of war do we want – provided we want a war? Public opinion, at least in democracies, should have something to say concerning this question. While political realism makes it necessary to take the existence of cyberwarfare as given and to ask whether and how ethical limits can and should be drawn, we should also be able to step back and ask whether it would not be better to renounce cyberwarfare completely. While cyberwarfare might have the potential to lead to destructionless wars, it also has the potential to initiate massive destruction. As such, it is a two-edged sword. and in addition to asking the pragmatic question "What can we do in order to reduce the risk of using the destructive side of the sword?" we should also take time to ask the fundamental question "Do we want a (new) double-edged sword at all?"

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Dale DORSEY. *The Limits of Moral Authority*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016. 233 pp.

In his book on the normative authority of morality, Dale Dorsey addresses the conflict between the 'plausible' intuition that morality requires universal 'impartiality' to override personal interests (PMI) and the implications of such requirements that go against our other rational views. Is the 'moral standpoint' mandatory for us at all times and in every circumstance? The burden seems overwhelming. This is 'the question', stated as an attempt to establish the relationship between acting according to moral requirements and how one ought to live. The more famous of the objections that he addresses is known as the 'demandingness objection'. Similar in content are the cases in which morality understood as 'reason-as-such' stumble into other (moral or non-moral) reasons in favour of the 'dearest and nearest'. *The Limits of Moral Authority* offers a broad presentation of practical rationality and morality, however, which is more consistent than the mere sum of its arguments.

The perplexity facing the (excessive) demands of moral requirements already guided Dorsey's inquiry to some extent in his previous book (*The Basic Minimum: A Welfarist Approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012). He raises questions such as: given two smaller communities, one faring well and another struck by famine, which one should society help? Why is it so clear that it ought to help the community that is worse off? Why should all other considerations be discarded? The 'demandingness objection' was also the main question in the author's paper "Weak Anti-Rationalism and the Demands of Morality" (*Noûs* 46/1 [2012]: 1-23). In this new volume, *the question* (with many of its ramifications) comes to the foreground, superseding political or social problems, even those that keep him awake at night (does his weak anti-rationalism not justify 'jerks' and the selfish wealthy in following their whims and discard any moral demands entirely?).

The question of practical (moral) conflicts is presented as follows: "My family and I have agreed to take a group vacation […]. The time has come to book our tickets. But

before we can do so, a natural disaster strikes an extraordinarily impoverished country, leaving hundreds of thousands of people homeless […]. My own view is that doing something to help is morally required. [… but to] cancel now would be the worst sort of disappointment. After all, my family and I really want to go. Also, it's something I feel I owe them" (1).

The picture is sketched in this somewhat pedestrian way in the introduction – if compared, for example, to Max Weber's despair in the face of the choice between saving one's soul or the city, or Isaiah Berlin's values conflict. Although the *reductio ad Hitlerum* (Hitler, Sartre's apathy and the justifications of a Nazi gatekeeper surface several times) eventually finds its place in the book, the tone is never of a deep inner struggle between the demands of universal morality and the fragility of goodness. Moreover, 'prudential' considerations also take the 'virtue' of prudence as a shallow calculation between self-interest and 'common good'. Given these platitudes, the book's presentation (or its beginning) is not at first glance promising.

Even more surprising, however, is the author's hasty use of a brief definition/description to solve the dichotomy between facts and values that has plagued morality and political life since Hume's dilemma (18) or Kant's 'stratagem' (213 ff.): morality is just one among several possible standpoints. "In its most basic distillation, a standpoint takes as inputs certain facts about a given action, assigns a particular importance (or 'strength') to these facts, and generates an evaluative output: an assignment of 'good,' 'bad,' 'required,' 'permissible,' etc., to the action in question" (9).

There are, however, two powerful reasons to read carefully what is otherwise a remarkably well-thought out and organized book, full of roadmaps, signposts, summaries, and conclusions.

On one hand, the puzzle is a real one, at the very least from a subjective perspective: "When trying to decide whether to take a family vacation or not, I consider not just morality, but also prudence, etiquette, and norms of friendship and family. Each of these picks out a distinct standpoint of normative inquiry" (9).

Obviously, it is tempting for this reviewer to let the author (and his family) go on vacation, and even encourage Lee, Chris and many others fictitious characters to pay for their sons' costly top-notch high school or college instead of donating their money to Oxfam (the recurrent dilemma afflicting many people in the book). In other words, to dismiss these rather shallow inner struggles as merely artificial conflicts, taking the view that moral permissions and duties should always take supremacy, therefore fully endorsing what the author calls 'moral rationalism'. Or even to uphold a theory that is closer to the author's heart, namely Douglas W. Portmore's defence of mild consequentialism (*Commonsense Consequentialism: Wherein Morality Meets Rationality*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011): moral rationalism sets constraints on moral theories, and some forms of act-consequentialism may be incorporated in practical reason in a way that does not violate such constraints. But is it that easy to reconcile all these viewpoints or is this attempt at dismissal not merely a distorted view of human morality and even a contradiction in terms – as Isaiah Berlin, for example, contends?

It is very tempting, nevertheless, to defuse these apparent conflicts and discard the main thesis of the book with them, especially because among the many arguments debated and accepted or rejected as 'plausible' or 'non-plausible', some theories *do* explain the specific conflict/contradictions under examination. Samuel Scheffler's 'partiality' ("Morality and Reasonable Partiality." In *Partiality and Impartiality*. Oxford University Press, 1994, 100-107), Brian Barry's not so demanding 'impartiality' (*Justice as Impartiality*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992, 191), and the double meaning of morality as either a set of basic rules and an ideal of excellence in behaviour (James Dreier. "Why Ethical Satisficing Makes Sense and Rational Satisficing Doesn't." In *Satisficing and Maximizing*. Edited by Michael Byron, 131-154 [149]. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) are among the theories that are too hastily dismissed.

On the other hand, this is a challenging book, full of interesting arguments and very readable, notwithstanding (or because of) the evidently impressive scholarship in recent analytical moral theory (with the occasional reference to a classical book thrown in). Chapter 1 is devoted to clarifying the concepts the author uses throughout the book, and it is apparently a mere 'stage-setter'. But while anticipating the objection that there is no independent notion of practical rationality (based on Copps's normative pluralism), he in fact argues that there is reason for accepting the sui generis normative standpoint of 'reason-as-such', from which the unscripted ought is the result (39). Chapter 2 addresses the problem of the method in moral inquiry and attacks *a priori* moral rationalism, that is, the view that moral considerations are supreme and a limiting condition ('thou shall not kill, period') and that if we take all moral considerations seriously, there is no theoretical conflict. His purpose is to contrast it with 'substantive rationalism' that entails an analysis of the reasons for action, dismissing in passing some criticisms of the famous defence of anti-rationalism by Philippa Foot. In chapters 3 and 4 Dorsey puts forward the core of his vision: there is good reason for accepting "[…] an impartial, and hence demanding, theory of morality" (70); but there is also a ground for the denial of the 'supremacy' of the moral standpoint (as in Thomas Nagel, 207-210) and therefore moral anti-rationalism is the best way to 'accommodate' the existence of heroic actions that are not normatively implied or required on grounds of how one should live, called 'supererogatory actions' (70). The more controversial points are made in chapters 5 and 6, where the author maintains that it is *not* irrational *not* to follow moral norms. He falls short of Bernard Williams's position – we would be "better off without" (86) –, but morality for Dorsey is merely a set of 'by default' reasons (or permissions) for action and we possess a "[…] capacity to strengthen practical reasons" through the "normative significance of the self" (173-180). This theory is also presented in the paper "Grounding, Priority, and the Normative Significance of Self" (*Journal of Ethics & Social Philosophy* 10/1 [2016]: 1-24), but ignores an obvious alternative: with due apologies to Jean-Paul, Sartre behaved as a selfish brat and he is merely excusing himself, claiming a political stance he never upholds – but certainly later hyper-compensated navigating the 'wave of the future'.

The assumption that pervades the book is that morality is independent of human desires and ends: "[…] whatever theory of practical reasons is true will allow us to

determine the first order of content of normativity on the basis of a reflective equilibrium of our considered judgments concerning how we should live" (6; fully clarified in the appendix "FYO"). Defining morality as impartiality and henceforth using the reflective equilibrium as a method ignoring the appeal to a view of the moral person is the deep reason why Dorsey's conclusion is to some extent unavoidable.

If one puts forward the standards or demands of morality as a form of moral constructivism in the attempt to avoid any ideal conception of personhood, naturally something is amiss in the relationship between the morality standpoint and normative authority.

Despite similarities in terminology, this is not Rawlsian reflective equilibrium. When Rawls presents the aim of his Dewey Lectures in 1980, he begins by saying that he merely wishes to examine the notion of a "constructivist moral conception" (John Rawls, "Kantian Constructivism." In *Collected Papers*, 303. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), although one of a specific kind: a Kantian constructivism, although he acknowledges that "[…] justice as fairness is not, plainly, Kant's view, strictly speaking" (1999, 304). Rawls is using the qualification 'Kantian' as an analogy and not quite as an accurate interpretation, but he still wants it to resemble Kant's fundamental aspects (1999, 304-305). He ventures to do so because constructivism is much less well understood than "utilitarianism, perfectionism, and intuitionism" (303). Indeed, in the third lecture Rawls presents how a Kantian doctrine "[…] interprets the notion of objectivity in terms of a suitably constructed social point of view" (1999, 340), following Henry Sidgwick's efforts to build a method of ethics that he considers the first truly consistent work in modern moral theory (1999, 341). Yet, Rawls still points out two important limitations to Sidgwick's *Methods of Ethics*: firstly, Sidgwick pays little attention to the notion of 'personhood' and the social importance of morality; and secondly, Sidgwick fails to recognize that both Kant's doctrine as well as perfectionism have a distinctive ethical method. Both Kantian doctrine and moral perfectionism are much more than a formal account of the principles of equity; both include a view of the moral person (1999, 342).

Perhaps a view of moral personhood, its purposes and desires, can only be entirely ignored at the cost of concluding in the end, as Dorsey argues, that we are not always required and even permitted (in all circumstances, or all-things-considered) to act morally according to the reason-as-such standpoint. This is a strong conclusion – a bold claim that is in practice prey to all (moral and non-moral) justifications for action and inaction – akin to the full-fledged subjectivism that he seeks to avoid with a 'default' PMI. He does not go as far as eschewing morality, but may turn us all into 'budding utilitarians' in a final attempt to evade subjectivism. This was the purpose of David Brink's paper: "Utilitarian Morality and the Personal Point of View" (*The Journal of Philosophy* 83/8 [1986]: 417-438), which ironically was seminal to this book.

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