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**Gerald K. Harrison, *Normative Reasons and Theism*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2018, 217 pp.**

Gerald Harrison, in his *Normative Reason and Theism*, offers an original argument for theism. Roughly, the idea being that, the existence of normative reasons is evidence for the existence of God. He does this first by articulating what exactly normative reasons are. According to Harrison, ‘Normative reasons are reasons to do and believe things’ (p. 1). Harrison also clarifies that there can be different types of normative reasons. For instance, there are epistemic normative reasons. As Harrison puts it, ‘...the fact the world is roughly spherical gives you reason — epistemic reason — to believe it is roughly spherical’ (p. 6). There are also instrumental normative reasons. The idea being that you have a reason to believe or do something if it achieves a specific end. Harrison gives an example of a billionaire offering to pay you 10 million dollars to believe that the world is cuboid (p. 7). In this instance, you have a normative reason to believe that the world is cuboid (rather than roughly a sphere). Finally, Harrison discusses moral normative reasons. Subject S, for example, ought to do action A because there is a moral duty D that is binding on S. S in this instance has a normative reason to do A.

Having now summarized what Harrison has in mind by ‘normative reason,’ I now move to discuss his argument. Harrison offers up the following syllogism:

- (1) Normative reasons are favoring relations.
- (2) All favouring relations have minds as their bearers.
- (3) All of the favouring relations constitutive of normative reasons have a single bearer.
- (4) All of the favouring relations constitutive of normative reasons have an external (to us) bearer.
- (5) Therefore, normative reasons are favouring relations that have a single external (to us) mind as their bearer (p. 9).

Harrison gives several arguments for each of the aforementioned premises. Due to the constraints on this review however, I will limit my review to discussing one argument for each premise.

Regarding premise (1), Harrison offers up what he calls phenomenological evidence. Harrison states the following:

Talk of normative reasons as commands, requests, pleases, suggestions and so on, does no more than give expression to how things appear...So speaking personally, when I judge myself to have reason to do or believe something, I am most certainly judging that I am either being commanded, requested, pleaded with, advised, or something similar, to do or believe that thing. And when I wonder what normative reasons are, I am wondering what such favourings are, in and of themselves (p. 18).

Roughly put, our experience of being aware of normative reasons leads us to believe that normative reasons favour action. If I have a normative reason to do A, or to believe that P, I'm judging that I am being commanded or suggested to do A, or to believe that P. Normativity suggests that we favour certain actions or beliefs.

With respect to (2), Harrison argues that normative reasons reflect attitudes toward something. For example, if you are being requested to do A, there is an attitude about doing A. But, as Harrison points out, minds alone bare attitudes. One could postulate something extra-mental that could bear an attitude but that would postulate a very complex theory and there is no need for that (p. 32).

Moreover, favoring relations have intentionality. Favouring relations are then about something (p. 33). But, aboutness is a feature of the mind. What separates sand from sand that has the inscription 'Help me escape!' on it, is the recognition of thought that is directed toward something. Harrison argues that, 'all that is needed to establish the truth of premise 2 is that favouring is an activity that essentially requires minds to carry out' (p. 34).

Having established that favouring relations are grounded in a mind, there becomes a question about whether we should ground favouring relations in specifically one mind or many minds. Harrison endorses what he calls the inter-unity thesis. According to Harrison, 'the inter-unity thesis is the thesis that single Reason [Mind] who is favouring me doing and believing things is the same single Reason [Mind] who is favouring everyone else doing and believing things' (p. 57). This contrasts the multiplicity view that the mind that

grounds my normative reasons is distinct from the mind that grounds your normative reasons (p. 57). Harrison's point is that the hypothesis that there is a single source that grounds favouring relations is simpler than the hypothesis that there are multiple minds that ground favouring relations. Since the former hypothesis is significantly simpler, it should be preferred.

Finally, with respect to (4), why should we think that this single mind is external to all of us? Harrison argues that it is extremely unlikely that any human is likely the Mind who grounds favouring relations. Harrison calls the design plan of the cognitive faculty that is responsible for producing beliefs about favouring relations, Reason's book. Harrison states that, 'it would be reasonable to expect you to remember having written Reason's book, remember implanting in us all, and to remember how and why you did this. Finally, Reason's book seems to have been written by an author who lived long before any of us come into existence, for it asserts that the normative reason that applied to Julius Caesar had the same source — Reason — as those apply to any of us (the unity thesis) (p. 61). Having made plausible each premise in the syllogism, Harrison concludes that (5) is true. That is, normative reasons are favouring relations that have a single external (to us) mind as their bearer (p. 9).

One of the main objections Harrison engages is the Euthyphro Dilemma. Various concerns regarding Euthyphro's Dilemma can be glossed in different ways. I take Harrison's following syllogism to be the central concern:

- (1) If normative reasons are attitudes of a god, then it is metaphysically possible for Xing — an act we know to be one we have overall reason not to do — to be one we have overall reason to do, consistent with it being performed with the same intentions and having all the same consequences.
- (2) It is not metaphysically possible for Xing — an act we know to be one we have overall reason not to do — to be one we have overall reason to do, consistent with it being performed with the same intentions and having all the same consequences.
- (3) Therefore, normative reasons are not the attitudes of a god (p. 107).

Harrison ends up denying (2) as he denies that there are necessary truths of reasons (p. 112). Reason can favour not doing A at  $T^1$  but favouring A at  $T^2$ . The design plan of our faculty can be updated. For example, Harrison thinks

that since most people thought that homosexual relations were morally objectionable in the 1950s, we have good reason to believe that people in the 50s had normative reasons to not partake in homosexual relations. If most people using their faculty seemed to infer that it was wrong, then it was probably wrong. However, according to Harrison, 'if most people today get the rational intuition that there is nothing morally objectionable about same sex sexual relations, then that is excellent evidence there is nothing morally objectionable about same sex relations. I mean, if you want to know what Reason approves of today, listen to what she's saying today' (p. 157).

What about our very strong moral intuition that we could never have normative reasons to do certain actions (e.g. torturing for fun)? Harrison thinks that these intuitions are given to us by God in order to show how much he disapproves of certain actions (p. 118). As someone who isn't creedal or religious, Harrison rejects that idea that God cannot change His mind about what people should think or how they should act.

Could Harrison's reasoning about homosexual relations also lead to seeing slavery as permissible, assuming that most people utilizing their faculties came to the conclusion that slavery was permissible? Or what do we say about the permissibility of killing people in the name of religion? Was this once permissible too? There are dozens of extremely counterintuitive positions that seem to be entailed by Harrison's voluntarism.

So, why bite the bullet? I know Harrison isn't inclined toward religion. Though Harrison does mention that he doesn't see his argument as incompatible with the Abrahamic traditions (p. 171). In Christianity, until recently at least, God is seen as metaphysically simple. That is to say, Christians have traditionally believed that God is without parts. God isn't just a being, rather, God is Being. Our language about God doesn't map onto God in a univocal way, rather, our language about God is analogical. And of course, given the doctrine of simplicity, God's existence is identical to His omnipotence which is also identical to His goodness, and so on. On classical theism, God is identical to goodness itself.

Why is this important for Harrison's case? Well, if Reason is identical to goodness then you can deny (2) and Harrison's argument still can be considered successful. We couldn't have had a normative reason to enslave persons as that would go against the Good. What Harrison should reject then is (1). There are actions that God could never prefer that we do.

What about homosexual relations? Well, I'm dubious that most people actually believe that homosexual relations are permissible. Now, it's likely that most people in the West think this, but what about people in Africa, South America, East Asia, the Middle East, Russia, and Eastern Europe? If most people in the world think that homosexual relations are wrong, then according to Harrison, we have good reason to suppose that homosexual relations are wrong. There exist normative reasons to not engage in such relations. That's a conclusion that I don't think he will want to accept. Of course, those who practice traditional forms of Christianity, Islam, and Judaism, won't have a problem with this specific conclusion. Nonetheless, as mentioned earlier, rejecting (2) has its doxastic costs, even for those practitioners of the traditional Abrahamic traditions.

Overall, Harrison's book is engaging and innovative. While, I am sure that the work won't convince most of those who don't already believe, I think Harrison's book will propose an intellectual challenge to those who don't believe. Theism in philosophy seems to be experiencing yet another resurgence.

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**Blake Hereth and Kevin Timpe, ed., *The Lost Sheep in Philosophy of Religion: New Perspectives on Disability, Gender, Race, and Animal*, Routledge 2020, 414 pp.**

Over the past few years I have had the fortune of witnessing a change occurring in the field, a much-needed diversification in both the 'who' and 'what' of analytic philosophy of religion. Alongside a special issue of *Res Philosophica* and the forthcoming *Voices from the Edge: Centering Marginalized Perspectives in Analytic Theology*, this volume consolidates that movement, setting a bold new agenda for the future of philosophy of religion. *The Lost Sheep in Philosophy of Religion* gathers together a diverse group of philosophers using the sharpest critical tools in this tradition to think about the intersections of religion, race, gender, ability, and species. It was conceived, according to its editors, out of a "dissatisfaction with the state of contemporary philosophy of religion" (x). As they explain in the introduction, while debates exist over whether analytic philosophy of religion is flourishing or in crisis, it appears