

stein's writings—especially the *Tractatus*—are original. Nonetheless, Goldstein agrees with most readers that this book contains much of great importance. In particular he holds that the doctrine of showing (as opposed to saying), as well as Wittgenstein's picture of logic are among the important and original contributions of his early book (pp. 156–7).

Although Goldstein clearly rejects Resolute readings, it is worth noting that such readings naturally offer one explanation of why we should be neither surprised nor dismayed to find that much of what (appears to be) said in the *Tractatus* is borrowed. If Wittgenstein intends to show that it is impossible to make sense of statements made by philosophers, what better way to do this than by using actual 'ideas' borrowed from these writers. It is precisely these 'ideas' that we are supposed to come to see as nonsense.

In the end, my main complaint about this collection is that the papers included do not provide the sort of discussion of Wittgenstein's influence on current philosophy that the title *Wittgenstein's Lasting Significance* seems to promise. Nonetheless, there are many interesting claims made and admirably defended in the pages of this collection, and there is no doubt it merits attention.

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***Aristotle: Political Philosophy***, by Richard Kraut. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2002. Pp. xiii + 520. P/b £18.99.

Richard Kraut's book, 'which offers an interpretation and critical examination of the modern relevance of Aristotle's work', is an excellent addition to the burgeoning scholarly literature on Aristotle's political philosophy. Although Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* deeply influenced moral philosophers throughout the twentieth century, his *Politics* was widely neglected, if not denigrated, by philosophers until the 1990s. However, Kraut contends 'that there are riches in Aristotle's political thought that are unrecognized or undervalued, and that his perspective deserves to be included in contemporary debates about social issues ... Aristotle is addressing himself to future political leaders' (p. vii), and modern public policy makers can still benefit from Aristotle's 'ideas about a good society, justice, citizenship, equality, democracy, community, property, family, class conflict, and the corrosive effect of poverty and wealth' (p. 206). Although Kraut's target audience is 'newcomers to Aristotle's social thought,' he hopes 'that seasoned readers of Aristotle and political theorists will also find something worthwhile' (p. viii). Writing in a clear and accessible style, Kraut succeeds admirably. He refers to important recent scholarship, but usually

briefly in footnotes, often merely voicing agreement or disagreement with other interpreters. Nonetheless, there are illuminating discussions of important texts and wider topics such as the development of Aristotle's political thought and his relation to Plato. Kraut also relates Aristotle to modern political philosophy including democratic, communitarian and liberal theories. This involves frequent shifts between critical textual exegesis and neo-Aristotelian theorizing, but it is generally clear which task Kraut is taking up.

Kraut emphasizes the close connection between Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Politics*: the former establishes the foundations for the latter, but it is only through the latter that the former can be put into practice (pp. 4, 17). Kraut devotes a separate part of his book to each. Part I has an introductory chapter on Aristotle's political world and writings followed by three chapters on subjectivism, on well-being and virtue ethics, and on justice. Part II has an introductory chapter, eleven chapters on different parts of the *Politics*, and a concluding chapter on Aristotle's modern relevance.

Kraut's exegesis is preceded by a chapter defending 'Aristotle's universalism'—the universal theory of the good as consisting in 'human flourishing'—against subjectivism, the view that 'what makes something good for me is the favorable attitude I have towards it—my desire for it, or my belief that it is good, or my intention to pursue it' (p. 22). Kraut offers a series of objections against subjectivism based on the idea that it conflicts with our 'commonplace thoughts' (which Aristotle called *endoxa*). For example, subjectivists must accept contradictory statements because they sometimes change their minds about what is good for them (p. 26). Again, subjectivism is at odds with the way we view deliberation, which aims not merely to form some belief or other, but the correct belief, about our future good. Hence, 'subjectivism is deeply at odds with the way we normally think about the major decisions we make about our future' (p. 27). Although Kraut makes a strong case against traditional forms of subjectivism, the version most in vogue today is ideal subjectivism: what makes something good is that I would believe it to be good if I had full information and unimpeded cognitive ability. It is doubtful that its proponents would be persuaded by Kraut's brief refutation: 'If the transformation of the real self into the ideal self includes the assessment of philosophical ideas and theories, then the conclusions at which the ideal self arrives are not made true by their being thought true' (p. 47). The ideal subjectivist might reply that Kraut's objection is telling only if the philosophical theories to which he alludes entail the truth of moral objectivism (in which case the theories must be proven), or else the question has been begged against subjectivism.

Kraut defends a neo-Aristotelian theory of goodness and justice. Well-being consists broadly in 'the excellent deployment of our cognitive powers' (p. 81) or 'the skillful deployment of our capacity to give and respond to reasons' (p. 85). He argues that this conception of well-being can be detached from Aristotle's much criticized metaphysical biology. According to Kraut,

Aristotle's theory of *dikaiosunê* anticipates the Rawlsian theory of justice: 'A just outcome is one in which the interests or rights of *all* parties receive due attention, and no one enjoys benefits or suffers burdens in an arbitrary way' (p. 118). Although it is impossible to discuss fully Kraut's complex and sometimes controversial interpretation of Aristotle's ethics, one recurring theme must be emphasized: what may be called Aristotle's 'principle of approximation', which Kraut ascribes to Aristotle, that one should strive for the best outcome, or, failing that, try for the closest approximation possible. The principle applies to virtue, because in addition to the best and most perfect virtue (which Aristotle equates with theoretical wisdom) it is possible to approximate virtue to various degrees. 'The most important task of Aristotle's students is to learn how to create conditions favourable to the development of virtue within their fellow citizens—or, if that is too high a goal in certain communities, at least something akin to genuine virtue' (p. 96). Again, 'Aristotle's eyes are always fixed on the goal of virtue—not necessarily perfect virtue, but at least "some share of virtue"' (p. 379). The principle of approximation also applies to justice, because on Kraut's interpretation 'all legal systems, even defective ones, have some degree of justice, because they are able to some extent to "produce and preserve happiness and its parts for the political community"' (p. 115). On this basis Kraut argues that Aristotle's virtuous person should not only obey the laws but also play an active role in the politics of his community, striving to make its system more just. He sharply contrasts Aristotle with Plato, who thinks that 'in the world as we find it justice requires withdrawal from political life' (p. 135). This view of Plato, however, is based solely on the *Republic*. In Plato's *Laws* V. 739a–e the Athenian Stranger deploys a principle akin to Aristotle's principle of approximation in designing a second-best constitution.

Part II is devoted to Aristotle's *Politics*, about which Kraut remarks, '[I]t is not at all clear whether its disparate parts fit together into an organized whole, or whether it is an aggregate of unrelated and perhaps even conflicting essays' (p. 183). Especially problematic is the relation between books VII–VIII, which depict an ideal city, and books IV–VI, which mainly treat actual cities and political change. The former books are often seen as idealistic and utopian, and the latter as empirical and pragmatic, or even Machiavellian. Some scholars argue that these two parts of the *Politics* represent fundamentally different and even inconsistent visions of political science. Kraut's own view is that the *Politics* exhibits a 'movement of thought' which 'takes us from what is rudimentary, undeveloped and developed to what is more fully realized and excellent' (p. 185). Thus the *Politics* has a 'basic organizational principle': 'When we learn to recognize the worthwhile institutions of well-governed cities, and the derangements of corrupt regimes, we will be in the best possible position to understand which type of city, among those that are possible to achieve, would be best' (p. 187). This presupposes the aforementioned principle of approximation: 'The practical value of studying the ideal community lies in its furnishing us with a goal that can be approached to some degree' (p. 193).

The character of Kraut's account can be appreciated by briefly discussing how he handles some problems that face an interpretation such as his. Several of these stem from the famous sixfold classification of constitutions of *Politics* III.7 (which was in fact borrowed from Plato's *Statesman* 302c–e):

Rulers	Correct	Deviant
one	kingship	tyranny
few	aristocracy	oligarchy
many	polity	democracy

The rulers of the correct (just) constitutions promote the common advantage, while the rulers of the deviant (unjust) seek their own private advantage. The rulers of kingship and aristocracy have full virtue, whereas those of polity possess a lower grade of 'military virtue'. *Problem 1*: Since citizens by definition have the right to participate in deliberative and adjudicative office (III.1.1275b18–19), they belong to the ruling class. If the common advantage is the advantage of all the citizens, then tyranny, oligarchy, and democracy all turn out to be just, because for instance the tyrant and king alike are the only citizens! Kraut's solution is that the deviant constitutions ignore 'the good of those who deserve citizenship' (p. 386). However, in oligarchy the rulers typically ignore the good of the poor, who do not deserve to be citizens according to Aristotle. Further, Kraut contends that there are lower offices (hence other citizens) in kingship (p. 386), although he concedes that these officials are mere functionaries without power (p. 411). *Problem 2*: The ideal city of books VII–VIII does not fit into the sixfold classification, because its rulers are too numerous for it to be a kingship or aristocracy, and too virtuous for it to be a polity. Kraut proposes that the classification is concerned with traditional political systems, whereas the ideal city is a proposal for transforming civic life (p. 420). *Problem 3*: Aristotle is inconsistent because he says that the ideal city is called the 'best' in VII, but kingship is ranked as 'first and most divine' at IV.2.1289a38–b5 (cf. *Statesman* 302e–303b). According to Kraut, the latter is a ranking of merely 'traditional' not ideal constitutions. However, Aristotle concedes that kingship would be better even at VII.14.1332b16–23. Kraut does not view this concession as serious because the kings would have to be 'like gods and heroes', so that the kingship of book VII is fundamentally different from that of III–IV (p. 421). Unfortunately, Aristotle uses very similar language at III.13.1284a10–11 to describe the king as 'a god among men'. Kraut must contend that the comparison to gods is serious in VII but not in III (p. 422). *Problem 4*: Aristotle is not committed to genuine political reform because he advocates preserving rather than changing constitutions. As Kraut notes, a good citizen, according to Aristotle, should preserve his constitution, and in

the case of a deviant constitution the good citizen should try to make it more moderate and thus more stable and durable (pp. 363–73). However, when Kraut goes further to claim that ‘democracies and oligarchies should be changed into polities’ (p. 376), this seems to involve subverting rather than preserving these constitutions.

Kraut opposes Aristotle’s political approach to the modern ideal of ‘liberal neutrality’ and the Rawlsian thesis that the justice of individuals lies merely in their adherence to the basic structure of society rather than in their personal choices (see p. 434). He is exceptional however in his emphasis on the democratic and egalitarian dimensions of Aristotle’s thought (pp. 474–6). Kraut asks rhetorically, ‘How can it be denied that modern nation-states are polities?’ (p. 13). He does not consider one important objection, however. Unlike Aristotle, many modern theorists distinguish between the political state (a monopoly on the use of legitimate coercive force) and the community, including civil associations (customary, contractual and voluntary associations). Even if human flourishing is the aim of the community it does not follow that it is the aim of the political state.

The foregoing comments are in no way intended to detract from Kraut’s achievement. His book is a major contribution which must be consulted by all serious students of Aristotle’s political theory. (I am grateful to David Key for very helpful comments on an earlier draft.)

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***Ethics, Economics and Politics: Principles of Public Policy***, by I. M. D. Little. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002. Pp. xvi + 162. P/b £12.50.

This short book is an introduction to the interfaces of normative economics and political and moral philosophy. Its aim is to help the reader to form a ‘well-considered view of the most desirable role for the State in various aspects of our lives’. It is primarily intended for undergraduate students studying two or all three of the disciplines of philosophy, politics and economics (PPE), but it is written to be accessible to ‘any person with an interest in public affairs’ (p. ix).

In writing this book, Ian Little is returning to philosophy after a long absence. As a young academic, he was famous as the author of *A Critique of Welfare Economics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1950). This was a brilliant work of economics and philosophy; it reconstructed welfare economics in the light of logical positivism, clearing away what the author presented as accumulations of metaphysical rubble. After this *tour de force*, Little went on to a distin-

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