

Two common distinctions in value theory are the *evaluative* and the *deontic*.

- Evaluative: Two prominent members of this family are the concepts of *goodness* and *badness*.
- Deontic: Prominent members of this family are the concepts of *rightness*, *wrongness*, *obligation*, *requirement*, *what there is reason to do*, and *what ought to be done*.

Depending on the philosopher, yet further distinctions may apply. W.D. Ross, in regards to *goodness*, claims that there are uses of goodness which are *attributive* and other uses which are *predicative*.

- Attributive Use: What is good, in the relevant sense, is good relative to some kind or good in some way. (e.g. you may say that someone you know is a good cook, but a bad drummer)
- Predicative Use: What is claimed to be good is not good relative to some kind or good in some way. (e.g. courage or mercy are good [full stop])

The distinction may have some grammatical markers. When the attributive sense is employed, 'good' tends to appear prior to the relative kind. For example, "Tom is good *at piano*" and "Jane is good *at accounting*" have a clear structure: X is good relative to Y. In the predicative sense, there is no relative kind to invoke. "Patience is good" is not meant to be relativized; such a virtue just is good.

The deontic distinctions of 'right' and 'wrong' also have a variety of acceptable uses. There is what is right for you morally, right for you prudentially, right for you legally, and so on. Some of these uses have normative force (they tell you what you should / should not do) and other uses do not have normative force (the law may tell you that X is legally right, but that does not entail that you should do X).

Now that this smattering of distinctions have been (roughly) explained, it remains to focus on the whether or not there are interesting relations between evaluative concepts and deontic ones. There are only two ways that it can go: either we account for the right in terms of the good, or the good in terms of the right.¹

The Right in Terms of the Good

As we saw in our discussion of GE Moore's view, he accounts for the right in terms of good. There is no sense in asking what good is, but there is in asking what right action is.

¹ Are these the only two ways that the evaluative and the deontic can be related?

“[T]o assert that a certain line of conduct is, at a given time, absolutely right...is...to assert that more good or less evil will exist in the world, if it be adopted than if anything else be done instead.” (Moore, 25)

Zimmerman finds three things worth pointing out about this quote. The first is that ‘absolutely right’ just means what one is morally bound to do. Second, Moore is concerned with *final* goodness or badness *for the world*. Thirdly, this quote provides an analysis of the concept of all-things-considered moral rightness. Analysis of this sort does three things: (i) it breaks the concept down into simpler concepts, (ii) the concept being analyzed and the analysis itself must be *strictly equivalent* (necessarily, one is true if and only if the other is true), and (iii) if anyone rejects the analysis then they don’t fully ‘get’ the concept being analyzed. This famous passage by Moore, however, is contrasted against a later work.

“[I]f we had to choose between two actions, one of which would have as its sole or total effects, an effect or set of effects, which we may call A, while the other would have as its sole or total effects, an effect or set of effects, which we may call B, then *if A [were intrinsically better than] B*, it would always be our duty to choose the action which caused A rather than that which caused B. This...would be absolutely *always* true, *no matter what A and B might be like in other respects*. (Moore 2005 [1912], 27-28)

Given Moore’s emphasis on effects, his view is understood to be a version of *consequentialism* (i.e. the right action is the action which has the best consequences). Zimmerman, however, finds two differences between these two quotes. First, is that while the first is an analysis of what it is to be morally bound to perform an action, the second merely claims that being morally bound to perform an action is strictly equivalent to that action having consequences which are intrinsically better than the alternatives. A proponent of the first quote would have to conclude that for anyone who disagrees with the analysis, that such a critic was mistaken about what it means to say that some action is morally right. This is quite a strong claim. The second quote does not take such a strong position. Disagreement about a claimed strict equivalence does not entail that the critic is mistaken about what it means to say that some action is morally right.

The second difference that Zimmerman notes between the two quotes involves what he calls the *outcomes*. The idea here is that if we just focus on the consequences of an action, as the second quote claims, then any intrinsic goodness in the action itself is left out of the equation.

- Outcomism (i.e. the first quote): An action is right when the intrinsic value of both the action itself and the consequences of that action are greater than if anything else be done instead.
- Consequentialism (i.e. the second quote): An action is right when the intrinsic value of only the consequences of that action are greater than if anything else be done instead.

Having now distinguished between these two ways of understanding Moore, there are a few more distinctions at play.

- Actualism: The morally right thing to do is to perform that action which *would* have the intrinsically best possible outcome (from among those actions one can take).
- Possibilism: The morally right thing to do is to perform the action which *could* have the intrinsically best possible outcome (from among those actions that one can perform). (pg 17)

After surveying some standard criticisms of Moore (both the consequentialist version, and the outcomist version) on pages 18 and 19, Zimmerman offers a potential way for Moore and his critics to move forward. Though, for example, a rights theorist will not accept the content of Moore's position, they can accept his structure.

- Moore's structure: whatever is morally right is better (in some way—and it is here that the theories will differ as to just what way that is) than whatever is not morally right. (pg 20)

Though there remain difficulties, Zimmerman concludes that the right may be analyzable in terms of the good. It is an open question (ha!).

FA Analysis: The Good in Terms of the Right

Roughly, the idea here is that for something to be good means that that something is the right way to act. As a piece of evidence for such a view Zimmerman highlights a number of terms for which the English suffix '-able' can apply. Such a position is flexible in two important ways:

"First, it bridges the attributive-predicative divide. It makes sense to say, for example, both that Smith is a commendable golfer and that courage is commendable. Second, it can accommodate the distinction between final and nonfinal value. For example, a proponent of the analysis might say that to assert that something is finally good is to assert that it is fitting to value it for its own sake, whereas to assert that something is nonfinally good is to assert that it is fitting to value it for the sake of something else to which it is in some way related." (pg 21)

Though this account does have initial promise, if it is to be accepted, then it must address a host of challenging questions.

1. Why is it fitting to value something that is good?
 - a. If unanswerable, this proves only that an analysis is not possible; strict equivalence is still on the table.

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2. How is valuableness to be analyzed?
 - a. For any potential answer to this question, other questions naturally follow:
 - i. What is it for something to be valuable, that is, for it to be such that it is a fitting object of a pro attitude?
 1. Is it a primitive notion?
 2. Is there some common, non-evaluative element that unites all pro-attitudes?
 3. For someone to take a pro attitude toward something is for that person to have an attitude toward that thing that involves conceiving of it as something that is in some way good.
 - a. Circular?
 3. We use 'good' to describe actions which we do not think are fitting to have some pro-attitude towards (e.g. so-and-so is a good liar).
 - i. Bite the bullet.
 - ii. Deny that FA applies to these uses.
 1. Either because 'good' is being used anomalously or
 2. Because the cases are fundamentally different
 4. WKR Problem: there are cases in which there is a reason to have a pro attitude toward something that is not good
 - a. Lots of back and forth in the literature on this.
 5. For whom and to what degree it is fitting to value something that is good?
 6. The problem of so-called solitary goods.
 - a. Such (alleged) goods consist in states of affairs that entail that there is no one in a position to value them. Suppose, for example, that happiness is intrinsically good, and good in such a way that it is fitting to welcome it. Then, more particularly, the state of affairs of there being happy egrets is intrinsically good; so too, presumably, is the more complex state of affairs of there being happy egrets but no welcomers. The simpler state of affairs would appear to pose no problem for part (a) of the thesis, but the more complex state of affairs, which is an example of a solitary good, may pose a problem. For if to welcome a state of affairs entails that that state of affairs obtains, then welcoming the more complex state of affairs is logically impossible. Furthermore, if to welcome a state of affairs entails that one believes that that state of affairs obtains, then the pertinent belief regarding the more complex state of affairs would be necessarily false. (From the SEP entry on [Intrinsic and Extrinsic Value](#))

Hybrid Account

- Not circular if it is not an analysis
- Not circular if the sense of 'good' and 'right' are different (i.e. good_1 may be analyzable in terms of right_2 , and right_1 may be analyzable in terms of good_2)