

## THE CONCEPTION OF INTRINSIC VALUE

My main object in this paper is to try to define more precisely the most important question, which, so far as I can see, is really at issue when it is disputed with regard to any predicate of value, whether it is or is not a 'subjective' predicate. There are three chief cases in which this controversy is apt to arise. It arises, first, with regard to the conceptions of 'right' and 'wrong,' and the closely allied conception of 'duty' or 'what *ought* to be done.' It arises, secondly, with regard to 'good' and 'evil,' in some sense of those words in which the conceptions for which they stand are certainly quite distinct from the conceptions of 'right' and 'wrong,' but in which nevertheless it is undeniable that ethics has to deal with them. And it arises, lastly, with regard to certain aesthetic conceptions, such as 'beautiful' and 'ugly ;' or 'good' and 'bad,' in the sense in which these words are applied

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to works of art, and in which, therefore, the question what is good and bad is a question not for ethics but for aesthetics.

In all three cases there are people who maintain that the predicates in question are purely 'subjective,' in a sense which can, I think, be fairly easily defined. I am not here going to attempt a perfectly accurate definition of the sense in question ; but, as the term 'subjective' is so desperately ambiguous, I had better try to indicate roughly the sense I am thinking of. Take the word 'beautiful' for example. There is a sense of the term 'subjective,' such that to say that 'beautiful' stands for a subjective predicate, means, roughly, that any statement of the form 'This is beautiful' merely expresses a psychological assertion to the effect that some particular individual or class of individuals either actually has, or would, under certain circumstances, have, a certain kind of mental attitude towards the thing in question. And what I mean by 'having a mental attitude' towards a thing, can be best explained by saying that to desire a thing is to have one kind of mental attitude towards it, to be pleased with it is to have another, to will it is to have another ; and in short that to have any kind of feeling or emotion *towards* it is to have a certain mental attitude towards it—a different one in each case. Thus anyone who holds that when we say that a thing is beautiful, what we *mean* is merely that we ourselves or some particular class of people actually do, or would under certain circumstances, have, or permanently have, a certain feeling towards the thing in question, is taking a 'subjective' view of beauty.

But in all three cases there are also a good many people who hold that the predicates in question are not, in this sense 'subjective' ; and I think that those who hold this are apt to speak as if the view which they wish to maintain in opposition to it consisted simply and solely in holding its contradictory—in holding, that is, that the predicates in question are 'objective,' where 'objective' simply means the same as 'not subjective.' But in fact I think this is hardly ever really the case. In the case of goodness and beauty, what such people are really anxious to maintain is by no means merely that these conceptions are 'objective,' but that, besides being 'objective,' they are also, in

a sense which I shall try to explain, 'intrinsic' kinds of value. It is this conviction—the conviction that goodness and beauty are *intrinsic* kinds of value, which is, I think, the strongest ground of their objection to any subjective view. And indeed, when they speak of the 'objectivity' of these conceptions, what they have in mind is, I believe, always a conception which has no proper right to be called 'objectivity,' since it includes as an essential part this other characteristic which I propose to call that of being an 'intrinsic' kind of value.

The truth is, I believe, that though, from the proposition that a particular kind of value is 'intrinsic' it does follow that it must be 'objective,' the converse implication by no means holds, but on the contrary it is perfectly easy to conceive theories of e.g. 'goodness,' according to which goodness would, in the strictest sense, be 'objective,' and yet would not be 'intrinsic.' There is, therefore, a very important difference between the conception of 'objectivity,' and that which I will call 'internality;' but yet, if I am not mistaken, when people talk about the 'objectivity' of any kind of value, they almost always confuse the two, owing to the fact that most of those who deny the 'internality' of a given kind of value, also assert its 'subjectivity.' How great the difference is, and that it is a fact that those who maintain the 'objectivity' of goodness do, as a rule, mean by this not mere 'objectivity,' but 'internality,' as well, can, I think, be best brought out by considering an instance of a theory, according to which goodness would be objective but would not be intrinsic.

Let us suppose it to be held, for instance, that what is meant by saying that one type of human being A is 'better' than another type B, is merely that the course of evolution tends to increase the numbers of type A and to decrease those of type B. Such a view has, in fact, been often suggested, even if it has not been held in this exact form; it amounts merely to the familiar suggestion that 'better' means 'better fitted to survive.' Obviously 'better,' on this interpretation of its meaning, is in no sense a 'subjective' conception: the conception of belonging to a type which tends to be favoured by the struggle for existence more than another is as 'objective' as any conception can be. But yet, if I am not mistaken, all those who object to a

subjective view of 'goodness,' and insist upon its 'objectivity,' would object just as strongly to this interpretation of its meaning as to any 'subjective' interpretation. Obviously, therefore, what they are really anxious to contend for is not merely that goodness is 'objective,' since they are here objecting to a theory which is 'objective'; but something else. And this something else is, I think, certainly just that it is 'intrinsic'—a character which is just as incompatible with this objective evolutionary interpretation as with any and every subjective interpretation. For if you say that to call type A 'better' than type B means merely that it is more favoured in the struggle for existence, it follows that the being 'better' is a predicate which does *not depend merely on the intrinsic nature of A and B respectively*. On the contrary, although here and now A may be more favoured than B, it is obvious that under other circumstances or with different natural laws the very same type B might be more favoured than A, so that the very same type which, under one set of circumstances, is better than B, would, under another set, be worse. Here, then, we have a case where an interpretation of 'goodness,' which does make it 'objective,' is incompatible with its being 'intrinsic.' And it is just this same fact—the fact that, on any 'subjective' interpretation, the very same kind of thing which, under some circumstances, is better than another, would, under others, be worse—which constitutes, so far as I can see, the fundamental objection to all 'subjective' interpretations. Obviously, therefore, to express this objection by saying that goodness is 'objective' is very incorrect; since goodness might quite well be 'objective' and yet *not* possess the very characteristic which it is mainly wished to assert that it has.

In the case, therefore, of ethical and aesthetic 'goodness,' I think that what those who contend for the 'objectivity' of these conceptions really wish to contend for is not mere 'objectivity' at all, but principally and essentially that they are *intrinsic* kinds of value. But in the case of 'right' and 'wrong' and 'duty,' the same cannot be said, because many of those who object to the view that these conceptions are 'subjective,' nevertheless do not hold that they are 'intrinsic.' We cannot, therefore, say that what those who contend for the 'objectivity' of right and wrong

really mean is always chiefly that those conceptions are intrinsic, but we can, I think, say that what they do mean is certainly *not* 'objectivity' in this case any more than the other ; since here, just as there, it would be possible to find certain views, which are in every sense 'objective,' to which they would object just as strongly as to any subjective view. And though what is meant by 'objectivity' in this case, is not that 'right' and 'wrong' are *themselves* 'intrinsic,' what is, I think, meant here too is that they have a fixed relation to a kind of value which *is* 'intrinsic.' It is this fixed relation to an intrinsic kind of value, so far as I can see, which gives to right and wrong that kind and degree of fixity and impartiality which they actually are felt to possess, and which is what people are thinking of when they talk of their 'objectivity.' Here, too, therefore, to talk of the characteristic meant as 'objectivity' is just as great a misnomer as in the other cases ; since though it is a characteristic which is incompatible with any kind of 'subjectivity,' it is also incompatible, for the same reason, with many kinds of 'objectivity.'

For these reasons I think that what those who contend for the 'objectivity' of certain kinds of value, or for the 'objectivity' of judgments of value, commonly have in mind is not really 'objectivity' at all, but either that the kinds of value in question are themselves 'intrinsic,' or else that they have a fixed relation to some kind that is so. The conception upon which they really wish to lay stress is not that of 'objective value,' but that of 'intrinsic value,' though they confuse the two. And I think this is the case to a considerable extent not only with the defenders of so-called 'objectivity,' but also with its opponents. Many of those who hold strongly (as many do) that *all* kinds of value are 'subjective' certainly object to the so-called 'objective' view, not so much because it is *objective*, as because it is not *naturalistic* or *positivistic*—a characteristic which does naturally follow from the contention that value is 'intrinsic,' but does not follow from the mere contention that it is 'objective.' To a view which is at the same time both 'naturalistic' or 'positivistic' and also 'objective,' such as the Evolutionary view which I sketched just now, they do not feel at all the same kind or degree of objection as to any so-called 'objective' view. With regard to so-called

'objective' views they are apt to feel not only that they are false, but that they involve a particularly poisonous kind of falsehood—the erecting into a 'metaphysical' entity of what is really susceptible of a simple naturalistic explanation. They feel that to hold such a view is not merely to make a mistake, but to make a superstitious mistake. They feel the same kind of contempt for those who hold it, which we are apt to feel towards those whom we regard as grossly superstitious, and which is felt by certain persons for what they call 'metaphysics.' Obviously, therefore, what they really object to is not simply the view that these predicates are 'objective,' but something else—something which does not at all follow from the contention that they are 'objective,' but which does follow from the contention that they are 'intrinsic.'

In disputes, therefore, as to whether particular kinds of value are or are not 'subjective,' I think that the issue which is really felt to be important, almost always by one side, and often by both, is not really the issue between 'subjective' and 'non-subjective,' but between 'intrinsic' and 'non-intrinsic.' And not only is this felt to be the more important issue; I think it really is so. For the difference that must be made to our view of the Universe, according as we hold that some kinds of value are 'intrinsic' or that none are, is much greater than any which follows from a mere difference of opinion as to whether some are 'non-subjective,' or all without exception 'subjective.' To hold that any kinds of value are 'intrinsic' entails the recognition of a kind of predicate extremely different from any we should otherwise have to recognise and perhaps unique; whereas it is in any case certain that there are 'objective' predicates as well as 'subjective.'

But now what is this 'internality' of which I have been speaking? What is meant by saying with regard to a kind of value that it is 'intrinsic?' To express roughly what is meant is, I think, simple enough; and everybody will recognise it at once, as a notion which is constantly in people's heads; but I want to dwell upon it at some length, because I know of no place where it is expressly explained and defined, and because, though it seems very simple and fundamental, the task of defining it

precisely is by no means easy and involves some difficulties which I must confess that I do not know how to solve.

I have already given incidentally the main idea in speaking of that evolutionary interpretation of 'goodness,' according to which, as I said, goodness would be 'objective' but would not be 'intrinsic.' I there used as equivalent to the assertion that 'better,' on that definition, would not be 'intrinsic,' the assertion that the question whether one type of being A was better than another B would *not* depend *solely on the intrinsic natures of A and B*, but on circumstances and the laws of nature. And I think that this phrase will in fact suggest to everybody just what I do mean by 'intrinsic' value. We can, in fact, set up the following definition. *To say that a kind of value is 'intrinsic' means merely that the question whether a thing possesses it, and in what degree it possesses it, depends solely on the intrinsic nature of the thing in question.*

But though this definition does, I think, convey exactly what I mean, I want to dwell upon its meaning, partly because the conception of 'differing in intrinsic nature' which I believe to be of fundamental importance, is liable to be confused with other conceptions, and partly because the definition involves notions, which I do not know how to define exactly.

When I say, with regard to any particular kind of value, that the question whether and in what degree anything possesses it *depends solely on the intrinsic nature of the thing in question*, I mean to say two different things at the same time. I mean to say (1) that it is *impossible* for what is strictly *one and the same* thing to possess that kind of value at one time, or in one set of circumstances, and *not* to possess it at another; and equally *impossible* for it to possess it in one degree at one time, or in one set of circumstances, and to possess it in a different degree at another, or in a different set. This, I think, is obviously part of what is naturally conveyed by saying that the question whether and in what degree a thing possesses the kind of value in question always depends *solely* on the intrinsic nature of the thing. For if *x* and *y* have different intrinsic natures, it follows that *x* cannot be quite strictly one and the same thing as *y*; and hence if *x* and *y* can have a different intrinsic value, only where their intrinsic

natures are different, it follows that one and the same thing must always have the same intrinsic value. This, then, is part of what is meant ; and about this part I think I need say no more, except to call attention to the fact that it involves a conception, which as we shall see is also involved in the other part, and which involves the same difficulty in both cases—I mean, the conception which is expressed by the word ‘impossible.’ (2) The second part of what is meant is that if a given thing possesses any kind of intrinsic value in a certain degree, then not only must that same thing possess it, under all circumstances, in the same degree, but also anything *exactly like* it, must, under all circumstances, possess it in exactly the same degree. Or to put it in the corresponding negative form : It is *impossible* that of two exactly similar things one should possess it and the other not, or that one should possess it in one degree, and the other in a different one.

I think this second proposition also is naturally conveyed by saying that the kind of value in question depends solely on the intrinsic nature of what possesses it. For we should naturally say of two things which were *exactly alike* intrinsically, in spite of their being *two*, that they possessed the *same* intrinsic nature. But it is important to call attention expressly to the fact that what I mean by the expression ‘having a different intrinsic nature’ is equivalent to ‘not exactly alike’ because here there is real risk of confusion between this conception and a different one. This comes about as follows. It is natural to suppose that the phrase ‘having a different intrinsic nature’ is equivalent to the phrase ‘intrinsically different’ or ‘having different intrinsic properties.’ But, if we do make this identification, there is a risk of confusion. For it is obvious that there is a sense in which, when things are exactly like, they must be ‘intrinsically different’ and have different intrinsic properties, merely because they are two. For instance, two patches of colour may be exactly alike, in spite of the fact that each possesses a constituent which the other does not possess, provided only that their two constituents are exactly alike. And yet, in a certain sense, it is obvious that the fact that each has a constituent, which the other has not got, does constitute an intrinsic difference between them, and implies that



each has an intrinsic property which the other has not got. And even where the two things are simple the mere fact that they are *numerically* different does in a sense constitute an intrinsic difference between them, and each will have at least one intrinsic property which the other has not got—namely that of being identical with itself. It is obvious therefore that the phrases ‘intrinsically different’ and ‘having different intrinsic properties’ are ambiguous. They may be used in such a sense that to say of two things that they are intrinsically different or have different intrinsic properties does *not* imply that they are not exactly alike, but only that they are *numerically* different. Or they may be used in a sense in which two things can be said to be intrinsically different, and to have different intrinsic properties *only* when they are not exactly alike. It is, therefore, extremely important to insist that when I say : Two things can differ in intrinsic value, only when they have different intrinsic natures, I am using the expression ‘having different intrinsic natures’ in the latter sense and not the former :—in a sense in which the mere fact that two things are two, or differ numerically, does *not* imply that they have different intrinsic natures, but in which they can be said to have different intrinsic natures, *only* where, besides different numerically, they are also *not* exactly alike.

But as soon as this is explained, another risk of confusion arises owing to the fact that when people contrast mere numerical difference with a kind of intrinsic difference, which is *not* merely numerical, they are apt to identify the latter with *qualitative* difference. It might, therefore, easily be thought that by ‘difference in intrinsic nature’ I mean ‘difference in quality.’ But this identification of difference in quality with difference in intrinsic nature would also be a mistake. It is true that what is commonly meant by difference of quality, in the strict sense, always is a difference of intrinsic nature : two things cannot differ in quality without differing in intrinsic nature ; and that fact is one of the most important facts about qualitative difference. But the converse is by no means also true : although two things cannot differ in quality without differing in intrinsic nature, they can differ in intrinsic nature without differing in quality ; or, in other words, difference in quality is only *one*

species of difference in intrinsic nature. That this is so follows from the fact that, as I explained, I am using the phrase 'different in intrinsic nature' as equivalent to 'not exactly like': for it is quite plain that two things may not be exactly alike, in spite of the fact that they don't differ in quality, e.g. if the only difference between them were in respect of the *degree* in which they possess some quality they do possess. Nobody would say that a very loud sound was exactly like a very soft one, even if they were exactly like in quality; and yet it is plain there is a sense in which their intrinsic nature is different. For this reason alone qualitative difference cannot be identified with difference in intrinsic nature. And there are still other reasons. Difference in size, for instance may be a difference in intrinsic nature, in the sense I mean, but it can hardly be called a difference in quality. Or take such a difference as the difference between two patterns consisting in the fact that the one is a yellow circle with a red spot in the middle, and the other a yellow circle with a blue spot in the middle. This difference would perhaps be loosely called a difference of quality; but obviously it would be more accurate to call it a difference which consists in the fact that the one pattern has a *constituent* which is qualitatively different from any which the other has; and the difference between being qualitatively different and having qualitatively different constituents is important both because the latter can only be defined in terms of the former, and because it is possible for simple things to differ from one another in the former way, whereas it is only possible for complex things to differ in the latter.

I hope this is sufficient to make clear exactly what the conception is which I am expressing by the phrase 'different in intrinsic nature.' The important points are (1) that it is a kind of difference which does *not* hold between two things, when they are *merely* numerically different, but only when, besides being numerically different, they are also *not* exactly alike and (2) that it is *not* identical with qualitative difference; although qualitative difference is one particular species of it. The conception seems to me to be an extremely important and fundamental one, although, so far as I can see, it has no quite simple and unambiguous name: and this is the reason why I have dwelt on

it at such length. 'Not exactly like' is the least ambiguous way of expressing it ; but this has the disadvantage that it looks as if the idea of exact likeness were the fundamental one from which this was derived, whereas I believe the contrary to be the case. For this reason it is perhaps better to stick to the cumbersome phrase 'different in intrinsic nature.'

So much for the question what is meant by saying of two things that they 'differ in intrinsic nature.' We have now to turn to the more difficult question as to what is meant by the words 'impossible' and 'necessary' in the statement : A kind of value is intrinsic if and only if, it is *impossible* that  $x$  and  $y$  should have different values of the kind, unless they differ in intrinsic nature ; and in the equivalent statement : A kind of value is intrinsic if and only if, when anything possesses it, that same thing or anything exactly like it would *necessarily* or *must* always, under all circumstances, possess it in exactly the same degree.

As regards the meaning of this necessity and impossibility, we may begin by making two points clear.

(1) It is sometimes contended, and with some plausibility, that what we mean by saying that it is *possible* for a thing which possesses one predicate F to possess another G, is, sometimes at least, merely that some things which possess F do in fact also possess G. And if we give this meaning to 'possible,' the corresponding meaning of the statement it is *impossible* for a thing which possesses F to possess G will be merely : Things which possess F never do in fact possess G. If, then, we understand 'impossible' in this sense, the condition for the 'internality' of a kind of value, which I have stated by saying that if a kind of value is to be 'intrinsic' it must be *impossible* for two things to possess it in different degrees, if they are exactly like one another, will amount merely to saying that no two things which are exactly like one another ever do, in fact, possess it in different degrees. It follows, that, if this were all that were meant, this condition would be satisfied, if only it were true (as for all I know it may be) that, in the case of all things which possess any particular kind of intrinsic value, there happens to be nothing else in the Universe exactly like any one of them ; for if this were so, it would, of course, follow that no two things

which are exactly alike did in fact possess the kind of value in question in different degrees, for the simple reason that everything which possessed it at all would be unique in the sense that there was nothing else exactly like it. If this were all that were meant, therefore, we could prove any particular kind of value to satisfy this condition, by merely proving that there never has in fact and never will be anything exactly like any one of the things which possess it : and our assertion that it satisfied this condition would merely be an empirical generalisation. Moreover if this were all that was meant it would obviously be by no means certain that purely subjective predicates could not satisfy the condition in question ; since it would be satisfied by any subjective predicate of which it happened to be true that everything which possessed it was, in fact, unique—that there was nothing exactly like it ; and for all I know there may be many subjective predicates of which this is true. It is, therefore, scarcely necessary to say that I am not using ‘impossible’ in this sense. When I say that a kind of value, to be intrinsic, must satisfy the condition that it must be *impossible* for two things exactly alike to possess it in different degrees, I do not mean by this condition anything which a kind of value could be proved to satisfy, by the mere empirical fact that there was nothing else exactly like any of the things which possessed it. It is, of course, an essential part of my meaning that we must be able to say not merely that no two exactly similar things do *in fact* possess it in different degrees, but that, *if* there had been or were going to be anything exactly similar to a thing which does possess it, even though, in fact, there has not and won’t be any such thing, that thing would have possessed or would possess the kind of value in question in exactly the same degree. It is essential to this meaning of ‘impossibility’ that it should entitle us to assert what *would* have been the case, under conditions which never have been and never will be realised ; and it seems obvious that no mere empirical generalisation can entitle us to do this.

But (2) to say that I am not using ‘necessity’ in this first sense, is by no means sufficient to explain what I do mean. For it certainly seems as if causal laws (though this is disputed) do entitle us to make assertions of the very kind that mere empirical

generalisations do not entitle us to make. In virtue of a causal law we do seem to be entitled to assert such things as that, if a given thing had had a property or were to have a property F which it didn't have or won't have, it *would* have had or *would* have some other property G. And it might, therefore, be thought that the kind of 'necessity' and 'impossibility' I am talking of is this kind of causal 'necessity' and 'impossibility.' It is, therefore, important to insist that I do *not* mean this kind either. If this were all I meant, it would again be by no means obvious, that purely subjective predicates might not satisfy our second condition. It may, for instance, for all I know, be true that there are causal laws which insure that in the case of everything that is 'beautiful,' anything exactly like any of these things would, in this Universe, excite a particular kind of feeling in everybody to whom it were presented in a particular way : and if that were so, we should have a subjective predicate which satisfied the condition that, when a given thing possesses that predicate, it is impossible (in the causal sense) that any exactly similar thing should not also possess it. The kind of necessity I am talking of is not, therefore, mere causal necessity either. When I say that if a given thing possesses a certain degree of intrinsic value, anything precisely similar to it *would* necessarily *have* possessed that value in exactly the same degree, I mean that it *would* have done so, even if it had existed in a Universe in which the causal laws were quite different from what they are in this one. I mean, in short, that it is *impossible* for any precisely similar thing to possess a different value, in precisely such a sense as that, in which it is, I think, generally admitted that it is *not* impossible that causal laws should have been different from what they are—a sense of impossibility, therefore, which certainly does not depend merely on causal laws.

That there is such a sense of necessity—a sense which entitles us to say that what has F *would* have G, even if causal laws were quite different from what they are—is, I think, quite clear from such instances as the following. Suppose you take a particular patch of colour, which is yellow. We can, I think, say with certainty that any patch exactly like that one, *would* be yellow, even if it existed in a Universe in which causal laws were quite

different from what they are in this one. We can say that any such patch *must* be yellow, quite unconditionally, whatever the circumstances, and whatever the causal laws. And it is in a sense similar to this, in respect of the fact that it is neither empirical nor causal, that I mean the 'must' to be understood, when I say that if a kind of value is to be 'intrinsic,' then, supposing a given thing possesses it in a certain degree, anything exactly like that thing *must* possess it in exactly the same degree. To say, of 'beauty' or 'goodness' that they are 'intrinsic' is only, therefore, to say that this thing which is obviously true of 'yellowness' and 'blueness' and 'redness' is true of them. And if we give this sense to 'must' in our definition, then I think it is obvious that to say of a given kind of value that it is intrinsic *is* inconsistent with its being 'subjective.' For there is, I think, pretty clearly no subjective predicate of which we can say thus unconditionally, that, *if* a given thing possesses it, then anything exactly like that thing, *would*, under any circumstances, and under any causal laws, also possess it. For instance, whatever kind of feeling you take, it is plainly not true that supposing I have that feeling towards a given thing A, then *I* should necessarily under any circumstances have that feeling towards anything precisely similar to A : for the simple reason that a thing precisely similar to A *might* exist in a Universe in which I did not exist at all. And similarly it is not true of any feeling whatever, that if *somebody* has that feeling towards a given thing A, then, in any Universe, in which a thing precisely similar to A existed, *somebody* would have that feeling towards it. Nor finally is it even true, that if it is true of a given thing A, that, under actual causal laws, any one to whom A were presented in a certain way *would* have a certain feeling towards it, then the same hypothetical predicate would, in any Universe, belong to anything precisely similar to A : in every case it seems to be possible that there *might* be a Universe, in which the causal laws were such that the proposition would not be true.

It is, then, because in my definition of 'intrinsic' value the 'must' is to be understood in this unconditional sense, that I think that the proposition that a kind of value is 'intrinsic' is inconsistent with its being subjective. But it should be observed

that in holding that there is this inconsistency, I am contradicting a doctrine which seems to be held by many philosophers. There are, as you probably know, some philosophers who insist strongly on a doctrine which they express by saying that no relations are purely external. And so far as I can make out one thing which they mean by this is just that, whenever  $x$  has any relation whatever which  $y$  has not got,  $x$  and  $y$  *cannot* be exactly alike: That any difference in relation necessarily entails a difference in intrinsic nature. There is, I think, no doubt that when these philosophers say this, they mean by their 'cannot' and 'necessarily' an unconditional 'cannot' and 'must.' And hence it follows they are holding that, if, for instance, a thing A pleases me now, then any other thing, B, precisely similar to A, must, under any circumstances, and in any Universe, please me also: since, if B did not please me, it would *not* possess a relation which A does possess, and therefore, by their principle, *could not* be precisely similar to A—*must* differ from it in intrinsic nature. But it seems to me to be obvious that this principle is false. If it were true, it would follow that I can know *a priori* such things as that no patch of colour which is seen by you and is not seen by me is ever exactly like any patch which is seen by me and is not seen by you; or that no patch of colour which is surrounded by a red ring is ever exactly like one which is not so surrounded. But it is surely obvious, that, whether these things are true or not they are things which I cannot know *a priori*. It is simply *not* evident *a priori* that no patch of colour which is seen by A and not by B is ever exactly like one which is seen by B and not by A, and that no patch of colour which is surrounded by a red ring is ever exactly like one which is not. And this illustration serves to bring out very well both what is meant by saying of such a predicate as 'beautiful' that it is 'intrinsic,' and why, if it is, it cannot be subjective. What is meant is just that if A is beautiful and B is not, you could know *a priori* that A and B are *not* exactly alike; whereas, with any such subjective predicate, as that of exciting a particular feeling in me, or that of being a thing which would excite such a feeling in any spectator, you cannot tell *a priori* that a thing A which did possess such a predicate and a thing B which did not, could not be exactly alike.

It seems to me, therefore, quite certain, in spite of the dogma that no relations are purely external, that there are many predicates, such for instance as most (if not all) subjective predicates or the objective one of being surrounded by a red ring, which do *not* depend solely on the intrinsic nature of what possesses them : or, in other words, of which it is *not* true that if *x* possesses them and *y* does not, *x* and *y* *must* differ in intrinsic nature. But what precisely is meant by this unconditional 'must,' I must confess I don't know. The obvious thing to suggest is that it is the logical 'must,' which certainly is unconditional in just this sense : the kind of necessity, which we assert to hold, for instance, when we say that whatever is a right-angled triangle *must* be a triangle, or that whatever is yellow *must* be either yellow or blue. But I must say I cannot see that all unconditional necessity is of this nature. I do not see how it can be deduced from any logical law that, if a given patch of colour be yellow, then any patch which were exactly like the first would be yellow too. And similarly in our case of 'intrinsic' value, though I think it is true that beauty, for instance, is 'intrinsic,' I do not see how it can be deduced from any logical law, that if A is beautiful, anything that were exactly like A would be beautiful too, in exactly the same degree.

Moreover, though I do believe that both 'yellow' (in the sense in which it applies to sense-data) and 'beautiful' are predicates which, in this unconditional sense, depend only on the intrinsic nature of what possesses them, there seems to me to be an extremely important difference between them which constitutes a further difficulty in the way of getting quite clear as to what this unconditional sense of 'must' is. The difference I mean is one which I am inclined to express by saying that though both yellowness and beauty are predicates which *depend* only on the intrinsic nature of what possesses them, yet while yellowness is itself an *intrinsic* predicate, *beauty* is not. Indeed it seems to me to be one of the most important truths about predicates of value, that though many of them *are* intrinsic kinds of value, in the sense I have defined, yet *none* of them are intrinsic properties, in the sense in which such properties as 'yellow' or the property of 'being a state of pleasure' or 'being a state of things which



contains a balance of pleasure' are intrinsic properties. It is obvious, for instance, that, if we are to reject *all* naturalistic theories of value, we must not only reject those theories, according to which no kind of value would be intrinsic, but must also reject such theories as those which assert, for instance, that to say that a state of mind is good is to say that it is a state of being pleased; or that to say that a state of things is good is to say that it contains a balance of pleasure over pain. There are, in short, two entirely different types of naturalistic theory, the difference between which may be illustrated by the difference between the assertion, 'A is good' *means* 'A is pleasant' and the assertion 'A is good' *means* 'A is a state of pleasure.' Theories of the former type imply that goodness is *not* an intrinsic kind of value, whereas theories of the latter type imply equally emphatically that it is: since obviously such predicates as that 'of being a state of pleasure,' or 'containing a balance of pleasure,' *are* predicates like 'yellow' in respect of the fact that if a given thing possesses them, anything exactly like the thing in question must possess them. It seems to me equally obvious that *both* types of theory are false: but I do not know how to exclude them both except by saying that two different propositions are both true of *goodness*, namely: (1) that it does depend *only* on the intrinsic nature of what possesses it—which excludes theories of the first type and (2) that, *though* this is so, it is yet not itself an intrinsic property—which excludes those of the second. It was for this reason that I said above that, if there are any intrinsic kinds of value, they would constitute a class of predicates which is, perhaps, unique; for I cannot think of any other predicate which resembles them in respect of the fact, that though *not* itself intrinsic, it yet shares with intrinsic properties the characteristics of depending solely on the intrinsic nature of what possesses it. So far as I know, certain predicates of value are the only non-intrinsic properties which share with intrinsic properties this characteristic of depending only on the intrinsic nature of what possesses them.

If, however, we are thus to say that predicates of value, though *dependent* solely on intrinsic properties, are not themselves intrinsic properties, there must be some characteristic

belonging to intrinsic properties which predicates of value never possess. And it seems to me quite obvious that there is ; only I can't see *what* it is. It seems to me quite obvious that if you assert of a given state of things that it contains a balance of pleasure over pain, you are asserting of it not only a *different* predicate, from what you would be asserting of it if you said it was 'good'—but a predicate which is of quite a different *kind* ; and in the same way that when you assert of a patch of colour that it is 'yellow,' the predicate you assert is not only *different* from 'beautiful,' but of quite a different *kind*, in the same way as before. And of course the mere fact that many people have thought that goodness and beauty were subjective is evidence that there is *some* great difference of kind between them and such predicates as being yellow or containing a balance of pleasure. But *what* the difference is, if we suppose, as I suppose, that goodness and beauty are *not* subjective, and that they do share with 'yellowness' and 'containing pleasure,' the property of depending *solely* on the intrinsic nature of what possesses them, I confess I cannot say. I can only vaguely express the kind of difference I feel there to be by saying that intrinsic properties seem to *describe* the intrinsic nature of what possesses them in a sense in which predicates of value never do. If you could enumerate *all* the intrinsic properties a given thing possessed, you would have given a *complete* description of it, and would not need to mention any predicates of value it possessed ; whereas no description of a given thing could be *complete* which omitted any intrinsic property. But, in any case, owing to the fact that predicates of intrinsic value are not themselves intrinsic properties, you cannot define 'intrinsic property,' in the way which at first sight seems obviously the right one. You cannot say that an intrinsic property is a property such that, if one thing possesses it and another does not, the intrinsic nature of the two things *must* be different. For this is the very thing which we are maintaining to be true of predicates of intrinsic value, while at the same time we say that they are *not* intrinsic properties. Such a definition of 'intrinsic property' would therefore only be possible if, we could say that the necessity there is that, if *x* and *y* possess different intrinsic properties, their nature must be

different, is a necessity of a *different kind* from the necessity there is that, if  $x$  and  $y$  are of different intrinsic values, their nature must be different, although both necessities are unconditional. And it seems to me possible that this is the true explanation. But, if so, it obviously adds to the difficulty of explaining the meaning of the unconditional 'must,' since, in this case, there would be two different meanings of 'must,' both unconditional, and yet neither, apparently, identical with the logical 'must.'