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ArticleTitle	A robust hybrid theory of well-being	
Article Sub-Title		
Article CopyRight	Springer Nature B.V. (This will be the copyright line in the final PDF)	
Journal Name	Philosophical Studies	
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Schedule	Received	
	Revised	
	Accepted	23 October 2020
Abstract	This paper articulates and defends a novel hybrid account of well-being. We will call our view a Robust Hybrid. We call it robust because it grants a broad and not subservient role to both objective and subjective values. In this paper we assume, we think plausibly but without argument, that there is a significant objective component to well-being. Here we clarify what it takes for an account of well-being to have a subjective component. Roughly, we argue, it must allow that favoring attitudes that are not warranted by	

the lights of objective values can ground benefits. Given this understanding, we show that there is an important and unrecognized expansion in the resources available to fully objectivist views: namely that such views can help themselves to the value of warranted love of objective goods. Such a move by the objectivist can help them respond to concerns that, on their view, a person's well-being can be too alien to them. We next argue that, nonetheless, such objectivist views are still unconvincing due to their lack of a subjective component. This motivates a move from fully objective accounts to hybrid accounts. We show that many prominent hybrid theories in the literature are inadequate because they implausibly minimize the subjective component. This motivates a move to a robust hybrid view that has an expanded subjectivist component. We conclude with some remarks about the interrelation between the subjective and objective components in the hybrid account that we favor and a role for resonance in a theory of well-being other than serving as a hard constraint on any benefit.

Keywords (separated by '-') Well-being - Subjectivism - Objectivism - Parfit - Hybrid - Reasons - Desires - Value

Footnote Information



1

3 **A robust hybrid theory of well-being**

4 **Steven Wall¹ · David Sobel^{2,3}**

5 Accepted: 23 October 2020
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7 **Abstract** This paper articulates and defends a novel hybrid account of well-being.
8 We will call our view a Robust Hybrid. We call it robust because it grants a broad
9 and not subservient role to both objective and subjective values. In this paper we
10 assume, we think plausibly but without argument, that there is a significant objective
11 component to well-being. Here we clarify what it takes for an account of well-being
12 to have a subjective component. Roughly, we argue, it must allow that favoring
13 attitudes that are not warranted by the lights of objective values can ground benefits.
14 Given this understanding, we show that there is an important and unrecognized
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17 move by the objectivist can help them respond to concerns that, on their view, a
18 person's well-being can be too alien to them. We next argue that, nonetheless, such
19 **AQ1** objectivist views are still unconvincing due to their lack of a subjective component.
20 This motivates a move from fully objective accounts to hybrid accounts. We show
21 that many prominent hybrid theories in the literature are inadequate because they
22 implausibly minimize the subjective component. This motivates a move to a robust
23 hybrid view that has an expanded subjectivist component. We conclude with some
24 remarks about the interrelation between the subjective and objective components in
25 the hybrid account that we favor and a role for resonance in a theory of well-being
26 other than serving as a hard constraint on any benefit.
27

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28 **Keywords** Well-being · Subjectivism · Objectivism · Parfit · Hybrid · Reasons ·
 29 Desires · Value

30
 31 This paper articulates and defends a novel hybrid account of well-being. We call our
 32 view a Robust Hybrid. We call an account of well-being “hybrid” if and only if it
 33 allows that both subjective and objective components each sometimes play a
 34 grounding role in determining what benefits.¹ A hybrid account of well-being is
 35 robust, in our sense, if and only if it grants a broad and not subservient role to both
 36 objective and subjective components, rather than marginalizing one or the other
 37 component. This paper assumes, we think plausibly but without argument, that there
 38 is a significant objective component to well-being. We do not aspire to justify this
 39 assumption here.² Fully subjectivist views are not our target. Our aim instead is to
 40 clarify what it takes for an account of well-being to have a subjective component in
 41 a world containing objective goods. We argue that it must allow that favoring
 42 attitudes that are not warranted by the lights of objective goods can ground benefits.
 43 “Stance-dependence”, we contend, is not the key to a subjective component.

44 Given this understanding, we argue that there is an important and unrecognized
 45 expansion in the resources available to fully objectivist views: namely, that such
 46 views can help themselves to the prudential value of warranted love of objective
 47 goods. Appealing to these resources can allow objectivists to respond to concerns
 48 that, on their view, a person’s well-being could be too alien to her. Nevertheless, or
 49 so we contend, fully objective views, even with such expanded resources, remain
 50 unconvincing due to their lack of a subjective component. The benefits of getting
 51 what one without warrant favors in matters of mere taste cannot be captured by
 52 these views.³ This motivates a shift from fully objective accounts to hybrid accounts
 53 of well-being. We next argue that prominent hybrid theories in the literature
 54 unconvincingly and without justification minimize the subjective component. This,
 55 in turn, motivates a move to a robust hybrid view that has an expanded subjective
 56 component. In the second half of the paper we address issues concerning the
 57 interrelation between the subjective and objective components, describing what
 58 happens to the traditional resonance constraint in the robust hybrid account that we
 59 favor.

1FL01 ¹ A common usage of “hybrid” in the literature refers to views that maintain that well-being benefits
 1FL02 require both a subjective and objective component. Our preferred more expansive usage of the term also
 1FL03 includes views, such as ours, that allow that subjective and objective components each are sometimes
 1FL04 individually sufficient to ground benefits.

2FL01 ² We do not say much about the content of this objective component. Nor do we discuss its nature. It
 2FL02 could be enumerative or explanatory (G. Fletcher, “A Fresh Start for the Objective-List Theory of Well-
 2FL03 being,” *Utilitas*, Vol. 25, No. 2 (2013): 206–220). We think our picture compelling when paired with a
 2FL04 wide range of understandings of the objective component.

3FL01 ³ See Sobel, “The Case for Stance-Dependent Reasons,” *Journal of Ethics and Social Philosophy*, Vol.
 3FL02 15, No. 2 (2019) and “Pain for Objectivists: The Case of Matters of Mere Taste,” *Ethical Theory and*
 3FL03 *Moral Practice*, Vol. 8, No. 4 (August 2005), 437–57.

60 **1 Subjectivism and well-being**

61 We start by trying to get clear on what makes a component of a theory of well-being
 62 subjectivist. Fully subjectivist views of well-being, we think, are tolerably well
 63 understood. These views maintain that all and only getting the object of some
 64 procedurally specified favoring attitude benefits one. On such views, nothing about
 65 the object of one's attitudes helps to ground the benefit one gets when one gets what
 66 one favors. Such a normative role for the attitudes was outlined, and rejected in the
 67 context of morality, in the *Euthyphro*. Matters are much less clear, however, when
 68 we turn from full subjectivism to what makes a component of a hybrid account of
 69 well-being subjectivist. Complexities infect this issue. Sorting them out will lead us
 70 to a deeper understanding of the subjective/objective distinction itself.⁴

71 Consider some examples. A view that maintains that one's relevant favoring
 72 attitudes always ground benefits and harms, regardless of the object of the attitude,
 73 but also allows that there are completely attitude-independent sources of benefit and
 74 harm that need to be weighed against the attitude-based benefits, obviously has a
 75 subjectivist component.

76 Things become somewhat trickier when a view allows that the objective
 77 component can constrain the contexts where the attitudes have upshot.⁵ An example
 78 of such a view is one that holds that one's favoring attitudes ground benefits in all
 79 cases except when they urge one in an immoral direction.⁶ Don't focus on the
 80 plausibility of such a view, but on the question of whether we have here a subjective
 81 component. On this view, objective moral values cancel the prudential upshot of the
 82 subjective attitudes when they conflict. Despite this canceling feature, we think that
 83 it is intuitive that such a view continues to count as having a subjectivist component.
 84 On such a view, objects that have nothing at all to be said for them in terms of

4FL01 ⁴ While we think we make progress here in understanding the nature of the objective/subjective
 4FL02 distinction, there is further work that remains. For we do not here take a stand on how to place on that
 4FL03 divide Kantian views that claim that only moral attitudes can be made fully coherent, Neo-Aristotelian
 4FL04 views that locate normativity in the nature of the type of agent whose reasons or well-being is in question,
 4FL05 or Constitutivist views that locate normativity in the nature of agency. Here our goal is to clarify the
 4FL06 nature of paradigmatic objective and subjective components. In future work we hope to expand our
 4FL07 characterization to persuasively locate such non-paradigmatically objective or subjective views on that
 4FL08 divide.

5FL01 ⁵ Ruth Chang has suggested a picture where objective values constrain the contexts where we have free
 5FL02 play to generate value, yet on her view we have broad powers to create value outside of such constraints.
 5FL03 See 'Voluntarist Reasons and the Sources of Normativity,' (2009) *Reasons for Action*, eds. Sobel and
 5FL04 Wall, Cambridge University Press, pp. 243–271 and 'Grounding Practical Normativity: Going Hybrid,'
 5FL05 (2013) *Philosophical Studies*, 164 (1), pp. 163–187.

6FL01 ⁶ There are different possible pictures of how this constraint would work. In the above we focus on a
 6FL02 constraint that silences the upshot of the relevant attitudes when there is a conflict as this is the most
 6FL03 interesting case for understanding the objective/subjective distinction. Alternatively, for example, some
 6FL04 or all objective values might (1) trump but not silence the upshot of the attitudes, or (2) diminish, but not
 6FL05 always (or ever) completely silence (or trump) the weight of the upshot of the attitudes. We do not take a
 6FL06 stand with respect to these different ways objective values might constrain the upshot of the attitudes. But
 6FL07 this paper explores only cases where some such objective constraints on the normative role of the
 6FL08 attitudes exist as we think this the most plausible model of interaction between objective and subjective
 6FL09 values.

85 objective value are made good for one simply due to one's favoring of them. Here
 86 the attitudes play a grounding, albeit constrained, role in making some options
 87 better for one than others.

88 Consider finally a view that maintains that there are objective prudential goods
 89 and that appropriately loving them adds to the prudential benefit of getting such
 90 goods.⁷ Suppose that, on this view, this additional benefit is the only contribution
 91 the attitudes can make to the well-being of the agent. Does this "loving the good"
 92 view count as including a genuinely subjective component? Many who have taken
 93 themselves to be defending a hybrid account of well-being have assumed the answer
 94 is yes. We think there are good reasons to say no. We will scrutinize "loving the
 95 good" views in the next section. For now, we can use this type of view to explain
 96 how the attitudes of a person could play a direct grounding role in providing benefits
 97 to her without bringing in what we see as a subjective component. The key to our
 98 explanation is a distinction between two normative roles that the attitudes can play
 99 in grounding benefits.

100 The first normative role, we will call it Type 1, is present when the existence of
 101 warranted favoring or disfavoring attitudes are allowed to directly affect well-
 102 being.⁸ This role is more than mere co-variation between the attitude and the
 103 prudential upshot. For example, on a "loving the good" view, the love of the good is
 104 itself an intrinsic benefit, not just correlated with a benefit. However, and crucially,
 105 the Type 1 normative role for the attitudes only permits warranted attitudes to have
 106 such an upshot. Thus Type 1 attitudes can ground benefits, but not, as we will put it,
 107 in a sovereign way. Their power to ground benefits is entirely subservient to
 108 objective standards of value.

109 By contrast, the second normative role the attitudes might play—we will call it
 110 Type 2—manifests this sovereign power to create benefits. In the unrestricted case,
 111 the attitudes have free play to create value for the agent wherever they go, even if
 112 they settle on objectively worthless or disvaluable objects. In the restricted case, the
 113 attitudes have the sovereign power to create benefits for the agents, but only so long
 114 as they do not run counter to some objective goods. Their sovereign power, it can be
 115 said, has jurisdictional limits. But even in the restricted case, warrantless attitudes
 116 have the power to turn objectively valueless or neutral objects into prudential value
 117 for the agent.

118 This distinction between the two normative roles the attitudes might play in
 119 grounding benefits brings into view some new and interesting questions about the
 120 objective/subjective distinction. Does the Type 1 normative role for the attitudes
 121 suffice for an account of well-being to have a subjective component, or must it go

7FL01 ⁷ The structure of such a view is explored in T. Hurka, *Virtue, Vice and Value*, Oxford University Press,
 7FL02 2000. Hurka's focus is on the perfectionist value of the attitudes, not their contribution to well-being.

8FL01 ⁸ Warranted attitudes respond appropriately or fittingly to the objective goods (or bads) at which they are
 8FL02 directed. They contrast with both unwarranted attitudes, which fail to respond to objective goods (or bads)
 8FL03 appropriately and warrantless attitudes, which are not directed at (or not directed in response to) objective
 8FL04 goods (or bads), but rather at states or objects that have no objective value or disvalue (or regardless of
 8FL05 their objective value). Attitudes might be thought to be warranted in a different way; as, for example,
 8FL06 when they satisfy standards of coherence and/or procedural rationality. But this kind of warrant is not our
 8FL07 concern here and needs separate treatment.)

122 further and include the Type 2 normative role? Our own view is that subjectivism is
 123 committed to the claim that the relevant attitudes can play the Type 2 normative
 124 role. Fully subjectivist views of well-being place no jurisdictional limits on the
 125 sovereign power of these attitudes. Hybrid views include a subjectivist component
 126 by allowing that the relevant attitudes sometimes, and perhaps only in restricted
 127 contexts, have the sovereign power to create benefits for the agent. Thus, as we see
 128 matters, on a genuine hybrid account, the attitudes do not simply kowtow to
 129 objective goods, but have some authority of their own to generate value even when
 130 they are not warranted by their objects. It is the combination of allowing such
 131 attitudes to serve as the ground or source of prudential benefit with granting them
 132 normative free play to do so that is the mark of a subjectivist component.

133 Objective views, by contrast, hold that the value of objects is normative for the
 134 attitudes and deny that attitudes that are unwarranted by the light of the value of
 135 their objects can ground value. The direction of explanation of value, on the
 136 objectivist view, originates from the value of the object, not from the attitude. And
 137 this is why the value that flows from unwarranted favoring attitudes is a different
 138 kind of value. In the unwarranted case the attitude's normative power is not a result
 139 of accurately reflecting the value of its object, but something else entirely. In such
 140 cases there is something in the object that suits the valuer, but not because the object
 141 is valuable and so ought in some sense suit anyone, but because of particularities of
 142 what the valuer happens to like. When the value flows from properly responding to
 143 objective value, one's role is to correctly detect and respond appropriately to what is
 144 good. One plays a similar role in trying to figure out what to believe. Our attitudes
 145 should conform to reality. But in the Type 2 case, that is not what is going on. These
 146 attitudes are not guided by what is good or true and so, in a way, can more freely
 147 reflect the subject's own distinctive nature.

148 We realize that the distinction between Type 1 and Type 2 normative roles is not
 149 familiar in the literature on well-being. Still, it helps to illuminate much of what
 150 subjectivists and objectivists have been disputing. Friends of subjectivism have
 151 obviously thought that even when there was no good objective reason to have an
 152 attitude, the attitude can ground a benefit. Critics have seized on this feature,
 153 claiming that the attitudes that the subjectivist champions are arbitrary, especially
 154 when they lead us in directions that conflict with objective values. Critics of
 155 subjectivism also point to examples such as the grass counter to argue that the
 156 attitudes are insufficient by themselves to make something good for us when their
 157 object is worthless. More generally, and applied to morality, the *Euthyphro* outlined
 158 a subjectivist picture where the attitudes were a source of normativity without being
 159 responsive to correctness conditions for the attitudes—indeed it was this central
 160 feature of the view that led to its rejection.

161 Thus, on reflection, we think it is tolerably clear that the Type 2 normative role
 162 for the attitudes is what subjectivists often have been championing and what critics
 163 of the view often have found problematic. Views that grant normative upshot only
 164 to attitudes that are warranted or correct by the lights of objective values cannot be
 165 charged with being problematically arbitrary. The normative role of the attitudes, on
 166 such views, stems from them properly responding to the objective values. The
 167 Euthyphronic direction of explanation in such cases runs from object to attitude, and

168 only in virtue of this from attitude to value—and for this reason we think it objective
 169 rather than subjective value that is in play. The objective values, on such a view,
 170 play the role of the sun and the attitudes play the role of the moon. The moon may
 171 add light, but only light that it reflects from the sun. Similarly, we think the
 172 fundamental source of value, on such a picture, is the objective value of the object.
 173 The value of the warranted attitudes is just a reflection of the objective value of its
 174 object—this is why unwarranted attitudes lack such normative upshot on such a
 175 picture. For these reasons, we think the Type 2 normative role for the attitudes
 176 captures a central feature of the subjectivist view and carves the subjective/objective
 177 distinction at the more philosophically important joint than the Type 1 normative
 178 role. Thus, we agree with Parfit’s claim, made in the context of practical reasons
 179 more generally, that any genuinely subjectivist-grounded reason must be provided
 180 by “some desire or aim that we have no reason to have.”⁹

181 Alternative accounts of the objective/subjective distinction in the philosophical
 182 literature on well-being strike us as both less illuminating than our proposal and less
 183 intuitive. It is quite common to distinguish subjective and objective views by appeal
 184 to the thought that the former are stance-, mind-, or attitude-dependent and the latter
 185 are not. But such proposals run together the importantly different ways in which the
 186 attitudes might play a normative role in grounding benefits that we have been at
 187 pains to distinguish.¹⁰ We think our arguments are persuasive that such stance-,
 188 mind-, or attitude-dependence is necessary but not sufficient for a subjective
 189 component. The key issue in determining whether or not we have a genuinely
 190 subjective component is whether the view allows that some attitudes that are not
 191 warranted by objective values ground value.¹¹ Only views that allow that some
 192 warrantless or unwarranted attitudes can play a grounding role incorporate a
 193 subjective component, and so only such views can count as hybrids.

194 Since our proposal concerning the objective/subjective distinction is crucial to
 195 the hybrid account of well-being that we want to defend, it will be helpful to pause
 196 here to consider a couple of important objections to it. The first objection holds that
 197 we have overstated the difference between the Type 1 and Type 2 normative roles
 198 for the attitudes—that this difference is merely one of degree, not type. We claimed
 199 that the Type 2 role for the attitudes grants them free play and sovereign power to
 200 generate prudential value for the agent. But proponents of loving the good views,

9FL01 ⁹ Parfit, *On What Matters*, Vol. 1, Oxford University Press, 2011, p. 9. Parfit did not attempt to justify
 9FL02 this claim. We like to think he might have accepted our explanation.

10FL01 ¹⁰ Sumner, *Welfare, Happiness, and Ethics*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996 understands the distinction
 10FL02 between objective and subjective accounts of well-being by appeal to this notion of mind-independence.
 10FL03 Such proposals are common.

11FL01 ¹¹ Parfit, *On What Matters*, Vol. 1, p. 91. Compare also Nagel on “motivated” and “unmotivated desires.”
 11FL02 *The Possibility of Altruism*, Princeton University Press, 1970, Dale Dorsey, “Subjectivism Without
 11FL03 Desire,” *Philosophical Review* 121 (July 2012), maintains that subjective views are most plausible when
 11FL04 the value conferring attitude is understood to be a belief rather than something conative. For such a view
 11FL05 to be genuinely subjectivist by our lights, as we think Dorsey would accept, the value conferring belief
 11FL06 must not be warranted by objective values. Similar remarks go for Ruth Chang’s voluntarist way of
 11FL07 stipulating into existence some reasons. See, among other of her works, her “Grounding Practical
 11FL08 Normativity: Going Hybrid,” *Philosophical Studies* 164, 2013.

201 the objection maintains, also grant free play to the attitudes. After all, they can say
 202 that wherever the attitudes warrantedly happen to go in a context of good things,
 203 they have normative upshot. If one happened warrantedly to love working on
 204 philosophy, one's love would add value to what one did. If one instead warrantedly
 205 happened to love working to house the homeless, one's time with Habitat for
 206 Humanity would have extra value. How, then, is this importantly different from the
 207 free play involved in what we claim is a genuinely subjectivist role for the attitudes,
 208 especially in cases where the attitudes are still constrained by objective values?

209 We think that there is a fundamental difference between the free play available
 210 on a loving the good sort of view from the free play available on a genuinely
 211 subjectivist component. Loving the good views presumably must treat one's failure
 212 to love the most lovable objects as an unfortunate limitation, like the case of the
 213 most beautiful paintings not being good for one to look at because one is color blind.
 214 That is not free play. It is just one's limitations making unavailable to one options
 215 that would have been objectively best. Alternatively, one might think the free play
 216 available on loving the good views is that one is free to fail to love the most
 217 lovable things, even when one can. Here one's attitudes are unresponsive to
 218 objective value. This too is not free play, although it does manifest a freedom to not
 219 love what one has most reason to love.

220 Loving the good views, in short, can grant free play to our attitudes only to the
 221 extent that we are defective or making mistakes. On such views, to the extent that
 222 we have self-command and comply with the objective demands of the values around
 223 us, we lack free play. By contrast, in the genuinely subjective case, the free play
 224 available to the attitudes is compatible with full self-command and making no
 225 mistakes. The person is normatively free to have her attitudes shape her good. This
 226 sort of freedom requires the Type 2 role.

227 The second objection to our proposal grants the distinction between Type 1 and
 228 Type 2 normative roles for the attitudes, but then denies that the Type 2 role in fact
 229 grounds a subjectivist component. As this objection aims to appropriate to the
 230 objectivist side what we think of as subjectivist values we will call it the
 231 *appropriation objection*. The main thought behind the objection runs as follows.
 232 Our claim that the Type 2 normative role of the attitudes involves a sovereign power
 233 to make the objects of the attitudes valuable rests on a misidentification of the
 234 relevant value bearer. The value bearer, the objection maintains, is not the object of
 235 the attitude, but rather an overall state of which the attitude is a part. And this
 236 overall state, which includes both the attitude and its object, is not itself made good
 237 by any further favoring attitude. Accordingly, it is objectively, not subjectively,
 238 good. To illustrate, consider the case of pleasure. It is possible for an agent who
 239 favors some sensation, and so gets pleasure from it, to nonetheless not have a higher
 240 order favoring attitude toward themselves getting such a sensation. If the value
 241 bearer here is not thought of as the object of the favoring attitude but rather the
 242 combination of the sensation and a liking of that sensation, then the attitude is not

243 playing the traditional subjectivist role of making its object valuable. Thus, our
 244 objector concludes, the value of pleasure is objectivist, not subjectivist.¹²

245 We do not find this attempt at appropriation compelling for several reasons. First,
 246 keep in mind that while many subjectivists look to higher-order attitudes, the
 247 subjectivist is by no means barred from granting authority to first-order attitudes.
 248 First-order attitudes may make pleasure subjectively good for one, even if one does
 249 not have a higher-order attitude that endorses the value of the pleasure. This is
 250 presumably how things work in the case of infants and many animals.

251 Second, we think when an attitude has a broad power to transform a wide range
 252 of objects into states that have value, and there is nothing about the object that is
 253 objectively valuable or warrants the favoring attitude, this suggests the attitude
 254 makes its object good. The only normatively relevant role for the object here seems
 255 to be to serve as the object of the attitude, not to in any other way contribute to
 256 making the state valuable. An analogy may be helpful. Imagine a tennis tournament
 257 that includes Federer, and that whoever Federer partners with in doubles, his team
 258 wins. And imagine further that he is partnered with a player who would (of course)
 259 win only with Federer. When the two of them win the tournament, it would be
 260 obtuse for the partner to proudly proclaim that he and Federer are equal partners in
 261 victory. Likewise, when an attitude and its object are both present in a case that
 262 involves the Type 2 normative role, it just strikes us as bizarre to think of the two as
 263 equal partners. Had the attitude hit on some other object the normative upshot would
 264 have been the same.

265 One might try to resist the analogy. While Federer is clearly the dominant partner
 266 in his partnership, it is less clear that desire is the dominant partner in the object/
 267 desire combination. After all, a desire for some object p cannot make just anything
 268 beneficial to the agent. The desire for p must be combined with p . So the desire and
 269 its object, it might be thought, are on a par, unlike Federer and his partner. But
 270 consider now an epistemic variant of the case. An agent has a desire for some
 271 object, but we do not know what the object is. Yet we can still know that, regardless
 272 of what the object is (providing it lies within the jurisdiction in which the Type 2
 273 normative role operates), the combination of that desire and that object will be good
 274 for the agent. The same does not hold in the other direction, however. For if there is
 275 some object present, then, if we do not know the content of the agent's desire or her
 276 attitude toward the object, we cannot know that the combination of that object and
 277 that desire is good for the agent. Without knowing the content of an agent's desires
 278 and without knowing what objects obtain or do not obtain, we can know this.
 279 Desires range over objects, creating value wherever they go, but the objects in
 280 question here have no such comparable power to create value when combined with
 281 whatever attitude they are partnered with.

282 Third, imagine a view that maintained that 'all and only getting the object of our
 283 desires (perhaps after good procedural deliberation) benefits us. However, it is not
 284 the object of our desires that benefits us, but combinations of objects and desires.' If

12FL01 ¹² Fletcher "A Fresh Start for Objective-List Theories of Well-Being." We are construing pleasure here,
 12FL02 with Fletcher, as a warrantless favoring of certain sensations for their own sake, not as a flavor, or set of
 12FL03 flavors, of sensation.

285 there were no further attitude that makes the combinations valuable, the advocate of
 286 such a view, in line with the appropriation objection, could insist that we have here a
 287 fully objective theory of well-being. This would be a quite counterintuitive
 288 description for such a view.

289 Subjectivists are in a good position to explain how the combination of an
 290 objectively valueless object and an objectively warrantless attitude could benefit a
 291 person. The attitude makes the object subjectively good for the person. That
 292 explanation is much more compelling than the view that holds that there is a set of
 293 unrelated brute facts in which objectively valueless objects, when combined with
 294 objectively warrantless attitudes, produce objective value.

295 We think the objective/subjective divide points to a philosophically crucial
 296 distinction, and thus investigation into how to best understand the divide
 297 philosophically important. Yet even if you think the sort of subtleties of
 298 classification discussed above are best handled by stipulation, we think you should
 299 still be interested in our project. Our main concern is not to fight over terminology.
 300 Those who are unconvinced by, or uninterested in, our claims about what makes a
 301 component subjectivist should still think our topic retains most of its interest. For it
 302 is an interesting and important question whether, and to what extent, favoring
 303 attitudes that are not warranted by objective values ground benefits. Terminology
 304 aside, our distinction between objective and subjective components of well-being
 305 highlights issues that matter, are worth keeping track of, and have been under-
 306 explored.

307 2 Objectivists can enjoy the good

308 It will be useful, at this point, to consider the resources that we have just implied are
 309 available to proponents of a fully objectivist account of well-being. Hybrid views
 310 are often motivated by the thought that a fully objective view of the good would be
 311 very hard to accept because they allow us to be radically alienated from our good.
 312 Friends of such accounts, Shelly Kagan asserts, “seem forced to accept the
 313 unappealing claim that I could be extremely well off, provided that I have the right
 314 objective goods in my life, even though these things hold no appeal for me, and I
 315 am, in fact, utterly miserable.”¹³ Kagan is here seconding the common thought that
 316 objectivists cannot adequately ensure that our good properly resonates with us. This
 317 concern motivates Kagan, and others, towards a view that requires that we find favor
 318 with what benefits us. Kagan proposes an account of well-being that he christens
 319 “enjoying the good,” and contends that it represents an interesting hybrid
 320 alternative to fully objectivist views of a person’s good. To enjoy the good, on
 321 Kagan’s proposal, it is not enough that one gets pleasure from the objective goods in
 322 one’s life. One’s enjoyment must be an appropriate response to the good-making
 323 features of the goods in question. Enjoyment of the good, on Kagan’s proposal,

13FL01 ¹³ S. Kagan, “Well-Being as Enjoying the Good,” *Philosophical Perspectives*, 23 (1):253–272 (2009),
 13FL02 p. 254.

324 comes from the warranted love of the good, or better—the warranted love of the
325 good things in one’s life.

326 It should now be clear that on our account of the objective/subjective distinction,
327 objectivists can account for such enjoyable states and their value without
328 compromising their objectivism. They can build warrantedly loving an object into
329 the situation that is objectively good without making any concessions to
330 subjectivism.¹⁴ And if such an objective theory added that engagement with
331 objective goods without warranted enjoyment was of little or no value, it could get
332 the desired result that it is impossible to be very well off by the lights of such a
333 theory, yet fail to favor or enjoy any aspect of one’s life.¹⁵

334 It might be objected that loving the good views, such as Kagan’s, mischaracterize
335 the value provided by the warranted attitudes. Why should one think that even if it is
336 allowed that it is valuable for objective goods to be loved, the value added is
337 specifically intrinsic prudential value for the lover? Perhaps having warranted love
338 for valuable goods in one’s life makes one have a better life, but not a life higher in
339 well-being.¹⁶ In response, we think that Kagan’s view is plausible on this point. We
340 believe that an advisor who cared for a friend for her own sake would not be
341 indifferent between their friend loving some aspect of her life that was valueless or
342 bad and loving some such aspect that was of objective worth. Such an advisor would
343 want his friend, for the friend’s own sake (other things equal), to love genuinely
344 valuable aspects of her life rather than its bad or valueless aspects.¹⁷ For this reason,
345 we think it plausible that the value at stake here includes intrinsic prudential value
346 for the lover of the good.

347 But our aim is not to defend loving the good views, although, as mentioned, we
348 think they are plausible and nicely capture the Type 1 normative role for the
349 attitudes. We have wanted to show how views of this type can respond to Kagan’s
350 concern without going hybrid. But such views, attractive as they are, remain
351 inadequate. They cannot account for the role of warrantless favoring attitudes in
352 shaping well-being. On reflection, we think it irresistible to hold that it is directly
353 relevant to people’s well-being whether they have favoring attitudes towards aspects
354 of their lives even when those attitudes are not warranted by the objective merits of

14FL01 ¹⁴ Hurka presses this point against hybrid views such as Kagan’s. He argues that enjoying the good views
14FL02 can hold that love or enjoyment of objective goods is fitting; and since fittingness itself is an objective
14FL03 property, such views can remain fully objective. T. Hurka, “On ‘Hybrid’ Theories of Personal Good,”
14FL04 *Utilitas*, Vol. 31, Issue 4 (2019): 450–62, at 455–56. This, he correctly observes, is clearest if, as would be
14FL05 most natural, the enjoying the good theorist also thinks hating the bad is a benefit. Such purported benefit
14FL06 is plainly not subjective in nature.

15FL01 ¹⁵ As Kagan notes, enjoying the good was first proposed by Parfit; and it is explicit in Parfit’s discussion
15FL02 of this view of well-being that pleasure is a matter of liking or wanting an experience. See *Reasons and*
15FL03 *Persons*, Oxford University Press, 1984, p. 501.

16FL01 ¹⁶ Hurka, for example, takes his recursive loving the good account of the virtues as a perfectionist value,
16FL02 but not a prudential benefit. T. Hurka, *Virtue, Vice and Value*, p. 7. But see his recent application of the
16FL03 recursive account of virtue to theories of personal good in “On ‘Hybrid’ Theories of Personal Good.”

17FL01 ¹⁷ We understand that such an argument will not persuade the committed subjectivist. But recall we are
17FL02 not here arguing against the full on subjectivist, as is shown by our merely assuming that there are some
17FL03 objective prudential values.

355 their objects.¹⁸ This is clearest when it comes to our favoring attitudes toward
 356 different sensations. Such attitudes can make good for one something that is not
 357 objectively worth liking. We are benefitted by getting tastes, seeing colors, listening
 358 to sounds, and having tactile sensations that we happen to like even though the
 359 objects of our favoring attitudes in these contexts do not warrant such an attitude.

360 To account for prudential value in matters of mere taste we must turn from the
 361 Type 1 normative role of the attitudes and focus attention on their Type 2 normative
 362 role. In contrast to loving or “enjoying the good” views, a genuinely hybrid view of
 363 well-being must do more than acknowledge the prudential value of warranted
 364 attitudes toward the good. It must assign the subjective attitudes a greater role, one
 365 that is not restricted to attitudes that are warranted by objective values. Only by
 366 doing this will it succeed in capturing the prudential value involved in cases of
 367 getting what one unwarrantedly loves in matters of mere taste. To capture such
 368 values persuasively, a genuinely subjective component must be added.

369 **3 The unsuccessful attempt to restrain the subjective component:** 370 **the case of Parfit**

371 Some philosophers accept that allowances in the subjectivist direction need to be
 372 made to handle cases of mere taste. But they then aspire to severely limit the scope
 373 of such cases, or they claim that the subjective component is not very significant for
 374 well-being. Perhaps, they allow, getting some enjoyment from a sensation one likes
 375 benefits one, but such subjectivist value is highly constrained and could not make or
 376 break a life. They might, for example, simply add subjectively construed pleasure to
 377 an otherwise objective list. The case of liking sensations, it may be thought, can be
 378 sharply distinguished from desires, or favoring attitudes more broadly. If so, then it
 379 may be possible to contain the concession to subjectivism. This is the strategy
 380 pursued by Parfit (in the context of reasons). We will focus on his arguments here,
 381 as we think he offers the best version of such an approach. We will argue that such a
 382 role for favorings is too limited to be persuasive. We also think that an appreciation
 383 of the inadequacies of Parfit’s position can help one to see why a more robust role
 384 for warrantless attitudes is justified.

385 First, a few words about pleasure. We claimed above that when it comes to our
 386 favoring attitudes toward different sensations, such attitudes can make good for one
 387 something that is not objectively worth liking. The benefit here is pleasure or
 388 enjoyment. But pleasure can be given a subjective or objective understanding
 389 depending on whether it is essential that the sensation be favored to count as
 390 pleasure.¹⁹ Here, like Parfit, we are concerned with a subjective understanding of
 391 pleasure.²⁰ Such views tend to have a narrow understanding of pleasure—involving

18FL01 ¹⁸ Sobel, “The Case for Stance-Dependent Reasons” is entirely devoted to defending this claim. We
 18FL02 significantly rely on the conclusion reached in that paper here.

19FL01 ¹⁹ For a case against the plausibility of the objective picture of pleasure see Sobel, “Varieties of
 19FL02 Hedonism” *The Journal of Social Philosophy*, Vol. 33, no. 2 (Summer 2002): 240–256, in addition to
 19FL03 “Pain for Objectivists,” and “The Case for Stance-Dependent Reasons”.

perhaps only the intrinsic favoring of phenomenological states for their own sake— and maintain that this is the only concession that needs to be made to our unwarranted attitudes to handle matters of mere taste. Others understand pleasure more broadly such that it would make sense to say that one gets pleasure from wanting there to be cheese on the moon and thinking it is so where the object of the favoring attitude is not a sensation.²¹ We are interested here only in disputing folks who have the narrower understanding of pleasure as only this picture avoids granting warrantless attitudes a broad and robust normative role. The position, then, that we have in mind allows only a minimal role for subjective values. It grants a place for (narrow) subjective pleasure in well-being, but aspires to hold the line there. Given our terminology, this view would be a hybrid view, but not a robust hybrid view.

Now to Parfit. He strongly insists that desires never ground reasons. Establishing this claim is perhaps the central ambition of the first 100 pages of volume 1 of *On What Matters*. Parfit's stridency concerning the role of desires leads many to understand him as rejecting all subjectivist value. On close inspection, however, Parfit's position can be seen to be more complex. He insists that "likings" can ground reasons, and likings are favoring attitudes. Parfit is clear that "likings" are a significant source of reasons in a fairly wide range of cases—intuitively in matters of "mere taste"—and that we have no reason to have the likings that we have.²² "Whether we like, dislike, or are indifferent to these various sensations," Parfit claims, "we are not responding to or failing to respond to any reasons."²³ Parfit here clearly, and rightly in our view, rejects all attitude-independent understandings of the value involved in matters of mere taste as well as the idea that the relevant attitudes are merited by their object.

Likings are, according to Parfit, not desires. So granting that they can ground reasons for those who have them does not contradict Parfit's strong claim that desires never ground reasons. But the most important differences between likings and desires that Parfit points to concern differences in the possible objects of the two attitudes, not differences in the attitudes themselves. Parfit stipulates that likings and dislikings range over, and only over, "actual present sensations", whereas desires range more broadly over objects and states of affairs.²⁴ But why would Parfit think likings one has no reason to have can ground reasons but desires one has no reason to have cannot? Parfit is silent on this crucial question.²⁵

We think we can make his view less mysterious and more persuasive. The best case for thinking that likings can provide reasons, but that desires cannot, is that,

²¹ Fred Feldman offers such a broader notion of "being pleased that..." in *Utilitarianism, Hedonism, and Desert*, Cambridge University Press, 1997.

²² Parfit, *On What Matters*, Vol. 1, p. 91.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

²⁴ Parfit, *On What Matters*, Vol. 1, p. 53, Vol. 3, p. 261.

²⁵ As we understand Bradford's recent view, she gives a grounding prudential role both to Benthamite pleasure and to favoring attitudes towards such sensations. We think this type of view an important improvement over traditional Benthamite views. See, for example, her post at PEA Soup: <http://peasoup.us/2018/05/gwen-bradford-pains-badness/>.

428 first, there are, according to Parfit, no objective reasons for likings to conflict with
 429 (whereas desires can so conflict) and, second, likings are necessarily accurately
 430 descriptively informed about their object (whereas desires need not be). If this is the
 431 best explanation for the authority of warrantless likings, then a motivated rationale
 432 for a view in Parfit's direction comes into view. Favoring attitudes accurately
 433 informed by their object can ground reasons when they do not conflict with
 434 objective reasons. But this rationale would vindicate a more robust role for
 435 warrantless favoring attitudes than the mere concession about "likings." For, on this
 436 rationale, desires, as well as likings, can ground prudential benefits, providing they
 437 are accurately informed by their object and do not conflict with objective values. We
 438 do not see a persuasive rationale for the role Parfit allows for likings that does not
 439 expand to this broader, more robust, role for warrantless attitudes. And we think
 440 Parfit's role for likings is deeply persuasive. Thus we want to claim that, quite
 441 generally, favoring attitudes of the relevant sort carry normative authority when
 442 they do not conflict with objective values and are accurately descriptively informed
 443 about their object. Our view is that the scope of subjectivism is at least this robust.
 444 Call this picture "Robust, Constrained Subjectivism".²⁶

445 Parfit may have overlooked the availability of our view because he was misled by
 446 his "All or Nothing" argument, which maintains that either all desires of a certain
 447 pedigree ground normative upshot or none do. Examples such as the desire for
 448 future agony were taken to show that it is implausible that all desires provide
 449 reasons, so it was concluded that desires never do.²⁷ The notion of "likings" was
 450 likely introduced by Parfit because it could obey the logic of his "All or Nothing"
 451 argument.

452 Parfit's argument takes the form of a reductio of subjectivism. That is what
 453 entitles Parfit to the premise that desires of the right pedigree must all have the same
 454 normative upshot. That is a commitment of subjectivism. Yet the argument
 455 concludes that desires never ground reasons, rather than that subjectivism is in
 456 trouble. Parfit, we think, failed to see that he was only entitled to the key premise of
 457 this argument—that all desires of the same pedigree must have the same normative
 458 upshot—when arguing against the pure subjectivism. He arguments offers no reason
 459 to doubt a hybrid view of the Robust, Constrained Subjectivism we are
 460 championing. Such a view allows that there are objective values which can block
 461 the normative power of some desires, but also that other desires can ground
 462 prudential upshot, at least when they hit on objects that are not objectively bad.

463 Cases of liking objectively neutral phenomenology is the thin end of the wedge in
 464 introducing a subjective element to well-being. But once it is allowed in, it is
 465 difficult to resist granting the attitudes a broader role. Certainly Parfit's efforts to
 466 restrict the normative power of the attitudes to the singular case of liking
 467 phenomenology is strikingly unmotivated. A much more natural and motivated

26FL01 ²⁶ A robust hybrid, in our terminology, has both a robust subjective component and a robust objective
 26FL02 component. Here we are explaining the shape of our robust subjective component.

27FL01 ²⁷ Parfit, *On What Matters*, Vol. 1, pp. 89–90. For a discussion of the issues involved here see Sobel,
 27FL02 "Parfit's Case Against Subjectivism," *Oxford Studies in Metaethics*, volume 6, 2011, p. 52–78.

468 view, of the sort we just outlined, can explain the cases Parfit has in mind but would
469 grant a much broader and more robust role for the attitudes.

470 While our Robust, Constrained Subjectivism can be accepted independently from
471 the rest of our view, we now want to embed this view into a broader theory of well-
472 being which speaks to the question of how the objective and subjective components
473 interact. Reflecting on this matter will help to further distinguish our view from
474 other hybrid views that have been proposed.

475 4 Objective goods and subjective attitudes

476 Many purportedly hybrid views hold that the so-called “subjective” and objective
477 components must both be present for a benefit to occur. The relevant favoring
478 attitude and the relevant objective good are each necessary, and jointly sufficient,
479 for a benefit. On such a picture, if one gets something that is objectively valuable
480 but does not have the relevant attitude towards that value, one is not benefitted.
481 Likewise, if one has the relevant attitude towards an option but the option is not
482 objectively good, one is not benefitted. Only when the object of the attitude is
483 objectively worthy of the favoring attitude and one has the appropriate attitude
484 toward the object, is one benefitted.²⁸

485 There are, accordingly, two necessity claims to consider. The first one attaches a
486 condition to subjective value. If you have pleasure and satisfaction in your life, but
487 these experiences are not related in the right way to objective goods, then you will
488 not be benefitted by them. This condition is obviously accepted by those who
489 advance loving the good views of the sort discussed above. The second necessity
490 claim attaches a condition to objective goods. If you have objective goods in your
491 life, but you do not enjoy or appreciate or want them, then you will not be benefitted
492 by them.²⁹ Ronald Dworkin endorsed this necessity claim when he insisted that no
493 one’s life can be made better against the grain of his convictions.³⁰

494 We reject both necessity claims. We think it much more plausible to hold that the
495 objective and subjective components each can suffice for well-being benefits. After
496 explaining why we think this, we will consider a more modest version of the
497 necessity claims in Sect. 6, for which we have considerable sympathy.

498 We have already seen that the first necessity claim is challenged by cases of mere
499 taste. To test its plausibility, it is helpful to imagine a contrast case where pleasure
500 or desire oriented toward no objective value is the only factor in play. With this in
501 mind consider neutral pleasures, where these are understood to be pleasures that are
502 produced by activities that realize no objective goods or bads and that do not require

28FL01 ²⁸ This is the hybrid view suggested, but not endorsed, by Parfit in his influential appendix to *Reasons*
28FL02 *and Persons*. Kagan strongly suggests such a picture in “Well-Being as Enjoying the Good”.

29FL01 ²⁹ Some writers formulate this necessity claim in the language of a “resonance constraint.” See Sect. 5
29FL02 below.

30FL01 ³⁰ R. Dworkin, *Sovereign Virtue*, Harvard University Press, 2000, pp. 268–70.

503 any significant effort or exercise of talent by the agent.³¹ Compare two lives are that
 504 are equally good in terms of the objective goods that they realize and in terms of the
 505 enjoyment they get from such realization, but where the first life also contains a
 506 sizeable measure of pleasure taken in objectively indifferent objects and the second
 507 life is devoid of such pleasure. On reflection, we think that it is clear that the first of
 508 these lives has higher well-being than the second. To be sure, too much neutral
 509 pleasure can be detrimental; it can distract people from engagement with objective
 510 goods and with developing their talents. But the point of the comparison of the two
 511 lives is to hold constant the level of objective value. And, on this supposition, it
 512 seems plain to us that neutral pleasures can benefit those who enjoy them.³²

513 The case of benefiting from neutral pleasures tells against the first necessity
 514 claim. Recall that we are assuming that the subjectivist construal of pleasure is
 515 broadly correct. Some hybrid theorists might claim to the contrary that the pleasure
 516 taken in neutral activities is itself objective. They then could accept that these
 517 neutral pleasures benefit those who experience them. We do not think that this
 518 maneuver effectively insulates the first necessity claim from the objection, however.
 519 To see why, suppose that one did not desire the purportedly objective pleasure taken
 520 in a neutral activity. If the hybrid theorist insists that the pleasure still benefits one,
 521 then he abandons the first necessity claim. If he claims instead that it does not
 522 benefit one, then the motivation for insisting that pleasure is an objective good is put
 523 in question. Such a theorist would now need to say mysteriously that pleasure is an
 524 objective prudential good, but that it only benefits a person when the person wants/
 525 desires it.

526 We think further, as our earlier discussion of Parfit brought out, that pleasure is
 527 not the only benefit that can accrue to a person with no objective good present.
 528 There are neutral goods in addition to phenomenological states that are liked. The
 529 notion of neutral goods, admittedly, is a little obscure. It might be better to speak of
 530 the neutral properties of options.³³ Even so, what are called neutral properties might,
 531 in reality, be viewed as good-making features by those who go for them. Or perhaps
 532 projects involving neutral goods, like the project of collecting trivial items into a set,
 533 have properties that are valuable, but in a very low-level way. In general, the more
 534 we describe a project as utterly pointless, like the project of counting blades of grass
 535 in an open field, the harder it is to see how engaging in it could be good for
 536 someone.

537 Our response has been to draw on the analogy with pleasure, subjectively
 538 construed. With phenomenological states, there is no pressure, or at least much less
 539 pressure, to view the liking as responding to something of intrinsic objective value.
 540 Perhaps this is just because phenomenological states are unusually clear examples

31FL01 ³¹ Arneson terms these “cheap thrills.” R. Arneson, “Human Flourishing versus Desire Satisfaction,”
 31FL02 *Social Philosophy and Policy* Vol. 16, No. 1 (1999): 113–42, at p. 120.

32FL01 ³² While officially neutral on this question, Kagan can clearly be seen as trying to avoid this result. He
 32FL02 suggests, awkwardly to our minds, that one’s body may be good and thus enjoyment in what one’s body
 32FL03 goes for is an instance of loving the (objective) good. See “Well-being as Enjoying the Good,”
 32FL04 pp. 269–70.

33FL01 ³³ Kagan, “Well-being as Enjoying the Good,” p. 259.

541 of states that are without any positive or negative intrinsic objective value. But cases
 542 like the grass counter, in which someone likes a completely pointless activity, are
 543 more challenging and it is harder to make sense of what the person could be
 544 thinking. Nonetheless, we think it clear, once all instrumental effects are screened
 545 off, that a good prudential advisor would not be indifferent to their advisee counting
 546 blades of grass and being indifferent to that activity and them counting blades of
 547 grass and wanting or liking to do so.

548 Some, like Parfit, are tempted to resist such a claim unless the agent, in getting
 549 what she favors, experiences pleasure. But if one has a subjective view of pleasure,
 550 in which it is just an intrinsic favoring of phenomenology which does not warrant
 551 such an attitude, this seems arbitrary and unmotivated. Why think favored
 552 sensations benefit but not favored states of the world? This is the pressure we take to
 553 be left over from our discussion of Parfit above.

554 Against this, some writers have argued that there is a strong dependence between
 555 our goals and our reasons for pursuing them. Raz gives the following example. Jane
 556 goes to art school. She does so because she believes that it is a worthwhile goal. But
 557 suppose she is wrong about this. Suppose there is no good (objective) reason for her
 558 to go to art school. Then, Raz claims, her achievement of the goal could not add to
 559 her well-being. Indeed, its frustration would be a blessing in disguise. In describing
 560 Jane's stance toward this goal, Raz writes: "She wants it because she believes it to
 561 be valuable, but she also wants not to have it if it is worthless."³⁴ We agree with Raz
 562 that people very often have goals with this structure. They want to have them, but
 563 only on the condition that the goals realize, or facilitate the realization of, objective
 564 goods. But we think it is possible to have goals without thinking that the pursuit of
 565 the goals is related to objective value in these ways. If the goals realize what we are
 566 calling neutral goods, then a person could want to have them, even without thinking
 567 that having them was objectively good in any way. Such a person's stance would be,
 568 in one sense, unintelligible to us in the same way it is unintelligible to us why a
 569 person goes for one flavor of sensation rather than another. In both cases, the
 570 explanation bottoms out with the brute fact that that is just what the person goes for.
 571 And a person could, as we are doing, sensibly treat that brute fact as a subjectively
 572 good-making feature of her getting the favored object. Such favoring attitudes may
 573 well be, at least in a range of cases, conditional in a different way—on the object
 574 being found agreeable when experienced rather than subjectively disappointing.³⁵

575 None of this is meant to suggest that people have good reason to take up
 576 valueless goals. The pursuit of goals has opportunity costs. Those who pursue
 577 valueless options forgo opportunities to realize objective value. But our concern
 578 here is not about the comparative value of goals without objective goods, but rather
 579 with the question of whether they can yield any prudential benefit at all to the agents
 580 who take them up. And we think that the answer to this question, once it is clearly in

34FL01 ³⁴ J. Raz, *The Morality of Freedom*, Oxford University Press, 1986, p. 301.

35FL01 ³⁵ For a persuasive general take on such conditional desires see Ben Bradley and Kris McDaniel,
 35FL02 "Desires," *Mind* (2008) **117**: 267–302.

581 view, is plausibly affirmative, and that it provides a further reason to reject the first
582 necessity claim.

583 Let us turn now to the second necessity claim, the claim championed by
584 Dworkin, among others. This claim has initial plausibility. There are certain goods,
585 and certain activities that realize goods, that come with subjective conditions. For
586 example, one cannot benefit from the good of friendship, if one does not enjoy
587 spending time with the friend. The enjoyment is a necessary part of the good.³⁶ But
588 it is not plausible to insist that all objective goods are so conditioned. Consider the
589 example of violin playing. By engaging in this activity a person can sharpen her
590 aesthetic appreciation, develop her talents, and, depending on her abilities, realize
591 significant achievements. These objective goods plausibly benefit her, whether or
592 not she enjoys playing the violin, or even believes that doing so is a good use of her
593 time.³⁷

594 In thinking about cases of this sort, it is important to screen off plausible, but not
595 strictly relevant, thoughts about the relationship between goods in one's life and
596 subjective attitudes. If one enjoys playing the violin, then one of course will benefit
597 more from it than if one does not. And if one does not see the value or point of this
598 activity, then one's motivation to engage in it in a spirit that will enable one to
599 realize the objective goods of aesthetic refinement, self-development and achieve-
600 ment will be seriously diminished. That is why some writers have held that a good
601 life for a person is one in which the person wholeheartedly pursues and engages in
602 objectively valuable pursuits.³⁸ We do not contest this sensible claim, and we will
603 come back to it in a moment. But our point here is simply that some objective goods
604 in people's lives contribute to making these lives go better for them independently
605 of their attitudes toward the goods.³⁹

606 Here is another way to see our point. It is better for a child to be compelled by her
607 parents to engage in activities that realize objective goods that she does not love
608 than to completely valueless activities that she does not love, and we think this holds
609 true even if the child never comes to appreciate the activities in question. It seems to
610 us quite plausible to say that, at least in some cases, if one is to do something that
611 one does not like or value, it is better for one if what one does at least realizes
612 something of objective value.⁴⁰

36FL01 ³⁶ Fletcher, "A Fresh Start for Objective-List Theories of Well-Being."

37FL01 ³⁷ More generally, some of the objectively good aspects of engaging in a valuable activity may not be
37FL02 accessible to our experience and may benefit us in the absence of enjoyment or appreciation. See R.
37FL03 Adams, *Finite and Infinite Goods*, Oxford University Press, 2002, p. 101.

38FL01 ³⁸ Raz, *The Morality of Freedom*.

39FL01 ³⁹ It is important to recall that an assumption of this paper is that there are objective prudential goods.
39FL02 Thus, we are assuming that not all things relevant to one's well-being are attitude-dependent. It might
39FL03 seem that this assumption is enough to ensure that we are entitled to our main conclusion here. But we do
39FL04 not see this claim as a trivial upshot of that assumption. It is a substantial claim, as we understand it,
39FL05 beyond the claim that there are objective prudential goods, that some of those goods benefit independently
39FL06 of being appreciated. However, we think this substantial claim is very plausible.

40FL01 ⁴⁰ A. Sarch, "Multi-Component Theories of Well-Being and their Structure," *Pacific Philosophical*
40FL02 *Quarterly* 93 (2012): 439–71 presents a different example that makes the same basic point.



613 We have spoken loosely of goods in our lives. We agree that something needs to
 614 be said to explain when a good becomes ours in the relevant sense. So, might the
 615 presence of favoring attitudes be a necessary part of the explanation? Once again,
 616 we think not. In the violin playing example you can sharpen *your* aesthetic
 617 appreciation, develop *your* talents, and, depending on your abilities, *you* can realize
 618 significant achievements. The reference to your appreciation, self-development and
 619 achievements plausibly explains why this valuable activity improves your life, as
 620 opposed to the life of someone else or the world. The benefit is plausibly specifically
 621 yours because the excellence or achievement is yours. It does not seem true to us
 622 that the only plausible rationale for connecting the good specifically to a person
 623 must go via the agent's attitudes.

624 5 Tolerable alienation

625 Writers on well-being often insist that for something to benefit a person it must
 626 resonate with her. Since our view maintains that one can be benefitted by objective
 627 goods without this resonance, we need to address this thought directly. The most
 628 influential discussions of this notion of resonance treat it as imposing a necessary
 629 condition on any benefit.⁴¹ That is, the sum of the constraint as usually understood is
 630 that if A is not intrinsically favored by X in the right way and under the right
 631 conditions, A is not of benefit to X. Let's call this the Benefit Constraint, since it
 632 holds that for an option to benefit one it is necessary that it resonate with one, at
 633 least to some extent.

634 Many writers treat the Benefit Constraint as a very powerful desiderata in a
 635 theory of a person's good. Hybrid theorists have tried to respect this constraint by
 636 insisting that although the objective value of the object of one's concerns is relevant
 637 to the size of the benefit, still only if one cares about something can it benefit one.
 638 We think that the Benefit Constraint is just one articulation of the more general idea
 639 of resonance. This is why we are reluctant to use the more common term "The
 640 Resonance Constraint" for such a view. One can accept resonance as an extremely
 641 important feature of a person's good without accepting that resonance is necessary
 642 for a benefit or that the Benefit Constraint fully captures the resonance intuitions, or
 643 so we will argue.

644 Once objective goods are admitted into an account of well-being, it becomes
 645 tempting to think that they at least sometimes can benefit on their own. Those who
 646 accept that there are objective prudential values but deny that they can benefit on
 647 their own, we think, are likely moved to do so in an attempt to comply with
 648 resonance worries. But consider now what we will call the Betterness Constraint.
 649 The Betterness Constraint holds that if you intrinsically value A more than B (after

41FL01 ⁴¹ P. Railton, "Facts and Values," in *Facts, Values and Norms*, Cambridge University Press 2003, p. 47.
 41FL02 See also C. Rosati, "Internalism and the Good for a Person," *Ethics* 106 (1996): 297–326. In the reasons
 41FL03 literature the constraint looks remarkably similar. See B. Williams, "Internal and External Reasons," in
 41FL04 *Moral Luck*, Cambridge University Press, 1981 and M. Schroeder, *Slaves of the Passions*, Oxford
 41FL05 University Press, 2007.

650 procedurally appropriate deliberation), then B cannot intrinsically contribute more
 651 to your well-being than A. This is another way one might maintain that one's values
 652 and concerns shape and constrain one's good.

653 Hybrid theorists, if they are to give adequate weight to objective values, need to
 654 reject the Betterness Constraint. Only by doing so can they make adequate room for
 655 the objective value of options. If a view accepted the Betterness Constraint, then the
 656 largest possible remaining role for objective goods would be merely to serve to
 657 break ties when an agent was indifferent between two options. This would be to
 658 reject the robustness of the objective component. But having rejected the Betterness
 659 Constraint there is, accordingly, pressure to reject the Benefit Constraint as well. If
 660 the rationale for accepting the Benefit Constraint is to avoid being alienated from
 661 one's good, it is difficult to see why one is not similarly alienated from the claim
 662 that something one likes and values less is better for one than something one likes
 663 and values more. The Betterness Constraint seems to us no less intuitive than the
 664 Benefit Constraint.⁴² We do not see a rationale for thinking that the Betterness
 665 Constraint can be sacrificed to make room for objective goods, but the Benefit
 666 Constraint must never be.

667 This suggests to us that accounting for resonance either leads one all the way to
 668 full-on subjectivism or it must in some cases be resisted to make room for objective
 669 values. We are not here arguing against the subjectivist view, but rather saying that
 670 if one thinks there are objective values, then the Benefit Constraint should be
 671 sacrificed in some cases to make adequate room for them.

672 Furthermore, we think there are firm resonance intuitions that the (constrained)
 673 Betterness Constraint explains better than the Benefit Constraint. Consider a context
 674 where there are no objective goods in play. Let us suppose that the choice between
 675 two whiskies is such a context and that I greatly prefer the taste of Lagavulin to
 676 Talisker even though I quite like both of them. It would plainly clash with our firm
 677 resonance intuitions to nonetheless claim that the taste of Talisker was much better
 678 for me than Lagavulin. Our view is that when objective goods are out of the picture,
 679 the comparative size of the benefit of the options is fully determined by one's
 680 warrantless preferences.⁴³ Thus our Robust, Constrained Subjectivism can explain
 681 what we think are clear and forceful resonance intuitions where the Benefit
 682 Constraint cannot.

42FL01 ⁴² Mark Schroeder has explicitly argued for, in the domain of reasons, something like the Benefit
 42FL02 Constraint while rejecting the Betterness Constraint. See his critique of "proportionalism" in *Slaves of the*
 42FL03 *Passions*, Oxford University Press, 2010, pp. 97–102. For a critique of this view, see Sobel,
 42FL04 "Subjectivism and Proportionalism," in *From Valuing to Value*, Oxford University Press, 2017. Typical
 42FL05 formulations of internalism do not explicitly reject the Betterness Constraint, but they are compatible with
 42FL06 its rejection.

43FL01 ⁴³ In Mark Schroeder's terminology, our view is that the weight of the benefit is proportional to the
 43FL02 degree of the favoring attitudes towards the options in contexts where objective goods are not at stake.

687 Our hybrid view grants that resonance is important to welfare, but denies that it is
 688 a hard constraint on all benefits.⁴⁴ Several points are relevant to our proposal. First,
 689 while resonance is not a hard constraint on all benefits, it may be a hard constraint
 690 on some benefits. Some objective goods may benefit one only if one engages with
 691 them in the right spirit. One should not, however, overgeneralize from these cases.
 692 Second, a lack of resonance can diminish one's ability to engage with an objective
 693 good and so reduce the amount of objective benefit one gets from it. Third,
 694 resonance can augment the contribution that objective goods make to one's well-
 695 being by activating or bringing into existence the benefits that accrue to one when
 696 one's evaluative outlook and motivational nature appropriately align with these
 697 goods. Fourth, in cases where the object of the favoring attitude does not objectively
 698 merit the attitude, resonance clearly will be essential to any value gotten from such
 699 objects.

700 Due consideration of these points explains much of the appeal of the Benefit
 701 Constraint and how one might make adequate room for resonance without treating it
 702 as providing a hard constraint on any and all benefits. And we have already argued
 703 that the Benefit Constraint fails to capture some important resonance intuitions that
 704 our view can offer a simple and compelling explanation of.

705 Still, a lingering worry remains. For all that we have said in support of resonance,
 706 it still might be the case that our view countenances the possibility, however
 707 unlikely it might be in practice, that a person's life might be good for them yet fail
 708 to have any aspect that engaged them in any way. To this matter, we now turn.

709 **6 A good life must be acceptable by the lights of objective and subjective** 710 **values**

711 We have rejected the view that for something to benefit one, it must have both
 712 objective and subjective value. We have claimed that some things that are of no
 713 objective value can benefit and some things that are of no subjective value can
 714 benefit. Our view, it might be said, is thus not a hybrid view of well-being in one
 715 sense of the word since we have denied that one needs both objective and subjective
 716 goods to be benefitted. But, in fact, our view is hybrid in this sense in an important
 717 respect. We think that for a life to be good for one it must be acceptable from both
 718 the objective and subjective points of view. That is to say, whether a life is good or
 719 not for a person is vulnerable to charges that it is defective from the objective point
 720 of view and from charges that it is defective from the subjective point of view. The
 721 notion of a "prudentially good life" in play here is admittedly somewhat vague, and
 722 we won't try to analyze it, but we think it is an intuitive and crucial notion.⁴⁵

44FL01 ⁴⁴ Following Hurka ("On Hybrid Theories of Personal Good"), one can distinguish radical from
 44FL02 moderate hybrid views. The former are committed to the necessity claims that we have challenged, but
 44FL03 the latter are not. Once the radical views are rejected (and they have been the dominant views in the
 44FL04 literature) important and neglected questions concerning resonance come into view. We plan to address
 44FL05 these questions more fully in future work.

45FL01 ⁴⁵ We worry, for example, that such a notion may be somewhat culturally relative.

723 Our claim boils down to the claim that neither objective goods nor subjective
 724 states are independently sufficient to secure the goodness of an overall life, to make
 725 a life prudentially choice-worthy, without need to fear how things are going on the
 726 other dimension. So, there are two cases to consider—the case that is excellent from
 727 the point of view of objective goods and the case that is excellent with respect to
 728 subjective states. We maintain that a life can be as excellent as is possible in one or
 729 the other dimension yet not be good overall due to how things are going in the other
 730 dimension of value.

731 A life excellent in objective goods might include considerable knowledge,
 732 friendship, achievement, and virtue together with a warranted appreciation of each.
 733 Such a life sounds excellent from the point of view of objective values. Yet it could
 734 plainly lack enjoyment and pleasure, and this possibility, as we have seen, has led
 735 many who are otherwise committed objectivists to embrace hybrid views. We have
 736 some sympathy for this sentiment. But we appreciate that it can be resisted. Add
 737 enough objective goods to a life and its deficit in the subjective good of enjoyment
 738 may be overbalanced, leaving the life as a whole good. This could remain true, even
 739 if the value that objective goods add to a life diminishes as one acquires more of
 740 them. However, and importantly, subjective states do not just include goods, like
 741 pleasure, but also bads, like pain. Recall Kagan's objection to fully objectivist
 742 views. "I could be extremely well off, provided that I have the right objective goods
 743 in my life, even though these things hold no appeal for me, and I am, in fact, utterly
 744 miserable." There is a difference between realizing objective goods that have no
 745 appeal to one, and experiencing misery. Pain and suffering more clearly and vividly
 746 mar a life than the mere absence of enjoyment. The badness of misery here, it might
 747 be said, can be accounted for by emphasizing how it would interfere with
 748 engagement with objective goods or distract us from their appreciation. But we
 749 don't think the best understanding of what is primarily marring such a life is the lack
 750 of even more objective value. What is primarily marring such a life is how it feels
 751 for the person whose life it is. Even if a person realized an exceptional level of
 752 objective good in her life, and even if she had warranted attitudes towards all the
 753 goods in her life, the pain and suffering she experiences, if great enough, could ruin
 754 her life.⁴⁶ Some might think that warrantless love or hate of neutrals is at best a
 755 trivial value, one that can add or diminish at the margins, not ruin a life. We
 756 disagree. For creatures like us who are regularly bombarded by objectively
 757 indifferent phenomenology but who have a variety of inescapable attitudes towards
 758 this phenomenology, this can add up to persistent agony of the sort that that surely
 759 can spoil an otherwise good life.

760 The other side to our claim is that subjectively excellent lives can be marred by
 761 how things are going on the objective side. Here one can point to familiar examples:
 762 experience machine cases or completely pointless or debased lives. A life that is
 763 deeply immoral, pointless, unconnected to any objective values, and debased keeps
 764 such a life from being a good life for the person living it, no matter how much

46FL01 ⁴⁶ Ruin it prudentially. The life might remain valuable and excellent from other points of view.

765 pleasure or desire satisfaction it contains, at least if we continue to assume that there
766 are objective prudential values.⁴⁷

767 7 Conclusion

768 We have presented a novel way of understanding the subjective/objective
769 distinction in theories of well-being. Deploying that understanding we have shown
770 that fully objective views have the resources to overcome the central objection
771 usually levelled against them—alienation from one’s good. In light of this result, the
772 central issue in deciding between a fully objective view of well-being and a hybrid
773 view is not whether our good must resonate with us but whether resonance absent
774 objective backing can produce prudential goods. We have argued that it can. And,
775 so we have claimed that fully objective views of well-being, even on the expanded
776 conception of the resources available to it that we have argued for, are inadequate.

777 Once this is accepted, the question becomes how constrained is the subjective
778 component. We have argued that, at a minimum, this role is unconstrained so long
779 as the subjective component does not run afoul of objective values. That may sound
780 somewhat minimal to some ears, but we have shown that it already exceeds the role
781 most hybrid theorists envisage for it. And, we have claimed, the role of this
782 subjective component is sometimes sufficient to undermine the goodness of a life.

783 Furthermore, there are a variety of ways in which the role of Type 2 warrantless
784 attitudes may be larger, more robust, than it so far seems. In closing, we will
785 mention two of them. First, it may be, for all we have claimed here, that such
786 attitudes do ground benefits even in contexts where they run counter to some
787 objective values. It is surely better to enjoy the good than to enjoy the bad, but
788 enjoying the bad may benefit nonetheless.⁴⁸ Second, and we think more importantly,
789 the role of warrantless attitudes may be quite large when it comes to comparative
790 facts about benefit. Contexts that present options between objective goods that are
791 equal, incommensurable, or on a par are contexts in which the favoring attitudes can
792 play the Type 2 normative role. When we desire or love one such option rather than
793 another our favoring attitudes may be correctly appreciative of the loved object’s
794 goodness. But our preference for it over the others cannot be accounted for by its
795 goodness. In such cases, we believe, our warrantless preferences have free play to
796 make these options the best options for us. And if there is a great deal of
797 incommensurability or on a par-ness in objective values, as Raz and Chang and
798 others have maintained, the role for warrantless attitudes in determining what
799 options are better for us may be quite large indeed.⁴⁹ Thus, to take the full measure
800 of the subjective component in our Robust Hybrid view of well-being requires

47FL01 ⁴⁷ C. Heathwood, “The Problem of Defective Desires,” *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 83 (2005):
47FL02 487–504, offers an important and interesting challenge to this seemingly obvious claim.

48FL01 ⁴⁸ See Hurka, *Virtue, Vice and Value*, pp. 141–52 (discussing the goodness of evil pleasures).

49FL01 ⁴⁹ See J. Raz, “Incommensurability and Agency” and Chang’s “Introduction,” in R. Chang,
49FL02 *Incommensurability, Incomparability and Practical Reason*, Harvard University Press, 1998.

801 attending to further claims about the nature of prudential value and the extent to
802 which value pluralism is true.

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