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Mary Shepherd's Essays on the Perception of an External Universe, ed. by Antonia LoLordo (review)

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Book Reviews

Antonia LoLordo, ed. *Mary Shepherd's Essays on the Perception of an External Universe*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020. Pp. 244. ISBN: 978-0190854263.

On Mary Shepherd's view of our perception of the external world, perceived qualities are "as a landscape, sent from an unseen country by which we may know it" (Shepherd, *Mary Shepherd's Essays*, 137; *Essays*, 261). Originally published in 1827, Shepherd's *Essays on the Perception of an External Universe (EPEU)* made important contributions in epistemology and the philosophy of perception, among other areas. In Antonia LoLordo's much-anticipated new edition of the text, advanced undergraduate students and scholars alike will find an inviting and authoritative introduction to Shepherd's work, followed by a modernized and annotated copy of the text.

LoLordo's is the first modern edition of Shepherd's *EPEU*. Inexpensive facsimile reprints are widely available, and in 2000, Jennifer McRobert edited and introduced a beautiful, two-volume facsimile edition of Shepherd's complete oeuvre. McRobert's edition, published by Thoemmes Press, collects the two book-length works written by Shepherd—the *EPEU*, and the 1824 *An Essay Upon the Relation of Cause and Effect (ERCE)*—as well as a number of shorter works written or attributed to Shepherd, including "Lady Mary Shepherd's Metaphysics," an essay originally published in *Frazer Magazine* in 1832, and included in LoLordo's new edition. Unfortunately, some disagreement persists about which texts to attribute to Shepherd. In a recent paper, Deborah Boyle convincingly shows that one of the treatises in McRobert's collection was not written by Shepherd.¹ Even were this not so, the McRobert edition is out of print and exceedingly costly to acquire. The situation with Shepherd's *ERCE* is no better: though there are inexpensive facsimile reprints available, the most common of these, from

Scholar Select, is missing pages 26 and 27 of the text (at least this is true of two copies ordered at different times from different stores).² In 2018, Boyle published selections from Shepherd's writings (mostly from *EPEU*) with Imprint Academic, along with a superb introduction, as part of the Library of Scottish Philosophy series. This latter volume is a valuable resource, especially for those interested in teaching Shepherd, but a modern edition of the full *EPEU* is essential at a time when the literature on Shepherd's philosophy is expanding rapidly.

LoLordo's introduction is a rigorous yet accessible initiation into Shepherd studies. It uses historical and biographical details to situate Shepherd's *EPEU*, and offers a description of Shepherd's philosophical opponents and allies, giving the reader a sense for the milieu in which Shepherd lived and thought. LoLordo draws attention to topics of interest for academics new to Shepherd's work, such as Shepherd's connection to Kantian philosophy, and her views about animal minds. Moreover, LoLordo makes useful recommendations regarding how to incorporate Shepherd's writings into an early modern philosophy course (3). At times, LoLordo does wade into interpretive discussions, such as the debate about whether to class Shepherd as a modern or early modern figure given that her major works were published in the 1820s, but LoLordo does so only insofar as she seeks to give the reader a sense for the kinds of conversations that are emerging around this historical figure.

Until recently, only a handful of essays had been written about Shepherd's philosophy, and these focus primarily on Shepherd's work on causation. Early in the introduction, LoLordo apprises her reader of the fact that there is still almost nothing published on Shepherd's philosophy of mind (Boyle's "Mary Shepherd on Mind, Soul, and Self" is the exception), a fact that is especially striking given the pride of place given to questions about perception on dominant narratives about the early modern period. LoLordo goes on to provide careful analyses of related topics such as the existence of the external world; dreams, hallucinations, and reality; matter as power; and mind and its relation to body, overviews that will support and guide the scholarship on Shepherd's theory of mind and perception that is sure to follow the publication of this edition.

LoLordo has chosen to present the *EPEU* text with only minor updates. Some of the spellings in the original Hatchard and Son edition have been revised, such as the replacement of "shew" with "show," and Shepherd's use of quotation marks has been standardized. Helpfully, LoLordo has added footnotes indicating the sources of quotations or paraphrases, so that the reader can more easily interpret Shepherd's frequent references. The index following the text is surprisingly different from Boyle's, the only other index created for (parts of) *EPEU*, including entries for concepts not included in Boyle's index, such as "animals," "testimony," "camera obscura example," "hallucinations," and "Malebranche," but not including others listed in Boyle's index, such as "Kant" and "power."

Thankfully, LoLordo has chosen also to include the Hatchard and Son pagination in the margins. Scholarship on Shepherd has so far referenced the Hatchard and Son edition—the only edition of the text published during Shepherd's lifetime. In referencing the *EPEU* in footnotes and the introduction, LoLordo gives both the page reference to her own edition, as well as the Hatchard and Son page reference, separating the two with a slash. It is perhaps

worth underscoring that this new edition brings with it interesting questions about how Shepherd's *EPEU* ought to be cited moving forward. Scholars will need to decide whether citations will continue to reference the Hatchard and Son edition, or whether there will be a standard pagination in use at all.

LoLordo's edition makes a timely and admirable contribution to Shepherd scholarship. Not only does the book provide its readers with an updated and readable copy of the original text, but LoLordo has skillfully contextualized the work with footnotes and a rich introduction. The volume is an essential resource for anyone interested in reading or thinking about Shepherd's philosophy in a sustained way.

NOTES

1 Boyle's "A Mistaken Attribution to Lady Mary Shepherd" explains how the disputed 1819 work came to be misattributed to Shepherd, a finding that conforms with Margaret Atherton's (2006) assessment of the issue ("Shepherd, Mary"). LoLordo (2n4) interprets McRobert as making a case for the attribution to Shepherd of an 1857 work, *Philosophy of Theism*, but doubts the attribution (see McRobert's *Mary Shepherd and the University*).

2 Shepherd conceived of the two texts as "throwing a mutual light upon each other" (*Mary Shepherd's Essays*, 30; *Essays*, xv). Happily, the Oxford New Histories of Philosophy series responsible for LoLordo's edition of *EPEU* has an edition of *ERCE* forthcoming as well, edited by Don Garrett, and collected with two additional essays published under Shepherd's name in 1828.

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