

allow us to ground all normative facts in our attitudes rather than God's? [178–179]), he mostly rehearses some well-established criticisms of their views not grounded in theism. His most interesting work is in his discussion of the relationship between moral goodness and divine willing at the end of his essay. Having advocated a realist position on which moral goodness is grounded in “natural facts concerning the flourishing of life in general” (201), a theist might naturally wonder how Jung thinks God's will is related to moral goodness. Following John Duns Scotus, Jung distinguishes between God's willing and God's willing for our willing, and contends that God's willing for our willing includes “God's intentional endorsement of things that are intrinsically good or bad” (200, emphasis in original). Facts about value are in some sense independent of God, but God's willing for our willing tracks moral goodness.

In short, this collection of essays aims to take on an important issue: assessing a group of prominent antirealist metaethical views from a theistic standpoint. However, scholars interested in this question would be best served to focus on certain essays, beginning with Christian Miller's and then turning their attention to those essays that deal with the versions of constructivism that most interest them. Some of the essays don't really discuss the interaction of constructivism with theistic belief, but do discuss interactions between other ethical views and theism, like Lockwood's and Jung's essays (though both pieces discuss Kantian constructivism). Still other essays discuss constructivism, but don't really engage theistic concerns, such as Farneth's piece, though those interested in Hegelian constructivism may profit from reading her piece. The book as a whole does not provide the sustained reflection on the merits of constructivism from a theistic perspective that one might have expected, but it does have moments of clear and useful engagement on this topic. And, at the very least, it has initiated a much-needed discussion about metaethics and theism.

Thomas Aquinas on Moral Wrongdoing, by Colleen McCluskey. Cambridge University Press, 2017. Pp. xiii + 198. \$110.00 (hardcover), \$28.99 (paperback).

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“Evil as a philosophical topic has arrived” (4). With these words, Colleen McCluskey wraps up a brief look at the recent history of the topic of her book, “the attempt to explain wrongdoing on its own terms” (2). As she notes, certain issues concerning evil have been getting serious attention for quite some time. Most notable in this regard is the theological problem



of evil. Perhaps surprising many readers, McCluskey states, "I have nothing to say on how to resolve [this] issue" (1). Her project, as she notes, is a different one. She is not interested in investigating how evil can coexist with an omniscient, omnipotent, perfectly good being, but instead in explaining "why agents engage in wrongdoing or evil-doing in the first place" (2).

Of course, as the title of her book indicates, her project is historical in nature. She is interested in analyzing Aquinas's views on this matter, both its abstract foundations in the relationship between being and goodness, and the nitty gritty of lived experience, from drunken action to road rage. Despite its historical focus, she has set her sights beyond mere interpretation. The descriptions of this aim vary in strength. Consider, for example, the following three claims:

- (1) "While our worldviews have been transformed by events that have taken place since the passing of the European Middle Ages, and of course, in places other than Europe, still Western perspectives have been importantly shaped by past events. I argue, however, that the value of Aquinas's theory transcends such merely explanatory value, however important that may be. *I hope to show by the end of this book that the theory as an explanation of wrongdoing stands on its own terms*" (10, italics added).
- (2) "Of course, it is a further question whether Aquinas's account is satisfactory, and in the course of this book, I argue that it is" (9).
- (3) "In examining Aquinas's complete theory of wrongdoing in this book, I hope to demonstrate that his account does explain why human beings engage in evil-doing" (5).

It is a large undertaking to produce a monograph explicating wrongdoing in a figure as rich and complicated as Aquinas. It is a large undertaking to produce a book trying to establish the correct explanation of wrongdoing. Trying to do both at once, in a manageable volume, is likely impossible. To a certain extent, it seems to me that this book doesn't even try something so foolhardy. If we return to the three claims quoted above, the actual method of the book most closely aligns with the aspirations of the first rather than the second or third. To be sure, McCluskey is keenly interested in fairly examining critiques leveled either at Aquinas's work, or at the sorts of positions Aquinas holds. In most cases, she defends Aquinas's views, and in this reviewer's opinion, does so well. What we don't find, but what would be necessary for arguing that his view is satisfactory, or demonstrating that his account explains the phenomenon in question, is any sustained argument that his view is superior to major competing theories. Indeed, the reader might come away unsure what the major competing theories are in some of the areas she investigates. Thus, those readers hoping to find Aquinas's view going to war with competing theories,

and standing alone on the field of battle by the book's end, are likely to be disappointed.

To be clear, I don't think this is a bad thing. Seriously engaging with other competing views on their own terms would have required sacrificing the clear aim of the book, which involves a careful analysis of Aquinas's work. If there is a criticism to be made here, it is not that she should have delivered what she promised, but that some of her stated goals were a bit too ambitious. What she does deliver upon is her goal of defending Aquinas's view from attack. To be sure, she is willing to disagree with Aquinas, but when she attempts to defend Aquinas's position from a critic, I nearly always found myself satisfied with her arguments.

There are two further things that should be mentioned about her defense of Aquinas. The first is that she is often at pains to show that the framework of Aquinas's answer to the question she has taken up ("why [do] agents engage in wrongdoing" [2]) can be adopted by theists and non-theists alike. Importantly, she does not shy away from talking about Aquinas's theistic views. Nevertheless, she is convinced that the basic outlines of his response are, at least in large part, detachable from those commitments. What she means is that his accounts of the nature of cognitive and appetitive faculties (and their relationships with each other), the mechanics of decision making and action production, the nature of voluntary action, and the ways defects in the intellect, the will, and the sensory appetite lead to wrongdoing demand no theistic convictions. Perhaps this is not surprising; Aquinas's accounts are deeply rooted in Aristotle's analysis of human nature and action. In general, I found her claims about this "detachability" plausible. I would have liked to see a greater discussion of Aquinas's views on the role of grace in the avoidability of wrongdoing, if only to see more clearly the difference between Aquinas's complete account and the framework that is detachable from his theistic views. Nevertheless, I can hardly fault the author for not including more discussion on something that falls outside of her core concern: showing that the framework of Aquinas's explanation of human wrongdoing is both reasonable and available to those who disagree with his theism, either in whole or in part.

The second thing that ought to be mentioned is that she thinks Aquinas's account of the psychology of wrongdoing is detachable from other views he holds as well, views which in some way at least *seem* to be foundational for his account of evil action. To understand these foundational issues, we need to back away from evil for a moment to look more closely at the nature of being and goodness. On Aquinas's view, being and goodness are the same in reality, differing only in concept. Because of this, it is impossible that evil itself could be a positive being, part of the furniture of the universe. Instead, evil is a privation, a lack of a due good. Critics have targeted privation accounts for years, arguing among other things that it is subject to counterexamples (such as pain) and that it is too thin a foundation for understanding the sorts of robust evil that were all too

common for much of history, and especially prominent in the last century. The author argues against such objections, but in the end suspects that her replies will fail to satisfy everyone. This, she thinks, is not a problem. "In the final analysis, though, this debate is not terribly important for this book. Aquinas's discussion of the psychology of wrongdoing does not rest on the privation account in any substantive way" (72). Once again, then, his moral psychology is detachable from other views, even when they might seem to be intimately linked.

McCluskey's arguments for both detachability claims are most forceful not when she explicitly addresses them (which is not often), but in her reconstruction and analysis of Aquinas's moral psychology. In explicating his views in this area, she is able to weave a tapestry that seems both plausible and freestanding, something that some who lack Aquinas's commitments to both theism and the privation account of evil might find attractive. Nevertheless, at times I found myself wanting further discussion of how this framework is filled out by Aquinas in ways that others would be less likely to find attractive, ways that are surprising, or odd, or depend upon commitments which, even if detachable from the basic framework, are important to Aquinas's view. Once again, however, I think it would be unfair to consider this a fault of the book.

Despite its goal of defending what the author finds to be a satisfactory view of the psychology of wrongdoing, this book is primarily a work of the history of philosophy. As such, it predictably stakes out some controversial opinions. For example, it is a matter of some controversy whether Aquinas is a compatibilist or an incompatibilist about free will and determinism. On this point, McCluskey sides with the incompatibilist interpreters. More interesting, however, is her way of making sense of indeterministic action production. If actions are, in a very robust, indeterministic sense, open until an agent settles on what to do, then there must be some faculty by which agents settle on a final course of action. Most indeterminist interpreters of Aquinas identify the will as this key faculty, but McCluskey argues that the intellect is the key faculty here. She writes, "[W]hat is chosen by the will is determined by the final judgment of the intellect over which alternative is to be preferred" (27). Moreover, although the will might have some input in changing the course of the intellect's activity before this final judgment is reached, the relevant volitional acts are themselves preceded by judgments of the intellect that prompted them. As I have said, this is an uncommon position on a controversial (and difficult) issue, and I have no desire to wade into the fray here, but it is certainly a position worth serious consideration.

What is noteworthy beyond McCluskey's stance on this issue is the way it informs other, major parts of the book, sometimes in what might seem to be subtle ways. Three of the six chapters of this book concern the ways in which sins might arise, in virtue of the defects of the intellect, the sensory appetite, and the will, respectively. Each of these analyses must trace the influence of one of these three faculties, showing how a defect arising

within it leads in one way or another to a defective choice. Given both her incompatibilistic interpretation and her emphasis on the importance of the intellect in settling what is to be done, these analyses take on an intellectualist flavor. This, I think, is particularly interesting, since debates about the roles of the intellect and will in free action too often keep other issues at a distance, most notably the role of the sensitive appetite in action production.

I turn, now, to a brief overview of the chapters. After an introduction highlighting her aims in the book (aims I discussed above), McCluskey turns in the first chapter to some preliminary considerations that lay the foundations for her project. In particular, she offers an overview of Aquinas's view of human nature and what she calls the "process of human action" (21), as well as an investigation of necessity within this process. Most notable here, as I noted above, is her defense of a robust role for the intellect in settling what choice the will eventually makes.

The second chapter takes a step back from the details of human action to look at the transcendentals. Most important for this investigation is, unsurprisingly, the good, but its relationship with being is not overlooked. An overview of Aquinas's account of being and goodness paves the way for a discussion of his account of evil as a privation. The chapter closes with defenses of Aquinas's privation account from a number of objections and an overview of his account of moral goodness.

Chapter 3 begins with what might be considered as more preliminary material—distinctions between different categories of defective entities (anything bad, bad actions, and blameworthy actions), and the nature of voluntary action—before diving into what will take up most of the rest of the book: examinations of the ways in which defects in particular faculties lead to wrongdoing. In this chapter, she tackles wrongdoing originating in the intellect. Here McCluskey deftly works her way through Aquinas's complicated (and sometimes puzzling) account of the way that ignorance can lead to blameworthy actions.

In chapter 4, McCluskey turns her attentions to blameworthy actions that originate in the sense appetite. Here she defends an interpretation of Aquinas in which the key faculties for wrongdoing—the sensory appetite, the intellect, and the will—each play a key role. In brief (and with a risk of oversimplification), she interprets Aquinas as holding that a subset of wrongdoing originates in the sensory appetite, and through the passions of this appetite, the intellect is affected in one of a number of ways. These ways ultimately influence the judgment of the intellect, which is decisive for action. The will completes the cycle by willing the final choice in keeping with the judgment of the intellect. The role of the will, here, is controversial. She writes, "The claim that the ultimate source of wrongdoing is the will does not imply that all wrongdoing is reducible to sins of the will; it is simply the weaker claim that the final step in the production of wrongdoing is the will, regardless of where the immoral act originated" (100). While it is clear that Aquinas does not reduce all wrongdoing to sins of the

will, explicating the claim that the will is the ultimate source of wrongdoing as simply the (very weak) claim that the will is involved in the final step will strike many as implausible. McCluskey realizes this, and does not shy away from discussing texts that are difficult for her interpretation, nor from engaging with others who disagree with her view. This chapter also includes fine discussions of practical reasoning and weakness of will in relation to wrongdoing originating in the sensory appetite.

Chapter 5 explicates Aquinas's account of wrongdoing that originates in defects of the will. This category includes actions that are performed because of a vice, but it also includes other actions that give rise to a puzzle. These actions are due, Aquinas says, to the removal of an impediment. It is difficult to precisely categorize what Aquinas means by this, and attempts seem to lead us to a category of action that does not originate in defects of the will at all. The issues that arise are too complicated to summarize here, but McCluskey's discussion of these issues—whether one agrees with her conclusions or not—makes the chapter worthy of careful attention. This chapter also includes insightful discussions of, among other things, the distinction between what she calls “evil and ordinary wrongdoing” (128), and the question of whether agents can perform evil for its own sake.

The book concludes with the sixth chapter, which includes a discussion of vices, both in themselves and in relation to the category of wrongdoing examined in the previous chapter. The most interesting part of this chapter, however, is the general conclusion to the book that it contains. In this conclusion, McCluskey attempts to show that Aquinas's account of wrongdoing holds out practical value for our world. This hope harkens back to a claim made in the introduction: “[P]erhaps the most important reason for developing an account of moral wrongdoing is that it gives us tools for attempting to understand why agents engage in such behavior in the hope that we can try to prevent at least some instances of it” (12). Writing this book, then, was not merely an attempt to produce a work of academic interest, but instead one that aims to share an explanation of evil that can help us improve our world. To demonstrate the potential value of Aquinas's framework, she closes the work with a brief analysis of racism in the United States. Here, she thinks, Aquinas's account can lead us to deeper insights into the causes and nature of this evil, insights which can help us construct strategies for preventing instances of this evil in the future.

I enjoyed reading this book, and I am sure I will be returning to it for my own work in the future. I heartily recommend this volume for anyone working in Aquinas's ethics or action theory. I recommend that those working in contemporary theories of evil take a look as well, although I feel that I ought to warn them that at times the twists and turns of interpretational questions takes precedence over those issues that will be of most interest to them.