

so well entrenched and so crucial to later developments that this power warrants extended study under the traditional description.

G. is no doubt right that this power deserves extended study, and his accounts in Part 3 of its various functions are genuinely illuminating. But I worry that the oddity of his overall project is symptomatic of problems in his initial framework, especially the proliferation of items each of which Aristotle would no doubt describe as a *dunamis aisthêtikê*. This is where I think G. should welcome Aristotle's identification of the perceptual capacity with the imaginative: it would allow his titular common sense to be the referent of what he sees as Aristotle's proper name. He could then speak of the various activities of one and the same capacity (or conceptual part) of the soul.

G. himself considers such a proposal at the end of Part 1, but falls back on the claim that it is easier to distinguish 'the different roles' played by perception, imagination and the combination thereof, if we ascribe them to 'slightly different things', so that his division has at least 'heuristic value' (pp. 60–1). But if some of the problems Aristotle seeks to address (including, perhaps, the wooden horse scenario) arise in part because we fail to see that the *same* thing plays different roles, it is not clear how positing distinct entities will help – unless, of course, positing these entities is *merely* heuristic (which would however be potentially misleading).

In sum, I do not think Part 1 works and I have serious concerns about Part 2's proposed expansion of the data pool. Nevertheless I strongly recommend Part 3, whose arguments repay careful study and are generally compatible with the alternative framework I suggest. Its main points would even, I think, survive the restoration of perceiving common perceptibles to the list of functions: one can sometimes make important contributions without bucking tradition.

University of Toronto

JENNIFER WHITING
jen.whiting@utoronto.ca

ARISTOTLE AND CONFUCIUS

SIM (M.) *Remastering Morals with Aristotle and Confucius*. Pp. xiv + 224. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007. Cased, £50, US\$92.99. ISBN: 978-0-521-87093-1.

doi:10.1017/S0009840X09990333

S.'s aim is a 'close comparison' between the traditions Aristotle and Confucius now form part of 'with attention to their views of the cosmos, the self, and human relationships'. While she admits that there are 'titanic difficulties of translation and comparison' (p. 2) her agenda in fact is much more ambitious, for she aims to show that Aristotle and Confucius each have deficits which the other can compensate for. Aristotelians can learn much about the 'ethical pertinence of ceremony and decorum', and in turn Confucians can make good their lack of 'first philosophy'.

'In result, neither tradition will remain untransformed by this encounter, not in ethics and not in metaphysics'. Grand claims indeed! The aim is not just a historical comparison, but the transformation of two traditions, with contemporary relevance. Here S. is targeting Alisdair MacIntyre's contention that different traditions such as those of East Asia and the West are quite simply incompatible. She concentrates on Aristotle on the one hand and Confucius (i.e. Kong Qiu), in the shape of the *Lunyu*, a collection of sayings of Kong Qiu and his followers which began taking shape in the

centuries after his death in 479 B.C.E. A further text from the ‘Confucian tradition’, *Zhongyong*, is also considered.

Yet another item on S.’s agenda is to use Aristotle to ‘reconstruct’ Confucius (Chapter 1, ‘Aristotle in the Reconstruction of Confucian Ethics’). The idea would appear to be that Western thinkers are clear, and so can help make clear what Pre-Qin Chinese thinkers were doing. This presupposes not merely a comparison between Confucius and Aristotle and an expectation that the one can make up the weakness of the other, but that they are doing the same thing. So one model here is Heiner Roetz with his ‘reconstruction’ of pre-Qin ethics using Lawrence Kohlberg’s theory of ethical development. A tall order for a small book.

Detail suffers. One of the oldest questions in the history of Greek ethics is: what is virtue? It is a question to which S. gives no carefully considered answer in this comparative study. At the outset (p. 1), she says ‘morality is a craft with demands and rewards of the utmost consequence for human life’. For anyone versed in the Greek tradition, it is a great surprise to read that morality is a craft in a book on Aristotle; perhaps she does not intend this statement to have too much weight attached to it. But what is morality then?

At the moment when one would have hoped for a detailed account of how individual virtues in the *Lunyu* and Aristotle’s ethical works relate one to another, she passes up the chance (p. 25), as being beyond the scope of her Chapter 1; nor do later chapters make good the omission. Her account of Aristotle’s definition of virtue is that it is ‘a disposition to achieve a mean between extremes, a middle path between an excess and a defect in the possibilities of action and emotion’ (p. 100). Notoriously, of course, it is the disposition which is a mean, not what the disposition is for; excessive actions may indeed be virtuous. Several other obscurities in Aristotle’s account of virtue are left unilluminated here. Nor is the Chinese side any brighter. As S. says, *de*, often translated *virtue* (for the simple reason that the Latin word *uirtus*, used in early European translations, can mean *virtue* as well as *power*), is not suitable; but there is no alternative explicitly offered by S.; one is left wondering what Confucius in her view might have thought virtue is. This problem is not inconsiderable, since this is a book which is banging the drum for so-called ‘virtue ethics’.

One candidate is of course *ren*. This is, as S. knows, an ambiguous concept (cf. p. 25, n. 7). It can either be one virtue among others, that is, very roughly, benevolence, or else virtue in a very general sense (then sometimes translated ‘Goodness’); and another question is whether it is a, or the, virtue of humans as such or of nobles as such. S.’s faith in the fact that *ren* in the *Lunyu* is human and not specific to nobles is left ungrounded. Now one of S.’s contentions is that Confucius is interested in ‘true definitions’; these definitions do not merely have the pragmatic aim of making rule harmonious, they also in some way correlate to the cosmos (Chapter 3, ‘Ritual and Realism in Early Chinese Science’). But clearly if *ren* is such an ambiguous term, as she admits it to be, and if *Lunyu* were interested in definitions, one would hope that that a process of disambiguation would be evident. But there is no such process; and so one’s faith in the interest in definitions is diminished. One question that can engage readers of Aristotle’s ethics is: what are the definitions in ethics for? Her account of the function of definitions in Aristotle is based on the *Analytics*; if anything is clear about the logical structure of Aristotelian *phronēsis*, then it is that this structure is not that of *epistēmē*.

Chapter 4, ‘Harmony and the Mean in the *Nichomachean Ethics* and the *Zhongyong*’, is devoted to the *Zhongyong*, a text of uncertain origin, certainly considerably later than Confucius himself. This is surprising; there might be a lot

more to be said about the *Lunyu*, the one text which, in parts, may be taken to report Kong Qiu's *ipsisima uerba*. For S. it is enough that that the *Zhongyong* belongs to the 'Confucian tradition'. Yet the concept of *logos* (or a Chinese analogue) plays no part in determining 'the mean' in *Zhongyong*. While no formula determines the mean for Aristotle, there is deliberation, and argument for the *phronimos*, here called 'the exemplary individual', to contribute. Yet there is clearly some form of deliberation and persuasion at work between speakers in *Lunyu*. This makes it questionable whether Aristotle is needed to help 'Confucianists' with persuading others, as S. believes. Many discussions both in *Lunyu* and of course in other texts (for example in the *Mengzi*) are about persuasion, not least in persuading rulers to behave themselves.

As part of the project of comparing Aristotle and Confucius S. wishes to show that Aristotelian Categories have analogues in Confucius. S.'s way of doing this (in Chapter 2) is to show that items she takes to be in Aristotelian Categories can be found referred to in the *Lunyu*. This of course does not help show that the systems of thought are compatible.

S. emphasises the 'metaphysical' background to Aristotle's ethics, for example the doctrine of the soul as the form of a living thing. Now the relation between Aristotle's ethics and his metaphysics is tricky; not only is Aristotle himself at pains to suggest that actually the amount of psychology (in his sense) that you need for ethics is minimal (basically, a division between rational and irrational soul); as in many other ethical systems, the concept of the individual is assumed rather than accounted for. Some of the other metaphysical points that S. wishes to make ethically relevant are odd, for example the supposed fact that Aristotle is weak in the metaphysics of relations, so that his ethics is weak on relationships. As recent commentators (for example Bernard Williams) have argued, using Aristotle's ethics is not dependent on accepting his ontology. His teleological view of living things, for example, would be a heavy burden for any modern ethical system of thought.

Further chapters on the self, politics and friendship complete the volume.

On the most basic level, the absence of a bibliography and *index locorum* might surprise the reader. One or two mistakes in transcription may be noted: *kuo* instead of *guo*, *bu zhi* instead of *bu ji* (in the list of Chinese terms, p. 213), *Zhing* for *jing* (p. 5). *thumoi* is translated 'emotions' at one point, (p. 29, n. 13).

This is an ambitious book on an important subject.

University of Glasgow

R.A.H. KING
r.king@philosophy.arts.gla.ac.uk

WOMEN IN MENANDER

TRAILL (A.) *Women and the Comic Plot in Menander*. Pp. x + 301. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008. Cased, £55, US\$99. ISBN: 978-0-521-88226-2.

doi:10.1017/S0009840X09990345

The characters of the *Aspis*, says the prologue-speaker of this play, Chance, 'wander in ignorance' (line 99): victims as they are of misleading assumptions, they will eventually be proven wrong. 'Wandering in ignorance' is a handy formula for all Menander's drama, a recurrent scenario whose dynamics T. sets out to chart by identifying who does not know what and the pattern which mistakes and misperceptions follow. T. shows that a sort of demographic profile can be traced: