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Book Review: Schroeder, Mark. Explaining the Reasons We Share: Explanation and Expression in Ethics, vol. 1.

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Schroeder, Mark. *Explaining the Reasons We Share: Explanation and Expression in Ethics*, vol. 1.
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This volume is a collection of eleven essays by Mark Schroeder, including one previously unpublished paper, divided into four parts. Schroeder's substantive introduction to the volume explains the unifying argumentative thread running through these essays and will be useful even to those who have read the essays

separately. The essays themselves are superb. Schroeder's work is unmatched in its clarity, incisiveness, originality, creativity, and depth. And this volume will leave the reader with a new appreciation for various ways in which assumptions about the structure of normative explanations—particularly about what Schroeder calls the Standard Model Theory—are important to central debates in metaethics.

When we provide a Standard Model explanation of why someone ought to perform some action, we show how performing that action is a way or means of doing something else he ought to do (28). Suppose Mark promises to attend the workshop. Here's a Standard Model explanation of why Mark ought to attend the workshop: attending the workshop is a way of keeping his promise, and he ought to keep his promise. On this explanation, there's some further action Mark ought to perform (keeping his promise), and attending the workshop is a way of doing that.

Schroeder's central target in the essays in part 1 is the Standard Model Theory, which is the view that "*all* normative explanations have to work in this way" (28). Rejection of the Standard Model Theory makes room for another kind of normative explanation: a Constitutive Model explanation. A constitutive explanation "explains why something is the case by appeal to claims about what it *is* for it to be the case" (3). And so a Constitutive Model normative explanation will, for instance, explain why you have a reason to do something by appealing to what it is to have a reason to do something or explain why you ought to do something by appealing to what it is for it to be the case that you ought to do something (79, 34).

In "Cudworth and Normative Explanations," which is justifiably identified as the "central paper in this volume" (4), Schroeder shows how Ralph Cudworth's argument against theological voluntarism presupposes the Standard Model Theory. (More precisely, it presupposes the Standard-Constitutive Conjecture, according to which, "all normative explanations must *either* follow the Standard Model *or* the Constitutive Model" along with a skepticism about Constitutive Model explanations [37].) Theological voluntarists will think that Mark ought to keep his promise because that's what God commands. But if we, like Cudworth, assume the truth of the Standard Model Theory, then the theological voluntarist will seem committed to explaining Mark's obligation to keep his promise by seeing his promise keeping as a way of doing something else he ought to be doing, namely, obeying God. And so the theological voluntarist would seem committed to thinking that Mark ought to obey God. And this is precisely what puzzles Cudworth. How could the theological voluntarist then coherently explain the obligation to obey God? (Did God also have to command us to obey him?)

The escape route for the theological voluntarist—and for the host of other views subject to similar objections—is to reject the Standard Model Theory. The theological voluntarist could hold that God's commands explain our particular obligations but deny that this requires him to state that there's some further, more general, action (obeying God) we ought to perform.

However, it's worth noting here that there's another way for the theological voluntarist to escape Cudworth's challenge which doesn't require abandoning the Standard Model Theory: narrowing the scope of what needs explaining. The Standard Model Theological Voluntarist could hold that the obligation to obey God is a basic, or fundamental, obligation. It explains other obligations

but isn't itself explained by any other. (After all, Standard Model explanations must run out eventually; you can't keep explaining obligations in terms of more general ones.) This seems to be an important option for the theological voluntarist or for anyone else who wants to appeal to a fundamental norm or set of norms. For the purposes of this essay, however, Schroeder follows Cudworth in thinking that the voluntarist aspires to explain such fundamental norms (25, 28). But one might not have those aspirations. (It's worth pointing out one motivation for having such aspirations that Schroeder points to in the introduction to the volume: if one allows for the existence of one unexplained obligation, that opens the door for someone to insist on others, leading to pluralism [4]. See also Schroeder's related discussion of the Incoherence and Chauvinism objections to the Humean Theory of Reasons in chap. 3 of *Slaves of the Passions* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007].)

In "Reasons and Agent-Neutrality" and "The Humean Theory of Reasons," Schroeder is interested in explaining both the reasons we all share and the reasons we don't. He argues that agent-neutral reasons (e.g., "the fact that Katie needs help is a reason to help Katie") are best understood as agent-relational reasons for everyone. In this example, the fact that Katie needs help is a reason for me to help her, a reason for you to help her, and a reason for everyone else to help her (43). Schroeder discusses the broader philosophical significance of this Quantification Strategy and argues against views committed to denying it.

As for the reasons we don't share, Schroeder considers, skeptically, whether the Standard Model Theory could explain why Ronnie, who loves dancing, has a reason to attend the dance party, while Bradley, who hates dancing, has a reason to stay away. On a Standard Model explanation, Ronnie and Bradley have these different reasons because doing each of these things is a way of doing something else they both have reason to do: doing what they enjoy. But Schroeder notes a problem: if there is a reason for us to do what we enjoy, we should be able to specify what that reason is, and it's not obvious what it is (56–59, 74–76). So, there are limitations to Standard Model theorizing: it can't explain the difference between Ronnie's and Bradley's reasons.

What lessons does Schroeder draw for the Humean theory of reasons? First, based on general methodological principles, cases like the Ronnie/Bradley case are the most promising place to look to understand the nature of reasons, and so provide a "presumptive motivation" for Humeanism (76). Second, we might wonder whether there is another explanation of the difference between Ronnie's and Bradley's reasons. Schroeder argues that if the Standard-Constitutive Conjecture is true, the only other option is a Constitutive Model explanation. We could say that Ronnie's desiring to dance is part of what it is for him to have a reason to go to the party. A Humean conclusion immediately follows: desires are necessary for the existence of reasons (79).

One could challenge these arguments by trying to provide what Schroeder thinks the Standard Model theorist can't provide: a specification of the reason to do what we enjoy. One might argue that doing what one enjoys contributes to making one's life go well, and that's the reason to do what we enjoy—dancing in Ronnie's case but not in Bradley's. (Schroeder acknowledges a view along these lines and notes that it generates problems when conjoined with a buck-passing view of value [58 n. 18]. But, if you're not already inclined toward buck-passing, it

seems to be a live option.) Or perhaps the answer is even simpler: the reason for us to do what we would enjoy, as opposed to doing something else, is simply that we'd enjoy it.

Also, one could argue that in cases where Schroeder thinks Standard Model explanations succeed in explaining why different agents have different reasons, it's also difficult to specify what the reason is to perform the more general action. Consider Schroeder's example of a successful Standard Model explanation involving promising (69–73). Al promises to meet Rose, and Andy promises to meet his mother, and so Al has a reason to meet Rose, and Andy a reason to meet his mother, and these different reasons "can be traced back to a reason they have in common—to keep their promises" (72). But one might argue that just as in Ronnie's and Bradley's case, it's not obvious what the reason is to keep our promises. (Schroeder does attempt to specify such reasons: "One such reason is that breaking promises tends to destroy their usefulness. Another is that breaking promises is a breach of trust" [72]. But the former applies only to some promises—not to those where your breaking them won't be discovered and hence won't tend to undermine the usefulness of the institution. And the latter explains too much, since you do not have a reason to avoid all breaches of trust, as when the trust someone places in you is entirely ungrounded and irrational.) Just as it isn't obvious what the reason is for us to do what we enjoy, it isn't obvious what the reason is for us to keep our promises.

Part 2 turns toward issues concerning reduction and supervenience. Rejection of the Standard Model Theory makes room for Constitutive Model explanations, including those central to Schroeder's reductive realism: explanations where normative properties reduce to nonnormative properties. One central advantage of such views is that they explain the supervenience of the moral on the nonmoral: if moral properties reduce to nonmoral ones, then there can be no change in the moral properties without a change in the nonmoral properties. But it's harder to see how the nonreductivist could explain supervenience. The essays in part 2 consider the prospects for nonreductivism on this front, after first clarifying the aspirations and commitments of reductive views.

In "What Matters about Metaethics?" Schroeder addresses Derek Parfit's claim that all versions of reductive realism are incompatible with things mattering. Schroeder argues, convincingly, that unlike an error theory, nothing about reductive realism need threaten the claim that some things matter. Rather, plausible versions of reductive realism will "hold fixed ordinary normative ideas and try to answer some further explanatory questions in a way that is theoretically satisfying" (87).

The next two papers consider the prospects for nonreductivist approaches to supervenience. The more technical, but accessible, "Supervenience under Relaxed Assumptions" (coauthored with Johannes Schmitt) considers Ralph Wedgwood's response to supervenience arguments against nonreductive realism. Wedgewood's strategy is to reject the S5 axiom of modal logic, $\Diamond A \rightarrow \Box \Diamond A$, on which many of these arguments rely. Schmitt and Schroeder argue that Wedgewood's strategy commits him to denying intuitively compelling supervenience theses.

In Schroeder's previously unpublished "The Price of Supervenience," we see another surprising way in which normative explanations are relevant to debates

in metaethics. Schroeder offers an insightful proposal for how the Standard Model Theory (which he doesn't endorse) could be used to defend nonreductive moral realism (also not endorsed) from the accusation of being unable to explain supervenience.

Here's an overview of the proposal, divided into three steps. First, Schroeder distinguishes between "pure" and "bastard" moral claims. Pure moral claims are necessary. But bastard moral claims, which "relate the non-moral to a special class of 'pure' moral claims," are contingent (131). The distinction is based on an analogous one for mathematics between pure mathematical claims (e.g., $28 > 10$), which are necessary, and bastard mathematical claims, which relate the "pure" mathematical claims to the nonmathematical and are contingent (e.g., I have more teeth than toes). Second, we appeal to the Standard Model Theory to specify which moral claims are pure and which are bastards: our most general obligations are pure, while the less general ones are bastards, since they relate the pure to the nonmoral. For instance, the claim that one ought to keep promises is a pure moral claim, but that Mark ought to attend the workshop is a bastard moral claim, since it relates this pure moral claim to a nonmoral claim, namely, that Mark promised to attend the workshop. Third, we use this to explain supervenience as follows: since the pure moral claims are necessary, they cannot change. So, it trivially follows that they cannot change without a nonmoral change. And since the bastard claims relate the pure claims to nonmoral claims, and since the "pure" component cannot change, the bastard claims are such that they can change only if there's a nonmoral change. Schroeder thus shows how the nonreductivist has resources to explain supervenience (although, he notes, the appeal to unexplained necessities in pure moral claims raises further worries).

The essays in parts 3 and 4 are concerned primarily with instrumental rationality—that is, the rational prohibition on intending some end while not also intending a means believed to be necessary for achieving that end. This requirement can be formulated in at least two ways. On a "narrow-scope" interpretation, "requires" has scope over the consequent of a conditional: if you intend an end and believe some means is necessary to it, rationality requires you to intend the means. (This interpretation runs into difficulty when it's intuitively rationally permissible for you to abandon an end, or revise your belief, instead of intending the means.) On a "wide-scope" interpretation, in contrast, "requires" has scope over a conditional: rationality requires that if you intend an end and believe some means is necessary to it, you intend the means. Here, you could do what rationality requires by abandoning the end, ceasing to believe the means is necessary, or intending the means.

Schroeder's first published paper, "The Scope of Instrumental Reason," played an important role in initiating the debate between "wide-scopers" and "narrow-scopers" that still flourishes in journals over a decade later. The most important contribution of that paper, in my view, is the "symmetry" objection against the wide-scope interpretations of rational requirements. Consider the wide-scoped instrumental requirement above. Schroeder observes that it's unintuitive to think that ceasing to believe some means is necessary would be rationally permitted by a requirement of instrumental rationality (156–57). At the very least, it's a way of escaping, rather than satisfying, the requirement (163). But, on the wide-scope view, one could make the relevant conditional true by

either ceasing to hold this belief or intending the means, and so both are equally good ways of doing what is required (so far as this requirement goes). Thus, an objectionable "symmetry" is posited by the wide-scoper. (As Schroeder anticipates, wide-scopers might attempt to account for "asymmetry" intuitions by appealing to other requirements, perhaps requirements of theoretical rationality, one might violate by revising one's belief [157].)

In "Means-Ends Coherence, Stringency, and Subjective Reasons" Schroeder develops a novel account of instrumental rationality in terms of subjective reasons, although one that requires we have the view (or something close to it) that intending to ϕ involves believing that one ought to ϕ. In his introduction to the volume, Schroeder distances himself from the main positive proposal of this paper (11). Nonetheless, the broad strategy of appealing to subjective reasons to account for instrumental rationality remains an interesting and promising option.

In "The Hypothetical Imperative?" Schroeder presents the case for reading Kant as a narrow-scoper. He argues that it's difficult to square the wide-scope interpretation of Kantian hypothetical imperatives with, among other things, what Kant says about how hypothetical imperatives are to be distinguished from categorical ones and how hypothetical imperatives are to be analytically derived from the concept of willing an end. But Schroeder recognizes that the narrow-scope interpretation would put Kant in a difficult spot, given the possibility of immoral aims. If someone were to intend an immoral end, a narrow-scope interpretation of hypothetical imperatives would require that he intend immoral means and so would require something inconsistent with what is required by Kant's Categorical Imperative. Schroeder's way out is to read Kant as denying the possibility of willing (in Kant's sense of *wille*) immoral ends (212–13).

This is an interesting proposal, but it makes puzzling the passage where Kant says that hypothetical imperatives apply both to reasonable, good ends and to unreasonable, bad ends—both to the physician aiming to make his patient healthy and the poisoner aiming to bring certain death to his victim (*Akademie* 4: 415). There's no indication in that passage that Kant thinks the physician's aim is possible but the poisoner's is impossible. He tells us that "the hypothetical imperative thus says only that the action is good for some *possible* or *actual* aim" and uses these examples to illustrate possible aims to which these "imperatives of skill" would apply (Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, ed. and trans. Allen W. Wood [New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002], 31–32). If there's another sense in which such aims are impossible—namely, that they can't be "willed" in conformity with the moral law—it doesn't seem to be one that Kant has in mind in this passage.

Kantian themes are further explored in "Hypothetical Imperatives, Scope and Jurisdiction," which develops an illuminating analogy between legal jurisdiction and the jurisdiction of rational requirements. Schroeder here objects that wide-scopers posit an unexplained requirement with "universal jurisdiction over all rational agents" (222; see also 157–58). Narrow-scopers, in contrast, posit a requirement that is applicable only in certain conditions, namely, when one intends an end and believes the means to be necessary. This conditionality "makes hypothetical imperatives easier to explain" (225).

However, it's not clear how narrow-scoping, by itself, generates significant explanatory advantages. After all, the mere citation of a sufficient condition for

something need not explain it particularly well. Moreover, even if it did, it's not clear why we couldn't modify the wide-scope view to include the relevant conditionality. Perhaps: if you intend some end, believe a means is necessary to that end, and don't intend the means, then you're required to abandon the end, abandon your belief, or intend the means. The antecedent provides the (possibly explanatory) jurisdictional restriction, while the consequent gives the wide-scoper what he really wants: a disjunctive requirement.

The final paper, "Scope for Rational Autonomy," however, tells us more about how the narrow-scoper could explain requirements of rationality by appealing to the conditions which make them applicable. The basic idea is that you are subject to these requirements because you impose them on yourself. Specifically, by adopting some attitude, such as a belief or intention, you commit yourself to having, or not having, some other attitude. So, rather than explaining what rationality requires of you by appeal to wide-scope requirements with jurisdiction over all agents—the kind of explanation Standard Model Theorists, like Cudworth, might go in for—we can instead adopt the attractive Kantian idea that rational requirements are self-legislated through the adoption of attitudes. Again, an interesting theoretical option is made available by moving away from the Standard Model Theory.

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Slote, Michael. *From Enlightenment to Receptivity: Rethinking Our Values*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013. Pp. 272. $49.95 (cloth).

In *From Enlightenment to Receptivity*, Michael Slote provides a defense of the value of receptivity and a critique of rationalism. The book starts with a quote from Prichard lamenting the remoteness of many discussions of moral philosophy from "the facts of actual life" (vi). Slote takes this idea seriously: the book is accessible to a general audience, while at the same time providing philosophical arguments of interest to specialists. Throughout the book, Slote emphasizes the narrowness of the rationalist picture and how receptivity allows for a richer picture of values, one that includes aspects that he laments have been marginalized in the Western philosophical tradition.

Slote declares as his targets the emphasis on action, control, and rationality that are, as he notes, also the focus of environmentalist and feminist critiques of rationalism. He criticizes postmodern theories sometimes used to support these movements for their relativist implications (27). Instead, he conceives of his project as the use of analytic methods to "show something quite radical" (29), an attempt to provide a critique of Enlightenment thought that is "philosophically clearer and more forceful than anything we have been told by the postmodernists" (31). Slote argues that proper caring for another requires receptivity, and on this basis he presents his view as providing a theoretical basis for an ethics of care along the lines of Gilligan's. The virtue of receptivity is opposed to what Slote calls the "Faustian emphasis on activity/dominance/control/autonomy" that he believes has permeated enlightenment rationalism (4). This emphasis, he argues,