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INSTRUMENTAL VALUES – STRONG AND WEAK

ABSTRACT. What does it mean that an object has instrumental value? While some writers seem to think it means that the object bears a value, and that instrumental value accordingly is a kind of value, other writers seem to think that the object is not a value bearer but is only what is conducive to something of value. Contrary to what is the general view among philosophers of value, I argue that if instrumental value is a kind of value, then it is a kind of extrinsic final value.

KEY WORDS: auxiliary value, extrinsic value, final value, instrumentality, intrinsic value, Korsgaard, Kagan, trope, usefulness, value bearer

1. Introduction

Normative philosophers have been keen to warn us of the perils of confusing what is of final value, i.e. what we value for its own sake, with what is of instrumental value. But it is far from obvious just what we should say about our judgements concerning instrumental values. Are they about a kind of *value*? Or are we merely talking about a certain way of *relating* to some final value? Here I will argue contrary to what seems to be the general idea among value philosophers, that the distinction between final values and instrumental values breaks down; if instrumental value is a kind of value, it is a kind of final extrinsic value.

The structure of this work is the following: Section 2 considers in greater detail the two above-mentioned ways of understanding 'instrumental value' – what I refer to as the strong and weak evaluative sense of 'instrumental value'. I then proceed to discuss in section 3 an example of an extrinsic value that has recently been suggested by Christine M. Korsgaard. Given certain assumptions, this example qualifies as an example of an instrumental value in the strong evaluative sense. The very notion of a final value that is *extrinsic*, which is what we would need if instrumental values were kind of final values is by no means obvious. Therefore, section 4 deals with a standard criticism of the idea. Section 5 examines some different ways of understanding the notion of an instrument, which leads me to qualify further my thesis. I make clear that the focus of my discussion is the value of concrete intentionally used

Ethical Theory and Moral Practice **5**: 23–43, 2002.

objects. Section 6 contains a discussion of an example in which a strong instrumental value accrues to an object in virtue of the symbolic function of this object.

One important obstacle to the claim that instrumental value is a kind of final value, is the wide-spread idea that only facts (states of affairs that obtain, or some other similar entity) but not concrete things can be the kind of objects to which final value accrues. Recently I have together with Wlodek Rabinowicz (1999) defended a pluralistic approach to value analysis that obviates the need for reducing final value of things and persons to final values of facts and states of affairs. In section 7, I refer briefly to an argument against reducing the value of things to the value of the fact that this thing exists. This section also introduces a new reductionist approach, viz., that final value accrues to *instantiations of properties*. This approach is interesting because it is not threatened by the earlier mentioned anti-reductionist argument. Moreover, if this new suggestion were correct, then instruments would after all not be bearers of final value. Section 8 discusses some aspects of such instantiations of properties, notably whether they are concrete or abstract particulars. Setting aside the general question whether such instantiations can be value bearers, I give two reasons in section 9 for why they at least cannot be bearers of strong instrumental value. Finally, I sum up in section 10.

2. Strong and Weak Evaluative Sense

Standard suggestions – such as '*x* is an instrumental value' means '*x* is conducive to something that has final value' – are not very helpful, if we want to find out just what the speaker means by 'instrumental value'. Such suggestions tend to leave us in the dark with regard to whether *x* is a bearer of something that belongs to the category of value or whether *x* merely is somehow related to something belonging to this category. In other words, to say of an *x* that it is an *instrumental y*, does not yet determine whether *x* is a *kind of y* or not. What happens here is something that seems to occur with many expressions that are employed to qualify something. Just as 'quicksilver' does not refer to a kind of silver, 'instrumental value' may not refer to a kind of value.

In the literature it is possible to detect at least two distinct usages of 'instrumental value'. To begin with, there is what I will refer to as the **S**trong evaluative sense:

> **S**: '*x* has instrumental value' means '*x* bears a (certain particular) value, and it bears this value only if *x* is conducive to (the existence of something that has) a final value'.[1]

The second conjunct of the definiens is open to more than one interpretation. But at this stage I will for simplicity's sake, side-step these complications. **S**, then, should not be confused with what I will be referring to as instrumental value in the **W**eak evaluative sense.

> **W**: '*x* has instrumental value' means '*x* is conducive to (the existence of something that has) a final value'.

Thus, I will say that when the expression 'instrumental value' is *not* used in the **S**-sense but is understood in the **W**-sense, then the expression has **W**eak evaluative sense.

In contrast to strong instrumental values, weak instrumental values do not belong to the category of value. But, it might be suggested, isn't that which leads to something of final value a good example of something that has a kind of value, namely the kind of value that accrues to objects that lead to what is of final value? However, this suggestion seems to set out from the idea that 'being valuable' is somehow part of the meaning of 'being conducive to value'. But that is surely a mistake. Notice that all that the definiens says is merely that *x* is conducive to what is of value. And there is no reason why 'being valuable' somehow would logically follow from the meaning of 'being conducive to value'. To conclude that what is conducive to value thereby must be of value is to commit what we may dub the *value-by association* mistake (see also the discussion at the end of section 6).

W-judgements, i.e., judgements that ascribe instrumental value in the weak evaluative sense, are (proper) value-judgements. However it must

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[1]Compare George Dickie's way of expressing the traditional distinction between intrinsic and instrumental goodness: "Philosophers distinguish between intrinsic goodness, which is good all by itself (independent of its relation to anything else), and instrumental goodness, *which is the goodness that something has* because it is a means to something else which is good" (1979, p. 157, my italics). Here it does seem as if Dickie assumes that there are at least two kinds of goodness: intrinsic and instrumental goodness. See also Allen (1993, p. 59), who thinks that the instrumental value of objects is 'realised' when we use these objects. Cf. Robert Nozick's claim "[. . .] there is something's originative value which is a function of the value it newly introduces into the world, the new instrumental or intrinsic value it introduces that was not presaged by or already fully counted in previous instrumental value" (1981, p. 311).

be noticed that what makes the judgement '*x* has instrumental value (in the weak sense)' evaluative, is not that such judgements ascribe a value to its subject, '*x*'. Their evaluative character derives from the fact that they are in part about final values.

That there is a **W-**usage of 'instrumental value' would not, I take it, be contested. But this kind of usage does not, in my opinion, capture the really interesting cases of what we refer to as instrumental value.[2] The question is, does **S**? The fact that there are numerous examples in the literature that suggest something in the direction of **S** (see n.1), does not mean that these examples eventually should not be understood in terms of the **W**-usage (in fact I believe that many of these examples of 'strong instrumental values' merely reflect that the writers have not given the distinction any thought). In part, the answer to the question above must at least depend on whether we can find some plausible examples of strong instrumental values that cannot be explained away in one way or another. Let us therefore consider at the outset a possible example of an instrumental value in the strong sense.

3. Korsgaard's Mink Coat

The following passage from Christine M. Korsgaard contains, in my opinion, some fitting candidates for the label 'Strong instrumental value':

> Mink coats and handsome china and gorgeously enamelled frying pans are all things that human beings might choose partly for their own sakes under the condition of their instrumentality: that is, given the role such things play in our lives. (1983. Quote is from Korsgaard 1996, p. 264).[3]

She also claims that such luxurious things are valued for their own sakes "under the condition of their *usefulness*" (my italics). Korsgaard's examples are indeed interesting. However, here I will be so bold as to put aside

[2]The distinction between **S** and **W** is relevant for the question whether instrumental values are, following Jarvis Thompson (1992, p. 103), derivative values; an *x* has a derivative value if *x* has inherited its value from some other valuable object. If the **W**-usage is the only one, it is obvious that if an *x* is said to have instrumental value, *x* has not inherited anything, since *x* is not a value bearer at all. At the end I will given an example of strong instrumental values that appear to be derivative. Whether strong instrumental value also could be non-derivative, is something that I am at the moment unclear about.

[3]Cf. Kagan (1998, pp. 283, 284). See also O-Neill (1992, p. 125).

questions of how she is best interpreted.[4] I will use the example of the mink coat for my own purpose, since I am inclined to regard it as an example of what I consider as a strong instrumental value. Later on I will discuss yet another example that I am also prone to regard as an example of a strong instrumental value.

It is precisely the fact that the mink coat is valued for its own sake under the condition of its instrumentality or usefulness that suggests that the mink coat is a strong candidate for the label 'bearer of strong instrumental value'; its value supervenes on the object's instrumentality Moreover, I will presume that instrumentality should be understood in terms of the more common notion of weak instrumental value (see note 4).

4. A Standard Reply

The final value that accrues to the mink coat does so in part because of some relational property (for instance that it keeps the owner warm). However, the very idea that there could be a *final* value that is *extrinsic* is alien to many philosophers of value. G. E. Moore, for instance, did not recognise such extrinsic final values. As is well known, Moore's position in *Principia Ethica* was that goodness is simple and undefinable, in the way for instance that a colour would be simple and undefinable. Moreover, he explains that there are only two alternative views of goodness, namely that

[4]The fact that she says that we choose mink coats "*partly*" for their own sake under the condition of their *instrumentality*, complicates matters in two ways. Dan Egonsson, for instance, has in personal communication pointed out that this phrase might suggest that we also choose these things *not* under the condition of their usefulness; sometimes we would choose them for their intrinsic properties. On the other hand, as Wlodek Rabinowicz has suggested, her point seems rather to be that we also sometimes choose these things purely as means and *not* "for their own sakes under the condition of their instrumentality". Secondly, should we, in terms of the present work, regard for instance the usefulness she is referring to as a strong or weak instrumental value? Korsgaard refers to instruments as *having* a goodness (1996, see e.g. p. 251) which does sound as if she is treating the instrument as a bearer of a value – what I have called strong instrumental value. However, later on she makes it clear that instruments have only conditional value unless the "conditions of their goodness are met," in which case they can be "good objectively" (see e.g. Korsgaard, 1996, p. 258). Cf. with the discussion here, in section 4. In Rabinowicz and Rønnow-Rasmussen (1999) it becomes clear in which way our position is different from the views of Korsgaard, Kagan and O'Neill. We also discuss in detail how Kagan's position is similar to our approach.

goodness is something complex, or that the term 'good' does not refer to anything and in that case would mean nothing. Moore speaks here about goodness in general terms. Of course, later on it becomes clear that the goodness he is talking about here is *intrinsic* goodness – i.e. what we value for its own sake on the basis of an object's *internal* properties. But already at this point it seems to be assumed that goodness does not come in two forms, namely as intrinsic and instrumental value. Rather, he stresses that moral judgements *refer* to this intrinsic goodness in different ways: We say that the goodness attaches to a thing or we say that "the thing in question is a cause or necessary condition for the existence of other things to which this unique property does attach" (1993, p. 73). Whereas the former is, Moore says, what we mean by "good in itself", the latter is what we refer to when we say that something is a "value as a means". When we judge something as being "good as a means" we make a judgement regarding a thing's causal relation: "we judge both that it will have a particular kind of effect, and that the effect will be good in itself". Here Moore has in mind what I referred to as **W**-judgements, i.e. judgements about something being conducive to (the existence of something that has) a final value.

Recently I have argued together with Rabinowicz (1999) that, contrary to Moore and others, final values are in fact of two kinds: on the one hand, they can be what has traditionally been referred to as intrinsic, i.e., they depend or supervene on the object's internal properties. On the other hand, we have extrinsic final values; this kind of value supervenes at least in part on some relational property of the object. In other words, whether a final value is intrinsic or extrinsic is something that is determined by the nature of the good-making properties on which this value supervenes. If these properties are internal to the object, it is an intrinsic value, and if they are *externally* relational properties, the final value is extrinsic. Moreover, as I understand the term, some internal properties will be internally relational; these are the properties that an object possesses in virtue of the relations it has to its own *parts* (components, elements, constituents, etc.). Later on, in section 7, I will have occasion to return to this discussion. For the time being, it is sufficient to underline one aspect of the pluralistic approach to value analysis that Rabinowicz and I argued for, viz., that it obviates the need for reducing the final value of things and persons to the final value of facts about things and persons. This aspect, together with the idea that there can be final values that are extrinsic, makes the approach especially suitable when it comes to the analyses of strong instrumental values.

It should be pointed out that Moore did not deny that something could have intrinsic value as well as instrumental value. However, he would have denied that we could have something such as a strong instrumental value.[5] A reply to the alleged value of the mink coat might therefore be to try to analyse it as an example of something having intrinsic as well as instrumental value. Of course, the mink coat could have an intrinsic value, i.e., a value that supervenes only on the object's internal properties. It was perhaps the colour or texture of the fur that was valued for its own sake. Still, such an analysis seems to miss what Korsgaard's example is all about, viz., that we somehow value the mink coat for its own sake "under the condition of its instrumentality".

5. Is Instrumentality a Relational Property?

When we describe some object *x* as being useful (in the weak sense), we may have in mind an object that *de facto* contributes to the existence of some other object of final value. On the other hand, we might have in mind something else, viz., that an object *x* that, although it is not being employed and therefore does not contribute to something of final value, *y*, has a potentiality for such employment and thus is conducive to final value in this potential sense (A shoe of the right sort, for instance, may well be used as a hammer, and may be therefore have a potential value even if you do not use it to hammer nails). There seems to be a frequent, what we might call, *ex ante facto* usage of 'instrumental value': Thus, we often make explicit notice that what in the past had instrumental value still *goes on* having value, whether or not we in fact are employing the instrument with success. And we do compare different objects of value with regard to how effectively they could lead to some final value (there are situations, some would for instance say, when being deceitful is better than being trustworthy). Moreover, we frequently describe objects as having value just be-

[5]See also Rashdall, (1924, p. 97): "From this non-hedonistic point of view we can no longer recognize an absolute distinction between means and ends. Some means may no doubt have no value beyond that of conducing to a further end; but many, nay, most, of the acts which do conduce to further ends have a value (positive or negative) of their own; and this value must be taken into account in estimating the rightness or wrongness of the acts." The idea that what is good may also have another value, say, be bad is an old one. Plato discusses it in the Protagoras, where it is asked whether pleasure may be extrinsically bad and yet also be intrinsically good.

cause some person is somehow *using* this object in some way, and we do so clearly in advance of knowing anything about the resulting effects of using this object.

But such *ex ante* usage appears to create a problem for anyone who wants to argue that instrumental value is a kind of extrinsic value, i.e., a value that supervenes on some externally relational property. The reason is that in these cases there appears to be no actual relation between x and y but only a potential one. Therefore, it might be denied that properties such as 'instrumentality' or 'usefulness' actually refer to externally relational properties in those cases.

Still, the *ex ante* usage need not be inconsistent with the idea that 'instrumentality' or 'usefulness' are relational properties. There is more than one way of analysing such *ex ante* judgements. The mink coat, for instance, need not stand in a *direct* relation to some object of final value in order to be of instrumental value. When we claim that the mink coat has instrumental value, we seem to be implying (among other things) that if the situation had changed, the mink coat might in fact lose its instrumentality (say, the owner became allergic to fur). This suggests that there is in fact some relational property involved. Let me mention only one example that at first sight might seem far-fetched but which I actually believe accounts for many cases: Suppose the mink coat was the object of my intentional plan to use it to achieve some final value, say, the plan to achieve the respect (or envy) of others by showing them that you are a person who can afford this expensive fur coat. An object that has entered into an agent's plan obviously has a relational property that another object with identical intrinsic properties need not have.

Someone might actually want to go a step further and demand that we should only speak of objects as instruments, when they have been successfully employed to accomplish something of final value. But this is surely an excessive demand – and not only because it runs counter to how we actually speak about instrumental values (Cf. Lewis, 1969, p. 34). It is plainly odd to make the answer as to whether something is an instrument or not depend on whether it actually succeeded in bringing about what it was used for. Something might for instance be conducive to a final value by *facilitating* the achievement of the final value. There seems to be little point in delineating the notion of 'instrument' in such a narrow way that something would not be an instrument just because I choose not to be facilitated by it.

Above I remarked that an object of instrumental value is an object that is somehow *employed* or *used* by a person. This raises the question whether

we should confine 'instrumental values' to objects that are intentionally employed[6] or whether objects that merely happen to be conducive to intrinsic or final value also should be said to have instrumental value. This question raises, I think, in part a terminological issue that nevertheless is of importance. It seems appropriate to say that bearers of instrumental values, since they are employed to cause something, are concrete and not abstract entities.[7] But I do not want thereby to exclude other kinds of extrinsic value that show affinity with instrumental values; things of such kind of value may be conducive to some final value, but nevertheless not be employed for that purpose. Suppose I want to throw a stone at someone who I believe is threatening someone else. The stone would be a strong candidate for having instrumental value. But suppose further that I miss my target and that I instead hit, say, a brick that falls down on the head of the aggressor. *Ex hypothesi* I did not intend to use the brick, but nevertheless it achieved what I was hoping the stone would achieve, namely to stop the aggressor. Obviously, if we want to retain the term 'instrumental value' for objects that we employ intentionally, we cannot refer to the brick as having such a value. Still an axiology ought to be able to account for what happened here in terms of some kind of value. That is, the brick should be regarded as being valuable in some other sense (at the time I threw the stone, it had, say, potential value). However, in what follows I suggest we confine the term 'instrumental value' to objects that are employed for the purpose of achieving some final value. This point seems to catch an im-

[6]There are, of course, many different ways something can be 'employed' in the sense relevant to the present issue. For instance, consider money. If I use money to help someone who is starving, the money has at least a weak instrumental value; the money may lead to an increase in, say, wellbeing and will as such be of weak instrumental value. However, from an Aristotelian perspective, the money also enables me to exercise my, say, generosity. Should we say that in this case too the person is *employing* the money? Or take another example. I am normally not conscious of my breathing. Should we say that I nevertheless am employing the air? Or consider something such as ability, as. e.g. the ability to read. In which sense are we employing this 'ability' when we read? These are all relevant questions that need to be answered eventually. However, it would take me too far astray from what is the main argument to address them in this paper.

[7]However, I do not deny that 'instrumental value' often is used differently. See for instance Chisholm (1981, p. 99. my italics). "If a state of affairs is intrinsically good, then it is intrinsically good in every possible world in which it obtains (or is true). *But a state of affairs that is instrumentally good* need not be instrumentally good in every possible world in which it obtains (or is true)". See also Zimmerman (2001a).

portant facet of what we ordinarily mean by '*instrumental* value'.[8] We could then use the phrase 'auxiliary values'[9] to refer to objects and other entities (facts, states, or what have you) that are conducive to final value without being employed for that purpose.

6. A Different Example of Strong Instrumental Value

As mentioned at the outset, I think Korsgaard and Kagan have already given examples of what I call strong instrumental values. But it is likely that there are other kinds of such valuable instruments. Let me therefore next present a different kind of example in which an object has strong instrumental value in virtue of the symbolic function of the object.

To illustrate this *symbolic* nature of some strong instrumental values, consider a variant of the 'stone' example: As before, a person *a* decides to throw a stone at person *b* who he thinks is about to act violently towards an innocent person. But suppose now that *a* can throw either of two stones; stone *x* differs in one important respect from stone *y*: *x* but not *y* has on a number of occasions been used by the aggressor *b* to harm people. *a* might justify his choice of *x* by ascribing a value to *x* that *y* does not have. Saying that *x* has instrumental value in the weak sense would not do the justificatory job, since both *x* and *y* are, shall we say, equally efficient as means; both would stop the aggressor.

It may be objected that this is not the most plausible reading of the example. Why not simply say that choosing to throw stone *x* rather than stone *y*, satisfies *a*'s desire for retributive justice? Given that this is the case, the stone will have merely weak instrumental value – which in effect means that the stone is not a bearer of any value at all. The stone only relates to something of value, namely that justice be done.

This is a fair worry. But suppose *a* denies that there is a relevant difference here between *x* and *y*; both stones achieve justice. This does not seem an unreasonable position to take. I imagine *a* could still value *x* in a way he does not value *y*. He could, that is, value *x* in part on the grounds that *x*

[8]Should we require that the subject intentionally employs such an object as a means towards a *specific* final value? Or is it sufficient that he is (or believes that he would in the right circumstance be) intentionally employing it for a purpose the precise nature of which might be unclear to the subject? Since I take it that most people seldom have a clear idea of what they consider to be of final value, the latter alternative seems to be preferable.

[9]I owe the expression 'auxiliary values' to Michael Zimmerman (personal communication).

by having the relational properties it has (its special history) is valuable for its own sake but only if it is an effective means to stopping the aggressor. *a* would stress that the final value of *x* will to a considerable part depend on the stone being an instrument to justice. If the stone would not be a means to stopping the aggressor – if it was perhaps too small – then there would in fact be no strong instrumental value accruing to the stone. Perhaps it would preserve its symbolic value even if it had no weak instrumental value. Be that as it may, it is when we combine its symbolic value with its weak instrumental value that it becomes feasible to value it for its own sake under the condition of it being an effective means to stopping the aggressor.[10]

The objection that the stone example is just another example where we have mixed up final value with weak instrumental value therefore seems to me unconvincing. Moreover, to argue that we need not strip the stone of all value, since we can claim that the stone has both intrinsic final value and is of a weak instrumental value does seem to be distorting the example. The stone in itself has no *intrinsic* value.

The value that the stone has is not a value that supervenes on its intrinsic properties, nor is the stone having merely weak instrumental value,[11] nor does the value of the stone supervene *merely* on another of its relational properties, viz., that it is the stone that has been used by the aggressor. It is a substantial issue what the 'good-making properties' are in a particular case. But in the case of the stone I at least venture that what makes it valuable is a conglomerate of properties that contains, beside the previously mentioned ones, the relational property of being the stone that is the object of a subject's intentional plan of stopping the aggressor.

But isn't it strange that the stone *x* gets its value from being part of the plan to use it? Intuitively, one would say that the agent decides to use it just because the stone is good. But no! The decision to use it is rather motivated by a belief that the stone would be valuable if used for that purpose.[12]

The example of the stone brings to the surface what is implicit in the mink coat example, viz., that the fact that the object is an efficient means to some object of final value, is not what renders this an object of final

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[10]Just how symbolic value should be analyzed in detail is a complicated matter. In the stone example I am inclined to think that the symbolic value involved supervenes on the properties of the stone that relate to it's past (that it was thrown by the aggressor), rather than to its (potential) role as an instrument to achieve something.

[11]Or in the case that it has not been actually used, the property of being the object of the subject's plan to use it as, say, a causally efficient object.

[12]I owe this observation to Wlodek Rabinowicz.

value. Being useful is merely a necessary precondition of the mink coat's final value. The coat must have some other property too. Korsgaard's suggestion is that it is the property of being a luxurious object. But just how we should understand this is not clear. Is it an intrinsic property or is it maybe another relational property that has nothing to do with it being a useful object?

At this stage it might be replied that what is a condition for something being of value must also be of value. So if an object is valuable because it has certain properties, then these properties must also be valuable. But this is a non-sequitur, actually a version of the *value-by association* mistake: it is at least not logically *necessary* for the condition of the valuable to be valuable itself, either intrinsically or extrinsically. A property that is 'good-making' need not, in other words, be of value to be 'good-making'.[13]

7. A Pluralistic Approach to the Analysis of 'Value Bearers'

There is nothing strange about saying that value accrues to things and persons, i.e., that somehow concrete particulars can be value bearers. Further reflection, however, may force us to say that on the last analysis it is in effect something else that bears value. In other words, statements to the effect that some *thing, x,* bears some value *V* should perhaps be *reduced* to statements that it is something other than *x* that is the bearer of *V.* It should be noticed that reductionism can be understood in at least two ways. When it is, for instance, argued that thing-value reduces to the value of something else, say, the value of some fact, *eliminative* reductionism denies that

[13]See Nozick (1981, p. 521) where I suspect he says something to the contrary (contrast Hare, 1987). See also the comment on Korsgaard (1996, p. 259) in Rabinowicz and Rønnow-Rasmussen (1999), in which we question Korsgaard's suggestion that the regress on the conditions of conditional goodness must sooner or later lead us to something that is unconditionally good. Werkmeister (1970) ascribes the following view to Meinong: "Let us assume that we value a certain O; and let us assume furthermore, that we believe some C to be a necessary condition for the occurrence of O; then, as a matter of actual fact, we may, but (for various reasons) need not necessarily, value C". The point expressed here seems to me to be a trivial one, and should not be confused with the one I think can be made against Nozick, viz., that conditions or even "constituters" of final values are not, at least not logically, necessarily valuable. Werkmeister continues: "However, if the relationship of C to O is as assumed, and if our valuing of O is justified, then our valuing of C is also justified, and our indifference to it, or our negative valuation of it, is not justified" (1970, p. 69). This latter part will however be open to the same objection that was raised with regard to Nozick's view.

what is being reduced exists – there is no value that accrues to the thing; the only value there is is 'fact'-value. However, according to a milder, non-eliminative version while thing value is indeed something that exists, such thing value is nevertheless nothing other than, say, fact value. Henceforth it is the eliminative version of reductionism that I have in mind when I speak of reductionism.

Part of my work with Rabinowicz (1999) was aimed at showing that facts are at least not the *only* value bearers; final extrinsic value may well accrue to such spatio-temporal objects as individual physical things and persons. Let me here merely repeat in brief *one* of our reasons for arguing against reducing 'thing and person value' to the value of the fact that these things exist. For a more comprehensive treatment of this matter I refer the reader to the above-mentioned work.

Take the case of a dress that has belonged to Princess Diana; this dress might accordingly have an extrinsic final value, i.e. it is at least imaginable that, by someone, it might be valued for its own sake in virtue of the relational property of having belonged to Diana. But the reductionist reduces the final *extrinsic* value of this dress to the final *intrinsic* value of the fact, say, that *this dress which has belonged to Diana, exists*. The value now becomes, on the reductionist account, intrinsic; what is valued for its own sake is not the dress but some fact (or state) that contains as a constitutive part the external relational property.

One reason why this particular reductionist manoeuvre is not convincing is the following: it places the cart before the horse; the reason why it is valuable *that* this dress exists (and we need not deny that facts have derivative value) is surely that the very dress is valuable. It is valuable that this dress exists, but the value of this fact derives from the dress. The reductionist will insist that if we value the dress we do so only derivatively because what we actually non-derivatively value is that there exist dresses with this relation to Diana. Again, this is to start at the wrong end. The relational property of being Diana's dress is a good-making property of the dress. And so, what is of value is the dress, and not the fact *that* this dress which has been Diana's exists.

However, there are other candidates to consider beside facts and concrete objects. In this context it is interesting to examine another reductionist suggestion that was not considered in Rabinowicz and Rønnow-Rasmussen (1999). Perhaps it is *a's employing the stone with this particular pre-history for some particular finally valuable purpose* that has value – where *a's employing the stone. . .*should be regarded as an ontological entity of its own (which should not be confused with, say, a propositional entity such as the fact that *a is employing a stone*). *a's employing the stone* is an ex-

ample of the instantiation of a property that occurs at a specific place and at a specific time. Such instantiation is by some metaphysicians regarded as an irreducible ontological entity *sui generis* –what nowadays is being referred to as a 'trope' (following Williams, 1953). In contrast to properties (universalia) tropes are particulars. Thus, *a*'s throwing a stone at *t1* and *b*'s throwing a stone at *t1* are two tropes. There are, in other words, two particular entities involved in the two cases (viz., a '*a*'s throwing a stone at t1' and a '*b*'s throwing a stone at t1'). Moreover, contrary to concrete individual things (e.g. people), these particular entities are regarded as abstract particulars (I will discuss the concrete-abstract division in section 8).

The suggestion that thing and person value might be reduced to trope value is interesting in that such a reduction is not open to the 'cart before the horse' argument: the value accruing to *a's having property P* is for obvious reasons not accountable in terms of the value that accrues to *a*. Moreover, if this reduction works, then a concrete instrument cannot be a bearer of final value, and accordingly, the central thesis of this paper is false. However, the question whether this new reduction proposal is at all plausible is too complex an issue to be dealt with in this work.[14] I will confine myself to a narrower question: is the reduction of *strong instrumental value* to trope value plausible? I will argue in a moment that it is not; tropes are for two reasons unfit to be bearers of this particular kind of value. But, since trope theory is not common ground to philosophers of value in general, it will be wise in the meantime to mention some further aspects of tropes.

8. Abstract and Concrete Particular

Trope theorists diverge when it comes to what else there is besides tropes. The project (a difficult one, to say the least)[15] of showing that no other entities exist apart from tropes – what we might refer to as the nominalist[16] version of trope theory – is not the only alternative that exists for

[14]See here Rabinowicz and Rønnow-Rasmussen (2001) in which we examine this new reduction proposal in detail.

[15]See for instance Stjernberg (2001, forthcoming) in which it is argued that Williams and Campbell's "trope theory does not deliver the promised gains in simplicity".

[16]It would not be classical nominalism but given its denial of universalia and its insistence that there is only one fundamental ontologic category, viz. particular tropes, it is surely some sort of nominalism (contrast Campbell, 1990, p. 27).

the tropist metaphysician; he may regard tropes as something we should add to our more common categories such as properties, relations, substances (to mention only a few). Now, Campbell (1990) has suggested that tropes are possible value bearers.[17] However, even if we were ready to add tropes to our list of ontological categories, there are still problems connected with the idea that value accrues to tropes. As suggested earlier, a condition for being a strong instrumental value bearer is that the object not only is a particular but that it is a *concrete* particular. Are then tropes concrete or abstract particulars?

Just how we should distinguish between the abstract and the concrete is a vexed matter. Recently Michael Zimmerman has addressed the 'concrete/abstract' division:

> It's been suggested, for instance that abstract entities exist necessarily, whereas concrete entities exist only contingently. This is problematic, since God is often taken to be a necessarily existing concrete entity, while sets of contingently existing objects are often taken to be contingently existing abstract entities. It's also been suggested that concrete entities have spatio-temporal location, whereas abstract entities do not. But this is again problematic, since individual souls are often taken to be concrete entities that do not occupy space, while times and places are often taken to have no spatio-temporal location themselves; and again, God is often taken to be a concrete entity that lacks spatio-temporal location. Another suggestion is that abstract entities can have instances, whereas concrete entities cannot. But this too is problematic, since sets are often taken to abstract yet incapable of being instantiated, something which is also plausibly thought to be true of 'impossible' properties (such as the property of being a square circle).[18]

Zimmerman does not claim to solve the issue but proceeds on the assumption that

> [A]ll abstract entities (except sets, if they exist) exist necessarily, whereas no concrete entity (except God, if he exists, and states of God) does, that only abstract entities are instantiable, and that only concrete entities can have spatio-temporal location (loc. cit.).

So where do tropes fit in? Take the claim that (i) abstract entities exist necessarily. To understand this claim we have to be aware of an idea that I think underlies it, viz., the idea that there is a conceptual distinction between the existence of an (abstract) entity and its instantiation or obtaining. Consider for instance properties, say, the property of being a mermaid. On this (platonic) account this property (*universalie*) exists necessarily but

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[17]Campbell does not however give us any weighty reasons for why tropes are appropriate replacements for thing value.

[18]Zimmerman (2001a, chapter 3).

in this world it happens to be the case that there is no such property instantiated. Should we consider tropes as entities that exist necessarily?

Modern trope theory developed as an attempt to throw light on our notion of a property. It might therefore be thought that if the latter was considered as having necessary existence, so should tropes. But it is in fact hard to detect anything that speaks in favour of this suggestion. The distinction between something existing and something being instantiated is not one that I believe is applicable to tropes. While properties (*qua* universalia) are the kind of entities that get instantiated, tropes are not. Given this we cannot make use of *this* distinction in order to explain why tropes would exist necessarily. That tropes are not necessary is pretty obvious: My beard is black but who would deny that I could have had a red beard. However, tropes can be abstract in some other sense than 'entity existing but not obtaining'. I will return to such a possibility in a moment. Meanwhile, a word must be said about the possibility that tropes are concrete entities.

Recall that in Zimmerman's sense of 'concrete' it was (with some possible exceptions) only concrete particulars that have spatio-temporal location.[19] Are then all tropes spatio-localisable? If I am allowed a speculation it seems to me that at least some tropes, if they exist, are more easily located in space and time than other ones. My hair colour would be an example whereas my *pain* would not be just as easily positioned in space (Is it in my thumb? My brain?). And what should we say about dyadic tropes such as my relation to the truth that '2 + 2 = 4'.[20]

Actually there is a further approach to the abstract/concrete division, which I think is the one that catches the meaning of 'abstract/concrete'. Moreover, on this account there is no doubt that tropes are in fact abstract particulars. Donald C. Williams, in comparing different lollipops with each other, says:

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[19]Zimmerman's own view must be mentioned here (his recent book canvasses many issues with regard to values). He suggests that it is not properties, nor abstract facts but rather concrete *states of individuals* that are value bearers. See also Zimmerman, 2001b. For a detailed examination of whether value can be reduced to such *states of individuals*, see the forthcoming paper "Tropic of value" by Wlodek Rabinowicz and myself (2001, see also note 22, below).

[20]In Rønnox-Rasmussen (1998, pp. 293 and 294) I expressed doubts about using indexical terms such as 'here' and 'there' about phenomenal qualities. Today my doubts are less firm, at least when it comes to certain qualities.

> To borrow now an old but pretty appropriate term, a gross part, like the stick, is 'concrete', as the whole lollipop is, while a fine or diffuse part, like the colour component or shape component, is 'abstract'. The colour-cum-shape is less abstract or more concrete or more nearly concrete than the colour alone but it is more abstract or less concrete than colour-plus-shape-plus-flavor, and so on till we get to the total complex which is wholly concrete. (Williams, 1953).[21]

The main idea expressed here catches, I think, what we have in mind when we perform an act of abstraction; the colour of this lollipop, for instance, occurs together with other qualities of the lollipop, and what I do when I bring this quality before my mind is that I set aside other qualities of the lollipop. An act of abstraction is, as Campbell puts it, "an act of selective ignoring" (Campbell, 1990, p. 3). What trope theorists then do is to claim that the object of such an act of abstraction has existence. Williams and Campbell, for instance, also want to take the further step and say that tropes are located in the same place; for instance, the concrete lollipop is the totality of being where the colour, shape, etc. of the lollipop are. In other words the doctrine that two different things cannot be at the same place and at the same time is either false or inapplicable to *abstracta*. But as far as I can see there is no need to accept this latter claim even if we do regard abstract entities in the above way (i.e. as thin entities that constitute the building material of thick entities). Nor do we need to endorse, as far as I can see, another claim which is implicit in the above passage, viz., that things can be more or less concrete/abstract. An object might be thicker or thinner, more or less diffuse, and in that sense we may speak of an abstract entity getting closer to or further away from being concrete. But saying this in no way removes, as far as my intuition goes, the gap between the concrete and the abstract.

9. Against Reducing Thing Value to Trope Value

Tropes may well, as Campbell suggested, be examples of value bearers. Nevertheless, this does not mean that they are suitable to bear all kinds of

[21] Quote is from Mellor and Oliver (eds.) (1997, p. 113). Cf. Campbell (1990, pp. 2 and 3). See also Armstrong (1978). Armstrong discusses the case of a coloured cube (pp. 120–121). This, as he calls it, 'concrete' cube, he then compares with the tactual and the visual cubes which he refers to as abstract particulars. Moreover, notice that Armstrong does not endorse the trope theory. See also Zimmerman (2001a), p. 66, note 6, where he criticises Campbell's use of 'abstract' and 'concrete'.

value. Thus, what is important to note here is that they are especially unfit to be bearers of *instrumental* values. The instrumental value of, say, a hammer, does not accrue to *a* trope – it accrues to the *concrete* hammer. What has instrumental value is not, say, '*x*'s hardness' or '*x*'s being made of iron', nor is it some fact involving these tropes. I do not hammer any nails with facts; I use my hammer. Tropes, being abstract entities cannot do the job of bearers for instrumental values. For all that I know, the hammer may be nothing but a bundle of tropes (or, to use an expression from Campbell, a "conjunctive compresent complex" of tropes); it would still be the case that what had instrumental value was the hammer and not some or all the tropes of the bundle. Thus, what I submit is that to be an instrument the object has to be concrete. Notice, though, that I am not saying that tropes cannot be value bearers. I am merely making the point that reducing the value that accrues to an instrument to a value of a trope will not do.[22]

There is another side to the complaint above that tropes cannot take the role of instruments and therefore are unfit to be bearers of strong instrumental values. Assuming that to be valuable is to be a fitting object for some conative attitude (e.g., preferences, desires, wishes) and/or emotions (love, liking, admiration, respect) and/or in virtue of some thing-oriented-attitudes-cum-behaviours (e.g., protecting, caring), we may then ask whether the fitting response to what is of *strong instrumental value* is also a fitting response to tropes (or a bundle of tropes)? It does not seem difficult to detect a general discrepancy between what is on the one hand, a fitting response to thing and person values, and on the other, what is a fitting response to trope values. I may for instance admire and respect a person, but it seems nonsensical to say that one admires or respects a trope. Moreover, responses that seem fitting towards instruments, e.g., treasuring or protecting, do not seem to be appropriate when tropes are concerned. If this suggestion is correct, we have a further reason for resisting the temptation to reduce the value of an instrument to trope value.

[22]Zimmerman refers to 'his' states as concrete entities that have space/time occurrence. However, I find these states of individuals to be *bona fide* examples of abstract entities. Suppose I am right about this. In that case they are just as unfit as tropes to be bearers of *instrumental* values.

10. Derivative and Non-Derivative Strong Instrumental Values

In Rabinowicz and Rønnow-Rasmussen (1999) the focus was on final values of a non-instrumental sort. Here I have argued that among our final values there are also what I have referred to as strong instrumental values. Of course, as long as the characteristic features of this kind of value are recognised, whether we call them instrumental values or not is less important. Still, the choice of name is by no means arbitrary; the value that I have been talking about here is closely linked to something being an instrument.

If the analysis which I have presented here of strong instrumental value is correct, we have reason to reconsider two common claims about instrumental values, viz., that instrumental value-judgements outnumber judgements about final values, and that final values carry a clear normative precedence over instrumental values. Both of these claims should in light of what has been argued here be reassessed. With regard to the first claim we can only speculate. My guess is that judgements concerning strong instrumental values (e.g., one concerning, say, a pen that has belonged to a historical person) are much less frequent than judgements about weak instrumental values ("this knife will be useful to make thin slices. . .", "this screw will work in this kind of material"), but that they are more common than judgements about final values of a non-instrumental sort (I am less sure, though, regarding this last speculation). Moreover, if strong instrumental values are a kind of final values, the latter claim is no longer obviously correct. In one way this is quite in order. At least I have always thought that what philosophers have said about these instrumental values does not reflect well the importance that people in general tend to give to objects of instrumental value. The existence of strong instrumental values may in fact help us explain the great significance which people tend to attach to controversies regarding instrumental values: these controversies may not so much concern weak instrumental values as they concern a kind of extrinsic final values.

Should these strong instrumental values be regarded on a par with the rest of the final values? What tells against such an idea is that in contrast to other (but not necessarily all) final values, strong instrumental values do appear to be, in Thomson's words, *derivative* values. Thus, the value of the stone from the example above seems to derive from some other value. In this particular example, by doing to the aggressor what he himself has done we are reasonably trying to accomplish some balance; we are, it seems, trying to do what justice demands ('The aggressor deserves

to taste his own medicine' or 'An eye for an eye. . .'). The particular stone inherits, so it seems, a value from the outside. Still, this so-called inheritance relation is, as Thomson admits, a rough idea. And as long as it is not further specified, the claim that all instrumental values are derivative values will be but rough.[23]

Acknowledgements

Wlodek Rabinowicz has been a veritable fund of good ideas and tough objections during this work. I owe him a lot. I am also grateful to Dan Egonsson and Michael Zimmerman for their valuable comments on earlier drafts. I have also benefited from discussions with Norbert Bilbeny, Manuel Garcia-Carpintero, Ramon Cirera, Ann-Sofi Maurin, Jonas Olsson, Ingmar Persson, Johannes Persson, and Fredrik Stjernberg.

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[23]It might be objected that the idea of derivative value calls in question the assumption that strong instrumental values need somehow to be constituted by a subject. If a value derives from the value of an object, there seems to be no need of someone constituting the 'derived value'. However, as far as I can see this is not necessarily the case. Also derived values need to be constituted. But obviously more work needs to be done regarding what it means to inherit value.

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