

One finishes reading these essays with a strong sense of the reasonableness and moderation of Carruthers's approach. His opponents on the right say that phenomenal consciousness is real and very special in the world, unlike anything else that our sciences have encountered, and that it is essentially private and subjective. They conclude that we will never achieve a naturalistic, reductive explanation of phenomenal consciousness. But, it seems too soon to make this inference, especially in the light of all the varied resources science can bring to bear on any particular issue and all the surprises that comprise the history of scientific progress.

Carruthers's opponents on the left seem equally hasty in simply dismissing these claims about privacy and subjectivity. Their focus on how mentality is involved with gaining and processing information about the world seems to overlook the crucial point that a thinker often does know about his own thoughts in a way that no one else can. Although it may make them more difficult to understand, thoughts and minds are undeniably and ineluctably private and subjective.

So, the virtue (the golden mean) of Carruthers's higher-order approach to consciousness is that it takes privacy, subjectivity, self-knowledge, meta-cognition etc. seriously, but it doesn't see them as barriers to a naturalistic, reductive explanation. Rather, it sees them as among the central things that need explaining. Why, for example, as Carruthers asks, is there "mental state subjectivity" in addition to "worldly subjectivity" (pp. 42–43)? Why, that is, are there certain of my experiences that not only represent the world around me (or my body) but that I can also represent to myself as my own experiences? Carruthers may not have the final answer to any of these questions, but he tries to answer them and he thinks they need to be answered.

This collection has the potential to convert just about anyone in its intended audience, because the theory Carruthers offers gives everyone roughly what they say they want in a theory of phenomenal consciousness. The left gets its reductive explanation of consciousness, although since it is in cognitive (functional, representational) terms, much work remains on the problem of fitting mental representation into the naturalistic, scientific world view. The right gets its privacy and subjectivity (its realism about phenomenal consciousness is vindicated) and although it turns out that phenomenal consciousness is just a special form of access consciousness, this is not too disappointing, because the only thing the right turns out to have been wrong about is how much more science can explain about our mental lives than they at first thought it could.

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Reasons and Purposes: Human Rationality and the Teleological Explanation of Action

By G.F. SCHUELER

Oxford University Press, 2003. xiv + 174 pp. £30.50

Schueler's book is a smooth read; but its claims are a bit elusive, and I think I can do a greater service by using my limited space to try to give its argument

in a way that heightens the contrast between it and the opposition, rather than by giving a quick over-view and then leaping to criticism.

What is it to explain in terms of an agent's reasons, why she did a certain action? Davidson says such explanations must take the following form: the agent desired *y*; she believed doing *x* would yield *y*; so she did *x*. Her reasons for doing *x* were her desire and her belief; they were the efficient cause of *x*, and they suffice to explain her doing *x*. If she lacked such beliefs and desires, her behaviour would not have counted as action.

Schueler objects to this view on several grounds:

(1) It cannot explain why, when one has conflicting desires, one chooses to advance one rather than another.

(2) Reasons are supposed to justify actions; but desiring *y* and believing that doing *x* would yield *y*, do not by themselves justify *x*; one can construct, using one's desires and beliefs, a valid practical syllogism whose conclusion is that one should do *x*, only if one additionally has something like the evaluative belief that one should take the means to one's ends. (Since the conclusion is normative, one needs a normative premise.)

(3) Sometimes one does not have any antecedent desire among one's reasons for an action, only evaluative beliefs: I might vote for Kerry simply because I believe he's the best candidate, and believe one should vote for the best.

(4) Even when the issue of my desires figures in my reasons, the desires do so not directly as efficient causes of my actions, but only as factors considered in my deliberation about how I should act, deliberation from which I conclude that it is more important to advance this desire rather than that one (this solves problem (1)), or more important to advance this desire than to cause anything else I evaluatively believe of some importance. Even here I need not actually have the desire, only believe that I have it—so again, desires aren't needed to serve as reasons in reason-based explanations of actions.

(5) More generally, one's actions are explained by one's believing that there is something to be said for doing them. But not all of one's reasons—all the things available to be said for one's actions—have as their contents, one's beliefs, any more than all of one's reasons have as their contents, one's desires—not all my reasons are that I desire something I believe an action would cause, nor that I believe something is important to bring about. I vote for Kerry not because I had a prior desire that he win ('That doesn't make him vote-worthy,' I think, as a responsible citizen), nor because I have the belief that he's best ('How would that psychological fact about me make Kerry vote-worthy?' I think); I vote for him because of the *content* of my belief—that he's the best.

(6) My action may be efficient-caused by my evaluative beliefs (otherwise my behaviour is not even an action—note that what makes something an action is its being efficient-caused by a pro-attitude of evaluative belief, not by a pro-attitude of a mere desire); but *the reasons-based explanation* of my action is in terms of the *contents* of the beliefs.

(7) And so my reasons explain my actions *teleologically*. That is, my actions are explained by what I represent as what there is to be said for doing them;

it is the doing-worthiness of the action that explains why it is done; the action occurs because it *ought* to occur.

(8) For any evaluative belief I have about the importance of something, or for any desire I have for something, it can be demanded what my reasons are for having it; so an explanation of an action of mine can be completed only if this regress can be terminated by citing something that accounts for why I rank, in my beliefs and desires, one factor over another, that does not itself need justification; and this is afforded by citing my character-traits; for these are not the kinds of things for which there are justifying reasons. Character-traits are explained non-justificationally, by efficient causes (for instance, I have this character-trait because that's how I was raised). So, suppose you're trying to explain why I voted for a tax-increase to fund day-care. You know I think day-care important, but also that I think important having the extra pocket money I would have were there no tax increase. You explain my voting for the increase by me having decided that day-care is more important than extra pocket money, which you in turn explain by my having a generous character.

(9) While, for Davidson, action-explanation is achieved purely descriptively by describing the agent's psychology (her desires and her beliefs about means to their satisfaction), Schueler thinks action-explanation is normative, in two ways: the agent whose action is being explained must be evaluated to be a rational being, one who does what there is reason to do, that is, what she *ought* to do given her reasons; and we must see what there was to be said from her point of view for doing this action, must be able to endorse her doing it given her reasons—we must be able to say that it is what she *ought* to have done given them.

(10) While we can explain some behaviours, paradigmatically, those of animals, by citing the behavior's desires as efficient causes (the cat ate because it desired to eat), this is not explanation by reasons, because it is not explanation by what there is to be said for so behaving; no valid practical syllogism with normative premises and conclusion is invoked. Animals do not fully *act*.

This important book powerfully challenges orthodoxy in the several fields it touches. Companioned with primary literature, it would make a terrific discussion-text for advanced classes in ethics, philosophy of action, theory of rational decision and moral psychology.

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ETHICS

Morality, Moral Luck and Responsibility: Fortune's Web

By NAFSIKA ATHANASSOULIS

Palgrave, 2005. xii + 200 pp. £45.00

The questions raised by moral luck strike right to the roots of our understandings of moral responsibility and fairness. It is unsurprising that the degree to