

Elizabeth Robinson & Chris W. Surprenant, eds. *Kant and the Scottish Enlightenment*. Routledge 2017. 368 pp. \$140.00 USD (Hardcover ISBN 9781138207011).

Hume has always been regarded as having a central place in Kant's philosophical development, but from the evidence of this volume of new essays the influence from Scotland goes beyond Hume to other Scottish enlightenment philosophers, especially to Francis Hutcheson and Adam Smith. There may be material here that is of interest to those working on Hutcheson, Hume, and Smith as a means of placing the views of these enlightenment philosophers in the history of philosophy, but this is a volume primarily dedicated to Kant. Insofar as it engages with the Scottish enlightenment philosophers, it is with the intention of illuminating Kant's thought. The essays are able to do this in some cases by directly mapping the influence Scottish philosophers had on Kant, looking at how Kant engaged with their work and looking at Kant in light of the questions and challenges their work posed. At other moments, the essays outline the views of the Scottish philosophers and provide an opportunity to compare and contrast them with Kant, which is advantageous in assessing the relative merits of Kant's view. An added benefit to viewing Kant alongside the Scottish philosophers is that it helps to highlight aspects of Kant's thought that may not always be readily apparent when studied in isolation.

A good example of the benefits of this approach and in particular of studying Kant alongside Hutcheson is provided by Reed Winegar. He places the *Critique of Judgment* in the contextual backdrop of Hutcheson's *Inquiry* and more specifically in the context of the argument from natural beauty to God. While Kant rejects Hutcheson's argument, it is noted that Kant still maintains a 'Critical version' of it, which has an important difference – the inferential step to the idea of God as creating nature 'in order to promote the human being's Highest Good,' (72) is a rational step to take, but for Kant it is belief or faith, not knowledge. Coming at Kant in this way encourages us to avoid 'contemporary' distinctions between aesthetics and teleology. Questions, of course, will be raised about the merits of any attempt to link natural beauty and teleology, but that is beside the point in an attempt to understand the motivations behind Kant's third *Critique*. As Winegar notes, it is essential to study Kant alongside Hutcheson, for only then will we grasp what he is aiming to achieve in the *Critique of Judgment*; which is to say, only then can we see that Kant is engaged in a 'Critical reevaluation (rather than a wholesale rejection) of attempts by physico-theologians like Hutcheson to link natural beauty and theology' (72). In aesthetics, Hutcheson and Kant gave their individual answers to a fundamental problem, that of private validity in the diversity of judgments of taste. Ultimately, Kant provides a more substantial and more satisfying attempt at grounding a form of universality in aesthetic judgment than Hutcheson and importantly better separates aesthetic judgment from the 'inclinations associated with the senses' (J. Colin McQuillan, 100). Kant's answer to the problem provides, therefore, a 'distinctly philosophical conception of aesthetic pleasure' as opposed to Hutcheson's view, which is really only a 'tool to explain the physiological and psychological origin' (100) of the pleasures provided by natural and artistic beauty.

Common ground between Hutcheson and Kant is also displayed in ethics. Aaron Garrett and Michael Walschots observe that both Hutcheson and Kant were seeking the same end of universal rules for morality and that Kant, like Hutcheson, sought to ground these rules in a human capacity or power. In addition, Kant may well have taken on Hutcheson's assertion that it is our task to show that the ultimate source of obligation in acting is a moral one. Thus, they had a common concern with what it is for us to recognize an act as unconditionally necessary (so gaining an obligation from it) and so seeing the need for a means of determining whether an act is

unconditionally good. It is well known that Kant's later philosophical developments and his mature view of the faculties of cognition as distinct from feeling meant a wholesale rejection of moral sense. Even so, because much of Kant's thought was developed and adopted in the engagement with ideas from the moral sense theorists, it holds an important place in the development of Kant's moral philosophy.

Considerable care is nevertheless needed not to overplay the relationship and influence of the Scottish enlightenment philosophers on Kant. While there may be clear evidence that Kant engaged with Hutcheson on issues in ethics and aesthetics, it may be erroneous to say that Kant draws a view from Hutcheson, even if it 'accomplishes something similar.' (J. Colin McQuillan, 91) This concern is also voiced by Alexander Schaefer when discussing Kant and Hume. He notes that Kant may well have been familiar with Hume's criticism of the social contract theory, but in attempting to set up Kant's support for the social contract as an answer to Hume, this reconstruction of an argument has a somewhat speculative nature. But this is not a reason to dismiss the reconstruction, for (quite apart from the issue of influence) Schaefer is still able to display that Kant has a significant contribution to make to the issue of political obligation.

Aside then from being able to map the positive influence that Scottish philosophy plays in Kant's philosophy, more generally there is a clear case for saying that thinking of Kant alongside the Scottish philosophers presents a definite aid to our understanding of Kant. In this positive light we see that Kant links to Hume and the enlightenment's pursuit of the science of man with his question 'What is the human being?' which, for Kant, is the most fundamental question in philosophy (Robert B. Loudon); we see that Kant would have been aware of the advances that Smith makes on Hume's moral philosophy and indeed adopted Smith's 'impartial spectator' along with the idea that impartiality is the goal of the moral agent (Jack Russell Weinstein); we see similar views of Kant and Hutcheson on sympathy: notably, while neither gives a primary role to sympathy in motivating us to act in a morally right manner, it is nevertheless acknowledged that sympathy highlights to us the needs and ends of others, meaning the ability to share in the suffering of others is therefore fundamental to our understanding just why an act is moral in the first place, even if this ability to share in the suffering of others can only *reliably* lead to genuine moral action when it is part of a more general moral disposition (Wiebke Deimling); and we see speculation upon a 'hybrid view' of Kant's ethics, where 'pure reason itself can motivate,' yet is accompanied by an 'uplifting feeling for the moral law' coupled more generally with the suggestion that Kant retains a role for sensibility in determining moral duty (Oliver Sensen).

Elements of these readings bring to mind Manfred Kuehn's wish that Kant had stayed with a middle way, a 'more humane' (Sensen, 128) ethical view that presents a more realistic vision of moral action and motivation. To realize this wish might mean moving Kant closer to Hume, whose view of motivation and action, Sensen notes, is closer to the contemporary vision. But there may be other options. Paul Guyer outlines an interesting parallel view of aesthetic judgment found in Kant and Beattie: in addition to the disinterested capacity of aesthetic judgment there is a psychological need, a capacity to take lasting pleasure from works of art, which is necessary because otherwise we would tire of these objects and lose interest, even find them 'loathsome.' This is a simple statement of our 'psychological reality' (111) as human beings. A question remains, however: might there be a moral feeling that has an equivalent practical role to play in keeping our moral interest too and would it be accurate to attribute this view to Kant? Perhaps it would if we consider John McHugh's essay, where attention is brought to a passage in the *Metaphysics of Morals* (6:464): here Kant notes that our consciousness of one's duty can 'manifest itself "in its subjective aspect" as "moral feeling"' (295). What is most apparent is that looking at Kant alongside the

Scottish enlightenment philosophers might well be the best means of assessing just what this feature of Kant's thought amounts to.

This volume is a welcome addition to the growing literature on Kant and proves rather useful in filling in some of the gaps in Kant's development as well as identifying where work still needs to be done. There may be more prominent figures in the early modern period relevant to the development of Kant's philosophy, but on the evidence produced here the sphere of influence on Kant's development from Scotland and his approach to particular issues, especially in ethics and aesthetics, is far wider than is sometimes accounted for. This book is not only a useful reminder to look at Kant in context, but a useful resource in any attempt to tell the story of Kant's philosophical system.

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