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*Appearance and Explanation: Phenomenal Explanationism in Epistemology* by Kevin McCain and Luca Moretti (review)

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most sense of the supposition that Socrates aims, above all else, to foster self-examination, before evaluating them for their likelihood of turning someone to self-examination.

Marshall, in the second part of the book, defends his approach from the objection that, since his project isn't aiming to articulate the content of Plato's mental states, or mining for arguments, he is co-opting Plato illegitimately. The basic defense is that we would have to know much more about Plato's intentions than we do for the charge to stick. In short, given that we are largely unable to articulate the assumptions we have regarding what goods an interpretation of a text will win us, we will be unable to arbitrate between radically different, yet internally coherent, interpretations of Plato.

It is initially puzzling why Marshall spends so long defending his approach from objections rather than defending the promise of his project from those skeptical of the social value of philosophy and folk-epistemological notions like the ones relied upon in Marshall's definition of self-examination. But the puzzle invites the exact exercise the book proposes: We can imagine many intermediary ends that would ultimately terminate in fostering self-examination, or a theory of how to bring people to self-examination, that explain the otherwise surprisingly long defense. Marshall might be aiming to illustrate a characteristic constitutive of self-examination, *thoroughness*, since he considers so many instances of the objection. Marshall might be aiming to convince fellow Plato scholars to take up the task by addressing just about every possible objection. One could go on. So, we should imagine how effective those various intermediate ends are in ultimately bringing about self-examination, either in readers or those taught by readers.

Regardless, the book is clearly written and full of careful argumentation. I'd recommend it to anyone interested in teaching Plato or the possibility of philosophical protreptic more broadly.—William Perrin, *Georgetown University*

McCain, Kevin and Luca Moretti. *Appearance and Explanation: Phenomenal Explanationism in Epistemology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021. iv + 195 pp. Cloth, \$70.00—Since its beginning, phenomenal conservatism (PC) has grown rapidly in popularity as a theory of epistemic justification. In *Appearance and Explanation*, McCain and Moretti develop out of PC a new theory of justification that they call phenomenal explanationism (PE). Their goal is to integrate PC with explanationism—the view that epistemic justification comes from the best explanation—thereby creating PE as a hybrid theory. They ambitiously contend that PE captures the same basic intuitions as PC but is better equipped to handle epistemic phenomena as a whole, troubling objections to PC (and foundationalism in general), and skeptical

arguments. The book is comprised of seven chapters. This review will emphasize the first four.

In chapter 1, the authors discuss what PC is and its merits. PC is the idea that “we should grant things to be the way they appear [or seem] to be, unless we have reason to doubt” our seemings. They point out some of the benefits of PC as perceived by its followers: It “provide[s] widespread epistemic practices with a rationale,” “it offers a unified account of non-inferential justification for beliefs of very different types,” “it constitutes the basis of fallible foundationalism,” and has a strong “anti-skeptical bite.”

In chapter 2, McCain and Moretti argue that PC is not sufficient to account even for noninferential justification. First, they argue, PC gives an insufficient explanation of the no-defeater condition. The no-defeater condition is the “unless we have reason to doubt” clause built into PC. PC does not explain why or how S’s reason to doubt “interacts with S’s seeming that *e* in such a way as to diminish S’s non-inferential justification for believing *p*.” Second, if the power of seemings to justify comes from the seemings themselves, then the seemings become unstable once the subject becomes aware of them. The upshot of this is that if seemings are sufficient for justification, then some beliefs that should not be justified would have justification.

In chapter 3, the authors begin to elaborate on their view. The authors distinguish between mere seemings, paired appearances, and presentational appearances to show how appearances can have varying degrees of justificatory power. Seemings and appearances are used in a roughly synonymous way. Mere seemings are lacking in both sensations and presentational phenomenology, hence they provide a very weak form of justification. Paired appearances have sensations but not presentational phenomenology. They have greater justificatory strength than mere seemings but less strength than presentational appearances. Presentational appearances produce the strongest justification and include both sensations and presentational phenomenology. The big payoff from these distinctions is that they show how different appearances can produce varying strengths of justification.

In chapter 4, Moretti and McCain first outline their version of explanationism, which is evidentialist in character. It is as follows: “Believing *p* is justified for S at *t* if and only if at *t*:

- (1) S has total evidence, *E*;
- (2) either (i) *p* is the best (sufficiently good) explanation of *e* (where *e* is a subset of *E*), or
  - (ii) *p* is an explanatory consequence of the best (sufficiently good) explanation of *e* (where *p* is such an explanatory consequence if and only if the relevant explanation of *e* would provide an explanation of *p*’s truth that is significantly better than the explanation it would provide of  $\sim p$ ’s truth);
- (3) it is not the case that *p* fails to satisfy (i) and (ii) with respect to *e* because of the additional evidence included in *E*.”

Next, the authors merge explanationism with PC as understood through the threefold division of appearances given in chapter 3. The result is that appearances or seemings are necessary and sufficient for a subject to have evidence, but the subject is justified in believing some proposition *p* only because *p* is the best explanation of the evidence. Appearances contribute to epistemic justification because as evidence they regulate the capacity of a belief to function as an explanation.

The authors argue that PE can account for all sources of epistemic justification and apply PE to inferential justification in chapter 4 and to perceptual, memorial, testimonial, introspective, and a priori justification in chapter 5. Finally, chapter 6 argues for the superiority of PE over PC because PE can overcome bootstrapping and Bayesian objections better than PC; chapter 7 stresses that PE can handle brain-in-vat hypothesis better than PC.

Moretti and McCain have produced a thoroughly enjoyable book. Chapters 3 and 4 are especially fruitful and the real meat of the work. The book is a useful summary of the scholarship surrounding PC over the past twenty years; it pays particularly close attention to the work of Michael Huemer, not surprising given his central role in developing PC. Perhaps most impressive is how clear and precise the authors are in their critiques and argumentation.

For those who are fans of PC, I would say this: Though Moretti and McCain are critical of PC, they are not attempting to destroy it. Rather, they want to trim back the scope of PC, from a complete theory of justification to a theory of evidence. They take pains to stress that PE is meant to preserve PC's core insights about seemings even though PC is inadequate as a theory of justification. In conclusion, *Appearance and Explanation* is a tightly argued, groundbreaking work that reveals fertile new avenues for epistemological inquiry.—Caleb Estep, *Saint Louis University*

OYOWE, Oritsegbubemi Anthony. *Menkiti's Moral Man*. Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2022. xii + 221 pp. Cloth, \$100.00—Oyowe critically examines the various threads in, issues raised by, and implications of Menkiti's maximal conception of personhood, against the backdrop of various criticisms, including his own. He indicates that, as "a repentant critic," he does "not deny the merits of these criticisms," but he is "convinced that there are resources in Menkiti's general account for tackling them."

In chapter 1, Oyowe examines how Menkiti uses the idea of community to foreground his normative view of personhood, in order to illuminate the African idea that one is a person because of, and through relationships with, other persons in a community. This indicates that one's existence or