

ON THE INTRINSIC VALUE OF STATES OF PLEASURE

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I. The Problem

Is pleasure good? Is displeasure bad? On first consulting our moral intuitions we receive, I think, no clear-cut answers to these questions, and therein lies the problem that I wish to investigate. In pursuing this investigation I shall not attempt to skirt our intuitions; on the contrary, I shall dig into them as deeply as I can.

First of all, the questions must be clarified. The first step is to amend them as follows: Is pleasure intrinsically good? Is displeasure intrinsically bad? Unfortunately, this may not prove much of a clarification, since the notion of "intrinsic value" is notoriously obscure. I must forewarn the reader that I shall make no attempt to clarify this notion. I shall use this notion as it is commonly used: to mean "the value that something has 'in itself' — not that that's much help. I shall also freely use the notion of "extrinsic Value," which may, once again unhelpfully, be defined as "the value that something has in virtue of being instrumental in causing something which has intrinsic value." Finally, I shall freely use the notion of "overall value," which may be thought of as the sum value that something has when its intrinsic and extrinsic values have been fully taken into account.

I shall make the assumption that the "something" which bears value is in every instance a "state of affairs." I shall not attempt to elucidate this notion. I shall further assume that: "states of mind," or "mental states," are a species of states of affairs; "states of pleasure" are a species of states of mind; and there are three types of states of pleasure: "pleasure," "displeasure," and "indifference" (this last term being used simply to denote any mental state which constitutes neither pleasure nor displeasure).¹

Now consider the following two cases. (i) If we accept pleasure as being intrinsically good, what then are we to make of pleasure in the bad? Is it also intrinsically good? (ii) If we accept displeasure as being intrinsically bad, what then are we to make of displeasure in the bad? Is it also intrinsically bad?

I make bold to say that not until Brentano wrote in the nineteenth century concerning the "correctness" of emotions was any real headway made in the answering of these questions.^{2, 3} But before I turn (in Section II) to a consideration and application of this theory I want first to discuss a concept with which Chisholm has

¹ I am most grateful to Fred Feldman for his comments on and incisive criticism of earlier drafts of this paper; also to Jim Waldo, with whom I first discussed the issues in detail.

² Franz Brentano, *The Origin of Our Knowledge of Right and Wrong*. Edited by Oskar Kraus. English edition by Roderick M. Chisholm. Translated by Roderick M. Chisholm and Elizabeth H. Schneewind. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, Ltd., 1969.

³ This *is* a bold statement. After all, the value of states of pleasure has received much attention in the history of philosophy. Yet the discussion that has taken place— even in the utilitarian treatises — seems to have been mainly in the tradition of the discussion that Plato presents in the *Protagoras* 351-358, where it is asked whether or not pleasure may sometimes, or even always, be extrinsically bad and yet remain intrinsically good. For our purposes this is hardly to the point; for someone's pleasure in the bad may have no evil consequences whatsoever, and yet we should still hesitate to pronounce it intrinsically good.

presented us — that of the "defeat" of intrinsic value — and which is supposed to apply to a wide variety of ethical problems, including the one that concerns us here.⁴

Chisholm's concept would appear to derive from Moore's principle of organic unities. This principle states, as is well known, that a "whole" may have an intrinsic value different in amount from the sum of the intrinsic values of its "parts," such that there is no regular proportion between these values.⁵ Exactly how Moore envisaged the relation of whole to parts is uncertain, for he did not formulate the concept of an organic unity in any precise manner. Chisholm's concept of defeat, however, is quite precise. He draws it up in contradistinction to his concept of "balancing off." If a state of affairs q entails two states of affairs p and r, such that neither p entails r nor r entails p, and if q's intrinsic value is determined (in principle) by adding the intrinsic values of p and r and dividing by two, then q's intrinsic value is determined by the "balancing off" of the intrinsic values of p and r.⁶ But if q obtains; q entails p; p is intrinsically good (bad); q is not intrinsically good (bad); and it is not the case that q entails a state of affairs r, such that neither p entails r nor r entails p and that q is intrinsically better (worse) than r; then the intrinsic value of p has been "defeated."⁷

Perhaps the most obvious application of the concept of defeat is to the problem of theodicy.⁸ All theodacists claim that the intrinsic value of the world "as a whole" is as great as possible, despite the intrinsic badness of some of the world's "parts." In Chisholm's terminology: the intrinsic badness of the "narrower" state of affairs is "defeated" by the "wider" state of affairs. Chisholm claims that there are many other instances where the concept of defeat may be seen to apply. (Indeed, he thinks that the distinction between balancing off and defeat is "of first importance to the theory of value."⁹) Specifically, for our purposes, Chisholm claims that pleasure may be seen as intrinsically good and displeasure as intrinsically bad and that these intrinsic values may be seen to be defeated in certain circumstances. Indeed, the circumstances in which defeat occurs are just those apparently anomalous ones that have been mentioned: pleasure in the bad and displeasure in the bad. Chisholm considers the example of someone's (say Jones's) taking pleasure in someone else's (say Smith's) displeasure, where pleasure is assumed to be intrinsically good and displeasure intrinsically bad.¹⁰ In such a case, the wider state of affairs (Jones's taking pleasure in Smith's displeasure) is not intrinsically good (Chisholm in fact says that it is neutral), but it entails another state of affairs (Jones's pleasure) which is intrinsically good, and it entails no state of affairs (Smith's displeasure need not actually obtain) such that Jones's pleasure does not entail this state of affairs, nor it Jones's pleasure, and the wider state of affairs is better than it. In short, the intrinsic goodness of pleasure is defeated when it happens to be pleasure in the bad. The defeat of the intrinsic badness of displeasure is analogous. (Chisholm gives the example of righteous indignation, which ultimately stems from Aristotle.)

The theory of the intrinsic value of states of pleasure that is developed in this paper may or may not be seen as an elaboration on Chisholm's concept of defeat. (I make no claims one way or the other as to the applicability of this concept outside of the area of ethics which is under scrutiny in this paper.) Certainly I claim, for instance, that while pleasure in the good is intrinsically good, pleasure in the bad is not intrinsically good, and insofar as I do not seek to give reasons for this, my position may be seen to be similar to Chisholm's. Nevertheless, there are some differences. (i) Although I do not present reasons for, e.g., the fact that pleasure in the bad is not intrinsically good, I do try to explain in some detail the "inner workings" of its intrinsic value (this point will become clearer shortly). (ii) Chisholm of course assumes that pleasure per se is intrinsically good and that displeasure per se is intrinsically bad. I make no such assumption; indeed, as will be seen, I am inclined to deny that it is true. (iii) The manner in which Chisholm discusses pleasure in the bad and displeasure in the bad suggests that

⁴ Roderick M. Chisholm, "The Defeat of Good and Evil," *Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association*, Volume XLII (1968-69).

⁵ G. E. Moore, *Principia Ethica* (Cambridge: University Press, 1971), pp. 27 and 36.

⁶ Chisholm, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 30-31.

⁸ *See ibid.*, p. 36.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

he feels that these cases are somehow radically different from the cases of, e.g., pleasure in the good and displeasure in the good. I hope to show that, on the contrary, there is a high degree of coherence between such cases.

One point that Chisholm's analysis raises, however, is that concerning the question of whether or not the object of pleasure need obtain for the intrinsic value of states of pleasure to be defeated. His analysis rests, of course, on the contention that the object need not obtain, and on this point I am sure that he is right. That is, the problem of Jones's taking pleasure in the bad arises even where such badness does not in fact obtain but is taken by Jones as obtaining. Following Brentano, we may say that it is the value of the "intentional object" (as opposed to the actual object) of Jones's displeasure which is of crucial importance here. Whether or not Smith is in fact displeased, the point is that Jones is pleased because he takes Smith to be displeased, and it is this state of affairs which, according to Chisholm, defeats the intrinsic goodness of Jones's pleasure. Although in what follows I shall not draw explicitly on Chisholm's concept of defeat, my analysis will indeed hinge upon the fact that for all states of pleasure where special problems of analysis occur (and where Chisholm believes the concept of defeat to be applicable) those states have an intentional object. The analysis will be seen to apply, indeed, to all those states of pleasure which have an intentional object, whether or not they appear especially problematic.

I take an object of a state of mind to be intentional if and only if the state of mind's obtaining or not obtaining is not conditional upon whether or not the object obtains. For instance, consider the statement: "John saw a pink elephant." Now, there are two ways to construe this: (i) John saw an actual pink elephant; (ii) John saw what he took to be a pink elephant. In the first case, John's seeing could not have taken place had the pink elephant not obtained. In the second case, John's seeing or not seeing is not conditional either upon the pink elephant's obtaining or upon its not obtaining. In the terminology that I shall adopt: an intentional object always "exists" but may or may not "obtain." (This, I think, conforms with current usage, although it runs counter to Brentano's use of the term "intentional inexistence.")¹¹

It is a controversial point whether or not all states of pleasure have an intentional object. Is it possible to be "just pleased," or must one always be pleased about (what one takes to be) something? This is a difficult problem that I shall not attempt to resolve. Suffice it to say that, if all states of pleasure have an intentional object, then the theory in Section II of this paper is designed to account for all the possible modes of intrinsic value of all states of pleasure. If not, then the theory accounts only for those states of pleasure which do have an intentional object. However, if the second case is true, and some 11 states of pleasure occur which have no intentional object, the theory is not severely limited. Indeed, the following principles are all that are required to make it as complete as it would otherwise be (and I think that they are all uncontroversial):

- a) All pleasure without an intentional object is intrinsically good; the greater such pleasure, the better.¹²
- b) All displeasure without an intentional object is intrinsically bad; the greater such displeasure, the worse.¹²
- c) All indifference without an intentional object is intrinsically neutral.

¹¹ There are some important problems which arise on any analysis of intentionality, but whose resolution is not crucial to the success of this paper. I shall therefore not attempt to resolve them. But they should be acknowledged: (i) Do all states of mind have intentional objects? (ii) Do only states of mind have intentional objects? (iii) The intentional object of a state of pleasure will be a state of affairs; that of perception will normally be a simple physical object. How is this distinction to be precisely formulated? (iv) What is the ontological relation between intentional and actual objects? (v) What is the epistemological relation between intentional and actual objects? Can one ever, epistemologically, transcend the intentional? (vi) If a state of pleasure has an actual object, must it also have an intentional object? (See Section III, problem 4 below for a discussion related to this last point.)

¹² Up to a limit, perhaps. In a simple hedonism, where only states of pleasure have intrinsic value, there should be in principle *no limit* to the value, positive or negative, that such states may attain. But in a complex theory of value there may well be absolute limits to the positive and negative intrinsic values of states of pleasure. This point should be borne in mind in any consideration of the theory presented in Section II.

Finally, I said at the outset that I would dig deeply into moral intuitions. These will be, specifically, my intuitions and those that I take most civilized people to have. However, no strict accordance between the theory and such intuitions is necessary for the theory to be true, and this is so for the following reasons: (i) the theory must be consistent, whereas moral intuitions perhaps are not; (ii) the theory is supposed to hold universally, whereas even civilized moral intuitions are not universally accepted within civilized society (although they too are supposed to hold universally). Thus, unless a counterexample to the theory demonstrates some inconsistency inherent in the theory itself, it is difficult to know whether or not the counterexample could ever be proven true. Nevertheless, if it were to turn out that some aspect of the theory grossly misrepresents what I take to be or should take to be a common intuition concerning the intrinsic value of states of pleasure, there would certainly be good reason to revise the theory.

II. The Theory

The theory that is constructed in this second section is based on a simple premise: the intrinsic value of a state of pleasure (where that state of pleasure has an intentional object) is a function of the value of its intentional object. Basing the theory on this premise allows us (i) to account for the intrinsic value of (such) states of pleasure in a consistent and coherent fashion, and thus (ii) to rid such seemingly special cases as pleasure in the bad and displeasure in the bad of their anomalous appearance, while also (iii) giving expression to our intuitions.

But what type of value is it that the intentional object has which is crucial to the determination of the intrinsic value of the state of pleasure? In his example of Jones's taking pleasure in Smith's displeasure, Chisholm takes the relevant value of the intentional object to be an intrinsic one.¹³ But such a restriction would appear unwarranted; the extrinsic or overall value of a state of affairs may be equally as crucial to the calculation of the intrinsic value of a state of pleasure of which the state of affairs is the object. Furthermore, the situation may be complicated by the fact that a state of affairs may prove intrinsically pleasing, but extrinsically displeasing; or it may prove to be in part intrinsically pleasing and in part intrinsically displeasing; and so on. As an example of a state of affairs which is intrinsically pleasing, but extrinsically displeasing: consider drunken revelry whose anticipated effect is a hangover. As an example of a state of affairs which is in part intrinsically pleasing and in part intrinsically displeasing: consider a concert where the music is soft but the seats are hard.

For the purposes of the theory, it is to be assumed that the state of pleasure, whose intrinsic value is under consideration, is directed on to (what is taken to be) a simple state of affairs with a single overall value, and it is this value which is crucial to ascertaining the intrinsic value of the state of pleasure. (It should be remembered that the overall value of a state of affairs in principle consists of the value resulting from the combination — no matter how this is in fact to be calculated — of the intrinsic and extrinsic values of the state of affairs. If the state of affairs has no, i.e., neutral intrinsic value, its overall value will be its extrinsic value; if — if this is possible — it has no extrinsic value, its overall value will be its intrinsic value.) There are two principal reasons for this. (i) If the state of affairs were not simple, it would have to be analyzed until its simple parts were discovered, such that each part would be considered in its own right. Jones as being musically pleasurable but sedentarily displeasurable, our analysis would proceed by breaking the state of affairs down so that in effect there would be two states of affairs — that of Jones's listening to the soft music and that of Jones's sitting on a hard seat — whose values would be individually calculated and concerning which Jones would be regarded as holding two separate and distinct states of pleasure — i.e., pleasure in the former instance and displeasure in the latter. (ii) Since the intended state of affairs must be simple for purposes of analysis, its intended value must be singular. Such value can only be overall value. To illustrate once again: if Jones (intentionally) perceives his own drunkenness as pleasurable in itself but also anticipates a hangover, and such anticipation affords displeasure, our analysis would proceed as follows. Jones's mental state would first be assessed as being composed of two states of pleasure — i.e., pleasure and displeasure — whose intrinsic values must be analyzed individually. In this case there are two separate overall values, the first of which is exclusively intrinsic and

¹³ Chisholm, *op. cit.*, pp. 27-28.

affords pleasure, and the second of which is exclusively extrinsic and affords displeasure. Then, if Jones holds what, for purposes of analysis, is a third state of pleasure regarding the general state of affairs (he may or may not have such an attitude, but let us suppose he is on the whole displeased with his drunken state), the intrinsic value of this will be analyzed in its own right. In this case there is just one overall value and it affords displeasure.

Strictly speaking, therefore, I should say that the theory in this section is based on the premise that the intrinsic value of a state of pleasure is a function of the intentional overall value of its intentional object. But such phrasing is clumsy, and I shall often lapse into talk of the value of the intentional object, or indeed simply of the value of the object. Unless otherwise specified, however, such talk is to be construed as concerning the intentional overall value of the intentional object.

And now on to the theory proper. With regard to the intrinsic value of states of pleasure, there are nine basic cases which deserve initial consideration. These are:

1. Pleasure in the good.
2. Pleasure in the neutral.
3. Pleasure in the bad.
4. Indifference in the good.
5. Indifference in the neutral.
6. Indifference in the bad.
7. Displeasure in the good.
8. Displeasure in the neutral.
9. Displeasure in the bad.

Three points should be noted. (i) "Pleasure in the good" means of course "pleasure in what is intended as overall good"; this point applies similarly to all other cases. (ii) Strictly speaking, one does not "take indifference in" something, but I phrase it thus simply to align cases 4-6 with the others. (iii) "Indifference" is a term which applies only to a state of mind; "neutral" is a term which applies only to the value of a state of affairs. (Chisholm, for instance, talks of both indifferent and neutral values;¹⁴ but this is a distinction which I shall not draw in this theory.)

Now, Chisholm's treatment of cases 1-9 (or rather cases 1-3 and 7-9, since he ignores indifference) is simply to assign intrinsic goodness to pleasure and intrinsic badness to displeasure and then to pick out cases 3 and 9 as being somehow strange, since even though the intentional object in both cases (as in all the others) need not actually obtain, nevertheless the intrinsic value of the "wider" state of affairs does not reflect the intrinsic value of the state of pleasure, such that this latter value is somehow defeated. But why are cases 3 and 9 strange? At this point, Brentano's theory of the "correctness" of emotions may help us out. In this theory Brentano draws an analogy between correctness in the sphere of the intellect and correctness in the sphere of emotions. He says that that which we call "true" is that, the affirmation of which is correct; similarly, that which we call "good" is that, the love of which is correct.¹⁵ According to this theory, therefore, only that pleasure which is correct is intrinsically good. (Pleasure in the bad is incorrect, and thus intrinsically bad.) Furthermore, displeasure which is correct is also intrinsically good. (Displeasure in the bad is correct, and thus intrinsically good.)¹⁶ If we accept this thesis concerning the correctness of emotions (without thereby committing Ourselves to accepting every detail of Brentano's theory) we may have an insight into the problem. Pleasure in the bad seems intrinsically bad (not just neutral, as Chisholm would have it) because the pleasure is misdirected, inappropriate,

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

¹⁵ Brentano, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

¹⁶ Using this insight, Brentano is able to distinguish (*ibid.*, p. 21) between a "higher" and a "lower" mode of being pleased. The higher is that where the pleasure is experienced as being correct and the lower is that where the pleasure is not experienced as being correct. (The lowest — which Brentano does not specify would, on this analysis, be that where the pleasure is experienced as being incorrect.)

incorrect; displeasure in the bad seems intrinsically good because the displeasure is appropriate or correct. Following Brentano's lead, we may quite easily construct the following nine principles:

- 1) Pleasure in the good is intrinsically good.
- 2) Pleasure in the neutral is intrinsically good.
- 3) Pleasure in the bad is intrinsically bad.
- 4) Indifference in the good is intrinsically bad.
- 5) Indifference in the neutral is intrinsically neutral.
- 6) Indifference in the bad is intrinsically bad.
- 7) Displeasure in the good is intrinsically bad.
- 8) Displeasure in the neutral is intrinsically bad.
- 9) Displeasure in the bad is intrinsically good.

Justification for the assignment of these intrinsic values would appear straightforward. (It is hard to argue for the truth of the principles. Their justification can only come from an appeal to intuition.) It is the value of the intentional object which is crucial. For once that value has been ascertained, then one can determine whether or not a state of pleasure directed on to the object is correctly or incorrectly so directed. This also accounts for principles (4) and (6), which might otherwise (like principles (3) and (9)) appear anomalous.

It is my contention that it is the state of pleasure itself which bears the intrinsic value of the whole situation, but an objection may be made here. It might run like this: "You say that no intrinsic value can be assigned to states of pleasure (which have an intentional object) per se, but that their correctness or incorrectness must first be established. What you are really doing is introducing a new state of affairs which bears its own intrinsic value. Recognizing this, one might still claim: pleasure per se is intrinsically good; indifference per se is intrinsically neutral; displeasure per se is intrinsically bad; correctness in an emotion is intrinsically good; incorrectness in an emotion is intrinsically bad. Then one can claim that pleasure per se retains its intrinsic goodness even in case 3; it is only the additional fact of its incorrectness, whose badness 'outweighs' the goodness of pleasure, that yields a negative intrinsic value for the general situation. A similar analysis can be applied to cases 4, 6 and 9." I am not sure how to argue against this objection. (In fact, Brentano probably subscribes to a view similar to that put forward in this objection.¹⁷) Perhaps it is not necessary to argue against it, for on both my view and that of the objection the same intrinsic value for the general situation is yielded. The objection is therefore not damaging to my thesis, and yet I must still say that I think it is mistaken. Personally, I cannot see any intrinsic goodness in pleasure in the bad — not even the supposed goodness of such pleasure considered in itself (if such consideration is possible). But perhaps that is just a personal quirk.

It should further be noted that the principles are intended to hold in all value theories where states of pleasure bear intrinsic value — from simple hedonism to the complex theories which (ideally) underlie most people's moral intuitions. However, a second objection may be made here: "On what basis can one assign an intrinsic value to a state of pleasure which has for its object another state of pleasure? If Jones is pleased that Smith is displeased, how can the intrinsic value of Jones's pleasure be determinable according to the present theory?" But there is no problem here. All one has to do is find out what it is that Smith is displeased about. It should be noted that Jones's pleasure in Smith's displeasure is not, according to the principles, automatically to be deemed bad. For what if Smith's displeasure, as in case 9, is good? Then Jones's pleasure will be good — and that is, or seems to be, as it should be. What if Smith's displeasure is in part or wholly concerned with Brown's displeasure? Then we must find out what it is that Brown is displeased about. If Brown's displeasure is in something good, then his displeasure is bad; then Smith's displeasure would appear good and so Jones's pleasure is good also. Such a chain could in principle carry on for innumerable states of pleasure; but until a state of pleasure is arrived at on analysis whose intentional object entails no (supposed) state of pleasure and may thus function as the "initial link," no value-assignment can be made to any other states of pleasure that lie further on down the chain and which entail this initial state of pleasure as part or all of their intentional object. (There may

¹⁷ Brentano, *op. cit.*, p. 23n.

appear to be one special case where the "initial link" is difficult, if not impossible, to evaluate. This case is discussed in Section III, problem 3 below.) Thus, once again, the principles would appear to hold in all theories of value which recognize that states of pleasure may have positive or negative intrinsic value. In a complex theory, the "initial link" must be a state of pleasure whose intentional object contains no part which entails a state of pleasure, but the value of which object may be good, neutral or bad; in simple hedonism, the "initial link" must again be a state of pleasure whose intentional object contains no part which entails a state of pleasure, but the value of which object must be neutral since in such a theory only states of pleasure can be good or bad.

If principles (1) - (9) hold, the following three postulates may be established on their basis. (By "postulate" I mean only a principle which presents both necessary and sufficient conditions for what is proposed as a fundamental truth.)

Where x is a person, y an intentional object, and x's attitude is a state of pleasure:

- P₁:** x's attitude with regard to y is intrinsically *good* if and only if:
either (a) x's attitude is one of pleasure and
 either (i) y is (overall) good (principle (1))
 or (ii) y is neutral (principle (2));
 or (b) x's attitude is one of displeasure and y is bad
 (principle (9)).
- P₂:** x's attitude with regard to y is intrinsically *bad* if and only if:
either (a) x's attitude is one of pleasure and y is bad
 (principle (3));
 or (b) x's attitude is one of indifference and
 either (i) y is good (principle (4))
 or (ii) y is bad (principle (6));
 or (c) x's attitude is one of displeasure and
 either (i) y is good (principle (7))
 or (ii) y is neutral (principle (8)).
- P₃:** x's attitude with regard to y is intrinsically *neutral* if and only if:
 x's attitude is one of indifference and
 y is neutral (principle (5)).

Our next task, given the truth of principles (1) - (9), is to construct some principles of intrinsic preferability. One can go about this in quite systematic fashion. The first step is to rank cases 1-9 in order of the intrinsic value, from best to worst, of the propositions expressed thereby. Unrefined intuition (refinement will come shortly) may well urge one to establish the following ranking:

Rank:	1	Case:	1
	2		2
	3		9
	4		5
	5		4
	6		6
	7		8
	8		7
	9		3

All that would seem to remain, therefore, is to construct the principles according to the following pattern: the proposition expressed by the case ranked 1 is preferable to the propositions expressed by the cases ranked 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9; the proposition expressed by the case ranked 2 is preferable to the propositions expressed by the cases ranked 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9; and so on. Out of this pattern issue the following principles:

- 10) Pleasure in the good (case 1) is (intrinsically) preferable to pleasure in the neutral (case 2).
- 11) Pleasure in the good is preferable to displeasure in the bad (case 9).
- 12) Pleasure in the good is preferable to indifference in the neutral.
- 13) Pleasure in the good is preferable to indifference in the good.
- 14) Pleasure in the good is preferable to indifference in the bad.
- 15) Pleasure in the good is preferable to displeasure in the neutral.
- 16) Pleasure in the good is preferable to displeasure in the good.
- 17) Pleasure in the good is preferable to pleasure in the bad.
- 18) Pleasure in the neutral is preferable to displeasure in the bad.
- 19) Pleasure in the neutral is preferable to indifference in the neutral.
- 20) Pleasure in the neutral is preferable to indifference in the good.
- 21) Pleasure in the neutral is preferable to indifference in the bad.
- 22) Pleasure in the neutral is preferable to displeasure in the neutral.
- 23) Pleasure in the neutral is preferable to displeasure in the good.
- 24) Pleasure in the neutral is preferable to pleasure in the bad.
- 25) Displeasure in the bad is preferable to indifference in the neutral.
- 26) Displeasure in the bad is preferable to indifference in the good.
- 27) Displeasure in the bad is preferable to indifference in the bad.
- 28) Displeasure in the bad is preferable to displeasure in the neutral.
- 29) Displeasure in the bad is preferable to displeasure in the good.
- 30) Displeasure in the bad is preferable to pleasure in the bad.
- 31) Indifference in the neutral is preferable to indifference in the good.
- 32) Indifference in the neutral is preferable to indifference in the bad.
- 33) Indifference in the neutral is preferable to displeasure in the neutral.
- 34) Indifference in the neutral is preferable to displeasure in the good.
- 35) Indifference in the neutral is preferable to pleasure in the bad.
- 36) Indifference in the good is preferable to indifference in the bad.
- 37) Indifference in the good is preferable to displeasure in the neutral.
- 38) Indifference in the good is preferable to displeasure in the good.
- 39) Indifference in the good is preferable to pleasure in the bad.
- 40) Indifference in the bad is preferable to displeasure in the neutral.
- 41) Indifference in the bad is preferable to displeasure in the good.
- 42) Indifference in the bad is preferable to pleasure in the bad.
- 43) Displeasure in the neutral is preferable to displeasure in the good.
- 44) Displeasure in the neutral is preferable to pleasure in the bad.
- 45) Displeasure in the good is preferable to pleasure in the bad.

Finally, one should take into account variations in intensity in the states of pleasure and variations in the value of the object of pleasure. The most convenient way to draw up principles in this respect is to assign ad hoc numerical values. Thus, for the following principles, pleasure₁₅ is more intense than pleasure₁₀, displeasure₀ is more intense than displeasure₅, good₁₀ is better than good₅, bad₁₅ is worse than bad₁₀, and so on. On this basis, another twelve principles may be drawn up, of which the following should suffice as illustration:¹⁸

- 46) Pleasure₁₅ in the good is preferable to pleasure₁₀ in the good, which is preferable to pleasures in the good.

¹⁸ The principles are drawn up as follows: principles (46)-(48) concern variations in the degree of pleasure where the value of the object of pleasure remains un- varied; principles (49)-(51) concern variations in the degree of displeasure where the value of the object of displeasure remains unvaried; principles (52)-(54) concern variations in the goodness of the object where the intensity of the state of pleasure remains unvaried; and principles (55)-(57) concern variations in the badness of the object where the intensity of the state of pleasure remains unvaried.

47) Pleasures in the bad is preferable to pleasure¹⁰ in the bad, which is preferable to pleasure¹⁵ in the bad.

51) Displeasure¹⁵ in the bad is preferable to displeasure¹⁰ in the bad, which is preferable to displeasure⁵ in the bad.

52) Pleasure in the good¹⁵ is preferable to pleasure in the good¹⁰, which is preferable to pleasure in the good⁵.

54) Displeasure in the good⁵ is preferable to displeasure in the good, 0, which is preferable to displeasure in the good¹⁵.

57) Displeasure in the bad¹⁵ is preferable to displeasure in the bad¹⁰, which is preferable to displeasure in the bads.

Unfortunately, at this point severe complications arise. Only principles (1)-(8), (12)-(17), (19)-(24), (31)-(35), (47), (50), (53), and (56) are true as they stand. Principles (28), (29), (38), (42), (43), (46), (48), (49), (54), and (55) may be made to express a truth with only minor qualifications. It is a matter of doubt whether principles (30) and (36) may be made to express a truth even when qualifications are made. Finally, principles (9)-(11), (18), (25)-(27), (37), (39)-(41), (44), (45), (51), (52), and (57) are simply false. The deficiencies in the principles which I have said are not true as they stand may be easily established on further inspection, which I shall now undertake.

The falsity of principle (9) is the most unsettling of all the deficiencies in the above principles, for this falsity renders all three postulates given above also false. In fact, because of this falsity, no such postulates (i.e., principles of both necessary and sufficient conditions for the intrinsic goodness, neutrality, and badness of states of pleasure) can ever be drawn up. Principle (9) is false simply because it is not necessarily true that displeasure in the bad is intrinsically good. Such displeasure may be intrinsically good, but if inappropriately great it may be rendered intrinsically neutral or even intrinsically bad. Of course, the greater the badness of the intentional object, the greater must be the displeasure before it becomes intrinsically neutral or bad; nevertheless, the point holds. Furthermore, because the displeasure may also be inappropriately slight (though it is never rendered intrinsically bad because of this), there are optimum amounts of displeasure, whose intensity is dependent upon the degree of badness of the object.

Why should principle (1) not be deemed false for analogous reasons? The answer, I believe, is simply that intuition dictates otherwise. It might be maintained that pleasure in the good may be inappropriately slight in certain cases (e.g., where the object is very good and the pleasure very slight); in fact, I would concur with this. It might further be maintained that pleasure in the good may be inappropriately great in certain cases (e.g., where the object is only slightly good and the pleasure is very intense); personally, I would not concur with this. Yet even if both these points were accepted, this would only require that there be optimum amounts of pleasure in the good, whose intensity is dependent upon the degree of goodness of the object; it would not require (for surely intuition forbids this) that any pleasure in the good, even though inappropriately great or slight, be either intrinsically neutral or intrinsically bad.

At this stage, I shall not attempt to point out why principles (2)-(8) and the others mentioned above are true as they stand. But I shall discuss the deficiencies of those principles that I have declared untrue as they stand.

It is worthwhile noting that no principle which incorporates principle (9) can be true; thus principles (11), (18), (25)-(30), (51), and (57) must be false. But other "patterns of deficiency" may be cited which are more revealing than the mere statement of this simple truth. These patterns concern either (i) the intensity of the state of pleasure or (ii) the degree of value of the object. I shall discuss these first with regard to (a) those principles that I have said may be successfully modified to express a truth; then with regard to (b) those principles that I have said might perhaps be so modified; and finally with regard to (c) those principles that I have said are simply false and could never be so modified.

(a i) Consider principle (28). As it stands it is false, for a slight degree of displeasure in the neutral may be intrinsically preferable to a great degree of displeasure in an object which is only slightly bad. Nevertheless, if principle (28) is modified to read thus:

(28') Displeasure in the bad is preferable to displeasure in the neutral, for corresponding degrees of displeasure, it is easily rendered true. This pattern holds for principles (29), (43), (54), and (55), which may be similarly treated.

(a ii) Consider principle (38). As it stands it too is false, for a slight degree of displeasure in an object which is only slightly good may be intrinsically preferable to indifference in an object which is very good. But if principle (38) is modified to read thus:

(38') Indifference in the good is preferable to displeasure in the good, for corresponding degrees of displeasure, it is easily rendered true. This pattern holds for principles (42), (46), (48), and (49), which may be similarly treated.

(b i) Consider principle (30). As it stands it is false, but it may perhaps be rendered intelligible. The qualification in this case would have to be: the degree of pleasure and the degree of displeasure must be the same. It is questionable whether such a qualification is meaningful, for how is one to establish such a correlation? Nevertheless, I hesitate to say that intuition simply cannot establish such a correlation, and thus I do not wish to pronounce this principle beyond redemption.

(b ii) Consider principle (36). This is false as it stands, but it may perhaps be modified so that the degrees of value of the objects compared (of goodness in the first case and of badness in the second) are deemed to be the same. Again, it is questionable whether one object may intelligibly be thought to be equally as good as another is bad; but, again, I hesitate to throw in the towel.

(c i and c ii) Principles (11), (18), (25), (26), (37), (39), (40), (41), (44), and (45) share in common the fact that their falsity depends upon the impossibility of correlating both degrees of intensity of states of pleasure and degrees of value of intentional objects. Such correlation is impossible, I think, simply because it lies beyond the bounds of intuition; thus these principles surely are beyond redemption.

It should further be mentioned why principles (10), (27), (51), (52), and (57) are false. (Their deficiencies do not fit easily into any of the patterns outlined above.) Because of the falsity of principle (9), principles (27), (51), and (57) are clearly false. Principle (10) is false (at least, I believe so, although the point is perhaps controversial) because it is in principle always possible to be inappropriately under-pleased about the good, such that pleasure (even to the same degree) in the neutral would be intrinsically better (or perhaps equal in value). Principle (52) is false due to a related point: it requires a greater degree of pleasure to be appropriately pleased in that which is very good than it does to be appropriately pleased in that which is slightly good.

With this my analysis of the principles is completed and the presentation of the theory is concluded.¹⁹

III. Residual Problems

¹⁹ More could be said, but only at the risk of obscurity. One technique for facilitating the task of discussing the principles is to assign ad hoc numerical values to (a) the intensity of the state of pleasure, (b) the overall value of the intentional object, and (c) the intrinsic value of the whole state of affairs, and then to plot these values on a graph. (Of course, such numerical values can serve only as rough guides, not as exact measures.) I have in fact done this elsewhere, where more space was available, and this technique has enabled me to make finer points than I could make here without the aid of the graphs. Nevertheless, such graphs are not required for the discussion of the more important points which have been presented in this paper.

There remain many additional problems in the theory of intrinsic value, some of which are particularly pertinent to the present discussion and deserve mention.

1. I have throughout tacitly restricted my discussion to the assignment of intrinsic value to simple states of pleasure. The assignment of such value to complex states of affairs which include several states of pleasure presents formidable problems. Somehow, one must seek to assign value only to "basic" elements of a state of affairs and not to "nonbasic" ones. This is not at all easy.^{20 21}
2. One case which it may seem difficult to reconcile with the present theory is this: Suppose Jones to be an introspective person who happens to be displeased about something good; he notices that he is displeased, and this displeases him further. According to the principles presented above, this might be good — but how could it be?²² I would submit in answer to this that in principle this case is no different from a more normal one where Jones's displeasure is directed on to some bad state of affairs "external" to him. He should be just as morally sensitive to his own inappropriate states of pleasure as to anyone else's. Of course, if he gets severely depressed about his displeasure, that is another matter — as the falsity of principle (9) makes clear.
3. A second problematic case is this: Suppose Jones is pleased that Smith is pleased that Jones is pleased. How can any intrinsic value be assigned to this?²² The answer is straightforward. Jones's pleasure in Smith's pleasure is not the same as the pleasure about which Smith is pleased. There is no circularity involved here, and the principle of the "chain" of states of pleasure holds as well here as for other more straightforward cases.

But a variation on this case might appear more difficult to deal with: Suppose Jones is pleased that Smith is pleased (inferring Smith's pleasure, perhaps, from Smith's smile), although he does not know what it is that Smith is pleased about. Suppose further that Smith is pleased (smiling) simply at Jones's apparent pleasure (Jones, too, is smiling — at Smith's pleasure).²² Here it is not easy — in fact it is impossible — to determine the "initial link" according to which the intrinsic value of Jones's pleasure may be determined. Is this a failing on the part of the theory? Surely not; for the intrinsic value of Jones's pleasure is not only indeterminable, but indeterminate. If Jones is not sure of the value of Smith's pleasure, Jones himself cannot know whether his (Jones's) pleasure is correct or not. This is a general point which applies not only to this particularly complicated case but to all cases where the object has indeterminate value.

4. It has been my main contention in this paper that the intrinsic value of a state of pleasure is a function of the intentional overall value of the intentional object (where there is one) of that state of pleasure. But what if Jones is pleased about what he takes to be good but what is in fact bad? Is his pleasure still intrinsically good? According to Chisholm, "Brentano suggests that, all else being equal, true pleasures are better than false pleasures."²³ "Better" here means "intrinsically better," since for Brentano error is

²⁰ Important work has been done in this area by Gilbert H. Harman, "Toward a Theory of Intrinsic Value," *Journal of Philosophy*, Volume LXIV, Number 23 (December, 1967); and by Warren S. Quinn, "Theories of Intrinsic Value," *American Philosophical Quarterly*, Volume II, Number 2 (April, 1974).

²¹ Nevertheless, the theory can account for certain features of conjunction and disjunction. Jones's being pleased that Smith is displeased *and* that Brown is pleased is equivalent (for purposes of analysis) to the conjunction of Jones's being pleased that Smith is displeased and Jones's being pleased that Brown is pleased. However the intrinsic value of such a conjunction is determined (a separate problem), the present theory has at least shown how it is possible to assign values to each of the conjuncts, and this has been its main purpose. So too with disjunctions: Jones's being pleased that Smith is displeased *or* Brown is pleased is equivalent to the disjunction of Jones's being pleased that Smith is displeased and Jones's being pleased that Brown is pleased. However the intrinsic value of such a disjunction is determined (a separate problem), the present theory has at least shown how it is possible to assign values to each of the disjuncts. (For a discussion of the intrinsic value of such disjunctions, see Roderick M. Chisholm, "The Intrinsic Value in Disjunctive States of Affairs", *Nous* 9 (1975).)

²² I am grateful to Fred Feldman for suggesting this case.

²³ Roderick M. Chisholm, "Brentano's Theory of Correct and Incorrect Emotion," *Revue Internationale de Philosophie*, Numero 78 (1966), p. 412.

itself an evil. But I would hesitate to make such a remark. It seems to me rather that, although such a situation as that just described would indeed be an unfortunate one, such that the intrinsic value of the wider state of affairs, which comprises both Jones's pleasure and the fact that this pleasure is mistaken, is perhaps fairly low, nevertheless the intrinsic value of the pleasure itself remains the same. To take an extreme case: if Jones's emotions are correct insofar as they are appropriate to what he takes to be the case, but it happens that he continually suffers from such delusions that he is always mistaken about what is the case, one can only praise him for his propriety; one cannot condemn him for being mad.

5. But what if Jones takes pleasure in what he takes to be good, and yet his pleasure is undeserved? Is it still intrinsically good? This is a difficult question. If distributive justice is assumed to be intrinsically good, then Jones's pleasure would seem not to be good. But this does not render the above theory vacuous. In such a case, the principles given above that have been declared true as they stand or true on modification are correct only on the condition that the state of pleasure is deserved. The theory would then have to be revised to account for undeserved states of pleasure. But that, indeed, would be another story.