

Editorial Note

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The first three articles of this issue result from the conference of the British Society for Ethical Theory held at the University of Stirling, 9–11 July 2012. In this ‘special issue’, Stephanie Collins discusses special duties to families and friends, and argues for an impartialist justification of these duties. Wouter Floris Kalf develops an alternative argumentative strategy for settling the non-negotiable commitment claim of moral error theory to there being a moral reality. Matthew Rendall argues that the challenge of Michel Otsuka, Alex Voorhoeve and Marc Fleurbaey to the priority view can be used to recast this view.

William A. Lauinger opens the general part of the issue with a discussion of which welfare theories can satisfy an adequacy constraint on welfare theorising: the requirement that a welfare theory cannot allow that someone can be directly benefited by events not strongly tied to him. Ryan Reed aims to discover what might be required of parents in a Rawlsian contract state, and considers adoptive selection in the light of these requirements and Rawls’ arguments considering merit and fair equality of opportunity. With his Tortoise–parable, Lewis Carroll intended to raise a difficulty about the idea of valid arguments. Jan Willem Wieland asks what Carroll-style considerations actually prove in the rationality debate. Oliver Hallich goes into the ‘paradox of forgiveness’ that we ought to forgive what there is (or seems to be) no reason to forgive: culpable wrongdoing, and argues that we can be rational in overcoming feelings of resentment towards such acts of wrongdoing. Greg Bassett raises the question of whether it is possible to explain actions that are contrary to judgement, and argues that this is possible if one regards these actions to be guided by pre-conceptual perceptions which are not propositional judgements. Peter Königs discusses the role that emotions may play in the justification of punishment and argues that the expressivist account fails as these emotions can be expressed other than through the infliction of punishment. Larry Alexander aims to survey and analyse the various moral problems in which the question of whether other people’s errors can affect our duties arises. According to all-luck egalitarianism, the differential distributive effects of both brute luck, which defines the outcome of risks which are not deliberately taken, and option luck, which defines the outcome of deliberate gambles, are unjust. Carl Knight goes into the question of how to correct the effects of option luck. Beril Idemen Sözmen examines the natural harm argument which says that alleviating the suffering of non-human animals is not a moral obligation for human beings because such an obligation would also morally prescribe human intervention in nature for the protection of non-human interest which, it claims, is absurd.

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