

difficulties and his treatments of Calvin, Vermigli, Althusius, and Turretin are extensive and illuminating. I am looking forward to the announced systematic sequel to this valuable book.

Rik Peels

John E. Hare, *God and Morality: A Philosophical History*. Oxford 2007: Blackwell. 309 pages. ISBN 9780631236708

The issue of how to write the history of philosophy is as controversial as what historians of philosophy say about particular philosophical figures. In ethics, the field has been dominated by what we might call *the Kantian school*, which is represented by thinkers such as John Rawls, Stephen Darwall, and Christine Korsgaard. Two assumptions drive this position. First, according to the Kantian school, modern moral philosophy is best seen as anticipating and culminating in Kant's work. Second, the Kantian school gives the religious context in which moral philosophers wrote relatively little attention. The idea seems to be that we can have an accurate and historically illuminating account of thinkers such as Butler, Hutcheson, Hume, Smith, and Kant even if we take only glancing notice of their religious context and convictions.

John Hare's *God and Morality* is a challenge to the Kantian view. In the spirit of C. D. Broad's *Five Types of Ethical Theory*, Hare considers four figures central to the history of ethics: Aristotle, Scotus, Kant, and R. M. Hare, arguing that we will fully understand their positions only if we pay close attention to their views about God. Hare's concerns, however, aren't merely historical. In each chapter, he considers a recent heir to the historical figures he considers. Larry Arnhart is presented as a contemporary Aristotelian, Sartre as a recent voluntarist in the tradition of Scotus, Christine Korsgaard as a contemporary Kantian, and Peter Singer as a contemporary philosophical descendant of R. M. Hare. The views defended by each of these figures, Hare maintains, encounter serious conceptual problems precisely because of their non-theism. In the final chapter, Hare draws upon all the figures discussed, sketching what he considers to be the most powerful version of a theistic ethical theory.

The book begins with a close reading of Aristotle. Hare contends that there is much more about God in Aristotle's ethics than other philosophers have stressed. Aristotle, according to Hare's reading, distinguishes different grades or types of happiness, the highest of which consists in being "blessed" — a blessed life being one in which we "live with the conviction that this divine thing in us is active to the fullest extent that is possible for humans" (p. 34). Like most commentators, Hare finds certain features of the *Nicomachean Ethics* puzzling. Did Aristotle make a mistake when he initially spoke of the practical life as the best type of life and then later said the same of the contemplative life? Yes, in a sense, Hare claims. Moreover, his reading of Aristotle allows us to diagnose exactly what went wrong, which is, roughly, this: Aristotle employs the concept *being divine* in such a way that he ends up saying something about what makes a life good (viz., that it consists in the highest use of *noûs*) that is incompatible with what he said originally about the good life (viz., that it is the practical life, which does not consist in the highest use of *noûs*). Contemporary Aristotelians, such as Larry Arnhart, by contrast, omit the concept of the divine from their thought. The result, if Hare is correct, is a position according to which goodness is determined by our desires, but there is no way of saying why any given desire is better than another. Aristotle had a way of ranking our desires, so Hare argues, and it is one that refers to their nobility or divine character.

The topic of chapter two is Duns Scotus, who is rightly presented as an unjustly neglected figure in the history of philosophy. In contrast to eudaimonists, such as Aristotle and Aquinas, Scotus assumes that there are two affections in the will, one

toward happiness, the other toward justice — the latter being such as to ground both accountability and freedom. Acting well, according to Scotus, is a matter of recapitulating God's will in our own will. So, Scotus' view is a divine command theory of a certain kind. It is, moreover, a kind of divine command theory according to which some moral prescriptions are necessary: it could not be the case, according to Scotus' view, that God could fail to prescribe that we are to love God. Other prescriptions, however, are contingent: it could be the case, for example, that God could have failed to prohibit theft. For God, if Scotus, is right, could have created a world in which there is no private property. In such a world, there would be no prohibition against theft. Does Scotus have heirs in recent moral philosophy? One need look no further than Sartre, if Hare is correct. Like Scotus, Sartre is a voluntarist who emphasizes both the contingency of moral principles and the radical freedom of human beings. Most importantly, both men agree that the ethical life is the attempt to be like God. Scotus believes the project is worth pursuing; Sartre holds that it is inescapable and absurd, as the "idea of God is contradictory" (p. 118). Hare points out, rightly, that any decent ethical theory would rather avoid Sartre's gloomy conclusion.

Kant is the subject of Hare's third chapter, which is arguably the finest chapter of the book. Drawing upon Kant's *Lectures on Ethics*, Hare presents Kant as working with a view according to which there are four possible ways to ground morality. One might try to ground it in experience or reason. Each of these options has two variants: the basis can be either internal (inside us) or external (outside us). Montaigne, for example, makes custom the basis of morality; his view is an "external experience-based" position. Hutcheson, somewhat differently, makes the moral sense the basis of morality; his is an "internal experience-based" position. Crusius grounds morality in the will of God; the resulting view is an "external reason-based" position. Kant believes none of these views to be satisfactory, thereby finding himself compelled to accept an "internal reason-based" position.

The interpretation of Kant that emerges is startling. Rather than accept the position that the moral law has its source in our will, as those who accept what I earlier called the Kantian school maintain, Hare argues that Kant's view is that, since the moral law is necessary, it does not have a creator at all, human or divine. Rather, "God and we are, non-symmetrically, authors of the obligation of the law but not of the law itself. We endorse the law, but we do not bring it into existence" (p. 177). Differently put, Kant's view looks much closer to Scotus' than we might first have thought. According to Scotus, the prescriptions that fall into the first table of the law, those that enjoin us to love God, have no author; they are necessary. The moral life consists in recapitulating such laws in our own will. This is also Kant's view, according to Hare. After a probing discussion of how the three formulations of the categorical imperative fit together, Hare takes aim at Korsgaard's Kantian position. In short, he finds it problematic on numerous fronts, in large part because Korsgaard has no answer as to why a fully reflective Nazi is rationally bound to value the humanity of others as much as he values his own humanity.

The fourth chapter is an extended discussion of R. M. Hare's position, which traces it from his unpublished "An Essay on Monism," written as a very young man, to his later *Moral Thinking*, published in the early 1980s. It will come as a surprise to most that R. M. Hare was deeply sympathetic with theism, and that his theistic sympathies informed even his latest work. The discussion of this chapter is intricate. It traces the evolution from R. M. Hare's prescriptivism to his prescriptivist quasi-utilitarianism and, finally, addresses his attempts to struggle with the question of what can be said in response to the moral "fanatic." For anyone interested in R. M. Hare's thought, this will be important reading, as he is often presented as the godfather of secularist expressivism. (This reading, in my estimation, has some warrant; see, for example, Derek Parfit's "Normativity" in *Oxford Studies in Metaethics, Vol. 1*, Russ Shafer-Landau, ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press 2006. It would have been helpful to see more

clearly where, in Hare's view, this sort of reading goes wrong.) In any event, Hare presents Peter Singer as the natural heir to R. M. Hare's utilitarianism. Like Kant and Sidgwick, R. M. Hare struggled with the question of whether duty and self-interest coincide, expressing sympathy with a theistic resolution to the problem. If Hare is right, Singer sees the problem but lacks the resources to address it satisfactorily.

In its most general outlines, this is the scope of Hare's book. In my estimation, it is an admirable book. The scholarship, for one thing, is very impressive. There simply are not very many philosophers alive who are as conversant with ancient, medieval, modern, and contemporary philosophical and theological texts as is Hare, and who can read and offer translations of them in their original languages. Perhaps the most striking feature of the book, however, is that Hare offers surprisingly powerful cases in favor of interpretations of Aristotle, Kant, and R. M. Hare that are, by the standards of the academy, idiosyncratic. Of course it is difficult to predict whether they will remain idiosyncratic readings of these figures. But even if they do, Hare has helped us to see how different the views of these figures look when we take into full account their theistic context. In this way, the book presents a powerful challenge to the dominant ways of writing the history of moral philosophy.

Are there questions to raise about Hare's overarching approach and his way of executing it? Yes, of course. There is, in the first place, the issue of the level at which the book is pitched. Hare's book seems to be addressed to very different audiences. In places, Hare's discussion is directed at professional moral philosophers. The discussion in these places is highly focused and complex, engaging in subtle exegesis of Aristotle and R. M. Hare, for instance. In other places, the book seems directed at undergraduate students. In these places, the level of discussion is very general, filling in details that most historians of ethics will be familiar with. This two-audience approach had the effect of keeping me off-balance as a reader. I did not know by what standards to judge the discussion.

There is, secondly, the issue of whether Hare succeeds in vindicating one of the book's main claims, viz., that when we extract the theistic content from the main figures he considers, deep problems surface. The main problem Hare identifies is that the theistic commitments of Aristotle, Scotus, Kant, and R. M. Hare give their positions a certain kind of theoretical unity, which consists in the fact that some of their central elements can complement each other in fruitful ways. When we extract these commitments, however, this unity vanishes, bringing these positions into sharp conflict with one another. On the assumption that each of these views has something to offer, it renders the project of reconciling them difficult.

I have doubts about this. Suppose that it would be theoretically desirable to combine elements central to Aristotelian, Scotistic, Kantian, and consequentialist positions. Suppose, further, that Hare is correct to claim that the theistic versions of these positions that he considers exhibit a type of theoretical unity, which allows them to be coherently combined. Suppose, finally, that the secularized counterparts of the views that he considers do not; it would be very difficult to blend them. Hare claims this is because these views have been drained of their theistic content. A rival explanation, however, is that these views have been drained of a commitment to values realistically understood. If we were, for example, to take secularized counterparts of Aristotle, Scotus, Kant, and R. M. Hare that were robustly realist in character, then, arguably, they would also exhibit significant theoretical unity and would complement each other in ways that at least approximate the ways in which their theistic counterparts do. Is it true, then, that the types of theory Hare discusses can be combined more easily when their original theistic premises are retained? That, I think, remains to be seen.

T. Cuneo