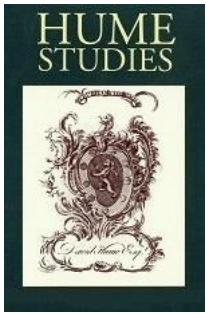

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Knud Haakonssen, ed. *The Cambridge History of Eighteenth-Century Philosophy.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006. Pp 1407. ISBN 0521418542, cloth, $250.

The Cambridge History of Eighteenth-Century Philosophy is a massive achievement, and in more than one sense. The most obvious is its sheer bulk: two volumes totalling 1400 pages, including over 150 pages of bibliography and index and another 100 pages of biobibliographical appendix. This last item, as its name suggests, provides thumbnail biographies of all the main figures referred to in the volumes together with a list of all their main publications with publication dates and also a short list of main secondary sources—and so can be expected to be a lifesaver for harassed scholars desperately trying to track down a missing reference. It is also a pleasure to record that, in an age when production standards often slip disastrously low, these are volumes built to last, with a high standard of proofreading as well. (I found only three typographical errors, and only one of those—"skepticism" instead of "rationalism" (419)—produced an errant meaning.)

The main sense in which this is a massive achievement concerns, of course, the contents themselves. Knud Haakonssen has done an outstanding job in organizing the volumes and in collecting such a fine stable of contributors from Britain, Continental Europe, North America and Australia. This is a work of lasting value, with all the articles being genuine contributions to our understanding of eighteenth-century philosophy.

The problems for a reviewer are twofold. In the first place, this is a reference work and so not intended to be read from cover to cover. Hence the reviewer's experience, of reading about much the same sequence of figures on topics A–Z, has a repetitive air that would not afflict those using it as it is intended. The second problem, of course, is the simple impossibility of giving an adequate sense of the contents in a short review. So I will concentrate, in the main, on topics likely to be of interest to *Hume Studies* readers.

The Cambridge History is organized into five parts: The Concept of Eighteenth-Century Philosophy, The Science of Human Nature, Philosophy and Theology, Natural Philosophy, and Moral Philosophy. The first part itself falls into two halves, theoretical and practical. The practically-oriented articles investigate institutional structures and their curricula and also the informal networks that provided the means by which many of the period's most radical works found an audience. The theoretical articles begin with Haakonssen's own overview of the period, in which he endeavours to break the hold of "the epistemological paradigm" imposed on the period by later generations. As we shall see, some of the other contributors

take this message to heart; but the other two articles in this section, by Werner Schneiders and Carl Henrik Koch, are more content to work with the broad epistemological categories. This divergence testifies to the truth of Haakonssen's remark that "this is not a volume at peace with itself, nor was it meant to be" (21). For his part, Haakonssen puts his claim to work to draw out the connection then supposed to obtain between one's philosophy and one's life—and thereby to explain what otherwise looks like just bad philosophy in controversies of the period, the willingness to deploy the ad hominem.

Part 2, on the science of human nature, is by far the longest of the five divisions. It also contains the longest article in the work, "Human Nature," by Aaron Garrett. This article is striking by approaching its topic from the perspective of its, for the time, margins or exclusions: it examines views of animals, wild children, the blind and deaf, race and national character, and women and marriage. This makes it a mine of fascinating information, but it nevertheless lacks a center in not offering any positive account of what a conception of human nature was a conception *of*. (It is often said, for example, that Hume had a "static," Rousseau a "historical" conception of human nature—but both these claims must be embarrassed by the thought that both these philosophers assumed the Aristotelian account of a nature as an *inner* principle of *change*.)

Articles entitled "Perception and Ideas, Judgment" by Kenneth Winkler, "Self-Consciousness and Personal Identity" by Udo Thiel, and "Active Powers" by Jerome Schneewind all provide detailed and illuminating discussions of their respective topics. However, in each of these cases, one might complain that the epistemological paradigm once again has the upper hand. To put it another way, in the handling of each of these topics, there is an elephant in the room: the possibility of an immaterial soul. Thus, Winkler draws out clearly the difference between perceptual and verdictive models of judgment, without pointing out that the latter preserves the role of the rational self as ruler over the body's perceptual mechanisms. Similarly, Thiel shows Locke to distinguish between consciousness and reflection (inner perception), to build his account of personal identity on the former, not the latter, and thereby to preserve the space for a traditional account of the soul. In contrast, Hume's occasional nod to the distinction does not deter him from plumping firmly for the perceptual model and so from calling sharply into question any need to appeal to possibly non-material elements. Schneewind, in his essay, brings out very clearly just how hard-line Hume's determinism is when measured against contemporary alternatives (despite his not being, in modern parlance, a "hard determinist"). Again, however, the background metaphysical issue which provided the motor for debates about active powers is left off-stage. It could be said, of course, that a reference work should stick to the facts (*hypotheses non fingo*!), but religious issues so often provide the background for eighteenth-

century philosophical debates that to fail to draw attention to them threatens to render those debates opaque.

Richard Popkin's article, "Scepticism," provides a characteristically detailed account of the influence of Pyrrhonian ideas on eighteenth-century thought. Nevertheless, its determination to cast Hume as a Pyrrhonian, in opposition to his self-description in the first *Enquiry* as an Academic, is surprising to say the least. But this is an instance of a more general refusal to regard Academic philosophy as skeptical at all. Sextus may have approved, but as an account of eighteenth-century thought—for which the encounter with Cicero's dialogues, with their division of the intellectual alternatives into Epicurean, Stoic, and Academic Sceptic camps, was almost staple fare—it is seriously-one-sided.

Two concluding comments on this part: first, Manfred Kuehn's excellent article "Knowledge and Belief" succeeds in bringing out the fact that Karl Leopold Reinhold's popularization of Kant's philosophy gave it a strong Cartesian twist and so paved the way for full-blown idealisms that it had been Kant's intention to abolish. Secondly, by including within the purview of human nature such topics as space and time, causality, and language, part 2 shows not so much differences in eighteenth-century conceptions of human nature as the editor's own empiricist sympathies. Hume would doubtless approve, but it is difficult to imagine a Wolffian feeling happy with this organization of the subject matter.

Part 3, on philosophy and theology, is focused in particular on debates about the possibility, and relative authority, of natural and revealed religion. For students of Hume, M. A. Stewart's two articles on the British debates on these topics will be particularly relevant, but Simone Zurbuchen's "Religion and Society" together with B. A. Gerrish's "Natural and Revealed Religion" show the importance of the Deist or free-thinking appropriators of Locke for a sound understanding of the context of Hume's religious critiques. More generally, both also give a sense of the secularizing shift implicit in the steady eclipse of the ideal of toleration by that of religious liberty. (The latter, unlike the former, rejects any form of religious establishment.) Given the importance of religious issues for the period, this part might seem a little perfunctory, but this is misleading. As mentioned above, few issues concerning the nature of human beings and human life lacked religious implications, so those issues belong under their specific headings.

Part 4, on natural philosophy, is somewhat less relevant for Hume scholars, but it is a well-organized section, with John Gascoigne's article, "The Study of Nature," on the significance of the division between natural history and natural philosophy, being followed by separate articles on each of those topics. Gascoigne also shows how "natural philosophy" steadily transmuted into what we now mean by "physics" as a result of the pressure exerted by mathematical and experimental imperatives. Pierre Kerszberg's discussion of natural philosophy is less contextually-sensitive than most of the other contributions, avowedly adopting the point of

view of the end of the century. As he puts it, "the whole century is dominated by one philosophical figure, Immanuel Kant. . . . [T]he Kantian interpretation emerges as pivotal for the intelligibility of the progress of science in the eighteenth century" (875). In practice the retrospective angle is less pronounced than this remark suggests, but nonetheless some anachronism does intrude, particularly in the relationships supposed between theology, metaphysics, and "science." Nevertheless, Kerszberg does a heroic job of sketching main developments in mechanics, astronomy, theoretical cosmology, chemistry, heat, electricity, and even reasoning and method.

Part 5 covers moral philosophy, in something like the broad eighteenth-century sense of the term. ("Something like" because its central organizing concept, human nature, has already been treated in part 2.) David Fate Norton's discussion of the foundations of morals takes Haakonssen's opposition to the epistemological paradigm to heart, showing the importance of realism about value to eighteenth-century debate. He is thus able to bring out why so many defenders of morals took exception to Francis Hutcheson's vigorous defense of moral virtue: by grounding moral value in sense rather than reason, he was seen by the rationalists as offering an ersatz substitute for the only power genuinely capable of discerning reality, moral reality included. Objectivity—in the weaker sense of dispassionate judgment—was, for these thinkers, not enough.

Wolfgang Kersting's article, "Politics," brings out the prevalence of "two contract" theories in the modern natural law tradition. These theories, by insisting on a general social contract prior to the political contract, provided a line of defense against the relevance of the Hobbesian state of war; nevertheless, they were typically absolutist. Perhaps in order to offer a sharp contrast, though, Kersting does rather overdraw the extent to which Kant can be thought of as a democrat. Finally, Dario Perinetti's "Philosophical Reflection on History" is a very welcome effort. By showing the early modern sense of the continuity between epistemological and historiographical questions—in the shape of answering the historical Pyrrhonist—he shows how absurd it is to suppose that Hume's turn to the writing of history was ipso facto the giving up of philosophy.

Are there any morals to the tale? Several can be discerned: two general, another more particular. The first concerns the distinctiveness of the three main intellectual traditions: the British world, with its focus on the foundations of knowledge, differs sharply from the overtly political (and also sharply anti-clerical) focus of the French world—and both differ from the more direct engagement with religious questions in the German setting. These worlds were not hermetically sealed, but issues transferred from one setting to another were significantly changed by being fitted into the differing local concerns.

The second general lesson is that the eighteenth century took longer to throw off the scholastic past than is usually supposed. The radical philosophies of the

seventeenth century not uncommonly met a spirit of compromise and adaptation rather than of whole-hearted adoption. This shows up particularly in curricular reforms in the institutions but also in the slow pace with which disciplines of enquiry, and the relations between them, were progressively restructured. The popular image of the eighteenth century, focused on the radicals and therefore on the high tide of radical opinion at the century's end, gives a distorting view of the whole.

The particular lesson is really a series of lessons concerning the significance of some less well-known thinkers routinely banished to the margins of intellectual history. The point is not that there are many interesting figures about whom one hears little outside of encyclopedic works like this—that is inevitably so—but that intellectual history will not properly cohere unless these figures are brought more firmly into the foreground. Perhaps the outstanding example here is Christian Wolff: commonly marginalized as a poor man's Leibniz, he emerges here as a major figure who exerted a powerful independent influence on German thought (and whose views would not be found uncongenial by many a contemporary analytic philosopher). For those seeking a better understanding of Hume, the importance of Bayle hardly needs to be emphasized; but mention should also be made of Mandeville and Butler and of the post-Lockean Deists and free-thinkers—Collins, Toland, Tindal—as figures who would reward closer attention.

Finally, are there any grounds for complaint? One possible reservation is the degree of concentration on British, French, and German thought. (Vico gets the odd mention, as do some Scandinavians and North Americans, but there is no consistent attention beyond these three national traditions.) However, given the pre-eminence of these cultures in the period, this restriction of focus is not thereby a limitation. What does seem an oversight, though, is the almost total absence of attention to the Iberian world and its colonies. Was there no news from Salamanca? It would also have been valuable to have seen some attention to the margins of the European intellectual world, not least in Russia. Another possible complaint is that Asia is ignored, but to remedy that gap would have undermined the work's coherence. This is a history of philosophy in eighteenth-century Europe and its satellites, and it is no worse for that, even if its eventual successor-volumes will, no doubt, in a yet further shrunken world, make that regional aspect explicit. But to end on a note of complaint would be to scorn the magnitude of the achievement. *The Cambridge History of Eighteenth-Century Philosophy* is an outstanding work of reference for which all scholars in the field will be grateful.

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