of the least-favoured representative man, but there is no man who represents the least-favoured groups under both (2) and (3). We can only take the least-favoured representative man to be the representative Indian, and as I say the argument does not work for him.

It is plain that to justify picking Constitution (3) rather than (2) we have to compare the interests of two groups. We have to say that the loss to the Indians in picking (3) is less than the loss to the British in picking (2). So we have to weigh up different people's interests in much the way utilitarians do, and in much the way the difference principle was supposed to avoid (pp. 175-83). If (3) really is better than (2) I should say it can only be on grounds like utilitarian ones. And if the utilitarian grounds go the other way—if, say, there are many more Indians than British—I should find it very hard to believe that (3) is really better.

JOHN BROOME. (I should like to thank John Rawls for his comments.)

I WHAT MAKES SOMEONE'S LIFE GO BEST

What would be best for someone, or would be most in this person’s interests, or would make this person’s life go, for him, as well as possible? Answers to this question I call theories about self-interest. There are three kinds of theory. On Hedonistic Theories, what would be best for someone is what would make his life happiest. On Desire-Fulfilment Theories, what would be best for someone is what, throughout his life, would best fulfil his desires. On Objective List Theories, certain things are good or bad for us, whether or not we want to have the good things, or to avoid the bad things.

Narrow Hedonists assume, falsely, that pleasure and pain are two distinct kinds of experience. Compare the pleasures of satisfying an intense thirst or lust, listening to music, solving an intellectual problem, reading a tragedy, and knowing that one's child is happy. These various experiences do not contain any distinctive common quality.

What pains and pleasures have in common are their relations to our desires. On the use of 'pain' which has rational and moral significance, all pains are when experienced unwanted, and a pain is worse or greater the more it is unwanted. Similarly, all pleasures are when experienced wanted, and they are better or greater the more they are wanted. These are the claims of Preference-Hedonism. On this view, one of two experiences is more pleasant if it is preferred.

This theory need not follow the ordinary uses of the words 'pain' and 'pleasure'. Suppose that I could go to a party to enjoy the various pleasures of eating, drinking, laughing, dancing, and talking to my friends. I could instead stay at home and read King Lear. Knowing what both alternatives would be like, I prefer to read King Lear. It extends the ordinary use to say that this would give me more pleasure. But on Preference-Hedonism, if we add some further assumptions given below, reading King Lear would give
me a better evening. Griffin cites a more extreme case. Near the end of his life Freud refused pain-killing drugs, preferring to think in torment than to be confusedly euphoric. Of these two mental states, euphoria is more pleasant. But on Preference-Hedonism thinking in torment was, for Freud, a better mental state. It is clearer here not to stretch the meaning of the word ‘pleasant’. A Preference-Hedonist should merely claim that, since Freud preferred to think clearly though in torment, his life went better if it went as he preferred. 21

Consider next Desire-Fulfilment Theories. The simplest is the Unrestricted Theory. This claims that what is best for someone is what would best fulfil all of his desires, throughout his life. Suppose that I meet a stranger who has what is believed to be a fatal disease. My sympathy is aroused, and I strongly want this stranger to be cured. We never meet again. Later, unknown to me, this stranger is cured. On the Unrestricted Desire-Fulfilment Theory, this event is good for me, and makes my life go better. This is not plausible. We should reject this theory.

Another theory appeals only to our desires about our own lives. I call this the Success Theory. This theory differs from Preference-Hedonism in only one way. The Success Theory appeals to all of our preferences about our own lives. A Preference-Hedonist appeals only to preferences about those features of our lives that are introspectively discernible. Suppose that I strongly want not to be deceived by other people. On Preference-Hedonism it will be better for me if I believe that I am not being deceived. It will be irrelevant if my belief is false, since this makes no difference to my state of mind. On the Success Theory, it will be worse for me if my belief is false. I have a strong desire about my own life—that I should not be deceived in this way. It is bad for me if this desire is not fulfilled, even if I falsely believe that it is.

When this theory appeals only to desires that are about our own lives, it may be unclear what this excludes. Suppose that I want my life to be such that all of my desires, whatever their objects, are fulfilled. This may seem to make the Success Theory, when applied to me, coincide with the Unrestricted Desire-Fulfilment Theory. But a Success Theorist should claim that this desire is not really about my own life. This is like the distinction between a real change in some object, and a so-called Cambridge-change. An object undergoes a Cambridge-change if there is any change in the true statements that can be made about this object. Suppose that I cut my cheek while shaving. This causes a real change in me. It also causes a change in Confucius. It becomes true, of Confucius, that he lived on a planet on which later one more cheek was cut. This is merely a Cambridge-change.

Suppose that I am an exile, and cannot communicate with my children. I want their lives to go well. I might claim that I want to live the life of someone whose children’s lives go well. A Success Theorist should again claim that this is not really a desire about my own life. If unknown to me one of my children is killed by an avalanche, this is not bad for me, and does not make my life go worse.

A Success Theorist would count some similar desires. Suppose that I try to give my children a good start in life. I try to give them the right education, good habits, and psychological strength. Once again, I am now an exile, and I shall never be able to learn what happens to my children. Suppose that, unknown to me, my children’s lives go badly. One finds that the education that I gave him makes him unemployable, another has a mental breakdown, another becomes a petty thief. If my children’s lives fail in these ways, and these failures are in part the result of mistakes I made as their parent, these failures in my children’s lives would be judged on the Success Theory to be bad for me. One of my strongest desires was to be a successful parent. What is now happening to my children, though it is unknown to me, shows that this desire is not fulfilled. My life failed in one of the ways in which I most wanted to succeed. Though I do not know this fact, it is bad for me, and makes it true that I have had a worse life. This is like the case where I strongly want not to be deceived. Even if I never know, it is bad for me both if I am deceived and if I turn out to be an unsuccessful parent. These are not introspectively discernible differences in my conscious life; so, on Preference-Hedonism, these events are not bad for me. But on the Success Theory, they are.

Consider next the desires that some people have about what happens after they are dead. For a Preference-Hedonist, once I am dead, nothing bad can happen to me. A Success Theorist should deny this. Return to the case where all my children have wretched lives, because of the mistakes I made as their parent. Suppose that my children’s lives all go badly only after I am dead. My life turns out to have been a failure, in one of the ways I cared about most. A Success Theorist should claim that, here too, this makes it true that I had a worse life.

Some Success Theorists would reject this claim, since they tell us to ignore the desires of the dead. But suppose that I was asked, ‘Do you want you it to be true, even after you are dead, that you were a successful parent?’ I would answer ‘Yes’. It is irrelevant to my desire whether it is fulfilled before or after I am dead. These Success Theorists count it as bad for me if my attempts fail, even if, because I am an exile, I never know this. How then can it matter whether, when my attempts fail, I am dead? All that my death does is to ensure that I will never know this. If we think it irrelevant that I never know about the non-fulfilment of my desires, we cannot defensibly claim that my death makes a difference.

I turn now to questions and objections which arise for both Preference-Hedonism and the Success Theory.

Should we appeal only to the desires and preferences that someone actually has? Return to my choice between going to a party or staying at home to read King Lear. Suppose that, knowing what both alternatives would be like, I choose to stay at home. And suppose that I never later
regret this choice. On one theory, this shows that staying at home to read King Lear gave me a better evening. This is a mistake. It might be true that, if I had chosen to go to the party, I would never have regretted that choice. According to this theory, this would have shown that going to the party gave me a better evening. This theory thus implies that each alternative would have been better than the other. Since this theory implies such contradictions, it must be revised. The obvious revision is to appeal not only to my actual preferences, in the alternative I choose, but also to the preferences that I would have had if I had chosen otherwise.22

In this example, whichever alternative I choose, I would never regret this choice. If this is true, can we still claim that one of the alternatives would give me a better evening? On some theories, when in two alternatives I would have such contrary preferences, neither alternative is better or worse for me. This is not plausible when one of my contrary preferences would have been much stronger. Suppose that, if I choose to go to the party, I shall be only mildly glad that I made this choice, but that, if I choose to stay and read King Lear, I shall be very glad. If this is true, reading King Lear gives me a better evening.

Whether we appeal to Preference-Hedonism or the Success Theory, we should not appeal only to the desires or preferences that I actually have. We should also appeal to the desires and preferences that I would have had, in the various alternatives that were, at different times, open to me. One of these alternatives would be best for me if it is the one in which I would have the strongest desires and preferences fulfilled. This allows us to claim that some alternative life would have been better for me, even if throughout my actual life I am glad that I chose this life rather than this alternative.

There is another distinction which applies both to Preference-Hedonism and to the Success Theory. These theories are Summative if they appeal to all of someone’s desires, actual and hypothetical, about either his states of mind, or his life. In deciding which alternative would produce the greatest total net sum of desire-fulfilment, we assign some positive number to each desire that is fulfilled, and some negative number to each desire that is not fulfilled. How great these numbers are depends on the intensity of the desires in question. (In the case of the Success Theory, which appeals to past desires, it may also depend on how long these desires were had. As I suggest in Chapter 8, this may be a weakness in this theory. The issue does not arise for Preference-Hedonism, which appeals only to the desires that we have, at different times, about our present states of mind.) The total net sum of desire-fulfilment is the sum of the positive numbers minus the negative numbers. Provided that we can compare the relative strength of different desires, this calculation could in theory be performed. The choice of a unit for the numbers makes no difference to the result.

Another version of both theories does not appeal, in this way, to all of a person’s desires and preferences about his own life. It appeals only to global rather than local desires and preferences. A preference is global if it is about some part of one’s life considered as a whole, or is about one’s whole life. The Global versions of these theories I believe to be more plausible.

Consider this example. Knowing that you accept a Summative theory, I tell you that I am about to make your life go better. I shall inject you with an addictive drug. From now on, you will wake each morning with an extremely strong desire to have another injection of this drug. Having this desire will be in itself neither pleasant nor painful, but if the desire is not fulfilled within an hour it will then become very painful. This is no cause for concern, since I shall give you ample supplies of this drug. Every morning, you will be able at once to fulfil this desire. The injection, and its after-effects, would also be neither pleasant nor painful. You will spend the rest of your days as you do now.

What would the Summative Theories imply about this case? We can plausibly suppose that you would not welcome my proposal. You would prefer not to become addicted to this drug, even though I assure you that you will never lack supplies. We can also plausibly suppose that, if I go ahead, you will always regret that you became addicted to this drug. But it is likely that your initial desire not to become addicted, and your later regrets that you did, would not be as strong as the desires you have each morning for another injection. Given the facts as I described them, your reason to prefer not to become addicted would not be very strong. You might dislike the thought of being addicted to anything; and you would regret the minor inconvenience that would be involved in remembering always to carry with you sufficient supplies. But these desires might be far weaker than the desires you would have each morning for a fresh injection.

On the Summative Theories, if I make you an addict, I will be increasing the sum-total of your desire-fulfilment. I will be causing one of your desires not to be fulfilled: your desire not to become an addict, which, after my act, becomes a desire to be cured. But I will also be giving you an indefinite series of extremely strong desires, one each morning, all of which you can fulfil. The fulfilment of all these desires would outweigh the non-fulfilment of your desires not to become an addict, and to be cured. On the Summative Theories, by making you an addict, I will be benefiting you—making your life go better.

This conclusion is not plausible. Having these desires, and having them fulfilled, are neither pleasant nor painful. We need not be Hedonists to believe, more plausibly, that it is in no way better for you to have and to fulfil this series of strong desires.

Could the Summative Theories be revised, so as to meet this objection? Is there some feature of the addictive desires which would justify the claim that we should ignore them when we calculate the sum total of your desire-fulfilment? We might claim that they can be ignored because they are
Therefore reject the Summative Theories. It is likely that, in both alternatives, I would globally prefer the first. Since the Global Theories would then imply that the first alternative gives me a better life, these theories seem to me more plausible.

Turn now to the third kind of theory that I mentioned: the Objective List Theory. According to this theory, certain things are good or bad for people, whether or not these people would want to have the good things, or to avoid the bad things. The good things might include moral goodness, rational activity, the development of one’s abilities, having children and being a good parent, knowledge, and the awareness of true beauty. The bad things might include being betrayed, manipulated, slandered, deceived, being deprived of liberty or dignity, and enjoying either sadistic pleasure, or aesthetic pleasure in what is in fact ugly.

An Objective List Theorist might claim that his theory coincides with the Global version of the Success Theory. On this theory, what would make my life go best depends on what I would prefer, now and in the various alternatives, if I knew all of the relevant facts about these alternatives. An Objective List Theorist might say that the most relevant facts are those just mentioned—the facts about what would be good or bad for me. And he might claim that anyone who knew these facts would want what is good for him, and want to avoid what would be bad for him.

Even if this was true, though the Objective List Theory would coincide with the Success Theory, the two theories would remain distinct. A Success Theorist would reject this description of the coincidence. On his theory, nothing is good or bad for people whatever their preferences are. Something is bad for someone only when, if he knew the facts, he would want to avoid it. And the relevant facts do not include the alleged facts cited by the Objective List Theorist. On the Success Theory it is, for instance, bad for a person to be deceived if and because this is not what this person wants. The Objective List Theorist makes the reverse claim. People want not to be deceived because this is bad for them.

As these remarks imply, there is one important difference between on the one hand Preference-Hedonism and the Success Theory, and on the other hand the Objective List Theory. The first two kinds of theory give an account of self-interest which is purely descriptive—which does not appeal to facts about value. This account appeals only to what a person does and would prefer, given full knowledge of the purely non-evaluative facts about the alternatives. In contrast, the Objective List Theory appeals directly to what it claims to be facts about value.

In choosing between these theories, we must decide how much weight to give to imagined cases in which someone’s fully informed preferences would be bizarre. If we can appeal to these cases, they cast doubt on both Preference-Hedonism and the Success Theory. Consider the man that Rawls imagined who wants to spend his life counting the numbers of blades of grass...
in different lawns. Suppose that this man knows that he could achieve great 
progress if instead he worked in some especially useful part of Applied 
Mathematics. Though he could achieve such significant results, he prefers to 
go on counting blades of grass. On the Success Theory, if we allow this 
to theory to cover all imaginable cases, it could be better for this person if he 
counted his blades of grass rather than achieving great and useful mathemat-
ical results.

The counter-example might be more offensive. Suppose that what 
someone would most prefer, knowing the alternatives, is a life in which, 
without being detected, he causes as much pain as he can to other people. 
On the Success Theory, such a life would be what is best for this person.

We may be unable to accept these conclusions. Ought we therefore to 
abandon this theory? This is what Sidgwick did, though those who quote him 
seldom notice this. He suggests that 'a man's future good on the whole is 
what he would now desire and seek on the whole if all the consequences of all 
the different lines of conduct open to him were accurately foreseen and 
adequately realised in imagination at the present point of time'.25 As he 
comments: 'The notion of "Good" thus attained has an ideal element: it is 
something that is not always actually desired and aimed at by human beings: 
but the ideal element is entirely interpretable in terms of fact, actual or 
hypothetical, and does not introduce any judgement of value'. Sidgwick then 
rejects this account, claiming that what is ultimately good for someone is 
what this person would desire if his desires were in harmony with reason. This 
last phrase is needed, Sidgwick thought, to exclude the cases where 
someone's desires are irrational. He assumes that there are some things that 
we have good reason to desire, and others that we have good reason not to 
desire. These might be the things which are held by Objective List Theories to 
be good or bad for us.

Suppose we agree that, in some imagined cases, what someone would 
most want both now and later, fully knowing about the alternatives, would 
not be what would be best for him. If we accept this conclusion, it may seem 
that we must reject both Preference-Hedonism and the Success Theory. 
Perhaps, like Sidgwick, we must put constraints on what can be rationally 
desired.

It might be claimed instead that we can dismiss the appeal to such 
imagined cases. It might be claimed that what people would in fact prefer, if 
they knew the relevant facts, would always be something that we could 
accept as what is really good for them. Is this a good reply? If we agree that 
in the imagined cases what someone would prefer might be something that 
is bad for him, in these cases we have abandoned our theory. If this is so, 
can we defend our theory by saying that, in the actual cases, it would not go 
astray? I believe that this is not an adequate defence. But I shall not pursue 
this question here.

This objection may apply with less force to Preference-Hedonism. On this 
theory, what can be good or bad for someone can only be discernible features 
of his conscious life. These are the features that, at the time, he either wants 
or does not want. I asked above whether it is bad for people to be deceived 
because they prefer not to be, or whether they prefer not to be deceived 
because this is bad for them. Consider the comparable question with respect 
to pain. Some have claimed that pain is intrinsically bad, and that this is why 
we dislike it. As I have suggested, I doubt this claim. After taking certain 
kinds of drug, people claim that the quality of their sensations has not 
changed, but they no longer dislike these sensations. We would regard such 
drugs as effective analgesics. This suggests that the badness of a pain consists 
in its being disliked, and that it is not disliked because it is bad. The 
disagreement between these views would need much more discussion. But, if 
the second view is better, it is more plausible to claim that whatever someone 
wants or does not want to experience—however bizarre we find his desires— 
should be counted as being for this person truly pleasant or painful, and as 
being for that reason good or bad for him. (There may still be cases where it 
is plausible to claim that it would be bad for someone if he enjoyed certain 
kinds of experience; this might be claimed, for instance, about sadistic 
pleasure. But there may be few such cases.)

If instead we appeal to the Success Theory, we are not concerned only 
with the experienced quality of our conscious life. We are concerned with 
such things as whether we are achieving what we are trying to achieve, 
whether we are being deceived, and the like. When considering this theory, 
we can more often plausibly claim that, even if someone knew the facts, his 
preferences might go astray, and fail to correspond to what would be good 
or bad for him.

Which of these different theories should we accept? I shall not attempt an 
answer here. But I shall end by mentioning another theory, which might be 
claimed to combine what is most plausible in these conflicting theories. It is 
a striking fact that those who have addressed this question have disagreed 
so fundamentally. Many philosophers have been convinced Hedonists; 
many others have been as much convinced that Hedonism is a gross 
mistake.

Some Hedonists have reached their view as follows. They consider an 
opposing view, such as that which claims that what is good for someone is 
to have knowledge, to engage in rational activity, and to be aware of true 
beauty. These Hedonists ask, 'Would these states of mind be good, if they 
brought no enjoyment, and if the person in these states of mind had not the 
slightest desire that they continue?' Since they answer No, they conclude 
that the value of these states of mind must lie in their being liked, and in 
their arousing a desire that they continue.

This reasoning assumes that the value of a whole is just the sum of the 
value of its parts. If we remove the part to which the Hedonist appeals, what 
is left seems to have no value, hence Hedonism is the truth.

Suppose instead, more plausibly, that the value of a whole may not be the
mere sum of the value of its parts. We might then claim that what is best for people is a composite. It is not just their being in the conscious states that they want to be in. Nor is it just their having knowledge, engaging in rational activity, being aware of true beauty, and the like. What is good for someone is neither just what Hedonists claim, nor just what is claimed by Objective List Theorists. We might believe that if we had either of these, without the other, what we had would have little or no value. We might claim, for example, that what is good or bad for someone is to have knowledge, to be engaged in rational activity, to experience mutual love, and to be aware of beauty, while strongly wanting just these things. On this view, each side in this disagreement saw only half of the truth. Each put forward as sufficient something that was only necessary. Pleasure with many other kinds of object has no value. And, if they are entirely devoid of pleasure, there is no value in knowledge, rational activity, love, or the awareness of beauty. What is of value, or is good for someone, is to have both; to be engaged in these activities, and to be strongly wanting to be so engaged.26

**J BUDDHA’S VIEW**

At the beginning of their conversation the king politely asks the monk his name, and receives the following reply: ‘Sir, I am known as “Nagasena”; my fellows in the religious life address me as “Nagasena”. Although my parents gave (me) the name “Nagasena” . . . it is just an appellation, a form of speech, a description, a conventional usage. “Nagasena” is only a name, for no person is found here.’27

A sentient being does exist, you think, O Mara?
You are misled by a false conception.
This bundle of elements is void of Self,
In it there is no sentient being,
Just as a set of wooden parts,
Receives the name of carriage,
So do we give to elements,
The name of fancied being.28

Buddha has spoken thus: ‘O Brethren, actions do exist, and also their consequences, but the person that acts does not. There is no one to cast away this set of elements and no one to assume a new set of them. There exists no Individual, it is only a conventional name given to a set of elements.’29

**Vatsiputriya.** If there is no Soul, who is it that remembers? **Vasubandhu:** What is the meaning of the word ‘to remember’? **Vatsiputriya.** It means to grasp an object by memory. **Vasubandhu.** Is this ‘grasping by memory’ something different from memory? **Vatsiputriya.** It is an agent who acts through memory. **Vasubandhu.** The agency by which memory is produced we have just explained. The cause productive of a recollection is a suitable state of mind, nothing more. **Vatsiputriya.** But when we use the expression ‘Caitra remembers’, what does it mean? **Vasubandhu.** In the current of phenomena which is designated by the name Caitra, a recollection appears.31

The Buddhist term for an individual, a term which is intended to suggest the difference between the Buddhist view and other theories, is santana, i.e. a ‘stream’.32

**Vatsiputriya.** What is an actual, and what a nominal existence? **Vasubandhu.** If something exists by itself (as a separate element) it has an actual existence. But if something represents a combination (of such elements) it is a nominal existence.33

The mental and the material are really here,
But here there is no human being to be found.
For it is void and merely fashioned like a doll,
Just suffering piled up like grass and sticks.34