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Theodicy in Another World

Eleonore Stump

in *Wandering in Darkness: Narrative and the Problem of Suffering*

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This chapter uses the narratives in the preceding chapters as well as the worldview of Aquinas outlined in earlier chapters to present Aquinas's theodicy. Taken in the context of the biblical narratives and encompassed in Aquinas's whole worldview but especially his account of love, Aquinas's theodicy is the heart of the defence promised at the outset of the book. On Aquinas's theodicy, God is justified in allowing the suffering of a mentally fully functional adult human person by one or the other or both of two possible benefits, where Aquinas's scale of value is the measure of the benefits. For a person whose suffering is entirely involuntary, suffering is defeated in virtue of its contributing to warding off a greater harm for her. For a person whose suffering is involuntary only in a certain respect, suffering is defeated in virtue of its contributing to providing a greater good for her. The chapter concludes with an argument that Aquinas's theodicy is incomplete as it stands and in need of further development.

From a Theological Frame to a Secular Frame

Mary L. Hirschfeld

in *The True Wealth of Nations: Catholic Social Thought and Economic Life*

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This chapter examines the fundamental hypothesis of the True Wealth of Nations project—that the economic and cultural criteria identified in the tradition of Catholic social thought provide an effective path to sustainable prosperity for all—from a Thomistic perspective. After

pointing out some key features of Thomas's theological framework and contrasting it with the modern day more secular perspective, it focuses on three issues. First, it discusses how Thomas understood the end of this-worldly (earthly) human flourishing in relationship to our final end, which for Thomas lies in the beatific vision. Second, turning to the question of how prosperity is understood, it discusses Thomas's understanding of the relationship between material well-being and virtue, which Thomas identifies with human flourishing. Third, it examines Thomas's understanding of material well-being in itself. The chapter concludes with an assessment of the degree to which we could or should incorporate Thomas' s perspective.

Domination and Human Flourishing

Frank Lovett

in A General Theory of Domination and Justice

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The various connections between freedom from domination and human flourishing are shown to account for the wrongness of domination. Benevolent and consensual dominations are shown not to detract from the general claim that freedom from domination is an important good. The limited significance of the claim from Hegel and others that domination will be self-defeating is discussed.

Happiness and Human Flourishing

Thomas E. Hill

in Human Welfare and Moral Worth: Kantian Perspectives

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Reviews the role of happiness in Kant's moral and political philosophy and contrasts his ideas of happiness with ideas of human flourishing prominent in ancient philosophy. It considers possible reasons why Kant avoided the latter and worked instead with more subjective conceptions of happiness. This was apparently due not merely to historical influences or misunderstanding of ancient ethics but also to Kant's respect for the moral freedom of individuals to choose, within limits, the way of life they prefer. Kant's understanding of happiness affects his ideas

of intrinsic value, prudence, beneficence, and the aim of government. Michael Slote's charge that Kantian ethics requires us to devalue our own happiness relative to others' arguably rests on a flawed analogy between beneficence to others and promoting one's own happiness.

God and Moral Obligation: Is a Link Possible?

C. Stephen Evans

in *Kierkegaard's Ethic of Love: Divine Commands and Moral Obligations*

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Moral obligations are overriding and objective, in a way that other kinds of obligations are not. A divine command theory of moral obligations claims that all truly moral obligations owe their status as moral duties to the fact that God commands them. God's commands, however, are not arbitrary; instead, God's command is a call to human flourishing and happiness. Kierkegaard answers the question posed in the *Euthyphro* by importing a Kantian dimension to an Aristotelian framework; he can do so only because he sees the self as spiritually and morally qualified. The two chief passions that are crucial to the formation of the self that God intends one to be are faith and love.

Human Flourishing, Ethics, and Liberty

Gilbert Harman

in *Explaining Value: and Other Essays in Moral Philosophy*

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Problems are raised for attempts to derive at least some of morality from a conception of human flourishing and those character traits or virtues that would contribute to human flourishing.

Kierkegaard's Ethic of Love

C. Stephen Evans

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Kierkegaard presents a form of divine command theory of moral obligation similar to accounts developed by Robert Adams and Philip Quinn. The account understands the relation humans have with a loving God as making possible the greatest human good, and as creating those unique obligations we designate as moral. God's commands should be obeyed, not because of fear of divine punishment, but out of love and gratitude for the good that God has bestowed on humanity. Though God can and does address specific individuals, the fundamental divine command is the injunction – common to Judaism and Christianity – to love one's neighbour as oneself. God's commands are not arbitrary; they are directed at human flourishing and lead to genuine happiness, even though obedience to them requires self-denial and is not egoistically motivated. This Kierkegaardian ethic, found principally in *Works of Love*, has advantages over its contemporary secular rivals, such as evolutionary naturalism, social contract theories, and moral relativism. Additionally, this form of divine command theory resists the fundamental objections often posed against a religiously grounded ethic.

Health and Social Justice

Jennifer Prah Ruger

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Envision a society in which all people have the ability to achieve the central health capabilities of avoiding premature death and escapable morbidity, and where everyone has comprehensive health insurance and access to high-quality health care. This vision is the animating principle behind the health capability paradigm, a unique new approach where not just health care, or the right to health alone, but health and the capability for health itself are moral imperatives. Ruger has been developing this health capability paradigm for over 15 years. Her innovative approach bridges the gaps at the interdisciplinary intersection of ethics, economics, political science, law and human rights, with practical and theoretical applications for the financing and delivery of health care and public health. The health capability paradigm provides philosophical justification for the direct moral importance of health, health capability, and the right to health, as well as a theoretical basis for prioritizing needs and allocating resources. There are no guarantees of good health, but society can, if it will, design and build effective institutions and social systems, structures and practices, that support all citizens in the pursuit of central health capabilities. Key tenets of this theory, which emphasizes responsibility and choice for health, include health agency, shared health governance, incompletely theorized agreements, internalized public

moral norms to guide social choice and collective action, and a joint scientific and deliberative approach to decision-making that incorporates medical necessity, medical appropriateness, and shortfall equality. This paradigm integrates both proceduralist and consequentialist approaches to justice, and emphasizes the critical roles of both moral and political legitimacy. We can no longer afford to ignore human suffering. This book weaves together a number of disparate constructs and original insights to produce a foundational new framework for thinking about and taking action to achieve health and social justice—the health capability paradigm.

The Politics of Actually Existing Unsustainability

John Barry

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Going against both the naive techno-optimist of 'greening business as usual' and a resurgent 'catastrophism' within green thinking and politics, *The Politics of Actually Existing Unsustainability* offers an analysis of the causes of unsustainability and diminished human flourishing. The book locates the causes of unsustainability in dominant capitalist modes of production, debt-based consumer culture, the imperative for orthodox economic growth and the dominant ideology of neoclassical economics. It suggests that valuable insights into the causes of and alternatives to unsustainability can be found in a critical embracing of human vulnerability and dependency as both constitutive and ineliminable aspects of what it means to be human. The book defends resilience, the ability to 'cope with' rather than somehow 'solve' vulnerability. The book offers a trenchant critique of the dominant neoclassical economic 'groupthink', viewing it not as some value-neutral form of 'expert knowledge', but as a thoroughly ideological 'common sense'. Outlining a green political economic alternative replacing economic growth with economic security, it argues economic growth has done its work in the minority, affluent world, which should now focus on improving human flourishing, lowering socio-economic inequality and fostering solidarity as part of a new re-orientation of public policy. Complementing this, a 'green republicanism' is developed as an innovative and original contribution to contemporary debates on a 'post-growth' economy and society. *The Politics of Actually Existing Unsustainability* draws widely from a range of disciplines and thinkers, from cultural critic Susan Sontag to the critical theory of the Frankfurt School, contemporary debates in green political thinking, and the latest thinking in heterodox and green

economics, to produce a highly relevant, timely, and provocatively original statement on the human predicament in the twenty-first century.

Health and Human Flourishing

Jennifer Prah Ruger

in Health and Social Justice

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This chapter lays the philosophical foundation for the book's theoretical framework, drawing on moral and political philosophy to argue that Aristotle's theory and Sen's capability approach provide the philosophical basis for the special moral importance of health capabilities as a central focal variable for assessing equality and efficiency in health policy. Both take a universal view of humans' capability to flourish as an end of moral and political philosophy and provide an analytical framework for addressing questions of justice and human rights in a way other philosophical schools do not. The capability approach considers human heterogeneity when assessing equality, and uses the capability to achieve valuable functionings as the main variable for evaluation. It also respects the central importance of freedom and reason in enabling humans to make choices. This is a departure from more Rawlsian resource-based evaluation frameworks that measure equality according to the attainment of tangible rewards such as wealth, income and health care. This chapter highlights the important contributions of these philosophical theories to the author's own thinking, while at the same time recognizes their limitations and demonstrates how the health capability paradigm can address such drawbacks in the specific context of the development, organization, and delivery of health systems and policy.