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WELFARE AND THE ACHIEVEMENT OF GOALS

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ABSTRACT. I defend the view that an individual's welfare is in one respect enhanced by the achievement of her goals, even when her goals are crazy, self-destructive, irrational or immoral. This "Unrestricted View" departs from familiar theories which take welfare to involve only the achievement of rational aims, or of goals whose objects are genuinely valuable, or of goals that are not grounded in bad reasons. I begin with a series of examples, intended to show that some of our intuitive judgments about welfare incorporate distinctions that only the Unrestricted View can support. Then, I show how the view can be incorporated into a broader theory of welfare in ways that do not produce implausible consequences. This in hand, I finish by providing a more philosophical statement of the Unrestricted View and the case in its favor, and respond to some objections.

KEY WORDS: achievement, ethics, goals, interests, welfare, well-being

I

Is it in your best interests to achieve your goals? The answer, obviously enough, is "sometimes". If we're talking about your goal of living a long and happy life, then yes, it is in your best interests to achieve it. If we're talking about your goal of eating a bowlful of gravel, then no, you'll be better off if that goal is left unfulfilled. That agreed, there are three views that might be taken about the relation between the achieving of goals and the best interests – the welfare – of individuals.¹

The Instrumental View: The relation between achieving goals and welfare is purely instrumental. It's in your best interests to achieve a particular goal just in case the object of that goal is something that would, for independent reasons, contribute to your welfare.

Such would be the view of, for example, a hedonist. The hedonist would say that it advances your welfare to achieve your goal of



living a happy life, but not your goal of eating gravel, because living a happy life is pleasurable but eating gravel isn't.

The Restricted View: An individual's achieving her goals *in itself* contributes to her welfare, but only if the goals are of the right sort or are formed in the right way. Your achieving one of your goals contributes to your welfare just in case it's a goal that meets certain more or less restrictive conditions.

The Restricted View will appeal to many philosophers who have recently written about the nature of welfare; it can be regarded as the received view. Among its proponents will be those who think that welfare is (at least in part) a matter of the achievement of rational aims, or of goals that would be endorsed under conditions of full information, or of goals whose objects are genuinely valuable, or of goals that are not grounded in bad reasons.² Such theorists will say that the goal of living a happy life, but not the goal of eating gravel, can be expected to meet the conditions that make an individual's goal relevant to her welfare.

The Unrestricted View: An individual's achieving her goals *in itself* contributes to her welfare *regardless* of what those goals are. Your achieving one of your goals contributes to your welfare, whatever that goal may be.

The best-known philosophical character to whom the Unrestricted View will appeal is the believer in the simple desire-fulfillment theory, which is discussed by Derek Parfit and, more recently, Mark C. Murphy (though we are talking about goals here, not desires – more on this to come).³ Anyway, a proponent of the Unrestricted View has to say that it does enhance your welfare, to some extent or in some respect, to achieve your goal of eating a bowlful of gravel. This needn't be taken to imply that eating the gravel would make you better off *on the whole* – perhaps eating the gravel prevents you from achieving other, more important goals, or perhaps it advances one aspect of your welfare to a lesser extent than it sets back another – but on the Unrestricted View there is, from the point of view of your welfare, something to be said for eating the gravel.

Put this way, the Unrestricted View looks dreadfully implausible. It entails that an individual is better off, to some extent or in some

respect, for achieving goals that are crazy, self-destructive, irrational or immoral. But the appearance, I will argue, is deceptive. The Unrestricted View is correct. In Section II I'll try to bring out the basic intuition in support of the Unrestricted View. This will involve putting off some important technical questions, which I'll take up in Sections III and IV; Section III says something about what the Unrestricted View is, exactly, and Section IV about how it can fit into a broader theory of welfare. All of this in hand, in Section V I'll give a more philosophical statement of the Unrestricted View and the case in its favor, and in Section VI I'll respond to some objections. Section VII concludes.

II

Bill sets himself the goal of writing and publishing a novel, and, after years of hard work, he achieves it. Bill's life, we can imagine, is improved in many ways by the publication of his book. Perhaps it earns him some money; perhaps it increases his self-esteem; perhaps the experience of placing his novel in the public eye is cathartic.

Steve also sets himself the goal of writing and publishing a novel. He works just as hard as Bill, but his efforts, unlike Bill's, never get very far. Then, just as Bill is bringing his project to fruition, Steve buys a lottery ticket on a whim, and he wins. Steve wins the same amount of money as Bill gets in royalties. Steve is interviewed by the newspapers about his win, this experience is just as cathartic and just as enhancing of his self-esteem as the publication of Bill's novel is for Bill. In the excitement of winning the lottery, Steve forgets all about his plan to write a novel, and never feels any sadness or regret about leaving it behind.

While Bill and Steve are even in most welfare-related respects, my intuition is that Bill's life goes better than Steve's. The relevant difference is that Bill, and not Steve, achieves what he sets out to achieve. If this is right, then Bill's achieving his goal in itself enhances his welfare.

One way to see this is to note that Bill, and not Steve, is entitled to the satisfying thought, "I did it". In having this thought, Bill is looking back at his years of work on the book and seeing them as years of productive effort, effort that paid off; he is seeing the story

of (this part of) his life as a story of hard work leading to a successful culmination; and he is taking this to mean that (this part of) his life has, in one respect, gone well. The important difference between Bill and Steve is not just that Bill gets the satisfaction associated with the thought, "I did it". The important difference is that Bill does it. Bill's life is successful in a way that Steve's isn't. Bill sets out to live a life that includes the publication of a novel, and he succeeds. Bill, as we might put it, imposes his will upon the world. This cannot be said of Steve, even though things go well for Steve in all sorts of ways. Bill's welfare is enhanced in a way that Steve's is not. Or so it seems to me.

Most would agree that publishing a novel, if it's the right sort of novel, is a worthwhile thing to do. But the Unrestricted View says that an individual's welfare is enhanced by the achievement of any of her goals, not just those whose objects are worthwhile. So, consider Jane.

Jane is a grass-counter.⁴ Her goal is to accurately count the blades of grass in all of the paddocks in her rural district. She puts a great deal of effort into her project, and does very well; she moves efficiently through the fields, never missing a blade and never losing count. Eventually, her goal is achieved. On the Unrestricted View, her achieving this goal – even though it's a crazy goal – contributes to her welfare. But, many will say, the craziness of the goal makes it difficult to believe that its achievement makes Jane's life go better. She would be better off, runs the thought, pursuing something worthwhile.

That may be true, but it's beside the point. A proponent of the Unrestricted View can admit that the achievement of some goals counts for more than the achievement of others. And she can admit that there are things apart from the achievement of goals that make a life go well, and that one of those things may well be the living of a life that is meaningful or worthwhile. The relevant comparison is not between Jane and, say, Bill, but between Jane and a new character: Mary.

Mary too is a grass-counter, and organizes her life around grass-counting in just the same way as Jane. Mary's goals are just as crazy as Jane's; her life is just as devoid of meaning. Unlike Jane, however, Mary is an awful grass-counter. She's always failing to notice blades

of grass, and she's forever forgetting the count and having to start again. For all her efforts, she never comes close to achieving her goal of counting the blades of grass in all the fields in her rural district. Whose life goes better, Jane's or Mary's? We might think that Jane will be better off than Mary because Jane will get the regular satisfaction of completing an accurate count, but let's push that consideration aside; suppose that Mary has a sunny disposition that makes up the difference, so that Mary's days are no more or less pleasant than Jane's. Still, there's a clear intuitive respect in which things go better for Jane than for Mary. They may both be perfectly pitiable, but Jane has something going for her that Mary does not: Jane does it. Whatever else can be said about Jane, she achieves the standards that she sets for herself. You can't take that away from her. In one respect, things go well for Jane, just because she achieves her crazy goal.

Grass-counting is crazy, but at least it's harmless. Even if we're convinced that the achieving of crazy goals makes a contribution to welfare, we might doubt that the same is true of seriously immoral goals, the kinds of goals at which only a monstrous individual could aim. Consider, then, Roger.

Roger is a horrible person with a heinous goal. Perhaps he wants to torture a certain number of kittens, or destroy those who oppose his tyrannical regime, or whatever. After some hard work, he achieves his goal. Like Bill and Jane, he achieves the standards he sets for himself. He imposes his will upon the world. Is his welfare enhanced? No, some will say, because terrible deeds constitute a blight upon a life, they don't make it go better. But we need to distinguish between two theses here. One is that the achievement of a heinous goal makes no contribution to welfare. The other is that the achievement of any goal makes a contribution to welfare, but another thing that makes a contribution to welfare is the living of an ethical life (so that Roger's achieving his goal enhances his welfare in one respect, while setting it back in another). Only the first thesis is incompatible with the Unrestricted View. Barry will help us to choose between the two theses.

Barry is another horrible person with a heinous goal – the same goal, in fact, as Roger. Unlike Roger, Barry fails in his attempts to achieve his heinous goal. Along the way, though, Barry carries out

some further, gratuitous, evil acts, acts that make him just as detestable a person as he would have been if he had achieved his heinous goal – just as detestable, indeed, as Roger. The lives of Roger and Barry are blighted equally. Still, it seems as though Roger's life, in comparison with Barry's, goes well. Roger is detestable, but Barry is both detestable and a failure. At least Roger lives a life that goes well on his own (perverted) terms; not even that can be said of Barry. If either of the two theses just mentioned is true, then it's the second, which is compatible with the Unrestricted View. So it seems as though the achievement of immoral goals does, in its way, contribute to welfare.⁵

III

So far, I've tried to bring out an intuition in support of the claim that there is a respect in which things go better for an individual if she achieves her goals, and I've tried to show that this intuition holds even when the goals in question are crazy or immoral. In the next two sections I'll present and defend my favored version of the Unrestricted View, and my favored story about how it relates to welfare more generally.

The Unrestricted View is concerned with goals, not mere desires or preferences. (To have something as a goal is, in part, to desire it, but you can desire something without having it as a goal.) Parfit presents a famous case intended to show that not every desire is such that its satisfaction contributes to its holder's welfare.⁶ You meet a stranger who tells you that he has a disease, and you form a desire that the stranger recover. You never see or hear of him again, but he does recover. Your desire, then, is satisfied, but that – surely – doesn't make things go better for you. This is consistent with the Unrestricted View, so long you merely desire the stranger's recovery, rather than taking it as your goal.

Taking something as a goal involves intending to put some effort into its achievement. Having a mere desire does not. I might desire that Australia win the Davis Cup while being certain that nothing I do will make a difference either way, but I cannot with such knowledge take Australia's winning the Davis Cup as my goal. When we think of someone as having a goal, we think of her as *pursuing* it –

as to some extent organizing her life, or intending to organize her life, around that goal. The extent to which something is a goal, or to which it is a strong goal, is in part a matter of the extent to which its bearer organizes her life around its pursuit. What's important here is that your taking on a goal involves taking an attitude towards *your* activities and *your* life (even if your reasons for forming that goal are entirely selfless).

This brings us to a second point, which is that the Unrestricted View is concerned with the *achieving*, not the mere attaining, of goals. Here's what I mean. Suppose that Joan's goal is to change the law prohibiting overnight parking in Brookline. If the law is abolished, but not because of anything that Joan does, then there's a sense in which Joan's goal is attained, even though Joan doesn't achieve it. To achieve a goal is to have its attainment be due in part to your own efforts. If someone receives a large unexpected inheritance, it would sound odd to say to him, "Congratulations on your achievement", even if he always had the goal of becoming rich; he doesn't *achieve* anything. The Unrestricted View (or my version of it) says that it's an individual's achieving her own goals – meaning her attaining them *through, in part, her own efforts* – that contributes to her welfare. I think that this is just a matter of the meaning of the word "achieve"; if I'm wrong, then it's hereby stipulated.

The reason why this is important to emphasize or stipulate is that the intuition in support of the Unrestricted View does not seem to extend to cases in which an individual's goals are attained through no contribution of her own. Consider, again, Joan, whose goal is to abolish a law prohibiting overnight parking. Suppose that Joan tries to achieve her goal by organizing a letter-writing campaign. And suppose that the law is eventually changed, but that it's changed not because of Joan's letter-writing campaign but because a pertinent politician buys a new car and needs somewhere to park. In such a case, the change in law does not seem to reflect upon how things go for Joan. Nothing she does makes any difference. She's not imposing her will upon the world, even if the thing that she wills is imposed.

Perhaps a more extreme example will make this clearer. Suppose that Joan has the crazy belief that repeatedly saying the word "widget" will cause the law to be changed, and that that's all that she

does in pursuit of her goal – then the law is changed, but not because of Joan’s saying “widge”. It’s very implausible to think that the change in the law, in itself, makes Joan’s life go better, even though it’s what Joan was trying to achieve. Whether the law changes or not, Joan’s is a life of wasted effort.

This line of thought yields a plausible rough-and-ready claim about how much the achieving of a particular goal contributes to an individual’s welfare: the greater the effort required for an individual to achieve her goal, the more her welfare is enhanced by its achievement. Suppose that you achieve your goal of winning a gold medal and I achieve my goal of winning a silver medal; or that we each achieve the goal of completing a marathon, but you have one leg and I have two; or that we each contribute to a scientific breakthrough, but your contribution is greater than mine. In all these cases, on the view that I’m suggesting, the contribution to your welfare is greater. You contribute more productive effort than me; your efforts change the world, so to speak, to a greater degree than mine.

IV

Assuming that the Unrestricted View is true – that an individual’s achieving her goals always makes her better off in some respect – there are three ways in which it might fit into the complete true theory of welfare. First, it might simply be that complete true theory; maybe welfare just is the achievement of goals. But this is very implausible. There are surely things – pleasure is an obvious example – that bear upon welfare but are not just a matter of the achievement of goals.

Second, the Unrestricted View might be a consequence of a more general, unified theory of welfare. The Simple Desire-Fulfillment Theory, for example, says that the satisfaction of any of an individual’s desires enhances her welfare, and it follows that the achievement of any of an individual’s goals enhances her welfare. But the Simple Desire-Fulfillment Theory, as we have seen, has its problems, and it’s hard to see any different claim that looks like a plausible unified theory of welfare and to which the Unrestricted View can be reduced.

Third, the Unrestricted View may enter the correct theory of welfare as one of several claims about what enhances an individual’s

best interests, where those claims are not reducible to each other. The achievement of goals would then be one among several aspects of welfare, one among several ways in which an individual's life can go well. This, I think, is the most promising approach.

The idea here is that welfare is not a unitary concept like height or mass or monetary wealth; it is not the sort of thing that can be accurately represented with a single value. Welfare, rather, is like physical fitness. The ability to lift heavy weights and the ability to run long distances, for example, are different, mutually irreducible aspects of fitness. The ability to run an extra mile always counts as an enhancement of physical fitness in one respect, but in one respect only. Sometimes it is outweighed by other aspects of fitness, so that one person is fitter than another even though the second person can run a mile further. And sometimes there's just no fact of the matter about whether the ability to run an extra mile contributes more or less than something else; if you can lift ten kilos more than me and I can run a mile further than you, and if all else is equal, then you are fitter than me in one way and I am fitter than you in another – and there's no additional fact to be found about who is fitter “on the whole”.

Similarly, I want to claim, your achieving a goal of yours always makes you better off in one respect, but in one respect only. If all other things are kept equal then your achieving a goal makes you better off simpliciter; but the achievement of goals is not the only aspect of welfare, so other things may well fail to be equal. In such cases, your achieving your goal may be outweighed by a reduction in some different aspect of your welfare, so that you are better off in one respect but worse off on the whole. And sometimes, when different aspects of your welfare conflict, there may be nothing more to say than that you are better off in one respect and worse off in another.

I present this broad view about the nature of welfare schematically and without much argument, but it should not be unfamiliar. It is most explicitly defended by J. David Velleman, who argues that “momentary well-being” and “well-being over an extended period” are mutually irreducible elements of welfare.⁷ And the broad approach can be plausibly said to lie in the background

of many other theories of welfare, especially those following the “objective list” strategy.⁸

(A brief digression. Some have suggested that if welfare has several mutually irreducible aspects then it is not suited for any fundamental role in ethical theory.⁹ This, without the addition of some hefty premises, seems to me a mistake. Some forms of utilitarianism might require that an individual’s welfare can in principle be represented by a single numerical value, and might be in trouble if the view in question is correct. But it doesn’t follow that welfarist moral theory in general is in trouble, any more than it follows from the analogous, obvious facts about physical fitness that *it* is not the sort of thing that can be valued or promoted or respected, or that can have intrinsic worth.¹⁰ But this is just a digression.)

V

The Unrestricted View, in the form in which I find it defensible, says this. One aspect of an individual’s welfare is her achieving her goals through her own efforts, regardless of what those goals are. It is not the only aspect of individual welfare, but it cannot be reduced to any of the others. Whenever an individual achieves a goal, she is better off in one respect, though she may be worse off in others. The greater the quantity of productive effort that an individual successfully devotes to the achievement of a particular goal, the more that achievement contributes to her welfare.

The best way to argue for the Unrestricted View, I think, is just to call upon the intuition that I tried to bring out in Section II, but the intuition can be given a philosophical gloss. In forming a goal, an individual establishes a standard by which her life can be evaluated. Does her life, or does it not, involve effort successfully directed at the achievement of the goal? It is a standard that arises from the individual herself; for an individual to meet that standard is for her to impose her own will upon the world. It makes some sense, then, to think that whether or not a life meets the standard in question has a bearing upon how well the life goes for the individual who lives it – and that’s what our intuitions, properly interrogated, suggest.

VI

Objection. According to the Unrestricted View, it's in your best interests to achieve goals that are crazy, self-destructive or immoral.

Reply. This is the apparently implausible claim that I mentioned at the outset. But it does not look so implausible once it is noticed that the proponent of the Unrestricted View need talk only about one aspect of welfare, and that she's free to allow criteria of meaningfulness and moral worth to be among the others. In evaluating the Unrestricted View, it's helpful to control for other welfare-related factors. We should compare, for example, your successfully eating the gravel with your failing to eat the gravel, but nevertheless suffering all the digestive upheavals that eating the gravel would bring. It's plausible to think that the first option has something going for it that the second lacks – namely, a lot of effort successfully directed towards the achievement of a difficult goal – even if both are pretty awful.

Along the same lines, compare your life, complete with successful but painful gravel-eating, with that of someone whose life is perfectly pleasant, but who never achieves any goals. You each, it seems to me, have something that the other lacks. There's an obvious respect in which your life goes worse; but there's another respect, probably less weighty, in which things go better for you. At least you get what you aim for.

Objection. The Unrestricted View implies that merely changing your goals can advance your welfare. If you make it your goal to live the life that you already live, then your goal is achieved – but that, surely, doesn't make you any better off.

Reply. This is not really an implication of the Unrestricted View, because your forming such a goal does not constitute your achieving it through your own efforts.

Objection. Well then, the Unrestricted View implies that it's in your interests to have mediocre aspirations. If your goals are easier to achieve, then you're more likely to do well along the dimension of welfare that the Unrestricted View purports to identify.

Reply. The Unrestricted View does imply that there's reason, so far as your welfare is concerned, not to adopt goals that are outrageously difficult to achieve. If your goal is to win every Nobel prize in the same year, then your life is unlikely to manifest the good of being a life that meets the standards set by its bearer. But this seems reasonable enough. There is something to regret about the lives of those who do great things, but not great enough to achieve their own outlandish ambitions.

That said, if your goals are very easy to achieve then you will not contribute as much productive effort as will be contributed by someone who achieves more impressive goals – and so your welfare will not be so far enhanced. The Unrestricted View suggests, I suppose, that your life will in the relevant respect go best if you set yourself goals that you will achieve and that will elicit greatest possible amount of effort. But most reasons why people adopt goals have nothing to do with such considerations; you adopt goals for ethical or aesthetic reasons, because you happen to care about something, or because you can't help it, or whatever.

Question. What about those who don't have goals?

Reply. An individual without goals cannot manifest the welfare-related good that the Unrestricted View identifies; her life cannot meet the standards she herself sets. Of course, seeing as her life has no such standards, she cannot fail to meet them either. Perhaps the right thing to say is that there are certain ways in which a life can go well, and certain ways in which a life can go badly, that cannot be manifested by the lives of the goalless.¹¹

VII

It is widely accepted that an individual's welfare can be enhanced by the achievement of goals (or aims), but it's widely thought that this isn't true of all possible goals – and hence that the interesting philosophical task is to say just which goals are ones that count.¹² A better view, I have argued, is that the achievement of any old goal enhances an individual's welfare, but only with regard to one of welfare's numerous and mutually irreducible aspects. The inter-

esting remaining philosophical task is to identify the other ways in which an individual's welfare can be enhanced.

So far as the study of welfare is concerned, a message of the paper is that there is much to be gained from treating welfare as a disunified concept – disunified in the way that the concept of physical fitness (or health or intelligence or philosophical ability) is disunified but the concept of height is not. Welfare is not the sort of thing that can be represented by a single value, and we can be misled by efforts to say all there is to say about welfare in a single, unified, pithy theory.

The Unrestricted View also has implications for some questions in ethics more generally. It may help explain how the value of welfare is related to the values of autonomy and political freedom; if one aspect of welfare involves the achievement of goals, then there's a kind of welfare that can only be enjoyed by those able to form and pursue their own goals.¹³ And the Unrestricted View may bear upon the debate over whether and how an individual's interests can be affected by posthumous events; if you form goals whose fate will not be decided within your own lifetime, then there's an aspect of your welfare whose advancement depends on what happens after you die (but it's just one aspect of welfare, and there are presumably others on which posthumous happenings do not bear). But whatever its implications for such questions, I think that the Unrestricted View best explains the relation between welfare and the achievement of goals.¹⁴

NOTES

¹ I will treat "what advances your welfare", "what makes you better off", "what makes your life go well" and "what's in your best interests" as synonymous, while being aware that these phrases may have slightly varying connotations in ordinary language. In any case, my subject is the notion of welfare or well-being discussed in, for example, Derek Parfit's 'What Makes Someone's Life Go Best', in his *Reasons and Persons* (Oxford University Press, 1984) pp. 493–502; James Griffin's *Well-Being* (Oxford University Press, 1986); and L.W. Sumner's *Welfare, Happiness and Ethics* (Oxford University Press, 1996).

² On welfare as the achievement of rational aims, see ch. 3 of T.M. Scanlon, *What We Owe to Each Other* (Harvard University Press, 1998); a similar view is classically advocated in John Rawls' *A Theory of Justice* (Harvard University Press, 1971) – see especially ch. 7. For a full information account of welfare,

see chpts. 1–4 of Griffin, *Well-Being*. On the connection between welfare and the achievement of worthwhile goals, see Susan Wolf, ‘Happiness and Meaning: Two Aspects of the Good Life’, *Social Philosophy and Policy* 14(1) (1997), pp. 207–225; and Roger Crisp, ‘Utilitarianism and Accomplishment’, *Analysis* 60(3) (2000), pp. 264–268. In ch. 12 of *The Morality of Freedom* (Oxford University Press, 1986), Joseph Raz argues that “well-being” (as opposed to “self-interest” – Raz is using these as terms of art) is in part a matter of the achievement of goals that are not held for bad reasons.

³ Parfit, ‘What Makes Someone’s Life Go Best’. Murphy, ‘The Simple Desire-Fulfillment Theory’, *Nous* 33(2) (1999), pp. 247–272.

⁴ The example comes from Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, p. 432.

⁵ It’s worth noting, with regard to this last case, that to say that some event would enhance someone’s welfare is not necessarily to say that that event’s occurrence would be a good thing. You can say that it would be an unqualifiedly bad thing for some horrible criminal to be released from prison, while admitting that it would be good for him. In the same way, you can say that things would go better for Barry (in one respect) if he achieved his evil goal, without thereby saying (for example) that we all have a reason to help him achieve it. The point is that we shouldn’t take it as a condition of adequacy for an account of welfare that it make every aspect of everyone’s welfare look valuable from the moral point of view.

There is one well-known dissenting opinion, expressed by G.E. Moore on pp. 98–99 of *Principia Ethica* (New York: Prometheus Books, 1988); according to Moore, to say that something is good for me is to say that it is good simpliciter that I have it. But this view is, for good reason, widely rejected. See Sumner, *Welfare, Happiness and Ethics*, pp. 46–53; and, for an extensive related discussion, ch. 10 of Thomas Nagel, *The View From Nowhere* (Oxford University Press, 1986).

⁶ Parfit, ‘What Makes Someone’s Life Go Best’, p. 494.

⁷ Velleman, ‘Well-Being and Time’, *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 72 (1991), pp. 48–77.

⁸ See, for example, Richard J. Arneson, ‘Human Flourishing versus Desire Satisfaction’, in Ellen Frankel Paul, Fred D. Miller Jr. and Jeffrey Paul (eds.), *Human Flourishing* (Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 113–142; Bernard Gert, *Morality: Its Nature and Justification* (Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 82–94; John Finnis, *Natural Law and Natural Rights* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), chpts. 3–4; and David O. Brink, *Moral Realism and the Foundations of Ethics* (Cambridge University Press, 1989) ch. 8.

⁹ This claim is often put to me in discussion, and variants of it are suggested by remarks in Shelly Kagan, ‘The Limits of Well-Being’, in Ellen Frankel Paul, Fred D. Miller, Jr. and Jeffrey Paul (eds.), *The Good Life and the Human Good* (Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 169–189; and in Wolf, ‘Happiness and Meaning: Two Aspects of the Good Life’, pp. 223–225.

¹⁰ See also Andrew Moore and Roger Crisp, ‘Welfarism and Moral Theory’, *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 74(4) (1996), pp. 598–613.

¹¹ As is often suggested by participants in the debate over whether or not death is a harm to individuals that lack self-awareness. See, for example, Michael Tooley,

'Abortion and Infanticide', *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 2(1) (1972), pp. 37–65; Don Marquis, 'Why Abortion is Immoral', *Journal of Philosophy* 86(4) (1989), pp. 183–202; and Peter Singer, *Rethinking Life and Death* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994). For an excellent discussion that shares some themes with the present paper, see Douglas Portmore, 'Welfare and Posthumous Harm' (Manuscript California State University, Northridge).

¹² I have in mind the proponents of the Restricted View (see note 2).

¹³ See, for example, Joseph Raz, 'Duties of Well-Being', in Raz (ed.), *Ethics in the Public Domain* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), pp. 3–28; and my manuscript 'Welfare and Political Freedom'.

¹⁴ For helpful comments and suggestions, thanks to David Lewis, Kieran Setiya and Peter Singer.

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