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TWO CONCEPTS OF INTRINSIC VALUE

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ABSTRACT. Recent literature on intrinsic value contains a number of disputes about the nature of the concept. On the one hand, there are those who think states of affairs, such as states of pleasure or desire satisfaction, are the bearers of intrinsic value ("Mooreans"); on the other hand, there are those who think concrete objects, like people, are intrinsically valuable ("Kantians"). The contention of this paper is that there is not a single concept of intrinsic value about which Mooreans and Kantians have disagreed, but rather two distinct concepts. I state a number of principles about intrinsic value that have typically (though not universally) been held by Mooreans, all of which are typically denied by Kantians. I show that there are distinct theoretical roles for a concept of intrinsic value to play in a moral framework. When we notice these distinct theoretical roles, we should realize that there is room for two distinct concepts of intrinsic value within a single moral framework: one that accords with some or all of the Moorean principles, and one that does not.

KEY WORDS: intrinsic value, Moore, Kant

When discussing intrinsic value, some philosophers make the following sorts of claims:

> Pleasure (knowledge, virtue, justice...) is intrinsically valuable.
>
> We should try to bring as much intrinsic value into the world as we can.

Other philosophers make claims like this:

> Human beings (rational beings, sentient beings...) are intrinsically valuable.
>
> Intrinsically valuable things deserve our respect and consideration.

Recent literature on intrinsic value contains a number of disputes between these sorts of philosophers. The contention of this paper is that the disputants, who I will call the Mooreans and the Kantians, have been talking past each other, on certain points at least, for some time; there is not a single concept of intrinsic value about which Mooreans and Kantians have disagreed, but rather two distinct concepts.[1]

[1] On the Moorean side, we have (naturally) Moore (1903), Ross (1930), Harman (1967), Chisholm (1968), Tolhurst (1982), Lemos (1994), Feldman (1997), and Zimmerman (2001);

In what follows, I state a number of principles about intrinsic value that have typically (though not universally) been held by Mooreans, all of which are typically denied by Kantians. I show that there are distinct theoretical roles for a concept of intrinsic value to play in a moral framework. When we notice these distinct theoretical roles, we should realize that there is room for two distinct concepts of intrinsic value within a single moral framework: one that accords with some or all of the Moorean principles, and one that does not.

In arguing for the distinctness of these concepts, I do not mean to imply that each concept corresponds to an actual property of moral significance. Merely showing that philosophers use the term 'intrinsic value' in a certain way does not show that the term denotes anything at all. I also do not mean to suggest that there is no way in which Moorean and Kantian intrinsic value compete with each other. In fact, it seems certain that they do compete, in the sense that there will be disagreements over whether one of these concepts is more fundamental than the other, and over which is more useful in developing a theory in the normative ethics of behavior. I do not intend to resolve all interesting disputes between Mooreans and Kantians. I do intend to show that the Moorean View of intrinsic value is impervious to certain lines of attack; for when a philosopher makes a claim about the nature of a concept of ethical significance that she picks out with the term 'intrinsic value,' and another philosopher makes an apparently contradictory claim about a concept picked out by the same term, in many cases their claims are not contradictory after all.

1. Some Moorean Principles

I turn now to some specific disputes about intrinsic value. These disputes focus on a number of principles, asserted by some and rejected by others. Typically, though not invariably, Mooreans accept the principles and Kantians reject them. I will attempt to show how at least some of these disputes can be resolved if the concepts of intrinsic value used by Mooreans and Kantians are indeed distinct and non-competing.

SUP: *Intrinsic value is a kind of value such that when it is possessed by something, it is possessed by it solely in virtue of its intrinsic properties*.[2]

SUP has an air of self-evidence about it; it seems to express one thing we might mean when we say that intrinsically good things

on the Kantian side we have Korsgaard (1983), Anderson (1993), and Scanlon (1998), among others.

[2] For statements of SUP, see Moore (1922, p. 260) and Feldman (1997, pp. 136–139).

are good "in themselves."[3] Closely related to SUP are two other views.

NEC: *When intrinsic value is had by something, it is had by that thing of necessity*.[4]

If the bearers of intrinsic value have their intrinsic properties of necessity, then NEC follows from SUP. NEC should not be confused with the view that to say that something is intrinsically good is to say that it is necessarily, or unconditionally, good on the whole. Something might be intrinsically good, but lead to very bad consequences in certain situations, making it misleading at best to call it necessarily good.

ISO: *Intrinsic value is a kind of value such that when had by something, that thing would continue to have it even if it were alone in the universe.*[5]

If something's intrinsic properties are the properties it has in isolation, then ISO follows from SUP. Noah Lemos and Michael Zimmerman have rejected Moore's version of ISO, but endorsed slightly different versions of it (Lemos, 1994, pp. 10–11; Zimmerman forthcoming, ch. 5.1).

Recently, arguments against SUP, NEC and ISO have been given by Kagan (1998), Hurka (1998) and Anderson (1993). I have discussed Hurka's arguments in some detail elsewhere (Bradley, 2001); here I will focus on the arguments given by Anderson and Kagan.

In the following passage Anderson describes what she thinks is wrong with ISO:

> . . . Moore and his followers removed themselves from active engagements in the larger world, withdrew to private spaces in the company of intimate friends, and introspectively contemplated the isolated objects of their imaginations. It is not surprising that many goods were not salient to people in such a privileged, exclusive aristocratic setting, insulated from experiences of work and practical activity with strangers. (Anderson, 1993, p. 120)

What goods were not salient to Moore? According to Anderson, they include "meaningful work, athletic achievement, justice, and freedom" (Anderson, 1993, p. 120).

[3] It should be noted that the Supervenience Principle does not claim that intrinsic value is the *only* sort of value that depends on intrinsic properties; there may be other sorts of value that also depend solely on intrinsic properties. For examples, see Feldman (1998).

[4] For statements of NEC, see Moore (1922, pp. 260–261), Feldman (1997, pp. 139–140), and Feldman (2000, p. 331).

[5] For the classic statement of ISO, see Moore, 1903, p. 187.

While I find Anderson's attack on ISO unjustified, I won't discuss this in detail here; I am not here defending the Moorean principles, but showing that recognizing two distinct intrinsic value concepts could be of some help. And indeed, recognizing two distinct intrinsic value concepts would be helpful to Anderson. For she seems to be claiming here that work, achievement, justice and freedom are intrinsically good. But this claim is apparently incompatible with another claim about intrinsic value that she thinks is very important: namely, that it is not abstract entities that have intrinsic value, but concrete things such as people, animals and paintings (see FGE below). In order to avoid contradicting herself, Anderson might wish to claim that people, animals and paintings have one sort of intrinsic value – the Kantian sort – while work, achievement, freedom and justice have another sort – the Moorean sort.

Shelly Kagan has presented a number of purported counterexamples to SUP.[6] Kagan argues that it is plausible to hold that some extrinsic properties, such as rarity or historical importance, can make something more intrinsically valuable. For instance, the pen used by Abraham Lincoln to sign the Emancipation Proclamation (EP) may be said to have intrinsic value in virtue of certain extrinsic properties (Kagan, 1998, p. 285). It is an extrinsic property of the pen that it was used to sign the EP. It is also an extrinsic property of the pen that it stands in an important causal relation to an overall good consequence, namely the freedom of the slaves. Kagan argues that in virtue of these extrinsic properties – historical importance and instrumental value – we may want to say that the pen has more intrinsic value than an ordinary pen. Destruction of the pen, Kagan says, might reasonably be thought to "diminish the value of the world as such" (Kagan, 1998, p. 285). This might be so, he says, even if we ignore the continuing instrumental value of the pen for historians, collectors, or museum curators.

Suppose that, as I have suggested, there are in fact two distinct and compatible concepts of intrinsic value. Then it could be argued that the intrinsic value attributions Kagan makes, if correct, show merely that SUP fails when we are talking about Kantian intrinsic value, not Moorean intrinsic value. The pen used to sign the EP has intrinsic value in one sense – it is deserving of a certain sort of treatment – but does not have intrinsic value in another sense, since it does not factor into the determination of the value of the world. It is not obvious that this response would work, but it puts the burden on Kagan to show not merely that the pen has a kind of

[6] See Rabinowicz and Rønnow-Rasmussen (1999, pp. 40–42) and Regan (2003, p. 671) for similar examples. Even though Kagan could not be called a "Kantian," it is interesting to note the similarity between Kagan's claim about the intrinsic value of a historically important pen and Korsgaard and Scanlon's claims about the values of mink coats, historically important buildings and the U.S. Constitution (Korsgaard, 1983, p. 185; Scanlon, 1998, p. 95).

value that might properly be called "intrinsic," or that it is appropriate to treat the pen as an end in itself, but that it is really plausible to suppose that the pen *makes the world a better place just by being around*.

Another response for the defender of SUP is to claim that it is not the pen itself that has intrinsic value, but a state of affairs involving that pen – namely, that the pen was used to sign the EP (Bradley, 2001). This leads us to our next disputed principle.

FGE: *The bearers of intrinsic value are fine-grained entities like states of affairs, propositions, or facts.*

Versions of this view have been held by many Mooreans.[7] This makes sense, since Mooreans attribute intrinsic value to worlds, outcomes and lives, which can be fruitfully understood as being complicated states of affairs or facts (though perhaps they need not be so understood).

There are also certain specific axiologies that seem to require fine-grained value bearers. For example, according to Feldman's version of hedonism, the bearers of intrinsic value are states of affairs consisting of a person taking pleasure, to some degree at some time, in some proposition.[8] Thus, suppose that Bill is taking pleasure in Hillary's suffering. Feldman would distinguish between the fact that Bill is pleased about something and the fact that Bill is pleased that Hillary is suffering. One might wish to hold that Bill's being pleased about something is good but Bill's pleasure in Hillary's suffering is not good; or alternatively, that Bill's pleasure, *qua* pleasure, has no intrinsic value or disvalue, but Bill's pleasure in Hillary's suffering is intrinsically bad. In order to allow for these possibilities, we need fine-grained bearers of intrinsic value.[9] Desire-satisfactionists have analogous reasons to believe in FGE.

Of course, a hedonist need not endorse Feldman's propositional account of pleasure. If there is a feeling of pleasure itself, akin to the feeling of warmth or sweetness, and if the possession of such a feeling is intrinsically good, the bearers of intrinsic value need not be fine-grained. They might be coarse-grained events consisting of a person having that feeling of pleasure at some time. Nevertheless, the bearers of value will be things that happen or obtain, rather than, say, physical objects. And that is really the crucial distinction here: between, on the one hand, those who attribute intrinsic value to things and people, and on the other hand, those who attribute

[7] See Ross (1930, pp. 112–113 and 137), Chisholm (1968, pp. 22–23), Chisholm (1986, p. 74), Feldman (1997, pp. 108–124), Feldman (2000, pp. 325–327), Lemos (1994, ch. 2 *passim*), Harman (1967, pp. 792–793), Tolhurst (1982, p. 383), and Zimmerman (2001, ch. 3 *passim*.). Zimmerman argues that the bearers of intrinsic value must be concrete.

[8] See Feldman (2004).

[9] See Zimmerman (2001), ch. 3.2, for a similar argument.

intrinsic value to events, tropes, states of affairs, property-instantiations, facts, or propositions. It is not obvious what all these latter things have in common, except that some such things (rather than, say, physical objects or people) are the sorts of things that make up lives, worlds, and other common objects of axiological evaluation.

It seems Kant rejected FGE. Sometimes he says that only good wills have intrinsic value (Kant, 1981, p. 7);[10] other times he attributes intrinsic value to all rational beings, whether they have good wills or not (Kant, 1981, pp. 35–6).[11] Perhaps Kant utilized at least two different sorts of intrinsic value: one that is possessed only by good wills, and another that is possessed by all rational beings whether morally virtuous or vicious.[12]

Some contemporary philosophers in the Kantian tradition have also maintained that concrete objects can have intrinsic value. For example, Scanlon seems to think that just about any kind of thing may have intrinsic value. "We value many different kinds of things, including at least the following: objects and their properties (such as beauty), persons, skills and talents, states of character, actions, accomplishments, activities and pursuits, relationships, and ideals" (Scanlon, 1998, p. 95).[13] Like Scanlon, Anderson departs from the Kantian claim that only humans are ends in themselves, arguing that animals and even inanimate objects such as paintings may have intrinsic value (Anderson, 1993, p. 19). But Anderson goes even farther, arguing that states of affairs are never (or almost never) intrinsically valuable (Anderson, 1993, p. 26). Let us examine her arguments.

Anderson defines intrinsic value in terms of what can be rationally valued. She claims that when we ascribe intrinsic value to something, we are saying that it is rational to value that thing independent of whether it is rational to value anything else (Anderson, 1993, p. 19). While I find this view problematic, I will assume for the sake of argument that her account is true.[14] I turn now to the argument, which is contained in the following

[10] On this point also see Korsgaard, 1983, p. 195.

[11] On this point also see Wood, 1999, pp. 115–121.

[12] It may be that Kant, strictly speaking, did not attribute intrinsic worth to human beings at all – rather, he may have thought of the worth of human beings as derived from the worth of "the law," which is what is really deserving of respect in the strictest sense. (I thank Eric Watkins and Hud Hudson for discussion of this point.) For example, Kant claims that "fidelity to promises and benevolence based on principles (not on instinct) have intrinsic worth. . . [T]he legislation itself which determines all worth must for that very reason have dignity, i.e., unconditional and incomparable worth" (Kant, 1981, p. 41). This Kantian line seems not to have been followed by Scanlon and Anderson.

[13] In this passage Scanlon says that we value these things, not that they are valuable. According to Scanlon, "to claim that something is valu*able*. . . is to claim that others also have reason to value it" (1998, p. 95). I take it that Scanlon thinks we do indeed have good reason to value the things he lists.

[14] For a criticism of Anderson's emphasis on rationality, see Zimmerman (2001, ch. 3.1).

passage:[15]

> It makes sense for a person to value most [states of affairs] only because it makes sense for a person to care about the people, animals, communities, and things concerned with them. This follows from the fact that our basic evaluative attitudes – love, respect, consideration, affection, honor, and so forth – are non-propositional. They are attitudes we take up immediately toward persons, animals, and things, not toward facts. Because to be intrinsically valuable is to be the immediate object of such a rational attitude, states of affairs are not intrinsically valuable if they are not immediate objects of such attitudes. (Anderson, 1993, p. 20)

Anderson's argument is simple in its outline. States of affairs are not the immediate objects of basic rational evaluative attitudes; therefore, states of affairs are not intrinsically valuable. States of affairs *derive* their values from the values of concrete objects and people.

Anderson's argument has been criticized elsewhere (Sturgeon, 1996, p. 516; Zimmerman, 2001, pp. 35–39; Card, 2004). It seems to me that Anderson is running together two distinct concepts.[16] The best way to interpret her claim is to say that there is a necessary connection between a person, animal, or thing's having *Kantian* intrinsic value (i.e. being a creature whose welfare we have reason to care about, being the sort of thing that we have good reason to treat in a respectful way, having moral status of some sort), and a state of affairs involving that person, animal or thing having *Moorean* intrinsic value (i.e. making the world better).[17] No such state of affairs could affect the value of the world without being about something with Kantian intrinsic value. We might build this necessary connection explicitly into our axiology; for example, we might say that the states of affairs that have intrinsic value in the Moorean sense are states of the form *S has Kantian intrinsic value and has a welfare level of n*.[18]

[15] Rabinowicz and Rønnow-Rasmussen give a similar argument: "If the existence of the wilderness is valuable, it is *because* the wilderness itself is valuable. Thus, it is the state that derives its value from the object it involves and not the other way round" (1999, p. 43). I deny that the derivation works either way.

[16] What I say here about Anderson could equally apply to Korsgaard's critique of the Moorean view (1983, pp. 192–195).

[17] This view is similar to Fred Feldman's view that (roughly speaking) pleasure is intrinsically good only when experienced by someone who deserves it (Feldman, 1997, pp. 151–174).

[18] Korsgaard objects to a similar sort of view – a view that attributes value to the combination of virtue and happiness – on the grounds that it obscures "the internal relations within the organic unity in virtue of which the organic unity has its value" (1983, p. 193). Korsgaard's argument has been criticized, to my mind effectively, by Hurka (1998, p. 307). I do not wish to revisit these arguments in detail here.

There remains the question of what to say about the state *S has a welfare level of n*. I prefer to say that such states either have intrinsic value in all circumstances or never have any intrinsic value. Others might wish to attribute intrinsic value to such states in some circumstances but not others; this would apparently involve rejecting SUP.

When the idea is put in this way, there is no temptation to say that welfare is merely extrinsically valuable. While the welfare of something might not be intrinsically valuable in the Moorean sense if the thing itself were not intrinsically valuable in the Kantian sense, the welfare state does not *derive* its value from the value of thing whose welfare is valuable. To see this, suppose that Jane is intrinsically valuable, and consider the following two states of affairs:

J1 *that Jane is mildly happy for ten seconds*
J2 *that Jane is extremely happy for ten years*.

Surely J1 and J2 are not equally valuable. But if J1 and J2 both derive their values from Jane's intrinsic value, then how are we to account for the difference in value? Jane is equally a constituent of both states, and presumably Jane is not more valuable as a constituent of J2 than she is as a constituent of J1. Furthermore, consider the following state:

J3 *that Jane is extremely unhappy for ten years*

If J1 and J2 are valuable in virtue of Jane's intrinsic value, then why isn't J3 valuable in the same way? She is equally a constituent of J3. The best way to interpret what is going on here is to say that Jane has Kantian intrinsic value, while J1 and J2 have Moorean intrinsic value. Both kinds of intrinsic value are in some sense underived. Jane does not get her value from states like J1 or J2; nor do J1 or J2 get their values from Jane. They have entirely different kinds of value. This is of course not to say that there are no connections whatsoever between the value claims; it seems plausible to say that J1–J3 would not have any value if Jane did not have Kantian intrinsic value, and vice versa. But this is not to say that J1–J3 *derive* their values from Jane's value.

From the Moorean side, Noah Lemos argues that particular things such as people could not be the bearers of intrinsic value. He describes a world full of permanently unconscious people, and says such a world would not be intrinsically good.

> The mere fact that there are persons in that world contributes no intrinsic goodness to it. And the mere fact that there are persons does not seem to be desirable in and for itself or intrinsically good. But if the fact that there are persons is not intrinsically good, then it seems reasonable to believe that persons are not intrinsically good, since if individual persons had intrinsic value, the fact that they exist would be intrinsically good. (Lemos, 1994, p. 28)

Perhaps the Kantian could agree with Lemos' axiological intuitions concerning the value of the world without having to give up the Kantian conception of intrinsic value. Lemos' argument depends crucially on the

principle that if something is intrinsically good, then the fact that it exists is intrinsically good. Since the fact that an unconscious person exists is not intrinsically good, he concludes that persons are not intrinsically good. While Lemos' principle seems plausible, some have explicitly rejected it (Rabinowicz and Rønnow-Rasmussen, 1999, p. 43). I suspect that whether Lemos' principle is true or not depends on what sort of value we are talking about. The principle seems plausible when we are talking about Moorean intrinsic value, but less plausible when we are talking about Kantian intrinsic value. The Kantian can say that while persons do have intrinsic value, and thus ought to be treated with respect even if they are permanently unconscious, their mere existence does not make the world better.

Talk of "making the world better" leads us to another set of disputed principles that seem to go naturally together:

DEG: *Intrinsic value is the sort of thing that comes in degrees.*
MAX: *Intrinsic value can be added up and maximized.*
BET: *Adding something with intrinsic value to the world makes the world, or a life, or an outcome, better (other things equal).*

Moore is sometimes thought to have denied that intrinsic value can be summed, in virtue of his principle of organic wholes, but he does seem to endorse a summative principle that is compatible with organic unities (Moore, 1903, pp. 27–30 and 214). MAX has been rejected by some Mooreans (Lemos, 1994, pp. 61–66), but endorsed by Feldman (2000), Harman (1967) and Zimmerman (2001, p. 160). The *ceteris paribus* clause in BET is important. Mooreans do not hold, as Korsgaard does, that intrinsic value is unconditional value, because adding something with intrinsic value to the world might not make it better if, for example, that thing brings about something else that is intrinsically very bad (Korsgaard 1983, 179).

It is not entirely clear to me what Kant thought about these principles, though it is usually supposed that he rejected them.[19] Certainly in contemporary discussions the idea that people have different amounts of intrinsic value is usually denied.[20] As for MAX and BET, both Anderson and Scanlon deny that the existence of an intrinsically valuable thing

[19] Concerning DEG, consider the following puzzling passage from Kant's discussion of the value of knowledge in *Lectures on Ethics*: "All men are equal, and only he who has superior morality has superior intrinsic worth" (Kant, 1930, p. 243). While he seems to endorse the idea that intrinsic value does not come in degrees in the first part of the passage, in the second part he seems to take it back. See Wood (1999, pp. 133–134) for further discussion.

[20] See, for example, Regan (1983, pp. 235–43). Regan actually calls this sort of value "inherent value," to distinguish it from the Moorean conception of intrinsic value. I think this will help my argument that there are two different kinds of value here, and that therefore there is no dispute over the nature of a single sort of value.

necessarily makes the world better. Scanlon holds that friendship is intrinsically good, but says that "it seems overblown to say that what is important about friendship is that it increases the value of the state of the universe in which it occurs" (Scanlon, 1998, p. 88). Scanlon also thinks that human life is intrinsically good, but says that while we have good reasons to preserve and protect human life, those reasons "do not flow from the thought that it is a good thing for there to be more human life rather than less" (Scanlon, 1998, p. 104).[21] Anderson agrees, and in fact rejects all three principles in the following passage:

> Now consider whether intrinsic value can be aggregated... Respect for humanity as an end in itself does not demand that we bring more humans into existence or minimize their deaths... Since there are no generally valid practical maximizing principles for intrinsic value, we say that intrinsic value cannot be increased by increasing the number of its bearers. So intrinsic value cannot be aggregated and does not vary by degrees. It is nonscalar. (Anderson, 1997, p. 97)

Naturally, my response to these sorts of arguments is similar to my previous responses. Different intrinsic value concepts are at work here! Kantian intrinsic value – the sort of value that requires respect – cannot be increased by increasing the number of things that have Kantian intrinsic value. But that does not show that Moorean intrinsic value cannot be increased by increasing the number of things with Moorean intrinsic value.

Finally, we have a principle concerning the relationship between intrinsic value and reasons for action:

PRO: *When something is intrinsically good, someone has a good reason to try to promote it, or preserve it, or make it true, or bring it into existence.*

PRO follows from BET if we assume that the fact that something makes the world better always gives us some reason to promote it. Surely most consequentialists would hold PRO. However, it could also be held by someone who holds a roughly Moorean view about intrinsic value but thinks that there are deontological constraints on morally right behavior (Nagel, 1986, pp. 175–80). Such a person would say that it is sometimes morally wrong to do what maximizes intrinsic value. In such cases, the fact that one state of affairs is intrinsically good gives us some good reason to promote it, but a reason that is outweighed by the deontological constraint. It is important to realize that those in the Moorean tradition do not necessarily hold that

[21] It is not clear whether Scanlon is actually denying that it is a good thing for there to be more human life rather than less. He may simply be saying that even if it were a good thing, that would not be the primary source of our reasons to protect human life. In any case, Scanlon does not seem to want to say that everything that is intrinsically valuable thereby makes the world better.

the *only* appropriate attitude to have toward intrinsic goods is to promote them; Chisholm and Lemos are among those who hold that *love* is a fitting attitude to have toward something that is intrinsically good (Lemos, 1994, pp. 6–19; Chisholm, 1986, ch. 5).

Kant rejected PRO; he clearly believed that respect or esteem was the appropriate attitude to have towards intrinsic goods. "We esteem that which has intrinsic worth, and we love that which has worth through its bearing on something else" (Kant, 1930, p. 135). This respect or esteem is to be had both toward rational natures and toward the moral law (Kant, 1981, p. 41). Anderson and Scanlon loosen up Kant's view a bit, while still denying that it is always appropriate to promote or maximize intrinsic value. Anderson mentions love, respect, consideration, honor, and affection as appropriate attitudes to have towards intrinsic goods; what attitude is appropriate will depend on the kind of intrinsic good in question (Anderson, 1993, p. 20).[22] Scanlon says:

> When we consider the things that are generally held to be intrinsically valuable, however, it becomes apparent that in most cases taking them to be valuable is not simply, or even primarily, a matter of thinking that certain states of the universe are better than others and are therefore to be promoted. (Scanlon, 1998, p. 88)

Rather, he says, to take something to be intrinsically valuable is, typically, to *respect* it.

Of course, one way to demonstrate one's love or respect for something is to promote or preserve it. So Scanlon's point is merely that there are appropriate ways to treat an intrinsically valuable thing that do not involve promoting or preserving. This point is related to Scanlon and Anderson's rejection of FGE, since the ways it is appropriate to treat a historic building (Scanlon) or one's mother (Anderson) differ from the ways it is appropriate to treat abstract entities such as states of affairs. And as before, Scanlon and Anderson's arguments dissolve if it turns out that there are two concepts of intrinsic value. So I turn now to making the case for this claim.

2. Two Concepts?

I have tried to show that at least some disputes about intrinsic value can be dissolved *if* we recognize the existence of two distinct intrinsic value concepts. But is there any good reason to do so? I think there are very good reasons.

[22] Also see Rabinowicz and Rønnow-Rasmussen (1999, pp. 46–47). Rabinowicz and Rønnow-Rasmussen also reject the claim that proposition-like entities are the bearers of intrinsic value.

One reason we might think there are different value concepts is by reflecting on the dispute over the bearers of intrinsic value (FGE). Similar disputes do not seem to arise in other areas of ethics. In the normative ethics of behavior, it is widely accepted that actions are the bearers of the properties of moral rightness, wrongness and obligatoriness. In virtue theory, there is little dispute that dispositional states of character or character traits are virtues or vices, and that *persons* are the bearers of those dispositional states.[23] Value theory appears to be the only ethical subfield in which there is great dispute concerning the ontological status of the bearers of the fundamentally important property of the field. I think this adds plausibility to the claim that there is not a genuine dispute here.

It is perhaps even more surprising to find that there could be such sharp disagreement over the question of whether intrinsic value comes in degrees (DEG). It is difficult to think of other concepts where such a disagreement arises. Consider a person who denies that mass comes in degrees, and says that anything that has mass has the same mass as any other thing with mass. It would be tempting to conclude that such a person simply lacks the concept of mass. This lends support to the idea that either one of the parties to the dispute concerning intrinsic value is talking gibberish, or that the parties to the dispute are talking past one another. (Note that I am not claiming that *any* dispute over the nature of a concept requires us to say, or gives us any reason to say, that there are really two concepts, or that someone lacks the concept.)

Note, also, that Moorean intrinsic value can be either positive or negative – a state of affairs can be intrinsically good or intrinsically bad – but Kantian intrinsic value does not have that feature. When talking about value in the Kantian way, we might say that a thing has or lacks intrinsic value, but we never say that it has *negative* value. Again, it would be surprising if there were two philosophers who grasped the same concept of intrinsic value yet disagreed on something as fundamental as whether it makes sense to say that something could have intrinsic disvalue.

It would be a mistake to make too much of these particular disagreements. After all, a Kantian might well accept that intrinsic value comes in degrees, or in positive and negative valences, while a Moorean might think that physical objects are bearers of intrinsic value. Adherence to all the Moorean principles is hardly essential for one to be playing the Moorean's intrinsic value ballgame; ditto for the Kantian. However, the fact remains that some Kantians (e.g. Kant, on a plausible interpretation) do deny all of those Moorean principles, and most deny at least one of DEG or FGE. So

[23] We do also call acts virtuous or vicious, and there is some dispute about whether the attributions of virtue to persons are more fundamental than attributions to actions; see Hurka (forthcoming).

at least as concerns disputes between archetypical Mooreans and Kantians, there is reason to think they could not be disagreeing about the nature of a single concept.

The final and most important reason to believe in distinct intrinsic value concepts is based on two distinct theoretical uses we might have for a conception of intrinsic value. On the one hand, we may be interested in answering certain questions in the theory of value, or axiology. We may wish to come up with principles that will tell us the values of possible worlds, human lives, or other interesting things. A concept of intrinsic value is essential to this project; when we determine the value of a life, we need to be able to distinguish between things that are valuable to that life merely as a means (such as the amount of money possessed by the subject of the life) and things that make the life better just by being part of it (perhaps including pleasure, or knowledge, or virtue). By answering such questions, we may also gain insight into questions in the normative ethics of behavior. For example, if there is a *prima facie* duty to make the world better, then in order to understand this duty we must first have an idea of what it is to make the world better. The Moorean project is to determine the nature of this sort of intrinsic value. Engaging in the Moorean project leads one to think of intrinsic value as the sort of property characterized by the Moorean principles: it comes in degrees, is possessed by states of affairs, is to be promoted, and so on.

On the other hand, we may be interested in defending a view concerning how people, or animals, or other things ought to be treated. By saying that something has intrinsic value, we are saying that it is not permissible to treat that thing in any way one sees fit, or to treat it as something with merely instrumental value. Its intrinsic value must be respected. The project concerning intrinsic value, then, is to explain this notion of intrinsic value, explain the sorts of actions that are required by someone with respect to something of intrinsic value, and to justify the claim that intrinsic value as so described calls for these sorts of actions. I take it that this is the intrinsic value project typically undertaken by Kantians. Engaging in the Kantian project leads one to think of intrinsic value as the sort of property that is possessed by people and animals (and maybe inanimate objects), is not to be "traded off" for other valuable things, cannot be added up or maximized, and so on – in other words, as generally not conforming to the Moorean principles.

The mere fact that Mooreans are looking for a concept to fill one theoretical role and Kantians are looking for a concept to fill a different role does not show that the same concept could not be used for both roles. Often the very same concept is used to fill multiple roles; when this happens, we think the concept is particularly useful. (Think of David Lewis' arguments for possible worlds (Lewis, 1986).)

But this is not such a case. First of all, in this case, there are good reasons to deny that a single concept could play both required roles.[24] Given the claims about intrinsic value made by Kantians, there is no way the sort of value they have in mind could play the role Mooreans are looking for. For example, it is doubtful that an intrinsic value concept that fails to satisfy DEG could be useful to a Moorean. If the project is to provide a principle that will rank worlds, lives or outcomes from best to worst, we need a value concept that allows for degrees.

The Kantian might argue that there is something fundamentally misguided about the project of ranking worlds, lives and outcomes. But Kant himself held views on the values of worlds, and his views are not fully understandable without some sort of Moorean intrinsic value concept. This is evident in the following passage:

> What constitutes the Supreme Good? The supreme created good is the most perfect world, that is, a world in which all rational beings are happy and are worthy of happiness. . . . In mankind therefore we have to look both for happiness and for merit. The combination of the two will be the highest good. Man can hope to be happy only in so far as he makes himself worthy of being happy, for this is the condition of happiness which reason itself proposes. (Kant, 1930, p. 6)

Kant explicitly says that a world full of people with good wills who are unhappy is not as good as it could be (Kant, 1930, pp. 6–7). He does not say that a world full of people with good wills who are unhappy is a *bad* world; he might say that the existence of good wills is itself a good thing. But in order to tell us what makes a world *supremely* good, even Kant must go beyond attributions of intrinsic value to good wills, and mention happiness. However, Kant apparently did not believe that happiness was intrinsically good. Korsgaard interprets Kant as holding that happiness is extrinsically good, since its goodness is "conditioned" by the good will, but that it is still "objectively" good when experienced by a good will (Korsgaard, 1983, p. 180). But now it seems as if the dispute between the Moorean and the Kantian is merely a verbal one. Both can attribute the same sort of goodness to deserved happiness, or happiness experienced by a person with a good will: a kind of goodness that makes the world better, or contributes to the world's value. (The Kantian might also attribute such value to the good will itself.) But the Kantian refuses to use the term 'intrinsic goodness' here because she reserves that term for a different sort of goodness, a sort that applies only to good wills.

Kantian intrinsic value is not suited to play the role of determining the values of lives and worlds. The role intrinsic value is supposed to play in

[24] Unless, of course, it has distinct subconcepts each of which plays only one of the roles; see the discussion of the fitting attitudes account below.

Kantian theories is to be the basis for respect or esteem; it is supposed to ground duties to people or things. So we should not be surprised that it is unhelpful when we are interested in axiological principles. As Scanlon points out, when we are interested in determining the value of a world, we are almost inevitably led to think about value in a Moorean way (Scanlon, 1998, p. 90). When we try to force Kantian intrinsic value to play the role of Moorean intrinsic value, we end up with strange un-Kantian views like the view that we ought to bring as many good wills into the world as possible, since intrinsic goods make the world better, and we always have a good reason to make the world better.

Furthermore, Moorean intrinsic value seems ill suited to play the role that Kantian intrinsic value is supposed to play; it is fairly useless when it comes to grounding duties to particular things or as a basis for attributions of moral rights. It makes little sense to talk about respecting or esteeming things with Moorean intrinsic value; when someone is experiencing pleasure, we may be happy that this state of affairs obtains, but we do not hold the state of affairs in esteem or respect it. It may not be impossible to hold such attitudes toward Moorean intrinsic goods, but it is not the purpose of Moorean intrinsic value ascriptions to be the basis for such attitudes. This difference in theoretical roles is what provides the strongest reason to think that there are two distinct and non-competing concepts here.[25]

Looking at recent work in environmental ethics and animal rights, we get more support for this claim. Tom Regan, a prominent rights theorist, utilizes a notion that he calls "inherent value," but which seems clearly to correspond to Kant's conception of intrinsic worth:

> You and I, for example, do have value as individuals – what we'll call *inherent value*. To say that we have such value is to say that we are something more than, something different from, mere receptacles. . . . The genius and the retarded child, the prince and the pauper, the brain surgeon and the fruit vendor, Mother Theresa and the most unscrupulous used car salesman – all have inherent value, all possess it *equally*, and *all have an equal right to be treated with respect*, to be treated in ways that do not reduce them to the status of things, as if they exist as resources for others. (Regan, 1998, pp. 49–50; emphasis his)

Although Regan, unlike Kant, holds that non-humans may have inherent value, it seems clear that he has the same concept in mind. When something has inherent value, we ought to respect it; we have duties toward it. We should treat it as an end in itself, not merely as a means. Regan explicitly distinguishes this notion from intrinsic value: "The inherent value of individual moral agents is to be understood as conceptually distinct from the intrinsic

[25] Zimmerman makes a similar point; he argues that the term 'intrinsic value,' as used by Kant, does not refer to a property we are interested in when doing axiology (Zimmerman, 2001, ch. 3.1).

value that attaches to the experiences they have" (Regan, 1983, pp. 235).

Paul Taylor actually *defines* inherent worth in terms of a Moorean conception of intrinsic value.

> Living things are now viewed as*the appropriate objects of the attitude of respect* and are accordingly regarded as entities possessing inherent worth. (Taylor, 1998, p. 103)

> We can now define what it means for a living thing or group of living things to possess inherent worth. To say that it possesses inherent worth is to say that its good is deserving of the concern and consideration of all moral agents, and that the realization of its good has intrinsic value. (Taylor, 1998, p. 100)

Here we once again have the claim that things with inherent value are things we must respect. Inherent value is a sort of value that is possessed by a concrete living being, while intrinsic value is had by the "realization of its good," which would seem to be a state of affairs. The characterization of *inherent* value given by Taylor and Regan closely matches the characterization of *intrinsic* value given by Kant, Anderson and Scanlon. Taylor and Regan use the term 'inherent worth' to designate the Kantian conception of intrinsic value, and use 'intrinsic value' to designate the Moorean conception. Unless the views of Taylor and Regan are incoherent, these conceptions of intrinsic value must be compatible.

The cumulative weight of these considerations strongly suggests that Anderson and Scanlon's arguments against the Moorean principles are misguided. What considerations point in the other direction? Some might point to similarities between the roles of Moorean and Kantian intrinsic value in an attempt to show that there is a real dispute here about a single concept. Consider this passage from Korsgaard:

> When Kant says that the only thing good without qualification is a good will, he means that the good will is the one thing or kind of thing *for which the world is always a better place*, no matter "what it effects or accomplishes." (Korsgaard, 1983, p. 180; my emphasis)

Korsgaard suggests that Kant attributed to good wills a kind of value that plays a role similar to that of Moorean intrinsic value: that of contributing to the value of the world. If so, then Kantian and Moorean intrinsic value would seem to be in direct competition with one another in this project. But could Kant really have meant to say that a good will makes the world a better place *no matter what it effects or accomplishes*? This is an incredible claim.[26] Would a world be better for the existence of one additional good will, if the

[26] In the vicinity of the Kantian passage Korsgaard quotes, Kant speaks very highly of a good will, attributing to it many fantastic qualities; but he never says that *the world is always a better place* for the existence of a good will.

effect of its existence were the extermination of the human race, including many other good wills? It would be much more charitable to attribute to Kant the view that a good will is *worthy of respect* no matter what it effects or accomplishes – in this sense, its value is "absolute" or "unconditional." This would be entirely consistent with what Kant actually says.[27]

One might well wonder: why just *two* concepts of intrinsic value? After all, there are a great many attitudes or responses a valuable object might merit. Besides promoting or respecting it, we might love, preserve, honor, or desire it. There might be thousands of possible responses or attitudes. Why not say that each corresponds to a distinct value concept?

Nothing said so far shows that there cannot be more than two concepts of intrinsic value. But to show that there are thousands of intrinsic value concepts, it is not sufficient to show merely that there are thousands of distinct pro-attitudes one might have towards something. It must also be shown that each of those intrinsic value concepts will do some useful work in a moral theory that is not done by other concepts. This has to be shown on a case-by-case basis. But it seems safe in general to say that the more conceptual apparatus a theory requires, the less plausible it will be.

There is, however, a more plausible view in the neighborhood. According to the "fitting attitudes" (FA) account of value, to be intrinsically valuable just is to be the appropriate object of some pro-attitude, or for there to be reasons to have some pro-attitude towards it. This is part of Scanlon's "buck-passing" view of value (Scanlon, 1998, pp. 95–100). FA might be thought to provide unity to the notion of intrinsic value, and might therefore seem to be in tension with my thesis that there are two distinct concepts of intrinsic value. After all, both Mooreans and Kantians agree that when something is valuable, some pro-attitude or other is appropriate to have towards it.

This is not the place to argue for or against FA.[28] It is sufficient to note that FA is entirely consistent with my thesis. I do not claim that the Moorean and Kantian concepts cannot be subsumed under a single overarching concept. Surely they can, if the concept is sufficiently indiscriminating. What would be problematic for my thesis would be if there were a unifying value concept V such that the disputes between Mooreans and Kantians discussed in this paper could plausibly be seen as disputes over the nature of V. But FA does not provide, and is not intended to provide, any such unifying concept.

As a simplistic comparison, suppose two people are arguing about what they take to be the nature of color. "Color is what the sky has!" says one.

[27] A detailed discussion of goodness without qualification is beyond the scope of this paper. See Feldman (1998) and Wielenberg (1998) for recent discussions.

[28] See Rabinowicz and Ronnow-Rasmussen (2004) for a prominent recent critique, and see Stratton-Lake (2005) and Olson (2004) for some recent rebuttals.

"Color is what roses have!" says the other. But it turns out that one is talking only about redness, and the other only about blueness, and this explains their disagreements away. The fact that a broader concept, *color*, subsumes redness and blueness, does not show that those "disagreements" were genuine after all. Something like that is happening here. If there is a more general value concept that subsumes the Moorean and Kantian concepts, then I say there are at least two importantly different ways in which something might answer to that more general value concept, and we have to be careful to distinguish them.

If I have successfully argued that there are two distinct, non-competing notions of intrinsic value, then I will have accomplished the main task of this paper. But questions may be raised at this point, and serious disagreements will remain. One disagreement will be in the area of normative ethical theory. Given that there are two concepts of intrinsic value, we may wonder whether a correct theory in the normative ethics of behavior will make use of both concepts, or only one, or neither. It might be that one or both of these concepts fail to pick out a property that is important from the standpoint of normative ethics. Other potential disagreements will arise among those who are interested in intrinsic value. Should those who study intrinsic value devote their time to clarifying the Moorean concept or the Kantian concept? Is there a good reason to suppose that one or the other of these projects will not be fruitful? Is it possible that one of these concepts not only fails to pick out an important property, but fails to pick out any property at all? Is one of these concepts reducible to the other? When constructing a moral theory, which concept should we start with? The fact that these questions remain shows that there is a sense in which these concepts are competing. Even if they are not competing attempts to describe the nature of a single ethical property, they still compete in other ways. Discussion of the disputes that remain must be left for another occasion.

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