

## Editorial

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The larger part of this issue is taken by seven articles dealing with the subject of moral theory in bioethics. This theme, as well as the articles, are introduced by the guest editors Mike McNamee and Thomas Schramme. I can confine myself to present the three articles that fill up the issue.

Carl Baker reacts on a recent article in this journal by Patricia Marino where she argues that Blackburn's logic faces a dilemma: either it cannot account for the place of moral dilemmas in moral reasoning or, if it can, it makes an illicit distinction between two different kinds of moral dilemma. Her target is the logic's definition of validity as satisfiability, according to which validity requires an avoidance of attitudinal inconsistency. Against Marino's arguments, Baker contends that expressivists following Blackburn *are* able to show how we appreciate the validity of arguments found in dilemma-contexts, and that Marino's argument concerning the distinction between contingent moral dilemmas and logical moral dilemmas rests on a mistake concerning the logical representation of a contingent dilemma.

Brian McElwee's article deals with the demandingness objection to consequentialism, which arises in response to the theory's commitment to impartiality. It might be thought, he says, that the only way that consequentialists can avoid such demandingness objections is by dropping their commitment to impartialism. However, he outlines and defends a framework within which all reasons for action are impartially grounded, yet which can avoid demandingness objections. He defends this framework against what might appear to be a strong objection, namely the claim that anyone who accepts the theory will be practically irrational.

The last article discusses the—disputed—use of thought experiments in applied ethics. Adrian Walsh argues that thought experiments have an important role to play in applied ethics, in focusing our attention on morally-salient features of a moral problem, providing counter-examples to general moral principles and allowing us to re-imagine moral problems that have become stale. Although there is nothing *intrinsically wrong* with any thought-experiment in terms of their content, Walsh does not to suggest their use is always

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legitimate. Firstly, their employment is illicit when they are elements of invalid arguments. This of course is a generic concern with the use of thought experiments. But there is also a way of going wrong that is specific to applied ethics. When thought-experiments fail to respect the contingent nature of the problems considered in applied ethics then their use is also illicit. This does not rule out bizarre thought experiments. However, it does involve a rejection of the use of thought experiments that lead us to change the topic under examination