In recent decades modern (Western) moral philosophy has come under attack as a product of discredited and misguided ‘Enlightenment’ ideals of reason. The moral philosophy of the ancient Greeks has been hailed as a superior model to follow. Kant is typically cited as the villain in this story, and Aristotle the hero. Many who reject the criticism still accept that Kantian and Aristotelian ethics are competing alternatives within moral philosophy, and a stark contrast between the two furnishes a clear narrative structure for many an introductory ethics course.

Why should the difference between two philosophers, with little or (in the case of Aristotle) no knowledge of or interest in the other and working more than twenty centuries apart, matter so much to moral philosophers today? Perhaps it is because Kant and Aristotle each seem to have been very right about something important — Aristotle about the moral psychology of virtuous character, in particular the moral significance of properly cultivated sentiment and feeling, and Kant about the rational structure of morally worthy choice. Wouldn’t it be nice to be able to agree with both on these issues? Yet Kant himself appears to reject, in section I of the *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, Aristotle’s claims about the moral significance of the passions. And he explicitly rejects, as incompatible with the enterprise of morality, the eudaimonist framework that informs Aristotle’s, and virtually all of Ancient Greek, ethical theorizing. If the respective insights of Aristotle

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and Kant are available only within competing methodological paradigms, then modern moral philosophers must choose between them. Unwilling to accept this stark choice, a number of moral philosophers in recent years have been scrutinizing and rejecting the proposed dichotomy. Much of the philosophical scholarship on Aristotelian and Ancient Ethics in the last two decades has sought to defend Aristotle (the Stoics, or other Ancients) against the charge that the pursuit of happiness (eudaimonia) as an ultimate goal makes all choice ‘heteronomous’ in Kantian terms. Some very fruitful recent work in ethical theory, from scholars inspired by Kant, has argued that there is room, within a broadly Kantian theory, to accommodate the Aristotelian insights about moral character and the sentiments. The essays in Aristotle, Kant, and the Stoics contribute to and assess this project of reconciliation.

The nature and point of the essays varies widely. Some are primarily exercises in contemporary moral philosophy, while others are more exegetical and interpretive of the historical texts. Most are comparative in nature, exploring and arguing for similarities and (occasionally) differences on particular points of doctrine. Some of these rest on detailed textual interpretation while others address broader points of comparison in less detail. All contributors make an effort to link their discussions explicitly to the issues of the relation between Kantian and Ancient ethics. Contributors whose primary background and scholarship has been in Kantian or modern ethics generally display admirably detailed knowledge of the texts and sensitivity to issues in Ancient philosophy. Although I am not in the best position to judge whether the Ancient specialists among the contributors acquitted themselves with similar honour in their use of the Kantian texts, none appears to me to have disgraced herself either.

While most of the essays focus on the views of Kant and Aristotle, some consider the relation of Stoic to Kantian ethics. Not all of the essays find agreement between Kant and the Ancients. Allen Wood probes a superficial similarity in Aristotle’s and Kant’s views on self-love to uncover a deep disagreement, grounded in differences in empirical psychology. Jerome Schneewind, who, virtually alone among the contributors is willing to articulate conceptions of ‘teleology’ and ‘deontology’ that capture a meaningful difference between Ancient and Kantian ethics, argues that this difference undermines some of the claims of convergence between Kantian and Stoic moral psychology. He also offers a methodological criticism directed against much of the project of rapprochement undertaken by other contributors to the volume. However, the voices of difference in the volume are in the minority. Most contributions aim to display points of agreement or convergence between Kant and the Ancient philosophers, or argue that the scope of disagreement is rather narrower than it commonly appears.

For example, Stephen Engstrom argues that, Kant’s criticisms of eudaimonism not withstanding, his account of practical rationality assigns to the conception of the highest good a role structurally similar to that played by eudaimonia in Aristotle’s account. Christine Korsgaard argues that the scope of Kant’s disagreement with Aristotle over the moral significance of the passions is quite narrow: Kant does allow, and even recommend, the cultivation of appropriate moral sentiments by persons seeking to live by the moral law; nor does he think the moral worth of persons acting from the motive of duty is diminished by concomitant sympathetic inclination; his sole disagreement with Aristotle on this point concerns the unlikely person who manages to act reliably from the motive of duty without concomitant sympathetic inclination, and his comparatively modest claim about such a person is simply that he is not worse than his Kantian counterpart.

In some cases, the pursuit of points of agreement seems relentless. For example, Engstrom finds even in the intellectualism of Nicomachean Ethics X 6-8 a Kantian counterpart, to which he makes recourse when arguing that Aristotelian eudaimonism is not vulnerable to Kantian criticisms. Korsgaard and Jennifer Whiting argue (for different reasons) that central to Aristotle’s conception of virtue of character is a very Kantian-sounding concern for autonomy. And Korsgaard finds that the same interpretive apparatus that allows us to find both intelligible and compelling Kant’s conception of acting from the motive of duty is equally able to solve some familiar conundrum concerning Aristotle’s various claims about the virtuous person’s motivation. Indeed, she goes so far as to claim that the importance Aristotle accords to activity ‘according to right reason’ (kata ton orthon logos) corresponds to the value-conferring status, in Kant’s view, of conformity to the principles of reason. Whiting too finds an Aristotelian version of the value-conferring nature of rational choice.

While the sheer number of alleged points of agreement might make one skeptical that any two philosophers, least of all two so disparate in time and circumstance as Aristotle and Kant, could agree on so many issues, it is beyond the scope of this essay to consider them all. Since some of the most interesting points of comparison, from the perspective of contemporary ethical theory, concern the moral psychology of agents acting with the appropriately moral motivation, I shall focus on this set of issues. For it turns out that among the contributors who agree that
morally worthy motivation is possible under eudaemonism, there is considerable disagreement about what eudaemonism involves.

It will be useful to start with the pair of essays by Barbara Herman and John McDowell, which open the volume. These address the issue of how desires and feelings are integrated with rational considerations of value in the properly motivated agent. Herman’s particular concern is with Kant—specifically to show how considerations of character, such as those emphasized by Aristotle, can be happily integrated into the rationalistic apparatus of a Kantian theory. McDowell’s concern is with Aristotle—specifically to argue against an inappropriately ‘rationalist’ interpretation of the conception of happiness expressed in the virtuous agent’s choice. However, each is largely concerned to make plausible a certain picture of moral psychology tout court. These two essays make clear, by their example, how reflecting on the history of ethics profitably informs contemporary moral philosophy.

Herman’s essay, ‘Making Room for Character’, is not easy to read, but is one of the philosophical high points of the volume. Its goal is to develop a naturalistic and realistic conception of desire, allowing that desires can arise from a standpoint completely independent of reason, but still leaving room for the possibility that the desires of mature well-developed agents may be informed by values and rational considerations. Thus Herman seeks to explain how agents may act on motivations supplied by desires and yet still display the Kantian ‘motive of duty’. A crucial point she emphasizes is that the reliability or stability essential to virtue of character must be understood to include not simply strength of will in the face of temptation or duress, but also (and more importantly) the flexibility to respond appropriately in widely differing situations. A properly educated desire will have been transformed so that it is only operative when it can be ‘located’ (as allowed or required) in the ‘deliberative field’ constituted by the principles and commitments expressing the agent’s conception of value. This seems a nuanced and very perceptive account of how we actually experience desires, and (although Herman, whose emphasis is on Kant, does not put it this way) it might well be a sensitive way of elaborating Aristotle’s claim that in a virtue of character one’s desires (and passions) are so habituated that one experiences them for the right objects, on the right occasions, for the right goals, etc.

Herman’s view that, in situations in which acting on her standing desires would violate her principled commitments, the agent does not experience these desires as occurring incentives at all (for example, when she can gain the financial security she desires by absconding with the

PTA funds), seems to render intelligible what McDowell, in earlier essays, has attributed to Aristotle and called the ‘silencing’ of desire. On this point there seems to be no disagreement between McDowell and Herman. Although Herman and McDowell appear to disagree about the nature of the desires that are transformed in such dispositions, the disagreement that comes most to the surface in the present volume concerns not this, but rather the role played by reason in such ethical dispositions.

McDowell’s ‘Deliberation and Moral Development in Aristotle’s Ethics’ contests interpretations of Aristotelian practical wisdom (phronēsis) that assign to the practical intellect the task of articulating and defending a conception of happiness (eudaimonia), and relegate to habituation the task of making sure the agent desires and takes pleasure in what the intellect has identified as good. On the contrary, McDowell insists, the content of the agent’s conception of happiness is exhausted by the agent’s habituated disposition to respond to opportunities as kalon (noble) and aischron (shameful), and thereby feel the appropriate motivation.

The agent’s conception of happiness is wholly constituted by the sum total of those propensities to respond to particulars as kalon or aischron. This disposition arises from the habituation of desire, not from an independent operation of the intellect. What distinguishes the person with phronēsis from the merely well habituated person is that her individual propensities to ‘read situations’ in terms of the concept of the kalon are somehow integrated by reflection. But even this reflective activity of integration, McDowell insists, is not an independent act of the intellect that yields or justifies a conception of happiness articulable in non-motivational terms.

It is on this central point, on which McDowell insists, that Herman disagrees with him explicitly (51-2). While Herman, as a Kantian, is officially concerned with how desires may be habituated to express the motive of duty, and not with the Aristotelian conception of eudaimonia of concern to McDowell, her understanding of the motive of duty (as


3 I owe this point to Rahul Kumar.
'dispersed' among the particular norms and values constituting the agent's 'deliberative field') seems broad enough to coincide with a notion of *eudaimonia* (since it incorporates such values as allegiance to family and to professional goals and norms, as well as to more strictly moral norms such as justice). While McDowell insists that the agent's deliberations do not involve an independent operation of pure reason, Herman assigns to the pure practical intellect a role in responding appropriately to particular situations, and in responding innovatively in new and difficult situations. Indeed, it is in dealing with novel and difficult situations, where one's previous experience and educated desire do not make it easy to identify the right way of satisfying all the implicated norms, that Herman suggests a Kantian view of character might be superior to an Aristotelian one (55-6). Thus Herman's disagreement with McDowell is not a disagreement over how to interpret Aristotle's moral psychology, but over whether there is a role, in the moral psychology of the virtues, for pure practical reason to play.

Of the various reasons McDowell cites for insisting that it is not the business of pure reason to articulate a conception of happiness, the one most germane to the concerns of the volume is his insistence that the alternative view is incompatible with a claim on which Aristotle agrees with Kant: that the virtuous person finds the morally good action choiceworthy for its own sake, rather than merely instrumentally choiceworthy for the promotion of some further end. The distinctively ethical notion of deliberation that McDowell attributes to Aristotle is supposed to be distinct from merely instrumental deliberation (20-1), and he implies that those who assign to reason the task of articulating and defending a conception of the good are thereby committed (even if unwillingly) to such an instrumental view of ethical deliberation.

This brings us to a central point of apparent tension between Aristotle's and Kant's moral philosophy. As contributors to the volume repeatedly mention (and it is not a new point), some of Aristotle's claims about the virtuous person's motivation appear to capture important points that Kant insists upon: the virtuous person chooses the virtuous action for its own sake, rather than to satisfy some ulterior motive such as her own pleasure or advantage (e.g., EN 1115b11-13). In choosing it because it is 'fine' (*tou kalou hēnewi*) she responds to what is morally worthy about the action. So far so good. However, a central tenet of what we may call Aristotle's eudaimonism is his claim that one chooses the virtuous action for the sake of happiness (EN 1097b1-5). A standard problem faced by interpreters of Aristotle in the face of 'Kantian' criticisms is to explain how the latter, eudaimonist, motivation does not undercut the former, apparently moral, one.

If we take the 'for the sake of' notion to be simply an instrumental relation between means and end, then the apparent conflict is on straightforward and real. But McDowell insists that the sort of deliberation the *phrēnimon* engages in 'with a view to doing well' (EN 1140a25-8) does not identify a means to happiness, as something distinct from it, but rather specifies an instance of what 'doing well' (a.k.a. happiness) would be in the specific circumstances. To view a possible action, here and now, as *kairos* and therefore worth choosing in its own right is all there is to choosing it for the sake of happiness, according to McDowell. But what reason does the agent have for choosing as he does? There are a variety of different ways of formulating this question. Distinguishing these different questions and the responses allowed by McDowell and other contributors to the volume will display the considerable variety in their understandings of eudaimonism. First of all, one might inquire into the agent's reasons for selecting this action rather than an alternative as an instance of happiness. Although McDowell denies that there is any role for pure practical reason to play in offering such justifications, he does not think that there is nothing more the eudaimonistic agent can say to defend her choice in the circumstances. He insists simply that the relation between one's judgments in particular cases, and the integration of one to the other in reflection, constitutes all the reflective endorsement or justification one can give. Justification of the ethical view (eudaimonism as one conceives it) will be piecemeal, from within the system of what one endorses, not wholesale from the outside.

A further question one might ask about the agent's justification for acting is why the agent thinks virtuous actions are worth pursuing rather than vicious ones. That is, why suppose that virtue, as opposed to vice, is constitutive of happiness? This is a question about the justification of a conception of happiness. This is the sort of question for which there is no conceptual room on McDowell's account, assuming to which selecting an option as *kairos* (the distinctive feature of virtuous motivation) is all there is to choosing it as an instance of *eudaimonia*.

Other contributors to the volume interpret eudaimonism (Aristotelian or Stoic) as leaving room for, and offering an answer to, such questions. Christine Korsgaard, in 'From Duty and for the Sake of the Noble: Kant and Aristotle on Morally Good Action', interprets Aristotle as offering a very Kantian answer to such questions. After giving an extraordinarily persuasive and compelling picture of what it is, on Kant's view, to be motivated by duty (another dictum hard to square, on
many unsympathetic understandings of it, with the phenomenology of virtuous motivation), Korsgaard suggests that Aristotle recognizes a general reason for performing actions that are *kalon*: they embody the principles of reason (so she glosses Aristotle's remark that they are *kata ton ariston logos*) and this confers value upon them.

On this very Kantian interpretation of eudaimonism, there cannot arise the further question, What good is there in following the principles of reason? Since rational choice is the source of all value on the Kantian view, the question of its value does not arise. I am rather skeptical that Aristotle accepts such an account of value (for the reasons sketched at the beginning of Whiting's essay, 163). For our present purposes, however, what is most significant is how Korsgaard's interpretation differs from Cooper's on this point. For the Stoics, according to John Cooper's interpretation in 'Eudaimonism, the Appeal to Nature, and "Moral Duty" in Stoicism', the question of the value of activity according to reason does arise, and they have an answer to it. Like Aristotle, the Stoics claim that happiness requires virtuous activity, which they identify with activity according to reason. According to Cooper, they have an additional story to tell that explains the value of such activity. The individual person's reason is identified with the cosmic reason that governs the universe as a whole, and acts for the good of the whole. So the cosmic teleology of Stoic metaphysics supplies the explanation, and is part of the sage's motivation, for acting according to the dictates of reason. The good to be achieved in rational activity is the good of the universe. Here Cooper rejects Julia Annas' contentions that metaphysical considerations have no role to play in (at least early) Stoic eudaimonism.

Cooper remarks in passing that Aristotle also has a metaphysical story to tell, which is supposed to justify adherence to the dictates of reason (265-6). This justification is intimated in the function argument of Nicomachean Ethics 17 and in his natural teleology: just as it is part of the good of plants to exercise the characteristic functions of nutrition and reproduction, so too it is good for human beings to exercise their essential function of reason. Terence Irwin has defended a similar position. It is precisely such metaphysical justifications as these that McDowell has been concerned to exclude from his account of genuinely virtuous motivation, since, on his interpretation, a distinctively ethical motivation must not depend, ultimately, on non-ethical reasons.

While McDowell thus finds Aristotle to be quite scrupulously observing Kant's prohibition on subordinating morality to the *summmum bonum*, Schneewind insists that if we appreciate Kant's distinctive account of the goals and structure of practical reasoning, we will see that this dictum marks a crucial difference between Kantian and eudaimonistic moral philosophy. Although Schneewind's essay, 'Kant and Stoic Ethics' is addressed specifically to Stoic teleology, he gives a general reason for supposing that eudaimonist moral theories (on metaphysical interpretations such as Cooper's and Irwin's) are fundamentally un-Kantian. The characteristic features of Kantian ethics, according to Schneewind, are Kant's view that reason (a.k.a. the moral law) is the source of value, and the implications this has for the psychology and justification of morally worthy action. Since conformity with the moral law is what confers value on choice, but is not something of value itself, the ultimate motivation for obedience to the moral law cannot be the judgment or perception that such conformity is good. (Here Schneewind disagrees with Barbara Herman and Paul Guyer who have argued, outside this volume, for the opposite interpretation of Kant's view.) This is precisely the point on which Kant's theory of moral motivation differs from that of the Stoics, Schneewind insists. Relying on Cooper's interpretation of the metaphysical basis of Stoic Ethics, and of the global natural teleology on which it rests, Schneewind claims that, for the Stoics, one can always explain a eudaimonistically motivated action by reference to its goodness; one's reasons always refer to the good. Choice is rational because it selects what is in fact good; rationality tracks rather than confers value. Unlike the Kantian agent, the Stoic sage can explain why it is good to follow the moral law.

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4 The Morality of Happiness (Oxford University Press 1993) 161-2


It is because of this feature of Stoic ethics that Schneewind rejects Julia Annas' claim that, on the Stoic view, the virtuous person who chooses virtue for its own sake is moved by something like what Kant calls respect for the moral law. However difficult it may be to understand what this respect is supposed to be, Schneewind insists, it is clearly not the perception of a good. It is rather the appreciation of the force of the moral law as value-conferring (295). Thus, Schneewind explains, Stoic ethical theory is teleological in a way that Kant's is not, and this difference is reflected in their respective accounts of morally worthy motivation.

Although Schneewind does not explicitly extend the point to Aristotle (since one of his morals is to warn against homogenizing historically distinct moral philosophies) the same considerations would show that Aristotle's eudaemonism is fundamentally teleological in a way that Kant is not (if Cooper and Irwin are right in their metaphysical interpretations). Schneewind's characterization of teleology is, indeed, general enough to capture both Ancient eudaemonism (on Cooper's and Irwin's interpretations) and modern consequentialism. Some of the Kantian contributors (Herman and Korsgaard) present Aristotle (or Aristotelianism) as an ally with Kant against consequentialism. (Indeed, there is a fair bit of consequentialist-bashing in their papers.) But Schneewind's account of teleology, without implying that the ancient eudaemonists are consequentialists, nonetheless implies that they share a fundamental feature with consequentialism that distinguishes them from Kant.

If Cooper and Irwin are right about the Ancients, against McDowell and Annas and Korsgaard (the latter three not agreeing with each other, of course), and if Schneewind is right about Kant, against Herman and Guyer, then there is a clear difference of opinion between Kant, on the one hand, and Aristotle and the Stoics, on the other, about the moral psychology of virtuous action. This does not seem to be a point of interpretation on which Irwin or Cooper would disagree with Schneewind. A salient question that arises at this point, however, is what significance these differences have for ethical theory. Once this difference between 'teleological' and 'Kantian' normative moral psychology is specified so precisely, we can ask whether either is thereby a superior or a deficient account of moral motivation. Is, for example, Aristotle's view that the virtuous agent, who acts from what would otherwise appear to be morally impeccable motives, also does so because it is good for her, an unacceptable account of moral motivation? Is any putatively moral motivation undermined by such eudaemonistic motivations? This is the question that Terence Irwin investigates in his contribution, 'Kant's Criticisms of Eudaemonism,' in which he argues that Kant's arguments that eudaemonist considerations are inimical to moral motivation (since they are ultimately heteronomous) rest ultimately on the undefended assumption that prudential reasons, unlike moral reasons, cannot command categorically. Since Kant allows that some reasons (that is, moral ones) can be 'external' (in Williams' sense), the burden of proof rests on him to explain why moral reasons are external but prudential reasons are not.

Schneewind, if he is right in rejecting Guyer's and Herman's teleological interpretations of Kant, also has reason to complain that Irwin's reconstruction of Kant's dispute with the Ancients fails to take into account the distinctively anti-teleological aspects of Kant's view. If rational activity is the source of all value, then the suggestion that it is itself good (and so susceptible to incorporation into a eudaemonist framework) is unintelligible — regardless of whether that eudaemonist framework itself commands categorically. Indeed, McDowell would presumably agree with Schneewind's Kant against Irwin's, that the crucial criterion of adequacy for a moral psychology is not whether it allows prudential imperatives to command categorically, but whether it leaves room for the morally worthy agent to ask if moral imperatives are good to follow.) Schneewind, however, does not pursue this line of inquiry. Instead, he chooses to press home a methodological criticism that calls into question the assumption by Irwin (and most other contributors to the volume) that Kant and the Ancients are even addressing the same questions (a necessary condition for their having a genuine disagreement).

Schneewind points out that when considering texts in the history of moral philosophy, we must keep in mind that philosophers working in very different historical and social circumstances will bring to their moral philosophies very different perspectives and assumptions, and that as a result, they may conceive the task(s) of moral philosophy quite differently. While he implies obliquely (292-3) that Irwin has failed to heed this methodological caveat, his explicit target of criticism is Julia Annas, whom he faults for assuming that Kant and the Stoics are offering answers to the same timeless set of questions, and that we can assess their answers in abstraction from the historical particularities of their respective situations.

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8 The Morality of Happiness, 175
Schneewind identifies the salient historically conditioned difference between Kant and the Stoics as what he calls the Stoic confidence in the natural world (their confidence that ‘when we act from reason as far as we can, everything of concern to us will be well,’ [294]). Schneewind contrasts this Stoic view with Kant’s ‘quite modern lack of confidence in the natural world’ ([297]). This difference in world view, he claims, explains why the Stoics take the task of moral philosophy to be to offer advice about how to achieve happiness, a philosophical project which Kant’s more pessimistic world view implies is a waste of time.

While Schneewind is clearly right that Kant and the Stoics conceive the tasks of moral philosophy quite differently, it is not clear that he has traced this difference to roots in historically conditioned pre-philosophical assumptions. It is clear that the Stoics affirm and Kant denies that ‘when we act from reason as far as we can, everything of concern to us will be well’ ([294]). But is this a pre-philosophical disagreement brought to moral philosophy by their different historical situations? Kant doubts whether relying on reason will make everything of concern to us go well because he thinks more than exercising reason is of concern to us. Attaining the objects of our desires is also of concern to us, he thinks. But he also thinks that human desires are inevitably frustrating and conflicting; the natural order (i.e., the non-human world together with empirical psychology) is such as inevitably to frustrate human desires (an aspect of Kant’s views nicely explored in Wood’s essay). However, the Stoics are no more sanguine than Kant (or any other ancients) about how likely humans are to satisfy their desires for material objectives in the natural world. They believe that ‘everything of concern to us will be well if we follow reason’ because they think attaining these material objectives is of no concern to us, while using reason, which is the only thing of value to us, is in our power. Although the Stoics identify reason with nature operating for the good of the whole, this goodness is not understood in terms of the satisfaction of human desires for material objectives. The Stoics insist these material objectives are not in fact goods (nythia) but indifferent (adiaphora). Thus the disagreement between Kant and the Stoics cited by Schneewind reflects not a clash between ancient and modern degrees of confidence in how hospitable the natural world is to human plans, projects, and desires, but rather an ethical disagreement about whether anything other than virtue is valuable. We do not have here an example of how in two different historical situations the phenomena addressed by moral philosophy may be so richly conceptualized before they enter philosophical discourse as to make the two domains of discourse incommensurable.

Even if Kant and the Stoics conceive the tasks of philosophy quite differently, it does not follow that they do not address some of the same questions or problems in the course of executing these different tasks. (After all, the tasks of the carpenter and the landscape architect are quite different; yet they both appeal to the same principles of geometry.) Indeed, the range of issues on which Aristotle, Kant, and the Stoics are compared in this volume are all ones on which these philosophers have something to say (the nature of the pursuit of happiness, the relation of this pursuit to the virtuous person’s reasons for acting, the necessity or propriety of self love and other sentiments for a morally worthy motivation). Insofar as Schneewind has a legitimate criticism of Annas, it is not that she is wrong to assume the Stoics and Kant are addressing the same question (What is the motivation of morally worthy action?), but rather that she is mistaken about whether they have given the same answers. If Schneewind is right against Herman and Geyer, and in siding with Cooper against Annas, then Annas has misidentified both Kant’s and the Stoics’ accounts of the virtuous person’s reasons for acting. But there seems to be no methodological mileage to be made from this criticism.

A reasonable moral to draw from Schneewind’s methodological warning is that we must be sensitive, in our comparative projects no less than in our investigation of individual philosophers of the past, not to seek from them answers to questions which, given their world view and other aspects of their philosophy, quite simply could not have arisen for them. If the alternate in a philosopher’s assumptions and basic outlook required to make a question or problem seem intelligible is severe or extensive enough, then we have no way of predicting how such revision would alter the rest of his philosophy, and so we simply cannot know how he would answer such questions, and there is nothing to be learned from posing them. But I don’t see that Schneewind has shown that the

9 Diogenes Laertius, VII 101-5

10 McDowell in fact charges (19, 30) that the ‘metaphysical’ interpretations of Aristotle’s eudaimonism are motivated by the (in his view, false) assumption that Aristotle shares the modern preoccupation with foundational justification.
question on which he faults Annas for finding convergence between
Kant and the Stoics (the virtuous person’s reasons for acting), is one that
does not arise for both of them. While it is impossible ever to be certain
that we have identified accurately a historical philosopher’s view and
the reasoning behind it, there is no reason in principle why we should
not evaluate those reasons and consider what illumination they may
bring to matters of common concern to us and to the historical figure.
Schneewind warns us to be careful about concluding that we do in fact
share a particular concern with a philosopher of the past, but he has not
demonstrated that the issues addressed in this volume are not common
concerns to Aristotle, Kant, the Stoics, and to us.

One of the reasons why anachronism is always a danger in the
interpretation of texts in the history of philosophy is that philosophers
in the past (no less than the present), often say much that is suggestive
on a given topic, with sometimes no more than a sketch of how the
various pieces are supposed to fit together. Aristotle himself, the self-
professed practitioner of the rough-sketch genre, explicitly says that it is
the job for subsequent philosophers to fill in the details (EN 1096a20–6).
(He mistakenly implies that doing so will be easy or uncontroversial, but
no matter.) Thus the task of interpreting the views of, for example,
Aristotle or Kant is hard to disentangle completely from the project of
working out a plausible position on the issues they address. This is part
of what makes studying the history of philosophy so philosophically
interesting. Sometimes, no doubt, we breach the line between interpre-
tation and positive theorizing, and sometimes we do not recognize or
acknowledge when we are doing so (although someone else is usually
willing to point out the error). It is not clear to me, for example, how
much of Korsgaard’s Kant and Aristotle are historically faithful recon-
structions of the explicit views of these historical figures as opposed to
the articulation of a bold and compelling set of positions in moral
philosophy which incorporate and transform important insights of
their. However, the genre of commentary has a venerable tradition,
early as old as philosophy itself, of being a venue for the development
of positive doctrine. Philosophy is a discipline that, perhaps more than
others, is able to learn from its past.

Unlike many collections of essays and conference proceedings, Aris-
totle, Kant, and the Stoics is a genuine unity. Admittedly, the editorial
control at some levels seems fairly light. There is no index locorum or
subject index, and no consistent pattern of citation for Ancient and
modern works; almost every essay has a long footnote explaining its
specific conventions for citation. However, the essay topics are well
chosen, and grouped in pairs (one Ancient, one Kantian) around specific
themes. There is also a fairly high degree of interconnection between the
essays, with frequent references between them in the footnotes. While
there are significant disagreements between the contributors, one defi-
nitely gets the impression that they have read each other’s essays and
have engaged in some common discussion. (One jarring note is intro-
duced by Schneewind’s criticism of Barbara Herman’s ‘teleological’
interpretation of Kant. The view he is criticizing is not one presented in
Herman’s own contribution to the volume, and the considerations he
adduces against her view (about the irreducibly desire-dependent na-
ture of human motivation) seem to coincide almost exactly with the view
she presents in the volume; some discussion addressing the connection
between his criticisms and her position in the volume would be in order
here.)

Is the volume complete? It would be nice if it included a positive
statement and defence of the teleological interpretation of Kant, for
example, by Herman or Guyer, since the criticism of these views is so
important to Schneewind’s own essay. It would also be nice to have in
the volume a positive statement of Julia Annas’ position on the role of
metaphysical considerations in Ancient eudaemonism. This view is the
subject of criticism in Cooper’s and Schneewind’s essays, but is not the
focus of Annas’ own contribution. It would be especially interesting to
have in the volume a discussion of the relation between Annas’ and
McDowell’s reasons for denying that metaphysical views have a role in
eudaemonistic reasoning. But this is simply to ask greedily for more in
what is already a fine collection that stimulates reflection and advances
the discussion, even if it in no way settles the issues.11

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11 I am grateful to Rahul Kumar and David Caswell for detailed and helpful com-
ments, especially concerning the interpretation of McDowell’s views.