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Ideas of the Good in Moral and Political Philosophy

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The topic of my lecture is the ways in which ideas of the good figure in moral and political philosophy, and about how that particular use gives ideas of the good a particular shape, different from what they have in the context of a single individual's deliberation about what to do. Moral Philosophy, as I will understand it, is concerned with principles regulating our conduct toward one another. It is concerned with the content of these principles, and their ground—why we should care about them. Political philosophy, as I will understand it, is concerned with standards for assessing institutions that we participate in and expect others to participate in. Here again there are questions of content—what these standards are (what justice requires), and questions of ground—why we should care about them (why we should care about justice.)

Answers to questions of content and questions of ground are generally taken to depend on claims about individual good—what individuals have reason to want *for themselves*. Justification of particular principles of right and wrong must be responsive to the effects of those principles on individuals' lives, such as being subject to threats and violence, having agreements violated, and so on. Utilitarian theories justify principles in this way, but so do non-utilitarian theories such as my contractualism, and Rawls's theory of justice, although they link principles to the good of those to whom they apply in various different ways.

What alternative is there to this way of justifying moral claims? Appeal to intuition is one possibility. But it seems possible to give reasons for conclusions about the

content of moral requirements, and if these reasons do not appeal to what it would be like to live under such principles, and to what things would be like if accepted standards were different, then what do they appeal to? The will of God, perhaps. But would obeying God's commands make sense if these commands were arbitrary? It is surely important that they are the commands of a *loving* God, and hence grounded in concern for us. So again the justification for the content of moral principles seems to depend on the way they benefit us, and hence on some conception of our good.

Conceivably, social institutions and the content of moral requirements might be justified by appeal to some good other than the good of those to whom these provisions apply. Indeed, in the case of some institutions this seems the appropriate mode of justification. The content of my rights and duties as a Harvard faculty member, such as the right to speak and vote at departmental meetings, are justified not by *my* interests but by what is necessary in order for the University to operate in a way that serves its goals. These include promoting the good of other individuals by providing education, and useful research, but also producing advancements in knowledge and understanding that are good in themselves, apart any from any practical benefits they it might lead to.

In the case of large-scale social institutions and general moral requirements, however, justifications of the latter sort, which appeal to impersonal values, have something of a bad name. Perfectionist, is one thing that such views are sometimes called. By contrast, Rawls says at the outset of *A Theory of Justice* that he is viewing a society as "a cooperative venture for mutual advantage." (*TJ*, 4-5.) This may seem an unexceptionable remark, and he offers no justification for it. But it is a substantive assumption, in favor of what might be called *individualist* answers to the questions of

grounds, and hence also of content. My immediate response is to accept this assumption, and count myself an individualist in this sense—that is, as someone who believes that in both moral and political philosophy answers to questions of both content and ground must be based on claims about the good of individuals. But one of my themes in this lecture is that my own conception of these matters turns out on reflection to be not as thoroughly individualist as one might at first have supposed. To anticipate, it seems to me on reflection that the conceptions of the good that we appeal to in moral and political philosophy are individualist, but that the ideas of the good we employ outside of this context need not be.

In answering the question of ground, we need to explain how being just, or refraining from treating others in ways that are morally wrong, is at least compatible with having the kind of life that an individual has reason to want for him or herself. To do this, we need to appeal to a conception of what makes for a desirable life that is the one a individual should employ in assessing his or her own life, and making decisions about what to do, insofar as he or she alone is concerned. Similarly, answers to questions of content—questions about, for example, when and why one is required to keep a promise—should also be based on a conception of what individuals have reason to want for themselves.

So it seems that both moral and political philosophy need to appeal, at two points, to an idea of what individuals have reason to want for themselves, or “from their own point of view.” It might seem, then that there should be a single conception of what individuals have reason to want for themselves that can serve three functions: as the basis of individuals own personal decisions about their lives, as a basis for argument about the

content of moral principles and principles of justice, and as the basis for arguments about why individuals should care about such principles. I will argue that this is not the case: the conception of individual good that figures in moral and political philosophy differs from the conception that individuals should appeal to in guiding their own lives.

Consider first the way in which this question arises in Sidgwick's discussion in *The Methods of Ethics*. Sidgwick distinguishes two rational standpoints. He refers to the first of these as the standpoint of self-interest and to the second as the standpoint of duty, but sometimes also as what is good "from the point of view of the universe." To understand the relation between these standpoints we need to consider two things: the nature of the values to which they, ultimately, appeal, and the nature of the normative conclusions that they yield.

In one sense, these two standpoints seem to appeal to the same ultimate value: agreeable consciousness. What is in my self-interest, according to Sidgwick, is determined by the amount of *my* agreeable consciousness. What duty requires is determined by the amount of agreeable consciousness enjoyed by all sentient beings. But the important difference between the basic values in the two cases should not be overlooked: what promotes *my* self-interest is an additional unit of agreeable consciousness in *my* conscious life. What makes things better from the point of view of the universe is an additional unit of agreeable consciousness in *someone's* conscious experience. To put the matter in the terms used by Thomas Nagel in *The Possibility of Altruism*, reasons of self-interest are *subjective* reasons, requiring a reference to the

person in question, whereas reasons to promote the good generally are what Nagel called *objective* reasons.¹

It may also seem, at first glance, that these two forms of practical thinking yield different kinds of normative conclusions. Thinking about self-interest yields conclusions about what is best for me. Thinking about what is good from a more impersonal point of view yields conclusions about what is impersonally good—about what is best “from the point of view of the universe.” Put in this way, it might seem that these two kinds of conclusions cannot conflict with one another. They are about different things. But Sidgwick clearly thinks that they can conflict, and he sees this as a very serious problem. They conflict because they are two ways in which our Reason can arrive at conclusions about what we have most reason to do (and, according to Sidgwick, the only ways in which Reason can do this.) So the fact that they can lead to incompatible conclusions seems to him to represent a crisis: what Sidgwick called the Duality of Practical Reason.

The possibility of conflict between the conclusions reached from these two standpoints of Reason depends on the difference, noted above, between the basic values from which they begin. It might be maintained that something is in my self-interest (good *for me*) only if it is something that is good impersonally (good from the point of view of the universe) and happens to occur within my life.² If this were so, then conclusions reached from the standpoint of self-interest would simply be partial conclusions about what is good impersonally (they would be conclusions about what is good in one part of the universe, so to speak.) Such conclusions would therefore have no normative weight

¹ Nagel, *The Possibility of Altruism*, pp. 90ff.

² Donald Regan has argued for such a view, which he calls “Moorean.” See, for example, “Why Am I my Brother’s Keeper?” in Wallace, Pettit, Scheffler and Smith, eds., *Reason and Value: Themes from the Moral Philosophy of Joseph Raz*.

against conclusions about what is impersonally good, on balance. Judgments of the latter kind would simply subsume judgments of the former kind.

I will argue later that in many cases what is good *for me* does depend on what is good impersonally. But this does not seem to be true of one's good in every case, in the blanket way just proposed. The idea that it does seems particularly implausible in the case of the kind of good Sidgwick took to be basic: agreeable consciousness. A unit of my agreeable consciousness is not good *for me* only because, as a unit of *someone's* agreeable consciousness, it is good impersonally, and it happens to occur in my conscious life.

This may or may not be compatible with what Nagel argued in *The Possibility of Altruism*. His claim was that we must be able to see what is good for us as also good impersonally, and hence to see, and to be motivated by the fact that, similar things in other people's lives are also good in the same way. So far, this is compatible with what I have just said, because it does not mean that we have to see something as good for us *only because* it is an occurrence in our lives of something that is impersonally good. But Nagel does also say that any subjective reason has to be statable in objective form *with the same motivational content*.³ So the compatibility of his view with the claim I have just made is not entirely clear. (But it should also be said that this claim of Nagel's is one of the most controversial in his book.)

The Dualism of Practical Reason represents a crisis for Sidgwick partly because he focuses only on two modes of practical thinking: what is good for oneself and what is good impersonally. In particular, he considers no wider mode of practical thinking within which the conflicting claims of these two standpoints might be rationally resolved. It is

³ *The Possibility of Altruism*, pp. 110-115.

worth pausing to consider why should have taken this view. One thing that is no doubt responsible is his view that agreeable consciousness is the only thing of ultimate value. This seriously limits the possibilities for practical reasoning. There are, of course practical standpoints definable in terms of agreeable consciousness that are intermediate between what is good for me and what is good universally, such as the standpoint from which I consider what is good for (promotes the agreeable consciousness of) my family, my nation, or some other group. One can reason about what is good from one of these standpoints, but I imagine Sidgwick thought that one is not rationally required to be governed by the conclusions one reaches through such reasoning. What is special for Sidgwick about the two standpoints he focused on is that it seems to him that we are rationally required to be governed by each of them: on the one hand by conclusions about what is in our self-interest, and, on the other, by conclusions about what is good impersonally.

Rejecting the idea that agreeable consciousness is the only ultimate good opens up the possibility of a wider standpoint, the standpoint from which we ask what we have most reason to do, all things considered. From this standpoint we take into account, within one normative frame, so to speak, of what is good for us (that we have reason to want because of how we are affected by it), and what is good for others (what we have reason to want because of how they are affected by it), along with any other reasons we may have. This standpoint has rational authority since it would seem that Reason requires us to be guided by conclusions of this kind (not to do so would be irrational.) Recognizing the rational authority of this wider standpoint involves downgrading the authority of the two standpoints Sidgwick considered. They no longer have any claim to a form of ultimate

rational authority, since we can ask from the wider standpoint what kind of importance to give to their conclusions, and in particular what to do when these conclusions conflict.

To sum up the conclusions reached in this discussion of Sidgwick's Dualism of Practical Reason. First, the starting points for personal and impersonal practical reasoning, as Sidgwick understands them are superficially similar: the ultimate value for an individual is his or her agreeable consciousness, and the good impersonally is composed of agreeable consciousness of all sentient creatures. But this similarity is somewhat misleading. Although the states that are of value from a personal point of view are also (parts of) what is valuable impersonally, the *way* they are valued is different. Individuals do not value their own states of agreeable consciousness only because these states are impersonally valuable. This would be a bizarre way to view one's own good. This difference is crucial to Sidgwick's "profoundest problem:" if individuals should, rationally, value their own agreeable consciousness only because these states are impersonally valuable, then the personal point of view would be subsumed within the impersonal, and the problematic of dualism would disappear.

Second, this problem arises for Sidgwick because he believes there are two independent forms of normative thought, the personal and the impersonal, which can give conflicting directives about what to do. Any account that recognizes two such standpoints leads to the conclusion that a rational individual will be divided within itself when such conflicts occur, and must face the question of how these conflicts are to be resolved. On Sidgwick's account this problem is particularly acute because he does not recognize any rational standpoint that could play this role.

I turn now to consider two other problems about the good in moral and political philosophy that, I will argue, have structure that is very similar to the one just described, although they also differ from Sidgwick's problem in significant ways. I mentioned earlier that Sidgwick referred to his two standpoints as self-interest and duty. So far, I have generally avoided the latter term because, in order to understand Sidgwick's Dualism of Practical Reason, I wanted to emphasize that he sees the authority of conclusions about what is good impersonally as *rational* authority.

But now that we have opened up the possibility of a standpoint from which the authority of these conclusions can be questioned and assessed I will go back to considering this standpoint as (one conception of) the moral point of view. The question of what to do when conclusions reached via this standpoint conflict with considerations of self-interest is an instance of what I called at the beginning of this paper the question of ground—the question of how the special authority of morality is to be understood. I want now to consider more carefully the point of view from which this question should be addressed and answered.

One natural answer, suggested by some of what I said above, is that it should be answered from Sidgwick's other point of view, the point of view of self-interest. There is something right about this suggestion. An explanation of how we can have good reason to take the requirements of morality as normally overriding guides to action must have something to say about how being guided in this way fits into the kind of life that a person has reason to want to live. But it does not seem plausible to say that an answer to the question of why we should care about moral requirements must take the form of showing that "being moral" advances one's self-interest. What is necessary is, rather, to

show that an individual has reasons to be so guided that do not themselves derive from morality. The standpoint from which this question of ground is to be answered is the standpoint from which, I suggested, Sidgwick's dualism is to be resolved: the broader standpoint from which an individual considers what he or she has most reason to do.

I will now consider two problems concerning the ground of morality, problems that arise concerning the relation between an individual's personal point of view and a moral point of view. I will argue that these problems are similar, in important ways, to Sidgwick's dualism, but also importantly different from it. The first of these is a problem in political philosophy discussed by Karl Marx and John Rawls.

It is generally agreed that justifiable political institutions must allow individuals to practice their various religions as long as this does not involve practices that interfere with the lives of others. As I would put it, a principle that counted institutions that did not do this as entirely just is a principle that it would be reasonable to reject. This rejection would be reasonable because individuals have reason to want to be able to practice their own religion. But 'religion' as it is employed in this reasoning, is not a category that is important in the personal thinking of a religious person. It applies to, and treats as of the same importance, a wide variety of different views, many of which are, from the point of view of an adherent of any one of these doctrines, false or even pernicious.

This point, about the contrast between the personal outlook of a religious person and the argument for religious toleration was addressed by Marx in his famous 1843 essay, "On the Jewish Question."⁴ Marx was responding to Bruno Bauer, who said that the idea of religious toleration (in the case at issue, treating Jews as having the same

⁴ In Robert C. Tucker, ed., *The Marx-Engels Reader* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1972), pp. 24-51.

rights as any other citizens) was incoherent. This was because religious toleration involved seeing various religions as having equal standing, and Bauer said that one could not take this view without ceasing to be religious. Marx replied that Bauer failed to see that religious toleration involved only declaring the difference between different religions to be *politically* irrelevant. That is to say, irrelevant to a person's political standing. This did not, he said, involve declaring the difference between religions to be irrelevant any more than getting rid of the property qualification for voting would involve abolishing property.

One should, Marx said, distinguish two standpoints: the standpoint one takes in one's personal life, from which one is guided by the tenets of what one takes to be the truth about God and human life—the tenets of Judaism, as it may be, or Roman Catholicism—, and the standpoint one takes as citizen, when one is applying the law or arguing about what the law ought to be, where one is guided by the idea that religions should equal before the law, and no one should be denied rights because of his or her religious beliefs. One can hold the latter view for political purposes without ceasing to take one's own religion seriously in one's private life.

John Rawls distinguishes two similar standpoints. Each person, he says, has his or her own religion or, more generally his or her own comprehensive view about such matters as the meaning of human life and its place in the universe. But, while we are each guided in our private lives by our own comprehensive view, when we are considering what our basic social institutions should be like—when we are addressing what he called constitutional essentials and questions of basic justice—we should be guided by reasoning that appeals not to values peculiar to our own particular comprehensive view

but rather to what he called political values, which all can recognize, regardless of their comprehensive views. The importance, for any person, of living in accord with his or her religion and, as Rawls puts it more generally, the higher order interest of each individual in developing and pursuing his or her own conception of the good are examples of such values.

Like the two modes of reasoning that Sidgwick described, the modes of reasoning we engage in from these two standpoints—the standpoints of man and of citizen, as Marx calls them—begin with values that are both similar and different. They are similar in that they value the same things, such as an individual’s being able to live in accord with the tenets of his or her religion. But they value these things in different ways. An individual values living in accord with the tenets of his or her religion, or the ideals of his or her comprehensive view, because that is the way he or she believes he or she has most reason to live. In justifying basic political institutions, on the other hand, we place importance on their allowing individuals to follow their own religions or comprehensive views *whatever these may be* because individuals have the strong reasons just mentioned for wanting to do this, because what they have these reasons to want to do are different, and because treating their diverse reasons as on a par (for purposes of political justification) is a way of treating all citizens as equals.

There is, of course, tension between these two normative standpoints. If our institutions allow others to live according to their own conceptions of the good, we are likely to find ourselves surrounded by people who live in ways that we disapprove of. We cannot have the kind of public space that we would most like to have, for ourselves and our children. Rawls believes that if our comprehensive view is of the right kind—if it

embodies the right idea of respect for others, even others who do not accept it--then will dictate that we should accept this tension, because to do otherwise would be to treat our fellow citizens as less than equal.

Rawls believes that this kind of reconciliation between the two standpoints is the best we can hope for. This is an essentially liberal position. Marx was not a liberal. Although, unlike Bauer, he recognized and valued religious toleration as the best we can do under current conditions, he did not see it as the best we should hope for. What we should hope for is not mere political emancipation but what he called human emancipation, in which religion is eliminated (along with property and the state) and the alienation involved in the division within us between the outlook of man and that of citizen is overcome.

A formally similar tension lies behind Bernard Williams' famous remark about "one thought too many." This is my second example, from moral philosophy. Williams was discussing the views of Charles Fried, who in his book *Right and Wrong* considered a case in which a man in a burning building had to choose between saving his wife and saving a stranger. Fried was discussing this question within the context of what might, I suppose, be called a neo-Kantian moral theory. He said, plausibly (?) that the equality of persons that such a morality involved did not imply that it would not be permissible for the man to save his wife, rather than, say flipping a coin. The reason, Fried said, was that morality must allow people to give special concern to their loved ones. Williams' characteristically sharp retort was that in suggesting that the man's reasons for saving his wife was "because she is my wife" this theory would give the man "one thought too

many.” The man’s thought, if he even has to think rather than just to act, should be, rather, “My God! It’s Anne!” Or something like that.

Williams’ point seems to me off the mark in a way that is similar to Bruno Bauer’s. In framing moral principles or legal policies, we need to take account of the fact that individuals have special reasons to be able to help, and to favor, their family members and others close to them. But this abstract categorization of those reasons—as reasons to help and favor “close friends and family members”—is a way of recognizing and equating for moral purposes the particular reasons of particular individuals to save particular people close to them. Like the category, “religion,” it is abstractly formulated precisely to play this equating role, for the purposes of moral justification. But this is not to suggest that any individual, performing an action recognized by this category, would be moved by this abstract reason. Its relevance is moral, not personal.

Williams is not blind to this distinction. He is arguing that we do not have good reason, from our personal points of view, to give the categories of moral thinking the weight normally claimed for them. In formulating his argument he overstates the kind of significance that morality needs to claim for itself. But, like Marx in the later part of “On the Jewish Question,” he might well hold that recognizing even the more limited significance that I have claimed for abstract moral categories involves having an undesirably divided self.

All three of the problems I have considered—Sidgwick’s Dualism of Practical Reason, the problem of political justification discussed by Marx and Rawls, and Williams’ challenge to individual morality—posit two different standpoints between which conflict can arise, and in the latter two cases, a third standpoint that dictates how

this conflict should be resolved. I want to consider now the different ways in which these standpoints can be understood.

Sidgwick characterizes his two standpoints in the simplest terms. What is good for a person is determined by the quantity of agreeable consciousness in his or her life, counting the same quantity of consciousness equally whenever it occurs. What is good impersonally (the standard of duty) is the greatest amount of agreeable consciousness overall, counting equal quantities of consciousness the same, whatever life they occur within. And there is, for Sidgwick, no third rational standpoint within which the conflicting claims of these two can be adjudicated.

“Someone’s agreeable consciousness” is an abstract category that serves to equate the good of different individuals. The categories of political or moral justification that serve a similar equating function in the cases that Marx, Rawls and Williams are discussing—categories such as “a person’s religion” or “the agent’s loved one”—are more specific but, of necessity, still abstract. The question they are concerned with is what significance individuals have reason to give to justifications employing these categories. This is what I called at the beginning of this lecture the question of ground. (Sidgwick does not have a space in which to ask the analogous question about conclusions reached from the standpoint of impersonal good, or duty, and, in addition, he seems already to rule out the question by characterizing this standpoint as that of Reason. It is one thing to ask, “Why should one accept the requirements of morality as overriding?” but another to ask, “What weight should I give to doing what Reason commands?”)

From what standpoint are Marx, Rawls and Williams addressing the question of ground? In discussing Sidgwick, I suggested that conflicts between his two standpoints should be addressed as questions about what an individual has most reason to do, all things considered, a question that is not the same as the question of what is in the person's self-interest. But I also said that the question of ground needed to be answered by showing how giving moral considerations authority fitted into the kind of life that an individual should want to live, and this seems to require taking the standpoint of self-interest in to account. This raises the question of the relation between these standpoints—the standpoint of self-interest and that of what one has most reason to do.

I believe that any plausible account of the good for an individual will be pluralistic, including factors of the following three kinds.

First, *experiential* factors, such as enjoyments, excitement, and the absence of states such as pain and fear.

Second, valuable relationships, such as friendships, good relations with one's family, and with others with whom one engages in cooperative activities.

Third, *achievements*, such as the development of valuable talents and skills and their successful employment in worthwhile ends.

I do not have a systematic argument that things of these three kinds are good for a person and make his or her life better.⁵ But it seems to me clear that they do make a person's life more choice worthy, and that any account of what is good for a person that left them out would be flawed and incomplete. Moreover, it seems clear to me that these

⁵ For discussion see Derek Parfit, *Reasons and Persons*, Appendix I; Joseph Raz, *The Morality of Freedom*, Chapter 12; T. M. Scanlon, *What We Owe to Each Other*, Chapter 3; Stephen Darwall, *Welfare and Rational Care*.

three forms of good are independent: none of them is fully reducible to any of the others: the goods of achievement and relationships are not, for example, explicable simply in terms of the experiences they involve or foster. Monistic experientialism does not seem to me at all plausible. Nor does it seem to me that there is likely to be a plausible monistic account of any other kind, that is to say, any other good not on this list, such that all of these things are good for a person only because they lead to or are required by this further good. As I said, I cannot prove that this is so, but it is how things seem to me. What I want to do now is to draw out from these assumptions some conclusions about the relation between what is good for an individual and what an individual has reason to want more generally.

Consider first factors in my second category, of valuable relationships. In my view this is where an answer to the question of the ground of morality, or of justice, is going to rest. The claim will be that justice consists in terms of cooperation that define a relationship with one's fellow citizens that one has good reason to want, and the morality, similarly, defines a relationship with others in general that one has good reason to want. The question is, what kind of reason? The answer can't be that such relationships are morally approvable.

Looking at this question from a different angle, it seems clear that a relationship makes a person's life better only if it is a valuable relationship, one worth having. Some relationships, of dependence, for example, may make a person's life worse. So what is it for a relationship to be valuable in the relevant sense? It is not, I would say, for it to be something that, apart from its contributions to the lives of those who stand in this relationship, "makes the world better" by existing. Rather, it has to be something that the

individuals involved have reason to want because of the way being involved in that relationship affects their lives. It does not seem right, however, to say that on this account our reasons for valuing a friendship, or for wanting to cooperate with one's fellow citizens on terms that treat them as equals, are reasons of self-interest. This is because, at least, living up to these relationships can require sacrificing things that are in one's self-interest in a narrower sense, such as convenience and higher income. What this shows, I think, is that what is in one's "self-interest" as this term is normally used, does not coincide with what makes for a life that one has reason to want. It remains true that what is fundamental in this case is what is *good for* an individual rather than what is *good* in some impersonal sense.

This is in contrast to my third category, of worthwhile achievements. Developing a talent, or achieving something by exercising, is *good for* a person in the relevant sense only if that talent or achievement is worth seeking for reasons independent of its contribution to the life of the person in question. This is most obvious in the case of achievements that are worthwhile because of their affects on other people's lives, such as stopping a famine, or discovering a cure for a debilitating disease. But I would say that it is true as well for intellectual achievements, such as proving a theorem or discovering some fundamental fact about the universe. Such achievements contribute to the quality of a person's life in a way that getting into the Guinness Book of World Records for eating a large amount of cheese does not. But these things are worth doing because of properties they have on their own, not, as in the case of relationships, because of the difference they make to the lives of those who discover them.

What is more surprising perhaps is that many experiential goods also depend on what is good in this an impersonal sense. There are, of course, experiential goods of which this is not true. Some pleasures, such as bodily pleasures, and freedom from pain are good for a person simply because of their experiential qualities. But any plausible account of experiential goods will have to include forms of pleasure, such as the pleasure or working on a puzzle, or winning a race, that involve taking pleasure *in* something, such as some activity or achievement. In these cases the pleasure involved is not independent of the idea that its object is in some way good. If, for example, philosophy is a worthless enterprise, or worse, then one should not take pleasure in doing it, but should be embarrassed or ashamed by the time one devotes to it, and to one's expertise at it. This dependence of the goodness of a state of taking pleasure in something on the goodness of the object of this attitude is not a new point. Both Plato and Aristotle made it long ago. But it is worth reminding ourselves of.

The more general point that follows is that in the first and third of my three categories of individual good, facts about what is good for a person depend on facts about what there is reason to want on grounds other than the way that person's life is affected.

I said earlier that moral justification and the justification of political institutions are individualistic: these forms of justification appeal at base to what is good for individuals rather than what is good in some impersonal sense. But it emerged on closer inspection that because of the nature of these forms of justification they represent individual good—what individuals have reason to want for themselves—in different terms than those individuals would use themselves, in their private choices. I also said that it is implausible to hold that something is good for an individual only if that thing is

impersonally good and happens to occur in that person's life. But it has emerged on closer inspection that important classes of cases what is good for an individual—what he or she has reason to want insofar as his or her own life is concerned—depends on what is good in a less personal sense—on what the person has reason to want on grounds other than the way in which his or her life would be affected.