Hume's Epistemological Evolution by Hsueh M. Qu (review)

Miren Boehm

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or bring out their significance for the issue of toleration. Locke's commitment to credal minimalism gives rise to an interesting puzzle. The doctrine naturally seems to favor a policy of comprehension within a broad national church: if there is only one essential article of the Christian faith, then the dissenters can have no legitimate scruples about entering into communion with the established church; Anglican clerics in their turn should seek to accommodate and welcome the dissenters. The scripturally based credal minimalism that Locke defends in *The Reasonableness of Christianity* (1695) suggests a continuing interest in a policy of comprehension as distinct from toleration. How far in his old age Locke still cherished the dream of a broad church of England that could include all (non-Catholic) Christians is an issue that deserves further investigation.

Collins writes as an intellectual historian rather than as a historian of philosophy interested in the analysis and evaluation of arguments. Significantly, the structure of his work is more chronological than thematic. Historians of philosophy will wish that he had given a more careful analysis of the issues in the debate between Locke and Jonas Proast, a High Anglican cleric. Proast is no crude polemicist but an acute critic who raised the challenging objection that belief is at least indirectly under the control of the will: it is the sort of thing that can be influenced by threats and bribes. Thus, persecution in religion may be efficacious. Historians of philosophy may also regret Collins's lack of attention to the fact that in metaphysics the positions of Hobbes and Locke are sometimes surprisingly close. Locke's theory of the relativity of identity is already to be found in Hobbes's *De Corpore*; Locke's distinctive contribution was to complicate the account by adding his famous theory of personal identity. Again, much, though certainly not all, of what Locke says about free will in the *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* could have been lifted out of Hobbes's writings. Despite its limitations, *In the Shadow of Leviathan* is an important work of scholarship from which no one can fail to learn a great deal. It is to be hoped that it will stimulate other scholars to rescue the relationship between Locke and Hobbes from a period of anomalous and wholly undeserved neglect.

NICHOLAS JOLLEY

University of California, Irvine

Hsueh M. Qu. *Hume's Epistemological Evolution*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020. Pp. 288. Cloth, $85.00.

This is a wonderful book that ambitiously and impressively brings to convergence two parallel, perennial lines of inquiry in Hume's scholarship. One is the classic Kemp Smith question concerning the relation between Hume's naturalism and skepticism. The other is about the relation of the first *Enquiry* to book 1 of the *Treatise*. Qu observes that the *Treatise* is most distinctively naturalist or descriptive, while the *Enquiry* is decidedly normative. His approach is to examine the two questions through a single lens by inquiring into the nature and causes of Hume's epistemological evolution.

Any evolutionary account must identify what evolutionary biologists refer to as the "transitional form." For Qu, this is part 4 of book 1 of the *Treatise*. In part 4, Hume discusses skeptical arguments about reason and the senses, the pitfalls of ancient and modern philosophy, and the immortality of the soul and personal identity. Qu perceives in these texts a Hume who becomes increasingly conscious and worried about the justification of our most fundamental beliefs. In part, this is triggered by Hume's criticisms of other systems of philosophy, which force him to turn the table and articulate the principles guiding his own normative distinctions. According to Qu's reading, in the "Conclusion" we witness the unraveling of Hume's own commitments, leading up to Hume's famous "dangerous dilemma" (*T* 1.4.7.6). Qu, like other scholars, identifies Hume's solution as the "Title Principle" (TP). But Qu maintains that Hume's TP fails to address the challenges raised by the dangerous dilemma. Qu identifies striking references to the "Conclusion" in the

Enquiry and interprets Hume as taking a second, successful shot at addressing the problems he encounters in the "Conclusion."

The book makes its case forcefully, carefully, and systematically. The range of literature it engages with is truly remarkable. Rival views are characterized in a conscientious and fair manner. In his criticisms, Qu anticipates and responds well to possible rebuttals. This book is an excellent exemplar of the art of philosophical argumentation.

There was a question that lingered in my mind after reading Qu's book. What explains the transition, in book 1 itself, from descriptivism to normativism? Part of the answer given above is that Hume's criticisms of other systems of philosophy force reflection on his own. But this just raises the same question in another form: If Hume is engaged in a descriptive project, then why turn to criticism of philosophical systems? Qu's depiction of the *Treatise* as essentially descriptive also conflicts both with the stated purpose of the *Treatise*, namely, to establish a foundation for the sciences (*T* Intro. 7), and Hume's later assessment of the *Treatise* in the *Abstract* (Pref. 2 and Abs. 3).

I find myself also disagreeing with Qu's evaluation of Hume's response to the dangerous dilemma. In the "Conclusion," Hume is most exercised by the role of vivacity in our cognitive lives. One of the most important lessons of book 1 is that causal reasoning depends on the feature of vivacity to generate belief. Causal reasoning terminates in belief, but the element of vivacity requisite for belief does not *seem* to arise from reason. Indeed, Hume notes that it "seemingly is so trivial, and so little founded on reason" (*T* 1.4.7.3). Worse yet, vivacity seems indiscriminately promiscuous. It attends good beliefs as well as bad ones, such as superstition.

This is the train of thinking that lands Hume in the dangerous dilemma. It appears that he cannot assent to causal beliefs without assenting to "every trivial suggestion of the fancy" (*T* 1.4.7.6). The only alternative appears to be an endorsement of reason itself independent of the element of vivacity. But Hume has shown in the section "Of Scepticism with Regard to Reason" that the understanding, "when it acts alone, and according to its most general principles, entirely subverts itself, and leaves not the lowest degree of evidence in any proposition, either in philosophy or common life" (*T* 1.4.7.7). Hume thus describes the choices before him as between false reason or none at all.

Qu identifies the following as Hume's solution to the dilemma: we should assent to reason that is lively and that mixes itself with some propensity (this is the "Title Principle"). But Qu maintains that this solution suffers from three substantial problems. First, by assenting to lively reason, we assent to superstition. As Qu remarks, superstition involves reasoning, and it is certainly lively (plus, many are strongly inclined to it). Second, Hume offers no defense of the TP. Third, and most serious, does lively reason track truth? It is not obvious that by assenting to lively reason we assent to what is true. Qu's treatment of these problems is the most thorough (and lively) I have encountered in the literature.

First, it is not clear to me why Qu reads Hume as endorsing (or as forced to endorse) both good and bad reasoning. The problem stated in the dangerous dilemma with assenting to good reason has to do with vivacity. But bad reasoning has an additional problem: it is bad reasoning. What makes it bad? In good reasoning, the idea of the unobserved, say the idea of the fire when I only perceive smoke, is derived from experience. This is an idea supplied by the imagination, but it copies one of the objects in the constant conjunction (fire-smoke). It thus copies a memory. The idea of the unobserved in bad or superstitious reasoning, say the idea of God, however, *does not* copy a memory. As Hume notes in the "Conclusion," superstition invents new, fantastical objects that go beyond experience (*T* 1.4.7.13). But there is also a difference between good and bad reasoning with respect to their vivacity. In causal reasoning, the present impression is the source of vivacity. In false reason, in contrast, the source of the vivacity is *external* to the operation of reason. Things like fear of the unknown or the desire to escape the narrow circle of life supply vivacity to superstitious beliefs.

Second, Hume offers no defense of the TP. So, Qu asks, why endorse *lively* reason? Might the answer be that lively reason is the only reason there is? Perhaps this is why Hume does

not consider it necessary to offer a defense. After all, any challenge to Hume's endorsement of (good) lively reason would itself be an instance of lively reason. And while one has no option but to engage in lively reason to get by, it is a choice whether to employ lively reason to level a skeptical argument against lively reason.

Finally, the question of whether (good) lively reason tracks truth is complicated by the fact that Hume does not offer a theory of truth in book 1. This account comes later in book 2, and nothing he says there suggests a tension between assenting to lively reason and following the truth.

So much remains in Qu's book worth of discussing at length. The book is a mine of literature on and superb analysis of central questions in Hume, and students as well as scholars will find it deeply engaging and rewarding.

MIREN BOEHM

University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

Abraham Anderson. *Kant, Hume, and the Interruption of Dogmatic Slumber*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2020. Pp. xxii + 180. Cloth, $74.00.

Abraham Anderson's *Kant, Hume, and the Interruption of Dogmatic Slumbers* is a book with an ambitious, although well-circumscribed, goal—to settle once and for all what precisely it is in Hume that awoke Kant from his dogmatic slumbers—and an audacious conclusion—that both Hume and Kant are concerned primarily, if not exclusively, with rational theology. Unfortunately, at least to my mind, the methods that Anderson chooses to pursue this end and establish this conclusion prevent him from achieving either. Most strikingly, despite much of the book being dedicated to defending his interpretation of Hume, Anderson does very little to engage with Hume scholarship, especially that which opposes his interpretation, and his engagement with Kant scholarship is similarly selective. He does include a preface that canvasses the extant literature on his main topic, but his engaging with that literature all at once makes his treatment of individual questions too brief to be satisfying. Anderson's articulation of his own heterodox interpretation of these two philosophers is admirably clear, so the omission of a robust engagement with other scholars is all the more disappointing. That said, Anderson's focus is more on working out the details of his own interpretation than it is on convincing his reader of its truth, so a merely curious reader should find the exercise valuable nonetheless.

The crux of Anderson's view is that "Hume interrupted Kant's dogmatic slumber by challenging *not* the causal principle governing experience—the principle that every event has a cause—but the causal principle extending *beyond* experience, which was supposed to be known by reason" (xi). Anderson holds that Hume and Kant agree that every event has a cause but also share the conviction that this principle can only be applied legitimately to experience. Anderson takes little note of the fact that whether Hume accepts any such principle, and what he means by it if he does, is a matter of controversy among Hume scholars, or that even if he does accept it, he almost certainly means something different by it than does Kant. Furthermore, Anderson also attributes to Hume Kant's claim that to apply the causal principle beyond experience would require reasoning via concepts alone, which is an illegitimate use of such concepts (xiv). Finally, Anderson argues that establishing this conclusion, and thereby undermining the possibility of rational theology, is the primary aim of both Hume's and Kant's philosophical work (for Hume, see 134; for Kant, see 70). Anderson admits that neither philosopher was explicit that this is their primary aim but finds speculative evidence lurking for this interpretation nonetheless: "To defend a reading of the sort I have proposed, I must insist that Hume had his reasons for not being absolutely explicit about his aims. To attack theology openly was to invite a harsh response, as the 'Specimen' shows" (134); "Kant is not fully explicit about the antitheological implications of Hume's question, perhaps because he wishes to avoid supporting the theological attack on Hume mounted by Priestley and the Scots" (83).