

examples from such authors as George Eliot, Samuel Johnson and Proust as evidence for the nature of the human experience, Larmore uses his concept of autonomy as elaborated in the earlier chapters to explain what is wrong with the idea of a life plan. What does it mean for a life to go well? For Larmore, it is not complete autonomy in the sense of being able to determine for oneself precisely how one leads one's life, for the following reason: 'At no point does our good exist as a finished end, waiting to be discovered and made the object of pursuit (p. 271).' Thus, Larmore brings together his idea of the normative dimension of reality and his agreement with Rorty about

the contingent determinators of our cognitive framework.

As well as being of general interest for moral philosophers from both the analytical and continental traditions, Larmore's study will be of great interest to scholars of Kant, especially those interested in the contemporary debate about naturalism and transcendentalism sparked by McDowell's work, as well as anyone concerned with the concepts of altruism, autonomy and freedom and their practical consequences.

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Human Goodness: Pragmatic Variations on Platonic Themes. By Paul Schollmeier. Pp. xiii, 302, Cambridge University Press, 2007, \$51.20.

This is an original, even audacious, book. Schollmeier's announced purpose in writing it is to introduce contemporary readers to the value and joys of an ethics based on a concept of happiness retrieved from the ancient Greeks. He believes that this concept can tell us important things about 'ourselves, our autonomy, our obligations, and our circumstances, not to mention our virtue.' (p. xi) What the reader won't get is the Greek notion of happiness in its pristine form. This Schollmeier makes clear from the start with the suggestion that the book could be seen as 'dedicated to the idea of an ephemeral teleology.' (p. xii) That means defending the notion that, like the rest of nature, humans act for an end, but uniquely so because as rational beings, we can be the efficient, formal, and final causes of our behavior. Unlike Plato, Aristotle, and Kant, he will argue that teleological behavior need not have eternal Forms or unchanging goals. Instead Schollmeier defends a teleology that reaches out to variable forms.

Chapter 2 offers another way of stating the book's purpose. We should understand the futility of addressing practical moral problems by appealing to eternal truths: 'When we act, we need not knowledge of nowhere and nowhen but knowledge of somewhere and somewhen.' (p. 37) Hence, we must turn from *knowledge* to *opinion*. The art of rhetoric alone, not dialectic, can tell us how to decide between what we ought and ought not to do, since it furnishes temporal truths consisting of our past experiences both personal and social and even fables. Because of the hypothetical nature of knowledge, Schollmeier challenges Socrates' claim that the dialectical method of knowing is superior to the rhetorical method in moral matters. Dialectic is superior on the conceptual level, insofar as it concerns the relationship between

concepts, but on the perceptual level (the level of things in the world) the rhetorical method is superior because it proceeds from concrete examples to generalities and then back to concrete examples. Thus, it is in principle the same as the experimental method in addition to having the same ontology – contingent things. The rhetorical art can be objective provided its generalizations are grounded in testable inductive and deductive arguments.

Hume and Kant figure importantly in this version of ethics. Hume's distinction between statements of *relations of ideas* and statements of *matters of fact* are matched with Plato's distinction between *knowledge* and *opinion*, while Kant's moral teleology, despite its transcendental nature, embraces a concept of value similar to the Greek concept in addition to the concepts of freedom, imperative, and cosmology, all of which Schollmeier finds useful for ethical analysis. American philosophers, chiefly the pragmatist, William James, play their role in Schollmeier's new ethics though they too must submit to some reconstruction of their general philosophical outlook. What he has in mind is to apply their experimental method to moral problems to advance intellectual teleologies rather than material ones.

All of which provides the foundation for Schollmeier's attempted reconciliation of Plato's theory of Forms with the pragmatism of William James. One of the consequences of which is the inference that the Greeks were right in maintaining that happiness consists in activities performed for their own sake, like knowing and dancing, rather than in the fulfillment of passional desire as defended by Hume and James, but James is right in maintaining that happiness is a pluralistic concept. That is because Schollmeier's representa-

tionalist epistemology precludes any certain knowledge of our human nature as well as any certain self-knowledge. In principle, there are as many versions of happiness as there are self-perceptions. Each of these versions, like everything else in the universe, is subject to change. All is contingent.

Schollmeier's claim that all our knowledge is hypothetical rests on the standard representationalist/pragmatist argument. He doesn't defend the claim, but remains content to argue that Plato and Aristotle held the same. His implicit dichotomy, *à la* Kant, between theoretical and practical reason, perhaps explains why he resorts to Aristotle's *Rhetoric* when the Stagarite's *Ethics* (Bk VI) offers

a better account of deliberation and action regarding concrete things while presupposing the continuity between theoretical and practical intellect.

Nevertheless, Schollmeier has produced a remarkable book. He has brilliantly used the concept of man as primarily a knower to show the incapacity of the instrumentalist ethical theory to explain the human good and, more importantly, his critique of Plato, Aristotle, Hume, Kant, and James in addressing the debate over passionate desire vs. happiness vividly displays what Etienne Gilson termed 'the unity of philosophical experience.'

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Personal Autonomy in Society. By Marina Oshana. Pp. xi, 190, Aldershot, Ashgate, 2006, £45.00.

Oshana's book develops a naturalistic conception of personal autonomy that is different from some of the neo-Humean and Kantian accounts in the literature. The approach at the forefront of recent discussions has understood autonomy as psychological authenticity; that is, autonomy is a state that is esteemed within, and in virtue of, what is described metaphorically as 'the inner citadel'. The 'inner citadel' is seen as a center of agency that is 'authentic' to the individual, a center in virtue of which the individual's agency is manifest and by whose lights the individual's sovereignty and integrity are protected against assault by entities that oppose, endanger or threaten it. On this account autonomy is a function of ensuring that the principles, preferences, and values by which a person's choices and actions are governed have been authenticated by the person under reflective conditions.

For Oshana, there are two difficulties with this approach. First, too little attention is paid to autonomy as a state constituted by social and relational phenomena; environmental factors external to the agent play a more significant role in autonomous behavior than it has so far been recognized. Secondly, autonomy is too readily paired with responsible agency; while autonomy can indeed play a role in explanations of free, responsible agency, the two are distinct and the conditions for each differ.

Oshana aims to defend a social-relational conception of autonomy as a condition of individuals constituted by the social relations people find themselves in. Such an account denies that personal autonomy is a condition that supervenes on occurrent dispositional states, psychological states, positive attitudes in the individual, or the history of these states alone. The emphasis is rather on what

constitutes being an autonomous individual and on what makes up autonomous living. Her conceptual analysis breaks new ground; autonomy is here regarded as a rich and multifaceted concept which takes on a naturalistic cast.

For Oshana autonomy is a natural property of persons, the possession of which can be established *a posteriori* on the basis of natural facts. The property of being autonomous is an empirical, natural property and is determined by how an individual lives in the world. Oshana's naturalized conception of autonomy demands that two conditions be satisfied: first, the properties which constitute autonomy must be natural properties that are verifiable through the senses or by introspection. Second, persons are socially situated amidst complex relations with others; individuals are thus not completely self-governing unless they have a status that guarantees them freedom from interference by forces that are 'external' in nature and origin. A naturalized account must therefore treat autonomy as a function of a person's status and relations that is independent of facts about her psychological history and occurrent psychological states; that is, these conditions are external to the individual's 'internal' character.

Oshana does not assert that all the conditions for autonomy are social; some are psychological. Her theory lists seven conditions: epistemic competence, rationality, procedural independence, self-respect, control, access to a range of relevant options, and social-relational properties. The first three conditions are psychological in nature, while the last four are social. All seven must be satisfied to a significant degree for a person to be considered autonomous. Since personal autonomy is meant to be a natural phenomenon, the