

# *Neutrality and the Relations between Different Possible Locations of the Good\**

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*This article explores and challenges several common assumptions regarding what neutrality requires of us in assessing outcomes. In particular, I consider whether we should be neutral between different possible locations of the good: space, time, and people. I suggest that from a normative perspective we should treat space differently than time, and people differently than space and time. I also argue that in some cases we should give priority to people over space and time, and to time over space, but that, controversially, in some cases we should give priority to time over people.*

**Keywords:** Neutrality, impartiality, practical reasoning, dominance principles, impersonal ideals, utilitarianism, space, time.

## *1. Introduction*

It is common for philosophers and others to assume that, in certain contexts, morality requires us to be *neutral* with respect to space, time, and people. Following John Broome, we might refer to space, time, and people as different possible *locations* of the good (Broome 1991). Arguably, classical utilitarians would have insisted that all that mattered was the sum total of utility that obtained in the world, not its location. So, in principle, classical utilitarians would have insisted not only on neutrality *within* each of the different possible locational categories, but *between* each of these locational categories.

\* This article was originally given as a talk at the Value Conference sponsored by The Ohio State University, Maribor University, and Rijeka University, held in Dubrovnik, Croatia, 11–15 June, 2018. I am grateful to the organizers, Justin D'Arms, Edin Lin, Boran Berčić, and Nenad Mišćević, for inviting me to participate in that conference. I am also grateful to Nenad Mišćević for inviting me to submit a written version of my talk for inclusion in this journal.

Setting aside the special relations that give rise to agent-relative prerogatives and duties, I think there is surely something to be said in favor of the general proposition that morality requires us to be neutral with respect to space, time, and people. However, I believe it is much less clear what that is than many have assumed. In particular, I believe that many common assumptions about the relative status of the different possible locations of the good are dubious.

In this article, I shall briefly try to illustrate some of my reasons for thinking this via a number of examples. The article is divided into three main sections. In Section 2, *Space and time*, I offer an example where I treat space and time differently for the purposes of rational deliberations. In Section 3, *Space, time, people, and dominance principles*, I introduce three dominance principles with respect to space, time, and people. I note that, intuitively, it may seem that if we should be neutral between the different possible locations of the good, then if we accept one of the dominance principles we should accept all three. However, I note that in cases involving infinity the three dominance principles conflict, so that we *cannot* accept all three. This suggests that we must reject all three dominance principles, restrict their scope, or reject neutrality between the three different locations of the good. In Section 4, *On the independent normative significance of temporal value*, I suggest that there may be independent value to filling different temporal periods with high quality sentient life, beyond the extent to which doing so is good or bad *for* the sentient beings in those time periods.

Together, my arguments suggest that, from a normative perspective, we should treat space differently than time, and people differently than space and time. More specifically, they suggest that in some cases we should give priority to people over space and time, and to time over space, but that, controversially, in *some* cases, we should, in essence, give priority to time over people.

## 2. *Space and time*

Let's start with the question of whether, from a normative perspective, we must treat space and time the same. Some people who do philosophy of physics may think that to even raise this question reveals a deep misunderstanding of the nature of space and time, since modern physics supposedly tells us that space and time are inextricably linked in a single space/time continuum. However, my concern, here, is with whether we *must* treat space and time the same, in virtue of some *necessary normative* principle, not with the *empirical* relation between space and time that may (or may not) *in fact* obtain in our world, but need not obtain in all possible worlds. Accordingly, to help us think about the questions that concern me here, we should assume, throughout this article, that we live in a world where a non-relativistic conception of space and time is true. This would have been the case if either a Newtonian or a pre-Newtonian conception of space and time had turned out to be true.

Bearing the preceding assumption in mind, consider the following thought experiment.

Suppose I learn that our civilization will live in our galaxy another 1000 years, and then die out. I *also* learn that in a distant galaxy another civilization will exist for the same 1000 years and then die out. Suppose, further, that this is also so in a third distant galaxy, and a fourth. I find this all quite interesting. Perhaps oddly, it is somewhat *pleasing* to me to learn that there are, in fact, advanced civilizations living in various galaxies far away. However, suppose I also learn that *beyond* the fourth galaxy there is *nothing* but cold, empty, space. This, too, I find interesting. Yet, I must confess that learning that fact doesn't bother me very much at all. Indeed, if someone said that events beyond the fourth galaxy were about to unfold which would make those distant reaches inhospitable to life forms in perpetuity, I wouldn't think it especially important for our civilization to make significant sacrifices, if it could, to prevent that from happening.

Suppose, on the other hand, I vary the story a bit. As before, I learn that civilization in our galaxy will die out in 1000 years, but I learn that after ours dies out another, wholly unrelated, civilization will arise and persist for 1000 years in a second galaxy far away, and that this will happen again a third and fourth time. But after that, I am told, there will be *nothing* but cold, empty, space, *forever*. For some reason, *that* knowledge would bother me a *lot*. Indeed, if I learned that events were about to unfold which would make the universe uninhabitable for any life forms 4000 years from now, unless our civilization made significant sacrifices to prevent that from happening, I would feel quite strongly that we should do so. Moreover, I would feel that way even if I knew that *our* civilization was going to die out in 1000 years no matter what we did, and that any future civilizations would do nothing to advance or realize our particular dreams or goals.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Samuel Scheffler (2013) has argued that having descendants who will help realize some of our deepest hopes, projects, or ideals, helps to give our lives value and meaning that they would otherwise lack. Scheffler's views are entirely compatible with my own, and I am happy to accept them. But, they point to *other* reasons why one might be more concerned about the future than about what happens elsewhere in space than those I am trying to illuminate here. As my example makes plain, I believe that even if the future civilizations were wholly unrelated to our own, and would do *nothing* to further *our* particular hopes, projects, and ideals, I *still* believe that there would be strong reason to ensure that such civilizations would exist if they would have high quality lives. In addition, I believe that such reasons would be stronger than any we would have to ensure, were it possible, that such civilizations obtain elsewhere in space contemporaneous with our own.

Similarly, Jeff McMahan (personal communication, October 2, 2015) suggested a variety of considerations that might lead us, in general, to give greater weight to there being high quality sentient lives existing in the future, than to there being high quality sentient lives existing elsewhere in space. According to McMahan, these might include views we have about the importance of the preservation of value, views about the importance of progress, and views about the importance of greater diversity of experiences. My response to McMahan is threefold.

My views here may ultimately be indefensible, but I don't think they are idiosyncratic, and they reveal that I have an asymmetry in my thinking about space and time. Even if I know that the exact same number of sentient beings will exist in the two scenarios, and will flourish to the exact same extent, I respond to the two scenarios very differently. The second scenario seems very bad indeed. The first seems hardly bad at all. Thus, I think it very important that many *times* be filled with flourishing sentient beings. I think it much less important that many *spaces* be filled with flourishing beings. Of course, these reflections hardly constitute an *argument* for my view; but they reveal that I am treating space and time differently in my moral deliberations.

Let us vary the preceding example just a bit. Suppose that we had taken steps to ensure both that three distant planets in space were populated with advanced civilizations, and that each of the next three consecutive hundred year periods would also be populated with advanced civilizations. Suppose, next, that someone developed two pills, each of which would enable us to lead really flourishing lives for 120 years, but with the following consequences. If we take the red pill, we won't be able to populate any more distant planets in space. If we take the blue pill we won't be able to populate any more hundred year periods after the next three. I believe that there would be little or no objection to taking the red pill, but *very* strong objection to taking the blue one. Here, again, I find myself wanting to treat space and time differently in my moral deliberations.

As discussed in note three, the objection to taking the blue pill that I have in mind here is independent of any of the ways in which future civilizations might help realize *our* projects or goals. To my mind, a *principle* reason for wanting high quality life to exist in the future is also a reason for wanting high quality life to exist in the past; namely that it is a very good thing for different time periods to be filled with a significant number of sentient beings with high quality lives. *That* reason is unrelated to any meaning or value that the existence of descendants may sometimes help bestow on their ancestors. I don't believe that there is a similarly strong reason to fill different locations in space with high quality lives.

First, as with what I said about Scheffler's view, I don't regard my position as incompatible with McMahan's. Depending on the details of the case, there could be more than one reason for valuing the existence of *future* civilizations over the existence of contemporaneous civilizations elsewhere in space. But second, in my examples, I wasn't, in fact, assuming that there was greater diversity of experiences over time than across space, nor was I assuming that there would be *progress* between our current civilization and the future, unrelated, civilizations. Thus, my views about such cases weren't, in fact, turning on such factors. Moreover, importantly, I note that the notions of *preservation* of value, and *progress*, have a temporal dimension built in to them, but not a spatial dimension. So, McMahan's suggestions regarding those factors would, if correct, not be a *rival* to my own, but rather a further elucidation of some of the *reasons* why we should treat space and time differently for the purposes of practical reasoning.

### 3. *Space, time, people, and dominance principles*

Suppose, for a moment, that we should dismiss my worries, and go along with the widely-held view that, except in the case of special relations and special obligations, we should be neutral across all three dimensions of space, time, and people. A corollary of such a view would *seem* to be that if we accept a dominance principle with respect to one of these categories, we should accept a similar dominance principle with respect to the others. Consider, for example, the following three dominance principles regarding utility.

*Spatial Dominance Principle:* for any two alternative outcomes, A and B, if A and B involve the same region of space, S, which is made up of a set of non-empty sub-regions of space,  $s_1, \dots, s_n$ , if A is better than B regarding utility in *every* sub-region of space,  $s_i$ , then A is better than B regarding utility.

*Temporal Dominance Principle:* for any two alternative outcomes, A and B, if A and B involve the same region of time, T, which is made up of a set of non-empty sub-regions of time,  $t_1, \dots, t_n$ , if A is better than B regarding utility in *every* sub-region of time,  $t_i$ , then A is better than B regarding utility.

*Personal Dominance Principle:* for any two alternative outcomes, A and B, if A and B involve the same people and A is better than B regarding utility for *every* person who will ever live, then A is better than B regarding utility.

Intuitively, many would find each of the preceding dominance principles plausible, and they might assume that if one of them is true the others must also be true. But this assumption is clearly false. To see this, consider Diagram 1.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> The following case is my own, but it was sparked by an example I first heard during a discussion with John Broome, many years ago, which he called “Expanding Heaven and Expanding Hell.” Broome credited his example to James Cain (See Cain 1995). Although my views about this topic were arrived at independently, other philosophers have developed similar arguments in order to make similar points. See, for example, Vallentyne (1993), Lauwers (1997) Vallentyne and Kagan (1997), Machina (2000), Lauwers and Vallentyne (2004), Bostrom (2011), and Campbell (2015).

Interestingly, while Cain uses an example similar to mine to arrive at the same conclusion that I do regarding the relative status of Personal and Temporal Dominance Principles for certain cases and contexts, Campbell produces a series of ingenious examples in order to show that, depending on one’s theory of personal identity, there will be other cases where the relative status of Personal and Temporal Dominance Principles would be the reverse of that for which Cain and I argue. I don’t favor the reductionist view of personal identity that would lead to Campbell’s results. However, many do, and for those who do, Campbell’s arguments are quite compelling.

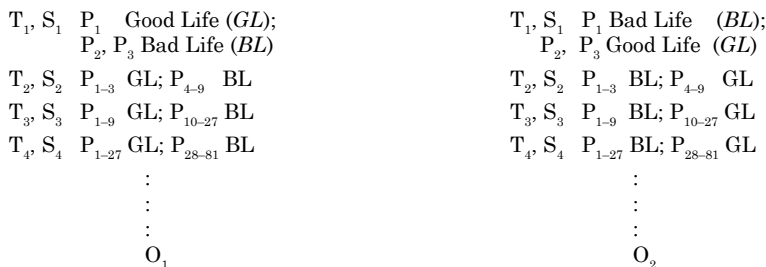


Diagram 1.

$O_1$  and  $O_2$  are two possible outcomes, in which the very same people,  $P_1, P_2, P_3$ , etc. exist. In  $O_1$  there is one person,  $P_1$ , living in time period one, and spatial region one, who has a *good* life, well *above* the level at which life ceases to be worth living; but, unfortunately, there are *twice* as many *other* people,  $P_2$  and  $P_3$ , who have *bad* lives, well *below* the level at which life ceases to be worth living. In time period two,  $P_1$  through  $P_3$  have moved to spatial region two, where they all enjoy good lives; but, unfortunately, in that time period, and at that location, twice as many other people,  $P_4$  through  $P_9$ , have come into existence, and their lives are as bad as  $P_2$  and  $P_3$ 's lives were during  $T_1$ . In time period three,  $P_1$  through  $P_9$  have all moved to spatial region three, where they all enjoy good lives, but, unfortunately in that time and location, twice as many other people,  $P_{10}$  through  $P_{27}$ , have come into existence, and their lives are as bad as  $P_2$  and  $P_3$ 's lives were during  $T_1$ . Outcome One continues to unfold, in this ever expanding manner, forever, with each time period lasting for one day, and each person living for 100 years total, before dying. Here, and later, we assume that the positive value of each good moment is the same, the negative value of each bad moment is the same, and that the two values sum to zero. So, by hypothesis, a life containing an equal number of moments of good and bad life will have a net value of zero, a life containing more moments of good life than bad will have a positive net value, and a life containing more moments of bad life than good will have a negative net value.

Outcome Two is analogous to, though the reverse of, Outcome One. In  $O_2$ , there is one person,  $P_1$ , living in time period one, and spatial region one, who has a *bad* life, well *below* the level at which life ceases to be worth living; but, fortunately, there are *twice* as many *other* people,  $P_2$  and  $P_3$ , who have *good* lives, well *above* the level at which life ceases to be worth living. In time period two,  $P_1$  through  $P_3$  have moved to spatial region two, where they all suffer bad lives; but, fortunately, in that time period, and at that location, twice as many other people,  $P_4$  through  $P_9$ , have come into existence, and their lives are as good as  $P_2$  and  $P_3$ 's lives were during  $T_1$ . And so on. As before, Outcome Two continues to unfold, in this ever expanding manner, forever, with each time period lasting for one day, and each person living for 100 years total, before dying.

How do Outcomes One and Two compare regarding utility? Comparing them spatial location by spatial location, or temporal location by temporal location, Outcome Two would be clearly *better* than Outcome One, in accordance with the Spatial and Temporal Dominance Principles. This is because for *every* spatial region,  $S_n$ , and *every* temporal region,  $T_n$ , there will be twice as many people with good lives as with bad lives in Outcome Two, while there will be twice as many people with bad lives as with good lives in Outcome One.

So, *should* we conclude that Outcome Two really *is* better than Outcome One regarding utility? I think not. This is because Outcome One is *better* than Outcome Two in accordance with the *Personal* Dominance Principle regarding utility. After all, by hypothesis, the *same* people exist in both outcomes, and they are all *clearly* better off in Outcome One, where they each suffer for only *one* bad *day* followed by *99 years* and *364* days of good life, than they are in Outcome Two, where they each fare well for only *one day*, followed by *99 years* and *364* days of bad life.

In this example, we can accept the dominance principle regarding people, or we can accept the dominance principles regarding space and time, but we cannot do both. Here we have a proof that, unless we reject *all three* dominance principles, in some cases, at least, we *should* not, and *cannot*, treat space and time the same way as we treat people. So, *should* we reject all three dominance principles? I don't see why. In this case, at least, the Personal Dominance Principle clearly seems to support the correct answer!

The preceding argument suggests that for certain cases, at least, we should give priority to distributions of wellbeing across people over distributions of wellbeing across space and time. And earlier, I suggested being more concerned about distributions of wellbeing throughout time, than throughout space. The priority ranking of people, over time, over space, for some cases, at least, might be further buttressed by considering Diagram 2.

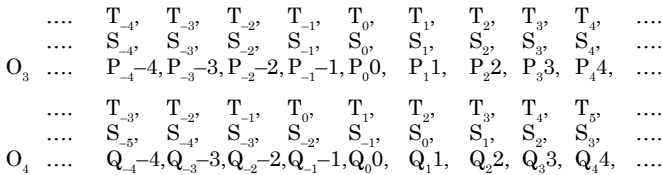


Diagram 2.

In Diagram 2,  $O_3$  and  $O_4$  are outcomes with an infinite number of people,  $P_i$  or  $Q_j$ , with each person, located at a particular location in space,  $S_k$ , and a particular location in time,  $T_l$ , at a level corresponding to one of the integers. So, for example, in Outcome Three, person  $P_0$  is at level 0, at temporal location 0 and spatial location 0, while in Outcome Four person  $Q_{-4}$  is at level  $-4$ , at temporal location  $-3$  and spatial location  $-5$ . For the purposes of this example, I am assuming that the metaphys-

ics of space and time allow for the identification of the same spatial and temporal locations across different possible outcomes, so that for each  $k$  and  $l$ ,  $S_k$  corresponds to the very same location in space in each outcome, and  $T_l$  corresponds to the very same location in time in each outcome. If such an assumption is coherent, then Diagram 2 illustrates that the Spatial and Temporal Dominance Principles are incompatible with each other. So we can reject both, or limit their scopes, but we cannot simply accept both. This is because, as a careful examination reveals, in Diagram 2, Outcome Three is *better* than Outcome Four at every point in *time*, but Outcome Three is *worse* than Outcome Four at every point in *space*.

Now assume, temporarily, that the populations of the Outcomes Three and Four are wholly distinct. In that case, I can see why someone might claim that each outcome is *equally* good, since each involves an infinite number of people, such that for each integer there is exactly one person whose level of wellbeing is accurately represented by that integer. If one reasoned in that way, then one would be rejecting *both* the Spatial Dominance Principle *and* the Temporal Dominance Principle. However, my own judgment is that in this case we should *accept* the judgment yielded by the *Temporal* Dominance Principle, and *reject* the judgment yielded by the *Spatial* Dominance Principle. That is, in this case, I would judge Outcome Three as better than Outcome Four, since it is better at each moment in time and, to my mind, there is neither a compelling reason to ignore this consideration, nor a countervailing reason outweighing it.

However, as the previous discussion makes plain, I believe that there *could* be a countervailing reason outweighing, or perhaps undermining, the Temporal Dominance Principle. In particular, if the *same* people would exist in both Outcome Three and Outcome Four, and they would *each* be better off in one of the outcomes than the other, then, in accordance with the *Personal* Dominance Principle, I would judge, in *this particular* case and context, the outcome in which they were all better off as better than the other outcome, regarding utility, regardless of how the two outcomes compared in accordance with either the Spatial or Temporal Dominance Principles.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> As the literature cited in note four reveals, many people have recognized that Dominance Principles fail in infinite cases. And many others are suspicious of appealing to infinite cases in thinking about normative issues. Given the difficulty of grasping the infinite intuitively, the latter attitude is understandable. Nevertheless, I think it is deeply mistaken. I believe that if one is careful, one can usefully consider infinite cases when doing normative philosophy, and that there can be great philosophical payoff from doing so. I also believe that since it is very possible that we live in an infinite universe, it would be deeply problematic if our moral principles were only plausible for, and applicable to, finite realms.

Unfortunately, the issues connected with this topic are too complex to pursue here. Still, I believe that the infinite examples canvassed in this work are appropriate for the purposes to which I put them, and that we can usefully gain insight into this article's topics by considering them. I might add that many people assume



#### 4. *On the independent normative significance of temporal value*

Many philosophers, economists, and others believe that the proper locations of value are *people*, and that considerations of time and space are *only* relevant insofar as they have an effect on the quality of different people's lives. But the considerations I have offered in support of giving greater priority to time over space belie that simple, natural, assumption. Elsewhere, I have argued at great length in support of there being *impersonal* ideals, as well as *personal* ones.<sup>4</sup> In particular, I have argued that many of the ideals that people value most, including such ideals as justice, equality, beauty, perfection, and truth, have value *beyond* the extent to which they are good or bad *for* people. I have also argued in favor of a *Capped Model of Ideals*, according to which there may be an upper limit to how good an outcome can be, regarding utility, for any given period of time, so that once a large number of people exist who are already extremely well off, merely adding more people to the outcome with lives worth living won't significantly make the outcome better.<sup>5</sup> I can't repeat the arguments for these positions here. However, if, in fact, they are correct, they provide the theoretical basis for a rather surprising, and controversial, conclusion. To wit: while in the contexts previously discussed there was reason to give priority to *people over times*, in *some* contexts, there may be reason, in essence, to give priority to *times over people*.

To see this, consider Diagram 3.

that even if the Dominance Principles fail in infinite cases, they succeed in finite cases. However, I believe that this intuitively plausible position is also mistaken, for reasons that I have given elsewhere and won't repeat here. For reasons relevant to rejecting the Personal Dominance Principle, even in finite cases, see Temkin (1993, 2000: 126–161, 2003a; 2003b, and 2012). For reasons relevant to rejecting the Spatial and Temporal Dominance Principles, see Temkin (2012 and 2015).

<sup>4</sup> See my *Inequality*, "Equality, Priority, and the Levelling Down Objection," "Egalitarianism Defended," "Personal versus Impersonal Principles: Reconsidering the Slogan," and *Rethinking the Good*.

<sup>5</sup> At least if the additional people are no better off than those who already exist. I was initially led to advocate a Capped Model of Ideals by reflecting on Derek Parfit's *Repugnant Conclusion* (Parfit 1984: 388). For a detailed explication of the Capped Model of Ideals, and some of the considerations underlying it, see Chapter 10 of *Rethinking the Good*.

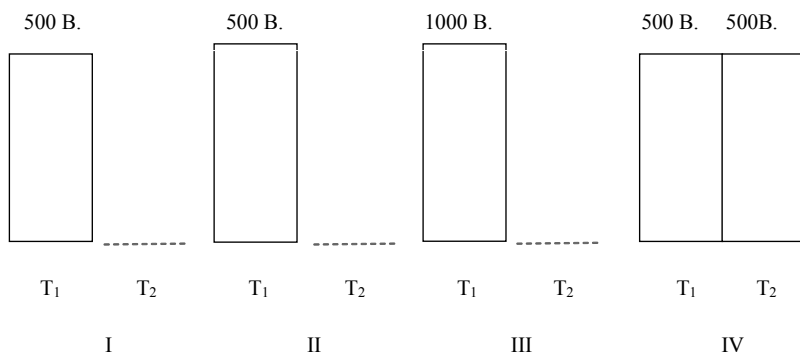


Diagram 3.

Diagram 3 is different from Diagrams 1 and 2 in one important respect. In Diagram 3, the width of each rectangle represents the length of a *time* period, rather than the number of people existing in an outcome—that number is given above each rectangle. Moreover, we assume, for the sake of the example, that in accordance with a Capped Model for Ideals, for any time period the duration of  $T_1$ , 500 billion people, at any given level of wellbeing, would be enough to bring an outcome *very near* to the cap for how good an outcome can be, during that time period, by having lots of people with that level of wellbeing.

As drawn, Diagram 3 represents four possible outcomes. In Outcome I, there are 500 billion people all at a very high level, spread out over a lengthy time period,  $T_1$ . Unfortunately, in Outcome I, a second equally lengthy time period,  $T_2$ , is *utterly devoid* of high quality sentient life. In Outcome II, the very same 500 billion people who would exist in Outcome I exist at a *slightly* higher quality of life during time period  $T_1$ . However, once again, unfortunately, time period  $T_2$  is *utterly devoid* of high quality sentient life. In Outcome III, an extra 500 billion people have been added to the temporal period  $T_1$ , at the same level as those in Outcome II. But, once again, unfortunately, time period  $T_2$  is *utterly devoid* of high quality sentient life. Finally, in Outcome IV, the original 500 billion people occupy time period one at the level of those in Outcome I, and there are an extra *500 billion people* who all exist *in time period*  $T_2$  at the very same level. Moreover, by hypothesis, these are the very same “extra” people who *would* have existed in Outcome III during time period  $T_1$  at a slightly higher level.

How do the different outcomes compare, all things considered? Drawing on the results presented previously, together with my view about how best to understand and interpret the Capped Model of Ideals—which I have only had time to barely *mention*, but not develop in this article—I would make the following judgments. I would judge Outcome II as better than Outcome I, since it is better for everybody. However, since it is only a *little* bit better for everyone, and I reject

a simple additive aggregationist model for ranking outcomes, I would judge that Outcome II isn't a *whole* lot better than Outcome I.

Next, I would judge Outcome III as only slightly better than Outcome II, and hence, like Outcome II, as only a little better than Outcome I. This is an implication of the Capped Model of Ideals, given our assumption that the cap is already almost reached in Outcome II, for how good an outcome can be by having lots of people at that level, during a time period the duration of  $T_1$ . On that assumption, the Capped Model implies that merely adding another 500 billion people to the *very same temporal region* would *not* make a significant difference to the overall goodness of an outcome. Hence, as indicated, Outcome III would not be significantly better than Outcome II.

On the other hand, since I believe that it *is* very important that many regions of *time* be filled with flourishing beings, I would judge Outcome IV, where there are *500 billion flourishing beings in  $T_2$*  as *much* better than Outcome I, where  $T_2$  is *utterly devoid* of high quality life. Unsurprisingly, then, I would also judge Outcome IV as better than Outcome's II and III, which are only a little better than Outcome I in terms of what happens during time period  $T_1$ , and which, like Outcome I, have the significant negative feature of being utterly devoid of high quality sentient life throughout the whole of time period  $T_2$ .

But notice, by hypothesis, the *very same people* exist in Outcomes III and IV, and they are *all* better off, even if only slightly, in Outcome III than in Outcome IV. So, my judgment that Outcome IV is better than Outcome III, all things considered, suggests that, in *this* context, I am, as it were, giving priority to time over people. This is a striking conclusion that many people will initially find deeply implausible.<sup>6</sup> However, I believe that this conclusion is defensible, and that, on reflection, it is neither surprising nor implausible. It is merely yet another manifestation of the fact that some ideals have *impersonal* value, in the sense that their realization can contribute to the goodness of outcomes, *beyond* the extent to which their realization is good *for* the sentient beings in those outcomes. In particular, this article's considerations reflect the view that there can be significant impersonal value to filling different periods of time with high quality life. Correspondingly, it shouldn't be surprising that in some cases, such as the one depicted by Diagram 3, such impersonal value can outweigh the personal value of increasing individual wellbeing by a small amount.

<sup>6</sup> Derek Parfit once referred to a claim of this sort as *The Absurd Conclusion* (Parfit 1984: 410–411). Arguably, underlying the plausibility of Parfit's ascription were both a *welfarist* view—which assesses the goodness of outcomes solely in terms wellbeing, thereby rejecting the relevance of *impersonal* ideals for assessing outcome goodness—and a standard view about what neutrality requires. As my claims here make plain, I believe that both views are dubious. For further arguments in support of this article's claims and the view that The Absurd Conclusion isn't, in fact, absurd, see Temkin (Forthcoming).

## 5. Conclusion

Let me briefly summarize my main claims. Setting aside any agent-relative duties and permissions that may arise due to the special relations that sometimes obtain among different beings, most people agree that morality requires neutrality. There is, I believe, something deeply right about this. However, it is much less clear than many have supposed what neutrality entails.

In particular, one might have presumed that morality requires us to be neutral both within, and between, each of the different possible locations of good: space, time, and people. While there may be *some* sense in which this is true, I have suggested that we need not, and should not, treat space, time, and people the same for the purposes of normative reasoning.

I have offered examples suggesting that in some cases we should give priority to time over space, and that it is more important that different temporal regions be filled with flourishing sentient beings than that different spatial regions be filled with flourishing beings. I have also shown that three intuitively plausible dominance principles conflict in certain cases: a Spatial Dominance Principle, a Temporal Dominance Principle, and a Personal Dominance Principle. I have suggested that when they conflict I favor the judgment of the Temporal Dominance Principle over that of the Spatial Dominance Principle, and that in certain cases I favor the judgment of the Personal Dominance Principle over that of both the Spatial and Temporal Dominance Principles. However, drawing on claims argued for elsewhere—that there can be impersonal ideals, as well as personal ideals, relevant for assessing outcome goodness, and that we need something like a Capped Model of Ideals for evaluating outcomes—I also argued for the striking claim that in certain cases we should, as it were, give priority to times over people.

This article is very much a preliminary exploration, and I am acutely aware that the speculative lines I have pursued will strike many as wild, implausible, and deeply wrongheaded. Nevertheless, I believe there is much to be learned about the nature of practical reasoning by taking these issues seriously; even if doing so may ultimately take us in directions other than those that I have stumbled towards in this article.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Most of this article's issues have been dealt with in much greater depth in Temkin (2012, 2015 and forthcoming). Even so, our thinking about these topics remains very much in an early stage, and there is much more to be learned, and written, about all of these issues.

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