

HAS GOOD AS INTRINSIC VALUE NO TRUE MEANING IN INTUITIONISM?

Intuitionism as an ethical theory holds that the nature of ethical judgments is seen in a sense of intuitive vision or wisdom, since ethical or moral words are only mere qualities of things and not natural properties. For the intuitionists, unlike the naturalists, the assertion that «a thing is natural» does not mean that «it is good», because nature cannot determine the specific essence or nature of the good, since goodness means something more than natural. However, the intuitionists in saying «this is good» do not mean that a thing is good by reason of a natural property, since they see no empirical way of assigning such a meaning to the word «good». In this sense, of course, all intuitionists would agree with Moore, that the meaning of the good is a simple and indefinable quality¹. Therefore, among the supporters of intuitionism, the most outstanding exponents would be Moore, Ross, Prichard, Ewing and possibly even Plato in a loose sense.

Plato is an intuitionist in the sense that his ethics are directed towards an attainment of man's «highest good» as distinguished from sense-pleasures. He seeks to determine the meaning of the good in the intuitive vision of an indescribable and unanalyzable «Form of the Good», as a realization of intellectual satisfaction, that is, the fulfillment of human soul in its actual functioning. Plato approaches the meaning of the good in a symmetrical and analogous proportion of the «good» (*kalon*) and the «true» (*alethes*), since he sees that they are the forms which provide the means for the «good life» (*euzen*) of man. The «good life» is the only true good of man, which is sought by the motive of love or *eros*, the specific desire for the human good or happiness². However, the good is that which is chosen for itself and not for the sake of pleasure, honor, wisdom, reason and virtue, since they are the means by which happiness is judged. Therefore, according to Plato, the good is a unique «Form» which, as the object of the soul's «contemplation of essence and the brightest region of being», is its objective value³.

1. Cf. on this point W. FRANKENA, *Ethics*, Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, M. J., 1963 Intuitionism.

2. PLATO, *Philebus*, 64 b.

3. IDEM, *Republic*, VII, 518 c.



Thus, Plato, is seeking to determine the meaning of the good in intuitionism, that is, the appeal to our intuition or intuitive experience of the unanalyzable objective goodness, which is common to all things, he defines the «good» as an objective quality which is the object of contemplation. He sees that the good is the pure Form of intelligibility, which reflects upon man's soul and as such it becomes his object of inquiry, since it is the highest value of man. Such a goodness is the essential Form of being, since it is universal and therefore it possesses a value for man's life beyond any utilitarian consequences or pursuits of pleasure. Hence, it is clear that man in order to see and understand value in his life he must rise to the vision of the «Form of the Good» which «transcends essence in dignity and surpassing power⁴». Plato maintains that there is a hierarchy of Forms, and the highest Form, which is identical with the «Form of the Good», is the cause of being and cognition. He considers the «Form of the Good» as the highest Form, since it is an intrinsic value and not a property of being. This Form is perfect in its kind and possesses value, in as much as such possession is in consonance with the doctrine of the Forms. The highest Form, as the richest Form of all, stands as the value of all truth and beauty in being, and therefore all sense-objects owe their being and intelligibility, and the human mind the power of its cognition⁵.

The «Form of the Good», according to Plato, is superior to the Form of the being, since the former bestows intelligibility and it exists simultaneously with the things, for things as «the objects of knowledge, not only receive from the presence of the Good their being known, but their very existence and essence is derived from it⁶». The fact that the highest Form is an intelligible essence itself implies that all the ideal Forms are objectively grounded in the absolute principle of value, which remains within itself, as the ideal of human value and virtues. For Plato the «Form of the Good» is the «greatest thing to learn», since by virtue of it all the things become «useful and beneficial» to man⁷. Plato, however, sees the purpose of man's life as the fulfillment of the good, since he realizes that:

«Man fixes his gaze upon the things of the eternal and unchanging order, and seeing that they neither wrong nor are wronged by one another, but all abide in harmony as reason

4. *Op. cit.*, VI, 509 a, b.

5. *Op. cit.*, VI, 508.

6. *Op. cit.*, VI, 509 b.

7. *Op. cit.*, VI, 505 a.

bids, he will endeavor to imitate them and, as far as may be, to fashion himself in their likeness and assimilate himself to them⁸.

Therefore, according to Plato, the meaning of the good as an intuition or intuitive experience is an intellectual activity or quality, that is, an intrinsic value which belongs exclusively in the state of mind.

But, the pioneer of the contemporary ethical intuitionism is Moore, who inherited intuitionism from his teacher Sidgwick, and he never abandoned its basic principle. Moore is an intuitionist, since he concentrates on the meaning of the word «good» rather than on the discussion of the nature of the good as a moral end. He sees that the moral point of view in ethics is to state what things are «good» rather than what is their nature and what this nature does. Moore argues that the fact that the things are natural implies that they are good in themselves, and, therefore, «good» is the name of a simple and unanalyzable quality of things, that is, an intrinsic value which belongs to the things, and it is the object of man's intuitive vision or mental activity⁹.

The word «good», according to Moore, means some quality which belongs to a thing in the same way the white colour belongs to a white thing. The meaning of the good for Moore neither can be identical with that which is «pleasurable» nor with that which promotes «happiness», because there is no natural property or any complex of natural properties which can justify the meaning of such a good as this. Thus, Moore, by his claim that the meaning of the good is an intuition of a simple and unanalyzable quality of things, assumes that both the ethical naturalists and hedonistic utilitarianists in their attempt to define the meaning of the good commit the naturalistic fallacy. The fallacy itself consist in the identity of the good with a natural property — an identity which results in seeking to define the word «good» in terms of some natural thing. This identity never occurs, since a natural quality exists only with its own existence in time, and therefore it cannot exist as a quality of some natural thing. Also, Moore, by his observation that the good never transcends any reality, assumes that the metaphysicians commit the naturalistic fallacy, since they seek to define the word «good» in terms of some metaphysical object. The metaphysicians, however, are wrong, since they claim that, because every truth transcends reality, therefore goodness transcends reality too¹⁰.

8. *Op. cit.*, VI, 500 c.

9. Cf. on this point G. E. MOORE, *Naturalistic Ethics, Principia Ethica*, Cambridge University Press, 1966.

10. Cf. on this point IDEM, *Naturalistic Ethics and Metaphysical Ethics, Principia Ethica*.

Therefore, Moore, by insisting that the things have an intrinsic value, assumes that the things in fact possess an intrinsic goodness, since the word «good» expresses a reflective consciousness or moral attitudes. In other words, when we call a thing «good», we mean that this thing possesses the attribute of goodness, which belongs to it as its simple quality. Moore, in conclusion, holds that the meaning of the good, as «good in itself», is «intrinsically good» and as such it means a simple and unanalyzable quality of things. Therefore, such a quality is a unique and non-natural property, that is, an intrinsic value, since it is an indefinable principle which is known primarily and directly in itself without the mediation of a natural property by intuition¹¹.

Ross combines both Sidgwick's and Moore's versions of intuitionism, since he derives the meaning of the good by a reference to both terms «ought» and «good» in a mutual correspondence of one to the other. He holds that goodness is a normative quality, which finds its justification in the moral judgements only, since it is a single and non-natural property, which is involved in the nature and relations of the things. However, the meaning of the good, according to Ross, is seen as what is known as «intrinsically good», that is, an intuitive experience of virtue or knowledge¹².

Ross observes that a non-natural property is «intrinsically good», because it exists by its own merit, and therefore it is known only as an intuitive meaning, which we call «good in itself». This kind of property as «good in itself», for Ross, means «good as an end», which is distinguished from the meaning of «good as a mean», since it possesses a value which stands as an intrinsic principle and reflects upon goodness. The meaning of «good as an end» Ross argues that it is seen in the nature and relations of the things in the sense that a thing of a particular nature is «good» only as known by intuition. Therefore, Ross, in seeing the meaning of the good as an intuitive experience, insists that this meaning is a non-natural property, which stands as a non-natural predicate of the things which are judged as good, that is, «good in itself», which as an intrinsic value is known by intuition¹³.

Prichard, unlike Moore and Sidgwick, in his *Moral Obligation* develops a subjective form of intuitionism, since he appeals to an instantaneous subjective meaning rather than to reason. Prichard's intuitionism is subjective in the sense that he considers obligation a characteristic of man rather than of ac-

11. Cf. on this point IDEM, Naturalistic Ethics, *Principia Ethica*.

12. Cf. on this point The Right and the Good, ROSS, D., Ed. BRANDT, R., *Value and Obligation*, Harcourt, New York, 1961.

13. Cf. on this point *ibid*.

tions. Thus, man under a moral obligation subjectifies himself and becomes a characteristic of himself which depends on the thought he may have about the situation he is in. However, the fact that man is aware of his obligations depends on the nature of his thought about it, since the meaning of the obligation to do certain things arises in man's unreflective consciousness. This fact Prichard explains on the ground that, in the absence of moral insight or intelligence, the contemplation of an act or situation is that which precludes all possibility of an intuition of good or bad, which by itself can serve as a moral reason for the understanding of the moral judgements¹⁴.

Therefore, Prichard observes that the sense in which we ought to do a certain thing arises in our unreflective consciousness as an activity of moral thinking; and it is this stage at which our attitude of obligation is one of unquestioning confidence. Thus, Prichard sees that there is a self-evidence of our obligations, an immediacy of our apprehension of them in an intuitive reflection. This realization of the self-evidence of obligations is a positive knowledge which supports the knowledge of the parallel immediacy of the apprehension of the goodness of the various virtues and of good dispositions, which implies an intuitive knowledge of the good, and therefore its meaning is conceived as an intuitive vision or wisdom. Hence, according to Prichard, the meaning of the good is apprehended as a subjective quality, and therefore it is a non-natural property, that is, an intrinsic value, which is the object of intuition, and it has only a subjective validity¹⁵.

Finally, in line with Sidgwick's intuitionism, Ewing develops a deontological intuitionism, since he maintains that the term «ought» implies such a non-natural property or quality as goodness. He thinks that «ought-judgements» express subjective feelings for something by which must be meant some non-natural property known by an intuitive reflection. Ewing sees that moral judgements can only be justified by reason, and as such are imposed on men by the objective situation, whenever such a non-natural property or quality is apprehended, namely, that of the good, as a vision of intuition. He argues in *The Definition of Good* that «ought-judgements» are deontological and the meaning for which these judgements stand is simply goodness in its objective sense and, therefore, as such it is an intrinsic value, which, as a non-natural property or quality, is the object of intuition¹⁶.

14. Cf. on this point A. I. MELDEN, *Ethical Theories*, Ed. On the Nature and Problems of Ethics, New Jersey, Englewood Cliffs, Prentice-Hall, 1967.

15. Cf. on this point H. A. PRICHARD, Does-Moral Philosophy Rest on a Mistake?, *Readings in Contemporary Ethical Theory*, Ed. Pahl & Schiller, N.J., Prentice-Hall, 1970.

16. A. C. EWING, *The Definition of Good*, New York, MacMillan, 1940, pp. 109, 157.

Ewing sees that Moore's arguments concerning the indefinability of the meaning of the good are not directed towards showing that the good is the only indefinable ethical or moral concept, or that to the word «good» cannot be given a non-naturalistic definition in terms of another concept of ethics. Yet, even though a deontologist, he agrees with Moore's basic argument, that the meaning of the word «good» is understood in the sense of an «intrinsic good», and therefore in this sense it means «good in itself», and as such it is known objectively by human intuition. Thus, Ewing conceives the meaning of the good in the state of mind as a reflective in intuition, which becomes the object of man's wisdom. Therefore, according to Ewing, the meaning of the good is a non-natural property or quality of the things, since it transcends itself as an intuitive judgement, and as such it is an intrinsic value which is known directly by intuition¹⁷.

Therefore, intuitionism, unlike the doctrine of naturalism, rejects the notion that nature is that which determines the meaning of the good, since there is no empirical evidence that there is such a natural property or quality which can be ascribed to goodness. The intuitionists admit that the meaning of the good must be seen in a sense of visualization or intuition. Thus, they see the meaning of the good in the sense of an object of thought, which is independent itself of nature or natural properties. Therefore, by the intuitionists, the word «good» may be seen as an ultimate meaning which stands for reference to the definition of the properties of things, that is to say, it is seen in the sense of an intrinsic value, which implies a concrete intuitive meaning of goodness.

Therefore, it is obvious that all intuitionists, regardless of their personal theories, would rather prefer to agree with Moore in the sense that the word «good» denotes a simple and unanalyzable quality. This quality as such is only a simple property of a non-natural sort which, as a non-empirical concept, is conceived in intuition as a self-evident truth. For this sort of quality cannot be the concrete description of the things in the scientific manner, and so to be the natural property of these things of which it is judged as such a quality. Therefore, the meaning of the good is a non-natural property or quality, that is, an intrinsic value, which stands as an alternative for the definition of the natural things¹⁸.

The moderate moral critic of this exposition on the discussion of the intuitionists on the meaning of the good, regardless of their slight differences, will see that each one of them arrives at the same interpretation, which itself

17. *Op. cit.*, pp. 112-15, 166.

18. W. K. FRANKENA, *Op. cit.*, pp. 85-87.

stands as a complete theory. Each one of these theorists, according to the sense in which he sees and interpretes the meaning of the good, offers his own solution, which, even though not total, still has ethical merit, and influences the moral code of the contemporary society. Nevertheless, the objective critic of the contemporary ethics will doubt if the above ethical theory of intuitionism evolves the true meaning of the good. He will rule out this thesis or solution of the above theory —namely, that the meaning of the good is a simple and unanalyzable quality, for it is an intrinsic principle— since the meaning of the good cannot be identical with a non-natural property or quality. For, in the first place, the objective critic will see that the word «good» rather has an «evaluative» meaning than an intrinsic value according to natural things; while in the second one, he will see that «intrinsic good», as a non-natural concept, however, raises these objections because he sees that the meaning of the good does not lie in the recognition that it is a non-natural concept or in the sense that «good» is a word which must be seen in use, before its meaning is understood, but rather in the sense that «good» is not the only interesting ethical or moral word.

The first form of criticism one may find in the writings of such contemporary moralists of the early nineteen fifties as: Urmson, Hare, Nowell-Smith, Toulmin, Baier and others who attempt a re-evaluation of the meaning of the good, that is, an evaluation of value. Thus, Urmson in his article «On Grading» insists that both theories, intuitionism as well as naturalism, have something to contribute to the understanding of ethical grading and not anything at all to the moral good. He sees that «grading» rather implies an «experience-appraisal» of the relative rank of various items, since the activity of grading shows the criteria, for first it places these items in different classes precisely classified and, secondly, it places them in their various categories in an order of merit. This is a formation of «grading labels» which works a unique and irreducible activity of grading rather than naming any natural or non-natural properties. For the «grading use» is only criteria by which we are grading the use of an ethical or moral word as «good» and not at all its qualities or properties¹⁹.

The moralist, according to Urmson, in discovering what these criteria are, he is seeing what moral standards may be adopted. Urmson in his article «On Grading» insists that there is only one moral standard of goodness, which may be based on the fact that one might grade ethical or moral criteria from the view-point of the ultimate grades of the «enlightened» or «unenlightened». He sees that the moral choice for the meaning of the good is closer to a

19. J. O. URMSON, On Grading, *Mind* LIX, No 234, 1950, pp. 148-160.

grading judgement than to a description, since the true criterion is a production of some desired end. Urmson observes that since there is no analytic identity of meaning between the criteria and the «grading labels», the criteria, according to circumstances, are different in each situation and, therefore, the meaning of the good has more than one sense. Thus, the meaning of the good resolves into a reasoning between the «enlightened» and «unenlightened», ultimate grades of active grading. Therefore, Urmson, in adopting such a grading analogy for moral discourse, by this analogy sees the word «good» as having an «evaluative» meaning, which is a «conventional appraisal» about those things which being judged are found good²⁰.

Hare takes advantage of Urmson's «analogy» by his suggestion of «prescriptive» moral words and the imperative class of «prescriptive» language. Thus, he claims that the assertion «this is a good apple» makes a true «evaluative» proposition to the person who is going to take it. This implies, however, that the uses of the word «good» taken in the «evaluative» meaning are restricted only in the «prescriptive» sense, but, nevertheless, the assertion «this is good», cannot be taken as a general inference, and therefore it must be chosen²¹. Hare holds that the meaning of the good is both «descriptive» and «evaluative», with the priority, of course, given to the latter, since the «evaluative» meaning is the primary feature of value-standard morals. The «descriptive» meaning is known by the standards the moralist uses to judge morality. This judging about morality, however, depends upon the behavior of the objects which are judged. For instance, a teacher in making the assertion that a particular member of his class is a «good student», supports his judgement by commending certain acts of behavior in students, and thus, the word «good» seems to have a descriptive force. Therefore, in this sense, the meaning of the good is rather a descriptive one²².

But, Hare sees that the meaning of the good through description is seen in an «evaluative» meaning, since the word «good» taken into the consideration of value-language is rather a «prescriptive» term which is an imperative or related to an imperative. This «evaluative» meaning of the word «good», however, must depend on the evaluative use of our language in the form of instruction or commendation, for ethical or moral words take their moral meaning through instructing and commending. Thus, according to Hare, the word «good» has an «evaluative» meaning; and therefore the meaning of the good is a rather conventional value.

20. *Ibid.*

21. R. M. HARE, *The Language of Morals*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1969, pp. 127-136.

22. *Op. cit.*, pp. 137-150.

Finally, this «evaluative» meaning of the word «good» supports Nowell-Smith. He observes in his *Ethics* that «good in itself» is used in the «gerundive force», since what is preferable «in itself» is what people ought to prefer; and therefore this use implies a value-judgement and consequently, the moralist must subscribe himself to all the value-judgements he may posit as examples of good. In this manner, however, Nowell-Smith introduces a general point for all the uses of moral language in all the contexts of «appraising», «describing», «advising» and «choosing». Thus, moral good in functioning both as an «aptness» word and as a «gerundive» word, is an object of choice. Therefore, the word «good» in its moral use has both of these functions, since it is a word «par excellence» which is rather established by moral convention²³.

Nowell-Smith sees that ethical or moral words are defined in a manner of «evaluative» words, since they are neither descriptive words nor dispositional meanings of feelings and attitudes. For such words are used to justify the motives of choice or appraising and not to describe any natural or non-natural properties at all. For ethical or moral words have a choice or purpose in themselves, however, value-judgements are justified in one's choice or actions. Thus, the meaning of the good, according to Nowell-Smith, is conceived as the meaning of the moral choice of a good action and therefore the word «good» has a conventional meaning, since there is no convincing evidence of proof for an objective moral property of goodness, that is, an intrinsic value²⁴.

Therefore, the above moralists by and large give the word «good» an «evaluative» meaning which, of course, overcomes the difficulty of the intrinsic meaning of the word in the ethical theory of intuitionism, since it involves a true meaning. The trouble, I think, in the theory of intuitionism lies in the fact that the intuitionists claim that the goodness of something is «good in itself», which, according to them, means what they call «intrinsically good». For the intuitionists believe that the word «good» has an intrinsic value, which is the object of intuition. Therefore, the intuitionists, in avoiding to see that the meaning of the good as «good in itself» depends on the criteria or standards used for judging the goodness of something, see it as intrinsic good, that is, the intrinsic value of being.

But, I think, this interpretation of the intuitionists on the meaning of the word «good» as «good in itself», that is, intrinsic value, involves incompatibilities because of its lack of natural consistency and phenomenal essence. In my opinion, it seems that «good in itself», as an intrinsic value is incompatib-

23. P. H. NOWELL-SMITH, *Ethics*, Baltimore, Maryland, Penguin Books, 1961, pp. 166-172.

24. *Op. cit.*, pp. 179-182.

le with the concept of individuals or natural things, because of the latter's concrete natural consistency. For «goodness», according to intuitionists, is a mere name or general word which, as a universal, is predicated of good things, while the concept of an individual or natural thing is conceived in that one which possesses a material body. For in fact, individuals or natural things are arbitrarily admitted entities, but they are distinct things which possess bodies, that is, things we grasp in our familiar uses of them as concrete material things, animals and people. For the material consistency of these individuals or natural things shows that they are material things, which fit together within the unique picture of the cosmos. However, a concept of an individual or natural thing is a concrete meaning and bears a special relation to that one which is found within the spatio-temporal system as a material object; while «goodness», as a bare name or general word, is not a true meaning and therefore it cannot stand as the concept of good things.

Secondly, it seems that the meaning of the word «good», as «good in itself», is also incompatible with the concept of individuals or natural things, because of the latter's phenomenal or empirical content. For an individual or natural thing is perceived as a concrete empirical object and therefore its concept is a true meaning which signifies its essence. For in fact, we perceive and experience individuals or natural things, which as real existents play their own roles among the other things within the framework of the cosmic reality, which are classified into their essential order by their concepts. Thus, in the process of the cosmos we conceive certain classes of states, events, processes and conditions, that is, the concepts of concrete material bodies, but we never conceive any concept of goodness, which the intuitionists claim they conceive through an intuitive vision or wisdom. For only individuals or natural things possess concepts, since they are observable for they exhibit spatio-temporal relations between themselves. Hence, the concept of an individual or natural thing is conceived through perception; while of goodness cannot be conceived such a concept, since it is not a true meaning of an individual thing, and therefore good as intrinsic value has not true meaning in intuitionism.

Therefore, in conclusion, the above critical analysis shows that the word «good» has an «evaluative» meaning, which must be evaluated by moral reasoning. For moral reason is the valid criterion which supports a person's decision to follow one course of action rather than another. In fact, moral reason guides man to follow a certain course of action in «choosing», «appraising», «tasting» and «accepting» all possible features in common which are evaluated as his individual good. Thus, it seems that in this sense moral reason has a conventional connotation, since it is the criterion in the process



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of the evaluation of man's good. For indeed, such an «evaluative» meaning of good is that «sort of thing» which is found and established by moral convention, which is explained in terms of moral reasoning. Goodness, however, is a discovery of human convention as sweetness, sourness, taste and such other qualities, which men decide to use in such senses. Therefore, the meaning of the good is rather «evaluative» than intrinsic, for our intuition is not strong enough to reach —if there is an intrinsic value as «good in itself», which the intuitionists call «intrinsically good»— such a simple and unanalyzable quality of things, that is, an intrinsic value, which the intuitionists claim to be the object of man's intuitive vision or wisdom²⁵.

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(Chalkidiki)

ΤΟ ΑΓΑΘΟ ΩΣ ΜΕΤΑΦΥΣΙΚΗ ΑΞΙΑ ΔΕΝ ΕΧΕΙ ΑΛΗΘΙΝΗ ΕΝΝΟΙΑ ΣΤΗΝ ΗΘΙΚΗ ΘΕΩΡΙΑ ΤΗΣ ΔΙΑΙΣΘΗΣΙΑΡΧΙΑΣ;

Περίληψη

Ὁ ἀπώτερος σκοπὸς τοῦ ἄρθρου εἶναι ἡ διατύπωση ἑνὸς πιθανοῦ ὁρισμοῦ τῆς ἐννοίας τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ὡς μεταφυσικῆς ἀξίας στὴν Ἠθικὴ Θεωρία τῆς Διαισθησιαρχίας καὶ ἡ διευκρίνιση τῆς ὑποκειμενικῆς ἢ ἀντικειμενικῆς ἐρμηνείας τῆς. Πρῶτα ἀπ' ὅλα ἡ ἔρευνα γιὰ τὴν ἐννοία τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ὡς μεταφυσικῆς ἀξίας ἐπικεντρώνεται στὴν ἐρμηνεία ποὺ δίνει ξεχωριστὰ ὁ καθένας ἀπὸ τοὺς ἐξέχοντες ἐρμηνευτές, ὅπως ὁ Πλάτων, καὶ-κυρίως οἱ σύγχρονοι ἠθικολόγοι Moore, Ross, Prichard καὶ Ewing. Ἡ ἐρμηνεία ποὺ δίνουν οἱ ὁπαδοὶ τῆς Διαισθησιαρχίας στὴν ἐννοία τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ὡς μεταφυσικῆς ἀξίας ἀναθεωρεῖται ἀπὸ τοὺς νεώτερους θεωρητικοὺς φιλοσόφους Urmson, Hare, Nowell-Smith καὶ ἄλλους, οἱ ὅποιοι προβαίνουν στὴν ἀναθεώρηση τῆς ἐννοίας τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ. Ἡ ἀναθεώρηση αὐτή, κατὰ τὴ γνώμη μου, ἀποτελεῖ ἐποικοδομητικὴ κριτικὴ, ἐφ' ὅσον γιὰ τὴ σωστὴ ἐρμηνεία τῆς ἐννοίας τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ὡς ἠθικὸ κριτήριον χρησιμοποιοῦ τὸ λόγο. Ἀλλὰ ἡ προσωπικὴ μου κρίση εἶναι ὅτι ἡ μεταφυσικὴ ἀξία τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ εἶναι ἀσυμβίβαστη μὲ τὴν ἰδέα τοῦ φυσικοῦ ἀντικειμένου, διότι αὐτὸ ὡς συγκεκριμένο ὑλικὸ πρᾶγμα ἔχει φυσικὴ συνοχὴ καὶ φαινομενικὸ ἢ ἐμπειρικὸ περιεχόμενο.

Ὁ πρωτοπόρος ἐρμηνευτὴς τῆς ἐννοίας τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ὡς μεταφυσικῆς

25. P. W. TAYLOR, *The Moral Judgement: Readings in Contemporary Meta-Ethics*, N. J. Prentice-Hall, 1963, p. 209.



αξίας στην Ἠθικὴ Θεωρία τῆς Διαισθησιαρχίας εἶναι ὁ Πλάτων, καθ' ὅσον ἡ ἠθικὴ του προσανατολίζεται πρὸς τὴν ἐπίτευξιν τοῦ «ὑψίστου ἀγαθοῦ» ὡς διακριτικῆς αξίας ἀπὸ τὴν ἡδονή, τὴν τιμὴ, τὴ σοφία, τὴν ἀρετὴ καὶ τὸ λόγο, ποὺ εἶναι μόνον μέσα γιὰ τὴν κρίσιν τῆς εὐτυχίας τοῦ ἀνθρώπου. Ὁ Πλάτων προκειμένου νὰ συλλάβει τὴν ἔννοια τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ὡς μεταφυσικῆς αξίας καταφεύγει στὴ διαίσθησις ἢ στὴν ἐσωτερικὴ θέασις τῆς ἀντικειμενικῆς ἀγαθότητος καὶ ὀρίζει τὸ ἀγαθὸ ὡς τὴν ἀντικειμενικὴ ἰδιότητα τοῦ πνεύματος. Ὁ ἀρχαῖος φιλόσοφος εἶναι ὁ πρῶτος ἀπὸ τοὺς θεμελιωτὲς τῆς Διαισθησιαρχίας, ποὺ συλλαμβάνει τὴν ἔννοια τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ὡς τὴν ἰδέα τοῦ νοητοῦ, ἡ ὁποία ἀντανακλᾷ νοερῶς στὴν ψυχὴ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, καὶ γίνεται ἀντικείμενο ἔρευνας, ἐφ' ὅσον αὐτὴ εἶναι ἡ ὑψίστη αξία τοῦ ἀνθρώπου.

Στὰ νεώτερα χρόνια ὁ κατ' ἐξοχὴν πρωτοπόρος τῆς Ἠθικῆς Θεωρίας τῆς Διαισθησιαρχίας γιὰ τὴν ἐρμηνεία τῆς ἐννοίας τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ὡς μεταφυσικῆς αξίας εἶναι ὁ Moore, ποὺ κληρονόμησε τὴ θεωρία ἀπὸ τὸν Sidgwick, καὶ στήριξε αὐτὴ στὴ βασικὴ ἀρχὴ τοῦ διδασκάλου του. Κατὰ τὴν ἀρχὴ τοῦ Sidgwick ὁ Moore προσπαθεῖ νὰ ὀρίσει τί εἶναι ἀγαθὸ μᾶλλον παρὰ ποιά εἶναι καὶ πῶς λειτουργεῖ ἡ φύσις του. Ἐτσι, ὁ ὀρισμὸς τῆς ἐννοίας τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ συνάγεται ἀπὸ τὴν ταυτότητα τοῦ πράγματος μὲ τὸ ὄνομά του, ἐφ' ὅσον τὸ πρᾶγμα αὐτὸ καθαυτὸ εἶναι ἀγαθόν, καὶ ἐπομένως τὸ ἀγαθὸ εἶναι τὸ ὄνομα μίας ἀπλῆς καὶ μὴ-ἀναλυτῆς ἰδιότητος τῶν πραγμάτων, δηλαδὴ ἡ μὴ δυνάμενη νὰ ἀναλυθεῖ μεταφυσικὴ ἰδέα ἡ ὁποία ἀνήκει σὲ ὅλα τὰ πράγματα. Τὸ ἀγαθὸ αὐτὸ καθαυτὸ ἔχει μεταφυσικὴ ὄντοτητα, ποὺ σημαίνει τὴν ἀπλὴ καὶ μὴ-ἀναλυτὴ ἰδιότητα τῶν πραγμάτων.

Ὁ ὀρισμὸς αὐτὸς τῆς ἐννοίας τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ἀξιῶναι τὸν Moore νὰ ἀνακαλύψει τὴ Νατουραλιστικὴ Πλάνη, ποὺ διαπράττουν οἱ ὁπαδοὶ τοῦ Ἠθικοῦ Νατουραλισμοῦ καὶ τοῦ Ἠδονιστικοῦ Ὁφελιμισμού.

Συνδυάζοντας τὶς διαισθητικὲς ἐκδοχὰς τοῦ Moore καὶ τοῦ Sidgwick ὁ Ross συλλαμβάνει τὴν ἔννοια τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ὡς τὴ διαίσθησις ἢ προαισθηματικὴ ἐμπειρία τῆς αξίας, δηλαδὴ μεταφυσικὸ ἀγαθόν. Τὸ ἀγαθόν, κατὰ τὸν Ross εἶναι ἡ πνευματικὴ ἰδιότητα ποὺ ἔχει ἀληθινὴ ἔννοια, γιὰτὶ εἶναι αὐθύπαρκτο, καὶ ἐπομένως εἶναι γνωστὸ μόνον ὡς διαισθητικὴ ἔννοια. Ἡ ἰδιότητα αὐτὴ σημαίνει ὅτι τὸ ἀγαθὸ ὑπάρχει ὡς σκοπὸς μᾶλλον παρὰ ὡς μέσον, ἐπειδὴ αὐτὸ κατέχει τὴν αξία ἐκείνη ποὺ ἴσταται ὡς μεταφυσικὴ ἀρχὴ καὶ ἀντανακλᾷ τὴν ἀγαθότητα. Ἐπομένως, ὁ Ross συμπεραίνει ὅτι ἡ ἔννοια τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ὡς μεταφυσικὴ αξία ἔχει ἀληθινὴ ἔννοια.

Ἀντίθετα ἀπὸ τὸν Moore καὶ τὸν Sidgwick, ὁ Prichard ἰσχυρίζεται ὅτι ἡ Διαισθησιαρχία ὡς Ἠθικὴ Θεωρία ἔχει ὑποκειμενικὴ μορφή, μὴ καὶ τὸ ἀγαθὸ ἔχει ἀκαριαία ὑποκειμενικὴ ἔννοια μᾶλλον παρὰ λογικὴ ἢ ἀντικει-



μενική. Ἡ Ἠθικὴ Θεωρία τῆς Διαισθησιαρχίας εἶναι ὑποκειμενική, κατὰ τὸν Prichard, διότι ἡ ἠθικὴ ὑποχρέωση εἶναι χαρακτηριστικὸ τῆς ἠθικότη-
τας τοῦ ἀνθρώπου καὶ ὄχι οἱ πράξεις του. Συνεπῶς, κατὰ τὸν Prichard, ἡ
ἐννοια τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ὡς ὑποκειμενικῆς ιδιότητος εἶναι ἀντικείμενο τῆς διαι-
σθήσεως, γιατί ἔχει ὑποκειμενικὸ κύρος, καὶ ὑπάρχει ὡς μεταφυσικὴ ἀξία,
ἡ ὁποία ἔχει ἀληθινὴ ἐννοια.

Ἐνῶ, ὁ Ewing ἀκολουθώντας τὴ θεωρία τοῦ Sidgwick, ἀναπτύσσει τὴ
Δεοντολογικὴ Θεωρία τῆς Διαισθησιαρχίας, ἐφ' ὅσον αὐτὸς ἀναγνωρίζει
ὅτι ὁ ὅρος «πρέπει» ἢ «ἔπρεπε» συνεπάγεται τὴν ἀγαθότητα ὡς μὴ-φυσικὴ ἢ
πνευματικὴ ιδιότητα. Οἱ ἠθικὲς κρίσεις, κατὰ τὸν Ewing, μποροῦν νὰ δι-
καιωθοῦν μόνον ἀπὸ τὴ λογικὴ, γιατί αὐτὲς ἐπιβάλλονται σὲ ἀντικειμενικὲς
περιπτώσεις, καὶ συλλαμβάνονται ὡς μὴ-φυσικὲς ἢ πνευματικὲς ιδιότητες.

Τέλος, οἱ ὁπαδοὶ τῆς Ἠθικῆς Θεωρίας τῆς Διαισθησιαρχίας ἀνεξάρ-
τητα ἀπὸ τὴν προσωπικὴ τους ἐκδοχὴ συμφωνοῦν μὲ τὴν ἄποψη τοῦ Moore
ὅτι τὸ ἀγαθὸ σημαίνει μία ἀπλὴ καὶ μὴ-ἀναλυτὴ ιδιότητα, ἡ ὁποία ὡς ἀντι-
κείμενο τῆς διαισθήσεως, εἶναι αὐταπόδεικτὴ ἀλήθεια. Ἡ ἐννοια τοῦ ἀγα-
θοῦ εἶναι πνευματικὴ ιδιότητα, κατὰ τοὺς ὁπαδοὺς τῆς Διαισθησιαρχίας,
διότι ἡ ἐννοια αὐτὴ δὲν ἀποτελεῖ τὴν περιγραφὴ ἑνὸς συγκεκριμένου πρά-
γματος ποὺ θὰ ἀπαιτοῦσε νὰ εἶναι ἡ φυσικὴ ιδιότητά του.

Ἄλλ' ὅμως ὁ ἀντικειμενικὸς ἐπικριτὴς τῆς συγχρόνου ἠθικῆς μπορεῖ
νὰ ἀμφιβάλει γιὰ τὴν ἐγκυρότητα τῆς Ἠθικῆς Θεωρίας τῆς Διαισθησιαρ-
χίας γιὰ τὴν ἐρμηνεία τῆς ἐννοίας τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ. Ὁ σύγχρονος ἐπικριτὴς
μπορεῖ νὰ ἀναιρέσει τὴν ἄποψη ὅτι ἡ ἐννοια τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ εἶναι μία ἀπλὴ καὶ
μὴ-ἀναλυτὴ ιδιότητα, ἡ ὁποία ὡς μεταφυσικὴ ἀξία ἔχει ἀληθινὴ ἐννοια,
διότι ἡ ἐννοια αὐτὴ δὲν μπορεῖ νὰ ταυτισθεῖ μὲ μία μὴ-φυσικὴ ἢ πνευμα-
τικὴ ιδιότητα.

Πρῶτος μεταξὺ τῶν ἀντικειμενικῶν ἐπικριτῶν τῆς Ἠθικῆς Θεωρίας
τῆς Διαισθησιαρχίας εἶναι ὁ Urmson ὁ ὁποῖος παρατηρεῖ ὅτι ἡ ἠθικὴ
κρίση γιὰ τὴν ἐννοια τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ἐξαρτᾶται ἀπὸ τὴ βαθμολογικὴ κλίμακα
μᾶλλον παρὰ ἀπὸ τὴν περιγραφὴ, ἀφοῦ τὸ σωστὸ κριτήριον εἶναι προῖον
κάποιου ἐπιθυμητοῦ σκοποῦ. Ἔτσι, ὁ Urmson συμπεραίνει ὅτι τὸ ἀγαθὸ
ἔχει ἀξιολογικὴ ἐννοια, γιατί ἡ ἀξία τῆς ἀγαθότητας τῶν πραγμάτων εἶναι
σχετικὴ καὶ ὄχι ἀπόλυτη.

Ἐπίσης, ὁ Hare ἀξιοποιώντας τὸ πλεονέκτημα τοῦ Urmson ὑποστηρί-
ζει ὅτι ἡ ἐννοια τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ δὲν εἶναι μόνον ἀξιολογικὴ ἀλλὰ καὶ περιγρα-
φικὴ. Καὶ αὐτὸς ὁμως δίνει προτεραιότητα στὴν ἀξιολογικὴ ἐννοια τοῦ
ἀγαθοῦ, καθ' ὅτι αὐτὴ εἶναι τὸ ἀρχικὸ χαρακτηριστικὸ τῆς ἀξίας τῶν ἠθι-
κῶν κανόνων. Ὁ Hare συμπεραίνει ὅτι τὸ ἀγαθὸ ἔχει ἀξιολογικὴ ἐννοια,
καὶ κατ' ἀκολουθίαν ἡ ἐννοια τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ἔχει σχετικὴ ἀξία μᾶλλον παρὰ
μεταφυσικὴ.



Τέλος ο Nowell-Smith παραδέχεται την αξιολογική έννοια του αγαθού, αφού οί ηθικές λέξεις κρίνονται από το αξιολογικό περιεχόμενό τους, διότι οί λέξεις αυτές δεν εκφράζουν ούτε περιγραφικές έννοιες ούτε διαθέσεις συναισθημάτων και στάσεων. Κατά τον Nowell-Smith ή έννοια του αγαθού συλλαμβάνεται ως ή ηθική προαίρεση μίας αγαθής πράξεως, και έπομένως το αγαθό έχει σχετική έννοια, έφ' όσον δεν υπάρχει απόδειξη για την ύπαρξη μίας αντικειμενικής ηθικής ιδιότητας της αγαθότητας, δηλαδή μεταφυσικής αξίας.

Συνοψίζοντας, οί σύγχρονοι θεωρητικοί φιλόσοφοι αναθεωρώντας την έρμηνεία της έννοιας του αγαθού, επιχειρούν να όρίσουν την έννοιά του, και να αποφύγουν τον φαινομενικό και παραπλανητικό προσανατολισμό τών συγχρόνων ηθικών θεωριών. Οί θεωρητικοί αυτοί φιλόσοφοι στην προσπάθειά τους να διασαφηνίσουν την έννοια του αγαθού προσφέρουν αρκετά νέα στοιχεία για την αντικειμενική έρμηνεία της.

Τέλος, χωρίς να θέλω να κάνω άτομική κριτική, ή διαισθητική έννοια αυτή δεν έχει φυσική συνοχή και φαινομενική ή έμπειρική υπόσταση. 'Η έννοια του αγαθού ως αγαθό αυτό καθαυτό είναι άσυμβίβαστη με την ιδέα τών φυσικών αντικειμένων, διότι αυτά έχουν φαινομενικό ή έμπειρικό περιεχόμενο. 'Η ιδέα ενός φυσικού αντικειμένου που συλλαμβάνομε ως συγκεκριμένο έμπειρικό πράγμα είναι μία αληθινή έννοια, ή όποια δηλώνει την υπόστασή του. Κατά τη ροή του κόσμου συλλαμβάνομε διάφορες καταστάσεις, στάσεις, πράξεις, όρους, μεθόδους, γεγονότα, δηλαδή ιδέες συγκεκριμένων υλικών σωμάτων, αλλά δεν μπορούμε ποτέ να συλλάβομε καμιά ιδέα αγαθότητας, την όποια οί όπαδοί της 'Ηθικής Θεωρίας της Διαισθησιαρχίας επιμένουν ότι συλλαμβάνουν δια μέσου της διαισθητικής έμπειρίας ή της γνώσεως.

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