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E. M. Dadlez. *Mirrors to One Another: Emotion and Value in Jane Austen and David Hume*. Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 2009. Pp. i–xv + 234. ISBN 9781405193481, Cloth, $94.95.

Eva Dadlez's book aims to illuminate the connections between Hume's ethical thought and the novels of Jane Austen. As such, the project is both well-conceived and philosophically worthwhile. Although it falters in a few places, it will prove a rich and enjoyable read for the audience for whom it is intended. Let me begin by saying something about that audience. It is likely that this book will appeal first to enthusiasts of Austen and secondarily to enthusiasts of Hume. This is not because of shortcomings in Dadlez's treatment of Hume but because of the extensiveness of her use of Austen. The book presupposes a thorough familiarity with all of Austen's published novels and, in a few places, the film versions as well. Dadlez does an excellent job of providing context for the examples and quotes that she uses, and my guess is that readers unfamiliar with all of Austen's novels will still walk away with a deep appreciation for her characters. Even so, I suspect that only those philosophers who are also serious Austen fans (by which I mean people who have opinions on Fanny Price as a heroine) will be able to engage fully with this book.

The book has fourteen chapters and a short, but substantive preface. The first two chapters are devoted to setting up and defending Dadlez's interpretative framework. The third chapter argues against Kantian and, to a lesser extent, Aristotelian analyses of Austen. Each of the next ten chapters focuses on particular philosophical topics on which both Hume and Austen have something to say. The final chapter returns to the question of what we can learn about Hume from reading Austen and vice versa.

In the first two chapters, Dadlez argues that literature can serve as a kind of philosophical thought experiment, enhancing our cognitive and affective appreciation of ethical situations and serving as a catalyst for ethical reflection. She quite helpfully distinguishes her view from Martha Nussbaum's widely known work on literature and moral imagination, and makes a special plea for Austen's novels as particularly apt sources of rich philosophical content. These chapters are important for setting up Dadlez's project, but are unlikely to be controversial to what I have suggested is her likely audience. Still, these chapters showcase Dadlez's gift for making philosophical points with illustrative detail, as exemplified by her marvelous discussion of the insufferable Robert Ferrars and his toothpick case (27–28).

The third chapter is, in my view, the weakest of the book. Dadlez's goal in this chapter is to argue against Aristotelian and Kantian readings of Austen,

particularly the latter. The point is not about the actual philosophical influences on Austen, which are unclear, but rather about which normative ethical theory makes the most sense of Austen's central themes and perspectives. I do not myself think it terribly important to settle this question. The more significant problem, however, is that in attempting to show the inadequacies of Kantian and Aristotelian interpretations, Dadlez relies on comparatively shallow understandings of those theories. The effect is not altogether amiable, to use one of Austen's favorite terms.

The discussion of Kantian ethics is especially frustrating, relying as it does on what is now a largely outdated picture of Kant's ethical thought. The Kantian reading of *Mansfield Park* that she produces and rejects is narrowly focused on questions of promise-keeping and duty as a motive, neither of which is particularly important in the grand Kantian scheme of things. The discussion ignores the reams of recent work on Kant's *Doctrine of Virtue*. Similarly, the discussion of Aristotelian virtue feels old-fashioned, taking little note of newer versions of Aristotelian virtue ethics, many of which emphasize the role of practical wisdom. (Chapter 9 would have especially benefited from a look into Aristotelian accounts of moral judgment.) In my view, the book would stand as well or better without this third chapter. Dadlez's project of exploring Humean themes through Austenian lenses is worthy in its own right; it does not need to be prefaced by unsatisfactory arguments against competing interpretations.

In the next several chapters, Dadlez lays out some of the central features of Hume's ethics and then shows the points of intersections with Austen's portrayal of ethical thought. These chapters include discussions of pleasure, virtue, sympathy, the general point of view, utility, and moral reasoning. Dadlez works from the paradigm of Hume as a virtue ethicist. This is undoubtedly the right approach for her to take in this project, but because of that, I think the central argument of the book would have been strengthened if she had provided a more systematic picture of what a Humean virtue ethics would look like, perhaps in the course of the Chapter 7 discussion about character traits as being useful. This chapter contains compelling evidence for Dadlez's Humean reading of Austen. A fuller account of Hume on virtue would bolster her case considerably and enrich the discussion of particular virtues in later chapters.

Chapter 8 contains a wonderful discussion of Humean aesthetics in Austen, with an especially insightful reflection on the notion of taste. In Austen's novels, good people generally have good taste, although villains sometimes do as well. The capacity for discernment exhibited through good taste is, in Austen's novels, linked to moral character. In unpacking this aspect of Austen, Dadlez employs Hume's discussion of how taste is shaped by education and practice. Dadlez also considers whether novels can modify the reader's own capacity for aesthetic judgment via

techniques like the critique of gothic melodrama carried on throughout *Northanger Abbey*. This chapter exemplifies nicely what I take to be the central aim of the book, which is to illuminate both Hume and Austen by examining their shared themes, commitments, and ideas. My only disappointment in this chapter was my dashed hope that Dadlez would turn her attention to the aesthetics of Austen's estates, like Sotherton and Pemberley, and what they reveal about the moral capacities of their owners.

Chapter 10 compares Hume's view of marriage with Austen's, while Chapters 11, 12, and 13 take up several virtues and vices which make a substantive appearance both in Hume's work and in Austen's novels. The discussion of pride in Chapter 11 encompasses a pleasantly broad range of Austenian characters, including some less obvious candidates for vicious pride. (Dadlez rightly focuses on improper pride in Austen's clergymen, especially Mr. Collins, but she does not, I think, attend adequately to the fact that three of Austen's six primary heroes take up that profession to what we presume will be different effect.) The following chapter on jealousy, envy, and malice is wonderful on Mary Musgrove, but probably focuses too much on Fanny Price. I sympathize with Dadlez's desire to highlight *Mansfield Park*, but it is a shame that a chapter on such vices doesn't mention Caroline Bingley and barely addresses Lucy Steele.

The topic of Chapter 13, indolence and industry, is especially original. It is also a noteworthy example of a topic on which Humean and Austenian themes clearly intersect. Dadlez spends quite a bit of time discussing acts and omissions, but the real interest of the chapter lies in the discussion of industry as a virtue and indolence as a vice in Austen and Hume. Dadlez nicely draws out the ways in which industry benefits the minds and situations of Austen's characters, even minor characters like *Persuasion*'s Mrs. Smith. The chapter would, I think, have been strengthened still more by a discussion of the failings of the talented, but irresponsibly indolent Mr. Bennet or by an explicit contrast between the useless existence of a Sir Walter Elliot and the energetic pursuits of a Captain Wentworth. Dadlez rightly calls our attention to possibilities for industry and indolence in the lives of women, as exemplified in the matriarchs of *Mansfield Park*, but it would also have been nice to see her extend her analysis to Austen's portrayal of the social expectation that women and girls be "accomplished" and what Hume's account of virtue might imply about it.

The flaws I have noted are, with the exception of Chapter 3, fairly minor ones, and mostly express my wish that the book had been longer. As it stands, Dadlez's book will be a delight to any moral philosopher who is also a fan of Austen. Those of us in that category share her view that there is no such thing as too much work on Austen, and by providing us with a Humean look at the novels, she does much to advance the reader's understanding of both. Her knowledge of both Hume and

Austen is extensive, and her rich and sophisticated treatment of them together is a very welcome addition to the literature.

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