

## BOOK NOTES

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Feezell, Randolph. *Sport, Play, and Ethical Reflection*. Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2004. Pp. 192. \$30.00 (cloth); \$20.00 (paper).

“Philosophical thinking about sport leads to questions about what in fact matters to us, why it matters, and how we might, in principle, show what should matter to us” (60). The title of this book gives insight on how Randolph Feezell goes about showing this. He suggests that the problems associated with sports participation are related to the problem of the meaning of life. This is a problem created by an internal-external tension, or a clash between the subjective-objective viewpoints, where we are simultaneously both participant and observer. This is the theme of part 1, culminating best in chapter 5, “Sport and the View from Nowhere.” Part 1 discusses sport as play, its aesthetics, and its seriousness and absurdity. Here Feezell examines *Paul Weiss’s Sport: A Philosophic Inquiry*. Part 2 addresses important ethical issues associated with sport but also relevant to life in general. “Whenever we engage in a practice we necessarily involve ourselves in a community of shared expectations, goals, and standards” (128). This is especially true of sport, but it is also true of any practice in society. Feezell engages the reader throughout the book with philosophical analysis and reflection of sport, how and why it matters to us as it does. The book builds on several of Feezell’s published articles, which accounts for a bit of unevenness in the writing. Despite this, Feezell, a philosopher and athlete, presents a philosophically serious, analytic, and insightful treatment of sport. J. B.

Pugmire, David. *Sound Sentiments: Integrity in the Emotions*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005. Pp. 222. \$60.00 (cloth); \$30.00 (paper).

Can emotions be sound in roughly the way that judgments can be? In this book David Pugmire in effect argues that they can be. The work is divided into nine chapters, with the account of emotional depth set out in chapter 2 serving as the foundation for the theory of emotional soundness. In the later chapters, Pugmire goes on to discuss various ways in which emotions can lack depth in

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the sense provided by his account. Much of the discussion is highly interconnected: one way in which emotions can lack depth, according to Pugmire, is narcissism (chap. 4); one form that narcissism can take is sentimentality (chap. 5); and one form that sentimentality can take is cynicism (chap. 6).

Pugmire's conception of emotional depth involves both internal and external components. The internal components are, first, that deep emotion requires a "*judgment* as to how matters actually stand and as to and how (and how much) that matters" (49) and, second, that deep emotion affects much of one's life. The external components are, first, a harmony between the importance we give to something and how important it actually is and, second, feelings that are of the right degree of intensity and qualitatively appropriate to the situation to which one is responding. These external components end up implying that deep emotions involve accurately representing the facts and values to be found in the world. I suspect that a number of readers will find this objectionable. We seem to have an intuitive understanding of emotional depth (at least in some sense) such that a person can have a deep emotion even when inaccurately representing the world. What if there were no objective values—and thus every representation of value is a misrepresentation? Pugmire's account seems to entail that there would then be no deep emotions. In any case, Pugmire's book makes a solid contribution to the understanding of how normative notions can be applied to emotion and what a sound emotional life may be like. A. T.

Sterba, James P. *The Triumph of Practice over Theory in Ethics*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005. Pp. 206. \$19.95 (paper).

Despite its combative title, Sterba's book is an exercise in what he terms the "peacemaking" rather than "warmaking" way of philosophy (155). His ecumenical aim is to show that, in their most plausible interpretations, there need be no theoretical conflicts among the Kantian, Aristotelian, and utilitarian moral perspectives deep enough to warrant "any conflict at the level of practice" (5). The first half of the book attempts to reconcile long-standing disputes among these theories. These chapters proceed briskly, and Sterba's catalog of the points of convergence among these theories helpfully reminds the reader of the slender differences among them. Nevertheless, partisans of these three theoretical traditions are likely to be frustrated by some of Sterba's treatments of their disagreements. To cite one example: Sterba argues that Aristotelians and Kantians need not be at odds over the features of the morally virtuous person, since Kantians could endorse the view that a fully virtuous person acts in accordance with the rational imperatives of morality and does so from sympathetic motives (10). Yet this seems to underestimate or sidestep a more fundamental disagreement between Kantians and Aristotelians about whether an agent's purely rational recognition of a moral requirement is sufficient to motivate her to fulfill that requirement. There are also curious omissions from the relevant literature in these chapters. For example, in the chapter on utilitarians and Kantians on our duties to the poor, Sterba does not mention Onora O'Neill's well-known work outlining a Kantian obligation to aid the poor.

The second half of Sterba's book contains three chapters on topics in contemporary ethics. The chapter on sexual harassment offers a pair of "positive norms," the principles of equal opportunity and desert, to govern our thinking about this phenomenon. Chapter 6, on affirmative action, defends affirmative action on the grounds both of promoting diversity and remedying past discrimination. Here Sterba's discussion of the standard of proof necessary to trigger remedial affirmative action is the most original contribution. Finally, Sterba draws upon a hybrid of just war theory and pacifism to argue against the 2003 U.S. war in Iraq. These chapters are written in a similarly conciliatory vein, aiming to find positions that combine the best insights of several theoretical perspectives. Sterba announces, in a "philosophical interlude," that these later chapters will draw upon the theoretical "common ground" established in the book's first half (87), a puzzling pronouncement given that the later chapters have almost no references to theoretical work at all. One would like to see the practical value of this theoretical reconciliation made plainer. These concerns aside, Sterba's book would make an excellent teaching resource to help students understand the current state of normative ethical theory and to illustrate that, although it is often acrimonious, philosophical inquiry undertaken in a spirit of appeasement can also be profitable.

M. J. C.

Timmons, Mark. *Moral Theory: An Introduction*.

Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002. Pp. 291. \$69.00 (cloth); \$20.95 (paper).

Mark Timmons's *Moral Theory* is one of the best ethics textbooks in existence: clear, careful, nonsuperficial, erudite, systematic, wide-ranging, organized, and fair. Although it is probably too advanced (and maybe a little too dry) for an introductory ethics course, I recommend it unhesitatingly for upper division undergraduate courses in ethical theory. I also recommend it as a reference for teachers and graduate students of philosophy.

*Moral Theory* covers eight theories of right conduct: divine command theory, relativism, natural-law theory, utilitarianism, Kantianism, Rossianism, virtue ethics, and particularism. Ethical egoism and social contract theory—two approaches commonly covered in ethics textbooks—receive no treatment.

I love the way the book is organized. First we get divine command theory and relativism—two "morality-by-authority" approaches very popular among undergraduates—out of the way. Then the chapter on natural-law theory introduces the crucial idea that values can conflict, along with one resolution, the doctrine of double effect, the examination of which makes for an excellent exercise. The chapter concludes by contrasting perfectionism and welfarism about intrinsic value, which leads naturally to the simplest solution to the problem of moral conflict: utilitarianism. Included in the rich, two-chapter discussion of utilitarianism is the objection that utilitarianism fails to respect persons and their separateness; this motivates the next chapter, "Kant's Moral Theory." In his discussions of natural-law theory, utilitarianism, and Kantianism, Timmons pushes his view that the best moral theory will be pluralistic and also "indeter-

minate in what the principles of the theory imply about the deontic status of a wide range of actions" (147). This idea blossoms in the next chapter, "Moral Pluralism," an examination of Ross's theory of prima facie duties. It enjoys further incarnations in the chapters on virtue ethics and particularism.

Although Timmons is exceptionally evenhanded, he is also opinionated in places, which makes the book even more pedagogically useful, since students and teachers are bound to reject some of his opinions. One recurring theme, as suggested above, is a campaign on behalf of "limited moral pluralism," more or less the following view: there are a plurality of basic moral duties and/or intrinsic goods; there is no codifiable super principle stating when some duty (or value) is more stringent (or greater) than a competing one, and so our final theory is limited (i.e., it will not deliver a verdict in every possible case about what, all things considered, morally ought to be done); therefore, we often need moral judgment, or practical wisdom, to discover what to do.

My main complaint is that Timmons nowhere acknowledges that if our final theory is a form of limited moral pluralism, then, really, our project has failed. It has failed to whatever extent the theory is limited. Perhaps limited moral pluralism is the best we mere mortal moralists can do, but this is a conclusion to lament, not to welcome. (I say this as a pluralist and Ross sympathizer.) Our original goal was actually to answer moral philosophy's first question, What should I do? The way a moral theory answers this question is by stating the nonmoral conditions an act must satisfy to be such that it should be done. Limited moral pluralism doesn't do this. It drops some worthwhile hints but then leaves us on our own to intuit the final answer. (It also, incidentally, leaves bigots and zealots on their own to intuit their preferred answers.) This objection to limited moral pluralism is not the weaker, merely epistemic one, often leveled against utilitarianism, that, given the theory, it is sometimes hard to know when the relevant nonmoral conditions are satisfied. Limited moral pluralism's shortcoming is that it supplies no such conditions. Despite this criticism, my recommendation of Timmons's superb book remains unqualified.

C. C. H.