

DEATH, VALUE AND DESIRE

Most of us think that death is often bad. We think, too, that it is often bad for the one who dies. How does this badness in death relate to the value of life? A widespread thought is that death is bad only when the life it takes away would have been good. I'll assume this is about right, and say not much more about it here. And how does this badness relate to desire and the frustration of desire? Many people think there is some sort of connection, but doubt that it's straightforward. I agree. Still, it is in some respects more straightforward than is often supposed. I'll argue here first that having categorical desires is a necessary condition of death's being bad for those who die, and second that the degree to which death is bad bears a close relation to the number and strength of those desires.

Some of this may well appear somewhat controversial. So much the worse, it might be thought. For how can new or exciting or controversial views on something as familiar as death have any hope of being right? I am sympathetic to such scepticism. And towards the end much of the controversy will fall away.

I

We want many different, and different sorts of, things. I want new shoes, and I want again to visit Venice. Bernard Williams, famously, contrasts conditional and categorical desires: though of course you need to be alive to want anything at all, the former are those that you want satisfied on condition, or assuming, you'll continue to be alive; while the latter stand independent of this, and so, often at least, give you a reason to go on living.¹ So, assuming I'll be alive next week, with places to go, then new shoes will be useful, whereas going Venice isn't just a way of passing the time, but something for which I'll make time. I won't undergo a painful life-saving

¹ Williams 1973, 85.

operation in order to get shoes, but will to see Venice. Though in the end related, the salient difference, of course, lies not in the objects themselves, but in our attitudes towards them. Given that he's alive Billy wants a bike to get to work. Jilly wants to cycle coast to coast in Africa. She wants a bike, and to stay alive, in order to do this.

There is, however, need in several respects for clarification here. Williams appears to suggest that his distinction is both sharp and exhaustive, with categorical desires just those that are unconditional. But that cannot be right. Another distinction is that between self-regarding and other-regarding desires. Let's say that I want, as you want, that you should finish your book. This isn't something I want to happen only on condition I'm alive, but nor does it give me, though it does give you, a reason to go on living. But there are mixed cases here. Suppose your finishing your book requires my help. Then I do now have reason to live on.

Yet even when considering only the things I want for myself the picture is more complex. I can want things to be true in the past. I want to have made a reasonable impression with my valedictory address last week. Suppose I wanted this beforehand, and in such a way that it was then properly thought of as a categorical desire. Looking back, I don't know what impression I actually made, but still want it to have been good. This doesn't give me reason to go on living now. Nor should we overlook some future-directed, and self-regarding desires where satisfaction doesn't require my living on. I might want for myself posthumous fame, or the glory of death in some current battle. And it may be that I think I've already done enough to achieve this fame, or glory. So more life won't help. There are issues, too, about realism. I want to fly, unaided, to Jupiter. Or I want to be the first philosopher to land on Mars. The former desire is for something physically impossible, the latter for something extremely unlikely. Do I have reason to live on? If I were reasonable, I wouldn't have such desires at all. But given that I do, then consistency gives me reason to avoid death. A final complication: my desire to visit Venice isn't altogether unconditional. I don't want to go to that city under any condition, no matter what the price. Some operations would be just too painful to bear.² This suggests, perhaps, that the difference between the two sorts of desires is one of degree, rather than kind. Although much here deserves to be further explored, I'll proceed as if the notion of a categorical desire can be adequately grasped.

² See Broome 1999, 234-7 for good discussion.

Talk of reasons needs considerably more unpacking. How strong are they? What Williams says at the outset of his discussion is perhaps right:

To want something... is to that extent to have reason for resisting what excludes that thing: and death certainly does that, for a very large range of things that one wants. If that is right, then for any of those things, wanting something itself gives one a reason for avoiding death. Even though if I do not succeed, I will not know that, nor what I am missing, from the perspective of the wanting agent it is rational to aim for states of affairs in which his want is satisfied, and hence to regard death as something to be avoided; that is, to regard it as an evil.³

But it's right, if it is, because of the qualifications – thus, I have reason *to some extent*, and *from my perspective* death will appear an evil. Other, later, things may be less right. Someone who has categorical desires 'will have a reason, and a perfectly coherent reason, to regard death as a misfortune....'⁴ and 'we, looking at things from his point of view, would have reason to regard his actual death as a misfortune.'⁵ Moreover, 'granted categorical desires, death has a disutility for the agent.'⁶ All of this perhaps implies that death is bad for such a person. But the implication is questionable. First, death might be good for me. Suppose my life is one of endless agony, with no chance of relief. It may be better for me, in my interests, to die, even though I want to live on. In this sort of case I will, as Williams suggest, regard my death as an evil. But I'll be wrong. Second, my desires themselves may be in conflict. Though I want to visit Venice, and so want to live, I want also to be no longer a burden to my relatives, and for my nephew to inherit before he is to marry. So though I have some reason to live on, I have other reasons, and perhaps these will be, and will appear to me to be, stronger reasons, to die. Third, there are cases – and I've given examples concerning interplanetary travel – where one's desires are quite irrational. I shun death, but even if I have in some sense a reason, it isn't clear I have a coherent

³ Williams 85

⁴ Williams 88

⁵ Williams 88. Yet it isn't clear whether this is a thought about seeing things as he see them, or seeing them from point of view of his interests.

⁶ Williams 88

reason for doing so. Fourth, and closely related, even if my desires are wholly reasonable, and for things that might reasonably seem to be within my grasp – say I am an epidemiologist looking to understand, and then limit, the spread of some disease – it may be they just won't be satisfied. Even if death is bad, it isn't because it stands in my way.

So, even if those with categorical desires think death will be bad for them, believe it has a disutility, they may be wrong. Even if they have some reason to avoid death, this may not be overriding, or fully coherent. Williams' position isn't altogether clear. But if he thinks that having categorical desires is sufficient for death's being bad then, again, he is surely mistaken. Nevertheless, the relation between such desires and death's badness remains close. For, or so I'll claim, the existence of such desires is a necessary condition for death's being bad. Absent such desires and, for the one who dies, death isn't bad at all. That is something of a bald claim, and there will be need for a couple of qualifications later on. But the bald claim can usefully stand for now.

II

I've contrasted two views. In one, having categorical desires is sufficient for death's being bad. Williams may hold this, but it isn't certain. In another, having categorical desires is necessary for death's being bad. I hold this. In two further views such desires play a less critical role.

Nagel, as Williams observes,⁷ thinks death's badness can stand independently of desire. Consider this puzzling passage:

The situation is roughly this: There are elements that, if added to one's experience, make life better; there are other elements that, if added to one's experience, make life worse. But what remains when these are set aside is not merely *neutral*: it is emphatically positive. Therefore life is worth living even when the bad elements of experience are plentiful and the good ones too

⁷ Williams 1973, 88.

meagre to outweigh the bad ones on their own. The additional positive weight is supplied by experience itself, rather than any of its contents.⁸

The claim here isn't that death is always bad. There's no suggestion that it's bad for the irreversibly comatose. But it is bad for those having good experiences, and bad also for at least some of those whose experiences are overall bad. Having experiences is good, even when the experiences themselves aren't good. And whether or not these experiences are desired has, apparently, nothing to do with it.

Jeff McMahan also thinks that death's badness is more wide-ranging than Williams seems to allow:

The idea that the badness of death can be fully explained by reference to the frustration of categorical desires is, I think, decisively undermined by two considerations..... One is that this idea cannot recognise that death can be bad for fetuses, infants and animals. The other is that the loss of future goods that are undesired at the time of death can contribute to the badness of death.⁹

There are three points here, only the central one of which needs to be pursued at length. First, 'fully explained' seems to overstate the case – Williams appears to claim, as I read him, that having categorical desires is sufficient for death's being bad. Suppose he also wants to claim, as do I, that such desires are also necessary. It's far from clear that he does think this. Even so, there might be a lot more to say about death's badness, say, about the Epicurean challenge, or again about the degree to which it is bad, before any full explanation is claimed. Second, McMahan's final point will take us into complex territory. I can put aside the detail for now. But it links with the middle point.

McMahan refers to infants. I can only suppose that he means by this what I mean by 'baby', and thus a very young child. I'll refer simply to babies from here on. These, along with fetuses and most animals, lack categorical desires. Someone who thinks only that categorical desires are sufficient for death's badness is not thereby committed either way on animal, fetus and baby deaths. But someone who thinks such

⁸ Nagel 1979, 2

⁹ McMahan 2002, 182. This follows on from explicit discussion of Williams' position, and it seems clear that it is indeed that position that is alleged to be 'decisively undermined'.

desires are necessary is so committed. So if I'm persuaded that fetus, animal or baby deaths are bad, then I'll have to give up on my view.

I'll say more about Nagel's and McMahan's positions below

III

I claim that having future-directed categorical desires is a necessary condition of my death's being bad for me. But I should clarify one point. If at a certain time I lack categorical desires, then death isn't bad for me, at that time. I don't, of course, hold that lacking such desires at some time means that death isn't bad for me at any time. I'll call this the *Desire View*. It contrasts with claims that death can be bad even when such desires are absent. What then is present? Well, life, for a start. Perhaps also health, or experience, or good or pleasurable experience, or a desire, albeit conditional, for such experience. Any view of this kind I'll call a *Life View*. And the salient difference between these views, in broad terms, is roughly thus: on the Life View death is bad when it prevents there being more life, or in some sense or other more good or worthwhile life, or some such. On the Desire View this isn't sufficient for badness. That life has to be something you want to live.

I say that the Desire View is true, while the Life View is false. This will need to be qualified – it is in several respects too blunt as it stands. But it has some fairly evident implications about when death isn't bad that I will stick by – the qualifications won't impinge on those:

If the Desire View is true then death isn't bad for:

a) Plants. They have no mental life at all, and so have neither categorical no conditional desires. I take it that when we say that a plant wants some fertilizer we are speaking only metaphorically.

b) Animals. Even if they have desires, they are not of the right kind. Wanting a mate right now isn't the same as, or the same sort of thing as, wanting to settle down and raise a family. Of course, my claim that animals lack categorical desires will be challenged. So perhaps I should say lower animals – cows, rabbits, frogs, worms –

though sentient, lack these desires. Or, insofar as animals lack these desires then their deaths are not bad.

c) The PVS patient. She had such desires. But her mental life is over. She has no desires now and will have none in the future.¹⁰

d) The late-stage Alzheimer's patient. He had such desires in the past. And he has some desires now. But he doesn't have, and will never have again, categorical desires in the sense outlined. We might say his condition is similar to that of an animal whereas the PVS patient, as indeed 'vegetative' suggests, can be likened to a plant.

e) The fetus. Though, assuming normal development, it will come to have categorical desires, it has no such desires either at the present, or at previous times.

f) The baby. Its condition is, in the relevant respects, the same as that of the fetus.

My claim here, then, is that it isn't bad, for things in any of these categories, when that thing dies. I am not saying, of course, that it isn't bad at all when such things die – it can be bad for owners, viewers, bystanders, friends, relatives, dependants. Maybe it can be bad, in some sense, for the universe. Nor am I saying that it isn't wrong to kill any such things. Abortion may be wrong, and killing a fetus may wrong it, even while its death isn't bad for it.¹¹ Nor, finally, am I denying that the manner of death might be bad. A painful death will usually be bad for the thing that dies.

My claim can be put in a different way. Using the term as philosophers often use it, where it links to rationality, self-consciousness, an awareness of time's

¹⁰ I am oversimplifying the position regarding the persistent or permanent vegetative state. There is considerable dispute, relating to and generating the different terms here, as to what is going on in the brains of those in such a condition. My assumptions are that such patients are unconscious, have nothing that we'd call a mental life, lack desires. It doesn't matter, for present purposes, whether these assumptions are true. See Belshaw 2009 for more discussion.

¹¹ I want to stress this point. A considerable number of writers, some of them advancing versions of the Desire View, have focussed on questions about the permissibility or impermissibility of killing, often in context of the abortion debate. Though the concerns are clearly related, my emphasis is on value, and what we should want to occur, rather than on morality, and what we should do. And see footnote 42 below.

passage, I might say that death isn't bad for non-persons. Things in the above categories are not persons, even if in several cases they were or will be persons. This isn't to say, of course, that death is bad, ever, or always, for persons. But I'll simply assume what I think is a common sense view here. Death is sometimes, or in some circumstances, but by no means always, in all circumstances, bad for persons.

IV

The Desire View will be found objectionable. Consider the PVS and baby cases. There are some similarities. In both there are no categorical desires now, and in both there are such desires at a different time. But the location of these times will seem to many to be a relevant difference. Perhaps death isn't bad when all such desires are in the past. But when, as with the baby, there's a period still to come that will feature such desires, death is bad.

Of course I agree that if this baby – call him Baby – reaches, say, the age of seventeen, and has then desires for more life, or for activities that require more life, then death at that time will be bad. But is it bad now? I say no. For I say that death is bad, for he who dies, only when it cuts off a life that he wants to live. Baby isn't living such a life. So death now isn't bad for Baby.

There might be offered some support for this view. Relatively few think it bad when a new life fails to start. So relatively few think that failing to conceive is bad, or that we should, other things equal, have as many children as possible, or that it would, other things equal, be better if deserts, jungles and seas were all teeming with life. But many think it bad, other things equal, when a life already under way prematurely ends. I see no important difference here. Focus just on human life. If a fetus dies then a particular individual, already alive, is prevented from being born, developing in many ways, and living out its life. If some conception which might have occurred doesn't occur, then a particular individual is prevented from coming into existence, being born, and living out its life. And this is so even if we don't know who that individual would be, what he or she would be like, whether it would be a he or a she.

Suppose you agree, it isn't bad when conception fails to occur. Then you should agree that it's similarly not bad when, in effect, conception is reversed, and a fetus dies.¹²

It will be objected that there are salient differences. With the non-conception case, no life is ended, no one is harmed, there is no victim to consider. But is there an important contrast with the fetus case? Whether the fetus is harmed by death, whether it is in the ordinary sense a victim, is the point at issue. And certainly it isn't pained or distressed, its desires are not frustrated, its life plans not overturned. My suggestion, then, is that just as it isn't bad not to start a new life, so it isn't bad, in cases like these, to end a life.¹³

Again, the point can be put in terms of personhood. Baby will become a person. But as he isn't a person now, so death isn't bad for him now

V

The objection considered above is that having categorical desires isn't necessary for death's badness. For Fetus and Baby lacks such desires. Here's another form of that objection: when I'm fast asleep, or under anaesthetic, or flat on my back in a boxing ring, it seems I have no desires. But it would be bad for me to die in these circumstances. So much, then, for the Desire View.

My response is different. Though I deny that death is bad for either Fetus or Baby, I agree it's bad here. And this is because of a structural difference that needs to be noted. In sleep, coma and similar cases, although there are no evident desires right now, there were previously and, without death and other serious mishaps, there will be again. Moreover, in most such cases seemingly the very same desires are recovered – I wake up and continue to want, as I wanted yesterday, to buy a Harley, and drive it to Spain. We might say that while our desires are for some period not evident, they are present, latent or tacit, throughout. Death, in sleep, cuts off the life I want to live.

¹² Imagine two test tubes. In the one an egg and sperm have fused, and form a zygote. In the other the egg and sperm are kept apart by a divider. Both test tubes are accidentally dropped, and broken. It is surely strange to deeply regret this in the one case, and to believe that nothing important has happened in the other.

¹³ For discussion see Parfit 1984, 487-490; McMahan 2002, 306-308; Rachels 1998.

The examples merely sketched here involve relatively brief and clear cut interruptions to an unfolding life. Elsewhere things are less straightforward:

The Teenager. Beth, a teenager, is moping about the house. Some boyfriend has dumped her. She hates school. Her parents are so misunderstanding. She wants to die. Though she had plenty previously and will, if she lives, have plenty again, Beth has right now no categorical desires. But she has desires nevertheless. She wants, while she's alive, to be left alone, to listen to her music, to eat only what she wants to eat.

Would it be bad for Beth to die now? We mostly want to say yes. Suppose we are right to say this. She used to have desires to live, and to live beyond her teenage years. That she's had such desires is a part of the reason for thinking her mood a temporary aberration. It may be less tempting here to say that she has these desires, though latent, right now. Nevertheless, it's because this mood, though hardly fleeting, is still temporary, because similar desires will surface, and she'll pick up the threads of her life, because further (as we can assume) this life will be good, that Beth's death now would be bad for her.

Contrast her case with two of her friends. Zoe last had such desires when she was seven. Since then, she's been clinically depressed. And she'll never recover, never again sustain any categorical desires. There is no unfolding life. So death now isn't bad for Zoe. Lou is enjoying her life, and does have plans for the future. But she will soon suffer a brain haemorrhage that will leave her in PVS. Her life is unfolding but won't continue to do so. Death, as an alternative to PVS, isn't bad for her.

Consider now a minor variation of a related case, offered by Jeff McMahan, where again, I want to say, death isn't bad for the one who dies. His case runs thus:

The Cure. Imagine that you are twenty years old and are diagnosed with a disease that, if untreated, invariably causes death (though not pain or disability) within five years. There is a treatment that reliably cures the disease but also, as a side effect, causes total retrograde amnesia and radical personality change. Long-term studies of others who have had the treatment show that they almost always go on to have long and happy lives, though these lives are informed by desires

and values that differ profoundly from those that the person had prior to treatment. You can therefore reasonably expect that, if you take the treatment, you will live for roughly sixty more years, though the life you will have will be utterly discontinuous with your life as it has been.¹⁴

We might say here that your psychology, your biographical life, has either zero or five years to run.¹⁵ If you choose five, it will then be ended, without replacement. If zero it will be replaced now, with another, quite distinct biographical life. McMahan thinks most of us would believe ourselves rational in refusing this cure. Your personality, memory, character could survive another five years. Choose the cure and they go out like a light, replaced by others altogether unknown to you. Why choose that? The patient here will undergo psychological rupture. He prefers five years of the life to which he is already committed, and which he can hope to pull into shape, rather than sixty years of something about which he knows little and cares less. Of course, just as some people will sacrifice themselves for their children, or their fellow soldiers, or a cause, so this patient might take the cure, in order to bring a long and worthwhile life into existence. But first, this isn't obviously a rational thing to do and second, though I'll need to come back to this point, it surely isn't in his interests, or best for him, to act in this way.

McMahan is suggesting only that most of us will prefer the shorter to the longer future. This doesn't itself imply that the longer future is of no value at all. But of course that is what I want to claim, of cases where psychological disruption is, as here, complete. So, my variation runs thus. You fall into a coma. Suppose well-meaning but, as I contend, poor-thinking doctors attempt to save your life, knowing that they can succeed only at the cost of such disruption. Would it have been bad for you if, while unconscious, you'd died? I say no. Death isn't bad when, if you live, a completely different biographical life unfolds. So even if it isn't worse, the longer life is no better than death. And some such view is at least suggested by McMahan's example. For, first, the difference between five years and sixty is already substantial,

¹⁴ McMahan 2002, 77.

¹⁵ For more on the distinction between the biological and the biographical life see Rachels, 1986.

and second, as it's hard to believe the precise numbers here are critical, then perhaps even one year, or less, will also outweighs sixty, or more. So we are at least on the way to supposing the longer life is of just no value to the patient. As it isn't bad to die when there is no good life ahead, so also it isn't bad when that life, though good, isn't wanted.¹⁶

One thing should be noted here. Even if you agree that it isn't bad if someone with irreversible depression dies, you'll surely think it bad that someone should be in that condition. Similarly, even if it isn't bad that someone should die rather than live on but with a completely different personality, it is surely bad that they are in this no-win situation. These cases contrast, then, with some – but only with some – of those considered earlier. It isn't bad that a plant is only a plant, an animal merely an animal. It isn't bad for them that death isn't bad for them. But it is bad that someone should be depressed, or in PVS, or faced with no options preferable to death. It is bad for them that death isn't bad for them.

VI

The concern so far has been with circumstances in which, as I've claimed, death isn't bad for the one who dies. Often it is bad. But how bad it is will vary from case to case, and from circumstance to circumstance. And there are, I've suggested, two broad brush factors to take into account. How bad it is to die depends, first, on the length and quality of the life ahead and, second, on how much you want to live that life. Again, the focus is on the second.

Death, I've said, isn't bad for the fetus or for the PVS patient. They have no categorical desires, and are not persons. But now personhood comes, and goes, by degrees. Baby grows into Child, and Woman begins to suffer from Alzheimer's. In these intermediate states they have, let us suppose, some categorical desires, but only a few, and with a very limited reach. Death, in general, is less bad for partial persons than it is for persons.

¹⁶ There are complications lurking here. With *The Cure* the future life isn't wanted – I say quite reasonably – because it is so different. Suppose it is wanted. Still I say death isn't bad. For this is a desire the satisfaction of which doesn't, in the relevant sense, benefit you. But I am hanging nothing on this more controversial claim.

Lou, who is a person and has many such desires, is fated either to live in PVS or to die. It isn't bad to die, when the alternative is PVS, and the life of a non-person. Jan and Jen are just beginning their retirement. They anticipate a further 20 years of worthwhile life. But Jen will soon begin to develop Alzheimer's. Suppose they both die in 10 years time. Jen's death is less bad than is Jan's. For, in general, it's less bad to die when the alternative is the life of a partial person, someone unable to realise, or even fully comprehend, one's earlier categorical desires.

McMahan's man declines the treatment. He prefers a short life, as himself, to a long life as someone altogether different. And it isn't bad to die, I've said, when the alternative is to live on as a completely different person. Suppose the post-cure man is only partially different from the man pre-cure. He has the amnesia, but not the personality change. It is, in general, less bad to die when the alternative is the life of a partially different person.¹⁷

This is all sketchy, but, I believe, nevertheless correct. It is going to be worthwhile, however, to look now at two cases, both less clear cut than those outlined here, in some detail. So, first:

Child and Student. Is it worse to die at 3, or at 23? Freddie isn't a baby any more. He talks, can already read a little, is wondering what school will be like. Ask him if he's a person and he won't understand. But he is. Derek is in graduate school, looking forward to finishing the dissertation, thinking about whether to put career or prospective family first, keeping an eye open for post-doc opportunities. Both have categorical desires, but the 23 year old has more, and they are longer ranging, and more stable.¹⁸

As Baby becomes a child he becomes a person. Freddie is a person. Death is bad for him. And the partial person move won't explain why his death is less bad than Derek's. But appeal to the number and reach of his categorical desires will. Normally,

¹⁷ Another complication. For it will be objected that we are always partially different from how we were before. That is clearly the case. What is less clear is whether we should therefore talk of our being a partially different person. So I am after something stronger than this. Whether what I am after involves a difference in kind or only in degree from everyday change is a harder question. I'm not going to worry about it, however, suspecting that if we achieved precision throughout this area something would have gone wrong.

¹⁸ See Belshaw 2005, 46-7; Belshaw 2009, 118-122; McMahan 1988, (259-266 Fischer); McMahan 2002, 164-172; Bradley 2008, Bradley 2009, 115-129 for discussion of this and closely related cases.

we think the earlier death is worse. Assuming a life span of around 80 years, then it is worse to die at 40 than at 70. Similarly it's worse to die at 20 than 40. But is the pattern here to be repeated, such that, again assuming they'd otherwise live to 80, Freddie's is the worse death? I say no. Even though he has fewer years ahead of him, Derek has a greater sense of those years, stronger desires in relation to them, much more of a life plan. Freddie's loss, thought of just in terms of the number and quality of years ahead, far exceeds Derek's. Still I say Derek's is the worse death. If this is right then the Life View has to go.

Here's another case, again not altogether tidy:

Stars. In her 50's now, Sally has what many would think of as a good career acting in a long running TV soap. And at Christmas she's usually in a pantomime. But through her 20's and just a little beyond she was at the top of her game – Hollywood, Oscars, Cannes. It's not a bad life now, but it's a long way short of what it was. Sometimes she thinks it wouldn't have been a bad thing, maybe would have even been better, if she'd exited the stage in some dramatic fashion at that earlier time, rather than continue with this muddling through.¹⁹

The idea here might be expressed in terms of narrative structure.²⁰ Sally's thought is that her life up to her early 30's had an elegance or shape or coherence that is now noticeably absent. Let's assume this is true, and she isn't simply deluded. Let's assume, further, that on a year by year basis her life then was better than it is now. But it is still year by year a good life, and one worth living. And she has, and satisfies, some categorical desires. And, on any defensible account, she is the same person, and as much a person, as she was before. The hard question, then, is whether she might nevertheless be right that dying around 30 would have been better for her than living on.

This case has some similarities with certain of the others. As with *The Cure* the question is whether choosing the shorter life might have been the better bet. But

¹⁹ There are ancestors in Bradley 2009, 157-163; McMahan 2002, 175; Belshaw 2009, 112-114.

²⁰ For narrative structure or unity see, as well as those mentioned in note 19, especially MacIntyre 1981.

there two biographical lives, wholly or partially different, were involved – here there is just the one. That’s true in *Child and Student* also. But in that case there’s no question the longer life is the better, such that it would clearly be good for Freddie to live on – the question is whether we can hold to that alongside believing that Freddie’s death is less bad than Derek’s. Here an emphasis on death, and death’s bringing about the loss of further life, is perhaps misleading – Sally isn’t so much thinking that the later death is worse as that the longer life is in one important sense less good for her than the shorter.

Though it’s less clear than the others, I think she might be right. Certainly in many cases of broadly this form suspicions of romantic self-indulgence would be well-placed. But must they always be so? Sally is making no obvious mistake about the content or value of parts of her life, or about the way these parts relate to one another. It doesn’t prevent her life from being worth living, doesn’t even rule out a kind of happiness, but she does have around her always the regret that in comparison with what went before, her life now doesn’t amount to much.

If this is right then again it counts against the Life View. It wouldn’t straightforwardly have been very bad for Sally to have died in her early 30s just because, again straightforwardly, she would thereby have lost many worthwhile years. Though the longer life in some clear sense contains more value, it isn’t so obviously of high value for her.

VII

I’ve argued that having categorical desires is necessary for death’s being bad, and that the degree to which it is bad relates to the number, reach, strength, realisability of these desires. From this it follows first that it just isn’t bad for many sorts of things – plants, people in PVS, fetuses – and second that even when death is bad for some sort of thing – someone living a worthwhile life, and wanting, and able to have, more – there is no straightforward correspondence between death’s timing and its value.

It seems that proponents of the Life View will oppose these claims. Ben Bradley is a committed advocate of this view. The view in general, and Bradley’s particular stance in relation to it, needs now to be considered.

Start with the Deprivation Account of death's badness, the belief that death is bad, when it is, not in virtue of its intrinsic properties but because of what it takes from us, or prevents us from having.²¹ One might think some version of this is surely right while doubting whether the particular refinements of the Life View should be maintained. Bradley puts the view thus:

the overall value of an event for a person is equal to the difference between the value of her actual life and the value of the life she would have had if the event had not happened.²²

This is quite general. So if a life has an overall value, then the value of some event for that life is precisely what it adds to or subtracts from this overall value. Its value, then, is what it contributes to the whole. And so if a long life has a higher overall value than a short life then death is bad, and bad just to the extent that it costs in terms of value.

There are two assumptions and one minor mistake that should be noted here. The assumptions are first that we can assign values to lives and events, and second that these values can in some sense be relativized – we are to consider the value of an event *for a person* and this event's impact on the value of life *for that person*. The minor mistake is the needless restriction here to persons. Bradley makes clear he thinks that animal lives also have value. And even if we were thinking only of human lives, the slipperiness of the notion of a person suggests that if we can easily avoid it, then perhaps we should. Perhaps, then, it is better to think of the value of lives and events for individuals. One advantage will emerge shortly.

This is, as Bradley observes, a simple view.²³ It implies the following. If all the periods in a thing's life are of positive value, then death is worse, the earlier it comes. If all the periods in a thing's life are of positive or neutral value, then, so long as there are some good periods ahead, death is bad. And, even supposing some periods of negative value, if the overall value of the final period of life is positive, then a death that deprives a thing of that period is bad for that thing.

²¹ See Fischer 1993, 18-27 and, as there suggested, Nagel 1979 .

²² Bradley 2009, 113. The statement in Bradley 2008, 292 is extremely similar.

²³ Bradley 2009, 51. And that simplicity is a virtue is point he insists on in the book's introduction.

This represents the bare bones of a Life View. But clearly there is already enough here to generate conflict with the Desire View. For I want to deny that the value of death is just the value of the life thereby lost and to deny too that the earlier the death, the worse it is.²⁴ Further conflict will depend just how this Life View is fleshed out. For the view is in itself compatible with a variety of positions on what gives a life, or a part of a life, some value, and compatible too with holding that some value contributor is either necessary for value or, more weakly, that while not necessary, it still adds to value. Now Bradley's is in fact a hedonist position²⁵ – he holds that having good experiences is what makes life good, and so it can be good for animals as well as for human beings, but not for plants. He appears to hold also that though self-conscious experience is especially valuable, contributing to the overall value of a life, it isn't necessary for value. Thus it is normally bad if healthy animals die, but normally worse if healthy human beings die. And various further positions on value are compatible with the Life View. One could hold that integration between moments adds to value, so that a fragmented life is of less value than a better integrated, more cohesive standard life. One could hold that desire satisfaction is relevant to value – other things equal the more desires are satisfied, the better it is. And now a potential confusion – one could also hold that having categorical desires is necessary for life to have value. But confusion can be dispelled. Suppose a life has to contain categorical desires at some point, in order for it to have value. Only if there are such desires to come, will it be bad if Baby dies. But on the Life View Baby's death can be bad, and bad for Baby, even if these desires are a long way off. Not so on the Desire View.

What is to be said for and against these rival views? Consider first Bradley's take on various of the cases discussed above. And start with *The Cure*. He thinks the patient should accept:

The decision to refuse treatment is shortsighted and irrational. It seems in many ways similar to the decision of a child to ignore the consequences of his

²⁴ It should be noted that my opponent needn't hold to quite this position. Suppose life begins with conception, but has no moment by moment value until some way into the fetal stage. Death at conception is as bad as, but not worse than, death a few months later.

²⁵ Bradley 2009, 9-45.

behaviour on his adult self, since he does not currently care about the things his adult self will care about.²⁶

Many will find this puzzling. Why should this man sacrifice a medium term future to which he is fully committed, for a longer and in some ways overall better future in which he has no interest? Issues about identity and personhood come up again here. Suppose that treatment affects identity – take the medicine and you cease to exist, being then replaced by someone else. Here Bradley thinks that refusal is appropriate.²⁷ You can reasonably want to put your future before someone else's. But there are questions about what identity consists in. Perhaps we should adopt some sort of psychological account. Then very plausibly, given the details – 'total retrograde amnesia and radical personality change' – you don't survive the operation. Perhaps, as many now believe, you are an animal. Then, as the same animal or biological life continues – only the mind is altered – you do survive. Should you take the cure? Bradley might appear to think that we really need to do some work in the metaphysics of identity before deciding on what to do. But this can't be right. For he thinks death can be bad for Baby, even before Baby is a person. And he thinks death can be bad for someone like Clive Wearing, where fragmentation subverts personhood as ordinarily understood.²⁸ Bradley seems, then, to be drawn towards an animalist account of identity and so thinks that one and the same individual exists both before and after the cure. But it remains unclear why that should settle anything. If I am not required to sacrifice my future for someone else's, why am I required to sacrifice the future I do want for one I don't?

An objection should be considered. Suppose our man decides to accept the treatment. It is highly plausible to suppose that the later person, enjoying his long life, will be pleased that the earlier person so decided. So he did have reason to accept. This objection is weak. I might be pleased that someone sacrificed their life on my behalf, but this doesn't show they had reason to make that sacrifice.²⁹ But suppose we agree that the very same individual survives the operation. Still, this pleasure

²⁶ Bradley 2009, 117.

²⁷ Bradley 2009, 118

²⁸ Bradley 2009, 119. See also McMahan 2002, 76

²⁹ Or, that it was reasonable to make the sacrifice. Someone might claim we always have *some* reason to do that which will please another person.

settles nothing. For imagine the patient had a further option offering an even longer life but where the post-op psychology seemed even more alien to him. As our man's pleasure doesn't show the patient was right to refuse this second option, it doesn't show he was right to accept the first.

As we disagree about *The Cure*, so also will we disagree about *Child and Student*. Bradley doesn't, however, discuss this case explicitly, but focuses instead on Baby and Student. For as he thinks Baby's death is bad for Baby, he can use the comparison here to make his point that the earlier death is worse. In denying this I needed an example where I nevertheless allow both deaths are bad.

Baby is just three weeks old. Unlike Child, he has no categorical desires. As, on Bradley's view, it is bad for an animal to die, so it is bad for Baby. But his death is considerably worse because of the rich future ahead, and that threatens now to be lost. Bradley supposes that Baby and Student, assuming they don't die, live near identical lives. We can either think there are two people to consider, Freddie and Derek, of different ages, each of which might die now, or we can think about just the one unfolding life, that of Frederick, and consider different times at which it might be ended. Either way it seems that Baby loses just what Student loses – say sixty years of a good life – along with some more good years – say another twenty. So on the Life View his must be the worse death.

On my view, even if development and change are gradual, still the strength, number, reach of desires is relevant to how bad it is, for an individual, to die. And certainly there is this seemingly salient difference in play – Student wants, now, to go on living, has, now, various realisable plans. Baby doesn't. So although Bradley can point out that Baby, should he live, will, when he is as old as Student, also want to go on living, will have plans, it's hard to see how present and future desires are on an equal footing,³⁰ and how the difference here doesn't impact on the badness of their deaths. More precisely, it's hard to see how it fails to impact on how bad death is *for them*.

Finally, Bradley discusses also cases like Sally's. Unsurprisingly, he's against the shorter life, and earlier death. But again, some might think his position a little

³⁰ Again, there's an ambiguity. Some say that bias to the present is irrational. So my current desires a) for now and b) for the future are on an equal footing. This claim, true or false, differs from my claim here: current desires, for now and the future, are not on an equal footing with future desires, for then and the future.

firmer than circumstances warrant. Using the example of a famous film star, he considers, and finds wanting, ways of improving on an alleged ‘inconsistent triad’:

1. James Dean’s actual life is better than the life he would have had if he had not died when he did.
2. James Dean’s death was bad for him.
3. DMP is true.³¹

DMP – the Difference Making Principle – is in effect a statement of what I am calling the Life View.³² Bradley insists that it, or some near equivalent is surely true, such that we have no option but to reject either 1 or 2 in order to be rid of inconsistency. And he thinks it plain enough that 2 is true while 1 is false. Now clearly I am far from wedded to the Life View or DMP, but wonder anyway whether 2 is as obviously correct as Bradley supposes.³³ It obviously costs the actor, as we are supposing, future good years, but part what is involved in this sort of appeal to narrative structure is a questioning of the alleged overall unambiguity of such claims. A little later, when asking whether such appeal is based on aesthetic intuitions, Bradley insists that ‘Dean’s actual life makes for a better story than the imagined longer life, but clearly this has nothing to do with whether it is a better life *for him*.’³⁴ Is this so clear? Interestingly, Bradley goes on to concede that some people really do want their lives to make a good story, and it may actually be better for them if they succeed. Still, ‘not everyone cares about such things, and it is not clear why they should if they do not’.³⁵ But this case is different from those considered earlier. My claim is just that Sally might not irrationally think an earlier death would have been better, and not at all that she should think this.³⁶ Similarly for James Dean. And I might revisit now an earlier

³¹ Bradley 2009, 159.

³² Bradley uses this formulation throughout his book. In earlier work he refers to what is in effect the same notion as the *Life Comparative Account*, or LCA. This, in non-abbreviated form, is the term much used by McMahan in a range of similar contexts. See Bradley, 2009, 50-51 and on; 2008; McMahan, 2002, 105-106, 168-187.

³³ It should be noted, however, that a critic of the Life View can accept that this early death is bad for James Dean. The question is whether it might be better – less bad – than a later death.

³⁴ Bradley 2009, 160.

³⁵ Bradley 2009, 161.

³⁶ A further point. Bradley thinks the friend of narrative structure is on stronger ground in cases, like that of Socrates, where someone chooses and prefers the earlier death, much less strong where the

point. Someone sacrifices their life for their children. It is surely tempting to say both that death is bad for them, in costing them many good years, and good for them, in bringing about what they most value. I said earlier that it surely isn't in someone's interests to sacrifice themselves in this way. But my suggestion now is that this isn't obviously correct. And as you might, not irrationally, care more for your children than living on, so you might similarly care more that your life has a good shape. But I'll say more about these ambiguities in the next section.

As well as looking further into these cases, it's worth thinking, too, about some of the broader implications of Bradley's position. If we ought, as with *The Cure*, to be indifferent to the psychological details of parts of our lives, so too for the whole of our lives. We'll all die in ten years, when an asteroid hits the Earth. Jane will be only 30. She could have been born earlier, as she was in fact born from an embryo that had been on ice for thirty years. So she could have lived to 60. Should she wish she had been born earlier, even though virtually none of her current psychology would in that case have emerged? Bradley must think she should.³⁷ I will die in five years because of exposure to chemicals when I was year old. My parents had been on the verge of emigrating. Had they done so, then even though my psychology would have been radically different – friends, interests, language, schooling – I'd have had a much longer life ahead. Should I wish they'd caught the plane? Bradley will think I should. But for many of us, it's very hard to see why this attachment to the kind of persons we are, to the kinds of lives we're living, should be so easily set aside.³⁸

There is an issue, too, about the ordering of events within life, or a period of life. As I've noted, life is worth living, on the life view, if it is overall good. My cat will live for another three years, and good years, if I subject it to an extremely painful operation, with six months of bad side effects, right now. Many people think that future pleasure cannot straightforwardly compensate for present pain in an animal life. It can, of course, in a human life, and I might rationally choose some drawn out painful procedures in order to secure some future benefit. But I think I can, as well,

person prefers to live on. Sally and James Dean may well have preferred to live at the time they died. But surely this is in part because they would then have expected the good times still to roll. Hence my emphasis on someone's looking back and thinking, with some reflection, that the shorter life would have been better.

³⁷ Someone could claim that psychology is very much genetically determined and so resistant to environmental impact. Clearly, Bradley's position rests on no such empirical claim.

³⁸ See Belshaw 2000a, 2000b.

rationality decline this. Two years of pain, starting now, will give me ten years of pleasure still to come. Even if I agree that, should I endure the pain, I'll later be glad that I did, I don't think it is clearly irrational, or cowardly, to decide now not to endure it. This is a hard case, complicated by my being already in the middle of things, with presumably desires now for later times. Baby's case is, I think, less hard. We're in a car crash together, both now unconscious. A doctor might well, and reasonably, decide it is worth giving me some painful operation to save my life, because, as he believes, I would want this. Ought he to do the same for Baby? I think we should look upon a baby here much as we'd look upon a cat, and be most concerned with its present pain.³⁹

VIII

I said at the outset that my position would, in the end, turn to be less controversial than it might first appear. I'll deliver on that now. And so I'll offer some sort of reconciliation between Bradley's position, and mine. This involves discussion of two sets of contrasts, one between *bad that* and *bad for*, the other between three sorts of value, or ways in which something might be bad.

Our question has been about whether, when, and to what degree death is bad *for the one who dies*. We might say, somewhat roughly, that our concern is with badness for the person, or with personal value.⁴⁰ But what is the contrast here? There are two, one firmer than the other. My death might be bad for me, but good for you, as you inherit, or good for society, as I am a terrorist, or despot, or carrier of some deadly virus. It might be instrumentally good that I die, even though bad for me. The other contrast is with intrinsic value – we might say it is a bad thing that someone died, or bad just in itself, or bad for the universe, or some such. Two things should be

³⁹ Bradley's elaboration of his position involves his engagement with and criticism of Jeff McMahan's *Time Relative Interest Account*. Both McMahan's account and Bradley's treatment of it are generously extended, and there isn't space for a worthwhile discussion here. I make only two comments. First, I'm not sure that Bradley entirely wins the argument with McMahan. Second, though they are not unrelated, there are nevertheless important differences between TRIA and the Desire View. So even if the one is beaten the other still stands. But see Bradley 2009, 129-146; McMahan 2002, 105-6, 165-174, 194-5 and elsewhere.

⁴⁰ My thinking here is influenced by – but not always consonant with – discussion in Dworkin 1993.

noted here. First, this is the less firm contrast, for while personal and instrumental values might be at odds with one another – it’s bad for me but not for others, or vice versa – intrinsic value seems to imply personal value – if it’s bad just in itself that I die, surely it’s bad for me also. Second, ‘bad for the world’ is ambiguous. This might on the one hand link with something’s being bad for others, or bad for society, and thus imply instrumental value, or it might connect with badness in itself, or for the universe, and thus intrinsic value. Thus when Bradley signals his concern as with ‘how bad death is for its victim, not for the world’⁴¹ it might not be wholly clear just what contrast he has in mind.

There’s more to say about *for* and *that*. Rust is bad for my car. What this surely means, though, is just that rust is indirectly bad for me. There is no clear sense, independent of our interest and concerns, in which something can be bad for an artefact.

It is different with living things. Supposing there are no gardeners, still drought is bad for plants. It interferes with their wellbeing or flourishing. But now if drought, or greenfly, or frost is bad for plants, so too, surely, is death. It’s hard to see how it can be bad for plants to undergo a decline in wellbeing, without its being bad that their well-being hits zero, and death comes. Some will object that plants are on a par with artefacts here – change can occur, and damage, but harm is only improperly spoken of. But I can sidestep this. *If* drought is bad for plants – and it is at least a familiar and not wholly implausible thought that it is – then death is bad for them also.

Things are somewhat similar with animals. ‘Somewhat’ as there is sentience and experience to take into account. So consider the sudden and painless death. We might agree that it is bad for a cow, or a lamb to die, at least prematurely, as again flourishing is curtailed, and some seemingly natural process is prevented from running its course. And then, of course, similarly too for embryos, fetuses, babies – if death is bad for plants, it is bad also human beings in the early stages of life. This is to concede something to Bradley and the Life View, then. And I might concede more. In the sense in which it is bad for a fetus to die – bad in that it is thereby prevented from growing, maturing and living out its life – the earlier the

⁴¹ Bradley 2009, 116.

death, in general the worse it is. It is in one clear sense worse for Baby to die as a baby, than to die later, as a student. His good moments are fewer.

This, however, is as far as the concessions go. I introduced above the rough idea of personal value. It can be made a little less rough. Consider some of the weird and far from wonderful things I happen to value – a stupid poem I wrote as a kid, my pink socks, a clapped out bike that it's no longer safe to ride. Evidently these things are of *merely* personal value, and it would be in no way bad, either for others, or in itself, should they be destroyed. Now the value of life is not to be understood in quite this sense. Nevertheless, we should distinguish two ways in which death might be bad for the thing that dies. From conceding that death is bad for the plant it doesn't at all follow that we should be exercised about plant death, regret its occurrence, or make any sacrifices to prevent it. Similarly for the animal, the embryo, the fetus or baby. We can agree that death is bad for these things while yet not agreeing it is bad that they die. Dissimilarly, however, elsewhere. Just as it's both bad for animals to be in pain and bad that they are in pain – this is something we should regret and in some circumstances try to prevent – so also it's both bad for Student to die and bad that he dies – this also is something we should regret, and want to prevent. When someone has worthwhile plans and projects, wants to live on, and – barring death – is likely to realise these plans and projects, then death is bad for that person, and in a way that makes demands on us. We might say that it's bad that he dies, or that his death is intrinsically bad, or that it's bad not only for him but also for the universe, or for the world.

When I suggest, then, that Baby's death isn't bad, and that Child's death is less bad than Student's, it's this sort of badness I have in mind. Baby's death isn't, for Baby's sake, something we should try to prevent, and Child's death, though normally we ought if possible to prevent it, should come lower in our priorities than Student's death. Now suppose a defender of the Life View objects here that their position has not been fully understood. Nagel, remember, suggests that experience itself is valuable. A hedonist thinks good experience is valuable. So even if we can forget about plants, still, the claim is, the preservation of animal lives and the lives of young, and very young human beings should be among our concerns. Keep away death and there will be more of value in the world. As it's good, and intrinsically good, or good in itself, that this value is sustained, so it's good that we prevent death.

I've already outlined the response to this. If we should save lives already under way, just because of their future potential then surely we should start extra lives when, if started, they will have similar potential. For if the thought is that, say, pleasure is intrinsically valuable, then the more of it the better. And if so maximising overall value is to be my concern then I should take the cure whether or not the post-op person is still me. That is one consistent position. Another is to hold that even though there is some sense in which death is bad for the thing that dies, some sense in which individuals are replaceable by those leading longer or better lives, there is no requirement to prevent death from occurring, or to engage in such replacing. The middle position – we have obligations to actual but not to possible lives, and stronger obligations to this animal than to others – is one that is so far underexplained.⁴²

IX

Where does Bradley stand in relation to this? Interestingly, there are a number of occasions on which he hints that he might be at least half-willing to entertain a position somewhat closer to mine. First,

There is one way in which it might be argued that Student's death is much worse than Baby's: Student has put a lot of work into his future, and thus deserves that future much more than Baby does. And we might think Student's death is more tragic for this reason. But this is not to say that Student's death is worse *for Student* than Baby's death is *for Baby*. Rather it is to say that even though Student's death is not as bad for Student as Baby's is for Baby, *the world* is made worse by Student's death than by Baby's death.⁴³

⁴² I might make here a broader point. The debate between Bradley and me resembles in many ways the *future like ours* view advanced by Don Marquis, and desire-centred opposition to that view mounted by, for example, Tooley and Boonin. Two observations about this: first, as noted earlier (fn 11) an important difference is that the earlier debate centres on the wrongness of killing (and of the fetus in particular) while the focus here is on the badness of death; second, a key move in that earlier debate – an appeal to the notion of idealised desires – isn't anywhere replicated here. See Marquis 1989, Tooley 1972, Boonin 2003, Bradley 2009, 128-9.

⁴³ Bradley 2009, 116.

Two points about this: first, though desert is not desire there is some relation. And desire is arguably the more important. Imagine he works hard for some future but then loses interest. He may still deserve it, but if the desire is gone then it wouldn't obviously be tragic if he doesn't get it. Second, this is the claim about badness for the world that I drew attention to earlier. And, though it's impossible to be certain, I think Bradley is more likely to have intrinsic than instrumental value in mind here. But then, because it is unjust or unfair that Student rather than Baby dies, it might seem that Student's death is the one that we, as would-be moral agents, should be most concerned to prevent.

Bradley has, however, something to say about this: '.....we might make a distinction between the extent to which an event *harms an individual*, and the extent to which that harm *matters morally*'.⁴⁴ This comment comes in the context of a more or less self-contained discussion about abortion, and it isn't clear what weight Bradley wants to put on it. But take a reasonably generous understanding of moral obligation, and it appears that at least a critical part of the distinction here is between the harms that matter, and that third parties should be concerned with, and those that don't.

A related distinction surfaces a little later. For Bradley notes that we do more highly value those goods that figure in periods where there are close psychological connections to the present, calling this the *bias towards psychological sameness*.⁴⁵ He says, (though he doesn't explain the point) that this 'seems irrational', but then insists that even if it is rational, nothing straightforwardly follows about overall values: 'How rational it is to prefer a given event is not necessarily proportional to the overall value of that event'.⁴⁶ But this is to grant rather a lot. If it might be rational for me to refuse the cure, then equally it might be rational also for my friends to urge such a refusal on me. I ought to opt for five years, and then death. And conversely – if I don't have reason to save the fetus' life, then it just doesn't matter, even if it is in some sense bad for it, that it dies. Unless he's prepared in the end for us to get along famously, Bradley needs to stick to his guns about this bias being irrational.

⁴⁴ Bradley 2009, 124.

⁴⁵ Bradley 2009, 147.

⁴⁶ Bradley 2009, 146.

X

It is sometimes bad to die. And, or so I've claimed, both there being a good life ahead, and there being a desire to live this life are necessary conditions of death's being bad. The first claim finds widespread support, the second considerably less. The focus here has been on this latter claim. So neither the desire, nor the good life ahead are sufficient conditions for death's being bad. The claims here follow, of course, from the necessity claims, but are, I believe, independently plausible. Nevertheless there are qualifications and complexities attendant on both.

It isn't bad to die just when you desire to live on, for your desire might be unrealistic – you don't see that there is simply no chance of your doing what you hope to do, of living the life you want to live. But isn't there something bad about someone's not getting what they want? Wouldn't it be better if this man were reconciled to death? We can concede this. Nevertheless, it's far from clear that the badness here gives us reason to help this man live on.

It isn't bad to die just when there's a good life ahead, for you may have no interest in living this life, may, further, have a not irrational desire to die. But isn't there something bad about death, when life would otherwise be good? We can concede this also. Again, however, this sort of badness needn't engage us.

I promised a return to McMahan. Though we agree about a lot, we disagree about fetuses and animals. He says, remember, that a problem with a desire-based account is that it fails to recognize that their deaths can be bad for them. In *The Ethics of Killing* he says this is a point he's discussed elsewhere. But that discussion isn't very full:

What makes the death of a fetus, infant or animal bad is primarily that death deprives it of a range of future goods that its life would otherwise have contained. Because these entities lack self-consciousness they are incapable of foreseeing or contemplating most of these goods and hence are incapable of desiring them. But, because the good would occur within their own lives, it seems plausible to regard the loss or deprivation of these goods as a

misfortune for them – not just an impersonal loss or loss of impersonal value but a loss that is against the interests of the fetus, infant or animal itself.⁴⁷

I've offered one sense in which premature death typically goes against the interests of a living thing. But in this sense, there is no direct reason for us to be exercised about death. If the claim here is to be made plausible in some other sense, one which will lead us to conclude it is a bad thing – something that should be prevented – that an animal or fetus dies, then more needs to be said.

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⁴⁷ McMahan 1998, 477. And see, for more on animal death, McMahan 2002, 195-198, Bradley 2009, 147-154.

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