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# Intrinsic value and educational value

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## Abstract

In this paper, I ask whether educational value is determined in any way by intrinsic value. The aim of the paper is to explore whether appeals to the intrinsic value of an activity or state of affairs can justify proposed educational value. I turn to Korsgaard's work on the concept of intrinsic value to cast light on the relationship between intrinsic value and educational value. Korsgaard claims that the often held distinction between intrinsic and instrumental value conflates two separate distinctions. These are the intrinsic/extrinsic value distinction and the final/instrumental value distinction. These two distinctions will be considered with regard to literature that appeals to intrinsic value. The distinctions between intrinsic/extrinsic value and final/instrumental value will be used to clarify puzzles which arise when philosophers of education use the concept of intrinsic value to make claims about educational value. I argue that the intrinsic/extrinsic value distinction has little bearing on an activity's educational value. The instrumental/final value distinction is relevant, but does not imply that activities with final value are any more educationally valuable than those with instrumental value. I conclude that, regardless of the distinction being appealed to, general intrinsic value has little bearing on educational value.

## KEYWORDS

aims of education, curriculum, flourishing, instrumental value, intrinsic value

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## INTRODUCTION

Sometimes, a claim is made that something ought to be taught in schools, or that some educational process or activity is a justified use of a child's time because it is intrinsically valuable. In this paper, I ask whether the intrinsic value of something has any bearing on its educational value. This question has implications for a range of arguments about the curriculum and the aims of education. Peters' and Hirst's seminal works on the aims of education appeal to a transcendental argument which rests the value of education on the intrinsic value of the pursuit of truth. Similarly, Newman and O'Hear make claims about the intrinsic value of knowledge to illustrate the value of a liberal education. I will also explore more recent claims about the value of arts education and religious education which mention their intrinsic value. The aim of this paper is not to show that mentioning intrinsic value immediately invalidates arguments, rather, I aim to show that appealing to intrinsic value does not add anything to these arguments.

First, I set out a basic condition for educational value. This is that something is only educationally valuable if it has the potential to be good for the person being educated. I then outline Korsgaard's analysis of the concept of intrinsic value which breaks it down into two separate conceptual distinctions: intrinsic as opposed to extrinsic value; and final as opposed to instrumental value. Next, I explain the implications of these distinctions on arguments which appeal to general intrinsic value in relation to educational value. Finally, I explore whether the idea that flourishing is an important aim of education can ground the legitimacy of claims about education resting on intrinsic value. I conclude that claims about flourishing, along with other appeals to general intrinsic value, do not translate into claims about educational value. This is because neither of the two distinctions set out by Korsgaard imply that intrinsic value equates to educational value.

## EDUCATIONAL VALUE

Christine Korsgaard describes 'three primary categories of value with which the moral philosopher is concerned: namely the rightness or justice of actions, policies, and institutions; the goodness of objects, purposes, lives, etc.; and the moral worth or moral goodness of characters or dispositions or actions' (1996, p. 249). In exploring the concept of intrinsic value, she is interested in 'goodness as a feature of ordinary ends and purposes, states of affairs, objects, activities, and other things- that is, with the kind of goodness that marks a thing out as worthy of choice' (ibid., p. 249). This list encompasses educational value which can be ascribed to states of affairs, such as flourishing or gainful employment; to educational activities, such as doing mathematics or history; or to resulting educational goods, such as knowledge or health. Within the activities, states of affairs and goods which are considered educationally valuable, some will also be intrinsically valuable. This paper will explore whether intrinsic value determines educational value to any extent. For example, would describing learning how to play an instrument as an intrinsically valuable activity imply that it is an educationally valuable activity? First, some basic account of educational value is necessary.

There are two claims that I want to make about educational value. The first is that something is only educationally valuable if it is good for the person being educated. The second is that ascribing educational value to an activity, state of affairs or good confers some claim to consideration for its inclusion on the curriculum. If I say that the activity of mathematics is educationally valuable, then I am also saying that it ought to be considered for inclusion on educational curricula. If I say that flourishing is an educationally valuable state of affairs, then it ought to be considered as an aim for a curriculum.

My first claim about educational value is that something is only educationally valuable if it is good for the person being educated. A school which focuses solely on preparing children for economic participation is only providing something of educational value if participating in the economy is good for a person. There are arguments to the effect that this is the case, for example Winch claims that 'from the point of individuals, worthwhile paid employment is a legitimate and worthwhile life-goal, which anyone interested in developing autonomy as an educational aim should endorse as an option for those who wish to pursue it' (2002, p. 106). However, if a school was training students to work in

degrading circumstances to serve morally dubious ends without providing anything of value to the students themselves, its educational value would need to be questioned. Educational value is independent from economic value; something of value to the economy might or might not be valuable to an individual, and so it might or might not have educational value. As Peters points out, 'it would be a logical contradiction to say that a man had been educated but that he had in no way changed for the better' (1966, p. 25). An activity or state of affairs is not educationally valuable if it does not provide someone with something that is good for them, or change them for the better. This is not to say that everything that is good for someone is educationally valuable, only that in order to be educationally valuable, something needs to be good for someone.

The second claim about educational value that I want to make is that, as a concept, it is useful if it provides guidance about how to educate people. While there are a vast number of activities and states of affairs that are potentially good for someone, not all of these are necessarily worthy of curriculum time. While being good for someone is a necessary condition of educational value, it is not a sufficient condition. In addition to being potentially good for someone, an educationally valuable activity, state of affairs or good should also be valuable enough to suggest that it ought to be provided for that person. This might mean that a distinction is made between useful yet trivial activities such as being able to win a game of golf, and useful and non-trivial activities like being able to read. It might mean making a distinction between activities or states of affairs that are good for some people, and activities and states of affairs that are good for most people. This is because educational value is a useful concept insofar as it can provide guidance about what ought to happen in educational institutions. When a case is made that a particular activity has educational value, the claim is meaningful to the extent that it implies that the activity ought to be considered as a contender for including in someone's planned education. If the concept of educational value does not have any bearing on the nature and content of educational programmes like curricula, then it is hard to see how it is distinct from the general concept of value.

Educational value differs from value *tout court* which does not always imply that something ought to be a focus for educational programmes or curricula. Playing chess has value, but it is not clear whether it has educational value. The concept of educational value, if it is to be different from the broader concept of value, needs to be able to guide the sorts of things valued by educators, the states of affairs that education ought to bring about, or the objects or goods which an education ought to provide people with. Since educational programmes are necessarily limited in scope, any understanding of educational value needs to be able to differentiate between more worthwhile or less worthwhile educational activities, states of affairs and goods. The school curriculum is limited in terms of time and funding, so it is important to decide which activities to include on the curriculum, and which to exclude. Even when thinking about life-long education, there are still limits on the time and resources available which mean that some way of distinguishing between valuable activities and educationally valuable activities would be helpful. There are too many valuable activities to include all of them on a single educational programme, so questions about educational value come into play.

In this paper, I will ask whether the intrinsic value of an activity, state of affairs or good has a bearing on its educational value. I will conclude that it does not. This is because intrinsic value does not always imply that something is good for a person, and that even when it does, it does not imply that it is good enough to be prioritised over other valuable activities, states of affairs or goods. Intrinsic value does not equate to educational value.

## INTRINSIC VALUE

The intrinsic value of a state of affairs has traditionally been defined in terms of its contrast with instrumental value (Chisholm, 1981, p. 99). Money is not intrinsically valuable because the value of money is neither an essential property of money, nor is money something that is worth possessing for its own sake. It is either valuable in terms of an external good, or in terms of the ends that it helps people to pursue. The concept of intrinsic value is an important facet of normative ethics. Harman takes 'the notion of intrinsic value to be a technical notion introduced to simplify the normative theory of value: once one has specified what has intrinsic value, one can then say that anything has value to the

extent that it “leads to” something having intrinsic value’ (1976, p. 793). In order to determine the value of possessing money, we need to trace its value until we reach something that has value for its own sake, or within itself. In the case of money, it might be the freedom that money affords people, or perhaps freedom is only valuable insofar as it contributes to flourishing; in which case flourishing is intrinsically valuable. Either way, intrinsic value grounds other sorts of value. Whether or not money is valuable in a normative sense, is determined by whether or not money will ultimately facilitate some intrinsically valuable states of affairs.

Intrinsic value is pertinent to education because claims made about education are often normative. Peters claims that education is a normative concept and that the idea of a bad education is an oxymoron. Education ‘implies that something worthwhile is being or has been intentionally transmitted in a morally acceptable manner’ (1966, p. 25). Even if the concept of education is used in a descriptive way, it seems fair to say that the aims of education should be good. Discussions about education should be discussions about things of value: What is a good life? What constitutes a healthy society? What is good for an individual? What activities or goods do we value enough to communicate to those we are educating? Thinking about education is often normative.

The relationship between intrinsic value and educational value is sometimes appealed to in discussions about what ought to be taught in schools. The thinking seems to be that if education involves making normative claims, and normativity ultimately rests on something intrinsically valuable, then activities, states of affairs and objects which are intrinsically valuable are ready contenders for educational value, since they are already unarguably good. Sometimes, particular activities are held to be intrinsically valuable, and so educationally valuable. For example, Koopman claims that any argument for including arts education on the curriculum should refer to the intrinsic value of arts education (2005, p. 85). Or, Wright argues that religious education is intrinsically valuable because ‘the critical study of religious and secular world views constitutes an end in itself’ (2005, p. 25). In other cases, broad sets of activities are held as intrinsically valuable and advocated as the proper object of education. O’Hear says that that ‘the disciplines are taught and engaged in for their own sake, because they are recognised to be valuable in their own right’ (1981, p. 4). Either way, ascribing intrinsic value to an activity is sometimes used as a short cut to ascribing educational value. One aim of this paper is to demonstrate why this line of thought does not work.

An example which has been developed in some detail is the appeal to intrinsic value to justify liberal education. Newman’s account of liberal education appeals to its focus on knowledge, where knowledge holds intrinsic value such that it is ‘capable of being its own end’ (1931, p. 27). Hirst points to classical accounts of liberal education were justified in terms of the pursuit of knowledge which ‘is ... the pursuit of the good of the mind, and therefore, an essential element in the good life’ (1974, p. 30). Although Hirst urges caution with this equation of the pursuit of knowledge with the good life, he provides his own lightly altered account of the intrinsic value of a liberal education (*ibid.*, p. 33). Perhaps the most developed exploration of the relationship between intrinsic value and educational value is Peters’ transcendental argument for the worthwhileness of theoretical activities. Peters’ concept of education is defined in terms of knowledge, understanding and cognitive perspective. This conceptualisation leads to a broadly liberal education model of education which inducts students into a range of theoretical activities which can be equated with academic disciplines. Peters argues that theoretical activities such as ‘science, history, literary appreciation, philosophy, and other such cultural activities’ (1966, p. 160), are ‘pursued for the sake of values intrinsic to them rather than for the sake of extrinsic ends’ (*ibid.*, p. 160). Peters then claims that this intrinsic value comes from their shared commitment to the pursuit of truth.

Peters’ transcendental argument rests on the claim that the pursuit of truth is intrinsically valuable since ‘how can a serious practical question be asked unless man also wants to acquaint himself as well as he can with the situation out of which the question arises and of the facts of various kinds which provide the framework for various answers’ (*ibid.*, p. 164). He thinks that part of living well involves asking practical questions and seeking knowledge which can guide answers to them. Peters explains that ‘to ask the question “why do this rather than that?” seriously is therefore, however embryonically, to be committed to those inquiries which are defined by their serious concern with those aspects of reality which give context to the question which he is asking’ (*ibid.*, p. 164). Theoretical activities are intrinsically valuable because the pursuit of truth is intrinsically valuable, and theoretical activities are, by definition, concerned with

the pursuit of truth. Peters appeals to the value of an 'attitude of passionate concern about the truth that informed Socrates' saying that the unexamined life is not worth living' (ibid., p. 165). Anyone who values the truth, which according to Peters, is everyone who asks 'why do this rather than that?', ought to value theoretical activities too. The intrinsic value of truth justifies a broad theoretical education.

These appeals to intrinsic value to justify the educational value of activities raise some *prima facie* puzzles which hint that if there is a relationship between intrinsic and educational value, it demands some scrutiny. First, there are activities which hold intrinsic value, but are not ready contenders for inclusion on the curriculum. While there is general agreement that viewing original works of art is intrinsically worthwhile to the extent that this motivates the provision of free access to art galleries in the United Kingdom, there is no such consensus that viewing original works of art ought to take up curriculum time. Schools might be obliged to introduce students to the possibility of viewing original art works, but it does not seem particularly important to spend much school time engaged in this activity. Since intrinsic value is either present or not present, and if viewing an original piece of art is intrinsically valuable, it seems that a curriculum entirely composed of viewing original pieces of art is just as valuable as a broad curriculum covering a range of different intrinsically valuable activities. If a broad curriculum itself is intrinsically valuable, then the problem remains because there is no means of explaining why one intrinsically valuable curriculum – the viewing works of art curriculum – is better than another intrinsically valuable curriculum – the broad curriculum. Similarly, romantic love is, if anything, intrinsically worthwhile, but encouraging romantic love in schools does not seem like a worthwhile activity. Teaching about relationships is worthwhile, but the experience of romantic love itself, although intrinsically valuable, does not seem educationally valuable. In these cases, intrinsic value does not seem correspond to value in a way which can easily guide educational decisions, such as those about curriculum content.

A second puzzle which arises is that, although intrinsic value is often defined in contrast to instrumental value, instrumentally valuable activities and states of affairs are often cast as educationally valuable. Learning to read is valuable insofar as it provides access to other goods; it is instrumentally and educationally valuable. A curriculum which neglected teaching children how to read would be non-educational. Learning how and why to eat well and exercise are other examples of activities that are instrumentally valuable and seem educational in virtue of this instrumental value. Vocational education, relationships education, substance use and abuse education, even learning how to tie shoelaces, are all instrumentally valuable pursuits, which plausibly have educational value. Arguments which claim that the intrinsic value of something lends it educational value only lead to the conclusion that the intrinsically valuable activity, state of affairs or good ought to be included in educational programmes if it is also held that intrinsic value takes precedence over instrumental value. This does not seem to be the case, plenty of instrumentally valuable activities seem equally, if not more good for the person being educated than intrinsically valuable activities. One thing that we want from the concept of educational value is the ability to rank and sort valuable activities from less valuable activities. If intrinsically valuable activities and instrumentally valuable activities are both educationally valuable, but distinct and perhaps incommensurable, how can decisions be made about which activities trump others when allocating curriculum space?

A further puzzle is highlighted by White's response to Peters' transcendental argument. White claims that Peters fails to countenance the idea that the pursuit of truth is not the only intrinsically, or educationally valuable pursuit. Asking 'why do this rather than that' may not amount to a commitment to truth: 'suppose a man with a knowledge of the arts and sciences decides to jettison any interest he had in them in favour of a life of idleness and comfort: can it be proved to him that he is somehow irrational, that rationality demands that in his own interests he takes the other course?' (White, 1973, p. 14). Spending time in idleness and comfort is not instrumentally valuable; if it holds any value at all, which it clearly does for some people, then that value is surely intrinsic. If there are intrinsically valuable pursuits other than the pursuit of knowledge, then why is not a liberal education also an education into idleness? White concludes that there are no valid arguments to this end. The intrinsic value of truth does not explain why activities centred on the pursuit of truth ought to be the focus of the curriculum, rather than other intrinsically valuable activities. A similar case could be made for arguments appealing to the intrinsic value of arts education, or of religious education: there are many other intrinsically valuable pursuits, so why insist that students pursue arts education and religious education rather than other activities. White's solution is to briefly introduce students to the full range of activities

they might value; he does not agree with Peters that there are a fixed number of intrinsically valuable pursuits which constitute an education.

These puzzles demonstrate the importance of examining the concept of intrinsic value in relation to educational value, and subjecting any possible relationship to scrutiny. The puzzles are not conclusive in any way, they are merely illustrative of a set of issues surrounding the idea of intrinsic value in education which require clarification. In the remainder of the paper, I will explore the concept of intrinsic value in more detail in an attempt to provide clarity about its relationship with educational value. First, I will set out Korsgaard's distinctions between intrinsic and extrinsic value, and instrumental and final value. I will then apply these different ways of understanding the idea of intrinsic value to the activities, objects and states of affairs sometimes described as intrinsically valuable in education. I conclude that intrinsic value plays a minimal role in considerations about educational value. This holds, regardless of how it is understood, or of the sort of educational activity, state of affairs, or good being considered.

## INTRINSIC, EXTRINSIC, FINAL AND INSTRUMENTAL VALUE

The most common construal of intrinsic value is that it sits in opposition to instrumental value. Something is intrinsically valuable if it is valuable for its own sake; it is instrumentally valuable if it is valuable as a tool to achieve something else. However, Korsgaard argues that this misconstrues intrinsic value through a series of conflation between two different sets of distinctions (1996, p. 249). She sums up the misconstrued account as follows: 'objects, activities, or whatever, have an instrumental value if they are valued for the sake of something else- tools, money, and chores would be standards examples. A common explanation of the supposedly contrasting kind, intrinsic goodness, is to say that a thing is intrinsically good if it is valued for its own sake' (*ibid.*, p. 250). Rather than contrasting intrinsic value with instrumental value, Korsgaard argues that there are two distinctions at play when it comes to value: a distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic value and a distinction between final and instrumental value. Once these distinctions have been clarified, light is shed on the puzzles about the relationship between intrinsic value and educational value.

The distinction between intrinsic value and extrinsic value is a distinction between the source of value of an activity, state of affairs or object. This distinction is 'between things which have their value in themselves and things which derive value from some other source' (*ibid.*, p. 250). One way of understanding this account of intrinsic value is that intrinsic value is contained within an object or state of affairs itself, and so it holds regardless of the context: 'if you find that a certain kind of thing is not good in any and all circumstances, that it is good in some cases and not others, its goodness is extrinsic- it is derived from or dependent upon the circumstances' (*ibid.*, p. 251). It could be argued that beauty is intrinsically valuable, that a world with beauty is better than a world without beauty, regardless of other circumstances. Alternatively, it could be argued that beauty is extrinsically valuable, resting on the experiences it elicits in people, and that a world with beauty but no people would be no better than such a world without beauty. This account of intrinsic value, as value residing within an object can be traced back to Moore, as 'very roughly speaking, something's intrinsic properties are the properties it would have in isolation' (Bradley, 2002, p. 23). Something is intrinsically valuable if, even in isolation, it holds its value within itself. Something is extrinsically valuable if its value derives from some external source.

Korsgaard's second distinction is between instrumental value and final value. This distinction is not about the properties of an object or state of affairs, but about whether it is desirable for its own sake, or for the sake of something else. Money is instrumentally valuable; it is valuable insofar as it allows people to achieve other ends. If money was not capable of serving as an instrument for meeting other ends, it would hold no value. On the other hand, pleasure can be seen as an end in itself, it has final value. Someone might justify going to an art gallery because it is a pleasurable experience for them. However, it would seem strange to ask them to justify seeking a pleasurable experience, because pleasure is more plausibly a final end, it is valued for its own sake. Something is instrumentally valuable if it is valued as a means to an end; it is finally valuable if it is valuable as an end in itself. Korsgaard thinks that the term intrinsic value

is ambiguous as it is used to refer to both final value (as opposed to instrumental value) and intrinsic value (as opposed to extrinsic value).

Korsgaard points out that attempting to argue that states of affairs with intrinsic value are necessarily states of affairs with final value requires a theoretical link between the two different distinctions: 'if intrinsic is taken to be the opposite of instrumental, then it is under the influence of a theory: a theory according to which the two distinctions in goodness are the same, or amount to the same thing. According to such a theory, final goods or things valuable as ends will be the same as intrinsic goods, and instrumental goods, or things valuable as means will be the same as extrinsic goods' (ibid., p. 250). If it is assumed that something which is valuable as a final end has intrinsic value, then 'the significance of the former [intrinsic/extrinsic] distinction drops out' (ibid., p. 251). If, instead, we 'equate ends and intrinsically good things ... by claiming that those things which have intrinsic value are or ought to be treated as ends', then the significance of the final/instrumental distinction is undermined (ibid., p. 251). Korsgaard holds that this conflation of the two distinctions rests on an unjustified claim that we ought to act on 'the attribute of intrinsic goodness' (ibid., p. 251). For example, spending time with a loved one can, under certain circumstances be difficult and lack properties which would afford it intrinsic (as opposed to extrinsic) value, but it could still be held as a final (as opposed to instrumental) end for someone. Conversely, extrinsic value and instrumental value do not always go together; viewing a sunset might only be good under certain conditions, and so not intrinsically valuable, but if viewing the sunset is extrinsically valuable, it is not necessarily instrumentally valuable (ibid., p. 252).

To summarise, in spite of the commonly held distinction between intrinsic value and instrumental value, Korsgaard suggests that there are in fact two distinctions. There is a distinction between intrinsic value, which rests on properties of an object or state of affairs, and extrinsic value, which rests on external conditions. There is a second distinction between instrumental value, where an object or state of affairs is valuable insofar as it serves as a means of reaching another state of affairs, and final value, where an object or state of affairs is valued for its own sake. This means that something might be both intrinsically and instrumentally valuable, or extrinsically valuable and hold final value, or any other combination of the two sets of distinctions. The assumption that final value derives from intrinsic value only works if 'a mysterious ontological attribute' links the two (ibid., p. 273). The significance of drawing these two different distinctions for Korsgaard is that 'the things that are important to us can be good: good because of our desires and interests and loves and because of the physiological, psychological, economic, historical, symbolic and other conditions under which human beings live' (ibid., p. 273). On Korsgaard's account, final value can ground normative claims, thus widening the sorts of activities, states of affairs or objects which can be taken into consideration to more than those with intrinsic (as opposed to extrinsic) value.

Claims about intrinsic value and education can fairly be described as lacking the clarity provided by Korsgaard's two distinctions. For example, it is unclear whether Peters' discussions about intrinsic value appeal to an intrinsic/extrinsic distinction, or an instrumental/final distinction. In some instances, Peters discusses something akin to the instrumental/final distinction. He grapples with what makes an activity in somebody's interest and suggests that 'the notion of interests ... is complex. It combines a judgment about something being good or worthwhile with a judgment about its suitability to the individual in question' (1966, p. 154). Peters appears to be following Korsgaard's suggestion of distinguishing between final value and intrinsic value, although little more is said on the matter. In other instances, He distinguishes between something that is good, and something that is suitable for an individual. Rather than settle on activities which are ends in themselves, Peters emphasises the intrinsic properties of activities. He says that someone who is interested in the question 'why do this rather than that?' takes 'considerations intrinsic to activities themselves which constitute reasons for pursuing them, as distinct from considerations with what such activities might lead up to which usually relate to the satisfactions of what Plato called the 'necessary appetites' (ibid., p. 154). The sort of intrinsic value that Peters thinks theoretical activities have is not related to people's interests, but rather to the properties of activities. This best corresponds with Korsgaard's intrinsic/extrinsic distinction, rather than the final/instrumental distinction. However, it seems likely that Peters uses the term 'intrinsic' in two different ways. For example, later he suggests that activities which pursue truth are also final ends, and so intrinsically valuable (ibid., p. 161).

Wright's argument for the inclusion of religious education on the curriculum appears to appeal to a final value account of intrinsic value. He claims that learning about and from religious and secular world views is a 'process of spiritual formation that fundamentally shapes the people we are. Religious education at its best generates an informed, critical and reflective self-understanding in the light of our developing relationships with others-in-community, with the natural world, and with the core question of the ultimate order of things. Such a process is best viewed as an end in itself, one from which no pupils should be excluded' (2005, p. 27). Koopman takes a mixed approach to intrinsic value, claiming that the arts education should be viewed as intrinsically valuable, and also finally valuable. For example, he claims 'value is to be found in the artistic activity itself' (ibid., p. 91), suggesting intrinsic rather than extrinsic value. He then says that this stands in contrast to 'something resulting from this' (ibid., p. 91), suggesting a final/instrumental understanding of intrinsic value. Koopman concludes that the arts offer fulfilling experiences, which are ends in themselves (ibid., p. 95). Ambiguity about the meaning of intrinsic value is not uncommon in arguments about educational value such that regardless of their intentions, Koopman, Wright and Peters' claims rest on at least potentially ambiguous accounts of intrinsic value. In what follows, I will show that whichever account of intrinsic value they are interpreted as appealing to, it adds little to their claims about educational value.

## INTRINSIC VALUE AND EDUCATIONAL VALUE

Korsgaard's two distinctions can be applied to claims about education as a tool for assessing them. I will use the distinctions to examine three different possible claims about the intrinsic value of education: (1) that a particular activity, such as arts education or religious education is intrinsically valuable and so educationally valuable; (2) Peters' broader argument that theoretical activities are educationally valuable because they are concerned with the pursuit of truth; and (3) that a state of affairs such as flourishing is intrinsically valuable, and that the intrinsic value of flourishing determines educational value of other activities, states of affairs or objects.

### Activities and intrinsic value

The first sort of claim about the relationship between educational value and intrinsic value is that particular activities are educationally valuable because they are intrinsically valuable. Using Korsgaard's distinctions, this might mean one of two things. First, the activity might be intrinsically valuable in that it would be valuable regardless of external conditions, so that its value rests entirely on properties internal to it. The second possibility is that activities hold final value, as opposed to instrumental value. As an illustration, when Koopman says that an argument for including arts education on the curriculum ought to rest on the intrinsic value of engagement with the arts, he might mean either that engagement with the arts has valuable internal properties, or that engagement with the arts is valuable for its own sake.

If Koopman is claiming that arts education is worthwhile because of properties internal to engagement with the arts, then it is valuable regardless of its effect on students, or whether students value it, enjoy it, or get anything out of it. This is because, on this understanding, intrinsic value is the value that something holds even in complete isolation from the world. This definition of intrinsic value seems at odds with any satisfactory concept of educational value. As set out earlier, a necessary condition of being educationally valuable is being good for the person being educated. As such, educational value depends on value to students. If arts education is only educationally valuable if it is good for the student, then it is the extrinsic value of arts education that matters, not its intrinsic value. The value of arts education rests on the relationship between engaging with the arts and students; its effect on students is an extrinsic, not intrinsic aspect of engaging with the arts. Whether arts education has valuable characteristics independent of contingent features of the world, has no bearing on whether it is educational because these independently valuable characteristics might not be good for a person.

Alternatively, Koopman might mean that arts education is educationally valuable because it holds final value; it is something that is desirable for its own sake. This maintains a commonly appealed to contrast to the idea that arts education is instrumentally valuable; for example, Nigel Tubbs claims that 'the value of the arts is often defined in its opposition to instrumental rationality and its weapons of mass utility: performance, measurement, technique, and efficiency' (2013, p. 441). If arts education is not valuable as an instrument, then perhaps it is valuable for its own sake. The first problem with this claim is that it is not clear that arts education is valuable for its own sake. Final value, unlike intrinsic value, is not held in isolation from extrinsic states of affairs, and so something holds final value if it is valuable to somebody. This point offers some further support for claims about the relationship between intrinsic value and educational value since it honours the intuition that something is educational in relation to the effect it has on students. However, it is not clear that arts education will hold final value to all students, and since final value is unrelated to intrinsic value, there are no grounds for saying that arts education ought to hold final value for all students without either conflating the two distinctions, or positing an extra theoretical step which links intrinsic value with final value.

It could be held that the fact that arts education is likely to hold final value to at least some students justifies its educational value. This, however, raises questions about how to decide between the multitude of activities which can potentially hold final value to someone when making decisions about educational programmes. Ascribing final value does not provide much guidance about educational value since almost everything is has the potential to be valued as an end in itself by someone. To say that something has educational value is most useful if it implies that it ought to be considered as a contender for curriculum inclusion. This might mean that an activity is more valuable to more people than many other activities; or that it is good for them in some distinctive way. Almost any activity has final value to someone, and so saying that arts education has final value does not imply that it ought to be considered for curriculum inclusion. It is potentially educationally valuable, but not necessarily so. Final value is an adequate concept for identifying sources of general value in the world, but it does not provide much guidance on the subsection of general value which should be considered educational value.

To put this point another way, I initially set out two claims about educational value. The first is that something is only educationally valuable if it is good for the person being educated. The second is that the concept of educational value is different from the concept of general value because it is able to guide decisions about curriculum content or educational aims. Many activities, goods or states of affairs are valuable, both finally and intrinsically. However, activities, goods and states of affairs which are educationally valuable are a subset of generally valuable activities, goods and states of affairs. They are the sorts of things that we are justified in promoting in schools *via* the curriculum, or within the aims of education. Finally valuable activities, goods and states of affairs are not necessarily good for the individual being educated, because what an individual holds to have final value is up to them. Secondly, almost all activities can be called finally valuable since it is possible that for any activity there exists someone who will value it as an end in itself. This means that saying that an activity, good or state of affairs is finally valuable does not necessarily mean that it is educationally valuable. Ascribing final value does not pick out a subset of value that might be considered especially worthwhile for including on educational programmes. In this sense, final value is unhelpful when it comes to discussions about education.

Together, regardless of which distinction is used, the intrinsic value of arts education seems to have little bearing on its educational value. If arts education is intrinsically, as opposed to extrinsically valuable, this has little bearing on its educational value since educational value requires some appeal to a positive effect of an activity on a student. If arts education has final, as opposed to instrumental value, then arts education is educationally valuable to those who find it valuable, but there are no grounds for saying that all students ought to hold that the arts have final value. Some students will simply not value the arts as ends in themselves, and there is nothing wrong with that. Neither intrinsic nor final value establishes the educational value of arts education if educational value requires being good enough for enough students to consider including on educational programmes. Arts education could be educationally valuable; it could be good enough for enough students to teach in schools, but this would not be because of its intrinsic value.

Perhaps arts education provides skills that are good for all students; this would lend it educational value, but not in virtue of intrinsic or final value.

## Peters' transcendental argument and intrinsic value

Peters' transcendental argument meets a similar fate. Peters rests the value of theoretical activities on the intrinsic value of the pursuit of truth. This can either be read as the idea that the pursuit of truth is valuable because of some properties internal to it, or that the pursuit of truth is an end in itself. If the pursuit of truth is intrinsically, as opposed to extrinsically valuable, then its intrinsic value has little bearing on educational value since something is educationally valuable in virtue of the effect it has on students, which would be extrinsic to the pursuit of truth itself. If the pursuit of truth is valuable as a final end, then White's criticism holds: Why should we expect students to value truth as an end in itself? What is wrong with the student who is disinterested in the question 'why do this rather than that' and spends their days fishing for trout rather than engaged in theoretical activities? Final value is determined by each individual, rather than by the nature of the activity valued, and since there is no clear relationship between intrinsic and final value, there is no reason to stipulate that students ought to value the pursuit of truth as an end in itself. The pursuit of truth, on this view, is only educationally valuable to those who already value it as a final end. This is where the force of Peters' transcendental argument lies; Peters tries to argue that people already value the pursuit of truth as a final end, but this is not clearly true. Some people do not care about the question 'why do this rather than that?' Peters cannot recourse to the stronger claim that students ought to value the pursuit of truth as a final end because the intrinsic (as opposed to extrinsic) value of the truth does not lead to the conclusion that truth ought to be valued as a final end. The strongest claim that can be taken from Peters' transcendental argument is that some people value truth as a final end. This lends the pursuit of truth general value, but not educational value because it does not pick out a subset of distinctively educational activities, states of affairs or goods.

Although Peters argues that it is the activity of pursuing truth which is valuable, a slightly different argument could be presented based on the value truth itself, as an object or educational good. If truth itself is intrinsically valuable, then spending school time on the pursuit of truth is worthwhile. This sort of argument is presented by Newman, who rests the value of a liberal education on the intrinsic value of knowledge. This approach does not have any clear advantages over arguments for the intrinsic value of activities. If truth is intrinsically, as opposed to extrinsically valuable, then its value is independent of its effect on students. This leaves open the question of why students should be provided with truths. Alternatively, if truth is valuable as a final end, it is still only educationally valuable to those students who hold that it is a final end, and already value it. This does not mean that truth and knowledge are not educationally valuable, just that the educational value of truth and knowledge does not derive from its intrinsic value. For example, it could be argued that truth is valuable insofar as it facilitates effective interaction with the world, making it instrumentally and extrinsically valuable, as opposed to intrinsically or finally valuable. The educational value of truth could rest on its extrinsic and instrumental value.

As it stands, intrinsic value does not determine the educational value of activities or goods, or at least it does not determine the educational value of an activity or good for all students. Arguments for including activities or goods on the curriculum in virtue of their intrinsic value either understood in terms of intrinsic/extrinsic value, or in terms of final/instrumental value, do not work as they do not establish a link between intrinsic and educational value.

## Flourishing and intrinsic value

The previous approaches to arguing from intrinsic value to educational value appeal to the intrinsic value of particular activities or objects to make claims about what ought to be considered educationally valuable. However, there is a third way that intrinsic value is used in relation to educational value. This is that some end state of affairs is intrinsically

valuable, and so ought to guide our understanding of educational activities and objects. A common way that this is framed is that education ought to bring about flourishing, and that flourishing is intrinsically valuable. This means that any activity which brings about the state of affairs captured by the term flourishing is educationally valuable. On this line of thinking, educational value is grounded by the intrinsic value of flourishing.

Flourishing is often held as an aim of education. Brighouse claims that 'the school should see itself as having an obligation to facilitate the long-term flourishing of children' (2006, p. 42); flourishing was the ultimate aim of Platonic and Aristotelian accounts of liberal education; White and Reiss argue that schools should 'equip each child to lead a life that is personally flourishing [and]... help others to do so too' (2013, p. 1); and Kristjánsson describes current trends in the philosophy of education as appealing to 'the new paradigm of the flourishing student' (2017, p. 88). Since flourishing is by definition good, it makes sense to say that all people ought to flourish. Unlike arts education, religious education or the pursuit of truth, it does seem that people do value flourishing. Perhaps, then, flourishing, as a final end, can ground the attribution of educational value through an appeal to intrinsic value.

When Korsgaard distinguishes between intrinsic and final value, she suggests that there is a frequent assumption that intrinsic value and final value are related, so that if something has properties internal to itself which are valuable, it is also the case that it is worthwhile as an end in itself. For example, if a work of art is intrinsically valuable because it is objectively beautiful, then it is also the case that it has final value to anyone who happens across it. Korsgaard points out that this is not necessarily the case. A world with the work of art might be objectively better than a world without the work of art, but this does not imply that anyone has any imperative to value viewing it as a final end. The idea of flourishing is interesting because, when presented in its strongest sense, it bridges the gap between intrinsic and final value. Kristjánsson describes an Aristotelian account of flourishing which is 'the intrinsically desirable, ultimate end of human beings' (2017, p. 100). It is a state of affairs which is valuable in itself, but also valued as a final end. Korsgaard's distinctions demonstrate just how theoretically laden claims about flourishing in education can be. The intrinsic-final value bridge demands theoretical commitments such as those provided by Aristotelian ethics. However, more minimal accounts are also viable. For example, Brighouse (2006) defines flourishing in terms of well-being which is only contingently valued as a final end but also almost universally valued as an end in itself.

Whether flourishing determines educational value is complicated by the fact that flourishing itself is not the sort of thing that can be directly taught in schools; instead, a range of activities which aim towards flourishing could be attributed educational value. The idea that a plurality of activities can be attributed educational value is also a strength of this account. The first way that activities can contribute towards flourishing is through being instrumental to flourishing. An example of an activity which is instrumental to flourishing is learning how to read and write. Being able to read and write on its own is not part of the good life. However, given the society that we live in, being able to read and write is an important means of accessing other goods which are part of the good life. For example, being able to read allows access to reading for pleasure, which might contribute to flourishing. Similarly, the ability to make money is instrumental to flourishing, not because it is part of the good life, but because it is instrumental to accessing goods which are. The second way that an activity might hold educational value in virtue of its relationship with flourishing is that it is constitutive of flourishing. If something is constitutive of flourishing, then it is a necessary characteristic of a good life. It could be argued that appreciation of beauty, living ethically, pursuing truth, or the experience of pleasure are constitutive of a flourishing life. If the pursuit of truth is constitutive of flourishing, then the pursuit of truth is valuable to the extent that it is an activity which is a necessary component of flourishing. This might be said to lend the pursuit of truth intrinsic value.

These considerations suggest that an activity might be educational if it is either an instrumental means towards flourishing, or if it is a constitutive part of living a flourishing life. Returning to Korsgaard, the former would not be a form of intrinsic value (understood either in contrast to extrinsic value, or as a final end), whereas the latter would. This is because instrumental value is not intrinsic value, on either distinction. Activities or objects which are constitutive of flourishing, rather than instrumental to flourishing, are the only contenders for educational value deriving from the intrinsic value of flourishing. However, it does not seem to be the case that activities or objects which are constitutive

of flourishing are any more educationally valuable than those which are instrumental to flourishing. This again casts doubt on the idea that educational value is related to intrinsic value.

If educational value can be determined by intrinsic value, then it would need to be the case that only activities which were constitutive of flourishing would be educationally valuable, otherwise they are simply instrumentally valuable. However, it does not seem to be the case that activities which constitute a flourishing life are more educationally valuable than those which are instrumental means towards flourishing. For example, reading is clearly educationally valuable because it is instrumental towards flourishing. Being introduced to, and taught how to appreciate beauty, is also educationally valuable because it is constitutive of flourishing. There is no reason to think that being taught how to appreciate beauty is more educationally valuable than being taught how to read just because it has a constitutive rather than contingent relationship with flourishing. This means that intrinsic value, as opposed to instrumental value, plays no role in determining whether or not something is educationally valuable, even if the aim of education is some intrinsically valuable state like flourishing. Whether or not an activity is intrinsically or finally valuable, as opposed to extrinsically or instrumentally valuable has no bearing on whether it is something that should be considered educationally valuable. Activities, objects or states of affairs from each category are all potentially educationally valuable.

This means that Peters' argument for a broadly liberal education which appeals to the intrinsic value of the pursuit of truth is no more decisive than an argument for a vocational education which would contribute to flourishing by allowing students to make money. Similarly, an argument for arts education based on the idea that an appreciation of the arts is constitutive of the good life is no more persuasive than an argument for learning how to read based on its instrumental value. Whether or not an activity has final value or instrumental value does not determine its educational value, even if the ultimate aim of education is some intrinsically valuable state such as flourishing.

## CONCLUSION

The intrinsic value of activities, objects or states of affairs is often appealed to in claims about educational value. Ascribing educational value to an activity, object or state of affairs is useful insofar as it can aid curriculum development or differentiate worthwhile from less worthwhile practices in educational institutions; at the very least the concept of educational value needs refer to a distinct subset within the area of general value. Furthermore, whether or not something has educational value is conditional on whether it is good for the person being educated. If intrinsic value is a useful concept in considerations about educational value, then it should contribute to this ability to differentiate worthwhile from less worthwhile practices in education.

Intrinsic value is often appealed to when making claims about educational value. Sometimes claims are made about the intrinsic value of particular activities such as religious education. Sometimes claims are made about the intrinsic value of curricula, such as the appeal to intrinsic value to justify a liberal education. The appeal to flourishing as an aim of education suggests that the intrinsic value of flourishing grounds educational value. These sorts of claims all equate intrinsic value with educational value in one way or another. Simultaneously, they raise a series of puzzles which cast doubt on whether educational value and intrinsic value correspond to one another at all.

Korsgaard suggests that the commonly held distinction between intrinsic and instrumental value is a conflation of two separate distinctions; a distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic value and a distinction between final and instrumental value. Furthermore, Korsgaard claims that there is no relationship between these two distinctions, so that the intrinsic value of an activity does not imply that it ought to be valued as an end in itself. These distinctions suggest that intrinsic value and educational value are unrelated; that intrinsic value does not determine educational value. The intrinsic (as opposed to extrinsic) value of an activity has no bearing on educational value because educational value requires some relationship between an activity and its effect on a student; educational value requires extrinsic value. The final (as opposed to instrumental) value of an activity has some bearing on educational value, but fails to support some of the stronger claims made about the educational value of activities. If an activity holds final value to someone, then that activity is educationally valuable to that person; however, there is no reason to think hold that all people

ought to hold that activity as valuable, and so no reason to say that one activity is more educationally worthwhile than another. Finally, even if a state of affairs such as flourishing can be said to hold final value for everyone, whether or not an activity is an instrumental means in pursuit of that final end, or a constitutive part of that end makes no difference to that activity's educational value.

If arts education, religious education or the pursuit of truth are educationally valuable, it is not because they are intrinsically valuable, regardless of which distinction is being appealed to. Activities, objects or states of affairs are educationally valuable if they are good for a student, either because the student values that activity for its own sake, or because that activity is instrumental to, or constitutive of something else that the student values for its own sake. Whether a student values something for its own sake is up to them, there is no imperative to value some things rather than others just because they are intrinsically, rather than extrinsically valuable. Even if it is generally agreed that flourishing is intrinsically and finally valuable, and ought to guide educational practices, this does not mean that the intrinsic value of an activity makes it educationally valuable. This is because activities which are instrumental to flourishing, and activities which are constitutive of flourishing are both equal contenders for educational value. Intrinsic value, whichever way it is understood, has little bearing on educational value.

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