

## *On Intrinsic and Constitutive Value*

1. If, according to an objectively relational theory of value, no being is valuable simply in itself, but has such value as it has, positive or negative, in relation to the needs and interests of other beings, doesn't this do away with the distinction between intrinsic and constitutive value? Doesn't it imply that the only value is constitutive value, because there is no intrinsic value? My answer is "No, it doesn't, because a theory of value as objectively relational allows for the distinction between intrinsic and constitutive value in the only sense in which this distinction needs to be upheld." I defend this answer as follows

2. Granted that "value" in the most general sense means either the good-for-ness or the bad-for-ness of one being for some other—in this being a term that functions very much like "being," which, in its most general sense, means being the object for some subject—there remains a difference between beings that can only be good or bad for other beings and beings for which other beings can be good or bad. Clearly, beings for which other beings can be valuable are themselves "centers of value" in a way in which beings that can only be valuable for other beings are not. But to be, in this sense, a center of value for others is to be intrinsically valuable relative to those others, just as they are constitutively valuable relative to that same center of value. And this is so even though in other relationships this same center of value may itself be constitutively valuable relative to some other center(s), just as the beings that are of constitutive value for it may in other relationships be intrinsically valuable because they in turn are centers of value for others. In sum: the distinction between intrinsic and constitutive value is as well founded and indispensable ontologically as the distinction between fully real, internal relations, on the one hand, and merely logical, external relations, on the other—or, alternatively, between *subjects* (or concretes) and *objects* (or abstracts). That which is not only object for subjects, but also, in some relation, subject for objects—or, in other words, is not only logically, externally related to others but also really, internally related to others—is intrinsically, not merely constitutively, valuable in that particular relation.

3. Of course, a possible alternative to the above would be to state a relational theory of value more carefully to begin with. Instead of saying, simply, "'Value' properly means either the good-for-ness or the bad-for-ness of one being for some other," one could say, "'Value' properly means *either* the subject of the real, internal relations constitutive of being as such, which subject is therefore intrinsically as well as constitutively valuable, *or* the object of such relations, which is only constitutively valuable in these relations." Just as to be is to be related to others—if not as the subject of such relations, then at least as the object thereof—so to be of value is also a matter of being related to others—either of being the subject as well as the object of relations, in the case of intrinsic value, or of being merely the object thereof, in the case of constitutive value.

4. It follows that God, properly conceived as the "all-worshipful," or "unsurpassable," and therefore the universal individual, is at once the intrinsic value than which none greater can be conceived and the greatest conceivable constitutive value. As the subject for which *all* things are objects, God is the greatest conceivable intrinsic value, while as the object for *all* subjects, God is also the greatest conceivable constitutive value. Except for the strictly metaphysical conditions of the possibility of all things, all of which are but aspects of God's own divine essence, and hence the object for all subjects, there neither would or could be anything whatever. Moreover, except for the *de facto* cosmic order that it belongs to God to impose, no other thing could ever be factually possible. For these reasons, or in these senses, God is the constitutive good than which none greater can be conceived, the one being who is unsurpassably good for all beings. On the other hand, insofar as God is the being for which all other beings are valuable, either positively or negatively, God is also the greatest conceivable intrinsic good; for nothing could conceivably be of greater possible value than the One for which not only all positive values, but even all negative values are, precisely, values.

### *On Intrinsic and Instrumental Value*

1. If, according to a theory of value as relational, no being is valuable simply in itself, but has such value as it has, positive or negative, in relation to the interests of other beings, doesn't this do away with the distinction between intrinsic and instrumental value? Doesn't it imply that the only value is instrumental value, because there is no intrinsic value? My answer is No, it doesn't, because a theory of value as relational allows for the distinction between intrinsic and instrumental value in the only sense in which this distinction needs to be upheld.

2. I defend this answer as follows. Granted that "value" in the most general sense means either the good-for-ness or the bad-for-ness of one being for some other—in this being a term that functions very much like "being," which, in its most general sense means being the object for some subject—there remains a difference between beings that can only be good or bad for other beings and beings for which other beings can be good or bad. Clearly, beings for which other beings can be valuable are themselves "centers of value" in a way in which beings that can only be valuable for other beings are not. But to be a center of value for others is to be intrinsically valuable relative to those others, just as they are instrumentally valuable relative to that same center of value, even though in other relationships this same center of value may be instrumentally valuable relative to some other centers, just as the beings that are of instrumental value for it may in other relationships be intrinsically valuable because they in turn are centers of value for others. In sum: the distinction between intrinsic and instrumental value is as well founded and indispensable ontologically as the distinction between fully real, internal relations, on the one hand, and merely logical, external relations, on the other—or, alternatively, between *subjects* (or concretes) and *objects* (or abstracts). That which is not only object for other subjects but also subject for other objects—or, in other words, that which is not only logically, externally related to others but also really, internally related to others—is intrinsically, not merely instrumentally, valuable in respect to that particular relationship.

3. Of course, a possible alternative to the above would be simply to state a theory of value as relational more carefully to begin with. Instead of saying, “‘Value’ properly means either the good-for-ness or the bad-for-ness of one being for some other,” one could say, “‘Value’ properly means either the subject of the real, internal relations constitutive of being as such, the subject of such relations being intrinsically as well as instrumentally valuable, or else the object of such relations, which is only instrumentally valuable in these relations.” Just as to be is to be related to others—if not as the subject of such relations, then at least as the object thereof—so to be of value is also a matter of being related to others—either of being the subject as well as the object of relations, in the case of intrinsic value, or of being merely the object thereof, in the case of instrumental value.

4. It follows that God, properly conceived as the “all-worshipful,” or unsurpassable, and therefore universal individual, is at once the intrinsic value than which none greater can be conceived and the greatest conceivable instrumental value. As the subject for which *all* things are objects, God is the greatest conceivable intrinsic value, while as the object for *all* subjects, God is also the greatest conceivable instrumental value. Except for the strictly metaphysical conditions of the possibility of all things, all of which are but aspects of God’s own divine essence, and hence the object of all subjects, there neither would nor could be anything whatever. Moreover, except for the *de facto* cosmic order that it belongs to God actually to impose, no other actual thing could ever be actually possible. For these reasons, or in these senses, God is the instrumental good than which none greater can be conceived, the one being who is good for all beings in the most radical way possible. On the other hand, insofar as God is the being for which all other beings are valuable, either positively or negatively, God is also the greatest conceivable intrinsic good; for nothing could conceivably be of greater positive value than the One for whom not only all positive values, but even all negative values are—precisely values.