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978-0-521-03959-8 - Value, Welfare, and Morality  
Edited by R. G. Frey and Christopher W. Morris  
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This book addresses critical issues in normative ethical theory. Every such theory must contain not only a theory of motivation but also a theory of value, and the link that is often forged between what is valuable and what is right is human welfare or well-being. This topic is a subject of considerable controversy in contemporary ethics, not least because of the current reconsideration of utilitarianism. Indeed, there is as much disagreement about the nature of value and its relationship to welfare and morality as there is about the substantive content of normative ethical theories.

The essays in this collection, all new and written by a distinguished team of moral philosophers, provide an overview, an analysis, and an attempted resolution of those controversies. They constitute the most rigorous available account of the relationship between value, welfare, and morality.

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# *Value, Welfare, and Morality*

*Edited by*

R. G. FREY and CHRISTOPHER W. MORRIS  
*Bowling Green State University*



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## Preface

In the last two decades, the rise of substantive ethics and, through this, the renewed development of normative ethical theories have become prominent concerns in moral philosophy. In turn, however, the development of such theories has raised to prominence issues in value theory and the epistemology of morals, and resolution of these issues has come to be regarded as vital to progress in the renewed search for an adequate normative ethical theory. In these regards, what is the relation between value and desire or preference? Do desires and preferences alone provide reasons for action? Indeed, do they provide reasons for action at all? Are judgments of value “subjective” in some way, and are they “projected onto the world”? Or are such judgments “objective,” either in the sense of having truth-values independent of their conditions of verification or in the sense of representing something inherent in the world? What is the relationship between claims of “objectivity” in either of these senses and the natural properties of things in the world? What exactly is supervenience, and what supervenes on what? Is there a viable distinction to be drawn between agent-relative and agent-neutral value? Are there any agent-neutral values, and how do we tell whether there are? Are there agent-independent values as well? The growing conviction that we are unlikely to make further progress in the development of an adequate normative ethical theory or even in substantive ethics without resolving a number of these issues, has given them an air of urgency as well as prominence.

It was with these questions in mind that we held a conference on “Value, Welfare, and Morality” at Bowling Green. To it, we invited a number of philosophers who had made significant contributions to value theory and moral theory. We have supplemented their efforts here with five additional essays commissioned for this volume, also by significant figures. Our aim has been, then, not only to produce a volume that addresses fundamental questions to do with value, welfare, and morality but also to produce one that is representative of the very best work on



the interlocking themes that comprise this general area of moral philosophy.

Numerous people have helped us both with the conference and this volume, especially among the graduate students, staff, and faculty of the philosophy department at Bowling Green, and we are grateful to them all. The referees for Cambridge proved helpful as well, as did our editor, Terence Moore, whose customary good advice and encouragement has once again placed us in his debt.

It is with deep sadness that we note one of our contributors, Warren Quinn, died before the appearance of this volume. While we have lost a friend, philosophy has lost a dedicated and vibrant talent. We are pleased to present here one of his best, if very last, pieces.