

Is Death Bad for a Cow?

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I. Introduction

Whether death is bad for a cow seems to be determined by what sort of mental lives cows have. The *Sunday Times* reports: “cows have a secret mental life in which they bear grudges, nurture friendships and become excited over intellectual challenges, scientists have found.”¹ If cows have friends, bear grudges, and get excited over intellectual challenges, then they have mental lives of some sort. But this does not by itself settle the question of whether death is bad for cows, or whether we may permissibly kill them. Some allege that while cows have some mental states, they do not have the ones that are required in order for death to be bad for them. In what follows I will evaluate these claims. Since our knowledge about cows’ mental lives may change over time, and we might come to discover that they are more or less sophisticated than we now think, my arguments will not turn on our current understanding of cows, but rather on more general connections between value and mental capacities. I will sometimes grant my opponents pessimistic and perhaps unwarranted assumptions about cow psychology in order to focus on these general connections.

There is a straightforward argument for the conclusion that death is bad for cows in at least some instances.² It goes like this:

1. Death is bad for an individual if and only if it makes that individual's lifetime well-being level lower than it would otherwise have been.
2. Death sometimes makes a cow's lifetime well-being level lower than it would have been.
3. Therefore, death is sometimes bad for a cow.

The first premise is just a statement of a generic deprivation account of the badness of death.³ The feature of this statement that is crucial for our purposes is the employment of the notion of a lifetime well-being level. Your lifetime well-being level is the value for you of your whole life.

The second premise might be justified in a number of ways. Let us suppose that among the goods of life is pleasure, and among the bads of life is pain. Almost everyone thinks this is true, even if most think that other things are good and bad as well. Cows can experience pleasure and pain. If pleasure is among the goods of life, then, *ceteris paribus*, when a cow gets more pleasure, its lifetime well-being level is higher. Death deprives at least some cows of a future that contains some pleasures and comparatively less pain. For those cows, death makes the cow's lifetime well-being level lower than it would have been if the cow had survived.

Those who argue that death is not bad for cows can be divided into those that reject premise 1, and those that reject premise 2. Those who reject premise 1 claim that it is not enough that death makes its victim's lifetime well-being level lower than it would have been; something else, in addition to (or instead of) deprivation, is required for death to be a misfortune. Those who reject premise 2 claim that cows do not have lifetime

well-being levels at all. I will consider these responses in turn. But first let me mention some responses to this argument that I won't be discussing here.

Epicurus and Lucretius are famous for giving arguments for the claim that death is not bad for people. Epicurus argued that death is not bad for us because when death comes, we no longer exist, so there is no subject of harm (Epicurus 1964, 54). Lucretius argued that death is not bad for us because a future in which we do not exist is relevantly like a past in which we do not exist, and since it is not bad to be born later than we might have been, it is also not bad to die earlier (Lucretius 1965, 110). Some contemporary philosophers find these arguments compelling (e.g. Rorty 1983). If sound, they might provide reason to reject premise one. I'm not going to address those arguments here. I'm supposing that there is no *general* problem with saying that death is bad. What I'm interested in is the idea that although death is bad for some individuals, such as most adult humans, it's not bad for cows.

Pessimists such as David Benatar argue that no actual person lives a life that is worth living on the whole. Life is full of pain. We get sick, we get hungry and tired, we spend great amounts of our lives in discomfort of some sort. Many of us think that the good times in life make it worthwhile to have been born, but we are wrong (Benatar 2006 Ch. 3). I think if Benatar is right we have good reason to reject premise two, as long as cows are like humans in the relevant respects. I see no reason to think he is right, but I don't wish to discuss this here, because again, if he is right, it would mean that death is not bad for anybody, whether human or not.

Finally, I will not here discuss the views of those who think that non-humans do not matter at all, morally speaking. As far as I can tell, none of the philosophers to whom

I am responding think that animal suffering does not matter. For example, Ruth Cigman argues that we have no obligation not to kill animals painlessly, but nevertheless “we have an obligation not to inflict gratuitous suffering on animals” (Cigman 1981, 50). The thought is that there is something special about *death*, in virtue of which while it may be very bad for a cow to be tortured, it is not bad for it to die.

II. The Desire for Life and the Badness of Death

Chris Belshaw claims that “a desire for life is necessary if death is to be bad” (2009, 115). He qualifies this claim in an important way, as we will see. But if Belshaw is right, the deprivation account of death’s badness is false, and the argument fails. Further, if cows lack a desire to live, then death is not bad for them.

Do cows desire to live? According to PETA’s website, “cows value their lives and don’t want to die.”⁴ It is unclear what the basis for this claim is, but the website also recounts a story about a cow that jumped over a fence while being led to the slaughterhouse, and ran a long way away. It was then given sanctuary by an animal rights group. Does this cow’s quest for freedom show that the cow wanted to live? I think this is a reasonable explanation of the cow’s behavior. Behavior can only constitute *prima facie* evidence of desires, but as Mary Midgley argues, given what we know about similarities between the biological and social characteristics of humans and other animals, “reasons must be found for *refusing* to say” that animals lack the mental states humans have (Midgley 1983: 134).⁵

While I am intrigued by the question of whether cows have desires and which ones they have, I am more interested in the claim that a desire to live is necessary for death to be bad. Belshaw offers no argument for the claim. Of course, desire-based views of value are popular, so the claim might be motivated by some such general view about value. But even if a desire-based view of value were true, death could still be bad for an individual that lacked a desire to live. If that individual had *other* desires that would be frustrated by death, death could be bad for her. So why think that this one particular desire is necessary?

Perhaps the answer can be found in a distinction between types of desires. Belshaw says that what is really required for death to be bad is not a desire to live, but a *categorical* desire.⁶ Here Belshaw follows Bernard Williams, who introduced the notion of a categorical desire in his famous 1973 paper “The Makropulos Case.” A categorical desire is supposed to be one that is not conditional on being alive, and therefore can provide both motivation and justification to continue living.

What is it for a desire to be conditional on being alive? To understand this, we must understand the nature of conditional desire. It seems that many desires have conditions – we want something on the condition that some other thing is the case. Charlton wants to eat the soylent green later on the condition that he is hungry later; if he is not hungry later, then not having some soylent green doesn't frustrate his desire for soylent green. Or, Charlton wants to eat the soylent green later on the condition that soylent green is something permissible to eat; even if he eats the soylent green later, his desire won't be fulfilled, because soylent green is people. In these cases, a desire is conditional on something that fails to obtain. When this happens, the desire is neither

satisfied nor frustrated; it is cancelled (McDaniel and Bradley 2008). It is, in one way, as if the desire never happened.

If this is right, then a categorical desire might be understood to be a desire such that if the desirer were to die, the desire would *not* thereby be cancelled. And we might think, therefore, that some such desire is necessary in order for death to be bad for its victim – at least, this is what Williams and Belshaw conclude. If someone had no categorical desires, then upon death all of that person's desires would be cancelled; thus death would frustrate no desires of the person who dies. The following sort of example is supposed to illustrate how this might happen. Someone is very tired of living, and is confined to her bed, but still desires that someone bring her some painkillers. Why? She wants the painkillers, but only on the condition that she is still alive. The painkillers are not motivating her to stay alive, nor giving her any reason to stay alive. If all her desires were like that, and she were to die, we might say that she is no worse off than she would have been if she had lived and had the painkillers.

So now our questions are: can cows have categorical desires, and are categorical desires really necessary for death to be bad?

I see no reason to think that cows cannot have categorical desires, provided they can have desires at all. Suppose a cow sees some grass and forms a desire to eat it; while it is moving towards the grass, it is hit by a cannonball and dies instantly. Was the cow's desire for the grass conditional on being alive, like the desire for painkillers in the case of the person who is tired of living? This is implausible. There is no reason to think that the cow wants the grass on the condition that it is alive. It just wants the grass. Its desire does not seem to be conditional on anything at all. Those who are suspicious of the

mental lives of cows should, if anything, be *more* suspicious that they have *conditional* desires than that they have categorical ones.

Are categorical desires necessary for death to be bad? The first thing to note is that this claim requires the truth of a desire-based theory of well-being. I think these theories are false, but right now we're not going to settle which is the correct theory of well-being. So let us suppose for now that some desire-based theory of well-being is true, so that differences in well-being must be explained by appeal to differences in the satisfaction or frustration of desires. We have now seen that there is a third thing that can happen to a desire: it can be cancelled. According to a desire-based theory, it is a good thing to have one's desires satisfied, and a bad thing to have them frustrated. What about having a desire cancelled? The natural thing to say is that it is neither good nor bad when a desire is cancelled. It is as if the desire never happened. Now suppose that death cancels some non-categorical desire that would have been satisfied if the victim had not died. Isn't it then bad for the victim to have died? After all, it deprives the victim of the goodness of having a desire satisfied. Preventing the satisfaction of a desire, by cancelling it, is a bad thing, even if it is not as bad as frustrating the desire.

In the case of the person who has tired of living, it seems that death is not a bad thing, even though death cancels a desire for painkillers that would have been satisfied if she had not died. That is not because her desire for painkillers is not categorical, but rather because her desire is an *extrinsic* desire. She desires painkillers on the condition that getting them is necessary to relieve her pain, which we may suppose she desires intrinsically. Defenders of desire-based theories (e.g. Brandt 1979 and Heathwood 2005)

typically claim, for just this reason, that it is only intrinsic desires that affect well-being. Getting painkillers and dying are both ways to satisfy the intrinsic desire to avoid pain.

So I suspect that a more plausible thought about desires and death is that an *intrinsic* desire is necessary for death to be bad; intrinsic desires are what the person who is tired of living lacks (beyond the desire to be free from pain, which is equally satisfied by dying). But cows can have intrinsic desires. They intrinsically desire grass – or eating grass, or the sensations they get from eating grass. And furthermore it is not clear that *actually having* an intrinsic desire is necessary for death to be bad. For suppose that the person who is tired of living would, if she survived just a few more days, develop some intrinsic desires for things, and that they would be satisfied. If she dies before those desires form, isn't that a misfortune for her? After all, if she formed the desires and they were satisfied, this would be a good thing for her, so her death makes things go worse for her. Why should we be so concerned with the desires the victim has at the time of death, and ignore the desires she would have had if she lived?⁷

Another kind of desire that cows allegedly lack is desires about the future. Cows are said to lack such desires because they lack the capacity to conceive of themselves as existing through time. If a being cannot conceive of itself as existing through time, then it cannot conceive of its future, and so cannot have desires about it. If a being can't desire to have a certain sort of future, then it can't have such desires frustrated. So desire satisfactionists can argue that death is less bad for cows than for adult people, since the death of an adult person frustrates more desires than the death of a cow. Here is what Peter Singer says about the distinction between beings that grasp their futures and those that don't:

Those who understand that they exist over time can have preferences relating to the future, and those that cannot understand that they exist over time cannot. Thus the former have more to lose than the latter, and so, other things being equal, it is worse to end its life. (Singer 1999, 310)

Singer's concern is with the wrongness of killing, not the badness of death for its victim. What he says is correct; if we presuppose a desire- or preference-based theory of welfare, and if cows have no desires about their futures, the death of a cow is *less* bad than that of a typical adult human. But why should we think cows lack these desires?⁸ Wouldn't the cow who sees some grass over on the hill, and walks over to the hill to eat the grass, have a desire to eat grass in the future that explains why it walks over to the hill? Can a creature that has memories and anticipates things really be said to live purely "in the moment"?⁹ Singer and others might have in mind more distant future-directed desires, or desires that concern one's life as a whole. Cows do not put money into 401Ks, build bomb shelters or visit the dentist, as we do when thinking about our more distant futures. As Belshaw says: "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" (2012, 278). Perhaps humans have *more* future-directed desires than cows do. If so, then if some desire-based axiology is true, the death of a cow may typically be *less bad* than that of a human. Nevertheless, the death of a cow may still be very bad for it, since, in addition to frustrating the perhaps limited number of future-directed desires it has when it dies, it prevents the cow from

forming and satisfying preferences in the future, and such satisfactions would be good for the cow. So we need further argument to establish that a cow's death is not bad for it.

The story I have told about categorical desires makes it fairly easy to have a categorical desire. Some seem to think it is much more difficult to have such desires. Here is what Ruth Cigman says:

The subject of a categorical desire must either understand death as a condition which closes a possible future forever, and leaves behind one a world in which one has no part as an agent or conscious being of any sort; or he must grasp, and then reject, this conception of death, in favor of a belief in immortality. Either way, the radical and exclusive nature of the transition from life to death must be understood. (Cigman 58-9)

It is not clear why Cigman thinks having a categorical desire requires the desirer to understand death in this way. But arguments about what a categorical desire is are not very interesting, because 'categorical desire' is just a technical term; we can consider her view on its own merits, whether or not we think of it as a view about categorical desire. Must one be capable of understanding death as forever closing a possible future in order for one's death to be bad? This would entail that death is not at all bad for a toddler or infant (DeGrazia 1996, 237). One can have a reason to live even if one does not understand that it is a reason to live, because one does not understand what it is to live or to die. In general, it is just false that something cannot be bad for an individual unless that individual can understand why it is bad.

Cigman's view is strange in another way. She says that in order for one's death to be bad, one must believe either that death is the end or that there is an afterlife. Well, at most one of these beliefs may be true. Suppose that there is an afterlife. Now consider someone who believes there isn't one. That person does not understand death at all. He has a false belief about death. Why would having this false belief satisfy a necessary condition for death to be bad? Or consider someone who truly believes in an afterlife, but has not grasped the possibility of death being the final end. According to Cigman's view, that person's death would *not* be bad for him; but why should grasping or considering a falsehood be necessary for death to be bad? Cigman's thought might be that, whichever of these views is true, death is a "radical" transition; one need not have any particular view about what happens at death in order for one's death to be bad, but one must at least think of death as involving a radical transition. But suppose Ann falsely believes death is a radical transition into an afterlife, and Beth falsely believes it is not a radical transition at all. Why should the difference in their false beliefs about death make any difference to whether their deaths are bad for them?

I don't think premise one can be undermined by appeal to a sort of desire that cows do not have. Neither categorical desires, nor intrinsic desires, nor future-directed desires, nor a sophisticated understanding of the nature of death, are necessary for death to be bad.

Here is another way we might try to undermine premise one. We might think that, although the cow's lifetime well-being level would be higher if it were to live, death is not bad for it because it is not connected in the right way to its future. In particular, we might think that cows do not have sufficient psychological connectedness over time for

future goods and evils to matter to it. Future goods and evils would be, in a way, like goods and evils happening to other cows. Jeff McMahan holds a view like this, which he calls the Time-Relative Interest Account of the badness of death (2002, 105). The rough idea of McMahan's view is that when determining how bad some event is for an individual, we look not only at the goods the event deprives the victim from having, but also at how psychologically connected – via memories, desires, and the like – the person is (or would have been) between the time of the event and the time the good would have been had. If this view is correct, we might argue that death is not bad for cows because although a cow is deprived of some future goods by dying at time t , the cow's death is not bad because, when we look at how things would have gone for the cow if it hadn't died at time t , the cow at the time of the future goods would not have been psychologically connected to the cow at t .¹⁰

This is not *McMahan's* view about cows; he thinks death is bad for cows, just not as bad as it is for creatures that exhibit more psychological connectedness. And it seems very implausible that cows have no psychological connectedness over time. They engage in behaviors that take time to complete. Once in a while they jump over fences to escape the slaughterhouse. A creature that had no psychological connectedness over time would have a hard time doing such things. So McMahan's view is not going to help explain why death is not bad for a cow.

One might try to argue that although a cow's death is bad for it, it is not *as bad* as the death of an adult human. McMahan's view seems to have this implication if we make some assumptions about the psychological connectedness of cows over time. We might also get this result from certain axiologies. One who likes Mill's distinction between

higher and lower pleasures might claim that cows don't get any higher pleasures, so their lives are not as good as those of people, so their deaths are not so bad. One who thinks achievement or knowledge are valuable might argue that cows do not achieve or know many things, and therefore their lives are not as good as those of people, so their deaths are not so bad. It is a very difficult thing to compare the values of lives of members of different species. I don't know how to tell whether my dog is having a better life than mine or a worse life; I prefer my own life, but that is compatible with it being the case that his life is better *for him* than mine is *for me*. In thinking about this question, it is very difficult to be objective – almost all of us want to say that lives like ours are more valuable than the lives of very different kinds of things, at least in part because this justifies us giving preference to beings like us. Questions about interspecies comparisons of well-being are worth further exploration, but I won't explore them here.¹¹ Even if the death of a cow is not as bad as the death of a human, it might still be very bad for it, and we have seen no good reason to deny this so far.

III. Lifetime Well-being

So far there is no good reason to reject premise one. So let us move on to premise two. The questions here are: what features must an individual have in order to have a lifetime well-being level, and do cows have those features?¹²

On one view, to have a lifetime well-being level, one must merely have some momentary well-being levels, because an individual's lifetime well-being is just the sum of her momentary well-being levels. On this additive view, cows have lifetime well-

being levels. But this view is controversial. One of the most forceful objections to the additive view is given by David Velleman.

According to Velleman, *momentary* well-being and *diachronic*, lifetime well-being are completely different things; cows have only momentary well-being, not lifetime well-being. Lifetime well-being is not reducible to momentary well-being or even to facts about the arrangement of bits of momentary well-being (Velleman 1993, 343-6). Lifetime well-being is determined (at least partly) by facts about *narrative structure*, such as whether early sacrifices pay off later in life, whether projects succeed or fail, and so on. For example, according to Velleman it is better for you to work out your marital difficulties, reconcile with your spouse, and live happily ever after, than it is to get divorced, meet someone new, and live happily ever after with that person. The reason is that you have invested a lot of effort into the previous relationship, and your life is better if those efforts pay off, even if you'd be just as well-off at every moment if you started over with someone new. Momentary well-being, on the other hand, is determined by facts about that particular moment, e.g. how pleased you are at that moment. Thus well-being is “radically divided” (Velleman 1993, 345). There is a component determined by momentary facts, and a component determined by narrative facts.

Velleman also holds the following thesis about intrinsic value: “unless a subject has the bare capacity, the equipment, to care about something under some conditions or other, it cannot be intrinsically good for him” (1993, 354-5). Given this thesis and our supposition about the impoverished mental capacities of cows, it follows that cows have no lifetime well-being at all. Cows cannot care about how their whole lives go; they can

care at any given time only about how things go for them at that very time. So cows do not have good *lives*, only good *moments*.

These theses about well-being form the basis for Velleman's argument that death is not bad for cows, which goes as follows:

There is no moment at which a cow can be badly off because of death, since (as Lucretius would put it) where death is, the cow is not; and if there is no moment at which a cow is harmed by death, then it cannot be harmed by death at all. A premature death does not rob the cow of the chance to accumulate more momentary well-being, since momentary well-being is not cumulable for a cow; nor can a premature death detract from the value of the cow's life as a whole, since a cow has no interest in its life as a whole, being unable to care about what sort of life it lives. Of course, a person can care about what his life story is like, and a premature death can spoil the story of his life. Hence death can harm a person but it cannot harm a cow. (1993, 357)

Velleman's argument is complicated. Let us excise the portions that concern the metaphysics of death, since these are very difficult to deal with and not necessary for Velleman's argument, as far as I can tell.¹³ Here is a simplified version of his argument:

1. If death is bad for a cow, then death detracts from the lifetime well-being level of the cow. (This follows from the deprivation account of death's badness.)

2. In order for something to detract from the lifetime well-being level of a cow, it must either bring it about that the cow accumulates less momentary well-being, or it must negatively affect the cow's life story in a way the cow cares about.
3. Cows cannot accumulate well-being.
4. Cows cannot care about their life stories.
5. Therefore, death does not detract from the lifetime well-being level of a cow.
6. Therefore, death is not bad for a cow.

Both premises 3 and 4 are justified by the same consideration: cows have no concept of themselves existing through time; they cannot grasp their whole lives. Thus well-being does not accumulate for them over their lifetimes, and they cannot grasp their life stories. So cows do not have a lifetime well-being level at all. This claim is supported by the following principle about intrinsic value, which I'll call the Capacity to Care Condition:

CCC: Nothing can be intrinsically good or bad for an individual unless the individual has the capacity to care about it.

Cows can care about what happens to them at a moment, but since they lack the capacity to see themselves as temporally extended beings, they cannot care about extended periods of their lives, or their whole lives. Thus their whole lives lack value for them, even if moments can be good or bad for them.

The claim that extended periods of a cow's life have no intrinsic value for the cow has bizarre implications. Consider two possible futures for a cow. In one future, the cow is tortured constantly until it dies. In the other future, the cow is happy and free. Which future is better for the cow? If Velleman is right, neither future is better. The second future has better moments for the cow, but *on the whole, it is no better or worse than the first future*. That cannot be right.¹⁴ Velleman claims that given the truth of CCC, "any method of combining the values of a cow's good and bad moments will be purely arbitrary and consequently defective" (1993, 356). But could it really be arbitrary to suppose that when we combine the values of a cow's bad moments, the result is as good as, or better than, the result of combining the values of the cow's good moments? Surely not all ways of combining momentary value are equally good.

We must, then, reject premise 3; we must reject the claim that a cow's life has no intrinsic value for it, and must therefore reject CCC. But there must be some reason Velleman finds CCC to be plausible. To see what this reason might be, let us make a distinction between two ways something can be intrinsically valuable. Sometimes when something is intrinsically valuable, its value is *reducible*. It is valuable because it is made up of some parts that are intrinsically valuable. For example: the happiness of the whole class is intrinsically valuable, but its value comes from the value of the happiness of each of the individuals in the class. On the other hand, sometimes the intrinsic value of something is *irreducible*. Perhaps the happiness of an individual is intrinsically valuable in a way that is not reducible to the value of its parts. (Or perhaps, in the case of an extended period of happiness, its value comes from the values of its temporal parts, which themselves have irreducible intrinsic value.)¹⁵

Perhaps in order for something to be irreducibly intrinsically valuable for an individual, that individual must be able to care about it. Thus, in order for an individual's *whole life story* to be irreducibly good for her (such as by being a story of improvement, or success, or redemption), she must be able to contemplate her whole life. A story of redemption or overcoming obstacles does not get its value from the intrinsic values of its parts, but from *how the parts fit together* to form a whole: an early misfortune, then some efforts to overcome it that are ultimately successful. However, it does not follow that in order for something to be *reducibly* intrinsically valuable for someone, she must be able to care about it. And in fact this seems implausible. Consider the happy class; it is good for the class to be happy, even the class does not or can not care about its happiness, and even if each individual in the class cares (or even can care) only about his or her own well-being. Just as well-being can aggregate *across* individuals even if the aggregate of individuals cannot care about its well-being, well-being can aggregate *within* an individual even if the individual cannot care about the aggregate well-being in its life. This enables us to say that cows have lifetime well-being levels, and so the life of torture is not just as good for the cow as the happy life. Of course, there may still be one way in which cows' lives cannot be good or bad for them: their lives cannot have the kind of value that comes from narrative structure (granting Velleman's views about cow psychology). It is controversial whether narrative structure has any relevance to well-being; but even if it does, it is surely not the only component of well-being, and not the only component of well-being that is relevant to the badness of death.

IV. Conclusion

Those who wish to argue that death is not bad for a cow have two options: reject a deprivation account of death's badness in favor of some other account that entails that death is not bad for cows, or claim that cows lack lifetime well-being levels and therefore the deprivation account cannot apply to them. Alternative accounts of death's badness are either subject to fatal counterexamples (such as "categorical desire" accounts, which entail that death is not bad for babies), or do not entail that the death of a cow is not bad for the cow (such as McMahan's "time-relative interest" account). Velleman's argument that cows do not have lifetime well-being levels is based on a principle that has very implausible implications, and that can be replaced by another very similar principle that does not have those implications. I conclude that cows can have good lives, and death can be bad for them.

This does not show that we are morally obligated not to eat hamburgers. An important question that I have not discussed at all here is whether cows have moral *status*, or moral *rights*. It is consistent with what I have said here that although death is bad for cows, cows lack moral status, so the badness of their deaths does not matter morally. Nevertheless, I think it cannot be argued that turning happy cows into hamburgers is not bad for the cows.¹⁶

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¹ <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/article416070.ece>

² See DeGrazia 1996, 231-2, Carruthers 1992, 81, E. Harman 2011, 728, and Norcross 2012, 466, for similar arguments.

³ For some examples of deprivation accounts, see Feldman 1992 Chs. 8-9, Broome 1999 Ch. 10, Bradley 2004, and Bradley 2009 Ch. 2.

⁴ <http://www.peta.org/issues/animals-used-for-food/hidden-lives-of-cows.aspx>

⁵ Mary Midgley argues that, given what we know about similarities between the biological and social characteristics of humans and other animals, “reasons must be found for *refusing* to say” that animals lack the mental states humans have (Midgley 1983: 134). See DeGrazia 1996, Ch. 6, for a defense of the claim that animals have desires; see Glock 2009 for a recent discussion of animal rationality.

⁶ Belshaw 2012, 274. For more discussion of categorical desires and alternative interpretations of the notion, see Bradley and McDaniel 2013.

⁷ See Carruthers 1992, 84-5, Harman 2011, 730, and Norcross 2012, 469, for similar points. Discussing a similar case, Belshaw says he is “not sure” that death is bad for such a person (2009, 116).

⁸ See Ch. 7 of DeGrazia 1996 for a strong case that many non-humans animals do have a sense of time.

⁹ See DeGrazia 1996, 169-171.

¹⁰ See Bradley 2009, Ch. 4 for objections to the time-relative interest account. See E. Harman 2011, 733-5 for related discussion.

¹¹ See Ch. 8 of DeGrazia 1996 for more detailed discussion.

¹² I discuss these issues in Bradley 2009, 147-152. The discussion here is derived from the one there with some simplifications and alterations, but the main points are unchanged.

¹³ See Bradley 2009, Ch. 3, for extensive discussion of the Lucretian argument to which Velleman refers.

¹⁴ There is an alternative line of argument that one might give. One might argue that since a cow lacks the ability to conceive of its life as a whole, cows are not temporally extended entities. Rather, at each successive moment there is a new individual, psychologically unconnected to past and future individuals but causally connected to them. There is no individual that is composed of these instantaneous cow-slices. If so, then there is no such thing as “lifetime well-being” for a cow that is distinct from momentary well-being, since no cow lives more than an instant. I take it this is not Velleman’s view, so I will not evaluate it here.

¹⁵ See G. Harman 1967 and Feldman 2000 on “basic” intrinsic value.

¹⁶ Versions of this paper were presented at West Virginia University in 2007 and at *Death: Its Meaning, Metaphysics, and Morality* at Newcastle University in 2011. Thanks to all those present for their helpful comments. Thanks also to an anonymous referee for helpful suggestions.