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Remastering Morals with Aristotle and Confucius by May Sim

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the first half of the book, namely that intentional action always takes place under “the guise of the good”—that is, that acting for a reason necessarily involves taking one’s reason to provide some degree of *justification* for one’s action. Recognitionists, who hold that good practical thought is thought that shows a proper sensitivity to normative or evaluative facts, assume that practical thought is thought concerning what we have reason to do, or what will promote the human good, or some such. Constructivists, who attempt to derive standards of practical thought from a conception of what it is to be a rational agent, assume that rational agents are those who seek to justify their actions. But not all versions of ethical rationalism presuppose the guise of the good thesis. Setiya also rejects versions presupposing that practical thought is thought about how to satisfy one’s final desires (or, somewhat more obscurely, that it is thought ultimately “triggered” by one’s final desires) or that it aims at self-knowledge. His discussion of this last view, which is associated with David Velleman, is especially important because Setiya’s account of intentional action is quite similar to Velleman’s. Setiya argues that despite the similarities the correct account (his own) is insufficient to support Velleman’s version of rationalism.

In one way or another, most of Setiya’s arguments against ethical rationalism rely upon claims he defends in the first half of the book. There he advances his account of intentional action, according to which intentionally ϕ -ing is a matter of ϕ -ing because of a desire-like belief to the effect that one is ϕ -ing at least in part because of that very belief. Crucially, the “because” that figures into the content of this belief is explanatory, not justificatory: intentionally ϕ -ing involves having a belief about what is *motivating* one’s action, not about what justifies it. Since Setiya thinks the primary argument for the guise of the good thesis is that it follows from a correct understanding of intentional action, he takes the truth of his account to undermine that thesis. He also briefly considers and rejects some other possible rationales for the thesis.

Setiya’s overall argument is long and complex; there are numerous points at which one might try to dig in one’s heels. Many will resist Setiya’s account of intentional action (although his arguments for it should not be dismissed lightly). But even such readers will find the rest of the book well worth studying. Is Setiya right that if it is possible to act for a reason without seeing that reason as providing some justification for one’s action, then it cannot be that practical thought is good *as such* only if it yields justified action? Is he right that the virtue theory of practical reason is the only non-skeptical alternative to ethical rationalism? Setiya has done us a real service by raising such questions and by giving us such subtle and powerful arguments to wrestle with.—Matthew Hanser, *University of California, Santa Barbara*.

SIM, May. *Remastering Morals with Aristotle and Confucius*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007. xi + 224 pp. Cloth, \$85.00—Sim tells

us in her introductory chapter that “My aim is to involve these authors in each other’s problems and to engage both in reconsidering the contemporary difficulties to which they speak with surprising frequency in one voice, or at least genuine harmony.” She succeeds admirably. One comes away from this volume with the feeling that one has audited a brilliant conversation between Confucius and Aristotle. Forced into dialogue by Sim, her authors find greater accord than disaccord on issues related to the self, to family life, and to social relationships.

Sim’s knowledge of Aristotle, it may be noted, was achieved under the tutelage of Alasdair MacIntyre; her knowledge of Confucius derives naturally from her personal cultivation of an inherited Chinese tradition. Virtue ethics thus becomes a focal point in her presentation of both, including her discussion of rights.

In Aristotle’s view, humans are by nature moral beings; each is endowed with a spontaneous sense of morality. They are naturally inclined to meet each other and to live together in families, in villages, or in larger communities; they establish political societies governed by laws that are expressions of common moral intuitions. These natural dispositions are developed through learning and training. This is especially true for those who live within the Confucian orbit. Ethical issues for the Confucian are not determined or formulated apart from the social setting in which they arise. In fact, one does not find in Confucian ethics a clear demarcation between moral rules and other sorts of rules. One finds rather in Confucian ethics a theory of virtue rather than a theory of obligation.

Both Aristotle and Confucius recognize the importance of the cultivation of moral virtue for a just society. Each acknowledges the guiding role of exemplary individuals, and each allows for context in the application of principles. Yet Confucius and Aristotle have very different attitudes toward the rule of law. Confucius tends to identify moral principles with customary norms and, unlike Aristotle, relies heavily on the exemplary person to inspire others to moral and civic virtue. Aristotle, while not denying a role for the exemplary figure, recognizes the rarity of such an individual, and consequently places greater confidence in the rule of law. Given Aristotle’s understanding of human nature and purpose in nature, Aristotle is positioned to evaluate custom in the light of transcendent norms. Law, from an Aristotelian perspective, possesses greater sovereignty than custom, although Aristotle would not dismiss the role of custom in preserving a just society. Identifying another difference, Sim writes, “Aristotle sharply distinguishes the political role of the statesman from the household rule of fathers. Confucius assimilates political rule into household rule: political government is simply the father-son relationship writ large.” Unlike Aristotle, Confucius offers no theoretical analysis of the state and political rule. Absent too is any explicit theory about nature and teleology.

Aristotle’s analysis of the nature of law, Sim concludes, may help the Confucian understand that the rule of law is not antithetical to a respect for custom and the cultivation of virtue. On the other hand, the Confucian account of ritual propriety can supplement Aristotle’s “all too brief account of unwritten law.” Confucians are peculiarly sensitive to what

Aristotelians call “ethos,” insofar as they have an acute sense of the way in which ceremony and ritual focus and intensify custom and moral practice.

A not-insignificant contribution of this volume is that Sim, in reading Aristotle through a Confucian lens, brings out aspects of Aristotle that are often overlooked by Western eyes accustomed to reading him in the light of his metaphysics, colored by the subsequent development of his thought in Western moral and political theory.—Jude P. Dougherty, *The Catholic University of America*.

SMITH, David Woodruff. *Husserl*. Routledge Philosophers Series. New York: Routledge, 2007, xiv + 467 pp. Paper, \$24.95—Edmund Husserl (1859–1938) is, without doubt, not only one of the most influential philosopher of the 20th century but also one of the most important thinkers in the history of the discipline. Husserl was not only the founder of phenomenology, which he defined as the science of the essence of consciousness, but he also made significant contributions to a wide range of other fields within philosophy. These include logic, epistemology, ontology, value theory, philosophy of language, philosophy of mathematics, philosophy of the natural sciences, and philosophy of the human and social sciences. Husserl is often thought to have influenced primarily continental philosophy. However, his influence and significant contributions also extend to the more formalistic tradition of analytic philosophy, which is primarily concerned with logic, mathematics, language, and the natural sciences.

It is, therefore, fitting that the Routledge Philosophers Series should devote a volume to the thought of this most creative, prolific, and influential philosopher, and that the person to write this volume should be David Woodruff Smith, an important and influential phenomenologist in his own right. Because Smith is an analytic phenomenologist, associated with what is often called the ‘California school’ of phenomenology, he is able not only to address the Husserl embraced by the continental tradition, who influenced Heidegger, Sartre, and Merleau-Ponty, among many others, but also to address the Husserl that impacted the analytic tradition, that is, Husserl the logician, mathematician, and philosopher of language. One of Smith’s chief goals in this volume is also to present the synoptic Husserl, the philosopher who is able to integrate all the various branches of his thought into one coherent system. As Smith puts it, in his introduction, “[t]his is the systematic philosopher who sees all things as interdependent . . . who even produced a theory of dependence itself, a theory that binds together his many other theories about consciousness, nature, society, number, ideal ‘logical’ forms in all these things, and so on” (p.1).

Smith begins his task with a discussion of Husserl’s life and works, a biographical sketch that is aided by a very helpful chronological timeline prior to the introduction. Following this biography, Smith makes a