15.1

Carlson notes that there are two different formulations that Moore gives in regard to what constitutes an *organic whole*. The phrase 'organic whole' is meant "to denote the fact that a whole has an intrinsic value different in amount from the sum of the values of its parts" (Moore 1903: 36). The question of how *parts* and *wholes* are related is a technical one. The following list, taken from the SEP entry on Mereology, is but a small sampling of some of the various complexities.

> Broadly speaking, in English we can use 'part' to indicate any portion of a given entity. The portion may itself be attached to the remainder, as in (1), or detached, as in (2); it may be cognitively or functionally salient, as in (1)–(2), or arbitrarily demarcated, as in (3); self-connected, as in (1)–(3), or disconnected, as in (4); homogeneous or otherwise well-matched, as in (1)–(4), or gerrymandered, as in (5); material, as in (1)–(5), or immaterial, as in (6); extended, as in (1)–(6), or unextended, as in (7); spatial, as in (1)–(7), or temporal, as in (8); and so on.

(1) The handle is part of the mug.
(2) The remote control is part of the stereo system.
(3) The left half is your part of the cake.
(4) The cutlery is part of the tableware.
(5) The contents of this bag is only part of what I bought.
(6) That area is part of the living room.
(7) The outermost points are part of the perimeter.
(8) The first act was the best part of the play.

In regards to Moore, Carlson lists the following restrictions on how the Moorean view of organic wholes should be understood. First, 'part' should be understood as *proper part*. Second, a whole must have at least one proper part which is itself a bearer of positive / negative / neutral intrinsic value. Third, a formal method can be used to represent the 'concatenated' value bearers. Let $a \circ b$ denote a complex value bearer, having *a* and *b* as parts. Fourth, Moore is not claiming that simply summing every possible combination of the proper parts of a whole entails an organic unity.

This fourth restriction, however, is a bit ambiguous given the fist quote from Moore. Two possible interpretations are available:

> **Nonproportional Definition of Organic Unity**: According to the first quote, a whole is organic iff its value is not proportional to the sum of the value of its parts.

> **Nonidentity Definition of Organic Unity**: According to the second quote, a whole is organic iff its value is not identical to the sum of the value of its parts. (pg 287)

It should be noted that the nonproportional definition entails the nonidentity definition, but not the other way round. If two things have no mathematically proportional relationship, then they cannot be identical; if they were identical then a proportion would hold (namely, 1:1). But, just because two things are not identical does not mean that there is necessarily no proportional relationship between them; 1 and 2 are not identical but there is a proportional relationship that exists between them (namely, 1:2).

Which better captures Moore's intentions? Carlson doubts that the nonidentity definition is consistent with the following quote:

> It follows from [the principle of organic unities] that, though in order to obtain the greatest possible sum of values in its parts, the Ideal [i.e., the best state of things conceivable] would necessarily contain all the things which have intrinsic value in any degree, yet the whole which contained all these parts might not be so valuable as some other whole, from which certain positive goods were omitted. (Moore 1903: 184)

In other words, the nonidentity definition cannot make sense of a whole being improved by the removal of a good part. On the nonidentity definition, the value of the whole should be reduced by the removal of a part (even if the value of the whole is still greater than the remaining parts). Carlson notes this appears to give rise to a possible contradiction.

> "First, he claims that if the value of a whole is very much greater than the sum of the values of its parts, this whole is an organic unity. Second, he claims that if a whole is an organic unity, it is not necessarily made better by the addition of a good part. The mutual inconsistency of these claims can be seen by assuming, again, an axiological principle to the effect that the value of any possible whole is a million times the sum of the values of its parts. Given this principle, Moore's first claim implies, for any given whole, that it is an organic unity, while his second claim implies that it is not.**"** (pg 288)

The fundamental problem here is that Moore's claims require value to be measured on a ratio scale. The normal examples of ratio scales do not admit of a 'whole' being more valuable than its 'parts'. For example, the 'value' (i.e. mass) of two 50lb dumbbells is just their combined mass. Such an understanding of ratio scales (made formal in the paper) would result in there

being no organic wholes (since neither definition could be satisfied), or his definitions just make no sense.

There are independent reasons to conclude they make no sense. Given that Carlson takes Moore's position to require monotonicity, but there are many who have rejected it. Chisholm claims that "other things being equal, it is better to combine two dissimilar goods than to combine two similar goods" (Chisholm 1986: 70–71). Additionally, associativity and commutativity are also subject to counterexamples (allowing for temporal or causal relations). If A is a less good thing than B, then A preceding B seems better than B preceding A. This violates commutativity. To violate associativity we are told, as an example, that 'simultaneously contemplating a painting, a, and a piece of music b, and later contemplating another piece of music, c, may be intrinsically better than simultaneously contemplating b and c, and then contemplating a.' (pg 289)

15.2

Perhaps intrinsic value is not subject to additive measurement. While this is a live issue in the contemporary axiology literature it is not Moore's position. The aforementioned quotes from Moore invoke mathematical phrases such as 'difference', and 'summing' in a way that undermine this as a possible interpretation of Moore.

15.3

Despite Moore's failing, the idea of organic wholes has persisted. After surveying a handful of them, Carlson extracts various possible criteria by which something can be said to be an organic whole. Those four criteria are:

1. Associativity or commutativity is false.
2. Monotonicity is false.
3. The value ordering of S○ is not a function only of the value ordering of S, the ordering of the value differences in S, and the respective value status of the members of S.
4. A whole can be good (bad) although it has no good (bad) proper part. (pgs 292 - 293)

After establishing that the first three criteria are logically independent of one another, Carlson claims that the independence of the fourth depends on 'monadic value properties of goodness, badness, and neutrality…and dyadic betterness relation on.' To satisfy the first three criteria, is to have established something as organic. Satisfying the fourth, however, appears to Carlson, sufficient for organicity. A question remains, however, as to whether any of these criteria are themselves *necessary* for organicity.

15.4

A fifth criterion for organicity exists too.

5. The value of a part may depend on its relations to other parts of the whole. (pg 294)

Such a criterion presupposes the view of *nonintrinsicalism* which is the view that a thing's final value may supervene partly on its extrinsic properties. Such a condition is not necessary for organicity, nor, according to Carlson, is it very plausible to think it is sufficient. Afterall, there are cases where the value of a thing is not different than the parts of that thing summed up (since some of the parts would seem to include those extrinsic to the thing). If they are supposed to be part of the whole, Carlson does not see why. The nonintrinsicalist owes use an explanation both of why cases like DaVinci's pen are wholes, and how to decide which kind of context dependence are relevant (pg 294 - 295)

15.5

Many do think that organic wholes exist. The Mona Lisa, for example, is finally valuable, whereas its left half is not. Such a claim, however, may be resisted if the left half is not a proper part that bears value. The paper closes with a brief discussion of Michael Zimmerman's rejection of organic wholes.

> "The state a = Alf is pleased at Beth's pain is, on this view, intrinsically bad, although it contains an intrinsically good part, namely, b = Alf is pleased, and no intrinsically bad proper part. (That Beth is in pain is, arguably, not a part of a, since Alf 's belief that Beth is in pain may be false.) Zimmerman claims, however, that b is evaluatively inadequate, and that a, if it is indeed intrinsically bad, need not therefore be regarded as an organic unity." (pg 296)