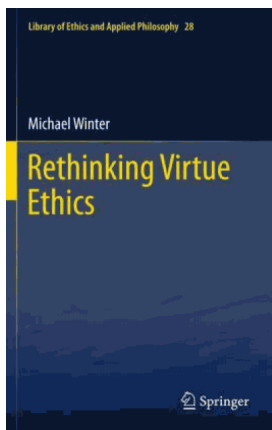


Michael Winter



Review:

Rethinking Virtue Ethics

Library of Ethics and Applied
Philosophy, vol. 28, Dordrecht,
Heidelberg, London, New York:
Springer, 2012 – pp. 183

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Have virtue ethicists underestimated the possibilities of developing a system of ethics that, among other things, could provide us with general moral principles which can be both codified and action-guiding

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within a basically aristotelian framework? Have they too casually accepted the view that when it comes to successful deliberation about what we should do in specific situations, Aristotelian virtue ethics entails that rules or principles do not have a particularly important role to play; that what is required is rather a well developed sensitivity, of a kind that is characteristic of the virtuous, which enables its possessors to appreciate reliably the morally salient features on a case by case basis? In "*Rethinking Virtue Ethics*", Michael Winter, Professor of Philosophy at the University "St. Thomas", Minnesota, USA, argues that these questions should be answered in the affirmative. The book has an introduction and five chapters concluding with an appendix and bibliography.

In the chapter entitled "*Moral Realism and Virtue Ethics*", the author takes into account several types of objections against aristotelian deductive paradigm, in terms of virtue ethics. Michael Winter objects against deductive interpretation that Aristotle states using the *Nicomachean Ethics* passages. It is noted that the features of Aristotle's ethics support the deductive model type in the understanding of ethical virtue. The author wants the reader to approach this book from the point of view of a non-deductive interpretation, which can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the following topics addressed in this paper.

Section 2.4 is more radical because it targets an important idea that relates to *quality theory* considered a plausible basis for moral theory and if someone might be skeptical about this theory, here is a reason for reading hereinafter the present work. Section 2.5 is a defense of virtue theory in a contemporary challenge against traditional understanding that assigns virtue from knowledge. For example, modesty which is based on the traditional understanding of the relationship between virtue and knowledge must be classified as moral virtue. In the end of the chapter it is mentioned that between the point of the theory of virtue in an ethically and teleology

approach, there is a commitment that cannot be underestimated.

Next chapter entitled "*A Sketch of an Aristotelian Science of Ethics*", presents the basic forms which are deductive paradigm of Aristotelian ethics. In order to discuss ethics in the context of Aristotle's conception there are two types of approaches. First called TSP "The Two Science Proposal" which shows that there are two types of Aristotelian science, the first in a pure form and the second simple, reason that ethics must be considered in a simplified manner, and the second TDP called "The Two types of demonstration", which refers to a single type of thinking approach to Aristotle but two forms of demonstration. At the end of this chapter, PhD Michael Winter shows that deductive paradigm of Aristotelian theory must take consideration of ethics. Deductions from moral principles of moral rules must generate in terms of provisions and human actions and their applicability must be accompanied by a correct moral judgment. Rethinking virtue ethics signify to think in a comprehensive way.

The chapter "*How are Ethical Principles Known?*" based on the general question "what are the prospects for armchair ethics?", in order to determine whether "ethics armchair" or ethics investigation carried out on the basis of conceptual analysis is possible. The author states that indeed the investigation on ethic has an empirical importance. If we as human beings say that moral principles can be gained from personal experience, however, we have no basis to say what standards are preferable to have. It is need a determinant of moral theory that provides a standard regarding the self-assessment. Aristotle emphasizes two aspects in this regard: that man possesses natural virtues and that it is naturally capable of recognizing virtue actions. Further the author analyzes Aristotle's doctrine of "νοῦς" in the sense of mind or intelligence. In the theoretical practice, inductive intelligence represents the last stage of the process that enables one to understand essentially the connections between topics and predicates of fundamental principles.

Last chapter entitled “*Some Challenges to the deductive Model*” follows as far as Aristotle’s virtue ethics goes to demonstrate the idea that there are absolute human rights as for example in the case of suicide. Admitting that suicide may be rational in certain circumstances, Michael Winter wonders whether one can speak of absolute rights. Analyzing the concept of autonomy in Kant, he shows that it is not clear whether suicide can be justified ethically and morally, according to Aristotle’s thought but his brilliant idea is quite suited to address human problems nowadays.

The whole chapter was written to emphasize some of the challenges it might face the deductive model of Aristotelian ethics. In this context the authors analyzes and present the idea of philosopher John McDowell according to Aristotle deductive model cannot be support, because of the role the virtue plays in ethics theory. In the final chapter, the author states that Aristotle’s virtue theory is an attractive model to justify an action in a detached manner of altruism issue, for example. On the other hand this is another reason to consider virtue as a sound basis for understanding moral theory. Nevertheless, to the Aristotelian deductive model the consideration of limitations is required to him, as there is a limit to demonstrate absolute justification of human rights.

Therefore, here are only a few important reasons for reading this very interesting philosophical work, of approaching the virtue in terms of ethics.