

**Hong Kong Catastrophic Risk Centre  
Online Research Seminar**

# **Desire-Fulfilment and Consciousness**

**Dr. Andreas Mogensen**

Global Priorities Institute, University of Oxford

Some philosophers argue that the desire-fulfilment theory of welfare requires us to recognize the possibility of non-conscious welfare subjects, relying on the assumption that an individual can be understood as desiring something just in case they are motivated to bring it about. I criticize this argument, showing that the best way to understand the desire-fulfilment theory of welfare relies instead on an affective conception of desire. Nonetheless, I suggest that there are good grounds for recognizing the possibility of affective states occurring without phenomenal consciousness and for according moral standing to non-conscious individuals who exhibit states of that kind. I conclude that we have good reason to think that the welfare good of desire-fulfilment can be instantiated by non-conscious individuals, albeit under far more restrictive conditions than the initial argument would suggest. Finally, I explore some of the implications of the view developed here for our thinking about invertebrates and AI systems as welfare subjects

## **Venue: Zoom Seminar**



**zoom  
seminar**

Here is the link to the seminar –

[lingnan.zoom.us/j/98319515823?  
pwd=Q9Qa5HadK0gFWfVEm1fTmQnBY31w8.1](https://lingnan.zoom.us/j/98319515823?pwd=Q9Qa5HadK0gFWfVEm1fTmQnBY31w8.1)

**For more information:**

<https://www.ln.edu.hk/philoso/hkcrc/>

2616 7445/ hkcrc@ln.edu.hk

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**4:30-6:00 p.m. (HKT)**