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Book Review

Marina Frasca-Spada and P. J. E. Kail, eds. *Impressions of Hume*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005. Pp. xi + 308. ISBN 0-19-925652-7, cloth, $74.

Impressions of Hume consists of an editorial Introduction and twelve original essays, most of which were earlier presented at the "Hume Studies in Britain" interdisciplinary workshops held in Cambridge (2000), Edinburgh (2002), and Oxford (2004) ("Preface," [v]). This collection is a valuable one, especially for those interested in the intellectual contexts of Hume's metaphysics and ethics. It might be shelved alongside—in parts it seems an extension of—M. A. Stewart and John P. Wright's edited collection from 1994, *Hume and Hume's Connexions*.

Indeed, *Impressions of Hume* begins with M. A. Stewart's 47-page article, "The Intellectual Development of Hume, 1711–1752," which covers Hume's life of reading in detail from the curriculum at the College of Edinburgh (1721–1725) through his bookish interests of 1725–1729 (including Latin texts of Dutch jurists; Longinus, Cicero, and Virgil; French and Italian literature; Shaftesbury and Hutcheson), and then leaps ahead, in more summary fashion, to Hume's professional interests in the decade after completing the *Treatise*, including his ongoing concern to distance himself from that work, culminating (beyond the article's announced time frame) in the 1775 "Advertisement" and 1776 "My Own Life." Rich in archival research and in full command of Hume's intellectual and social milieus, Stewart's article whets the appetite for the full-blown biography of which this seems a partial draft. According to this volume's "Notes on Contributors,"

however, Hume's intellectual biography is now in the hands of James A. Harris, whose contribution here, "Hume's Use of the Rhetoric of Calvinism," marks him as a worthy successor to Stewart and the other scholars—Harris cites Roger Emerson and James Moore—who have set the understanding of Hume's life on a whole new footing since E. C. Mossner's second edition of *The Life of David Hume* (1980). Harris argues that Hume used fideistic pronouncements, especially in the first *Enquiry*, to align himself strategically with the Calvinist opponents of the neo-Stoic moderates in church and university, including Hutcheson, who blocked Hume from securing the Edinburgh moral philosophy chair in 1745. Hume's intention, according to Harris, "was to discredit by whatever means possible the revolution in moral philosophy being engineered by Hutcheson, and so to imply a need for a return to the time when moral philosophy was one thing, and the teaching of natural religion another" (147).

Combined, the essays by Stewart and Harris comprise nearly a quarter of the main text of *Impressions of Hume*. Complementing their intellectual-biographical concerns are several strong essays that situate Hume in relation to seventeenth- and eighteenth-century philosophy. Two of these treat Hume's implicit response to Malebranche. In "Sympathy and Comparison: Two Principles of Human Nature," Susan James to my mind establishes that "Hume's account of the passions echoes and engages with [Malebranche's] *De la Recherche* [*de la vérité*]" (107). James compares and contrasts their respective treatments of esteem and contempt, two passions that rely on the principle of comparison. For Malebranche, "people are naturally greedy for pride or self-esteem" (113), and procure it sympathetically through passionate exchanges with those lower than they are (to whom they feel superior) or, conversely, higher than they are (through being associated with superior beings). Hume adopts and elaborates Malebranche's account of esteem and contempt; ultimately, he modifies it by counterbalancing these passions with "a more disinterested benevolence, . . . [and] a more relaxed appreciation of property and wealth" (121). James concludes, suggestively, that this difference between Hume and Malebranche has political implications: while the Frenchman's psychological investment is entirely in hierarchical social relations, Hume allows as well for "an investment in collective good fortune" (123). In sum, James establishes a fine counterpoint between Hume and Malebranche, based on a shared endeavor (analysis of the passions in relation to human nature), "despite their divergent aims and convictions" (107). Conversely, these divergent aims and convictions are emphasized in P. J. E. Kail's essay, "Hume's Ethical Conclusion." Kail reads the conclusion of Book 1 of the *Treatise* as an antithetical reply to Malebranche, the Christian philosopher who sets love of order and rational resemblance to God over pleasure and the sociable virtues.

Other essays of considerable intellectual-historical interest are Peter Lipton's "Waiting for Hume" and R. W. Serjeantson's "Hume's General Rules and the 'Chief

Business of Philosophers.'" Lipton shows that to the long history of skepticism about induction Hume brought something new: a focus "on the method of inference itself and the principle of the uniformity of nature that it is supposed to presuppose" (63). Why did we have to wait for Hume to formulate the problem of induction in this way? Hume, Lipton cogently argues, was the first to have motive and opportunity to frame the problem in the way he did: his motive was finding support for his "naturalist programme of showing that our thought is governed by principles of custom or natural instinct" (70); his opportunity came "because his brand of empiricism left him with an epistemology in which induction is *ubiquitous*, the only route to any beliefs about unobserved matter of fact" (72). Lipton thus presents Hume's *Treatise* as a turning point in the history of thought about induction. Whether or not induction was ever a "problem" to Hume, however, is an issue raised by Serjeantson in a striking comment that calls out for further elaboration: "what historians of philosophy have tended to treat anachronistically as the 'problem of induction'—was intended by . . . [Hume] as a contribution to the logic of probability" (192). Whether or not this claim is true, Serjeantson's essay is in general a historically adept examination of Hume's formulation of probabilistic "general rules" in relation to the history of logic and particularly to the place of rules in early modern philosophy (especially in Leibniz and Berkeley).

Emilio Mazza's "Hume's 'Meek' Philosophy among the Milanese" is a lively contribution to the history of Hume's reception, here within the correspondence of the Verri brothers who, with the better-known Beccaria (their one-time friend and subsequent antagonist), belonged to the later eighteenth-century *coterie de Milan*. The younger Verri brother, Alessandro, a traveler to both Paris and London, championed Hume's "meek" or moderately skeptical thought against what he perceived as the atheistic fanaticism of the French *philosophes* and the enthusiasm of Rousseau (his older brother Pietro took opposite sides on these issues).

Of the remaining essays, two explicitly ask what Hume has to offer to philosophy today. R. M. Sainsbury's "Meeting the Hare in her Doubles: Causal Belief and General Belief" is a complex piece of analytic philosophy from which I learned a good deal but which I lack the expertise properly to summarize, much less to judge. Roughly, Sainsbury argues that Hume's second definition of causation, modified to serve as a definition of causal belief, cannot finally account for the distinction between causal and accidental generalization; however, its "underlying idea that we can distinguish a distinctive way [or mode] of believing a generalization, a way which in some sense puts us in its grip, remains promising, and highly relevant to many currently debated issues in metaphysics and philosophy of mind" (93). As Sainsbury translates Hume into the vocabulary and concerns of contemporary analytic philosophy, so Martin Bell seeks to situate Hume within Continental philosophy in "Transcendental Empiricism? Deleuze's Reading of Hume." Deleuze saw in Hume's metaphysics an anticipation of his own proclaimed "transcendental

empiricism," in which the faculties aren't, as they arguably are in Kant, unified in apperception or the nature of the transcendental subject. "The whole point of empiricism," according to Deleuze (as Bell summarizes him), "is that it thinks of experience not in terms of forms imposed by the subject, but as an indefinite multiplicity of differences—for empiricism, it is all a matter of '*and* and *and*'" (101).

Questions of difference and unity also occupy Susan Manning in "Hume's Fragments of Union and the Fiction of the Scottish Enlightenment." For Manning, Hume's writings on the mind evince a structural tension between an impulse towards union or coherence and a counter-impulse towards fragmentation that is loosely analogous to the tensions found in some political writings on "the parliamentary Union between England and Scotland in 1707 and the confederation of the United States in the American Revolution" (245). Indeed, in the literature of the Scottish Enlightenment more generally Manning sees imagined wholes (the coherent self, the unified nation, the integral composition) in tension with processes of fragmentation: thus Hume's epistemology is of a piece with Boswell's London Journal, "Scottish Common-Sense writing," and Henry Mackenzie's novels. The essay is provocative, but I wish that the connections it suggests among various texts and ideas were more firmly established.

The two remaining essays in *Impressions of Hume* are also of a literary bent and proceed by loose analogies. Marina Frasca-Spada's essay, "Quixotic Confusions and Hume's Imagination," collocates passages from Hume's writings and from Charlotte Lennox's 1752 novel, *The Female Quixote*. Frasca-Spada sensibly concludes that what distinguishes belief in history from belief in poetry and eloquence—for the novel's "female Quixote" as well as for Hume—is reflection on general rules (179–81). The volume closes with Sarah M. S. Pearsall's "Hume—and Others—on Marriage," which is as disjointed as its title suggests. Pearsall's central concern is with the letters of Margaret and James Parker, a colonial American couple that separates during the Revolutionary War and afterwards reunites in England. Their correspondence is interesting as social history—or even, perhaps, as a minor literary episode in later eighteenth-century sentimentalism—but it has little discernible relation to the theoretical positions on marriage that Pearsall culls from Locke, Hutcheson, and Hume in the opening of her essay. Nonetheless, with regard to Hume the essay is useful precisely as a test case of how far "Hume's connexions" can and cannot be extended.

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