

Value after death

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Abstract

Does our life have value for us after we die? Despite the importance of such a question, many would find it absurd, even incoherent. Once we are dead, the thought goes, we are no longer around to have any wellbeing at all. However, in this paper I argue that this common thought is mistaken. In order to make sense of some of our most central normative thoughts and practices, we must hold that a person can have wellbeing after they die. I provide two arguments for this claim on the basis of postmortem harms and benefits as well as the lasting significance of death. I suggest two ways of underwriting posthumous wellbeing.

KEYWORDS

death, deprivation, posthumous harm, time, value, wellbeing

Does our life have value for us after we die? Not just for the world, but for *us*—in some permanent way? Does our life continue to matter after we are dead? Not just that it continues to be true now that our past life had value for us *then*, but that it continues to be true now that our past life has value for us *now*? To many, these questions might seem absurd, even incoherent. Once we are dead, we are no longer there to have value. I argue that this thought is mistaken. Someone can have wellbeing after they die. Their life can continue to have value for them, even once they are no longer alive.

The question of whether there is personal value after death divides into one of *retaining value* and another of *acquiring value*. To acquire value after death would be for there to be posthumous harms and benefits whose value is received then. To retain value after death would be for one's past life to continue to be personally valuable postmortem. Both involve *possessing value* after death. Thus, this paper concerns the conditions for possessing value, and whether those conditions allow someone to possess value after death.

In Section 1, I discuss what it is to retain personal value. In Section 2, I discuss several candidate conditions on possessing value. In Section 3, I defend the proposal that a person can possess value at a time so long as they

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are alive at some earlier time, as opposed to requiring that they be alive at that very time. In Section 4, I suggest two ways that this condition might be underwritten. The first involves taking the subject of wellbeing to exist as an abstract entity after death. The second involves taking wellbeing to be a created artifact that persists after its creator is gone.

As a terminological note, throughout I use “value” interchangeably with “personal value”, and likewise for cognate terms such as “better” and “good”.

1 | ACQUIRING AND RETAINING VALUE

In order to get clear on whether someone possesses value after death, we must first get clear on what it is to possess value. Distinguish **retaining** value from **acquiring** value. Acquiring value occurs when someone *first* comes to get value from something, whereas retaining value occurs whenever someone keeps that value and so continues to do better or worse because of it. Let **possessing** value be a person either first acquiring value or retaining value acquired in the past. Thus, acquiring value is just first coming to possess it, and retaining value is just possessing it over time.

To get a feel for retaining value, take an analogy with money. Consider that dollar bills are the substrates of monetary value, where monetary value itself is distinct from the physical dollar bill that bears it. Say that someone deposits money into their lifetime savings by inserting bills into an ATM, and that their lifetime savings is the pure monetary value that they have—their total buying and spending power as of some time. After putting the bills into the machine, this person loses them, but they retain the bills' monetary value in the sense that their savings has increased and stays at that new amount for some time afterward. If the person checks on their account a month later, then unless they have spent some of it or deposited anything else the amount will be the same. This is so, even though the bills are long gone.

This person's lifetime savings, then, is the total amount of monetary value they have retained from the value of the bills deposited into their ATM. But in order for the person to have a lifetime savings as of some point in time, then they need to have retained the monetary value *at the time* their lifetime savings is being added up. If as of a later time they have spent some of their savings, or if the value has decreased due to inflation, or if the bank loses their funds, then they have less—perhaps *no*—lifetime savings. If the monetary value is not retained, then the person's lifetime savings is either decreased or entirely non-existent. In this way, in order to have a lifetime savings, the person does not retain the bills themselves—the non-monetary substrate of monetary value—but they must retain the monetary value of those bills over time.

Similarly to lifetime savings, overall wellbeing is how much value someone has *saved*, not merely *deposited*. Thus, a person does not retain fleeting pleasures or pains, satisfied or thwarted desires, or the particular event of achieving a goal. Those are gone as soon as the moments in which they occur have passed. But these are merely the non-normative substrates of value. The psychological feeling of pleasure is a non-normative psychological item that underwrites personal value for someone—akin to how dollar bills are not themselves monetary value but instead underwrite it. However, a person can *retain the value* of these substrates. A person can retain the value of pleasure or a satisfied desire, even once the pleasure has ended and the event of satisfaction is over. Indeed, in order for the person to have overall wellbeing as of some time, then even though the substrates of value that occurred throughout their life might be gone, the person must have retained, as of that time, the *personal value itself* of these substrates. Much like how a person retains the monetary value of deposited bills in order to have lifetime savings, a person retains the personal value of the constituents of wellbeing in order to have overall wellbeing over time.

Therefore, retaining value is required for aggregating momentary wellbeing into overall wellbeing over time. Consider a simple atomistic view that holds that overall wellbeing is the simple summation of momentary wellbeing

(Feldman, 2004, ch. 6; Bradley, 2009, ch. 2; Bradley, 2011, p. 47). On the left is a chart of someone's momentary wellbeing at different moments of time, and on the right is a chart of their overall wellbeing as of time t_4 :



Atomism says that the overall wellbeing of a span of time is the sum of the momentary wellbeing at each moment in that span—it is simply the area under the curve. However, as of t_4 , the person's overall wellbeing can only be the sum of the momentary wellbeing from t_1 through t_4 if they *retain* the value from what went on at those earlier times. In order for the personal value of what happened at earlier times to make the person's life go better, then those happenings *still*, as of t_4 , need to be *personally normatively significant in the wellbeing sort of way*. But that is just to say they *still* need to be *personally valuable* for the person at t_4 —not in the sense that the person finds it psychologically significant, but that it continues to have value for them. Even if overall wellbeing is just a summation of the personal value of past items with personal value, those past items need to have personal value *now*—not just it *now* be the case that they *had* personal value *then*. The same holds for more complex views of aggregation, which hold that the shape of life matters (Slote, 1983; Kamm, 2003, pp. 222–223; Glasgow, 2013). On these views, the distribution of goods and bads across time can in itself be good or bad. Yet, the point still stands that the distribution of value over times t_1 to t_4 is good or bad for someone as of a later time t_9 only if they retain the value from the earlier times that makes up the distribution. Thus, personal value often persists over time.

Crucially, retaining value is genuinely retaining it—a substantive normative fact about personal value and not a trivial temporal fact about the past. For a person to have overall wellbeing due to value they acquired at earlier times, it cannot *merely* be true that they received value *then*. Rather, it must *still* be normatively significant for them at the time they retain the value. Thus, we cannot simply appeal to an eternalist truth that it is atemporally true that the person received value at times t_1 to t_4 —because that atemporal truth about value located in t_1 to t_4 does not ensure the normative significance of that value at t_9 . Nor can we appeal to a temporally qualified truth that as of t_9 , it was true that the person had value at times t_1 to t_4 —because that does not ensure that as of t_9 , the value first acquired during t_1 to t_4 is *now* valuable. Rather, for a person to have overall wellbeing as of time t_9 , due in part to value they received at times t_1 to t_4 , then at t_9 they must still have the value they first acquired at those earlier times. Overall wellbeing requires value to be retained over time.

2 | CONDITIONS ON POSSESSING VALUE

Throughout, I have been speaking of “overall” wellbeing, as opposed to using the more customary term “lifetime” wellbeing. This is because someone can have aggregate wellbeing over segments of their life. But it is also because the question of this paper is whether someone can have wellbeing after they die. Thus, in this section, I consider two conditions on possessing personal value that turn on when the person is alive. While the claim that we continue to have wellbeing after death might at first sound absurd, the argument of the paper is that it is allowed by the most plausible constraint on possessing value.

Call the first condition **Alive At That Time**. It says:

Alive At That Time: Necessarily, if a person s possesses value at a time t from some x that attains at a time t^* , then s is alive at t .

Out of the two conditions, this imposes the more stringent requirement that someone possesses value at a time only if they are alive at that very time. This condition would entail that after death all lives become valueless. Moreover, it would entail that there cannot be any posthumous harms or benefits, unless their value is acquired before death. More on these points later.

Call the second condition **Alive At Some Time**. It says:

Alive At Some Time: Necessarily, if a person s possesses value at a time t from some x that attains at time t^* , then s is alive at some earlier time t' .¹

This condition is more permissive in that it only requires someone be alive at some time in the history of the universe in order to get value at other times. Thus, for all this condition requires, someone can acquire value posthumously, and they can also retain value from their past life after they die.

In the rest of the paper, I argue that *Alive At Some Time* is correct, while *Alive at That Time* is not. Of course, *Alive At Some Time* is only a necessary condition. So it leaves open further conditions on acquiring and retaining value, such as those involving having relevant attitudes or the item being objectively worthwhile or what haveyou. The point in arguing for *Alive At Some Time* is to hold that if someone *does not* acquire or retain value, then that is not simply because they are not alive. Thus, when I argue for *Alive At Some Time* I am arguing that there is no more stringent condition on possessing value in terms of being alive.

3 | POSSESSING VALUE AFTER DEATH

In this section, I offer two arguments for the claim that a person can have wellbeing after they die. The first appeals to posthumous harms and benefits. The second appeals to the lasting significance of death. The cumulative force of these considerations makes a compelling case that a person can have wellbeing after they die.

3.1 | Posthumous harms and benefits

The first argument for the claim that people possess value after death comes from considering posthumous harms and benefits. It seems that people can be harmed and benefitted after they die, where they accrue that value after death. If so, then this means that someone can possess value after death.

Take the following example of posthumous harm:

Island: Consider the case of a person on holiday on a remote island. Back home, on Friday, his life's work collapses. But, because of the inaccessibility of the island, the bad news does not arrive until the following Monday. On the intervening Sunday, however, the man is killed by a shark; so he never learns that his life's work has come to nothing. (McMahan, 1988, p. 34)

In reflecting on this case, Jeff McMahan states that “it seems hard to believe that it makes a difference to the misfortune he suffers whether the collapse of his life's work occurs shortly before he is killed or shortly afterward”

¹An even more permissive condition would allow for someone to possess value before they come to be alive, so long as they *will* exist. So, then, it would allow for pre-life harms and benefits. Insofar as a child can be harmed before they come to be alive, then this sort of more permissive condition is needed. I remain neutral on this sort of issue here.

(38). And, indeed, the straightforward verdict about this case is that such a small difference in timing would not matter. Hence, there can be posthumous harms. If so, and if the value of the harm is accrued posthumously, then a person can have wellbeing after death.

Now consider the following case of posthumous benefit:

Albert and Joan: Albert is a physicist who worked for decades to explain a particular observed phenomenon given standard physical theory. He spent much of his life dedicated to solving this problem, and made substantial progress, training a number of talented physicists along the way. Unfortunately, he died when he was very close to the solution; perhaps a year's worth of dedicated work away. Knowing his dedication, a student of Albert's, Joan, takes up the problem and completes the work Albert had begun, using the tools and theoretical apparatus Albert had constructed during his lifetime. When asked why she had taken up his project, which was related, but not identical to her own, Joan responds: "For Albert's sake." (Dorsey, 2018, p. 1906)

Reflecting upon this case, Dale Dorsey (2018) draws the moral that "Joan's act is one of genuine beneficence for Albert" (p. 1906). If so, then Albert can be posthumously benefitted. And if the value of this benefit is accrued posthumously, then a person can have wellbeing after death.

There are three major ways for a savvy philosopher to try to reject this verdict. The first is to allow for posthumous harms and benefits but to hold that their value is not acquired after death. One way to go would be to hold that the value is accrued in some eternal sense. Another is to hold that the value is accrued prior to death (Luper, 2007; Pitcher, 1984).² The third is to simply deny that there are any posthumous harms or benefits at all (Jenkins, 2011; but see Ekendahl & Johansson, 2014). Yet a proponent of one of these responses must be careful not to defend them by appeal to Alive at That Time, because that would be to beg the question.

In addition, we can put pressure on these lines of response by modifying the cases so that the relevant project succeeds or fails in stages starting before death and continuing after it. Given this, it appears arbitrary to deny either that what happens after death can be valuable, or that its value must be acquired before death or in some eternal sense. In the cases that follow, assume that the person desires up through the time of their death that the project be completed, but where they do not actively or consciously feel this desire in the period leading up to their death.

Consider, first, a modification of the case of harm:

Aggie Island: An agricultural entrepreneur, Aggie, is on holiday on a remote island. Back home, their life's work begins to slowly collapse over the course of a few days. On Friday morning, funding for development of one of their water reuse systems gets pulled, followed throughout the day by the loss of funding for all their other reuse systems. On Saturday and Sunday, contracts to develop their vertical gardening towers fall through, along with contracts for all their other technologically advanced farm buildings throughout the course of the day. On Monday, their GMO tomato is given a permanent ban by the FDA, followed by another ban on another product almost every hour. By Monday's end, Aggie's life's work has been totally destroyed. Yet that Sunday, before the news of their failures reached the island, they were killed by a shark.

Aggie is clearly harmed Friday through Sunday, given that their life's work starts to unravel. Yet, it seems arbitrary to hold that they are no longer harmed on Monday when that completes the destruction of their goals.

²This sort of maneuver would not work for a related view, *Fusionism* (Purves, 2017), which holds that harm and benefit occurs at the fusion of the time the harming or benefitting thing occurs and the time that one holds the relevant attitude. For death and posthumous harms, such a fusion would include times the person is dead. For a desire-satisfaction theorist who holds that there are posthumous harms and benefits such that one is benefitted and harmed at times after death, see Baber (2010, sec. 2.3.3).

It also seems wrong to hold that Monday's events harm them but only earlier on Friday through Sunday—or only in some eternal sense. Aggie did not know about any of the failures either way, and even once they die they are still characterized by a pursuit of agricultural innovation, which the failures undermine as much after as before their death. Of course, once they are dead they cannot come to contemplate their goals or failures, but they were not doing that anyway while on vacation, having too much fun scuba diving—until the end. Thus, the most straightforward interpretation of this case is simply that Aggie is harmed Friday through Monday the whole time their life's work is unravelling. If so, then Aggie has wellbeing after death that can be affected, and so they can possess value while dead.

Next, consider a modification of the case of benefit:

Joan and Albert: Joan is a physicist who has spent decades making progress toward resolving a series of interrelated problems in particle physics. Unfortunately, toward the end of her life health complications make it impossible for her to continue working toward the solutions. Though she continues to aspire that they be solved someday, her health complications become distracting enough that eventually she stops thinking about them at all. Fortunately, her student, Albert, begins to tackle the problems for Joan's sake. He keeps his labors secret from her in order to surprise her with the solutions. Unfortunately, after Albert solves half of the problems Joan dies. But Albert continues on, solving the rest shortly thereafter.

It seems clear that Joan is benefitted when Albert solves half of the problems constituting her life's work. By contrast, it seems wrong to hold that she suddenly is no longer benefitted after she dies, even though Albert solves the remaining problems. And it also seems wrong to hold she is benefitted but only before her death or only in some eternal sense. Even though Joan dies, she is still characterized by her pursuit of solutions to those problems. And before her death, she neither knew about Albert's successes, nor did she even consciously desire that the problems be solved. Thus, given the continuity of Albert's activities and Joan's character, the most straightforward interpretation is that Joan is benefitted before and after her death. Hence, Joan has wellbeing after death that can be changed, and so she can possess value while dead.

3.2 | Significance of death

The second argument for the claim that someone can possess value after death is that personal value must persist after the person dies in order for their death to harm or benefit them in a lasting way. Roughly put, the idea is that if our past lives could not have value for us after we die, then it would not really matter when death comes, because it would make all lives valueless. It would not matter how much better or worse your life would have been, or how good or bad your life was, because all lives come to the same value in the end: none whatsoever. I work through this argument more carefully in terms of two leading proposals about the harm or benefit of death: **deprivationism** and **willhavehadism**.

Deprivationism (Nagel, 1979, ch. 1) holds that death harms the one who dies insofar as it deprives them of the goods of continued life, and it benefits the one who dies insofar as it keeps them from having the bads of continued life. Thus, to assess the harm or benefit of someone's death, we compare the actual life they live given their actual death to the life they would have lived had they not died that death. The extrinsic value of someone's death is then either the amount of wellbeing they lose out on in that additional stretch of time (Bradley, 2009, ch. 3), or the total amount of wellbeing they lose out on by living their actual life instead of that alternative life (Feldman, 1991).

However, deprivationism loses much of its point if people do not retain the value of their lives after they die. If they do not, then even if it is true that someone would have received more goods and bads by continuing to live, it is still the case that given enough time after they die their actual and alternative lives amount to the same: no value

at all. To illustrate, take Dethora, who dies at age eighty from cancer but had they been cured they would have lived an extra twenty years. Assume that in those twenty years, they would have gained on balance forty positive value points, and this would result in a total lifetime wellbeing of one hundred and thirty as opposed to their actual ninety. Deprivationists of all stripes would hold that Dethora's death is bad for them. But notice that if Dethora cannot have wellbeing after they die, then they do not have wellbeing after they actually die, and their counterpart would not have wellbeing after they die the alternate death in the alternate life. After this point in time, Dethora's death would no longer be bad for them, because the stretch of possible continued life would become valueless, and both their actual and alternative life would have the same exact value of nothing. Thus, Dethora's death would at most be bad for them during the twenty years she would have lived on, but after that their death is completely valueless for them. Yet, we think that Dethora's death continues to be bad for them even after the time they would have been dead in her alternate life.

Consider an analogy. We are comparing the amount of water in two cups. At a certain time, one cup has more water than the other, but after a month all the water has evaporated. It is not true *then* that one cup has more water than the other, even if it was true that it did. Thus, as of these later times, the cups have the same amount of water, namely none at all. Without retaining value, deprivationism treats the value of death in the same way. One life may have more value than another for a time, and so death may be good or bad for someone during that time. But if value is not retained after death, then after both lives are over, neither has any value at all. So as of these times, death cannot constitute a deprivation of goods or bads, hence without retention of value deprivationism must say that as of these later times death is neither good nor bad for the person. But, certainly, someone's death can continue to remain good or bad for them, even after they would have died in their alternate life. To capture this, deprivationism needs to be supplemented to allow for value to be retained after death. It needs to be that after all the relevant lives are over, Dethora and her counterparts retain the value from their past lives, in order for the comparison between their overall wellbeing to still apply *then*.

Turn now to willhavehadism (Kamm, 2020, ch. 1), which holds that death is bad in proportion to the amount of someone's overall wellbeing by the time they die. Unlike deprivationism, we do not look at the counterfactual life someone would have led had they not died. Instead, we consider their actual total level of wellbeing at the time of death. Take two people. Insofar as the first person's life is better than the second's, then the first person's death is less bad, because they received more goods while they were alive.

However, such a view does not even get off the ground if people do not retain the wellbeing from their past life after they die. If they do not, then as of the time of their death everyone's life would be equally valueless, and so everyone's death would be equally bad—or neutral. Returning to the cup metaphor, say we are comparing the amount of water in two cups at the exact moment they are smashed to pieces. If all the water evaporates the instant the cups shatter, then at that time they have the same amount of water, namely none at all—regardless of how much water they had just prior to being smashed. Insofar as willhavehadism is supposed to give us any sort of informative answer as to the badness of someone's death, then people must retain wellbeing after they die.

4 | POSTHUMOUS WELLBEING

Given the preceding arguments, it appears that personal value can persist after death. This raises the question: How?

In earlier work (Frugé, [in press-a](#)), I suggested that we adopt a conception of the subject of wellbeing as persisting in some manner after death. There, I argued that we cannot simply shift the subject of wellbeing to something that—while lasting longer than the biological or psychological person—itself comes to an end, such as a person's life as events about them (à la Kagan, 1992, 1994) or social practices surrounding the person (à la Stokes, 2019). The same sort of considerations raised earlier also apply to such expansive, but still finite, subjects. There are still

posthumous harms and benefits, where these are posthumous to the more expansive subject. And death still has lasting significance, where this lasts beyond the end of such subjects. Therefore, these expansive subjects are not expansive enough.

Hence, I tentatively endorsed the view that persons are **temporarily concrete**—entities that are concrete at some times and abstract at others.³ The view holds that *if* someone comes to be alive, then they exist forever after—they just exist as an abstract person after death. Were persons to be temporarily concrete in this way, then we can make sense permanent value. The person continues to exist after death, as abstract, and thereby they can remain a subject of wellbeing. Of course, there are many questions about this kind of view. How do we make sense of personal identity despite someone transitioning from being concrete to being abstract? How does an abstract object have a quality of faring well or poorly?

Therefore, partly in light of such questions, I am now inclined to an alternative view. Elsewhere, I argue that normativity is a special sort of artifact (Frugé, *in press-b*) and that wellbeing in particular is grounded in the valuing attitudes of subjects (Frugé, *in press-c*). This suggests that what persists might be the wellbeing of the subject, as an artifact, as opposed to the subject themselves, because other sorts of artifacts persist and even change their artifactual properties after their artificers are gone.

Take aesthetic artifacts. A musical work seems able to persist and change its aesthetic properties, even after the composer and the composer's artistic intentions are gone. Consider the following case:

Composition After Death: A procedurally inclined composer, Composita, composes pieces entirely by rules. For their last work, they create a rule that associates the pitch and length of each note with the temperature patterns in various cities over five-hundred years. Just as they finish writing down this rule, a piano falls on them and they die.

Even though Composita dies before their composition is complete, it still seems that the composition is completed over the course of the five hundred years after their death. Therefore, not only does Composita's composition persist after their death, but its aesthetic properties change as new notes are added.

In addition, works of literature seem able to persist and change their aesthetic properties, even after the author and their artistic intentions are gone. Consider the following case:

Writing After Death: An experimental writer, Novie, writes most of a manuscript but leaves several chapters blank, where they are to be word-for-word copies of editions of the New York Times as published on certain days over the course of a hundred years. Novie puts the finishing touches on their manuscript, including notating the rule for the incomplete chapters, but then gets such a nasty papercut that they die of blood loss.

Even though Novie dies before their novel is complete, it still seems that their novel gets completed. It persists and indeed changes over the course of the next hundred years as the Times editions are published. Thus, not only does Novie's novel persist after they die, but its aesthetic properties change as new chapters are added.

While, of course, not decisive, such cases are suggestive. If wellbeing is an artifact, then it may persist in a similar way as do these other artifacts. In the above cases, even though the creator and their intentions are gone, it may be that those earlier attitudes stretch to cover times after their death, such that their creations can continue to persist and change. Perhaps the same goes for wellbeing, if it is taken to be a created artifact. Though the subject is gone, it

³The view is not committed to full blown **permanentism**—the view that always everything is always something (Williamson, 2013, p. 4). If someone wants to be a permanentist about persons, then presumably they should revise *Alive At Some Time* to allow for people to have personal value at times before they come to be alive. For the modal analog to permanentism—**necessitism**—see Linsky and Zalta (1994, sec. 4; 1996) and Williamson (2013, ch. 1, sec. 2).

may be that their valuing attitudes stretch beyond their death such that their wellbeing can continue to persist and even change. If so, then there would be no need from value theoretic considerations to hold that the subject of wellbeing persists after death, even if their wellbeing does, for their wellbeing would persist without them.

Therefore, there are at least two promising ways of accommodating value after death. Perhaps the subject of wellbeing exists after death as an abstract object, or perhaps their wellbeing is an artifact that persists even after they no longer do. As it stands, I am inclined to the latter approach, but either conception underwrites *Alive At Some Time* and, therefore, accommodates the considerations raised in the previous section. As for posthumous harms and benefits, *Alive At Some Time* allows for a person to continue to have wellbeing while they are no longer alive. Thus, their wellbeing can continue to be raised or lowered after death. As for the lasting significance of death, a person can continue to possess the value of their past life such that it can be compared with the value of the past lives of their counterparts. On the first approach, there is such posthumous wellbeing, because the person continues to exist as an abstract object and thereby can continue to possess value. On the second approach, this is because the person creates their wellbeing as an artifact that outlasts them.

In fact, either conception of post-mortem wellbeing offers resources to respond to traditional objections to the possibility of death's harm or benefit. Perhaps the most prominent argument is the **subject argument**: death cannot harm or benefit the one who dies because they do not exist when they are dead (see Epicurus in Saunders, ed., 1994; Nagel, 1979). This argument crucially relies on the **existence condition**, which holds that a person can only be harmed or benefitted at times they exist. Yet, if the person exists as an abstract object after death, then the existence condition poses no barrier to there being value after death—and hence to a person being harmed or benefitted while dead. And if someone does not exist after death, then if their wellbeing can persist as an artifact after they die, then the existence condition is false, because someone can have alterable wellbeing at times they do not exist.

Another argument is the **timing puzzle**: either death harms or benefits someone before they die or after; death cannot harm or benefit someone before they die because it has not yet occurred, but it also cannot harm or benefit them after they die because of the subject argument; so death cannot harm or benefit the one who dies (see Luper, 2021; Bradley, 2009, ch. 1, sec. 3). Yet, as we saw, the second horn of the dilemma poses no problem, because the subject argument is no good. We can hold either that the existence condition is true but subjects exist while dead, or we can hold that subjects do not exist while dead but the existence condition is false.

Thus, value after death does not remove the potential harm of death. For death removes life, and life is a big deal. Once we are no longer alive, even if we exist, then we cannot feel pleasure or pain, or actively pursue our own desires and goals—though others can still pursue them for us. But we can still possess value.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

For their help on nascent versions of this paper, I would like to thank Johann Frick, Frances Kamm, Larry Temkin, and Alec Walen. I would also like to audiences at the 2021 Great Lakes Philosophy Conference, the 2021 International Association for the Philosophy of Death and Dying Symposium, and the Fourth International Conference on Philosophy and Meaning in Life.

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How to cite this article: Frugé, C. (2022). Value after death. *Ratio*, 35, 194–203. <https://doi.org/10.1111/rati.12333>