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Sušnik, Matej

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MATEJ SUŠNIK
Department of Philosophy,
University of Rijeka

In his book Moralna spoznaja *Baccarini argues that, with respect to the individual reasoning about morality, the method of reflective equilibrium is the appropriate method of moral reasoning. The starting point of my argument is Baccarini's refutation of Hare's view. As I see it, one of Baccarini's central arguments against Hare consists in claiming that Hare's approach to the amoralist objection weakens the deductive model of moral reasoning. I argue that the amoralist objection also posses a threat to the method of reflective equilibrium. At the end of the paper, I consider another view of moral reasoning which, in my view, is better suited to deal with the amoralist objection.*

Key words: reflective equilibrium, amoralist, deductive reasoning, practical reasoning, rationality

1. *Introduction*

The aim Baccarini sets for himself in his book[1] is to "establish the method of moral reasoning which is appropriate for the enterprise of searching for correct moral beliefs" ([2007], 11). In this discussion I will express my doubts regarding Baccarini's accomplishment of this aim. In chapter I Baccarini considers the Kantian model of moral reasoning which he calls "the deductive model". He recognizes that this model does not exhaust the Kantian approach as such ([2007], 19), but, nevertheless, he argues that the method of reflective equilibrium (RE) seems to be more promising as the method of moral reasoning. Therefore, the primary focus of my discussion will be Baccarini's refutation of Hare's account of moral reasoning (Chapter I), as well as Baccarini's defense of the method of reflective equilibrium (RE) given in Chapters II and III. In the first part I will examine the basis of Baccarini's refutation of Hare's account of moral reasoning. I will argue that Hare's method of moral

[1] Baccarini, E. [2007], *Moralna spoznaja* (Izdavački centar Rijeka).

method of moral reasoning is not the only method which is threatened by the amoralist objection, but that the same objection can be put forward against the method of RE. In the second part of the paper, I will briefly present the method of RE, and I will point to some difficulties Baccarini's arguments encounter. In the final part of the paper, I will consider one possible approach to the amoralist objection. Briefly put, I will analyse one method of moral reasoning Baccarini does not consider in the book at all—the method according to which moral reasoning is just one form of practical reasoning.

2. *Hare's deductive model of moral reasoning*

Hare argues that our moral reasoning is governed exclusively by *logical* rules, and that the two fundamental logical properites of moral words are prescriptivity and universalizability. Using moral words in this way, according to Hare, inevitably leads us to the acceptance of certain utilitarian conclusions. In Chapter 11 of his *Moral thinking* Hare anticipates a possible objection to this account of moral reasoning. He imagines the amoralist, a person who refuses to use moral words in the way Hare thinks they ought to be used or who refuses to use moral words at all.[2] Put differently, Hare considers the possibility of a person who may agree that moral reasoning consists of following certain logical rules, but who then might claim that he does not want to engage in moral reasoning. That is to say, the amoralist may recognize that he will reach utilitarian conclusions if he uses moral words (as understood by Hare), but then he may see this as a reason *not* to use moral words in that way because he does not want to reach these conclusions (Hare [1981], 188). In order to refute the amoralist, Hare considers non-moral arguments or, more specifically, tries to show that there are prudential reasons for not being the amoralist. Therefore, the only possible way to refute the amoralist objection, according to Hare, is to use *non-logical* reasons.

After presenting Hare's view, Baccarini uses Hare's argument against the amoralist to establish his own point. He seems to think that Hare's reliance on non-logical arguments against the amoralist considerably weakens Hare's own attempt to ground moral reasoning *only* in logical rules. Baccarini says:

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[2] Perhaps it should be mentioned that is not always clear what is meant by the term "amoralist". It is used to describe two different people. First, the term may refer to a person who makes moral judgments but remains unmotivated to act in accordance with these judgments. Second, it may refer to a person who seeks *justification* of morality. It is this second amoralist that Hare thinks poses a threat to his account of moral reasoning.

This strategy is promising. [...] However, this way the genuine Hare's program falls in the background, that is, there is no foundation of moral argument *only* by means of logical analysis. What happened is that if we want a justification of a certain moral system and a form of moral argument, we need to lead the discussion on other levels, which involve, for example, empirical considerations about the world in which we live, anthropological considerations, theories of rational choices and others [...] Moral theory is not only formal-deductive procedure" (Baccarini [2007], 38).

In what follows, I will try to establish two points. First, I will argue that Baccarini is not justified in reaching the conclusion that Hare's treatment of the amoralist objection shows that "there is no foundation of moral argument *only* by means of logical analysis". Second, I will claim that the reason why Baccarini reaches this conclusion in the first place is because he (mistakenly) assumes that the only way to approach the amoralist objection is to endorse the method of RE. Let me examine this in order.

Baccarini argues that Hare's account of *moral* argument is undermined by the fact that he uses *non-moral* arguments against someone who does not want to argue morally. I cannot see why it should be considered as a flaw of Hare's account that he uses non-moral arguments to persuade the amoralist to enter the moral domain. I think the reason for this is obvious. If certain rules are applied within the moral domain, it does not mean that one has to use these same rules in order to justify that domain to someone who does not want to enter that domain. This is exactly the point of the amoralist objection. The amoralist is pictured as someone who stands *outside* moral realm and to whom moral requirements do not apply. He is someone who refuses to step in unless he is given good reasons to do so. These reasons cannot be *moral* reasons because it is those reasons he questions in the first place. In Hare's *Freedom and Reason* we find the following statement: "Just as one cannot win a game of chess against an opponent who will not make any moves—and just as one cannot argue mathematically with a person who will not commit himself to any mathematical statements—so moral argument is impossible with a man who will make no moral judgments at all" (Hare [1963], 101). Obviously, if someone refuses to play chess by the rules, or does not want to play chess at all, we cannot force him to do so by telling him what the rules of chess are! He simply refuses to accept those rules, and there is nothing we can say to him. But it certainly does not follow from this that the existence of such a person poses a threat to those very rules. Baccarini, however, seems to think that *if* Hare's account of moral reasoning (according to whom moral reasoning is governed exclusively by logical rules) is justifed by non-logical means, then it follows that his account of *moral* reasoning is *not* governed exclusively by logical rules. This conclusion does not follow. On the contrary, even if Hare's argument fails to convince someone that he should act morally, that does not mean that Hare's view of morality should be abandoned. Once again, even if Hare relies on the empirical arguments in his "battle" against the amoralist (who stands *outside* morality), this does not

tell us anything about the rules which, according to Hare, apply *within* morality. Perhaps it should be mentioned that I am not trying to defend Hare's theory. My only aim is to show that Baccarini (at least on the basis of his discussion about the amoralist) is not justified in reaching the conclusion that moral reasoning is not purely deductive.

3. *The amoralist and the method of reflective equilibrium*

Even though I don't think that Baccarini succeeds in establishing the conclusion he wants to establish, there is something important one should notice in Baccarini's passage cited above. In spite of his belief that Hare's strategy against the amoralist fails, Baccarini finds Hare's strategy "promising". Why? I believe that the reason for this lies in Baccarini's conviction that Hare's appeal to the empirical considerations favors the very account of moral reasoning Baccarini himself endorses—the method of reflective equilibrium. Put differently, Baccarini may concede that Hare is absolutely right in thinking that the only way to justify a certain system of rules is to provide an *external* justification of these rules.[3] Therefore, in order to provide the justification of his account of moral reasoning, he may agree that Hare has to do it by means of non-logical arguments. But, according to Baccarini, if one makes the appeal to the empirical (non-logical) arguments when providing the justification of a certain account of moral reasoning and, consequently, a moral theory, he comes one step closer to endorsing the method of wide RE. Let me explain.

The method of reflective equilibrium is traditionally perceived as a coherentist method of epistemic justification[4]. Roughly, this method consists in trying to make judgments one adopts coherent and balanced. The state in which our intuitive moral judgments are coherent with the general moral principles—the state which is also known as the state of narrow reflective equilibrium—can be achieved by certain adjusment. If we find ourselves in the situation in which these two are in conflict, it is necessary *either* to give up some of our moral judgments or to revise the moral principle in such a way as to make it consistent with our jugdments. However, Baccarini argues that the method of wide reflective equilibrium is more promising ([2007], 50). The crucial difference is that wide reflective equilibrium also takes into account various background theories one believes, such as rational procedures, anthropological theories, prudential considerations and everything that might be relevant in order to establish the proper moral theory.

But now one should notice that it is precisely those background theories Baccarini mentions in his argument against Hare. He wants to

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[3] The distinction between internal and external justification is analysed by Drier [1997]

[4] However, there are authors, as pointed out by Baccarini, who think that reflective equilibrium is compatible with foundationalism (Baccarini [2007], 48).

show that Hare's argument against the amoralist commits Hare himself to endorse the method of RE. In order to justify the moral theory and the method which leads him to the acceptance of that theory, Hare, according to Baccarini, has to appeal to the various background theories which, as it appears, are the essential ingredient of wide reflective equilibrium! Since the proponents of wide RE appeal to the empirical considerations, this is supposed to be an independent argument *against* the deductive model but *for* the method of wide RE. However, as we saw, the fact that Hare appeals to the empirical considerations does not show that moral reasoning is *not* deductive because the *justification* of a certain model does not have to consist (and cannot consist) in appealing to the norms which apply within the model itself.

Even under the assumption that Baccarini successfully refutes Hare's view of moral reasoning, it still seems that he is faced with the following difficulty. If we can conceive a person who poses a threat to purely deductive forms of moral reasoning, then we can also conceive a person who threatens the form of moral reasoning Baccarini prefers, namely, the method of RE. My point is this. If one of the reasons why Baccarini abandons Hare's account is *because* it does not successfully deal with the amoralist, he has to show why his own account is better suited to deal with the very same objection. He has to show why it would not be a threat to his own account of moral reasoning if one imagines a person saying something along the following lines: "I see that moral reasoning consists in finding the balance between my beliefs, some general principles and various background theories, and I undestand that if I do so, I will reach certain conclusions. But this is exactly why I don't want to endorse this method of moral reasoning because I don't want to reach these conclusions"[5]. So how can the proponent of the method of RE deal with this objection? Let me consider one possible approach.

The defender of RE might claim that amoralism is a position which really does not make much sense. This view is, for instance, advocated by David McNaughton (but not within the context of defending RE) who argues that the amoralist is not an intelligible figure because "...in rejecting morality he appeals to values that he shares with us. Not all of these need be moral values but it is likely that some will be" (McNaughton [1988], 140). If this is true, it would mean that the amoralist would not be someone who stands *outside* morality, but who already stands *within* the moral domain. Following this line of reasoning, the proponents of RE could argue that the amoralist, even though he does not recognize it himself, makes genuine moral judgments.[6] But if he already stands within the moral domain, then he may eventually recognize that his amoralism is not firmly grounded. Since he would be ra-

[5] My formulation of the objection relies on Hare's own formulation of the amoralist objection (Hare [1981], 188).

[6] Notice that the possibility of this move is not open to Hare because Hare thinks that the amoralist's judgments are only *preferential* and cannot be considered as genuine moral judgments. For this point, see (Baccarini [2007], 35).

tionally required to make his view consistent with other principles and background theories, he would reach the conclusion that his position is not coherent. This manoeuvre would therefore purport to show that the amoralist position is not *internally* justified.

But there are two problems with this approach if taken by the proponent of RE. First, as we already saw, there is something wrong with the justification of the method of moral reasoning if that justification consists in appealing to the norms which apply within the method itself. If the proponent of RE argues that the amoralist needs to have his beliefs coherent with his other beliefs and various background theories, his argument would be circular because he would appeal to the very method that the amoralist questions. Second, why should one suppose that the amoralist would not reach the equilibrium between his beliefs while still preserving his amoralism? Even if the amoralist makes genuine moral judgments, why not suppose that he could give up these judgments when he engages in the process of RE? Perhaps this would place him *outside* morality since he would not have any *moral* judgments, but it would certainly show that his amoralism can be coherent and consistent. The point raised in these questions can be understood as an instance of the very well known objection which is often used against the method of RE, namely the *alternative coherent beliefs* objection. Since it is conceivable that there are many alternative coherent sets of beliefs, there is no reason to suppose that the method of RE will lead us to convergence. In Chapter III Baccarini fully discusses the method of RE and considers various problems it encounters. I will now focus on this chapter in order to find the answers to the above questions. To be more specific, I will try to examine Baccarini's attempt to refute the *alternative coherent beliefs* objection as well as his attempt to provide the justification of the method.

4. The 'alternative coherent beliefs' objection and the justification of RE

The *alternative coherent beliefs* objection amounts to the claim that there might be many incompatible sets of beliefs, and that the fact that one's set of beliefs is coherent does not necessarily imply that it is true. Different people from different cultures might be justified in holding their moral views (no matter what these views are) because they could all reach the state of reflective equilibrium. There is no warrant that different people will converge on the same moral views if they engage in the process of RE.

Baccarini's understanding of the method seems to enable him to deal with this objection easily, since he does not want to argue that there is a connection between coherence and truth in the first place ([2007], 69). Instead of using the notion of "true belief", he rather uses the notion of "correct belief" ([2007], 63). One's moral beliefs in the state of reflective

equilibrium do not have to correspond to the objective moral reality, but this does not show that they cannot be objectively correct. This enables him to claim that *it is possible* that the method will lead us to convergence, even though there is no guarantee that it will ([2007], 63). This possibility is ensured by the fact that the method of reflective equilibrium is "the only method which enables us to be rational", and "only rationality provides the possibility that all our beliefs are correct" ([2007], 64). I am not convinced by this argument. First, I don't think that the method of RE is the *only* method which enables us to be rational (I will return to this problem in the last section of this discussion). Second, the fact that *it is possible* that convergence will take place does not really solve the initial problem. In order to clarify his point, Baccarini states that the phenomenon of moral disagreement is "exaggerated", and that in some cases the moral disagreement might be resolved by giving up false beliefs and various prejudices ([2007], 63). This might be true in some cases, but it is certainly not true in *all* cases. For example, there is no inconsistency in imagining two people who have no prejudices and have no false beliefs regarding certain matter, but who still hold different moral views. If this situation occurs, we would be faced with the case of genuine moral disagreement, and there is no reason to suppose that both parties cannot have coherent sets of beliefs. Baccarini's approach to the phenomenon of moral disagreement does not exclude these cases. It appears that the proponents of the *alternative coherent beliefs* objection may happily agree with Baccarini because the mere fact that the method of RE allows for the possibility of convergence does not refute this objection at all.

When dealing with the objection that the method of RE needs justification, Baccarini seems to agree with DePaul's view that "we are not left with anything else but accepting the method of reflective equilibrium" (Baccarini [2007], 67). He himself later concludes that this method is "the best one we have..."(Baccarini [2007], 70). I cannot think of a better response to this claim than the one Elijah Millgram provides in his RE discussion. As he notices, this kind of response falls into the category of what he calls "Coffeeshop Responses", and it is expected that it will be used by the proponent of this method:

> It's an indication of how respectable the notion has become that on occasion I see 'reflective equilibrium' typed into the method blank of a philosopher's grant or fellowship application. Probably an even more important indication of its respectability is the family of overlapping responses you encounter when you press practicing philosophers on the reasons for using reflective equilibrium: One, what *else* could you do? Two, you do it *anyway*. [...] Call these Coffeeshop Responses, because you get them over coffee, after class, and during Q & A sessions. Answers like the Coffeeshop Responses are normal practice only when what's being defended is itself a normal practice. A tendency to identify reflective equilibrium with wide reflective equilibrium makes the Coffeeshop Responses seem reasonable, but also makes the notion uninteresting ... (Millgram [2005], 9).

It seems that Baccarini is faced with the very same objection. We can understand this better if we go back to Baccarini's argument against Hare. According to my interpretation of this argument, Baccarini wants to establish a more general point, namely that sooner or later one will end up using reflective equilibrium. This should not be surprising because *it is the best method we have*, and this is why we are justified in using it. But even though it may seem that this is the argument *for* the method, it is really an argument *against* it. In Millgram's words: "...if *anything* you do counts as an instance of Method X, then Method X is not a *method* (Millgram [2005], 9)." If there is no acceptable alternative to the method of RE, then this method becomes empty and philosophically uninteresting.

But even if the proponent of RE can deal with the above problems, this sort of justification is certainly not strong enough for the "battle" against the amoralist since the amoralist does not have to be persuaded by this justification at all. Even if he agrees that the method is the best one available, he can still refuse to accept it as the method which will govern his own reasoning, and, more importantly, he can refuse to accept it while not being accussed of irrationality.

5. *Moral reasoning as practical reasoning*

Is there an account of moral reasoning which could cope with the amoralist objection? Maybe there isn't, but before we come to this conclusion we should examine one more appoach a moral theorist might take. In order to do this, let me consider the following question: what do we want to establish when we engage in moral reasoning? It seems obvious that we want to find out what to do, or what we have (moral) *reason* to do. But what does it mean to say that someone has *a reason* to do something? It appears that this question can be answered only if we turn our attention to the theory of practical reasoning. Practical reasoning is reasoning about what to do, or reasoning about what we have reason to do. The theory of practical reasoning might, for instance, tell us that what we have reason to do is to satisfy our preferences and desires, or it might tell us that there are categorical reasons, namely reasons whose presence does not depend on what people happen to desire. But if this is so, then we might conclude that the results one might achieve in one's search for the theory of practical reasoning can also be used in the domain of moral reasoning. Moral reasoning, according to this picture, would be one form of practical reasoning.

Now, the amoralist is a person who wants to find out whether he has any *reasons* for moral behavior. In order to approach the amoralist, one might use the same strategy. That is to say, one might turn to the theory of practical reasoning and use its results to see whether these reasons can be given at all. If, for instance, as it is already mentioned, turns out that the existence of reasons is dependent on the antecedent desires, that would mean that the amoralist cannot be given reasons

for moral behavior unless he himself would have some desires which could be satisfied by moral behavior. This approach has its root in the Humean tradition. On the other hand, the theory of practical reasoning might tell us that there are categorical reasons, and that moral reasons are of this sort. In that case it would follow that *everyone* has a reason to be moral. This approach is, in its various versions, today strongly defended by some contemporary Kantians. Under the assumption that the Humean picture proves to be correct, the amoralist would not be motivated to engage in moral reasoning, and he would have no reason to do so. It would turn out that the justification of morality would always be justification for some people, not for all. As Drier puts it: "Humeans think that it is a disappointment we will have to learn to live with" (Drier [1997], 88). On the other hand, if Kantian conception turns out to be true, the amoralist would be considered *irrational* because he would not acknowledge the reasons he has (and which everyone else has) for moral behavior.

Having said this, let us consider the amoralist who questions *this method* of moral reasoning and utters the following statement: "I understand that moral reasoning is a form of practical reasoning, and I understand that I will reach certain conclusions about what I have reason to do if I engage in moral reasoning, but I don't want to use this method of moral reasoning because I don't want to reach these conclusions". If the amoralist is pictured as someone to whom the justification of this method has to be given, in order to provide such a justification, one would have to provide *reasons* why this method should be accepted. But again, if, for instance, all reasons turn out to be dependent on one's motivation, then we would have to conclude that the amoralist does not have a reason to accept this method if he does not want to. However, the amoralist's position now becomes a threat not only to moral reasoning, but to practical reasoning as such. He wants to be given *reasons* to follow the instrumental principle (the principle which tells us that what one has reason to do is to follow one's desires and preferences), and it remains unclear what kind of reasons would the amoralist accept as reasons at all?[7]

The Kantian conception, on the other hand, does not show that everyone has a reason to comply with moral norms *if* they decide to engage in moral reasoning. This means that the amoralist cannot sensibly say that he does not want to accept this kind of moral reasoning because he does not want to reach certain conclusions about what he has (moral) reason to do. This is because he would have these reasons even if he would not engage in this kind of reasoning. If the amoralist, as it

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[7] James Drier tackles this problem in more detail. He states: "If our subject were asking for some reason to follow M/E [means-end principle], the matter would be different. ... So she asks what reason she has, and when we cite the M/E principle, she asks what reason she has to follow that. But now, I think, we are at a loss. Not merely at a loss to provide a compelling answer, but at a loss to know what to think of such a person" ([1997], 95).

is already noted, wants to be given *a reason* why he should engage in this kind of moral reasoning, then that reason could be easily provided. The Kantian position implies that every rational being has a reason to comply with morality even if he decides not to engage in moral reasoning. It might seem that the amoralist may then ask for a reason to do what rationality requires him to do. But this does not seem promising. As William Frankena points out, in that case "one is requesting reasons and so has already committed oneself to being rational" (Frankena [1980], 83).

In light of this discussion, I think we might conclude the following. If the Humean conception of reasons is true, then it appears that at some point amoralism becomes very confusing and mysterious position. This is certainly not the argument for this method of moral reasoning, but it does not seem to be the argument against it either. On the other hand, if the Kantian conception of reasons turns out to be true, then the amoralist's quest for reasons to engage in this kind of moral reasoning would already pressupose his commitment to rationality.

Of course, I am not trying to suggest that the Humean and the Kantian approach to the theory of practical reasoning exaust the whole field of practical reasoning, and my purpose here is not to argue for either of those. Also, the theory of practical reasoning raises many questions and problems which I am not able to tackle in this paper. I rather wanted to establish a more general point: namely, that we should not dissmiss the view of moral reasoning according to which moral reasoning is just one form of practical reasoning. Let me now just briefly comment on Baccarini's claim that the method of RE is the "only method which enables us to be rational". This might be true only if rationality is here understood as *theoretical* rationality, but, as we saw, why can't we suppose that the method of moral reasoning has to do something with *practical* rationality?

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