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# Reproductive Risk Taking and the Nonidentity Problem

## Introduction

The present essay grapples with a practical moral problem: do prospective parents with a known high risk of transmitting a serious genetic disease have an obligation to refrain from reproducing their own biological offspring?<sup>1</sup> Section 1 attempts to show that the view we are intuitively drawn to in a situation of this kind is that prospective parents have a duty not to conceive. Sections 2 and 3 explore arguments which purport to show that such a judgment is not supported by currently favored moral theories. These arguments appeal to what is by now a standard problem in the literature on intergenerational morality, namely, the nonidentity problem. Section 2 directs attention to the fact that the view we are inclined to endorse apparently lacks a theoretical justification vis-a-vis utilitarian moral theory. The final section sheds light on the practical problem with which I began, by undertaking a resolution of the philosophical predicament it engenders. In particular, I present arguments designed to show that rights based moral theory provides support for the view in question.

### 1

There exists a diverse and wide ranging set of conditions falling under the general rubric of genetic disease. In certain

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contexts, I think it is natural to hold the view that individuals known to be at high risk for passing on a severe genetic disease ought, morally, to avoid taking that risk. This claim of course needs to be more finely tuned--What is a foreseeable high risk? And what constitutes a severe genetic disease? I propose to pick a working example, Huntington's disease, that fits the bill reasonably well and to understand terms like (1) "high risk," (2) "foreseeable," and (3) "severe" genetic disease in terms of that example.

(1) *High risk.* Since Huntington's is an autosomal dominant disorder, an individual who carries the lethal gene(s) has the disease and there is a fifty per cent chance that any child that individual conceives will be affected.

(2) *Foreseeable.* Although anyone who has the lethal gene(s) is affected, age of onset for the disease is usually thirty to fifty years, so a person in her twenties contemplating parenthood may not know whether she has the condition and whether her offspring are 'at risk for inheriting it. But younger individuals are sometimes affected with Huntington's disease, and scientists recently identified a marker for the disease--essentially, a piece of DNA that travels with the Huntington's gene(s) in all family members who have the disease. So we might focus on cases where an individual in her twenties is affected or an individual knows that she has the marker for the disease.

(3) *Severe.* The severity of Huntington's disease can be best conveyed by describing the affliction. The most pronounced clinical findings are, first, profound dementia, involving paranoia, personality changes, and suicidal tendencies. Second, chorea or involuntary jerky movements caused by muscular contractions in the arms, trunk, face, neck, and tongue that make walking, sitting, speaking, and swallowing difficult or impossible. Third, inexorable downward progression of these symptoms for ten to twenty years followed by death, with no treatment available to prevent the degenerative progression of the disease. The

life to which individuals afflicted with a disease like Huntington's are subjected suggests that part of what makes conception objectionable is that it would harm or infringe the rights of the individuals who would thereby exist and suffer in these ways. One way to show that this is a judgment we would, at least upon reflection, be willing to accept, is to call attention to various principles that can be adduced in support of this claim.

One motivation for the evaluation I am suggesting might be based on arguments drawn from literature on the ethics of parenting. Sidney Callahan, who has written extensively and carefully in this area, makes the following point in a piece entitled, "An Ethical Analysis of Responsible Parenthood:"

...the primary guiding ethical principle of decision making [regarding whether or not to become a parent] seems...inevitable....What will be best from the potential child's point of view? Any parent contemplating entry into the basically altruistic role of parenting can hardly justify putting their own motivations, desires, or even ideologies ahead of their child's welfare.<sup>2</sup>

Thus, if the role of parents is to be understood on a child-centered and non-egocentric model, as Callahan proposes, this lends credence to the view that prospective parents ought not to take grave reproductive risks that are not in the best interests of future progeny. Just as it would be unacceptable, from a moral point of view, to become a parent in order to fulfill a pathological desire for power or to have a play thing or to indoctrinate a child with a religious or political ideology,<sup>3</sup> so too it would be reproachable to satisfy a fervent desire for one's own biological offspring, when doing so is not in the best interests of children-to-be. This is especially so in light of presently available reproductive technologies, such as artificial insemination, egg donation, and embryo transfer. Such technologies provide options for individuals who desire to experience other aspects of reproduction, such as pregnancy, childbearing, and child rearing, but for various reasons prefer not to conceive their own biological offspring.

It might be objected that alternative reproductive technologies do not constitute a satisfactory alternative for a certain class of people who very strongly desire offspring that share their genetic makeup. Prospective parents might anticipate, for example, that in some important sense they would vicariously participate in immortality by passing their genes into the human gene pool.<sup>4</sup> But, if the previous analysis of parenthood is defensible, it follows that narcissistic motivations for genetic parentage are not morally supportable, especially if fulfilling such desires involves harming or infringing the rights of future progeny.<sup>5</sup>

Although I have proposed a rather extreme case, where the plight of prospective offspring is very serious, this is not to suggest that moral limits on reproductive practices apply only in extreme cases. Indeed, some maintain that a lesser risk and/or a less severe condition warrant curtailing reproduction.<sup>6</sup> Others hold the still stronger view that where detection is possible *in utero*, abortion at an early stage can be in the fetus's own best interest.<sup>7</sup> It may very well be the case that these stronger positions are ultimately defensible. However that may be, a good starting point for reflecting upon these issues is to begin with a judgment about which there is a considerable degree of consensus, and then to attempt to understand the moral principles that justify the view in question. The idea is that we will be better equipped to tackle hard cases if we can approach them with a sense of the appropriate moral principles and broader theoretical framework. It is to this task that I now turn.

## 2

At first blush, it might appear self-evident that an individual ought to avoid conceiving if there is a foreseeable high risk that the resultant child will inherit a terrible disease like Huntington's. It might be assumed that the view in question is a relatively easy one to justify, where justification is understood to involve (roughly) showing that the view in question follows

from a certain critical morality or system of philosophical ethics. The task of this section is to put forward reasons for doubting that utilitarian moral theory succeeds in locating a principle to support parental obligations to unconceived offspring.

One of the most intriguing aspects of recent discussions concerning obligations to future individuals is what is sometimes called the nonidentity problem. This problem arises in virtue of the fact that many of the choices confronting present persons will change the identities of future persons: the future person(s) who would exist as a result of our choosing one course of action is often nonidentical with the future person(s) who would exist as a result of our choosing some other course of action. That is, while one action (such as, conceiving a child tonight) would cause the existence of a future person, and another action (conceiving a child next month) would also cause the existence of a future person, those persons would be different (they would have different genes; one might be male, the other female; one might be slightly taller; and so on). Because of this, present persons can apparently justify a wide range of actions by appealing to the fact that no future persons are made worse off than they otherwise would be.

The nonidentity problem is clearly relevant to the issue at hand. For a different individual would exist if a couple chooses to conceive their own biological offspring, despite a risk of transmitting the lethal Huntington's gene(s), rather than choosing to use artificial insemination and avoid that risk. The nonidentity of individuals who would result from various reproductive options suggests that even if future progeny are affected with a severe disease, they have not been wronged. After all, they are not worse off than they would be if their parents had decided not to conceive them, because under those circumstances they would never have existed.<sup>8</sup> The general point is that persons afflicted with genetic disease would presumably choose to endure certain hardships so long as the hardships in question are necessary for their coming into exist-

tence. And this would be so whenever future persons would judge that their lives are minimally worth living.

Let me explain more precisely why it is that the nonidentity problem apparently forestalls claims about the wrongness of high risk conception when these claims are based upon utilitarian moral theory. By "utilitarianism" I mean the general view that an act of policy is right just in case it is the one among those open to an agent that has, or is likely to have, the best overall consequences for all affected parties. So understood, this view is of course unclear as regards a prospective parent's obligations to future offspring. There are three different responses one might give here. Each represents a distinctive view about parental obligations to future progeny. One might hold the view that the right act or policy is the one that has:

- (1) the best overall consequences for present persons<sup>9</sup> or
- (2) the best overall consequences for present and future persons<sup>10</sup> or
- (3) the best overall consequences for present and future persons and for all persons capable of being born or conceived.<sup>11</sup>

The difficulty with maintaining (1) is that it is not sufficient to support the claim that parents have an obligation to their future progeny, in other words, that consequences accruing to future offspring are morally significant in virtue of their effects on future offspring. Moreover, subscribing to (1) appears to commit us to the undesirable view that the limits of parental care are the limits of parental duty: if prospective parents cease to care for or to take an interest in what is best for whatever children they might have, then the buck stops there, so to speak.

Position (2) fares no better in supporting the claim that parents have obligations to their future children. For, in light of the nonidentity problem, the only future persons whose interests would be injured would be future persons other than the

would-be offspring. The interests of future offspring would not be injured, since offspring suffering poor genetic health would not exist if their parents had not conceived them. Only present and future third parties' interests would count--those of society at large or those of present and future individuals who would be denied medical care in order to provide it for the genetically ill child-to-be. So, once again, the violation of an obligation to the child who would be afflicted with a terrible disease cannot be derived from a utilitarian framework.

The viewpoint expressed in (3) does offer some hope of a firm footing for the kind of judgment we are concerned to support. The idea here is that, although the persons who exist with poor genetic health may not be worse off than they otherwise would be, such persons may nonetheless be worse off relative to the possible persons who might have been conceived in their place--for example, if alternative reproductive strategies had been pursued and genetic disease avoided. It might be alleged that this last approach can therefore explain the wrongness of conceiving when the risk of a serious deformity is great, even though no actual present or future persons would be harmed. But the favorable appearance of this approach is misleading. For, upon further reflection, it entails patently absurd consequences. The consequences I have in mind are just the classical objections to utilitarian views of this kind. Most notably, (3) entails the implausible claim that the right act or policy is to create the largest possible population where individuals who exist still have lives that are just barely worth living. After all, if each individual represents a net gain in utility, however small, then additional persons would always serve to increase total utility. It has also been pointed out that various revised versions of (3) do not help matters much. For example, to say that the right act or policy is the one that maximizes average utility per person leads to other, equally untenable consequences. For instance, one logical consequence of the revised account is that in a world where average utility per person is one hundred times greater than it



is on earth today, procreation is morally forbidden, if it can be expected to reduce average utility ever so slightly.<sup>12</sup>

The above arguments serve to undermine utilitarian justification for restrictions on procreation. Therefore, if we think there sometimes are moral imperatives of this kind, then we would do well to look elsewhere for a philosophical principle to support this view.

### 3

Another system of philosophical ethics to be considered is a deontological approach. Rights based moral theories fall under this general heading, because they place more or less absolute constraints upon certain forms of conduct, irrespective of whether, in particular circumstances, instances of these forms produce the best overall consequences. In this last section, my aim is to show that the intuitive view with which we began can be supported by rights based moral theories.

In his recent book, *Reasons and Persons*, Derek Parfit illustrates the potential problems with attributing rights to future persons by appealing problems to the nonidentity problem. In this connection, he offers the following pair of examples. First,

Some years ago, a British politician welcomed the fact that, in the previous year, there had been fewer teenage pregnancies. A middle-aged man wrote in anger to *The Times*. He had been born when his mother was only fourteen. He admitted that, because his mother was so young, his early years had been hard for both of them. But his life was now well worth living. Was the politician suggesting that it would have been better if he had never been born?<sup>13</sup>

According to Parfit, we cannot plausibly justify the politician's view that the fourteen year old mother should have waited by claiming that this angry man was born with a right that could not be fulfilled--a right to a reasonably good upbringing. Parfit uses another example to show that this is so:

Suppose that I have a right to privacy. I ask you to marry me. If you accept, you are not acting wrongly, by violating my right to privacy. Since I am glad that you act as you do, with respect to you I waive this right.<sup>14</sup>

One plausible interpretation of these cases is the following (this is not, as it turns out, the interpretation Parfit himself intends<sup>15</sup>). Whenever  $X$  has a right that  $Y$  not do  $Z$ ,  $X$  waives that right, if both  $Y$  does  $Z$  and  $X$  is later glad that  $Y$  does  $Z$ . Thus, the individual in Parfit's example has a right that information concerning his day to day routines not be available to others, yet because his wife obtains such information and he is glad that she does, he thereby waives his right that she not obtain it. Parfit maintains that a similar claim applies to the angry man cited in the first example. Owing to the fact that he is admittedly glad about his existence, if he has a right that is not fulfilled he waives this right. Thus, it is wrong to claim that teenage pregnancies violate the rights of the resultant offspring, because so long as the offspring of teenage pregnancies lead lives that they prefer to nonexistence, they waive the rights in question.

The argument Parfit puts forward is analogical. By way of analogy, the marriage example presumably shows that in the teenage pregnancy case, the angry young man waives his right that the act leading to pregnancy not occur. The suggestion is that both the angry man and the marriage partner consent to others performing acts that they have a right that others not perform. Consent of this sort supposedly follows from the fact that each of these individuals will later be glad that acts that *prima facie* violate their rights occur. For example, the young man is glad he is alive and so glad that his mother's teenage pregnancy took place. The marriage partner is glad that he is married and so glad that his wife enters his home and has access to personal information about him.

Interpreted in this way, the pregnancy example is the basis for a more general point about decisions affecting the rights of future persons. The general point that this case might be used to support is this: with respect to choices that change the identi-

ties of future persons, it is not wrong to cause persons to exist with a right that cannot be fulfilled if after such persons are caused to exist they are glad they do exist. This is because in these kinds of cases, future persons waive whatever rights are not fulfilled. So, on this view, if acts, such as teen pregnancy, are wrong, this cannot be because they constitute a violation of the rights of individuals directly affected. In Parfit's words, it may have been better if the teenage mother had postponed pregnancy, however, "...this is not because of what she did to her actual child."<sup>16</sup>

This interpretation of Parfit's argument is vulnerable to serious objections. First, the marriage example and the teenage pregnancy example are dissimilar in significant respects. In the marriage example, the waiving of a right to privacy is distinct from the gladness the married individual later feels. After all, if the married individual were later unhappy that his marriage partner enters his house and obtains information about his daily routines, this would not be grounds for asserting that his partner violates his rights. She would still be permitted to act in these ways, because by asking her to marry him, her partner has already waived his rights. This shows that it is not *gladness* that determines that a right is waived.

Turning to the teenage pregnancy example, the gladness that the resultant offspring feels is not sufficient to show that he waives whatever right he has to a better upbringing, because, generally speaking, the claim that "X will be glad that Y did Z" is not sufficient to establish that "X will waive the right that Y not do Z."

This objection can be clarified by considering an example. Suppose that Jones breaks into Smith's house, steals twenty dollars, and then leaves. Another burglar, Brown, has also planned to break into Smith's house, but she arrives when Jones is in Smith's house. Brown has a large van with her and had planned to cart off just about everything Smith owns--i.e., tens of thousands of dollars worth of goods. Brown proceeds to smash Smith's window and enter Smith's house. But then Brown sees Jones. Thinking that Jones is Smith, Brown runs

away fast. Later, both Jones and Brown are caught and accused of breaking and entering Smith's house. Brown is convicted on the basis of Jones's testimony that she is the individual he saw breaking into and entering Smith's house. When Jones is brought to trial, he defends himself by arguing that he has not acted in violation of Smith's rights. His reasoning is that Smith is now glad Jones did break into his house, for if he had not done so, Brown would have proceeded to steal tens of thousands of dollars worth of goods and perhaps would never have been caught. Thus, Jones argues that Smith waives his right not to have his house broken into by Jones in virtue of the fact that Smith is now glad that Jones did break into his house.

In my view, Jones's argument clearly fails. For even though Smith is glad that Jones did break into and enter his house, Jones still acted wrongly at the time he committed that act, for he acted in violation of Smith's right. That Smith is later glad the act took place does not support the claim that Jones did not violate Smith's right. This example is analogous to Parfit's example of the teenage pregnancy. In both cases, even if at the time *Y* violates *X*'s right, *Y* reasonably expects that *X* will forgive him for the violation or be glad that the violation took place, this does not change the fact that *Y* unjustly violates *X*'s right and thus acts wrongly.

Having shown that the marriage example fails to establish that in the teenage pregnancy case, the child of a teenage pregnancy waives his right, it follows that the more general argument, concerning the rights of future persons, is undercut. For, as noted above, this latter point is established by generalizing from the teenage pregnancy case. But the claim that the teenage pregnancy case is intended to illustrate has been shown to be false.

An alternative reading of how the nonidentity problem prevents appeals to future persons' rights is the following (this second interpretation is in accordance with what Parfit himself intended<sup>17</sup>). Suppose that when future people exist they will waive their rights that certain acts not have occurred. Would this be sufficient to justify the performance of acts that now

violate their rights? In other words, are present persons justified in overriding the rights of future persons if it turns out that future persons later consent to their so doing? This interpretation does not make the assumption that future persons will necessarily waive their rights. Rather, the alternative account says that if when they exist future persons do waive their rights not to have certain acts take place, then this undermines a rights based objection to the performance of those acts. Whereas on the previous analysis,

if  $X$  has a right that  $Y$  not do  $Z$ ,  $X$  waives that right if both  $Y$  does  $Z$  and  $X$  is later glad that  $Y$  does  $Z$ ,

on the present analysis,

if  $X$  has a right that  $Y$  not do  $Z$  and  $X$  waives that right, then  $X$ 's right does not constitute an objection to  $Y$ 's prior performance of  $Z$ .

Support for the revised interpretation can be gleaned from a number of passages. For instance, in connection with the teenage pregnancy example, Parfit states,

This man's mother acted wrongly because she caused him to exist with a right that cannot be fulfilled [a right to be born with a good start in life]. But this man's letter shows that he is glad to be alive. He denies that his mother acted wrongly because of what she did to him. If we had claimed that her act was wrong, because he has a right that cannot be fulfilled, he *could* have said, 'I waive this right'. This *would* have undermined our objection to his mother's act.<sup>18</sup>

The use of "could" suggests that the child of the teenage pregnancy does not waive his right to a better upbringing merely in being glad his mother conceived him. Instead, the above passage supports the position that if this man waives his right to a better upbringing, then his right is not an objection to his mother's teenage pregnancy.

Likewise, in the marriage case, the statement "since I am glad that you [my marriage partner] act as you do, with respect to you I waive this right," might be understood to mean not that gladness is a sufficient condition for showing that I waive my rights, but rather that my reasons for waiving my rights are that I am glad you act as you do--although my reasons might have been other than this. On this interpretation, the waiving itself is not *accomplished* by my being glad, but by my act of asking you to marry me.

On the amended interpretation, the marriage example is once again intended to show by analogy that in the teenage pregnancy case the young man's right to a better upbringing is not an objection to his mother conceiving a child at so young an age. In the marriage case, if I consent to my partner performing acts, such as entering my house, rearranging my furniture, and borrowing my car, then whatever right I previously had that this individual refrain from these acts is no longer in force. I can no longer object to this individual acting in ways that I have permitted by appealing to my rights. Likewise, the man who was conceived when his mother was very young cannot properly appeal to his right to a better upbringing in a situation where he explicitly says "I waive my right to a better upbringing."

Interpreted in this new way, the teenage pregnancy case provides a basis for a more general point concerning the rights of future persons. The general point that this case is used to support is this: with respect to choices that change the identities of future persons, it is not wrong to cause persons to exist with rights that cannot be fulfilled if after such persons exist they waive their rights.

Despite the greater plausibility of the position under consideration, a number of serious objections can be raised against it. To begin with, the marriage example and the teenage pregnancy example are once again dissimilar in crucial respects. In the marriage example, the bearer of a right waives the right *prior to* the occurrence of acts that would otherwise be a violation of the right. The sequence of events is:

- (1) an individual has a right that *Y* not do *Z*,
- (2) the individual waives that right,
- (3) *Y* does *Z*.

In the teenage pregnancy example, however, the sequence of events is

- (1) an individual has a right that *Y* not do *Z*,
- (2) *Y* does *Z*,
- (3) the individual waives that right.

This difference between the two cases is critical. Persons are justified in performing acts that violate the rights of others if at the time they act the right in question has already been waived, but it is not enough that the right will later be waived.

The above objection can be clarified and supported by means of an example. Imagine that one day Jeff is mugged in the street. He is injured seriously and requires hospitalization for a week. While in the hospital Jeff falls in love with a doctor. The two of them later marry and live happily together for the rest of their lives. Under the circumstances, Jeff might later decide to waive his right not to be assaulted, since but for the mugging he would perhaps never have met this woman. We might even suppose that the mugger is subsequently apprehended and Jeff decides not to press charges: he says, "I waive my right." Whatever Jeff accomplishes by making such a statement at this point in time, surely his saying it does not entail that any past acts are now vindicated. The mugger may be excused or forgiven by Jeff's asserting he waives his right, but the mugger nonetheless violates Jeff's rights at the time he acted.

I conclude that efforts to appeal to the nonidentity problem to block claims about future persons' rights are unsuccessful. Rights must be taken seriously. We cannot dismiss rights just because the bearers of rights are future persons who will waive their rights or who will be glad that violations of their rights

took place. The significance of this point is considerable in the context of reproductive decision making. For instance, if future persons have a right to a minimally decent genetic endowment, then an individual who carries a dominant disorder, such as Huntington's, cannot justify a decision to impose serious risks on future progeny by pointing to the fact that his future child would probably prefer waive this right when he does exist.

It should be emphasized that I have *not* argued that prospective parents' unconceived offspring *have* rights, but rather that: *if* their future children have rights, *then* these rights could provide the basis for obligations on the part of prospective parents. Thus, it still remains to be seen whether the ascription of rights to future persons is defensible. Nonetheless, the arguments presented here offer some incentive for the development of a full theory of rights. Such a theory is needed for the evaluation of practical moral problems, such as determining the obligations of prospective parents.

### Notes

1. This paper was written in the Spring of 1986, during my stay as a visiting scholar at the Hastings Center in New York. I wish to express my sincere appreciation to the associates, staff, and visitors there who created a stimulating environment for philosophical reflection and dialogue. Special acknowledgement is due to the following individuals who read and provided helpful criticism on earlier versions of the paper: Daniel Callahan, Director of the Hastings Center; Cynthia Cohen, Associate for Ethical Studies; and Joyce Bermel, Managing Editor of the *Hastings Center Report*. I am also indebted to Drs. David Adams, Laurence Bonjour, Peter Dalton, Gunnulf Myrbo, Derek Parfit, Robert Richman, and Marsha Willing, and to participants in the 1986 Northwest Conference On Philosophy who listened patiently to an earlier version of the paper.
2. Sidney Callahan, "An Ethical Analysis of Responsible Parenthood," in Alexander M. Capron et al., *Genetic Counseling: Facts, Values, and Norms* (New York: Alan R. Liss Inc., 1979), p. 236.
3. Callahan, "An Ethical Analysis of Responsible Parenthood," p. 223.



4. This view is expressed for example by R. Lifton in his book, *The Life of the Self: Toward a New Psychology* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1976).
5. Further support for the position that parental wishes for offspring that are biologically their own can be overridden where there is a high risk of transmitting a genetic defect is provided by Joseph Ellin. See Ellin, "Sterilization, Privacy, and the Value of Reproducing," in John W. Davis, Barry Hoffmaster, and Sarah Shorten, (eds.), *Contemporary Issues in Biomedical Ethics* (Clifton, New Jersey: The Human Press Inc., 1978).
6. See, for example, Joseph Fletcher, "Ethical Aspects of Genetic Controls: Designed Changes in Man," *New England Journal of Medicine* 285 (September, 1971): 776-83 and "Knowledge, Risk, and the Right to Reproduce: A Limiting Principle" in Aubrey Milunsky and George Annas, (eds.), *Genetics and the Law II* (New York: Plenum Press, 1980); Bentley Glass, "Science: Endless Horizon or Golden Age," *Science* 171 (1971): 23-29 and "Human Heredity and Ethical Problems," *Perspectives in Biology and Medicine* 15 (1972): 237-54; and Sissela Bok, "Options in dealing with The Threat of Hemophilia," *Hastings Center Report* 4 (April, 1974).
7. See, for example, "Options in dealing with The Threat of Hemophilia," and M.D. Bayles, "When The Baby Won't Be Perfect," *Westminster Institute Review* 2 (1982).
8. I am not endorsing the claim that "A can be better or worse off in circumstance  $C_1$  than in  $C_2$  only if A exists in both  $C_1$  and  $C_2$ ." For this claim implies, e.g., that death cannot make persons worse off than they were when they were alive, or than they would be if they had not died. Instead, I am suggesting that the reason individuals who are born with genetic defects are not harmed by reproductive risk taking is that if these individuals had not been conceived, they would not *be* anyone, and you must *be* someone to be compared as worse or better off. Notice that this way of understanding the issue at hand does allow us to speak of the dead as worse or better off than themselves or others, since the dead were someone.
9. View (1) is held by philosophers such as John Passmore, *Man's Responsibility for Nature* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons and Gerald Duckworth and Co. Ltd., 1974); Douglas MacLean, "A Moral Requirement for Energy Policies" in *Energy and the Future* (Totowa: Rowman and Littlefield, 1983); Thomas Schwartz, "Obligations to Posterity" in *Obligations to Future Generations* (Philadelphia: Temple Univ. Press, 1984); and Walter Wagner, "Futurity Morality" in K.S. Shrader-Frechette (ed.), *Environmental Ethics* (Pacific Grove: Boxwood Press, 1981).

10. View (2) is held by Michael Bayles, "Harm to the Unconceived," *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 5 (1976): 292-304 and "Comments on 'Protecting the Unconceived': Butchers, Bakers, and Candlestick Makers" in *Contemporary Issues in Biomedical Ethics*; by Jonathan Bennett, "On Maximizing Happiness" in *Obligations to Future Generations*; and by Jan Narveson, "Moral Problems of Population" in *Ethics and Population Policy* (Cambridge: Schenkman Publishing Co., 1976), "Future People and US" in *Obligations to Future Generations*, and "Utilitarianism and New Generations" *Mind* 76 (January, 1967): 62-73..
11. View (3) is suggested in classical utilitarian writings. See, for example, Jeremy Bentham, "Principles of Morals and Legislation" in Wilfrid Harrison (ed.), *Principles of Morals and Legislation* (Basil Blackwell, 1960) and John Stuart Mill, "Utilitarianism" in Max Lerner (ed.), *Essential Works of John Stuart Mill* (New York: Bantam Books, 1965).
12. The reader is here referred to Michael Bayles, *Morality and Population Policy* (University: University of Alabama Press, 1980), Appendix 1, p. 105, for a more complete discussion. Recently, Gregory Kavka has suggested a different revision of view (3), but I am inclined to agree with Derek Parfit's assessment that this approach is open to equally serious objections. The relevant arguments can be found in Kavka's "The Paradox of Future Individuals," *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 11 (Spring, 1982): 93-112 and Parfit's *Reasons and Persons* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), pp. 432-38.
13. Parfit, *Reasons and Persons*, p. 364.
14. Parfit, *Reasons and Persons*, p. 364.
15. In correspondence Parfit has explicitly denied that he intends *Reasons and Persons* to be interpreted in this manner. Yet it is worth considering the position I describe, because it is a view that many would find attractive. Moreover, although Parfit does not intend to endorse this account, the passage I quote can be seen as supporting it and thus as giving expression to a view worth considering.
16. Parfit, *Reasons and Persons*, pp. 364-65.
17. Parfit has confirmed in correspondence that this interpretation is one he intends to express and endorse in *Reasons and Persons*.
18. Parfit, *Reasons and Persons*, p. 364, emphasis added.

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