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T. M. Scanlon, *Moral Dimensions: Permissibility, Meaning, Blame*.
Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2008. xii + 247 pp.

Ten years after the publication of the richly argued and highly influential *What We Owe to Each Other*, we are fortunate to have this much anticipated and important new book by T. M. Scanlon. Although it explores many of the same themes as the earlier work, it stands on its own, even as it clarifies and departs from earlier work in places. This book has already received, and will continue to receive, a great deal of critical attention, and will spark creative new responses that will significantly advance the discussion of permissibility and blame.

The book divides into two main parts. The first, consisting of three chapters, argues that the moral permissibility of actions never depends in a nonderivative way on the intentions of the agents performing them. So, for example, the common claim that terror bombing is impermissible at least in part because, in such a case, the bombers act with the intention to kill innocent civilians to promote their own end is incorrect. Still, it is argued, there is a role for intentions and reasons in moral evaluation: the agents' intentions and reasons are relevant to judgments about the *meaning* of actions. In particular, moral principles can play two distinct roles: (1) in their "deliberative use," they answer the question of permissibility by identifying the considerations that make it permissible to perform an action, and (2) in their "critical use," they help us assess the way the agent decided what to do by answering the question of whether the agent took the proper considerations into account. Failure to distinguish these two uses is a mistake and recognition of them allows us to reject the idea that *permissibility* depends on agents' intentions and reasons for acting. The second part of the book, consisting of a single fourth chapter roughly the same length as the first three combined, extends the discussion of meaning to a novel account of blame. On the account proposed, impermissible actions need not be blameworthy and vice versa. And this is because blameworthiness relates to the meaning of an action and in particular to what that action implies for the future relationship one might have with the agent.

The book opens in the first chapter with a discussion of the Doctrine of Double Effect (DDE), which Scanlon understands as holding that "although it can be permissible to do something that one can foresee will lead to the deaths of innocent people, when doing it is necessary to achieve some greater good, it is impermissible to kill the same number of innocent people as a means to achieving the same greater good" (14). Acknowledging that the doctrine seems to account for intuitions about a number of cases, including the case of the terror bomber (in contrast to the strategic bomber who foreseeably kills the same number but whose aim is only to destroy a munitions factory nearby), Scanlon offers a different account, explaining our intuitions in a way that

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does not make permissibility dependent in a nonderivative way on agents' intentions, aims, or reasons for acting. It would be helpful to have a clear statement of what counts as "derivative" since, for example, Scanlon acknowledges that intentions can affect the nature of the actions people perform, and these actions are in turn the subject of permissibility claims. Yet this is not obviously a derivative role for intentions.

Scanlon's argument against the DDE and in favor of his account has several components, including these: (i) the claim that the DDE has been given no rationale, (ii) claimed counterexamples to the DDE, (iii) alternative ways of explaining our intuitions in the various cases, (iv) an argument that appeals to the fact that agents can't *choose* their reasons but only their actions and to the thesis that permissibility can apply only to what we can choose.

Some parts of this argument are more persuasive than others. For example, the version of DDE Scanlon adopts is an "absolutist" one in that it prohibits any harm to persons when their harm is aimed at directly. But this is the least plausible version of the DDE; more plausible are nonabsolutist versions that claim only that actions that aim at harm are harder to justify (all other things equal) than those that do not. Thus, because Scanlon does not engage with specific nonabsolutist versions of the DDE (or related but still more general principles that appeal to agent's reasons, such as an account of permissible action as embodying a justifying practical inference; see Hanser 2005), claims about a lack of rationale and even particular counterexamples are less convincing than they would otherwise be. One rationale not discussed here is the Kantian idea that one ought not use people as means to one's ends. Scanlon does address this idea on its own terms in chapter 3, but it has been offered as a natural rationale for the DDE and related principles (see Quinn 1989, for example).

The replacement principles proposed for accounting for the relevant cases can seem too narrowly tailored to provide a satisfying justification. For example, the impermissibility of terror bombing is explained by this principle: "In war, one is sometimes permitted to use destructive and potentially deadly force . . . only when its use can be expected to bring some military advantage, such as destroying enemy combatants or war-making materials, and it is permitted only if expected harm to noncombatants is as small as possible, compatible with gaining the relevant military advantage" (28). Lest one think that killing civilians and thereby undermining morale itself counts as a military advantage and so would be permitted under this principle, Scanlon makes clear that the "death of noncombatants is not rendered a 'military advantage'" (29). But why not? Without explanation, this can seem ad hoc. After all, the bombing will terrorize the civilian population, which in turn will put great pressure on the leaders and combatants to surrender.

At the same time, the argument that appeals to choice ((iv) above) is intriguing and worthy of further exploration, and the larger alternative picture

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that Scanlon offers is powerful and has the potential to gain further support in the next chapters, which take on other contexts in which permissibility seems—at least at first—to depend nonderivatively on agents' reasons for acting.

In chapter 2, Scanlon turns to other sorts of cases in which permissibility might seem to depend directly on an agent's intentions and reasons, including cases of self-defense, discrimination, and threats. And in chapter 3, as mentioned, he takes on the Kantian prescription not to treat others as means but only as ends. In all cases, either specific alternative principles of permissibility are proposed that do not directly mention intentions, or the general alternative picture that distinguishes between permissibility and meaning is applied. In general, failure to make this distinction is offered as the diagnosis of the initial appeal of the idea that permissibility can in fact depend directly on agents' reasons or intentions.

In the long final chapter, Scanlon turns to an account of blame and blameworthiness. Although the account is presented as building on the earlier distinction between permissibility and meaning, it may be possible to accept at least some of the arguments in the later part of the book while rejecting much of the earlier and vice versa. Scanlon's account of blame appeals first to an account of what it is to be blameworthy. In his view, "to claim that a person is *blameworthy* for an action is to claim that the action shows something about the agent's attitudes towards others that impair the relationship others can have with him or her To blame a person is to judge him or her to be blameworthy and to take your relationship with him or her to be modified in a way that this judgment of impaired relations holds to be appropriate" (128–29). The account is developed first by applying it to close relationships such as friendship and then extending it to the "general moral relationship" we might have with any fellow person. The appropriate form that blame takes in each case will be different, although anyone can make the same judgment of blameworthiness. Scanlon takes this to be a virtue of his account, and it allows him to contribute to the "ethics of blame" itself, a somewhat less traveled path to this point.

I cannot do justice to the richness of the account of blame here, but it is essential to note both its nonretributive nature and the related implication that one can be rightly blamed, on this account, even if one does not act freely. At points, Scanlon acknowledges that the account might be revisionist in certain ways, and to the extent that it is, we must judge whether revision is called for.

Here I will raise just a few questions for the account. The first is why blame ought to be defined in terms of the blameworthy rather than, as one might expect from the linguistic form alone, the other way around. It naturally allows for different kinds of blame to be appropriate for different people, but it is not essential to make blameworthiness the more fundamental notion in order for there to be variation in forms of appropriate blame. Second, one might ask whether blame must imply a judgment about an impairment in one's relationship. For example, consider cases in which one blames one's

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child; intuitively, this doesn't always require a judgment of impairment in the relationship. And, moving in the other direction, one might question whether such judgments of impairment must in their turn imply judgments of blameworthiness. Consider, for example, a case in which your friend lets you down—and in a way that specifically violates the standards of friendship. She fails to keep a promise to you in order to help someone else. It seems to me possible that in such a case you are disappointed and may even reevaluate your relationship, but you don't blame her at all, or even judge her to be blameworthy in an intuitive sense. (Scanlon allows for "drifting apart" cases that do not involve blame, but these are explicitly described as cases in which standards of the relationship are not violated.)

Finally, Scanlon argues for his account in part by its potential to explain outcome moral luck. In other words, Scanlon claims that his account can explain why it is appropriate to blame one person more than another, when, say, both had the same reasons and attitudes when they acted, but only one person's actions resulted in harm and the other person's did not, due to circumstances out of the control of either. Once an action is blameworthy, Scanlon claims, the outcome can affect what is appropriate in terms of the relationship one has with another. In this, he argues that his view has a distinct advantage over competitors that are, in contrast to his view, purely attitude based rather than relationship based. For example, a view of blame as character assessment, or a view of blame as constituted by the reactive attitudes such as resentment and guilt (such as Peter Strawson's) cannot account for outcome luck since the two agents in question have, by hypothesis, all the same attitudes. But it is controversial, to say the least, what we should say about moral outcome luck. It may fit well with Scanlon's own relationship-based account that it can be appropriate to blame people differentially based on the outcomes of their actions over which they have no control, and this account preserves the idea that many of our current practices of differential treatment are justified. But for many who reflect on supposed cases of moral luck, such reflection suggests that our current practices are based on a mistake and that our initial judgments *can and should* be explained away. Now I believe that even Scanlon's account could accommodate this point because one might claim that relationships *ought* to depend on people's reasons and intentions and *not* on luck in the results. Yet, in that case, more would need to be said about why we should favor Scanlon's account over certain alternatives.

As is undoubtedly apparent, the bold and original conclusions defended in this book have implications for a number of distinct debates in ethics. Bringing these together in this way has great value, and the book will rightly continue to enrich the discussion of each individually.

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Christine Korsgaard, *The Constitution of Agency: Essays on Practical Reason and Moral Psychology*.
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The collection opens with three articles grouped under the title "Principles of Practical Reason." This is followed by four articles on "Moral Virtue and Moral Psychology," all related to Aristotle, and they in return are followed by three more ("Other Reflections").

The first two articles, "The Normativity of Instrumental Reason" and "The Myth of Egoism" are very complicated works, as Korsgaard herself notes (67). I will not try to summarize the long, thorough, nuanced, and sophisticated argumentation. On the way to their conclusions—instrumentalism is incoherent, egoism is not viable—Korsgaard offers many insights. For example, when she points out that the principle of prudence is very different from the instrumental principle ("whoever wills the end wills the means") one just stops and thinks "but of course!" I was less convinced by the quick identification of any view that relates rationality to maximizing desire satisfaction with egoism. If you have a desire-based view of rationality, you may think of a person whose desires are all altruistic and who never does anything for the sake of desire satisfaction as rational—and rational insofar as his or her desire satisfaction is maximized by his or her actions.

The first article introduces us to, and the third article develops, what is perhaps the key theme of the collection—that of constitutive or internal norms. Internal norms are norms that constitute the activities they govern. Some such norms include that a house provide shelter from the elements, that an English sentence have both a noun and a verb in it, that an encyclopedia contain information. These propositions have their descriptive side, for a structure that does not provide shelter is not a house, a string of words that is missing a noun or a verb is not an English sentence, and a book with no information in it is not an encyclopedia. At the same time they are normative: if you are building a house, you ought to include a roof; if you speak a sentence, you ought to include a verb;