

The Harm of Existence

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to defend the position of "antinatalism" which tries to show that coming into existence is always a serious harm for the person who is brought into existence, and that even what we might call the best lives are not worth starting. This is shown by an asymmetry proposed by David Benatar in which he compares pains and pleasures to their absence. I will refer to pains and pleasures as, "the good things in life," and "the bad things in life." By looking at this asymmetry we can come to the conclusion that there are no lives worth starting, and even the very best lives are plagued with an immeasurable amount of the "bad things in life." I will explore just how much badness existence contains and the positive illusions and biological safeguards we use to defend ourselves which prevent us from consciously recognizing this. I will object to the fact that we have any sort of obligation to produce happy people but we do have an obligation not to produce unhappy people, or put people into a potentially harmful and dangerous situation without their knowledge or consent. All these things lead me to the conclusion that bringing someone into existence is a terrible form of malevolence and an action that should not be taken by a moral person.

KEYWORDS

Antinatalism, Polyanna Principle, Existence, Utilitarianism

In this paper I will be supporting the position of anti-natalism, the belief that it is wrong to bring new sentient beings into existence. We ought not to be creating new sentient beings. I will be attempting to show that coming into existence is always a serious harm for the person who is brought into existence, and that even what we might call the best lives are not worth starting. By coming into existence, I am not talking about fetal viability, or moment of conception, what I mean by, "coming into existence" is when a being has an interest in continuing to exist, even if these interests might be considered small or primitive. Because of the serious harm that comes from bringing people into existence we should conclude that reproduction is immoral.

This argument goes against most people's deepest intuitions concerning life as a whole for three main reasons. One, that coming into existence does not constitute a harm at all, that it is always a good thing for the person who is being brought into existence. Some people might not share this intuition, though I suspect many people do. Even if people do not agree with this statement, I find that there are two other common intuitions people use to justify existence. The second is that coming into existence can be a harm, but the harm that accompanies existence is not of a high enough degree so that we would wish we never would have come into existence in the first place. Running parallel with this claim is a belief which I believe the majority of people share; that their lives are on average good, and that they are glad for having been brought into existence. Stemming from these deep-seated intuitions, those who believe in them will have strong reasons to deny the view that bringing people into existence is a morally culpable act.

First it must be shown that coming into existence can be a harm at all. David Benatar proposes an axiological asymmetry to show this (Benatar 1997). Imagine two possible states, state A in which a person exists and another, state B, which says that person never came into existence. By coming into existence, that person probably will experience pleasure, which by itself is a good thing. That person will also experience pain, which by itself is a bad thing. In short, the presence of pleasures is good, and the presence of pains are bad. How we would like to define these terms is unimportant. I am talking about pains and pleasures in the intrinsic sense and am unconcerned with the byproducts that each might create after the initial experience. The point of highlighting pains and pleasures in the asymmetry is helpful because these are tangible experiences and less likely to be

mischaracterized. However, pains and pleasures are not the only metric available for showing that coming into existence is a harm. We could easily replace pains and pleasures with satisfactions and disappointments, happiness and sadness, or knowledge and ignorance. It might be helpful for pains and pleasure to be used synonymously with “the good things in life” and “the bad things in life.” Regardless, it does not matter what binary we plug into the asymmetry, the conclusion will remain the same in all cases.

Now, compare this to another counterfactual state of the world where that person does not exist at all. Because of the absence of a specific person we must look at what the absence of pains and pleasures looks like. The absence of pain is good even if it is not good for a specific person, and the absence of pleasure is not bad unless that absence is a deprivation. Because there is no one who exists that could be deprived of any pleasures, the absence of pleasures is not bad. By comparing these two states we can see that the asymmetry favors state B, that of not having come into existence. There are no pains, and there are no deprived pleasures. By coming into existence, you most assuredly will encounter pains, or, “the bad things in life,” and most likely a very significant amount. On the other hand, you will likely experience certain pleasures, but these pleasures are paid for at the cost of a vast amount of harm. By not bringing people into existence we avoid all harms that would befall that possible person. Again, it is true that they will experience no pleasures, but that cannot be a mark against non-existence because there is no one to be deprived of these absent pleasures.

There might be some resistance to the idea that something could be good even if there is no one for whom it is good or that there is no one around who might be able to experience or recognize that good. It seems to me, however, that the property, or status, of something being “good” does not necessarily have to involve a person being there or recognizing that good. Many good things in life are not recognized, or not judged to be good by people. An error in judgement or an unrecognition of a certain good does not seem to negate the fact that it indeed might still be good.

A mistake people make when interpreting this argument is the distinction between a life worth starting and a life worth continuing. People will look at this argument and think I’m dismissing the power of pleasures too quickly, but the possibility of pleasures does not mean that we should bring people into existence just so they can experience those pleasures. If I say, “Jill would be better off

never having been born," people will quickly point out all the good things that her life contains and say that these are adequate reasons that her existing is a good thing. I admit that a life filled with the "good things in life" is the preferable scenario for someone who already exists and has a continued interest in existing, but that does not mean that Jill's life was worth starting just because she can take advantage of these pleasures. There are no lives that are worth starting, which is what the asymmetry attests to.

Some argue that we cannot compare the two states because we are comparing the life of someone who exists to non-existence, we are comparing the existence of A to nothing. In order for B to be preferable to A, A must make someone worse off than they otherwise would have been. But this does not seem to be necessarily true. A is simply bad, where B is not, as the asymmetry shows. A is bad for the person coming into existence when compared to the possible alternative of B.

Certainly, life cannot be reduced and compartmentalized to only pains and pleasures, as some might wish to argue. Life could contain a great deal of pain and still be rewarding or worthwhile in some way, and that perhaps this model of judgement is to hedonistic and misconstruing the bigger picture of existence. One might argue that pains and pleasures are too simplistic when we are making judgements about how bad existence is, there are things like knowledge, love, longevity, satisfaction, and communal contribution. These things are commonly thought of as good and might help swing the scales to the obverse conclusion that bringing someone into existence is a good, or at the very least is not immoral. I do not deny that once someone has come into existence these things can give us a sense of purpose, a reason to continue living, and give us a powerful impetus to resist the notion that existence is very bad. But, in all these categories I would argue that people are faring much worse than they actually believe. If we look at knowledge and imagine a spectrum where on one end of the spectrum is knowing everything, or being omniscient, and on the other end of that spectrum is knowing nothing, I would argue that we fall very close to the knowing nothing side of the spectrum. Similarly, we can also look at love. On one side of the love spectrum is being loved by everyone and opposite of that is being loved by no one. Again, we fall much closer to the side of being loved by no one. That is not to discredit the amount of love or knowledge that a person might have in their life, but it is important to recognize how little of these goods we have.

Many people might grant the conclusion that life does contain more pain, or bad things, and still hold to the belief that, though life does contain harm, it is not of a high enough magnitude to accept the conclusion that we should never reproduce. They will claim that, all things being equal, the good things far outweigh the bad things, or that the presence of the good things are enough to make the bad things worth it. I believe this is a miscalculation of how bad our lives really are, and this is partially due to certain biological safeguards that manifest themselves in the form of positive illusions, or self-serving biases which greatly cloud our judgements when we try to make accurate evaluations of our lives. M.W Matlin and D.J Stang have found that humans have a "Pollyanna principle," an optimistic bias that acts on the subconscious level which distorts the views we have about our own lives (Matlin, M.W; Stang, D.J 1978). It allows us to recall pleasant memories easier than unpleasant ones when thinking about past events, and this subconscious process produces a rosier picture than what was initially experienced.

There are numerous everyday examples of this principle in action, and some of them on a massive societal scale. How many times has one heard, when referencing ones college or high school years, that they were the "good old days." For such a widely spoken statement, it's one that does not seem entirely objectively accurate. College students are often poor, their diet suffers as a result and they lack the money to pursue meaningful or engaging hobbies. There is constant stress placed on them to succeed academically as well as socially. There is the constant fear of failure and "throwing away" one's future. The majority of students suffer these consequences while being aware that they are burying themselves in debt which will affect them psychologically and financially. Assuredly the monotony of stress, anxiety, and depression are broken by the occasional "good things" in life, but I do believe that they are the exception and not the rule. Obviously, this is not the case for everyone during those times and experiences. Some people's times may be worse than others, but overall, I believe it to be just various shades of "bad." The Pollyanna Principle and other biases allow us to easily recall the positives of those "good old days," and ignore the negatives.

We are not only affected by these delusions when looking backward, but also forward. When we think about the future, we tend to exaggerate on how good our lives will be. For instance, we think that we will achieve the goals we currently have set, find a partner, become rich or famous. Most of these things

will not happen, and people hardly ever consider the inevitabilities that the future brings; death of a family member or friend, old age and the failing physical and mental capacity that comes with it, possible debilitating sickness, dissatisfaction and disappointments. These things are hardly ever considered when people are making a judgement about their future. Also, our self-assessments concerning our current well-being is often extremely optimistic. We choose to think of the good things about our lives and ignore the bad. To help support this view we have a tendency to compare our lives with other lives that are objectively worse, which in doing so unfairly tips the judgment scales in favor of our lives; think of statements like, "well at least I'm not starving," or "I could have cancer like Bill!" And even if our objective wellbeing takes a turn for the worst, we are quick to adapt to our new discomfort and normalize it. The average human being consents to the badness of life without a second thought and is easily carried towards sedation through biologically created and self-induced optimistic illusions. It should be noted that the Pollyana Principle is severely lacking or non-existent in depressives.

These harmful inevitabilities are often never taken into consideration when people are thinking about having children. It is the case that, when you have a child that child is going to suffer a very large amount during their lifetime, but also eventually that child will experience the gradual process of dying, culminating in its obliteration. Knowingly bringing a person into an existence where the outcome will always be obliteration seems like it would be difficult to ignore, but it is one that seems to be shrugged off with ease, or without ever being contemplated at all. Many parents seem unconcerned with this fact. They might feel consoled that if the natural order of things goes as planned their obliteration will precede that of their child's, so there is a sort of "out of sight, out of mind" mentality. I do not think this natural telos of annihilation is one that should be dismissed so quickly when people are considering having a child, and if people thought carefully and compassionately about this certitude it would give them good reasons to desist from procreation.

People usually do not like to be told that their quality of life is much lower than they've estimated and that they have been hoodwinked into believing a falsity. It is not uncommon for people to become fairly defensive over such claims. If people conclude that after looking at all the facts and analyzing them that their lives are good, why should they be told otherwise? This logic is very rarely applied when people who are depressed or suicidal talk about the badness of life. Often

times these people are viewed as “sick,” or that their subjective assessment about their life is simply mistaken. If the quality of life can be underestimated than it can certainly be overestimated, which is usually the case given the Pollyana principle and other similar biological processes. I believe that being deluded by these biases is a benefit to those that believe they are true, but I do not believe that they should be the exemplar we should be using when we are talking about the objective quality of existence.

We quickly forget about day-to-day unpleasanties and annoyances which constitute a significant amount of our time: hunger, thirst, bowel discomfort, minor aches and pains, anxiety, boredom, and many other common place negative experiences. Imagine having the capability to remember every single instance of these common place experiences with the same vivacity as we could a very charming memory. We might be hard pressed to keep ourselves alive. Add on top of these major life events that nearly everyone who lives long enough will experience: bereavement over the death of a loved one, serious sickness or injury, depression, dissatisfaction, disappointment, aging, and eventually the process of our own death. These are institutional ailments to the human condition, but even the most extreme conditions are exceedingly prevalent throughout all times and places. Think about the billions of people who live in poverty, who starve to death, who are killed in cruel and inhumane ways, who are stifled by dictatorship or authoritarianism, who are born with a disability, and many other extreme cases that are easy to find amongst the human race. We should not only focus on ourselves when considering our relation to these evils, but also recognize that these inflictions permeate into all human lives in some form or another. By focusing on the here and now we are severely limiting our scope to the monumental amount of human suffering that has been experienced throughout all of history. All of which was unnecessary and based on the miscalculation that existence is always a good thing.

Furthermore, all these negative experiences and sensations come far more naturally than experiences like happiness, achievement, and satisfaction. Hunger will come unless it is satiated, boredom will set in when we are stagnant, sickness and disease are for more likely to come unless we are taking careful consideration over what we put into our bodies. There is also something to be said about the length and frequency of these negative experiences. A sense of achievement is often overcome very quickly by a new desire or a new goal. Achievement requires

constant striving and is short lived. Injuries happen in an instant but could take months or even years to heal, if they ever fully do. A lifetime of knowledge could be wiped out in minutes from a stroke or head injury, decades of love and intimacy can end in a day if the feeling is unreciprocated from another.

Some people will argue that I have neglected to recognize the positive experiences that life can provide, and that perhaps I have rigged the scales in order to favor my conclusion. I do not think I have done this. I do not believe pleasures and pains are equal in scale, this is because the vivacious nature of the ways we can be harmed. Their duration, their resilience, their forcefulness, and a number of other factors. We do not need to subscribe pains and pleasures a numerical value and through some calculus see if this is the case, but instead we can simply look at the world and people's reaction to pains and pleasures. It seems to me that the most terrible pains are worse than the greatest pleasures are good, and we have strong empirical reasons to believe that this is the case. For example, if we grant that pleasures and pains are on the same scale, then it seems most people would take a half an hour of the most extreme and brutal pains for an hour of the most sublime pleasures. However, I do not think that most people would accept that deal, and that is due to the nature of pains and the nature of pleasures. Another example, millions of people live with some sort of chronic pain, but there is no such thing as chronic pleasure.

This argument, as many people might point out, is contingent on there being pain, or "bad things" in the world, so that if these bad things were eliminated or greatly reduced to almost the point of nothing, then it would be permissible to bring new people into existence. This is not the case. The argument is certainly contingent on "bad things" being in the world, but this is a very deep contingency that is so firmly rooted in human existence that it is nearly impossible to imagine a world without it. I do not think it is possible for human beings to create a world totally immune from all the bad things in life. Let us say we were able to build this perfect world and the only pain a person would feel would be the prick from a needle, say, from a "bad things in life" immunity shot. This tiny instance of pain is still enough to refer back to the asymmetry and see that it would have been better for that person to have never felt that pin prick in the first place, even though the rest of their life will be uninterrupted pleasure. By not coming into existence that person never feels that pain and is not deprived of any pleasures.

Some will wish to push further and ask us to imagine a world with absolutely no pains or “bad things” in life. I believe this is an impossibility, but so as not to dismiss the point too quickly, even if this perfect world were somehow to come into fruition it would just make bringing someone into existence a matter of indifference. We could bring someone into existence, but they are not deprived of anything if we do not. It seems to me that we have no obligation to create happy people, and we do not regret not bringing happy people into the world for their sake. We can imagine a beautiful planet empty of sentient life in some distant galaxy which is similar to Earth. We are not filled with pity or sadness that there are no happy people living there, though we might be glad that there is no suffering on the planet. We might feel some form of happiness that there are no people on that planet, and are thus spared from things like wars, famines, murders and rapes. But for most, it would be a matter of indifference that there are no happy people on the planet. There are other reasons for rejecting this “perfect world argument.” One of them being the generations leading up to this perfectionist utopia that will suffer greatly, perhaps billions and billions of people, who just play the role of stepping stone towards a better world for future people.

This idea of obligations might resonate with certain ethical theories such as Utilitarianism. If the greatest possible good is to do things which promote the most happiness for the most amount of people, and most people feel that they are happy with their lives as opposed to unhappy, then a Utilitarian might conclude that we do have an obligation to bring people into existence in order to bring about more happiness for more people, even though a perceived smaller amount might feel consistently unhappy throughout their lives. It seems to me, however, that the Utilitarianism principle cannot be applied to the cases of potential people. This is because it rests on an assumption that the majority of future people will be happy with their lives, and also that these people will help promote the happiness and wellbeing of others. It is possible that, for instance, all people born after the year 2020 will grow up with depressive mindsets. That they will overwhelmingly believe that their lives are not worth continuing, and that they will have regretted the fact that they were brought into existence in the first place. This seems unlikely, but it is just as unlikely as the assumption that the majority of people born after the year 2020 will be happy with their lives and be grateful that they were brought into existence. The point of these two hypothetical possibilities is to show that an assumption of this kind is not worth

the negative repercussions of what could happen if our assumption turns out to be false. Therefore, the Utilitarianism argument fails when it is applied to the cases of possible, or future, people.

Up until this point I have been focused on giving philanthropic arguments for why we should abstain from procreation. However, these are not the only form of arguments available. The other form could be considered misanthropic arguments; arguments revolving around interactions between people. Let us draw from the previous hypothetical example and grant that people born after the year 2020 will all be extremely happy with their lives. From this it does not mean that those happy people will amplify or promote the happiness of others. The happy people born after 2020 could grow up to do horrendous acts of cruelty and violence. They could become mass murderers, rapists, pedophiles, tyrants, or a number of other things which would only reduce the level of universal happiness instead of supplementing it. No one likes to think this way when they are considering having a child, and that is for the simple reason that it isn't a very pleasant thing to think about. When people are considering having a child, they never think about the immeasurable harm it might inflict on other people or the damage it may cause to the environment, but this is the risk that every parent takes when they decide to bring a child into existence.

These are extreme cases, (although I believe they happen frequently enough to act as a further deterrent to bringing people into existence) and it could be easy to shrug off this argument by saying that the majority of people will not do these things. That they are abnormalities; an exception and not the rule. However, even if we choose to ignore these more serious cases of human savagery, we still can look at a multitude of other examples which reveal just how harmful human beings are to each other on a day-to-day basis. Consider small instances of lies or deceit, what we might call "white lies." We might justify these things by saying that we are trying to avoid hurting the feelings of the other person, or that we're trying to sidestep an unnecessary argument of some sort. These are reasonable excuses, but not morally excusable ones. Lies are revealed. We often hurt the person in our effort to make them feel better or console them, and though this type of harm might seem miniscule at the time, throughout the course of a lifetime I believe it adds up to a substantial amount of harm that we have caused other people. Similarly, acts of exclusion often make people feel unwanted, unappreciated, or

lacking in some substantial way. Children often do this but acts of exclusion follow us way into adulthood.

Again, each individual instance of these acts might seem negligible, but over the course of a lifetime these acts add up to what I believe is a substantial amount of harm. Small acts such as these are bound to happen countless of times every day around the planet. Add to these other seemingly insignificant (not for the person who is affected by the act, however) accounts of human malevolence such as petty theft, fights which induce physical harm, adulterous cheating, rude behavior, inconsiderate remarks, and an abundance of other acts which are not just constricted to the fringe of the human race but instead permeate to nearly everyone who has ever lived or is currently living on the planet. The nasty truth is we are generally not very nice to each other on a regular basis. We only dismiss these “petty” forms of malevolence because they seem so natural to the majority of us.

In short, it seems that we have no justification from the Utilitarian point of view, or any other obligatory view to create new people, as we have no way of guaranteeing that these people will be happy or that they will add a sort of net-benefit to the people who already currently exist. However, it seems that we do have an obligation to avoid sending a potential human being (and an already existing human being) into a painful or dangerous situation without their knowledge of the situation or their consent. For example, someone is lost wandering the streets of Flint, they approach you and ask for directions to the nearest gas station where they might be able to make a phone call to ask a friend to come and pick them up. You know where the nearest gas station is, and you know that it is in a safe neighborhood only a couple blocks away. But, instead of giving them directions to that gas station you direct them towards a gas station two miles away located in a very dangerous neighborhood. You do not inform the person of all the possible pains and dangers that person is risking by walking there alone. I think most people would find that you’ve done something morally wrong. You’ve put a human being in a potentially very dangerous situation. A situation in which had you directed them to the safe gas station a couple blocks away, they could have avoided entirely. If harm befalls that person, then it seems that you are partly responsible for that harm, because you knowingly have helped orchestrate the dangerous situation in which that person found themselves. By choosing to bring someone into existence you do something similar to the case of the lost

person. By bringing people into existence we are knowingly and willingly placing them into a situation where dangers and pains are abundantly present. Bringing someone into existence is even worse than the lost person scenario because the degrees of possible pains and dangers are greatly amplified due to the sheer amount and higher degree of pains and dangers which are possible throughout a lifetime.

There are certain steps I believe we could take which might make the lost person scenario morally acceptable. Say when approached by the stranger you only know about the gas station located in the dangerous neighborhood two miles away, and you are completely unaware that another gas station exists only a couple of blocks away that is very safe to walk to. You direct the person to the gas station two miles away but explain to them that it is a very dangerous part of town, and that they take a great risk walking all the way there alone. The difference between this scenario and the scenario above is that a.) you are unaware of the other gas station which would have been safer to walk to, and b.) you informed the person of the great possibility of potential harm that could befall that person should they choose to walk there. If they choose to walk there, then they have done it with the full knowledge of the potentially dangerous situation and have taken it upon themselves to ignore that potential harm and walk there anyways. Now compare this to bringing someone into existence. The possible person has no knowledge of all the potential bad things that could befall them should they be brought into existence. And, we have the full knowledge that by not bringing that person into existence we could altogether avoid sending that possible person into a painful or dangerous situation. We have done something wrong when we bring someone into existence. That person was never informed and could never be informed, about the risks of coming into existence, yet we have chosen for them and forced them into this potentially painful or dangerous situation.

A contention to this line of thinking could be that there is no way we could ever communicate the risks of existence with potential people, so that cannot be a moral strike against bringing someone into existence. Because we could never know what a potential person would choose, it seems unfair to think that all of them would choose non-existence over existence. Furthermore, a person who is brought into existence might never experience these possible pains or dangers (which, things being as they are, seems to me to be an impossibility). Even if we grant these claims we are still making the decision for them and forcing that

person into a potentially painful or dangerous situation without their consent. It seems to me that consent is an essential part of morality and our interactions with one another. Knowingly putting someone into a situation where the potential for serious harm is likely, even if it could possibly benefit that person or give them pleasure, should still require the consent of that person. Say you go in for a minor surgery that you have consented to undergo. The anesthesiologist puts you to sleep and begins to operate on you. The doctor performing the procedure successfully completes your surgery with no complications, but she is aware of a brand-new procedure which if done correctly could greatly enhance the good things in your life, and how well you live your life. However, because the surgery is very difficult, there is also a chance where she makes a mistake and puts you at a severe disadvantage for the rest of your life and substantially lowers its quality. There is a 50/50 chance that she either succeeds or fails. She performs the surgery while you are unconscious and without your consent but is ultimately successful. Even though because of the procedure she has given you more of the "good things in life," it seems completely fair to say that she was immoral for having done the procedure in the first place. The doctor opened up the possibility of a great amount of harm befalling you without your consent, and we should regard that as immoral. Due to the considerable amount of the "bad things" that life contains, we should not subject someone to the risks of existence because we do not have consent to do so.

An argument often leveled against the anti-natalist position is one that often takes the brutish form of, "If life is so bad, why don't you just kill yourself?" It is true that I believe life contains more good than it does bad, but that does not mean that the bad is more prevalent at all times in a person's life. The totality, or the whole of life, is I believe bad, but that whole is comprised of different parts, some of which might be good. Also, the suicide rebuttal is a mistake of people commonly equating anti-natalism with some form of pro-mortalism. This rests on the assumption that death is not bad for us, something like the Epicurean view of "death is nothing to us." I do believe that death is a harm to us because it means the cessation of our goals and desires into which we have placed value. It means that we are deprived of the good things which we otherwise could have had, and it means a complete obliteration of the self. It certainly could be the case that there might come a time in someone's life where death becomes the lesser of two evils, but it is still an evil, nonetheless. If I am wrong about the view that death

is bad for the person who dies than the comparison to pro-mortalism might be warranted, but I do not think my view of death is wrong or counter intuitive.

Nothing in the arguments I have presented has forced me to accept the conclusion that I, or anyone else, should kill themselves in an attempt to escape from the condition we exist in. People who propose this question are missing the very important distinction between a life worth starting and a life worth continuing. Again, there are no lives that are worth starting, but once a life has been started it is worth continuing if that person has an interest in continuing to exist. Nowhere do I propose that someone should give up their interest in continuing to exist, although sometimes someone may deem it better for them to abandon their interest in continuing to exist, or that interest might evaporate seemingly on its own due to the amount of badness a life contains. There might come a time in a person's life where they no longer have an interest in continuing to exist, something which is common of people during the end of their lives. Their interest in living is thwarted by too much pain, boredom, or exhaustion. After a cost-benefit analysis of some sort, a person might conclude that these factors, or the "bad things in life" that they are experiencing, overpower their interest in continuing to live for a couple more months or years. The feasibility of obtaining possible pleasures are overpowered by the certainty of pains. In cases such as these, where a person's interest in living ceases to become important to them, or is far overshadowed by other factors, then it seems that we should find it morally admissible for them to take their own lives. In cases such as these I believe suicide is warranted, but just because life contains an immense amount of badness does not mean everyone who experiences this badness should take their own lives. Nowhere in the anti-natalist argument is someone forced to this conclusion, and it is an argument purely based on a misunderstanding of the anti-natalist position.

Forfeiting our intuitions, we should be able to realize two things. The first is that all our lives are very bad, and probably much worse than we realize. Because of this comes the second, due to the vast amount of badness that each life contains we should refrain from bringing new people into existence. I do not believe that this argument or way of thinking will spread to the masses or be talked about in universities or popular culture, but still I hope it is one of applicable ethics and not just shrugged off as a philosopher's puzzle or a strictly metaphysical argument. I hope that when people are thinking of having a child, they are thinking about the inherent harm that comes with existence, and the amount of badness which will

befall that child that simply does not need to. All suffering is unnecessary, and the more we continue to reproduce the more we choose to prolong it.

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