I

Welfare's Normativity

This book concerns what we variously call a person's good, interest, well-being, or welfare: the good of a person in the sense of what benefits *her*.[1] This differs, I shall argue, from what a person herself values, prefers, or takes an interest in, even rationally. It is true, of course, that helping someone realize her values is almost always a significant part of advancing her welfare. Still, a person's good is a different thing from what she holds good, either actually or rationally, even from her own point of view.

One way to see this is to think about what it is to care for someone. When we care for a person, we desire his good for its own sake, not just as a means to other ends. But not for *its* sake only (that is, for his good's sake). Any desire for another's good that springs from concern for that person is also for *his* sake. The object of care is the individual person himself.

Desires are usually individuated by their objects, which are identified with states of affairs. But a desire for someone's good rooted in care has, in addition to the "direct" object of the person's good or the state of its being realized, an "indirect" object: the person himself.[2] We desire his good *for his sake*.

To appreciate what these last three words add, consider that it seems possible for an intrinsic desire for someone's

welfare to arise through the sort of associative process by which Mill explains the genesis of an intrinsic desire for wealth, or even, perhaps, through whim or fancy, without involving any concern for the person himself.[3] Mill claims that people come to desire wealth even when it lacks instrumental value because of its psychological associations with other things they intrinsically desire. Were a desire for someone's good to arise similarly, it might involve no concern whatsoever for the person himself. One might simply desire intrinsically *that* another's good be realized without desiring this for *his* sake.

Caring for someone involves a whole complex of emotions, sensitivities, and dispositions to attend in ways that a simple desire that another be benefited need not. If someone about whom I care is miserable and suffering, I will be disposed to emotional responses, for example, to sadness on his behalf, that cannot be explained by the mere fact that an intrinsic desire for his welfare is not realized. Taken by itself, all that would explain would be dissatisfaction, disappointment, or frustration.

Consider now the difference between the perspective we take when, in caring for someone, we attempt to work out what is good for her, on the one hand, and the perspective that is implicit in her own values, interests, and preferences, on the other. The former is a perspective we attempt to take *on* the person, whereas the person's own values are what seems good to her from *her* point of view.

Of course, a person can have concern for herself, and to the extent that she does, she will be the object of her own regard. She will have herself and her good in view. From her perspective what seems valuable will then include herself and her own welfare. But it is virtually unimaginable that a person's concerns could be exhausted

by self-concern, or even by what would satisfy it. There will inevitable be things whose value seems different to her from her own viewpoint than they do when filtered through the lens of self-regard. Indeed, it is entirely conceivable, maybe even commonplace, that a person can care relatively little for herself and her own welfare. Sometimes this will just be because other things matter much more to her. But it can also happen, in depression, for example, that someone cares little for herself because she seems to herself not to be worth caring much about.

The difference between empathy and sympathy is instructive here. Empathy is the imaginative occupying of another's viewpoint, seeing and feeling things as we imagine her to see and feel them. Sympathy for someone, on the other hand, is felt, not as from her standpoint, but as from the perspective of someone (anyone) caring for her.[4] Empathizing with someone in a deep depression, we imagine how things feel to her, for example, how worthless she feels. When, however, we view her situation with sympathy (a sympathy she perhaps can't muster for herself), she and her welfare seem important, not worthless.

Another reflection of the difference between a person's good and what is, or seems, good from his point of view is the possibility of pursuing values one cares deeply about at some cost to oneself. If there were no difference between what a person valued and what benefited him, self-sacrifice would be impossible, except through weakness of will. Pursuing some values at the cost of others would be possible, of course. But it would be impossible for pursuing one's values ever to cost one *on balance*, since realizing a value would be the same thing as benefiting from it.[5] I shall argue, however, that we should distinguish between how much a person values or takes an interest in some-

thing (or would rationally do so), on the one hand, and its benefit *to him* or contribution to *his* good, welfare, or interest, on the other. Much of life, I believe, involves investments that are warranted, even in one's own view, by values that bear no direct proportionality to personal benefit. Some things I attempt to provide my children, for example, will bear fruit, if ever, only decades after I am dead and no longer in a position to be benefited much by anything. Still, even though a person's good and what is good from his point of view are two distinct things, I shall also argue that we frequently promote the first by promoting the second.

Care and the Normativity of Welfare

I shall be claiming that a person's good is constituted, not by what that person values, prefers, or wants (or should value), but by what one (perhaps she) should want *insofar as one cares about her*. Partly, this will involve a claim about what kind of *normativity* the concept of welfare possesses. It seems to be widely accepted that welfare is a normative notion in the sense that an 'ought' or normative reasons claim follows from the proposition that something is for someone's good. Usually, this is because it is believed that if something is for my good, then it follows that I ought, or have reason, to want or pursue it. It is assumed, that is, that welfare has an *agent-relative* normativity, that a person's welfare is necessarily normative for *his own* desires and actions.

If a person's welfare were the same thing as apparent or actual good from her own point of view—what the person values or has reason to value—then it would have this

agent-relative normativity. To value something is to see it as giving one reasons. From the agent's point of view, values bring reasons and warrant for desire and action in their wake. Of course, a person's values may be unwarranted or otherwise mistaken. What she takes to give her reason may not actually justify her desires and acts. But they do give her reasons in her own view, at least. And if her values are warranted, they give her reasons in fact.

As we have noted, however, it seems possible for a person to place relatively low value on herself and her own welfare. For example, she might care much more about specific projects, people, groups, or institutions she is related or committed to in various ways. Now I shall argue in Chapter IV that activities in which we realize and appreciate significant values are an important source of personal benefit. But that doesn't make a person's values the same thing as her welfare. Even though realizing and appreciating values benefits one, the values realized and appreciated are distinct from the benefit *to one* that comes through realizing and appreciating them. And caring about the values, or the specific things valued, is not the same as caring about the benefit that one's relation to these values can bring. It seems entirely possible to be passionately and enthusiastically devoted to values and to care relatively little about the benefits *one* gains by realizing or appreciating them.

More dramatically, someone may not value his own welfare because, in a depression, he sees himself as *unworthy* of care or even, perhaps, because he loathes himself. Depression or self-loathing doesn't entirely extinguish values and preferences, however. The depressive may prefer isolation and sleep, even though he knows that he might enjoy and benefit more from going out with

friends: "Sure, that would be better for *me*," he might say, "but why does that matter? Why think I am worth caring for?" And the self-loather might take the fact that he would benefit from an activity as a reason *not* to engage in it. To both, the thesis that one's own good or welfare entails reasons for acting will seem to mock the truth.

Most would agree, of course, that the depressive and the self-loather are mistaken in thinking that considerations of their own welfare give them no reasons. But what these characters think isn't self-contradictory or conceptually incoherent. And because it isn't, the normativity of welfare cannot consist in entailing agent-relative reasons for the person's own desires and actions. The notion that, as one is unworthy, one's good gives one no reasons, is not the incoherent thought that what is (as one thinks) valuable, gives one no reasons. It is *conceptually* possible that considerations of one's own good provide no normative reasons for acting whatsoever or even, as the self-loather believes, that they provide "counter" reasons. To claim otherwise, as I assume we would, is to put forward a substantive normative thesis, not an analytic or conceptual truth.

To understand the normativity of welfare, I shall argue, we must see it in relation to care. What the depressive is right about is that *if* he weren't worth caring for, considerations of his own good would not be reasons. It's just that he is wrong in thinking he is unworthy of care. The deep truth that underlies the depressive's claim is that it is a person's being worthy of concern (as he will seem to someone who actually cares for him) that makes considerations of his welfare into reasons. What *is* a conceptual truth is that to care for someone is to be in a relation to him such that considerations of that person's welfare are

normative for one's desires and actions with respect to him. *What is for someone's good or welfare is what one ought to desire and promote insofar as one cares for him*.

In this respect, the normative relation between care and welfare has a similar status to that of the familiar principle of instrumental reasoning that underlies hypothetical imperatives, namely, that insofar as one aims at an end, one ought (must) take the "indispensably necessary" means that are in one's power.[6] Kant plausibly claims that this normative principle is guaranteed to be true by the concepts of ends and means. To adopt an end is to place oneself under a norm of consistency requiring that one either take the necessary means or renounce the end. Similarly, caring for someone involves a normative relation to that person's welfare. Insofar as one cares for someone, one ought to be guided by the person's good in one's desires and actions.

If we take it only this far, however, welfare's normativity will seem only hypothetical in the same way means/end reasoning is. The consistency constraint that governs means and ends requires only that one either take the necessary means *or* give up the end. It neither puts forward a "categorical" normative reason for taking the means that is conditional on having adopted the relevant end, nor puts forward the fact of having adopted that end as a categorical reason for taking the relevant means. From the facts that one has adopted *A* as end and that *B* is a necessary means to *A*, it does not follow that one ought or has reason to do *B*.[7] If one had no reason to adopt *A* (or worse, reason not to do so), then maybe one should not do *B*, but give up *A*. The reasons it puts forward are conditional, not on the fact of having a given end, but, as it were, on a normative "hypothesis" that one accepts or

is committed to in having the end—namely, that the end is to be, or ought to be, accomplished.[8]

Caring for someone places one under a similar consistency constraint of being guided by that person's welfare. Welfare is normative for care. Insofar as we care for someone, we ought to be guided by his good.[9] So far, these reasons are merely hypothetical. The idea, however, is not that the fact that one cares about someone makes considerations of his good reasons for one. The reasons are not conditional on one's caring. If that were so, they would be canceled once one ceased to care. They are conditional, rather, on a hypothesis one accepts or is committed to *in* caring, namely, that the cared for is *worth* caring for.[10] I shall argue in Chapter III that sympathetic concern partly involves seeing the person for whom one cares as having value himself, as being someone worth caring for.[11] What gives considerations of someone's welfare or personal good the status of normative reasons is his having a value that makes him worthy of care, as one accepts when one cares for him.

A Rational Care Theory of Welfare

So far we have that the normativity of welfare must be understood in relation to a concern for someone for that person's sake. I will be claiming, in addition, that a stronger relation exists between welfare and care, namely, that what it is for something to be good for someone *just is* for it to be something one should desire for him for his sake, that is, insofar as one cares for him. The relevant sense of 'should' again, is its most general normative sense. We might equivalently say that what it is for some-

thing to be good for someone is for it to be something that is rational (makes sense, is warranted or justified) to desire for him insofar as one cares about him. This is a *rational care theory of welfare*. It says that being (part of) someone's welfare is being something that it would be rational to want for him for his sake.

This might seem to get the relation between care and welfare backward. Surely, it will be said, it is welfare that is the independent variable here and rational care the dependent variable. Concern for someone just is a sensitivity to his good. Unless facts about welfare are fixed independently of concern, how will concern have, as it were, anything to be responsive to?[12]

As a useful analogy, consider the relationship between belief and truth. Beliefs are sometimes said to have truth as a "constitutive aim."[13] It is the nature of beliefs that they aim to be true, to be sensitive to the facts. The point is not just that they have what Hume called a "representative quality," that they represent some proposition *as* true.[14] When we imagine that *p*, or assume that *p*, we also represent *p* as true, even if we don't believe it. The idea is that beliefs are *regulated* by truth in a way that imaginings or assumptions are not. Truth is normative for belief. It is of the nature of beliefs that they *ought* to be true. If a representing that *p* is utterly insensitive to evidence of *p*'s truth, then we are apt to discount it as a genuine belief and consider it a representational state of some less committed kind.

Similarly, it might be thought, welfare is normative for care. It is simply part of what it is to care for someone, that it is regulated by the welfare of the person cared for. If I care about someone, then I ought to desire what is good for that person.

In the case of belief, we can distinguish between a formal and a substantive aim.[15] Belief's formal aim is to believe what we ought to believe. Its substantive aim is to believe what is true. By satisfying belief's substantive aim, we satisfy its formal aim. We believe what we ought to believe by believing what is true, or what is most likely to be true given our evidence. The sense in which truth is a substantive, and not a merely formal, aim is that truth is a distinct concept from the normative concept of what we ought to believe. That we ought to believe what is true differs from the tautology that we ought to believe what we ought to believe. For this reason, it seems a mistake to try to understand truth in terms of what we ought to believe. Wouldn't it involve a similar mistake to try to understand welfare in terms of what we ought to desire for someone's sake? This would leave us with the tautology that we ought to desire for someone's sake is what we ought to desire for his sake.

I believe that the claim that what we ought to desire for someone's sake is what is good for him *is* a tautology. Welfare is not simply normative for care in the way that truth is normative for belief. Rather, welfare is the same concept or thing as what is normative for care in the way I have indicated. To say that truth is a substantive, rather than formal, aim for belief is to say that, although truth is normative for belief, the concept of truth is not itself an explicitly normative concept, in particular, that it differs from the concept of what we ought to believe. If a person's good were to play an analogous role in relation to concern and desires for someone's sake, then it too would have to be a non-normative concept that differs from the concept of what we ought to desire for someone's sake. But this is not the case. Welfare is a normative

concept and, as I shall argue, there is no other plausible normative concept for it to be other than that of what we should desire for someone's sake.

In particular, it seems possible for two people who care about someone, *S*, to coherently disagree about whether something, *X*, is good for *S*, even though they agree completely about all the non-normative facts concerning *X* and *S*. If the concept of a person's good were like the concept of truth in the relevant respect, this should not be possible. Two people cannot agree on all the non-normative facts concerning *p*—for example, they cannot agree that *p*—and still coherently disagree about whether *p* is true. And since truth is belief's substantive aim, they cannot agree about *p* and *p*'s truth, and coherently disagree about whether they should believe *p*.[16] It does seem possible, however, for two people to disagree about whether *X* is good for *S*, even if they are completely agreed on every non-normative fact concerning *X* and *S*.

Suppose, for example, that *X* is a pleasant illusory belief of *S*'s, say, that *S*'s novel has sold 10,000 copies (when in fact it has sold only 12). It would seem that two people could be agreed about everything else, but simply disagree about whether this pleasant illusory belief is good for *S* or makes some contribution to his welfare, other things being equal. In such a case, it is hard to see what else they could be disagreeing about other than whether *X* is to be (ought to be) desired for *S*'s sake, or, equivalently, whether it would be rational (warranted, justified, make sense) for someone who cared about *S* to desire *X* for *S*.[17]

If this is right, then welfare is not just normative for care in the way that truth is normative for belief. Rather, welfare must be an explicitly normative concept. My pro-

posal will be that it is the concept of what we would rationally desire for someone insofar as we care for her, or, equivalently, what is rational to desire for her for her sake.

This is the view—a rational care theory of welfare—that I defend in this book. It is a position in the metaethics of welfare concerning the concept of a person's good or what it is for something to be good for someone. It thus differs from normative theories of welfare, either of what things are good for us or of what *makes* a person's life go better for her. It differs, that is, both from a theory of what has prudential value and from a theory of what are "prudential value-makers."[18] It is a metaethical theory of the concept of someone's good or of what it is for something to be good for someone, have prudential value, be in his interest, or be part of his welfare.

If, however, being normative for care or desires for someone's sake is part of the concept of welfare, how then are we to identify care or concern? Obviously care cannot be *defined* in terms of welfare on pain of circularity. But a rational care theory of welfare doesn't require a definition of care. It is enough if care or concern exists as a natural psychological kind for us to refer to. In Chapter III, I argue that this is the case. A review of recent psychological literature on empathy and sympathy suggests that normal human beings have a psychological mechanism, one I call sympathetic concern, that is distinct from, but related to, empathy in its various forms. If concern or care for someone for his sake is a natural psychological kind, then we can make use of it in a theory of welfare without having to define it.

To glimpse the plausibility of this idea, consider the relation between caring for someone and desiring his

good. Even if we cannot define what it is to care for someone, we can still grasp the way care or concern enters into psychological explanations. For example, we can appreciate how someone might desire someone else's good *because* he cares for her. And we can appreciate also how the converse doesn't hold, that we never explain a person's caring for someone by the fact that he or she desires that person's good. There is an apparent explanatory asymmetry here that is quite familiar to us even if we lack a definition of care. Moreover, we easily accept as explaining someone's fear, joy, or sadness *for* someone the fact that he cares for that person, and that the presence of these emotions cannot be explained by the mere failure of an intrinsic desire for his welfare to be satisfied.[19] Even if we have no definition of caring for someone for his own sake, I shall argue, it is sufficiently evident to us that there is such a psychological state for us to make use of it in a rational care theory of welfare.

I should stress that care of concern *for* someone (or something) for his (its) sake can differ from other kinds of care or concern. There is a broad sense in which we can be said to care *about* anything just in case we value it.[20] But something's being important or making a difference to one in this broad sense need not involve care or concern *for* any person or thing, whether we think it objectively important or just important to us. Someone might care intensely and wholeheartedly about whether his shirts are ironed without this involving any concern for anything for *its* sake, including the shirts. The kind of care or concern that is involved in a rational care theory of welfare is concern for someone for the person's sake.

Care and Respect

Neither is caring for a person, in the sense in which we shall be interested, the only way of valuing a person intrinsically, in or for herself. We can speak of doing things for someone's sake or on her behalf, when what we have in mind is respect rather than care. Making this distinction is another way of appreciating the difference between what is good from an agent's point of view and what is for her good or welfare.

Like care, respect takes the person herself as object. But whereas caring for someone involves relating to her as a being with a welfare, respecting someone entails relating to her as a being with a dignity. Insofar as we care for someone, we want what is good for her. Insofar as we respect someone, we regulate our conduct toward her by her dignity. And whereas the concept of welfare, I am arguing, is that of what we should want for a being for her own sake, the concept of dignity is that of a nexus of normative constraints on choice and action deriving from someone's (or something's) being the kind of being she (or it) is.[21]

Reasons for acting that are rooted in respect are both agent-regarding and agent-relative. First, respect for persons is a responsiveness to what makes them persons, the capacity for free agency. What we must attend to here is not, primarily anyway, what is for someone's good, but what she holds good and would want from her point of view. We may rightly think that unhealthy habits are harmful for someone, but think as well that respect tells against exerting undue pressure to induce her to change. Second, respect's reasons are agent-relative. A person's

own values and preferences give *her* reasons to realize and promote them, and *others* reasons to permit her to do so, whether or not the resulting states are good from an agent-neutral point of view.[22]

Reasons of care, on the other hard, are welfare-regarding and agent-neutral. From the perspective of "one caring,"[23] the cared for's values are regulative only insofar as they are represented in his welfare or good. Of course, they very frequently are, but they generate reasons of care only to the extent that they are. Moreover, to one caring, considerations of welfare present themselves as agent-neutral, rather than agent-relative. From the perspective of sympathetic concern, what benefits the cared for seems not only good for him; it seems a good thing absolutely (agent-neutrally) that he benefited in this way.

Think of a parent's relation to his child at different stages of life. A toddler's desires and will give normative reasons to a parent just insofar as they indicate or represent what is for the child's good. If the child doesn't want to eat his broccoli, then this fact may have no independent weight, except insofar as it indicates that it will be frustrating, painful, and so on, to the child to do so. When, however, the child matures into a competent agent, then his will and desires do acquire independent weight. For a parent to be regulated only by his child's good at this point is paternalism in the pejorative sense.

The contrast between respect and care thus reconfirms the distinction between what is or seems good from someone's viewpoint and what is for his good or welfare. Treating another's point of view as normative is a form of respect. Taking a person's welfare as normative is a form of care. The respect we demand from others calls for empathy. The care we hope for, from some at least, is sympathy.

This contrast also helps to bring out a tension within the utilitarian tradition. Originally, the claim that morality is a matter of maximizing overall happiness was thought to derive from equal care or benevolence. For example, Francis Hutcheson, who first formulated the principle of the "greatest happiness for the greatest numbers" in English, grounded it in universal benevolence.[24] And theological utilitarians, like Berkeley, inferred utilitarian normative doctrines from a metaethical voluntarism combined with the doctrine of divine omnibenevolence.[25]

Usually these views were combined with hedonist theories of welfare. In the last century, however, it became more common to find utilitarianism formulated in terms of preference-satisfaction. Now if I am right about welfare, giving equal weight to each person's preferences or rational preferences, to what each values or should value, from his point of view, is not what one is led to by caring equally for every person or, perhaps, even more obviously, by caring equally for every sentient creature. If we put positivist scruples about access to subjective states to one side, therefore, preference forms of utilitarianism seem to be more sensibly grounded in what economists call "consumer sovereignty," that is, in some principle of equal respect, rather than universal benevolence or equal concern.

From Meta- to Normative Ethics: Welfare and Appreciating Values

After exploring the psychology of care in Chapter III, as one must to defend a rational care metaethics of welfare,

I turn in Chapter IV to the normative question of what makes a person's life go well and defend a version of the Aristotelian claim that the best life for a person, in the sense of that with the greatest prudential value or welfare, is a life of virtuous activity in something approaching the Aristotelian sense. This normative claim is, of course, somewhat independent of any metaethical theory of what welfare is or of what the concept involves. But only somewhat. Even if metaethics and normative ethics are concerned with distinct questions, a *philosophical ethics*, as I term it, must ultimately fit metaethical and normative ethical claims and arguments together into a satisfyingly coherent whole.[26]

The normative claim I shall defend is that the best life for a person (in terms of welfare) is one involving activities that bring her into an appreciative rapport with various forms of agent-neutral value, such as beauty, the worth of living beings, and so on. This normative claim tends to support a rational care metaethics of welfare, I shall argue, and to be supported by it in turn. Partly because the perspective of sympathetic concern is an agent-neutral standpoint distinct from the agent-relative perspectives of *both* the carer and the cared for, it should not be surprising that what it makes sense to desire for someone from that standpoint must be sensitive, not just to what seems good in agent-relative terms (to either the carer or the cared for), but to what seems good agent-neutrally. A rational care theory of welfare can therefore offer support to an Aristotelian normative ethical claim about the good life, and vice versa.

For Aristotle, virtuous actions are chosen for their own sake as *kalon* or fine. They have an intrinsic (agent-neutral) value or merit that is distinct from the contribution

they make to *eudaimonia*, the agent's own good or welfare, and they are chosen for the sake of that value (as well as, Aristotle believes, for the sake of *eudaimonia*). This creates a puzzle. How can an activity be chosen for its own sake *and* as exemplifying an abstract (agent-neutral) value: merit or the fine? The key to solving this puzzle, I argue, is the notion of *appreciation*. There is a way of appreciatively engaging in valuable activities that involves an experienced rapport to the value as exemplified in particular activities. We come to appreciate the value of the activity through a distinctively evaluative mode of awareness we have toward the activity itself.

Consider, for example, what it is like to listen with full engagement and enjoyment to a deeply moving musical performance, say, Samuel Barber's "Knoxville: Summer of 1915." On the one hand, the object of one's enjoyment and regard is particular, the individual performance, composition, and performers one is listening to and the activity of listening to them. On the other, one's engagement with each (and all) of these, and with the activity of listening to them, involves an appreciating of it as instancing a distinctive kind of agent-neutral value. The experience is, of course, beneficial—it is good *for one*. But the benefit itself involves experiences that are *as of* values, the profound beauty of the music, for example, that are agent-neutral. More important for our present point, appreciative engagement brings one into a rapport with these values that one cannot have by merely accepting, or even knowing of their existence in some other, second-hand way.

The appreciated values differ from welfare or, indeed, I argue, from any other sort of agent- or person-relative value. The most profound and satisfying benefits to one-

self, I claim, come in activities that bring one into a rapport with things whose worth or importance one appreciates as neither just *for* some individual (in the way that welfare is) nor *from* any individual's point of view (in the way that agent-relative value can be). When, for example, we listen to an especially satisfying performance of the Barber, we see it as exemplifying aesthetic values and the distinctive worth of music, which present themselves as, in principle, available to anyone.

Some of the forms of worth with the most significance in human life, moreover, are those involved in relationships of care and concern. It is not unusual for parents, for example, to say that raising their children has provided them with experiences that are among the most deeply satisfying of their lives. Part of the reason for this, I believe, is that these experiences include a profound appreciation of the worth of their individual children and, consequently, the value and significance that caring for them has.

Again, although these are claims of normative ethics, they tend to support the rational care metaethics of welfare I have sketched in this chapter and will develop in the next. When I think about what I would wish for my own children, it seems obvious to me that central to such a life are activities in which they appreciate the value of their own lives, in part, by virtue of their rapport with things they rightly see as having worth. From this point of view, it seems to matter both that they have the relevant experiences—that their lives *seem* valuable to them in these ways—*and* that their lives really do exemplify these values. Either without the other may still make a contribution to welfare, but the two together make a contribution that seems greater by far.

Welfare and Philosophical Ethics

It should not be surprising that metaethics and normative ethics, although formally distinct, can bear on each other in these ways. Surely it is no accident that hedonistic or preference-satisfaction versions of utilitarian normative theories tend to go together with varieties of metaethical naturalism, or that deontological normative views cluster with intuitionism or Kantian constructivism. In general, one or another normative view will seem more or less attractive depending on one's metaethics, and, sometimes, vice versa. A comprehensive philosophical ethics should attempt to work out a coherent ethical and philosophical outlook that integrates normative ethical theory and metaethics in a mutually supporting way.

This is no less true when it comes to views about welfare than it is with respect to other ethical areas. The attraction of preference-satisfaction *normative* theories of well-being, I believe, derives almost completely from confusion at the metaethical level about the normativity of welfare. Specifically, these normative theories are almost always based on the metaethical idea that a person's good has a normativity that is intrinsically *agent-relative*, entailing reasons for acting for the agent himself, but no one else. In my view, this is almost the reverse of the truth. The normativity of welfare is not agent-relative but agent-neutral. A person's good is intrinsically normative, not for the agent herself, but for anyone who cares for her, herself included. Once we make this shift at the metaethical level, preference-satisfaction normative theories of welfare lose their attraction. What will seem good *for* a person, viewed from the perspective of someone

who cares for her, will be different from what seems good *to* her.

One area where this metaethical shift can have potentially significant normative consequences is in environmental ethics. If, for example, we can sensibly care about nonsentient biological species, or natural places, for their own sakes, then these will have a welfare, despite the fact that we cannot attribute desires or preferences to them.[27] Things will be good or bad *for* them, despite the fact that nothing can be good or bad *to* them.