Canadian Journal of Philosophy

ISSN: 0045-5091 (Print) 1911-0820 (Online) Journal homepage: http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rcjp20

The denial of moral dilemmas as a regulative ideal

Michael Cholbi

To cite this article: Michael Cholbi (2016): The denial of moral dilemmas as a regulative ideal, Canadian Journal of Philosophy, DOI: 10.1080/00455091.2016.1164524

To link to this article: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00455091.2016.1164524

Published online: 21 Mar 2016.

CANADIAN JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY, 2016
http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00455091.2016.1164524

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

The denial of moral dilemmas as a regulative ideal

Michael Cholbi

Philosophy, California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, CA, USA

ABSTRACT
The traditional debate about moral dilemmas concerns whether there are circumstances in which an agent is subject to two obligations that cannot both be fulfilled. Realists maintain there are. Irrealists deny this. Here I defend an alternative, methodologically-oriented position wherein the denial of genuine moral dilemmas functions as a regulative ideal for moral deliberation and practice. That is, moral inquiry and deliberation operate on the implicit assumption that there are no genuine moral dilemmas. This view is superior to both realism and irrealism in accounting for moral residue and other crucial phenomenological dimensions of our experience of moral dilemmas.

ARTICLE HISTORY Received 29 December 2014; Accepted 8 March 2016

KEYWORDS Moral dilemmas; regulative ideals; moral phenomenology; moral residue; Bernard Williams

Most every moral theorist concedes that moral agents can find themselves in *apparent* moral dilemmas, situations in which they believe themselves subject to conflicting moral obligations. Some of these dilemmas may be *merely apparent* in that the dilemmas would resolve were it not for the individual agent's ignorance or false beliefs regarding her situation. The more provocative question is whether every apparent moral dilemma is in principle open to such resolution or whether, in contrast, some dilemmas turn out to be *genuine*: An individual is in a genuine moral dilemma if and only if she is all things considered morally obligated to perform act A, and all things considered morally obligated to perform act B, but the contingent circumstances of the world make it impossible to perform both A and B. (Gowans 1987, 3; McConnell 2009; Schaber 2004, 280; Sinnott-Armstrong 1988, 29)[1]

According to Christopher Gowans, the two main philosophical positions concerning genuine moral dilemmas reflect clashing orientations toward moral inquiry. What Gowans dubs the 'experimentalist' orientation prioritizes fidelity to individuals' lived moral experience, including,

CONTACT Michael Cholbi mjcholbi@cpp.edu

> what it is like for a person embedded in a particular social context to live a life constituted by values and commitments, to encounter circumstances of perplexity and choice, to deliberate and determine a course of response, and to carry out this decision and live with its consequences.

Since dilemmas do appear to arise within ordinary moral practice, the experimentalist tradition is disposed to grant the existence of genuine dilemmas. In contrast, the rival 'rationalist' orientation regards moral practice as a species of human rationality, where reason is seen as striving for systematic order, hierarchy, and generality. (Gowans 1996, 200) For rationalists, the existence of genuine moral dilemmas would mark a failure of human reason. Hence, any apparent moral dilemma, because it represents a 'betrayal rather than a manifestation of reason,' must, under further rational scrutiny, be resoluble. (Gowans 1996, 202) The rationalist tradition is thus skeptical of genuine moral dilemmas.[2] The debate about the existence of genuine dilemmas thus germinates from a tension between competing philosophical desiderata: rationally ordering our moral judgments while remaining faithful to ordinary moral experience. (Herman 1993, 159)

My aim here is to defend a revisionary view concerning moral dilemmas that, while broadly rationalistic, incorporates the experimentalists' aim of accounting for ordinary moral experience. Borrowing a notion from Kant, I shall argue that the denial of genuine moral dilemmas functions as a *regulative ideal* for moral deliberation and practice. That is, moral inquiry and deliberation turn out to operate on the implicit assumption that there are no genuine moral dilemmas. On Kant's picture, a regulative ideal governs or sets the agenda for a given practice of inquiry or exercise of thought. It animates that practice in the sense that its practitioners both assume that the ideal is realizable and aspire to realize the ideal through that practice. Regulative ideals are principles to which we are rationally committed without knowing them to be true, and in fact, without having direct evidence for their truth.[3] In Kant's eyes, reason is a faculty with its own concepts and interests. As the faculty that seeks to gather our understanding under principles, reason, Kant reminds us, always seeks the unconditioned to unify what is conditioned, and thus assumes that the unconditioned can be found. Reason thus seeks more than simply having true beliefs or proper attitudes. Rather, reason's *telos* is rooted in its inherent drive for understanding. Reason is thus the source of freestanding norms, norms not reducible to either procedural norms or to the alethic aims of various forms of rational inquiry. Regulative ideals are freestanding norms in just this way.

The regulative ideal view I propose is not a metaphysical position concerning whether there are genuine moral dilemmas and is thus officially agnostic about their existence. Instead, just as (according to Kant) the unity of science functions as a regulative ideal for empirical or theoretical reason, the denial of genuine moral dilemmas functions as a regulative ideal for practical reason. It is thus a methodological stance taken up in practical reasoning and deliberation.

It should be noted at the outset that the regulative ideal view adopts a Kantian stance on the aspirations or methodology of moral theorizing, but it is not wedded to a Kantian stance on morality's origin or content. So although I am offering a Kantian account of why we care about the resolution of apparent dilemmas – why, in a more Kantian vernacular, we take a rational interest in their resolution – this account is not tethered to a Kantian account of the moral values or duties that may give rise to apparent dilemmas. Moral theorists with other commitments (consequentialists, virtue theorists, etc.) should therefore not be uneasy about the view's Kantian pedigree.

Since the regulative ideal view is novel,[4] I outline its general features in the next section. I then turn to the general project of using this regulative ideal view to explain the phenomenology of moral dilemmas. In doing so, I recognize that there are other arguments in play in the debate between realists and irrealists, in particular, arguments appealing to deontic logic and the *ought* implies *can* principle. (Zimmerman 1996) But just insofar as the phenomenology of dilemmas is concerned, we have strong reasons to favor the regulative ideal position over either the realist or irrealist alternatives.

My defense of the regulative ideal view builds from a consideration of Bernard Williams' well-known argument (1965) that the persistence of various reactive attitudes such as guilt, regret, and the like, even after agents act to resolve an apparent dilemma, proves that these dilemmas are genuine. Williams' argument spotlights the phenomenology of moral dilemmas, and in particular, the 'moral residue' associated with them. Those philosophers who believe genuine dilemmas exist (call them 'realists') claim that this residue points to the existence of genuine dilemmas, whereas those philosophers who deny genuine dilemmas exist ('irrealists') reject this inference. I shall argue that, by underscoring how apparently irresolvable moral dilemmas represent potential failures to realize the aforementioned regulative ideal of practical reason, my view more fully and more parsimoniously accounts not only for moral residue but for other crucial phenomenological dimensions of our experience of moral dilemmas. Indeed, the plausibility of the view illustrates that the experimentalists' commitment to honoring ordinary moral practice, especially in 'circumstances of complexity and choice,' is not antithetical to the rationalists' aim of eliminating moral conflict in the pursuit of rational system and order. In fact, the latter is essential to the best account of the former.

The central theme of Sections 2 and 3 is that metaphysical hypotheses about the existence of genuine moral dilemmas do not illuminate why we ultimately care about the resolution of apparent moral dilemmas, and that we must therefore trace our concern for the resolution of moral dilemmas to the aspirations of practical reason. Accordingly, I show how my methodological view fruitfully explains two main features of the phenomenology of moral dilemmas. First, it can explain the *rationality of the self-reproach* that agents often experience subsequent to acting within apparent moral dilemmas. Second, it explains an

important *asymmetry between our first-personal and third-personal standpoints* on apparent moral dilemmas. If I am correct, then my view permits us to retain many of our beliefs and attitudes concerning moral dilemmas without hitching them to any controversial metaphysical stance about whether genuine moral dilemmas are real or not.

Lest my central claim be exaggerated, note that to assert that moral deliberation and practice operate in accordance with the regulative ideal that denies the existence of genuine dilemmas is not to issue a straightforwardly descriptive psychological claim. In saying that the regulative ideal is *implicit* in moral deliberation and practice, I thus allow that many moral agents will not be aware of the role this regulative ideal plays in their own moral deliberation and practice. Regulative ideals are not epistemically transparent. For example, supposing Kant is correct that the unity of science is a regulative ideal for scientific inquiry, we should still expect that many scientific practitioners will not be cognizant of this regulative ideal's role in animating such inquiry. Kant's defense of this regulative ideal is meant to afford such practitioners a bona fide discovery regarding a commitment or attitude that explains *other* attitudes they have regarding scientific inquiry. My defense of the regulative ideal that denies genuine moral dilemmas functions similarly: as an explanation of other commitments or attitudes we have regarding morality (or practical reason), an explanation that operates largely in the background of moral deliberation and practice but that I hope I succeed in bringing to light here.

1. The denial of moral dilemmas as a regulative ideal

For Kant, the unity of scientific knowledge is a regulative ideal of theoretical reason. I now proceed to outline how the denial of genuine moral dilemmas may plausibly be seen as a regulative ideal of practical reason. A caveat here: Kant is customarily interpreted as an irrealist about moral dilemmas, denying the possibility of genuine dilemmas. (Barcan Marcus 1996, 24; Dahl 1996, 90; Gowans 1987, 6–7; Hill 1996, 173–175; Mothersill 1996, 69; for a dissenting interpretation see Louden 1992, 108–111) While I would not be unhappy if the view of moral dilemmas I defend here turned out to be Kant's own, I am content for it to be merely Kantian in inspiration.

To say that the denial of genuine moral dilemmas is a regulative ideal of practical reason is to claim that our moral deliberation is oriented around this denial. The denial of genuine dilemmas thus plays a similar role in the conduct of moral deliberation as the unity of science (allegedly) plays in the conduct of science. It serves a dual methodological role, as an assumption and an aspiration of practical reason that sets the agenda for moral deliberation.

We usually enter into moral deliberation because of moral uncertainty. Ideally, our deliberations conclude with the rational resolution of this uncertainty. More specifically, central to our ideals about practical deliberation is that

it will terminate in an action-guiding verdict.[5] If our deliberations end with the conclusion that we face a genuine dilemma, then this particular deliberative ideal is not met. For it belongs to the nature of a genuine dilemma that, once we are aware of it, our practical deliberation must fail to guide action in this all-things-considered, verdictive way. We can of course perform one of the two acts we are obligated to perform in a genuine dilemma, but we cannot perform both. From the standpoint of our ideals of practical deliberation, a genuine moral dilemma is an aporia that stymies our aspirations as practically rational agents. This aporia is, I propose, deliberative rather than moral in nature. Of course a genuine moral dilemma portends, for the agent whose dilemma it is, a moral failure, since no matter how she acts, she will violate a moral obligation she has. But it is embedded in our ordinary expectations about practical deliberation that it can succeed. Any rational activity can of course fail. But the very intelligibility of such an activity failing supposes that such an activity also has achievable conditions of success, and for the most part, conscientious agents bring to moral deliberation guarded optimism concerning its prospects for success. In other words, if it makes sense at all that we *ought* to deliberate about moral questions, then it must also make sense that we *can* deliberate about them successfully. The resolution of apparent dilemmas is a fundamental marker of successful practical deliberation. Of course, such resolution is sometimes not forthcoming, an outcome which stymies our aspirations as practically rational creatures.[6] I shall say much more about the phenomenology of this aspiration in coming sections, but for now, note that uncertainty – of which apparent dilemmas are a particularly unsettling instance – may represent a frustration of a rational ideal instead of its refutation. Just as the scientific community finding that its current theories lack unity would not refute the regulative ideal of theoretical unity, so too would discovering an apparently irresolvable dilemma not refute the regulative ideal according to which there are no genuine dilemmas. For our knowledge that such ideals function for us *qua* ideals is an instance of synthetic a priori knowledge, not open to empirical refutation. An apparent moral dilemma may therefore cast doubt on the achievability of this ideal, but not on the ideal's legitimacy or on the legitimacy of pursuing it.

The denial of genuine dilemmas is deduced from the nature of practical reason, and more specifically, from the nature of the demands imposed by the supreme principle(s) of morality (in Kant's case, by the Categorical Imperative). The Categorical Imperative is, Kant argues, an unconditional practical demand, but it can only unify or 'complete' the various particular moral demands (morality's innumerable categorical imperatives) if its prescriptions are free of contradiction, i.e. if the non-existence of genuine dilemmas is assumed. The existence of genuine dilemmas would leave gaps in the rational architecture of our moral understanding. It would imply that our moral principles, once juxtaposed against the world in which we must act, do not issue in authoritative and action-guiding imperatives, since genuine dilemmas are situations in which we appear

subject to conflicting imperatives that cannot both be satisfied. Consequently, our practical reason impels us to resolve such apparent dilemmas on the very assumption of the possibility of their resolution. Nevertheless, the most we can reasonably hope for is that the denial of moral dilemmas *may* be true. Indeed, this hope results from an application of Kant's dictum that 'ought' implies 'can': Since we ought to strive to resolve all moral dilemmas, it must be possible for us to resolve them. But even here, I do not (following Kant) believe that the 'ought' in question is a moral ought, such that there is a moral *duty* to assume the non-existence of genuine moral dilemmas. This regulative ideal is instead an independent normative standard, not reducible to any other normative standard, either moral or epistemic. And even here, we must counsel modesty: The regulative ideal neither proves that there are no genuine dilemmas nor provides evidence for or against any particular claim to have resolved a dilemma.

The denial of genuine dilemmas is rooted in a rational interest in being guided by moral norms in identifying what we must do. Being able to act in light of the moral norms we recognize as authoritative is not a species of understanding, but it is analogous to the understanding we achieve by unifying our scientific knowledge.

Hence, that there are no genuine moral dilemmas cannot be legitimately treated as a knowledge claim in a metaphysical sense. The denial of such dilemmas instead serves as a regulative, rather than constitutive, principle of reason: not a claim known to be true but a condition for the rational application of our knowledge of morality as issuing in authoritative rational demands. Though theoretically agnostic about the existence of genuine dilemmas, it takes the resolution of apparent dilemmas, and hence the implicit denial of genuine dilemmas, as a governing principle of moral deliberation and practice. It is crucial that the epistemic status of a regulative ideal not be exaggerated. A regulative ideal is a statement about what is necessary for the 'sensible continuation of a practice,' a statement that, for practical purposes we are obliged to embrace, but not to assert as true. (Misak 2004, 140)

In sum then: In terms of Kant's famous three central questions for reason – what can I know, what ought I do, and what may I hope – the answers with respect to moral dilemmas are:

(1) We can know a priori that reason aspires to resolve apparent moral dilemmas on the assumption that genuine moral dilemmas do not exist, but we cannot know whether that metaphysical thesis is in fact true.
(2) We ought to deliberate and inquire in moral matters operating on the assumption that there are no genuine moral dilemmas – that every apparent dilemma is resolvable in principle.
(3) We may reasonably hope that the world is not fundamentally dilemmatic in character.

The position I have outlined is attractive in its modesty. It neither asserts nor denies the existence of genuine moral dilemmas, but instead takes the

resolution of moral dilemmas as a methodological ideal. However, advocates of non-agnostic views of genuine moral dilemmas – realists or irrealists – may be happy to accommodate my methodological proposal. Whether there are genuine dilemmas appears to be a theoretical question, a question about whether the considerations a moral theory designates as morally relevant considerations supervene on non-moral ones to generate incompatible obligations. Thus, it may seem that the position I have described is orthogonal to recent philosophical debates about moral dilemmas. To a large extent, this worry is on target, for the position I have outlined is not a position about how the world is, morally speaking, but a position about the stance we ought to take toward the world in our moral deliberation and inquiry. Indeed, its very modesty does not impugn, and is in fact consistent with, either non-agnostic view. Hence, my view may appear to complement non-agnostic views rather than being a philosophical rival to them.

However, my regulative ideal view is a genuine rival to these non-agnostic views inasmuch as it offers a superior explanation of particular aspects of our experience of apparent dilemmas. Realism in particular has been defended by appeal to the phenomenology of moral dilemmas, and as I argue in the next two sections, both realism and irrealism imply explanatory claims regarding the phenomenology of apparent dilemmas that fit uncomfortably with that phenomenology. These non-agnostic views thus fail to predict or account for the phenomenology of moral dilemmas, whereas my regulative ideal can explain those very aspects of our moral phenomenology. I do not take these considerations to refute either realism or irrealism, since (again) my position is logically compatible with either. Still, to the extent that a philosophical position on moral dilemmas should make sense of how we experience them, my methodological position is superior to extant metaphysical positions.

2. Explaining the phenomenology, part I: moral residue and rational self-reproach

As one might expect, my view is skeptical of arguments, whether empirical or a priori, intended to establish whether or not genuine moral dilemmas exist. One such class of arguments are those that invoke the existence of genuine dilemmas to explain central features of our moral experience. The best-known example of such an argument is Bernard Williams' argument from 'moral residue.' This argument asserts that in order for the reactions we often have after we act in apparent dilemmas to be rational, there must in fact be genuine moral dilemmas. Moral residue need not be exclusive to situations that present themselves as dilemmas. As Ross (2002, 28) pointed out, in breaking a relatively unimportant promise in order to help a person in dire need, we need not understand that situation as a dilemma. Nevertheless, it triggers residue inasmuch as the promise breaker is now obliged to apologize, make recompense, etc. Still, the reactions

individuals experience once they act within an apparent moral dilemma are numerous and nuanced. They include reactive attitudes such guilt and remorse, as well as intentions that flow from these attitudes, such as desires to make amends to injured parties and to seek their forgiveness and understanding. They also include 'agent-regret,' a form of regret that is self-directed. The agent who experiences agent-regret does not regret only the occurrence of some event. She regrets being responsible for the event's occurrence. As Williams observed, what unites these various attitudes and intentions is their ascribing to oneself a measure of moral responsibility for an act or outcome one would prefer not to have been responsible for. (Williams 1965, 108–109) This responsibility is the basis for the 'self-reproach' that lies behind the various attitudes and intentions just enumerated.

According to the moral residue argument, when an agent acts in response to an apparent moral dilemma, she rightly subjects herself to self-reproach in the form of these negative self-appraisals, regardless of which of the two acts she performed. But these self-appraisals are rational or justified only if the agent would have been equally rational or justified had she acted to fulfill the other apparent obligation that bound her in the dilemma. Since these self-appraisals are appropriate only when an agent acts wrongly, it follows that the agent could not have failed to act wrongly and was therefore in a genuine moral dilemma. Put more formally (Sinnott-Armstrong 1988, 45–46):

(1) Suppose S is in an apparent moral dilemma, in which it is possible for her to do either A or B but not possible to do both A and B.
(2) Regardless of whether S does A or B, S will undergo rational self-reproach.
(3) Self-reproach is rational only if S acts wrongly (i.e. S violated a moral obligation).
(4) Thus, regardless of whether S does A or B, S will have acted wrongly.

S's situation is a genuine moral dilemma (since she cannot avoid acting wrongly).

Irrealists about genuine dilemmas typically object to the moral residue argument by rejecting premise 3, on the grounds that the rationality of these negative self-appraisals does not entail that an agent acted wrongly. For one thing, much will depend on the exact negative self-appraisals in question. As noted earlier, the range of self-appraisals in question is wide, but only some of these carry the suggestion that an individual violated a moral obligation. A person ought to feel guilt, for example, only on the condition that she violated an obligation, but if she did not, an appraisal such as regret is more appropriate. Some of these (a desire to make amends to injured parties, for instance) may be appropriate regardless of whether an obligation was violated. Furthermore, it can be rational for agents to experience negative self-appraisals that imply wrongdoing even when agents accept that they did not act wrongly. Such self-reproach could motivate agents to compensate (or seek the forgiveness of) those they injure

as a result of their actions or motivate agents to fashion social institutions and circumstances that do not tend to put individuals in dilemmas in the first place. Hence, considerations of social welfare make self-reproach rational even when agents do not in fact violate any obligations in the course of acting to resolve an apparent dilemma. (Sinnott-Armstrong 1988, 50)

I follow opponents of genuine dilemmas in concluding that these objections to the moral residue argument show the moral residue argument to be unsound: premise 3 is not the only credible explanation for the truth of premise 2, and in general, using our experience of moral dilemmas to infer the existence of genuine dilemmas looks like a hasty leap from phenomenology (or epistemology) to metaphysics. (And if my methodological view is correct, all such leaps will be illicit.) However, rather than resting satisfied with an apparent refutation of the moral residue argument, I wish to shift focus to the common ground that unites advocates of the moral residue argument and its critics, namely, its second premise. Both accept that after acting in an apparent moral dilemma, an agent subjects herself to rational self-reproach, regardless of which act she performs. Even after doing what we believe we ought to have done in resolving an apparent dilemma, we rarely feel pleasure or a sense of emphatic self-congratulation.[7] Granting that the existence of genuine dilemmas is a problematic explanation of this rational self-reproach, what view of moral dilemmas *would* explain this fact?[8]

It is crucial that the target of explanation not be misunderstood. When an agent performs the act that, in her judgment, represents a resolution of an apparent dilemma, it may nevertheless be true that her choice generates harm, injury, or the like, stemming from the act she did not perform. And it would not be at all surprising for conscientious moral agents to undergo negative self-appraisal for being responsible for such outcomes. Indeed, we should be glad that agents are psychologically constituted so as to lament the harms or injury their choices produce. But this self-reproach is not precisely the rational self-reproach gestured at in the moral residue argument. Irrealists about genuine dilemmas, as I mentioned above, attempt to explain how such rational self-reproach is justified, regardless of which course of action a person takes in an apparent dilemma, by claiming that feeling remorse, making amends to those injured, trying to reform social institutions so as to reduce the frequency of apparent dilemmas, etc., are rational responses to the *experience* of said dilemmas. For example, a physician who experiences negative self-appraisals after finding herself in too many apparent dilemmas concerning end of life care may then advocate for better palliative care so as to minimize future situations of this kind. Doubtless, responses such as making amends and the like can be supported by moral reasons, and in this sense, the apparent dilemmas have a causal role in the history of these responses. But this is quite different from a rational response *to* apparent dilemmas themselves, and it is the epistemic rationality of self-reproach itself, not the moral rationality of how we act and react *in the wake of*

such self-reproach, that advocates of the moral residue argument seek to explain in terms of the existence of genuine dilemmas. Advocates of the moral residue argument thus see the rationality of self-reproach as justified *retrospectively*, rooted in the proper cognition or appreciation of dilemmas. What makes guilt, remorse, etc., rational, they argue, is that they incorporate accurate cognitions both of the moral considerations that constitute apparent dilemmas and of how to act when facing them. In contrast, irrealists about genuine dilemmas try to explain the rationality of self-reproach *prospectively*, in terms of how agents respond, rationally-cum-morally, to having been in apparent moral dilemmas. But this is the wrong kind of explanation (moral, rather than epistemic) of the rationality of this self-reproach, and it targets the wrong explanandum (our moral responses to our judgments concerning apparent dilemmas, rather than the aptness of the judgments themselves).

Irrealists may reply that they can explain this rational self-reproach in other ways, however. Regardless of how agents react to having been in apparent dilemmas (whether they try to avoid such circumstances in the future, etc.), agents undergo rational self-reproach when they believe they judged an apparent dilemma wrongly. If, as irrealists believe, there are no genuine dilemmas, then an agent who concludes that she opted for the wrong course of action ought to feel self-reproach. Suppose that agent S does B in an apparent dilemma, when in reality, she was obligated to A, and S later comes to realize this fact. In such a case, rational self-reproach would clearly be warranted. But this reply is inadequate, for in endorsing premise 2, irrealists about genuine dilemmas are conceding that this rational self-reproach does not depend on whether an agent believes she erred in evaluating a dilemma. The self-reproach is supposed to be rational irrespective of whether an agent believes she acted properly in resolving the apparent dilemma. Thus, even if believing one erred might be part of the explanation for rational self-reproach in some cases where agents were compelled to act in an apparent dilemma, it cannot be the full explanation.[9] For although the self-appraisals we experience after acting in an apparent dilemma are to some extent sensitive to our judgments about whether we engaged in wrongdoing, there often are, as Greenspan (1995, 151) has suggested, agents who feel guilt without having a corresponding judgment of fault or wrongdoing. The rationality of such self-reproach is precisely the fact in need of explanation, and for agents to suffer an 'uneasy conscience' even when they correctly judge both that their situation was not a genuine dilemma *and* that they acted correctly in that situation looks *irrational*.

We will return to this first feature in a moment, but the perplexity about rational self-reproach only deepens when we consider a second important feature of it: The reproach is reproach of the *self*. (Greenspan 1995, 135; Rorty 1980, 490) But neither realism nor irrealism illuminates how the agent herself is an object of reproach after she acts to resolve an apparent dilemma. There is something insufficiently reflexive about explaining these self-appraisals by

proposing that there are genuine dilemmas. For these are negative *self*-appraisals, and there need be no failure (epistemic, moral, or otherwise) on the part of an agent if these negative attitudes reflect a disjointed moral world populated by genuine moral dilemmas. That an agent is, in a sense, trapped by a genuine dilemma and cannot fail to act wrongly provides a basis for negatively appraising whatever action the agent performs. Yet aside from genuine dilemmas that are the agent's own making, this is not a rational basis for negatively appraising the agent by blaming her for so acting. Indeed, an agent who concludes that she was in a genuine dilemma may in fact experience the opposite of such negative self-appraisals. She may instead feel a sense of relief that there was, in an important sense, no way not to have done wrong.

On the other hand, we have already observed that irrealists about genuine dilemmas can argue that reproach directed at the self is appropriate if an agent concludes she erred in evaluating or responding to an apparent dilemma. But even here it is not entirely clear that an agent who believes she erred in evaluating or responding to that dilemma ought to feel self-reproach. For a failed effort to resolve what is assumed to be in principle resolvable need not reflect negatively on an individual. Suppose that arithmetic is such that all its theorems are provable. Nevertheless, there are theorems whose proofs cannot be readily identified. The proof of Fermat's last theorem eluded generations of brilliant mathematicians, for example. Now imagine such a mathematician felt self-reproach because she inferred that because of (a) the in-principle provability of all theorems, and (b) her own inability to prove Fermat's theorem despite her using sound disciplinary methodology, etc., that she must therefore have erred in some way she is unable to detect. Such self-reproach would not be a rational response to her failed efforts. It would instead amount to self-flagellation. Some problems in mathematics are sufficiently daunting that erring in evaluating or responding to them does not impugn mathematicians who so err. After all, even Andrew Wiles, the mathematician who ultimately proved Fermat's last theorem, said it was to some degree due to luck. So too for morality: There are some moral dilemmas, apparent or otherwise, that are sufficiently daunting that erring in evaluating or responding to them does not impugn agents who so err. If Sophie in Styron's novel *Sophie's Choice* chose the wrong child to send to the gas chambers, would anyone hold this against her? If this is correct, however, regardless of whether there are genuine dilemmas, rational self-reproach does not hinge on whether agents believe they succeeded in resolving an apparent dilemma.

Thus, the rationality of self-reproach is not contingent on whether genuine moral dilemmas exist (Sinnott-Armstrong 1988, 46–47) or even on whether agents believe they deliberated correctly in their efforts to resolve dilemmas. Thus, the rationality of this self-reproach cannot be located either in the metaphysical facts about the existence of genuine moral dilemmas or in the properties of agents' specific deliberative or epistemic performances when apparent dilemmas present themselves. It thus seems as if this rational self-reproach is

not the product of substantive irrationality, since it does not depend on agents' getting moral reality right. But nor is it the product of procedural irrationality, since it does not necessarily depend on how well agents deliberate or act in their efforts to get moral reality right. (Betzler 2004, 197–199; Sinnott-Armstrong 1988, 44)

Despite taking no stand on the metaphysics of moral dilemmas, my proposed regulative ideal view can provide an explanation of why such negative self-appraisals may be rationally warranted regardless of whether genuine dilemmas exist and regardless of whether agents believe they have successfully resolved apparent dilemmas. Crucially, my regulative ideal view does not hold that these negative self-appraisals are fundamentally moral. Yes, an agent who believes she faced a genuine dilemma will necessarily believe that she acted wrongly. However, it need not be the case that she (or other agents) blame her for so acting. Especially if the dilemma is not one of her own making, it may well be unreasonable for the agent to be subject to moral reproach. Instead, the reproach in question is better characterized as a rational, rather than moral, self-reproach. Again, from the perspective of an agent committed to deliberating successfully, although the demands of the regulative ideal depend logically on other substantive moral demands, the ideal itself is a rational ideal, not a substantive moral demand. So as a regulative ideal, the denial of genuine is implicitly accepted by all moral agents as a norm of reason. It is thus the agents' own deliberative ideal. This rational residue thus reflects the sense that we have let morality down, not in the sense that we will (if in fact we face a genuine moral dilemma) act immorally. But when we identify with morality strongly and see morality's demands as demands of practical reason, to let morality down is also to let oneself down. It is the moral *cum* rational law within and not the starry heavens above that generates this self-reproach. This negative rational appraisal is thus implicitly a negative self-appraisal. (Herman 1993, 168)

Thus, when an agent finds herself in what appears to be an especially confounding apparent dilemma, it would not, I contend, be irrational for such an agent to later experience the negative self-appraisals allegedly associated with the existence of genuine dilemmas, even if the agent believed that she had effectively resolved the dilemma and acted appropriately. For the ideal itself is not an ideal associated with either deliberating well or with ascertaining features of moral reality. It is instead a self-imposed rational ideal, but in no way an arbitrary or subjective standard. The mere appearance of dilemmas, regardless of their ultimate resolution, reminds us of the prospect that one can fail to realize this ideal. We are, Kant claimed, capable of the distinctly moral emotion of reverence for the moral law. To worry that we have not identified what the moral law asks of us thus sparks a rational anxiety that manifests itself as self-reproach. But again, this self-reproach is independent of the moral self-reproach associated with violating one's obligations.

Hence, the regulative ideal implicit in agents' deliberation explains how agents are subject to negative appraisals directed specifically at the self as a moral agent. Furthermore, the regulative ideal pinpoints what makes this self-reproach rational. It is not that, because there are no genuine dilemmas, agents must have fallen short in the resolution of apparent dilemmas despite their best deliberative and epistemic efforts. Nor is that agents must have deliberated or reasoned badly. Instead, as dilemmas increase in their apparent intractability, concern that the regulative ideal will not be realized increases in proportion. This concern is not rooted in the firm belief either that genuine dilemmas do not exist or that agents have not on a particular occasion actually resolved a dilemma. Agents' self-reproach is rational because especially daunting dilemmas underscore the demands of this regulative ideal.

3. Explaining the phenomenology, part II: self-other asymmetry

Let us now consider how this regulative ideal view handles a second feature of our experience of dilemmas.

Our reactions to apparent dilemmas exhibit an asymmetry. As described earlier, from the first-personal standpoint of the person whose dilemma it is, the aftermath of acting in an apparent dilemma often brings self-reproach, a fact that my regulative ideal view is able to explain. However, for third parties to hold similarly reproachful attitudes about how other agents acted in response to apparent dilemmas seems less appropriate. The proper responses to other people having confronted apparent dilemmas can include sympathy and solidarity, rather than condemnation. (It is this very sympathy that helps explain why the response mentioned in Section 2, to want to create institutional or social conditions wherein fewer apparent dilemmas arise, is a rational response to the experience of dilemmas.) Sympathetic third parties may well have opinions concerning how the apparent dilemma was best resolved, and it would not be inappropriate to provide those opinions if, for example, the agent who was in the apparent dilemma sought advice or insight after the fact. But the impulse to evaluate the conduct of the agent in the apparent dilemma is properly subordinated to less epistemically grounded responses such as sympathy and solidarity.

There is, then, an asymmetry between first-personal responses to apparent dilemmas and third personal responses to them. Let us call the appropriate first-personal response the *verdictive* standpoint and the appropriate third-personal response the *sympathetic* standpoint.[10]

This attitudinal asymmetry is difficult to explain. One possible explanation for this asymmetry is epistemic: 'Outsiders' may believe that they have insufficient understanding of the situation to form a reasoned moral judgment about the apparent dilemma (or at least not the level of understanding that the individual in the dilemma has simply by virtue by being in it). Hence, the inappropriateness of outsiders adopting the verdictive standpoint reflects outsiders' reasoned

suspension of judgment, i.e. they simply do not know enough to form a reasoned moral judgment (or their judgments cannot be as well-grounded as the judgments of the individual in the apparent dilemma). But this cannot be a full explanation of this asymmetry. For these third-party attitudes do not spring from an outright *suspension* of judgment. Third party sympathy and solidarity are not contingent on third parties' own judgment concerning how the apparent dilemma is best resolved. An outsider may have just as much information or moral probity as the agent actually confronting the apparent dilemma and come to conscientiously agree or disagree with the actions taken by that agent. But sympathy or solidarity are called for in either case. That this asymmetry does not stem from third parties' epistemic perspective on the dilemma does not mean that others' judgments concerning it place no limits on how they respond. Third parties must at least think that the individual is in at least an apparent dilemma – that she is confronting a 'hard case,' so to speak – in order to feel sympathy or solidarity with her. A dogmatic moral opponent of abortion, for instance, may not feel sympathy for an agent who, caught in an apparent dilemma, opts for an abortion. After all, for the opponent of abortion, the situation does not even present an apparent dilemma.[11]

Another tempting explanation is that this asymmetry is only superficial. While it may not be appropriate for individuals to *assert* or *express* critical or judgmental attitudes about how others respond to apparent dilemmas, one might argue, it is not inappropriate for third parties to have such attitudes. Rather, the appropriate attitudes to express are those of sympathy or solidarity, regardless of whether these are one's true attitudes. But this cannot be the correct explanation either. For one thing, a person who has unsympathetic attitudes may experience self-reproach of her own simply for having those attitudes. In other words, a person may subject herself to self-criticism because she *wishes* she felt sympathy or solidarity in response to another person's apparent dilemma, when in actuality she is indifferent or even harshly judgmental. One can, after all, have higher order attitudes toward one's lower order attitudes, regretting one's lack of sympathy for instance. This indicates that whatever may be wrong with expressing verdictive responses, its wrongness supervenes on having those responses in the first place.

Lastly, one might think that the responses associated with third-personal sympathy occur because third parties recognize that agents in apparent dilemmas often have their own interests or concerns at stake in those dilemmas. But this cannot be the whole picture, for not all apparent dilemmas are self-affecting in this way. Physicians, military leaders, or educators may confront apparent dilemmas in which their own concerns or interests are not immediately implicated, and yet sympathy and solidarity can still be appropriate responses by third parties. Furthermore, our sympathies for those in self-affecting dilemmas extend beyond what happens to them. They extend to what they must do. For imagine if Sophie were not made to choose between her children, but instead,

a Nazi officer simply killed one of her children. Sympathy and solidarity for her loss would of course be justified in that case. But if Sophie herself is made to choose which of her children should die, there is an additional set of reactive attitudes we ought to feel as a response to her having been placed in an apparent dilemma. Our sympathy, solidarity, etc., reflect not simply what happened to her, but also how her agency became entangled in a set of circumstances such that what eventually transpired became the product of her agency.

Of course, a number of factors may rightfully mitigate our sympathy with those in apparent dilemmas. For instance, our sympathies lessen if the dilemma is of the agent's own making (if, by having chosen differently in the past, she might have avoided the dilemma altogether). Still, explaining this asymmetry remains a challenge, and the non-agnostic rivals to my regulative ideal view succeed in explaining only half of the asymmetry. As noted earlier, irrealists tend to explain the rationality of self-reproach prospectively. But they can offer a plausible retrospective explanation of such self-reproach as a fitting attitude to apparent dilemmas: If there are no genuine dilemmas, agents in apparent moral dilemmas have compelling reason to strive to resolve them, and this necessarily involves arriving at justifiable verdicts concerning how one acts (or acted) in an apparent dilemma. However, the thesis that there are no genuine moral dilemmas can only explain third-personal sympathy in the very epistemic terms I have already suggested are inadequate. For if there are no genuine dilemmas, why should we have sympathy for another person's being in an apparent dilemma aside from our being impressed with the difficulty of adjudicating the conflict at hand? Puzzlement or frustration seem appropriate in that case, but not sympathy.

Conversely, the realist stance that there are genuine dilemmas can explain third-personal sympathy but not the first-personal verdictive standpoint. Those who are not parties to an apparent dilemma justifiably experience a sense of its injustice to the individual whose dilemma it is. But if a situation is a genuine dilemma, the agent whose dilemma it is has comparatively little basis for *self*-criticism. Being concerned to get a dilemma right is intelligible only if it is possible that there is a unique something to be gotten right, which is not the case in a genuine dilemma.

Thus, the non-agnostic views about moral dilemmas can only account for different halves of this attitudinal asymmetry. However, if the denial of genuine dilemmas is merely a regulative ideal, then an explanation for this asymmetry itself comes into view. I have argued that practically rational agents accept the resolution of apparent dilemmas as a constitutive aim of their practical deliberation. This claim needs clarification. Setting aside the question of whether there are any genuine moral dilemmas, the notion of a moral dilemma can be analyzed in terms of situations where individuals function as variables, i.e. a situation is a moral dilemma iff any agent S in that situation would be subject to incompatible claims of obligation. But this characterization is clearly inadequate. For one

thing, not just any agent S will be in a dilemma if placed in such a situation. In some cases, features specific to S (her profession, her loyalties, etc.) determine whether or not the situation is a dilemma in the first place. More fundamentally, every dilemma is someone's dilemma. If there are simply no possible agents for whom a situation would appear to generate incompatible obligations, that situation is not a moral dilemma. At root, moral dilemmas are relations between individuals and their circumstances, so that talk of a situation's being a dilemma must ultimately be analyzable in terms of someone's being in a dilemma. Moral dilemmas are thus fundamentally local. And just as we can speak of headaches in the generic, so too can we speak of situations as dilemmas, but we should not be deceived into believing that dilemmas exist independently of the agents whose dilemmas they are anymore than we should be deceived into believing that headaches exist independently of those individuals whose headaches they are.

This picture of the ontology of dilemmas – that dilemmas *qua* sets of circumstances in which particular individuals find themselves are prior to dilemmas *qua* generic states of affairs – bears on how we should understand the rationality of the prerogative associated with the regulative ideal I have defended. I have argued that the denial of genuine dilemmas is a regulative ideal that orients deliberation and that this is an ideal for practically rational agents who seek to govern their conduct in accordance with morality's demands. If moral dilemmas were fundamentally generic situations, then the reasons that underlie this regulative ideal might appear to be agent-neutral. As Phillip Pettit describes it, an agent-neutral reason is a reason that can be fully specified without irreducible indexical reference to an individual. If the rationality of the regulative ideal consisted in providing agents with exclusively agent-neutral reasons to resolve apparent dilemmas, then an agent's relation to the reasons she has for seeking to resolve them is strictly incidental. She happens to find herself in apparent dilemmas due to contingent facts, and her reason for seeking to resolve these dilemmas is *that moral dilemmas ought to be resolved*. In contrast, since moral dilemmas are fundamentally relational, an agent has agent-relative reasons to seek to resolve those apparent dilemmas she finds herself in, where an agent-relative reason is 'one that cannot be fully specified without pronominal back-reference to the person for whom it is a reason.' (Pettit 1987, 75) In other words, that a moral dilemma is *her dilemma* is part of the rational force behind her aspiration to resolve it. The reasons generated by the regulative ideal that denies genuine moral dilemmas are agent-relative. That is, aside from the substantive moral considerations associated with the dilemma itself (that, depending on which course of action the agent takes, a person may be injured, a promise may be broken, etc.), which may provide either agent-relative or agent-neutral reasons for action, an agent aspires to resolve an apparent dilemma for reasons that are irreducibly hers, and more exactly, because *that* dilemma is *her* responsibility. This is why, as Walter Sinnott-Armstrong has suggested, a bystander to torture who is unable to put a stop to it does not feel the anguish felt by the agent

who, in response to an apparent dilemma, 'chooses and carries out the torture.' (1988, 48–49)

Thus, the regulative ideal that denies, for practical purposes, the existence of genuine moral dilemmas is therefore a universal but agent-relative norm. It is a norm grounded in the common, constitutive agential features of rational humans who acknowledge the authority of morality's demands.

This way of understanding the normativity of the denial of genuine dilemmas allows us to explain the aforementioned asymmetry between the verdictive first-personal standpoint and the sympathetic third-personal standpoint on moral dilemmas. The verdictive quality of our first-personal responses to the apparent dilemmas we find ourselves in is a reflection of the rational aspiration to resolve all such dilemmas in accordance with the regulative ideal. Yet when we encounter others in apparent dilemmas, our acceptance of this regulative ideal elicits our sympathy because we see other agents in morally fraught situations structurally analogous to those we know or can imagine. To focus attention principally on the epistemic or moral aptness of the verdicts others reach in their apparent dilemmas is to mistakenly adopt, however implicitly, the stance that the agent-relative reasons that animate their desire to resolve their them are our reasons too – that their reasons are not simply analogous to ours, but *are* ours, with the result that we should adopt the deliberative first-personal standpoint that strives to resolve the dilemmas. Thus, we engage in a kind of bracketing of our epistemic and moral judgment of others, without fully renouncing our own judgment.

The regulative ideal I have defended is a freestanding methodological norm rather than being a substantive epistemic or moral norm of its own. Nevertheless, this regulative ideal intersects with certain moral ideals. When agents in apparent dilemmas adopt the verdictive standpoint toward their own decisions and conduct, and when third parties adopt the sympathetic standpoint toward those decisions and that conduct, they, respectively, exhibit the Kantian virtue that Jeanine Grenberg has called 'proper humility.' Agents with proper humility are aware of their limitations as moral agents. Yet at the same time, they enjoy self-respect stemming from their recognition of their worth as moral agents and their entitlement to claim morally decent treatment from others. Proper humility combines these attributes into a 'meta-attitude' wherein the rational agent perceives herself as 'dependent and corrupt' but 'capable and dignified' in striving to honor the moral principles she takes as her own. (Grenberg 2005, 133) The regulative ideal that denies genuine dilemmas is characteristic of Kantian agents with proper humility. Such agents are committed to resolving dilemmas because they are committed to the sometimes daunting task of according their conduct with the supreme principle of morality. In Kant's vivid analogy, they bring their actions before the moral law in the court of conscience. Agents with proper humility therefore see other agents entangled in apparent dilemmas not as their inferiors but as engaged in a common, and humbling, human endeavor.

Indeed, it would be wrong for them to judge others' reactions too harshly, for that would run afoul of their duty to sympathize actively in the fate of others.

In so doing, agents with proper humility judge themselves not in relation to one another but in relation to the supreme principle of morality they and other rational agents accept. As Grenberg propounds it, this proper appreciation of moral principles transcends the self in that it transcends particular agents' perspectives. The denial of genuine dilemmas thus provides a standard that instead of being 'foreign, other, inaccessible, and truly not one's own,' is a standard to which we aspire because it is a consequent of the moral law. The regulative ideal is thus both a transcendent and a local standard. (Grenberg 2005, 142)

The phenomenology of moral dilemmas suggests that the regulative ideal view more fruitfully and parsimoniously accounts for central features of our experience of moral dilemmas than do non-agnostic views, and to that extent is preferable to either affirming or denying that there are genuine dilemmas. In the end, apparent dilemmas press in upon us and urge their resolution in a distinctive way, by calling upon individual practical agents to resolve the dilemmas that encircle them. The urgency of their resolution does not stem from our accepting any metaphysical hypotheses about whether these dilemmas shall ultimately prove genuine. Rather, we care specifically about the resolution of moral dilemmas because we are practical agents trying to navigate a complex world that threatens to stymie our efforts to act with integrity in light of morality's demands. As such, the regulative ideal view helps to explain why we experience self-directed reactive attitudes such as guilt or regret even when we are fairly confident we have resolved an apparent dilemma. This is not to say that we seek to resolve apparent dilemmas aware of the regulative ideal's influence on our deliberations. Nor is it likely that our implicit acceptance of the regulative ideal explains *all* of our emotional response to apparent dilemmas. Sophie's guilt or anguish stem largely from the fact that her situation and choice (that she was made to choose to send her child to die, etc.) was deeply entangled with her own personal concerns rather than from what I have claimed is her implicit acceptance of the regulative ideal regarding genuine dilemmas. The regulative ideal was likely the furthest thing from Sophie's mind in that context. Yet the fact that we experience similar negative self-directed reactive attitudes when we are forced to act in the face of apparent dilemmas that are remote from our own personal concerns speaks in favor of my regulative ideal view. Guilt, regret, etc. can thus stem as much from our worry that we faced a dilemma as from our awareness of the specific moral wrongs that the apparent dilemma may have compelled us to perform.

4. Conclusion

If my regulative ideal view is at all plausible, it represents an intriguing hybrid of the experimentalist and rationalist orientations. The systematicity and order

urged on us by the rationalist moral tradition and the fidelity to the lived experience of moral agency (and more specifically, the lived experience of moral dilemmas) urged on us by the experimentalist tradition are not at odds. In fact, a chastened version of the former – wherein the denial of genuine dilemmas is a methodological or practical precept instead of a metaphysical assertion – is part of the best account of the latter.

This theoretical agnosticism about the general philosophical question of the existence of genuine dilemmas coexists with a practical commitment to moral inquiry that aims to resolve all apparent dilemmas. I am not defending the implausible claim that moral agency as such requires acknowledgment of the regulative ideal. Dogmatists and ideologues will deny the possibility of such dilemmas, and I do not deny that dogmatists and ideologues are moral agents. Furthermore, the regulative ideal I have defended is not logically at odds with non-agnostic views of moral dilemmas. The regulative ideal is instead a rational stance on moral practice that renders the resolution of dilemmas a practically rational hope – and this rational stance is more philosophically defensible than either realism or irrealism. Apparent dilemmas are practical challenges, and so our stance on them should itself be practical. The practical thus has primacy over the theoretical, such that the regulative ideal (itself a stance on practical deliberation) is used to explain phenomenology of our practices of moral deliberation.

Most importantly, my regulative ideal view explains why the appearance, if not the actuality, of genuine dilemmas causes us to undergo a feeling of rationally justified dismay directed not at the world but at ourselves insofar as morality is an enterprise rooted in our own rational self-governance. The appearance of moral dilemmas foretells the unsettling prospect of an alienation flowing from the mismatch between our rational ideals and the world we aim to shape in their likeness. At the same time, my account permits a guarded optimism about our ability to make moral reality tractable by resolving each and every apparent dilemma. In this regard, the regulative ideal view I have defended reflects the sentiment that because morality issues authoritative demands that should guide our action, reason then compels us to exercise our moral capacities to the utmost and thereby seek to resolve the apparent moral dilemmas we confront, regardless of whether the world is ultimately constituted so as to thwart those rational aspirations.

Notes

1. Standard characterizations of genuine moral dilemmas do not index dilemmas to the agent's epistemic or moral competence, knowledge, etc. Hence, it is possible for an agent both to be in a genuine dilemma without knowing she is and possible for an agent to wrongly believe she is in a genuine moral dilemma. As McConnell expresses it elsewhere, 'genuine moral dilemmas are ontological, not merely epistemic; the truth of the conflicting ought-statements is independent of the agent's beliefs.' (1996, 36).

2. Donagan (1996, 15) writes that 'the generation of moral dilemmas is to moral rationalism what the generation of self-contradictions is to theories generally; an indispensable sign that a particular theory is defective.'
3. I will concentrate here on Kant's account of regulative ideals, though he is not the only philosopher to invoke or defend them. They play a central role in C.S. Peirce's pragmatism. See Misak (2004).
4. I am not aware of any philosopher who defends a regulative ideal approach to moral dilemmas. Raz (2004, 187) comes closest when he claims that what is lamentable about practical conflict is that it represents a failure to conform to reason as such: 'The distinctive feature of conflicts is the impossibility of complete conformity with reason, or, to be precise, the fact that conflict makes it impossible to conform to reason as well as but for it one would have been able to do so. In conflict situations our best efforts will still leave us short …. Whatever we do, some of the reasons remain unmet … This is the standard we fall short of; a personal standard not of knowledge, will, or competence … but of reason.'
5. Tessman (2015, 15) adds to the standard characterization of genuine dilemmas that the situation must be such that neither the obligation to do A nor the obligation to do B 'ceases to be a moral requirement just because it conflicts with another moral requirement, even if for the purpose of action-guidance it is overridden.' It is not obvious what Tessman intends by a moral requirement being 'overridden' for the 'purpose of action-guidance.' Notwithstanding, I expect that the regulative ideal view is plausible with respect to Tessman's characterization as well (though space prevents me from addressing this fully): To be committed to the non-existence of unicorns is to be committed to the non-existence of any proper subset thereof (e.g. black unicorns). Likewise, Tessman's dilemmas are a subset of dilemmas standardly characterized, so if our moral deliberation assumes, as I contend, that there are not genuine (standard) dilemmas, then our moral deliberation will likely assume that we are not committed to genuine (standard) dilemmas with the further feature that they do not 'ceases to be a moral requirement just because it conflicts with another moral requirement,' etc.
6. It is not part of my position that regulative ideals in general, or the regulative ideal concerning moral dilemmas I defend here, are inherently unrealizable. Emmet (1994) argues that regulative ideals have the methodological or deliberative role they do precisely because they cannot in fact be realized.
7. Markovits (2009, 114) makes this same observation in connection with how consequentialists analyze Bernard Williams' infamous 'Jim and Pedro' example – that 'having killed one, Jim might congratulate himself on saving nineteen lives.'
8. Talk of the rationality of regret, guilt, etc. seems to assume a cognitivist account of these reactive attitudes, since it might appear that such attitudes must be truth-apt states, akin to belief, in order for them to be susceptible to rational evaluation. This assumption is not one that I can suitably defend here except to note that it appears to be shared by most all parties to the debate concerning moral dilemmas, save Williams himself.
9. Bagnoli (2000) argues for this claim specifically with respect to regret.
10. I restrict the claims I make in this section to dilemmas that are not of one's own making or choosing. In those cases, the verdictive standpoint appears appropriate even for outsiders.
11. In any event, our sympathy or solidarity for those who must act in difficult moral dilemmas does not immediately follow upon an epistemic suspension of judgment concerning such dilemmas. For one can lack both the verdictive response and the sympathetic response. Hence, whatever considerations militate

against the verdictive response, those considerations do not suffice for the sympathetic response.

Acknowledgements

Audiences at the Second Rocky Mountain Ethics Congress (2009), the 12th Southern California Philosophy Conference (2009), the Southern California Law and Philosophy Group (2009), and the American Philosophical Association Pacific Division meeting (2010) provided invaluable feedback on earlier versions of this article. Special thanks in particular to Robert Hanna (RoME, 2009) and Jeremy Wisnewski (APA, 2010) for their formal comments on this material. David Adams, Richard Eldridge, Margaret Gilbert, David Kaspar, Sharon Lloyd, Herbert Morris, Steve Munzer, Peter Ross, and Dale Turner also offered many helpful suggestions on prior drafts.

Notes on contributors

Michael Cholbi has published widely in both theoretical and practical ethics. His *Understanding Kant's Ethics* will be published by Cambridge University Press in 2016. He is currently completing a monograph manuscript on ethical issues pertaining to grief, the first book-length treatment of that subject.

References

Bagnoli, Carla. 2000. "Value in the Guise of Regret." *Philosophical Explorations* 3: 169–187.

Barcan Marcus, Ruth. 1996. "More about Moral Dilemmas." In *Moral Dilemmas and Moral Theory*, edited by H. E. Mason, 23–35. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Betzler, Monika. 2004. "Sources of Practical Conflict and Reasons for Regret." In *Practical Conflicts*, edited by Peter Baumann and Monika Betzler, 197–222. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Dahl, Norman O. 1996. "Morality, Moral Dilemmas, and Moral Requirements." In *Moral Dilemmas and Moral Theory*, edited by H. E. Mason, 86–101. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Donagan, Alan. 1996. "Moral Dilemmas, Genuine and Spurious: A Comparative Anatomy." In *Moral Dilemmas and Moral Theory*, edited by H. E. Mason, 11–22. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Emmet, Dorothy. 1994. *The Role of the Unrealisable*. New York: St. Martin's Press.

Gowans, Christopher. 1987. *Moral Dilemmas*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Gowans, Christopher. 1996. "Moral Theory, Moral Dilemmas, and Moral Requirements." In *Moral Dilemmas and Moral Theory*, edited by H. E. Mason, 199–215. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Greenspan, Patricia. 1995. *Practical Guilt: Moral Dilemmas, Emotions, and Social Norms*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Grenberg, Jeanine. 2005. *Kant and the Ethics of Humility*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Herman, Barbara. 1993. "Obligation and Performance." Chap. 4. in *Practice of Moral Judgment*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Hill, Thomas E. 1996. "Moral Dilemmas, Gaps, and Residues: A Kantian Perspective." In *Moral Dilemmas and Moral Theory*, edited by H. E. Mason, 167–198. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Louden, Robert. 1992. *Morality and Moral Theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Markovits, Daniel. 2009. "The Architecture of Integrity." In *Reading Bernard Williams*, edited by Daniel Callcut, 110–138. London: Routledge.
McConnell, Terrance. 1996. "Moral Residue and Dilemmas." In *Moral Dilemmas and Moral Theory*, edited by H. E. Mason, 36–47. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
McConnell, Terrance. 2009. "Moral Dilemmas." *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/moral-dilemmas/.
Misak, Cheryl. 2004. *Truth and the End of Inquiry*. Oxford: Clarendon.
Mothersill, Mary. 1996. "The Moral Dilemmas Debate." In *Moral Dilemmas and Moral Theory*, edited by H. E. Mason, 66–85. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Pettit, Philip. 1987. "Universalizability without Utilitarianism." *Mind* 96: 74–82.
Raz, Joseph. 2004. "Personal Practical Conflicts." In *Practical Conflicts*, edited by Peter Baumann and Monika Betzler, 172–196. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Rorty, Amélie. 1980. "Agent Regret." In *Explaining Emotions*, edited by Amélie Rorty, 489–506. Berkeley: University of California Press.
Ross, W. D. 2002. *The Right and the Good*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Schaber, Peter. 2004. "Are There Insolvable Moral Conflicts?" In *Practical Conflicts*, edited by Peter Baumann and Monica Betzler, 279–294. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Sinnott-Armstrong, Walter. 1988. *Moral Dilemmas*. New York: Basil Blackwell.
Tessman, Lisa. 2015. *Moral Failure*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Williams, Bernard. 1965. "Ethical Consistency." *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* Supplement 39: 103–138.
Zimmerman, Michael. 1996. *The Concept of Moral Obligation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.