Introduction

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The essays collected here are drawn from work first presented at the 20th Conference on Value Inquiry, held at Drew University in 1992. They are not mere papers bound in a proceedings. Some of the papers presented at the conference, fine as they were, have not found their way in this volume. As well, the essays that follow are not mere records of conference presentations. The authors have reflected on their initial presentations. They have re-thought arguments in light of discussions at the conference. They have revised their work. All of this has combined to bring fresh ideas on important issues into carefully considered discussions.

The nineteen authors of the essays do not share a common viewpoint on all problems of value inquiry. They are certainly not in agreement in their conclusions. Their concerns, however, cluster around a recognizable body of questions. Several of the authors raise fundamental questions on the nature of values and the possibility of giving them an objective status. Some of the authors raise questions about where value inquiry becomes value advocacy. They are also ready to ask whether or not advocacy is in the legitimate purview of philosophers. A number of authors set out to examine conditions of moral practice and of harming or benefiting people in general. Other authors show a concern for juxtaposing moral values and aesthetic values, in some cases to observe similarities, in some, differences. Finally, a few authors focus on particular notions such as forgiveness, intimacy, and love that are central to our lives.

The first essay, "The Value of Value Inquiry for Moral Philosophy," outlines the boundaries of the work that may come under the designation "value inquiry." After giving expression to the inclusiveness of the subject, I offer a three-way distinction for identifying fields characterized by questions of value, as disciplinary value inquiry, inter-disciplinary value inquiry, and meta-disciplinary value inquiry. I delineate areas of conceptual exploration for meta-disciplinary value inquiry and discuss their importance for normative ethics. I advance reasons for taking moral goodness to be the most general and fundamental moral concern, and point to the need for a general account of the contribution that the term "good" makes in the phrase "morally good." The understanding we gain from

meta-disciplinary work may be of service to more specifically meta-ethical work, which in turn may be helpful for work in normative and applied ethics.

Broad conceptual questions are also at the focus of the essay by Joseph Margolis. In "Moral Philosophy in Four Tiers," Margolis presents an overview of contemporary moral theorizing that is wide-ranging and subtle. Central to his discussion is the notion of objectivity with respect to moral values. He maintains that moral philosophers from J. L. Mackie to Thomas Nagel, Bernard Williams, and David Wiggins have kept to three tiers of theorizing. He argues for a fourth tier of thought that offers a new prospect for gauging objectivity. On his view, when we reflect on moral problems, we are left without an agent-neutral perspective, or anything approaching neutrality independently of our place in the world. Margolis suggests that we need to look out through the gates of historicism and radically re-examine our ways of moral theorizing. In doing so, he calls into question our very notion of objectivity in ethics.

The notion of objectivity is also a concern for Don E. Marietta, Jr. In his "Objectivity: Wrong Concept for Value Inquiry," Marietta maintains that values are not objective. He does not deny that values have characteristics which approach an agent-neutral perspective, but takes the position that the notion of objective value can be accounted for in terms of what he calls end value and independent value. He argues that in some respects, end values and independent values may not be as significant as might be supposed. Some important values are not independent of us. In any event, the theoretical issues need not bear on moral problems in practice. He holds that even if we cannot satisfy demands of objectivity for values, that does not undermine rational argument in ethics.

Rational argument over ethics, prudence, and practice in general is the central concern of James B. Wilbur III. In "Towards a Metaphysics of Practice," Wilbur argues that oughts of practice are always hypothetical. He also holds, however, that at least for moral practice, oughts are unconditional. They are presuppositions of moral action. Considerations of a metaphysics of practice may seem far removed from everyday concerns, but for Wilbur they are motivated by questions of moral responsibility in business practice. He finds theory and practice to be tied together tightly and regards the enabling conditions of practice to be the basis of our moral values. Indeed, he takes the enabling conditions of practice to be universal, inasmuch as they are the same for all of us.

Values are sometimes distinguished as intrinsic and instrumental. In "On Intrinsic and Quasi-Intrinsic Value," Carlo Filice argues for a third type of value to lie between intrinsic value and instrumental value. Filice calls values of this third type quasi-intrinsic values. More than mere means, quasi-intrinsic values nonetheless lack characteristics of sentience or pleasure that he considers to be requisite for intrinsic values. Autonomy and excellence, on his view, have quasi-intrinsic value. Aesthetic values too, he maintains, may be quasi-intrinsic. But how are basic values apprehended? After reviewing contemporary discussions of the objectivity of values, James S. Kelly attends to this question in "The Postmodern Turn: Plurality of Voice or Cacophony?" He suggests that we should

accord value experiences epistemic weight, much as we do sensory experiences. Indeed, he takes the position that they afford us access to a normative reality. Value experiences themselves, he urges, have grounding in our emotions.

We display our values in our actions. The more strongly we feel about an issue, the more we may do to persuade others to share our views. On some issues we may even believe we are morally compelled to do this. People with a strong sense of values, as may be said, often show a willingness to involve themselves publicly in causes. In what ways and to what extent should moral philosophers act as advocates in the public arena?" Tom Regan raises this fascinating question in "The Business of the Ethical Philosopher." After distinguishing three types of advocacy, logical advocacy, normative advocacy, and political advocacy, he argues that, strictly speaking, only logical and normative advocacy are in the provenance of philosophers. As a philosopher, a philosopher should be engaged in rational argument and criticism. The point is not to still the voice of a philosopher strongly committed to a cause, but to clarify the legitimate role of a philosopher as a philosopher. A moral philosopher may engage in political advocacy *qua* concerned citizen, but not *qua* moral philosopher. The roles need to be kept distinct.

William Aiken and Robert K. Fullinwider also address the matter of political advocacy for moral philosophers. In his "Risks of Advocacy," Aiken dismisses the limits, in principle, to political advocacy that Regan places on moral philosophers. Aiken finds the notion of a neutral philosophical stance suspect, making all talk of roles for philosophers less than clear cut. But even as he argues that philosophers may engage in advocacy irrespective of roles, he holds that moral philosophers should be ready to restrict themselves to rational argument and criticism in order to maximize their effectiveness. Moral philosophers should approach advocacy with caution. Moral philosophers would often be well advised to restrain themselves as a matter of prudence. Like Aiken, Fullinwider is not inclined to limit the role of a philosopher when it comes to political advocacy. In his "Philosophers and Advocates," Fullinwider does find philosophy and advocacy to be distinct and even opposed to one another in some ways. But a philosopher in academia is likely to combine the jobs of an intellectual, a scholar, and a teacher. These jobs may make advocacy obligatory. He suggests that philosophers should even be willing to do more to develop rhetorical skills in order to better discharge their responsibilities. That political advocacy is not excluded from the role of a philosopher, he argues, has historical warrant going back to Plato.

If prudence is a matter of maximizing utility for oneself, a rational utility maximizer should be prudent. We should expect the model of rational utility maximization for economists, *Homo economicus*, to be a prudent individual. In the "Lost Childhood of *Homo Economicus*" Roger Paden points to fundamental problems in the model. Employing ideas of Derek Parfit, Paden examines presuppositions of personal identity which *Homo economicus* does not share with actual people. If prudence is problematic for *Homo economicus*, this presents serious difficulties for other models of practical reasoning, including idealizations

in ethics and political theory. Conceptual concerns of practical reasoning are at the heart of the position set out by Jonathan Jacobs in his "Elements of a Naturalistic Realism in Ethics." Jacobs maintains that practical reasoning allows us to recognize the normative significance of facts. He argues that there is a common human nature and that with practical reasoning we may recognize the ethical significance of facts. This provides a basis for a sort of naturalism in ethics that has its roots in Aristotelian thought. Since human needs and interests are various, and the conditions in which people live differ from time to time, and place to place, naturalism in ethics leaves room for much that is found in pluralism today.

In "The Value of Human Life: An Absolutist Strategy for Attacking Consequentialism," Joram Graf Haber offers a defense of moral absolutism, the view that some types of actions cannot be right under any circumstances. Utilitarians and other types of consequentialists do not generally accept moral absolutism. Hard cases may make bad law, but they afford test cases in philosophy. Haber sets out several widely discussed hard cases and considers two theses that moral absolutists might advance to deal with them, the incomparability thesis and the equality thesis. For some hard cases, on the equality thesis, comparisons are odious because there is effectively nothing to choose between alternatives. On the incomparability thesis, comparisons are out of place because the conditions preclude a choice among alternatives. Haber defends the equality thesis on the grounds that life is infinitely valuable and that doing away with a life is infinitely bad.

Julian Lamont is also concerned with the value of life to people, but from the standpoint of their coming into existence. In "On Benefiting People by Creating Them," he raises the question: Does causing someone to exist benefit, in a moral sense, the person brought into existence? In the course of examining arguments of Derek Parfit, Lamont concludes, contrary to Parfit, that there are reasons to think the answer is "no." The problem, he points out, is that no existing person benefits from procreation: no *thing* exists to be benefited prior to coming into existence. Moral injunctions against killing are not similarly problematic, since someone does exist to be harmed by a premature death. The issue of benefiting people by creating them plainly bears on controversies over abortion and population growth. It is of particular importance to some forms of utilitarianism.

Someone who feels wronged, even when justified in feeling so, may nonetheless be morally called on to forgive the wrongdoer. In "Forgiveness, Moral Reassessment, and Reconciliation," Uma Narayan argues that forgiveness is a process that requires the aggrieved party to set aside feelings that have been hurt. Narayan suggests that reasons for forgiveness involve reassessments of wrongdoers, relationships to wrongdoers, wrongs, and reactions to wrongs. She also examines the relation of forgiveness to reconciliation and takes the position that while forgiveness may lead to reconciliation, it is not necessary for reconciliation. The greatest value of forgiveness, she maintains, has to do with the realignment of our reassessments and feelings. Forgiveness is never far removed

from the reflections of Robert Ginsberg in "The Photograph on My Mind." He offers a humanistic response to the inhumane image of a nameless man in a Nazi prison who died trying to dig out from under a burning building set on fire just hours before the arrival of American troops. As a reaction to an image, his inner narrative displays the aesthetic power that an image can have. Yet it would be hard to lose sight of the moral overtones of the situation captured in the image. The aesthetic power is largely dependent on the moral values at issue.

Images of death can fascinate. In drawing our attention, they also have the power to entertain. Sander Lee examines the power of film filled with horrific images in "The Screaming of the Lambs: Philosophical Themes in Demme's *Silence of the Lambs*." Lee contrasts the way *Silence of the Lambs* is structured with another film in the horror-suspense genre, *Psycho*. He offers a detailed analysis of *Silence of the Lambs* that probes into the states of mind of the main characters. Nietzscheian themes appear throughout it, among them, the notion of a will to power. Films may also illustrate and promote broad political values. In "Let's Dance with Wolves!", H. P. P. (Hennie) Lötter suggests that the film *Dances with Wolves* exemplifies liberal values that are needed to reconcile differences in pluralistic societies. In particular, the film displays the importance of a complex principle that combines an equal respect for people, with an equal consideration of interests. He finds evidence in the film that acceptance of the complex principle by individuals leads to dialogue. In a broader social context, strengthened dialogue can help to advance a type of consensus that is not easily forged in a pluralistic society.

Respect is central to the issue Joseph Kupfer takes up in "What Is Wrong with Prostitution?". Here, however, it is not so much respect for others, but self-respect that is at issue. He holds that prostitution shows a lack of self-respect requisite for full autonomy. He argues that prostitution precludes intimacy essential for self-development. In the end, prostitution is a bad bargain for the prostitute, with characteristics of high value for a person being tendered for nothing that matters as much. Intimacy is also central to the essay by Predrag Cicovacki. In "Can Love Resolve the Problem of Marriage?", Cicovacki observes that the heights of intimacy can be reached in marriage, though not without difficulty, and that intimacy and constancy are two essential features of marriage relationships. All too often, intimacy and constancy are at odds with one another. Love, of course, is another essential feature of marriage. Cicovacki distinguishes spiritual love from romantic love and argues that while the two types of love are not mutually exclusive, spiritual love in the forms of *eros*, *filia*, *agape*, and *amor* is the main ingredient for easing tensions between intimacy and constancy in marriage. It is as well a key to self-development. Love thus brings together high values for the joint undertaking of marriage and for the individual.

Inquiry is typically spurred by a lack of knowledge or understanding, and value inquiry is no exception. Some question leaves us uneasy; some problem gets under our skin; what someone says rubs us the wrong way—whatever the source of discomfort, we have an itch and feel the need to scratch. But inquiry, at its best,

also sets more questions that provoke further thought. It is itself the cause of more itching. The essays that follow are nothing if not thought-provoking. They repay close reading with new questions. Such are the theses, arguments, and conclusions of the authors and the value of their work.