

SELF-INTEREST AND SELF-SACRIFICE

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In the second chapter of *Welfare and Rational Care*, Stephen Darwall presents the following case.¹ You have a friend, Sheila, who cares very much about the rebuilding of a certain war-ravaged city. She cares about it so much, in fact, that she intends to donate all of her disposable wealth to support the reconstruction efforts. As it happens, Sheila has a degenerative disease which, left untreated, will result in memory loss and confusion so severe that she will forget where her money has gone and fail to appreciate or take pleasure in any impact her contribution makes. Her deterioration could be arrested by means of a “relatively inexpensive drug.”² Sheila will accept no assistance, however, and she prefers, on reflection, not to allow any of her own assets to be diverted from the reconstruction efforts for her medical care. In short, Sheila ranks the state of affairs that consists in repair of the war-ravaged city to degree *D* higher than the state of affairs that consists in repair to degree *D* less the improvements lost due to resources expended on her own treatment.

Darwall offers this example as just one illustration of what he calls the “scope problem,” a problem originally raised by Mark Overvold in his well-known critique of desire theories of welfare.³ According to Overvold, theories of welfare that identify a person’s welfare or interest with what that person most wants to have or to do, all things considered, make self-sacrifice conceptually impossible. As Darwall sees it, the scope problem arises for any view that identifies a person’s good with her own reflective

¹ Darwall (2002).

² Darwall (2002: 43).

³ Overvold (1980).

preferences—her own ranking of concerns. Any such view will entail that when Sheila chooses to support reconstruction of the city and forego attending to her serious health needs, she acts in her own self-interest. But this assessment of Sheila’s choice is surely false. Although Sheila may choose based on what she most values and act based on her strongest desire, she chooses and acts against her good. She behaves not self-interestedly, Darwall insists, but self-sacrificially.

Darwall finds two interrelated morals in Overvold’s critique. First, as Overvold himself argues, any adequate theory of welfare must not make self-sacrifice conceptually impossible. Second, a theory of welfare can allow for self-sacrifice only if it appropriately distinguishes between *what a person takes an interest in* and *what is in a person’s interest*, between *what a person may merely value or desire* and *what is good for her*.

Overvold’s solution to the scope problem essentially attempted to draw the latter distinction by adding to desire theories the restriction that the person must herself be an “essential constituent” of the state of affairs or outcome that she desires. That is to say, satisfaction of an informed desire benefits a person only if her existence at a time, *t*, is a logically necessary condition on the desired outcome’s obtaining at *t*.⁴ Darwall argues, however, that some desires that satisfy this restriction, such as the desire to do one’s duty despite any attendant loss of happiness, will intuitively count as self-sacrificial rather than beneficial.

Darwall himself urges, in effect, that we move further away from the agent’s point of view. According to Darwall’s “rational care” theory of welfare, by identifying a person’s good not with what she cares about but with what one ought to want insofar as

⁴ Overvold (1980: 117-118, fn. 10).

one cares for *her*, we can appropriately distinguish between what a person values and what is good for her. Darwall's view faces its own difficulties, however, for what one ought to want for a person insofar as one cares for her would seem to depend on what benefits her.⁵ What is more, what can benefit her partly depends on what she does or could care about. If the agent's point of view, her own ranking of concerns, isn't sufficient for fixing her welfare, it seems nevertheless indispensable.⁶

The challenge that the scope problem poses for a theory of welfare or personal good is thus more complex than may initially appear. A plausible theory must allow for self-sacrifice, distinguishing between what a person may merely value or desire and what benefits her. At the same time, it must recognize that a person's good, what is in her interest, consists in no small measure in what she values or takes an interest in. Her good is, in fact, largely constructed out of her values and desires.

Now whether a theory of personal good distinguishes appropriately between what a person merely values or desires and what benefits her so as to allow for self-sacrifice would seem, in the end, to depend on what self-sacrifice is. My aim in this essay is not to provide a theory of welfare that solves the scope problem, though my discussion will draw on a preliminary analysis of personal good that I have offered elsewhere.⁷ Instead, I shall focus on exploring the nature of self-sacrifice. An account of the nature of self-sacrifice should capture and explain the structure of paradigmatic cases of self-sacrifice. As will become clear, the structure of these cases is, unsurprisingly, importantly related

⁵ See Rosati (2006a), for an argument that Darwall's analysis of welfare is circular. See Darwall (2006) for a reply.

⁶ Darwall does not, in the end, give us an analysis of what it is to be good for someone—of the relation a person stands in to some things and not other that constitutes their being good for her. For this reason, his account is not, in my view, equipped to enable us to draw the very distinction on which he insists. See Rosati (2006b).

⁷ See Rosati (2006b).

to the structure of personal good, and so to the good of *persons* or *agents*—*of creatures who are capable of self-sacrifice at all*. I shall offer an analysis which suggests that the key to understanding self-sacrifice is, so to speak, to put the self back into the sacrifice. If my suggestions about the nature of self-sacrifice are on the right track, then perhaps the scope problem is not so fatal to desire theories after all. For it turns out that self-interest and self-sacrifice need not be opposed in quite the way that some have thought. An act can both advance one's good and constitute an act of self-sacrifice.⁸

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Overvold offers the following analysis of the concept of self-sacrifice.

An act is a genuine act of self-sacrifice if and only if:

- I. the loss of welfare is expected and anticipated...
- II. the act is voluntary, and
- III. there is at least one other alternative open to the agent at the time of the act which is such that (a) if the consequences of the alternative had been as the agent expected them to be, then the alternative would have been more in the agent's self-interest than the act he actually did perform, and (b) if the agent had chosen to perform the alternative act, then his act would have been more in his self-interest, objectively, than the act which he actually did perform.⁹

Overvold's analysis is meant to distinguish acts of self-sacrifice from acts that accidentally compromise one's welfare and acts undertaken in order to cut one's losses.

It is also meant to avoid requiring an unrealistic degree of reflection by the agent as to

⁸ Overvold (1982: 187) denies this: "The account of self-interest must not be so broad as to allow us to describe the same act as a self-sacrifice and as an act that promotes the agent's self-interest."

⁹ Overvold (1980: 113-114).

how the action she is about to perform affects her interests. And so the analysis requires only that the agent be aware of an available alternative at the time of action that would have been more in her interest, if the consequences of it had been as she anticipated, and that this alternative act would have been, if performed, objectively, more in her self-interest than the act she did perform.

I believe that Overvold's analysis faces three difficulties. First, and perhaps most conspicuously, the analysis does not explicitly state that one acts on the alternative that is inferior from the standpoint of one's self-interest out of a regard for the perceived value or good of another.¹⁰ This restriction surely must be met; and furthermore, one's act must, objectively, if performed and successful, promote or preserve the value or good of another. That is to say, just as the compromise in one's choice cannot aim at cutting one's losses, so it also cannot aim masochistically at enhancing one's losses, or at the promotion or preservation of something trivial or valueless, and still count as an act of self-sacrifice. And just as an act that merely appears to involve some loss of welfare as compared with an available alternative isn't really self-sacrificial, so an act that sacrifices one's interest where the value or good of another only appears to be at stake isn't really self-sacrificial. This first difficulty I take to be a mere oversight on Overvold's part, for his examples make clear that he supposes that some such restriction exists on what can count as an act of self-sacrifice.

Second, Overvold's analysis doesn't make clear whether the alternative action must have been more in an agent's interest considered just at the time of action or whether it must have been more in her interest considering her life as a whole. Suppose

¹⁰ That "other" need not, of course, be a person, at least not directly. It might be nonhuman animals, the natural environment, or of some aesthetic value.

Overvold means that the alternative action must have been more in her interest, considering her life as a whole. Then our judgments of acts as self-sacrificial would always be provisional, pending a final assessment of the welfare value of a person's life. They would have to be provisional, that is, unless the welfare value of a life is additive, so we could definitively say once a loss of welfare has occurred at a time, t , that the welfare value of that life has been permanently depressed. But we do not treat our judgment that an act was one of self-sacrifice as provisional in this way. It seems doubtful that the concept of self-sacrifice presupposes a particular view as to whether the welfare value of a life is additive as opposed to wholistic, or something on the order of an organic unity.¹¹ Suppose Overvold means instead that the alternative act must have been more in an agent's self-interest just at the time of action. Then supposing that the welfare value of a life is not additive, a self-sacrificial act might have a lower welfare value at and around the time of action, while contributing to a life, considered as a whole, the welfare value of which is higher than it would have been had the agent performed the alternative action instead.

This latter possibility would seem to suggest just one way in which we misunderstand the nature of self-sacrifice if we think of it too crudely in terms of the impact of actions on an agent's welfare. Suppose that I forego eating the piece of cake I have just purchased from a local bakery (the cake happens to be my favorite, and eating it would give me real pleasure) in order to give it to a hungry, homeless person I encounter on the street. Suppose, as certainly seems possible, that even taking later guilt feelings into account, I derive less satisfaction from my charitable act than I would have derived from consuming the cake. My action is voluntary; the loss of welfare is expected and

¹¹ For competing views on this score, see Velleman (2000) and Feldman (2006: Ch. 6).

anticipated; I can see an alternative action, and if the consequences of it are as I anticipate, and if that act were performed, it would have been objectively more in my interest than the act I actually did perform. My act thus fits Overvold's analysis. But surely we wouldn't describe my action as self-sacrificial except perhaps as a joke, even if we agree that I did the right thing in surrendering the slice.

In my view, it is no accident that the paradigmatic cases of self-sacrifice are cases in which the agent risks life or limb or in which she foregoes a pursuit or activity of central importance to her. And here we come to a third difficulty for Overvold's view. An analysis of self-sacrifice that links it too crudely to welfare impact misses what seems critical to understanding self-sacrifice, namely, that self-sacrifice is a sacrifice of the *self*. Although a sacrifice of the self takes the form of a sacrifice of one's interest, not every sacrifice of one's interest, as my cake example illustrates, is a sacrifice of oneself and so a case of self-sacrifice.

To the extent that self-sacrifice is always a sacrifice of one's interests, even though not every sacrifice of one's interests is self-sacrifice, that would seem to reflect not only the nature of self-sacrifice but a deep fact about the structure of personal good. As concerns the nature of self-sacrifice, I suggest, only acts that involve a sacrifice of one's interests that can plausibly be understood as sufficiently serious to be at the same time a sacrifice of self, will count as self-sacrificial. The key to understanding the nature of self-sacrifice, then, is understanding the relationship between welfare and the self, such that a sacrifice of one's welfare is a sacrifice of one's self.

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Our nature is complex and our good is correspondingly complex. We are not only human—a certain type of biological creature; we are also persons, creatures with the capacity for autonomous agency and the array of motives and capacities that make autonomous agency possible. As a consequence our good consists not merely of satisfaction of biologically determined needs and wants but involvement with a variety of projects, undertakings, and relationships that, through our autonomous choices and actions, come to occupy a more or less central place in our lives.

Our good is thus not simply given to us in the way that a nonhuman animal's good is given to it; and so it is also not structured in the precisely the way that an animal's good is structured. Nevertheless, personal good does have a structure, with some elements playing a framing or ordering role, while others remain relatively peripheral. What is important for present purposes is that not everything that benefits us or forms a part of our good bears the same relation to the self. One task for a theory of personal good is to provide an account of the basic structure of a person's good and an understanding of how of the many things that can stand in the *good-for* or *benefit* relation to us as individuals—of the many things that in this sense can *fit* or *suit* us—not all are equally central to who we are.

I cannot here undertake to provide an account of the structure of a person's good or a full account of the relationship between welfare and self. Fortunately, we need only understand certain basic features of personal good and the connection between our interests and our self in order to develop an account of self-sacrifice that can capture and explain the structure of paradigmatic cases of self-sacrifice.

The paradigmatic cases are what we might call cases of life, limbs, and loves. The person who risks her life for another risks her self and her interests in a most literal sense. Assume that continued existence is, other things equal, a good for the person whose existence it is. Assume also that mature self-love, self-love of the sort that manifests a proper valuing of oneself, is central to a flourishing life. Valuing oneself is, given this assumption, foundational for all of one's valuing—you see to your interests and see to giving your self interests out of a regard for, or for the sake of, your self. What is more, standing in a valuing relation to oneself is itself critical to a one's faring well. In a variety of ways, then, the person who risks her life for the sake of another risks not only her interests but interests the sacrifice of which are a sacrifice of the self. To put one's life at risk is to risk that part of one's good that consists in one's continued existence, that part of one's good that consists in one's valuing relation to one's self, and that part of one's good that consists in all of the projects, activities, and relationships that are also, for reasons we shall consider in a moment, connected to the self.

The person who risks her limbs, or more generally, her physical functioning, for the sake of another likewise risks her self in a rather literal sense. A person's physical functioning, her being physically intact, is, of course, of great instrumental importance; it surely is, in John Rawls' sense, a primary good. Her being able to live comfortably and autonomously, her ability to pursue any of those other things that she might value, is made possible and aided immeasurably by her physical condition. But in addition, a part of valuing oneself as a person is preserving one's own physical integrity and functioning.¹² To risk one's limbs or physical integrity is, again, to risk an interest that is

¹² I here take physical integrity to include emotional and psychological integrity.

central to oneself, and again, to put at risk those project, activities and relationships that are also connected to the self.

A person's interests in her life and physical condition are in part, but only in part, interests in her self as the particular being that she is. Sacrifice of one's interest in life and physical integrity are themselves sacrifices of self in a recognizable sense. But risking them may risk yet other interests and so in another way risk one's self. As noted earlier, personal good is complex, and a person's good obviously isn't comprised simply of her interests in life and physical well-being. She will have, in addition, many pleasures and pastimes, projects and undertakings, acquaintances and relationships, and while all of them may form a part of her good, some are more central to her self. For some among the elements that benefit her or make up her good are things that she does not merely enjoy or feel glad for, but those she loves and to which her love commits her. She may love her work or her causes, much as she loves her spouse, family members, and most intimate friends. Of course, not just anything that a person loves can be good for her. Whether the things she loves are good for her isn't just a matter of her loving them, but, as I have argued elsewhere, of their "loving her back."¹³ Her love for them must be "requited," so to speak, in that her engagement with her loves rewards her. The ways in which a person's loves reward her are perhaps most evident in healthy love relationships. These relationships characteristically support a person's sense of her own worth and provide a sense of direction and identity; they are ordinarily energizing rather than enervating; and they are experienced as internally motivating rather than as forced on her from outside.

¹³ See Rosati (2006b).

The things we love—those pursuits, activities, and relationships with which we are most deeply engaged—are more central to our selves, I am suggesting, than other things that may benefit us. They are central to self, though in a somewhat different sense from that in which life and physical integrity are central to self. In loving something, we come to give it a kind of organizing position in our lives; our loves become the things around which we arrange our time and our other activities and engagements. For example, our central commitments—whether our intimate loves or loved activities or pursuits—determine where we shall live and who we will answer to, who will mostly receive our caretaking efforts, who we will plan with, who and what will come first and last. They also help to determine our identity, our views about who we are and what our lives are about, in such a way that their flourishing or failure affects our own sense of adequacy and our own flourishing or failure. To risk one's loves for the sake of another is to risk one's interest in a way that puts one's self at risk; to sacrifice one's loves for the sake of another is to sacrifice one's self by sacrificing something integral to the very person one takes oneself to be.

A common example that illustrates self-sacrifice of the latter sort is that of a parent who sacrifices her personal dreams and ambitions for the sake of her children. One question about examples like this concerns how they are best described. Are they cases in which parents abide by their values at the expense of their interests, or are they cases in which parents favor one part of their good over another, albeit for the sake of their children? I shall say more about this question shortly. For now, I simply offer my belief that the latter description is often most accurate, and precisely because a person's loves, and so a parent's loves, are not mere values she holds. To be sure, a person will

have, in addition to those values that are central to who she is and that help to comprise her welfare, a great many other evaluative beliefs and values to which she is not so intimately and personally tied. In those cases in which a person acts to advance those values as against her own interests, she engages in self-sacrifice that is better described in the former way. But very often acts of self-sacrifice involve a choice between elements within a person's good rather than between a person's good and values that lie wholly outside of it.

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Let's pull these threads together. In order for an act to be an act of self-sacrifice, it need not involve a net loss of welfare considering one's life as a whole. And it need not involve trading one's good for some value which is not a part of one's good; it can, instead, involve sacrificing one part of one's good in favor of another part, provided that one does so out of a regard for the value or good of another. To be an act of self-sacrifice, however, it cannot involve the sacrifice of just any benefit. Rather, it must involve the sacrifice of some part of one's good that is at the same time a sacrifice of self.

The foregoing discussion suggests the following analysis of self-sacrifice.

An act is a genuine act of self-sacrifice just in case:

- I. the act results in a loss of welfare that is expected and anticipated,
- II. the act is voluntary,
- III. the act is undertaken primarily out of a regard for the value or interest of another rather than out of a regard for long term self-benefit,

- IV. the agent was aware of at least one alternative open at the time of the act the consequences of which she correctly expected would have been, in some respect, more in her immediate self-interest, and
- V. any adverse effect on her self-interest as a consequence of her chosen act is on some part of her good such that the sacrifice of that part of her good is also a sacrifice of her self.

What follows from this analysis? It seems to me that at least some desire theories may be able to avoid Overvold's arguments against the desire theories that were his principal target. Provided that a desire theory can allow that some desires are more intimately connected with the self in the ways already described, and provided that a desire theory can allow that a person's good is given by what satisfies a complex system of desires, not merely by what satisfies her strongest desire at a specific time, it seems that such theories can allow for the possibility of self-sacrifice. In my view, the most plausible desire theories, will be (and always were) of this more complex sort. Consider, for example, Rawls' theory, according to which a person's good consists in the approximate realization of a rational plan of life.¹⁴ As Rawls describes it, person's life plan will involve certain central, though revisable, aims rooted in an agent's reflective desires, with details of the plan to be filled in at the appropriate times, and in ways that are sensitive to an agent's circumstances, including her options and available resources. A plan is an ordering of desires, more and less significant to a person, and failure to succeed in one's plan can amount to failure to succeed in one's principal aims and so failure to satisfy one's central rational desires. On Rawls' picture, acts of self-sacrifice would not be conceptually impossible, at least not if my analysis of self-sacrifice is

¹⁴ See Rawls (1971: §§63-64).

roughly correct. In short, insofar as my analysis is correct, although we may have other good reasons for rejecting desire-theories, we ought not to reject them, or other theories that identify a person's good with her own ranking of concerns, on the grounds that they make self-sacrifice conceptually impossible.¹⁵

I want to return now to the example with which we began. Darwall's case, we should notice, is not entirely apt for making the point he wishes to make. If we take the example just as described, Sheila's ranking of alternatives seems unreasonable, even by her own lights. If the drug she needs really is "relatively inexpensive," then surely Sheila is irrational to refuse either to accept aid or to expend a small portion of her resources for her own treatment. After all, given her devotion to the rebuilding of the war ravaged city, a devotion few may share, the longer she is alive and of sound mind and able body, the longer she will be around to draw attention to her cause, to raise awareness and possibly even more funding. Closely considered, then, the example seems less one of self-sacrifice than of serious miscalculation.

Details of the example aside, however, Darwall's point is an important one. A theory of welfare must leave room for self-sacrifice, and in doing so, leave room for at least two distinctive attitudes we may take toward another person. One attitude we can take toward another is concern, treating her as a being with a welfare.¹⁶ A different attitude we can take toward another is respect, treating her as a being with dignity—an

¹⁵ For criticisms of desire theories, see Velleman (1988), Sobel (1994), and Rosati (1995a, 1995b, 2000, 2003, 2006b).

¹⁶ Concern or care is not, of course, the only attitude we take toward another in which we regard her as a being with a welfare; there is also love, for example. See Velleman (2008).

autonomous agent. Out of respect for another, we may honor her choices even when, out of concern for her, we would favor a different choice for her sake.¹⁷

Let's suppose, for the sake of argument, that the facts are different in Sheila's case in whatever way might be required so that her decision isn't irrational. Darwall might then be right about the act being self-sacrificial but perhaps not for the reason he gives. How best to describe Sheila's case, how best to understand her act of self-sacrifice insofar as her choice is genuinely self-sacrificial, depends very much on how we understand the case.

It depends, in particular, on how we understand the way in which Sheila values the rebuilding of the war-ravaged city. We can imagine different relations Sheila might stand in to this cause. Her relation to it might be, for example, like my relation to world peace or an end to global warming. I much prefer (you will be glad to know) a world in which warring parties are at peace to one in which they continue to wage war. I much prefer a world in which global warming is being addressed head on to the current world. Should I live long enough or should certain eventualities come to pass, my welfare may be directly affected in any number of ways by whether the states of affairs I prefer are realized; I may then be better off for the world's being at peace and for climate change having been arrested. But though I value these things, and seriously so, I have not undertaken as a project or commitment of my own the promotion of world peace or the cessation of global warming. These values play no real part in structuring my day, apart from taking periodic small steps like replacing incandescent light bulbs with energy efficient bulbs, or consolidating errands, or showing up to vote on election day.

¹⁷ Darwall (2002: 14-16).

Another possibility is that Sheila's relation to her cause is more like my relation to philosophy or my family. These values play a major part in structuring my day, my thought processes, my expenditures of money and time, my emotional ups and downs. They bear quite centrally on my sense of who I am, and they would be among the essential framing elements in any story I might tell about my life. My relation to these latter values is of the sort I described earlier—they are, in my view, a part of my good in a way that the former values are not. It isn't that the former values have no relation to self, to my sense of who I am, but my identity is not tied to them in quite the same way my identity is bound up with the latter values. My relation to the former values, however it is best described, is not the *good-for* or *benefit* relation—that relation of fit or suitability that we refer to when we talk about something as being good for a person.

Sheila's relation to her cause seems more like my relation to philosophy and family than my relation to world peace or the cessation of global warming. She is prepared not simply to drop a dollar in the bucket of the person collecting for the rebuilding efforts but to donate all of her disposable wealth—and at the expense of her own health and physical integrity. Of course, it is possible that hers is a one time act of generosity, that apart from this final grand gesture, the cause has occupied little of her time, resources, or emotional energy. But then, these considerations illustrate a point I made earlier. For suppose her situation is as just described. Then I think we do have a case of self-sacrifice aptly characterized as one in which a person sacrifices her welfare for the sake of something she values. And so we would have a case in which, in honoring her choice—a choice against her self-interest—we express respect for her as an autonomous agent.

But her act, and this has been the critical point, may be self-sacrificial *even if* Sheila's relation to her cause is, as I have suggested, more like my relation to philosophy and family. If she places her cause ahead of her physical well-being, she sacrifices a part of her good, and a part such that to sacrifice it is to sacrifice her self, though she does so in favor of a different part of her good. This might seem to make her choice more like a case of cutting her losses; something has to give and she opts for what she regards as the more important part of her good. But I believe that it is not. For while the effect of her action is to advance her good in a key respect, her action is not performed *in order to* advance her good; she is not acting for her own sake but, rather, for the sake of her cause.

Suppose instead that what gives Sheila the greatest pleasure in life is her activity on behalf of the reconstruction efforts. And suppose that in explaining her choice, Sheila reports that as she has a limited time to live anyway, supporting the city at the expense of her own treatment will give her the greatest fulfillment; it will better enhance her own welfare as compared with the alternative. In such a case, our worry about Sheila will no longer be that she is sacrificing herself to her cause; we will not be torn in the same way between our desire to respect her autonomous evaluations and our desire to see to her good. Rather, our worry will be that she has miscalculated and is about to behave imprudently; and we will be torn between our desire to honor her (misguided) determination of her good and our desire to promote her good as we determine it to be.

I take it that this is not the case we are meant to imagine. What we are meant to imagine is a genuine act of self-sacrifice. But it is one that, if I am right, is best described as a person acting in a way that sacrifices one part of her good to another, rather than as her acting in a way that sacrifices her welfare to something she merely happens to value.

I believe that a great many cases of self-sacrifice fit the first characterization as opposed to the second. Moreover, for reasons offered herein, I believe that an account of the nature of self-sacrifice had better allow for this if it is not to make a hash of the nature of personal good. As persons—creatures with the capacity for autonomy—our good is importantly determined, not merely by facts about our human needs and wants, or even by these together with facts about our individual natures and circumstances, but also by the operation of the capacities that make us autonomous. We have the capacity to reflect, to evaluate, to come to value some things over others, to guide ourselves by what we value, and to have a sense of ourselves as beings with a distinctive identity given partly by what we value. We have the capacity to reflect on our desires, to order and choose among them, thereby choosing what sort of person to be and what sort of life to live. The greater part of what comes to make up our good are those things to which we come to stand in the good-for relation by the exercise of our capacities for reflection, evaluation, and choice. Given our nature as autonomous beings, it is absolutely predictable that those things that come to be a part of our good through the exercise of the capacities that render us autonomous may come into conflict with those parts of our good, equally central to self, that come to us just as living human beings.

Insofar as the foregoing discussion is correct, self-interest and self-sacrifice need not be opposed in quite the way that it may sometimes seem. An act can both, as I have explained, advance one's good and constitute an act of self-sacrifice. Of course, the cases I have considered also suggest a limit on the ways in which acts of self-sacrifice can trade-off parts of a person's good. Not just any part of a person's good—even a part that involves the self—can be risked or sacrificed for the sake of another. That is why the

typical structure of acts of self-sacrifice involve the sacrifice of life or limb for a cause, or of one identifying commitment (say, a career) for another (one's children). A sacrifice of one's cause for one's life or limbs would almost always be undertaken for one's own sake. A sacrifice of a fundamentally other-affecting commitment for a fundamentally self-affecting commitment would almost always be undertaken for one's own sake. Indeed, in the latter case, the sacrifice would not only be undertaken self-interestedly, but also, as we often say, selfishly.

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