## **Editorial Note**

A. W. Musschenga · R. Heeger

Published online: 13 March 2013

© Springer Science+Business Media Dordrecht 2013

When one group commits genocide against another, the genocide is collective in the sense that the wrongness of genocide seems morally distinct from the aggregation of individual murders that make up the genocide. According to Brian Lawson, the problem, which he refers to as the problem of collective wrongs, is that it is unclear how to assign blame for distinctly collective wrongdoing to individual contributors when none of those individual contributors is guilty of the wrongdoing in question. In his article, Lawson offers Christopher Kutz's Complicity Principle as an attractive starting point for solving the problem, and then argues that the principle ought to be expanded to include a broader and more appropriate range of cases. The view he ultimately defends is that individuals are blameworthy for collective harms insofar as they knowingly participate in those harms, and that said individuals remain blameworthy regardless of whether they succeed in making a causal contribution to those harms.

According to Robert C. Reed, everyday ethical expertise requires an openness to an experience of self-doubt very different from that involved in becoming expert in other skills—namely, an experience of profound vulnerability to the Other similar to that which Emmanuel Levinas has described. Since the experience bears, according to Reed, a striking resemblance to that of undergoing cross-examination by Socrates as depicted in Plato's early dialogues, he illustrates it in his article through a close reading of the Euthyphro, arguing that Euthyphro's vaunted "expertise" conceals a reluctance to submit himself to the basic process of self-redefinition that results from learning the limits of one's knowledge. He shows how the dialogue itself models the disruptive experience of selfquestioning that leads to moral maturity, providing further evidence that expertise has an important non-cognitive element, as well as casting doubt on the ethical value of seeking "definitions" of the virtues.

Recent empirical studies have established that disgust plays a role in moral judgment. The normative significance of this discovery remains an object of philosophical contention, however; 'disgust sceptics' such as Martha Nussbaum have argued that disgust is a distorting influence on moral judgment and has no legitimate role to play in assessments of moral wrongness. In his paper, Alexandra Plakas argues, pace Nussbaum, that disgust's role in the

A. W. Musschenga (⋈) · R. Heeger

Department of Philosophy, VU University, De Boelelaan 1105, Amsterdam 1081 HV, The Netherlands e-mail: a.w.musschenga@vu.nl



moral domain parallels its role in the physical domain. Just as physical disgust tracks physical contamination and pollution, so moral disgust tracks social contamination. She begins by examining the arguments for scepticism about disgust and show that these arguments threaten to overgeneralize and lead to a widespread scepticism about the justifiability of our moral judgments. She then looks at the positive arguments for according disgust a role in moral judgment, and suggest that disgust tracks invisible social contagions in much the same way as it tracks invisible physical contagions, thereby serving as a defence against the threat of socio-moral contamination.

In recent years there has been growing attention paid to a kind of human action or activity which does not issue from a process of reflection and deliberation and which is described as, e.g., 'engaged coping', 'unreflective action', and 'flow'. Hubert Dreyfus, one of its key proponents, has developed a phenomenology of expertise which he has applied to ethics in order to account for 'everyday ongoing ethical coping' or 'ethical expertise'. In his article, Nigel DeSouza addresses the shortcomings of this approach by examining the pre-reflective ethical know-how individuals first develop and on which all later forms of ethical expertise are dependent. In the first section an account is given of the 'ethical second nature' which every individual develops from childhood onwards and which forms the basis of pre-reflective ethical know-how. The second section turns to pre-reflective ethical know-how and whether it is conceptual in nature. Finally, the third section examines the process whereby ethical second nature and pre-reflective ethical know-how are actually acquired, namely, through immersion in an 'ethical world'.

A morally objectionable outcome can be overdetermined by the actions of multiple individual agents. In such cases, the outcome is the same regardless of what any individual does or does not do. (For a clear example of such a case, imagine the execution of an innocent person by a firing squad.) In their article, David Killoren and Bekka Williams argue that, in some of these types of cases, (a) there exists a group agent, a moral agent constituted by individual agents; (b) the group agent is guilty of violating a moral obligation; however, (c) none of the individual agents violate any of their moral obligations. They explicate and defend this view, and consider its applications to problems generated by

Gianluca Di Muzio argues that horror films of a certain kind are immoral because they undermine the reactive attitudes that are responsible for human agents being disposed to respond compassionately to instances of victimization. Scott Woodcock calls this argument one instance of the Argument from Reactive Attitudes (ARA). In his article, he argues that Di Muzio's attempt to identify what is morally suspect about horror films must be revised to provide the most persuasive interpretation of the ARA. He then shows that the ARA provides a compelling standard for evaluating the moral permissibility of creating and viewing horror films, however, it is an exceedingly difficult practical task evaluating the risk that these films create for our reactive attitudes. Woodcock's conclusion is that the ARA provides a useful way of orienting ourselves to the complicated details of evaluating the moral status of horror films.

Many political philosophers hold the *Feasible Alternatives Principle* (FAP): justice demands that we implement some reform of international institutions P only if P is feasible and P improves upon the status quo from the standpoint of justice. The FAP implies that any argument for a moral requirement to implement P must incorporate claims whose content pertains to the causal processes that explain the current state of affairs. Yet, argues David Wiens in his article, philosophers routinely neglect the need to attend to actual causal processes. This undermines their arguments concerning moral requirements to reform international institutions. The upshot is that philosophers' arguments must engage in causal analysis to a greater extent than is typical.



Editorial Note 225

It is widely acknowledged that moral principles are not sufficient to guide moral thought and action: they need to be supplemented by a capacity for judgement. However, why can we not rely on this capacity for moral judgement alone? Why do moral principles need to be supplemented, but are not supplanted, by judgement? So-called moral particularists argue that we can, and should, make moral decisions on a case-by-case basis without any principles. According to particularists, the person of moral judgement is a person of empathy, sensibility and virtue, rather than a person of principle. In her article, Maike Albertzart argues that this is a false dichotomy. The person of good moral judgement is a person of principle. She proposes that we think of moral principles as internalised long-term commitments that form our moral character and sensitivity, and, as such, are constitutive of moral judgement.

In many countries, only donation has been considered for organ procurement. Among the other possibilities that can be used after a person's death, purchase or systematic removal have been a priori rejected. In their article, Caroline Guibet Lafaye and Henri Kreis show that the appeal to individual altruism has resulted in some of the aporias of the present situation. Subsequently, they consider how systematic organ removal from deceased persons can be made acceptable in liberal and democratic societies. Finally, they suggest that individual choices with regard to systematic organ removal could well be registered in a way that allows proper implementation of present French legislation

Thomas Pogge has argued that typical citizens of affluent nations participate in an unjust global order that harms the global poor. This supports his conclusion that there are wide-spread negative institutional duties to reform the global order. In his article, Steven Daskal defends Pogge's negative duty approach, but argues that his formulation of these duties is ambiguous between two possible readings, only one of which is properly confined to genuinely negative duties. He contends that this ambiguity leads Pogge to shift illicitly between negative and positive duties, and ultimately to overstate the extent of the negative ones. Daskal also argues that recognition of this ambiguity makes it possible to draw a meaningful distinction between the relevant positive and negative duties, and that Pogge's analysis can therefore be revised in a way that reveals substantial negative institutional duties to the global poor, albeit less extensive ones than Pogge asserts

Patrick Tomlin argues that luck egalitarians should sometimes seek to limit inequalities, even when they have a fully choice-based pedigree (i.e., result only from the choices of agents). Granting that the broad approach is correct, Tomlin argues that the temporal standpoint from which we judge whether the person can be held responsible, or the extent to which they can be held responsible, should be radically altered. Instead of asking, as Standard (or Static) Luck Egalitarianism seems to, whether or not, or to what extent, a person was responsible for the choice at the time of choosing, and asking the question of responsibility only once, we should ask whether, or to what extent, they are responsible for the choice at the point at which we are seeking to discover whether, or to what extent, the inequality is just, and so the question of responsibility is not settled but constantly under review.

The hard paternalist must, according to William Glod, give adequate reasons for her coercion which are acceptable to a free and equal agent. Coercion that fails to meet with an agent's reasonable evaluative commitments is at least problematic and risks being authoritarian. Even if the coercer claims no normative authority over the coercee, the former still uses coercion to replace the latter's reasons or will with his own reasons or will. But does every hard paternalistic view have to invite such objection? In his article, Glod assumes that defenders of what he calls "Neutral Paternalism" (NP) and "Commonsense Paternalism" (CP) aim to offer reasons for coercion all can reasonably endorse despite evaluative



diversity, in opposition to more objectionable forms of coercive paternalism, such as those which defend it on religious or perfectionist grounds. Glod argues, nonetheless, that Gerald Dworkin's defence of NP and Danny Scoccia's defence of CP succumb to the same problems of objectionable imposition that saddle other forms of coercive paternalism. The shortcomings in their views suggest that even modest hard paternalism is nonetheless problematic for liberals.

Epicurean contractarianism is an attempt to reconcile individualistic hedonism with a robust account of justice. The pursuit of pleasure and the requirements of justice, however, have seemed to be incompatible to many commentators, both ancient and modern. It is not clear how it is possible to reconcile hedonism with the demands of justice. Furthermore, it is not clear why, even if Epicurean contractarianism is possible, it would be necessary for Epicureans to endorse a social contract. In his article John J. Thrasher argues that Epicurean contractarianism is both possible and necessary once we understand Epicurean practical rationality in a new way. We are left with an appealing version of teleological, individualistic contractarianism that is significantly different from Hobbesian contractarianism.

