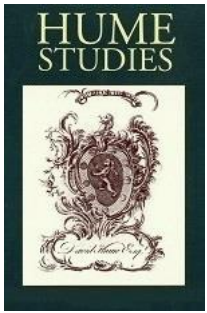

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Kant and the Scottish Enlightenment by Elizabeth Robinson and Chris W. Suprenant, eds. (review)

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Elizabeth Robinson and Chris W. Suprenant, eds. *Kant and the Scottish Enlightenment.* New York: Routledge, 2017. Pp. 367. Hardcover ISBN 978-1-138-20701-1, $140.

Given Kant's seemingly dismissive attitude toward Scottish philosophers of common sense—in the *Prolegomena*, he famously describes how painful it is to see them miss Hume's point—one might expect that a book titled *Kant and the Scottish Enlightenment* would be a rather slim volume. However, as Manfred Kuehn in *Scottish Common Sense in Germany* and elsewhere has made abundantly clear, Scottish philosophy played a large role in eighteenth-century Germany, and was a significant influence on Kant. The present volume, which stands as a *Festschrift* for Kuehn, admirably follows on this path, and the nineteen papers collected here trace a number of interesting and surprising ways in which Scottish philosophy connects to Kant. Despite what Kant might have *said* about the Scots, *Kant and the Scottish Enlightenment* does an excellent job of demonstrating that there is much to be gained from exploring the relations between the two camps.

The book is edited by Elizabeth Robinson and Chris Suprenant, but the introductory essay is supplied by Kuehn, who provides a broad overview of the ways in which the Scottish influence worked on Kant, and the extent to which this is typically overlooked. The papers that follow touch on a wide range of topics, but they fall into roughly four groups: six pieces on Kant's relation to Hutcheson and Beattie, eight papers comparing Kant and Hume, three papers on Kant and Smith, and two dealing with other topics. The contributors comprise established figures in the field as well as more junior people, and are drawn from scholars of both Kant and Scottish philosophy, so there is a nice mix of views and approaches. As with most anthologies, there is a range in the quality of the contributions, but fortunately all of the papers are worth reading, and reward careful attention. Kant scholars in particular will, I think, find the volume very helpful in expanding our understanding of the roots of the critical philosophy.

There is not space to discuss the papers in any detail, but I will note some of the themes of the anthology. One of the impressive features of the volume is the fresh perspective it offers on Kant's broader thought, especially since many Kant scholars are not fully aware of the role that the Scots played in shaping his views on a variety of subjects. This is particularly the case with the works dealing with Hume, where, instead of rehashing the hidebound debates about the nature of causation, for example, we instead have papers addressing feeling in moral philosophy (by Oliver Sensen), religion and the highest good (Lawrence Pasternack), Hume and Kant on anthropology (Robert Louden), Hume and Kant on marriage (Elizabeth

Robinson), the status and role of the imagination in Hume and Kant (Frank Schalow), the nature of antinomical conflict in Hume and Kant (Bryan Hall), Hume and Kant on identity and substance (Mark Pickering), and Kant's response to Hume's thoughts about the social contract (Alexander Schaefer). These are all interesting, but the discussions by Robinson, Sensen, and Schaefer stand out as being particularly insightful and rewarding. The essays discussing Hutcheson's relation to Kant (by Aaron Garrett, Michael Walschots, Wiebke Deimling, Reed Winegar and Colin McQuillian) focus largely on moral feeling, though both Winegar and McQuillian also provide interesting insights into the connections between Hutcheson's and Kant's views on aesthetics, as does Paul Guyer's piece comparing Kant and Beattie. The three papers dealing with Kant and Smith address virtue in economics and politics (J. P. Messina), the phenomenology of moral motivation (John McHugh) and imagination, reason, and personhood (Jack Russell Weinstein). All of these make a strong case for thinking that Smith exercised far more influence over Kant than is typically recognized, and they help make clear why Markus Herz noted that Kant described Smith as his "*Liebling*"! Given that Smith's influence on Kant is even less appreciated than that of Hume and Hutcheson, the papers presented here will be of particular interest to Kant scholars, and each does an excellent job of linking the two thinkers. The remaining two papers examine the connection between Reid's common sense, Tetens's "weak externalism" and Kant's idealism (Scott Stapleford), and Kant's heuristic methods (Brigitte Sassen). These two are also engaging and interesting, but they are perhaps more thematic than the other papers in the volume.

I do have a few minor worries, and some lingering questions about what exactly the larger lessons of the volume might be. The copy-editing of the volume leaves something to be desired; there are a distressing number of typographical errors, which after a while become rather distracting. Also, it is surprising—and a bit disappointing—how little attention is devoted to Reid, especially given the intriguing similarities between his and Kant's views. Kuehn's introduction addresses Reid in the larger context of Scottish thought, but aside from a few passing mentions in the other papers, the only sustained discussion comes in the essay by Stapleford, though even here Reid and Kant are used primarily as foils for Tetens's weak externalism. On a more substantial note, while there is no denying that Scottish thought played a significant role in the development of Kant's views, when taken as a whole, the essays in the volume might tend to overstate the influence of the Scots. Relatively little is said about the other non-Scottish thinkers who helped shape the critical philosophy, though this is perhaps understandable, given the theme of the anthology.

Finally—although it is not explicit—there seems to be a bit of tension between what might be taken as two different philosophical and historical methodologies. Some of the papers seek to expose the direct or indirect influence that the Scots

exerted on Kant's thought, while others proceed in a more comparative spirit, without claiming that the Scots directly inspired any of Kant's positions. In their preface, the editors speak of Kant's debt to Scottish figures, and in his introductory essay, Kuehn comes down firmly in favor of "looking at the actual influence of Scottish philosophers on German thought," since "in general, comparative studies do not make for good history of philosophy" (13). More than a few of the essays, however, acknowledge that there is no clearly direct influence of the Scots on Kant with regard to the issues addressed, and instead take up a roughly comparative project. I note this latent methodological tension not as a complaint, but rather as indicative of a larger question about what exactly the history of philosophy aims to accomplish: ought it primarily be directed at tracing historical influences, or should it instead seek to discover interesting and suggestive similarities between different views and traditions, with an eye toward shedding new light on each, even if there is no evidence for a direct influence? Or, ideally, should it aim to do both? Both approaches are embraced in the volume, but little is said on a more general level about which methods are to be preferred.

These, however, are mere quibbles. Kuehn's seminal scholarship opened up a new vista in our understanding of Kant, and it is a fitting tribute to his work that the essays in this volume continue to broaden our perspective both on Kant and on Scottish philosophy. *Kant and Scottish Philosophy* does an excellent job of bridging the scholarly fields devoted to both its subjects, to the great benefit of each.

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