

precedence—or at least these selfish geniuses ‘cannot reasonably protest if [the] consequences [of their breaking the ground rules] catch up with them’ (p. 168). This seems to me to come precious near—or at any rate nearer than a pluralist can comfortably allow—to allowing privileged status to the moral framework over other frameworks for the evaluation of human lives.

In a short notice I have only been able to touch on a fraction of the themes in this carefully argued and highly readable volume. There is an impressive directness and integrity about the writing: clear, straightforward, and utterly free from the pretentiousness and obfuscation of so much contemporary academic writing. Even those who are unconvinced that it will radically alter our philosophical outlook on the problems of the good life will have to admit that it casts a fresh and challenging light on questions of the utmost importance.

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Learning from Asian Philosophy, by Joel J. Kupperman. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999. Pp. viii + 208. H/b £37.00, \$45.00, P/b £15.99, \$19.95.

This volume collects Joel Kupperman’s essays on Chinese and comparative philosophy published over the last thirty years. Each topically organized section of the volume includes a brief afterword essay drawing together themes raised and addressed by the papers in that section. The book hence feels more like a monograph than like a collection of papers. The scope of the book is in fact more restricted than its title might suggest and this in two dimensions. Kupperman focuses almost exclusively on ethics and moral psychology. He also focuses almost exclusively on Chinese philosophy—more specifically on Confucianism and Taoism, with only passing references to other Asian philosophical traditions. Throughout the book the reader is delighted by a consistently lucid, pleasant prose style. The book is as much a literary as a philosophical pleasure.

Kupperman’s metaphilosophical enterprise is laudable. He works to develop a genuinely cross-cultural philosophical investigation in which voices from Asia and from Euro-America contribute to each others’ investigations, as opposed to mere ‘comparative philosophy’ in which one juxtaposes texts from ostensibly disparate traditions in order to note similarities or differences or in order to use one’s own tradition as an entrée into another. The comparative approach—though to be sure, it made possible contemporary cross-cultural philosophy—has had its day, and it is to Kupperman’s credit that he had transcended it long before its eventual denouement.

Once we accept the global distribution of philosophy it is both epistemically and morally incumbent upon us to take seriously the views of those who write in languages with which we are less familiar, and in cultural contexts rather different from our own. We learn by doing so. Kupperman urges, correctly, that we who live in the West have a lot to learn from Asian philosophy and that our Asian colleagues have a lot to learn from Western philosophy. As a consequence of colonialism and of the postcolonial cultural predicament, the latter fact has been taken much more seriously than the former. Hence the need for books like Kupperman's to be written and to be read by those who otherwise would be comfortable ignoring all philosophical thought not produced by Europeans or their descendants.

While I applaud the enterprise, and much of Kupperman's contribution to it, I register two methodological reservations. First, Kupperman focuses too heavily on the major indigenous Chinese traditions to the exclusion of Indian, Tibetan, Chinese Buddhist, Korean and Japanese traditions. While some Indian and Japanese ideas get polite nods, none comes in for sustained discussion. The dangerous upshot is that the naïve Western reader could come away with the impression that all of the action in Asia is in Taoism and Confucianism, or that these two traditions can be safely taken as representative of the entire Asian landscape. Neither could be further from the truth.

Second, Kupperman is not textual enough. Many of the texts to which Kupperman alludes pose significant interpretative and translational challenges. The literature addressing many of them is replete with hermeneutical debates. Kupperman does not share these controversies with the reader, nor does he indicate which readings he rejects or why he adopts his own readings. Sometimes his claims are unsubstantiated by any textual reference at all, and indeed are sometimes unsustainable. Kupperman's occlusion of textual difficulties and interpretative debates, his tendency to ascribe theses and tenets to a philosopher or to a school without adequate textual grounding and his consequent tendency to paint with too broad a brush are the book's most serious deficiencies. A great deal of the interesting work on classical Asian philosophical texts, by Asian and Western philosophers alike, is hermeneutical in character, and Kupperman's presentation suggests that the readings he offers are non-controversial and that the traditions are homogeneous. Again, nothing could be further from the truth.

In registering these reservations I hasten to add that to some degree they reflect differences in taste in the methods of cross-cultural philosophy. I admire the grace and depth of many of Kupperman's essays, while preferring a somewhat different approach to the project and greater precision in handling texts. All of my remarks should be taken in the context of a general view that with the exception of a very few essays to be noted, this is a work of philosophical subtlety and sensitivity, which will reward the reader with important insights.

There is a curious tension that runs through the volume, surfacing in a few

places, first in the introduction: on the one hand, Kupperman wants Asian philosophy and Western philosophy each to count as instances of *philosophy*. On the other hand, he wants enough distance between them that they each have something important to learn from the other. This attempt to keep them *precisely* at arm's length from one another occasionally leads to distortions of each. Kupperman writes that '[in many Asian traditions] the formation of self is considered as an ethical problem. In many Asian traditions, how it is that one becomes the kind of person who leads a good life is regarded as the central problem of ethics. Contemporary Western philosophy gives it comparatively little attention' (p. 3). Now, this claim is simply false of the Western tradition. In that tradition, Aristotle, the Stoics and Hume are notable for their focus on this problem and the contemporary Western scene is replete with philosophers who self-consciously work in their moral traditions and take up this very problematic. Baier, Taylor, Flanagan and Nussbaum come to mind.

Kupperman argues that what he calls 'Contemporary Western Philosophical Common Sense (CWPCS)' (p. 5) 'holds that ethics is concerned first and foremost with choices ...'. But again, this is surely a characterization of only (some) Kantian and utilitarian theorists. We are currently witnessing a resurgence of work in virtue ethics and in the moral psychology of character and of character formation. Indeed some Kantians (Baron and O'Neill) find themselves compelled to defend the claim that even that most obvious domain of CWPCS—Kantian ethics—is concerned with the development and formation of character. The West may not be as different from classical China on *this* dimension as Kupperman would have us believe.

The distortion occurs in the opposite direction as well. In pp. 6 ff. Kupperman suggests that while CWPCS holds that argument is central to philosophy, argument is comparatively absent in Asian traditions, or at least in the Chinese traditions with which he is principally concerned. Now there is a great deal in this subtle discussion that is dead on target, particularly Kupperman's observation that arguments—even in the most rigorous and analytic philosophy, whether Asian or Western—are often not psychologically relevant to belief fixation; they figure more in what we might call the context of justification than in the context of discovery. But this is as true of Chinese philosophy as it is of Western philosophy, and the suggestion that argument plays a *less* salient role in Asia is off the mark. This is particularly obvious when one examines the Buddhist, Nyāya, Mimamsika or Vedānta traditions of India including the extensive literature on debate and demonstration, or the highly analytic Buddhist philosophical traditions of Tibet. Even when we turn our attention to the Taoist and Confucian traditions themselves, argument and justification are certainly present, if sometimes implicit. The work of such recent Western scholars of these traditions, including Ames, Graham and Hansen is replete with reference to *arguments* proffered by figures in these traditions, and to *counterexamples* to theories proffered by their opponents.

Kupperman also points out (p. 12, ff.) that often in such texts as the *Analects*

one may fail to notice arguments because they are merely *implicit* in the text. Again, one might point out both that there are plenty of philosophical texts from China, such as the *Zuanzhi* and from other parts of Asia, such as *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* in which there is plenty of *explicit* argument, and that there are plenty of Western philosophical texts, such as *Twilight of the Idols*, in which much of the argument is highly *implicit*. Again, no great difference on this dimension tracks any important geographical divide. Indeed, to the extent that one denies the presence of argument, or even just of *explicit* argument, in Asian traditions one is dangerously close to conceding the Orientalist claim that there is properly no Asian philosophy, only religious or ‘wisdom’ traditions, and so justifying the all-too-pervasive occlusion of Asian traditions in Western departments of philosophy.

Kupperman himself falls into this very trap in ‘The Supra-Moral in Religious Ethics’. Kupperman here explicitly distinguishes philosophical from religious ethics when he says that ‘non-religious versions of ethics consist of little besides a morality. They usually proscribe murder, theft, promise-breaking, perhaps certain kinds of sexual conduct, and so on: in short, those kinds of conduct that public society takes seriously as objects of pressure and as fitting occasions for guilt. Often there are few or no recommendations for the rest of life. That is, when you are not engaged in deciding whether to murder someone, steal and so on, the ethical system very likely will leave you alone: you are free to pursue your own happiness’ (p. 172). By contrast, ‘Religious ethics typically does not leave people alone most of the time. Usually ... a religious ethical system involves an associational life and a sense of community that places as much emphasis on the supra-moral as on the moral ... One also should achieve purity of heart, or love God, or be in harmony with the Dao, or achieve Confucian naturalness’ (p. 173). Philosophical morality, then, is a minimum civil code; once one talks about human virtue or the good life broadly speaking, one is in the business of religion.

There are at least three things wrong with this way of drawing the distinction. First, it makes a hash of the Western moral tradition. By this criterion, while (most of) Kant, Mill and Hobbes are on the side of philosophy, Aristotle, Hume and Schopenhauer, as well as Nietzsche and Heidegger, come out as religious figures! Second, and connected to this, it begs the question concerning the proper scope and content of moral theory: debates between deontologists and virtue theorists become debates between doing philosophy and being religious. Third, and to my mind most ironic given Kupperman’s project, it would turn out that there is *nothing* to learn from Asian moral philosophy, simply because there *is no* Asian moral philosophy. It’s all just religion! Fortunately in the remainder of this volume Kupperman does not embrace this conclusion.

It is notoriously hard to say just what the distinction is between philosophy and religion, and in both Asian and Western history the enterprises have been tightly intertwined. Kupperman has, properly, foreclosed the dead end of ‘philosophers have arguments; religious people don’t’ route, and virtually every

criterion presented turns out to run afoul of some culture or another. Perhaps it is best not to try, and instead to point out that given what we unproblematically count as philosophy, there is a lot that is indistinguishable on all relevant dimensions from that done in Asia. And indeed in much of this volume, by placing Asian and Western questions, arguments, texts and insights in juxtaposition with one another and by demonstrating a clear commonality of enterprise if not always in idiom, Kupperman does just this.

Kupperman correctly emphasizes that philosophy, Western or Asian, does much more than simply offering arguments for positions. Philosophy in each tradition shows, as Sellars put it, 'how things, in the broadest sense of that term, hang together, in the broadest sense of that term ...'. And this may often, as Kupperman demonstrates, be by means of the apt story, example, or injunction. Argument may often follow. It is a tool, and not an end. But sometimes it is the other way around, and this is true as much in the East as in the West.

This volume contains several illuminating studies of the philosophical importance of tradition in Confucian thought. In 'Confucius and the Problem of Naturalness' Kupperman explores not only Confucius's account of a civilized, refined 'naturalness' (*he*) that is the goal of moral development but also the way that this account of 'second nature' undercuts what one might see as a dichotomy between nature and culture. Inasmuch as human beings are by nature participants in culture, our proper naturalness, the Confucian argues, is not one we would achieve through the repudiation of the artifices of culture, but through the perfect mastery that allows us to internalize them and to participate in them effortlessly, spontaneously and effectively, interacting productively and harmoniously with our fellows. More attention in this essay could have been paid to the Confucian account of the role of tradition in mediating this second nature and its acquisition. Confucius makes much, for instance, of the need to learn the classic 'songs', so that their store of imagery, their literary devices and their ideology and way of seeing the world can become internalized. The cultural mediation of second nature is hence, for a Confucian, not only synchronic, but also diachronic. I take this to be an important feature of the Confucian account of *he* and one that reinforces the need for one who wishes to become conversant with this philosophical tradition to pay attention to its broader cultural and historical context.

This temporal dimension of the determinant of identity is taken up in 'Tradition and Community in the Formation of Self'. Here Kupperman emphasizes that models of personhood represented in our traditions define our possibilities for development and hence the character of our contemporary communities. It is indeed important to emphasize this dimension. I have only two small quibbles with Kupperman's otherwise illuminating treatment: first, he misses the hermeneutical role of tradition that runs through many Asian traditions. That is, written and oral textual lineages determine and inspire new interpretations of the texts providing these traditional sources of the self. It is partly for this reason that hermeneutical scholarship is so prized in so many of

these traditions. The second quibble is that in this essay Kupperman also focuses exclusively on the Confucian and consideration of other Asian instances could deepen and add nuance to the discussion. But these quibbles aside, here Kupperman successfully identifies a place where an Asian account of self-formation can inform Western discussions of this phenomenon.

'Tradition and Moral Progress' is a fine essay, and another that makes good on the promise of the title. Here we have an example of *learning* from Asian philosophy, in particular from Confucianism. The first half of the essay explores the complexity of moral traditions and their status as forms of life shaping moral judgement and vision. None the less, just as in the two essays just mentioned, Kupperman's account of tradition is curiously static. There is little sense of the dynamics that drive traditions, or the ways in which we access traditions in developing moral sensitivity. This is a pity, as so much Confucian philosophy is concerned specifically with the details of bringing a tradition into one's own psyche in moral development and the mechanisms by which one learns from a tradition. Here we could learn *more* from Asian philosophy.

The second half of this essay though, is where the action is. Here Kupperman develops a compelling Confucian account of moral progress and moral education, emphasizing the role of change in moral *perception* in significant moral progress. Kupperman brings to the fore the typically Confucian moral particularism about the cultivation of moral perception, sympathy and sensitivity. The discussion of the complementary roles of sympathy and justice is astute. There is much to like in this essay, not least its sound moral psychology and its explicit recognition of what Western and Asian traditions have to say to each other.

Kupperman's tendency to focus exclusively on Chinese ideas when relevant ideas are available from other Asian sources is apparent in 'Debates Over the Self', in which Kupperman examines the connection between accounts of personal identity and accounts of moral responsibility. He notes early in the essay that Hume and many Buddhists urge that though personal identity is a matter of convention not grounded in an underlying substantial unity, that conventional identity is a morally significant fact. Despite this, Kupperman dismisses the resources of a Humean or a Buddhist account of these matters as a ground for a satisfying theory of responsibility and the development of character almost without comment and proceeds to an account of Zhuangzi's ethics. That discussion is all well and good, but there is a great deal to say about Hume's sophisticated account in Books II and III of the *Treatise* and a great deal to say about Śāntideva's and Āryadeva's accounts of moral responsibility and character development in *Bodhicāryāvatāra* and *Catuhśataka*. These positions are different from Zhuangzi's and discussing them would illuminate better the variety of ways in which a conventionalist conception of personal identity can ground serious moral theory. It is also worth noting that the throwaway lines on Zen on p. 64, regarding its supposed 'lack of seriousness', rejection of literal truth, and 'dramatized' rather than 'argued' metaphysics are

not only entirely unsupported by any textual documentation or analysis, but are highly problematic, and would be hotly contested by many scholars of the Zen tradition (Abe, Kasulis, Stambaugh, Heine). This is a place where a lack of attention to the sources leads Kupperman seriously astray and where his text could have the effect of confirming already well-entrenched and uninformed prejudices regarding an important philosophical school.

There are two essays in the volume that are substantially weaker than all of the others: there is little of the East in evidence in 'The Emotions of Altruism East and West', and this is a place where Asian ideas could be put to good use in developing a deeper account of the moral psychology and metaphysical underpinnings of altruism. Kupperman presents a good, clear account of Hume's moral theory and contrasts it appropriately with other Western moral theories, with special attention to Hume's account of the origins and role of altruism. Unaccountably, however, there is no juxtaposition with the extensive Māhāyāna Buddhist literature on altruism or even with the Confucian or Mohist discussions of benevolence. In each case there is ample room for dialogue and the Asian traditions arguably have a lot to offer.

'The Compartmentalization of Western Ethics' is the nadir of this volume, and should have been omitted. The first half of the essay is devoted to three apposite warnings against 'creating overly stark contrasts between East and West' (p. 123), against 'generalizing broadly over either Asian or Western thought' (p. 123), and 'against the tendency to assume that all of the advantages will be on one side or the other of two contrasting approaches' (p. 125). Kupperman then immediately and unaccountably flouts all of these well-taken warnings as well as a fourth I wish he had added—to pay careful attention to interpretative scholarship in scholastic philosophical traditions.

The remainder of the essay is devoted to Buddhist ethics, with a brief contrastive introduction through the *Baghavad Gita*. The reading of the *Gita* (itself an extensive and complex text and the subject of innumerable commentaries and interpretative debates, none of which are noted here) (pp. 126–7) is simply shallow. Kupperman misses the important accounts of the relation between appearance and reality, the individual soul and the fundamental reality of the universe and the complex relation between the disciplines of knowledge, action and devotion the *Gita* spells out as means for realizing the union of the self with the cosmos. It is hard to make sense of the ethical theory of the *Gita*, or, more importantly for this essay, of the Buddhist reaction to this system, without attending to these issues.

Things get worse when Kupperman turns to Buddhist ethics. Buddhist philosophy is internally extremely diverse, comprising non-Māhāyāna and Māhāyāna schools developing in a variety of cultural contexts and in dialogue with a variety of other philosophical traditions. Its moral theory is diverse and complex, and evolves considerably over the 2,500 years of Buddhist history. Much Buddhist moral theory has much in common with much Western moral theory. Compelling comparisons have been developed between various Bud-

dhist ethical theories and Aristotle's, Mill's, Hume's and Schopenhauer's ethics. Kupperman characterizes Buddhist ethics as utterly alien to Western ethics, flouting the first admonition; as uniform, flouting the second; and implicitly valorizes it, flouting the third. All of this without a single reference to any Buddhist text, flouting my fourth. And the account of Buddhist moral theory, as a consequence, is thin, seriously inaccurate of most of the tradition and not at all textually grounded.

Two essays stand out as by far the best. In 'Spontaneity and Education of the Emotions in the *Zhuangzi*' Kupperman develops with great clarity and élan Zhuangzi's view of the fluidity of being and of identity and of the importance of de-intellectualizing our mode of being-in-the-world in order to excel in the art of living. But importantly Kupperman explains why this de-intellectualizing and the attendant spontaneity is an *accomplishment* resulting from a kind of training and contemplation, and not a recovery of some innate ability. Finally, he offers, using a variety of sources Asian and Western some real insight into the difficult questions concerning the nature of spontaneity and of the education of the emotions that can facilitate it. This essay rewards careful reading.

'Not in So Many Words: Zhuangzi's Strategies of Communication', is superb. Making use of a famous joke in the *Zhuangzi* and then of the Zhuangzi's famous parable of Chuang Chou and the butterfly, Kupperman shows how sometimes the deepest and hardest to articulate philosophical insight can be engendered not through argument, but through artful literary ostension. The joke, the apt image, the parable, the riddle, the deep metaphor, can often lead us to see things differently and more deeply, and can catalyse deeper investigation than a didactic argument ever could. Such philosophy can be transforming and such transformation is what we should expect from the greatest philosophy. Such idioms of expression abound in Chinese and Indian philosophy (just as they do in Western philosophy). Kupperman reminds us, not by argument but by example, that the legitimacy and power of this mode of expression, even at home, is one of the many things we can learn from Asian philosophy.

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Kantian Humility: Our Ignorance of Things in Themselves, by Rae Langton. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998. Pp. xiv + 232. H/b £35.00.

This is one of the most original and thought-provoking books on Kant to have appeared for quite some time. Its scholarship and its philosophical insight are