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Hume in der deutschen Aufklärung. Umriss einer Rezeptionsgeschichte (review)

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because God must apply the “law of contrariety” to create the world—that we exist at all. One might argue against Gouhier that it is only this “humanisme dévot,” which makes God and man partners, however unequal, that can really give man a definite role in Christian theology.

If one reassigns most of “l’humanisme dévot” to the anti-humanist camp, anti-humanism occupies the bulk of the relevant literature and Gouhier’s title is explained, but the puzzles become even more pressing as he follows the Jansenist controversies and the labyrinths of the search for the “true” St. Augustine. He is surely right to press the question about the possibility of a creative and unique human function in the universe. But perhaps it would be better to say that the issue is, first of all, whether God and man have a master-puppet relation or whether they are partners. Once that question has been answered (if it can be), the more dramatic question becomes whether or not any adequate concept of man can be instantiated in any universe in which an adequate idea of God is instantiated. This thinly veiled possibility raised fears and gave its sharp edge to the philosophical theology of the period.

As always, Gouhier has ordered the facts illuminatingly, written with charm, and left us with some unsettling questions.

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Günter Gawlick and Lothar Kreimendahl. *Hume in der deutschen Aufklärung. Umriss einer Rezeptionsgeschichte*. Forschungen und Materialien zur deutschen Aufklärung, Vol. 4. Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Friedrich Fromann Verlag, 1987. Pp. 235. NP.

Gawlick and Kreimendahl’s study of Hume’s influence upon German thought during the second half of the eighteenth century represents a welcome departure from the traditional discussions of Hume’s German relations. It surveys the entire extent of Hume’s effects in Germany, and is not restricted to discussing Kant’s “answer” to Hume. Gawlick and Kreimendahl want to provide us with the “outlines” of the real history of Hume’s reception, and “to do more justice to Hume’s actual fate in Germany.” Accordingly, they see their task as one of “working up [*aufarbeiten*] the reception of Hume’s philosophy *before, by, and besides* Kant” (11). In doing this, they believe they have created also a history of philosophy “from below [*von unten*]” that “throws new and not unflattering light on Kant” (13).

Gawlick and Kreimendahl may usefully be seen as trying to accomplish their task in two stages. The first of these is mainly bibliographical. It is to be found in the first three chapters. Following a short Introduction (11–13), they offer a descriptive bibliography of the German translations of Hume’s works (Chapter 2, 14–44; see also the Bibliography, 199–202), and then give a brief account of the many reviews Hume’s works received in German journals (Chapter 3, 45–83; see also Bibliography, 202–20). In the second stage they draw definite conclusions about the more profound effects of Hume’s philosophy in Germany, and attempt to characterize the broader outlines of Hume’s influence. Thus Chapter 5 (84–119) considers Hume’s effects on theoretical

and practical philosophy, Chapter 6 (120–42) discusses philosophical theology, Chapter 7 (143–59) deals with theology proper, while Chapters 8 and 9 treat the influence of the *History* (160–67) and the *Autobiography* (168–73). The final chapter is devoted to “Manifest and Apocryphic Hume-Reception in Kant” (174–98).

All of this is most interesting. Gawlick and Kreimendahl uncover not only a great deal of new and significant information, they also have interesting things to say about most of it. Without doubt, there is much to be learned from their account. Their descriptive bibliography of the Humean texts in German is most helpful, and goes a long way towards remedying the considerable shortcomings of Jessop’s account. Nobody interested in Hume’s effects in Germany can afford to neglect it. The same holds true for their bibliography of the reviews of Hume’s works in German journals. They list roughly 120 reviews which are directly concerned with works by Hume, and they adduce many more which deal indirectly with aspects of Hume. The wealth of this bibliographical information alone should recommend the book to anybody interested in Hume. Accordingly, the book cannot be recommended highly enough for providing so much useful information. It will be indispensable as a reference tool for some time to come.

However, while there is much information of great interest in this book, it is, as a whole, rather disappointing. This is mainly a consequence of the second stage of their enterprise. For Gawlick and Kreimendahl’s thesis is, in the end, not very different from the standard view: Hume was, though well known in Germany, *not* very influential there. Dividing Hume’s influence into two periods, they find that, at first, “Hume’s sallies against theology were a prominent theme. They were rejected . . .,” and therefore Hume was not taken seriously. During the second period “theological prejudice was overcome and Hume’s philosophy might have had a chance in Germany.” But now “Kant had put forward a new conceptual framework which put Hume in historical perspective.”

So, while the “most fruitful part of the discussion took place before 1781” (7), this discussion itself was *not* very fruitful either. Since this part was dominated by theology, Hume had little or no effect on German philosophy. Kant’s work remains an exception in appreciating Hume’s more subtle points. Only Moses Mendelssohn, another “exception,” can be compared to Kant in this regard. Yet, even during the later period “the discussion [of Hume] is characterized by a poverty of argument that is almost shocking. The great exceptions here are Gottlob Ernst Schulze, Salomon Maimon, Karl Leonhard Reinhold and especially Johann Nicolaus Tetens” (84). The “outlines” of Hume’s influence in Germany remain the same as they have always been. Gawlick and Kreimendahl would seem only to have filled in some of the details.

This disappointing result would have to be accepted, if it followed from the historical evidence. However, it is far from certain that this general conclusion does follow from the evidence. The very material presented in the book does not only allow a quite different conclusion, but even seems to require it. Since a more positive conclusion can be supported by other evidence, one has to be more than doubtful about the correctness of their outline.

Thus Gawlick and Kreimendahl claim that the reception of Hume's philosophical doctrines "begins only late," that, during the fifties, sixties, and seventies, Germans were "not really interested in his philosophical theses" (84), and that he was discussed almost exclusively as a critic of religion. Apart from the obvious anachronism in their sharp distinction between "philosophical theses" and "theological consequences"—which, by the way, pervades the entire book—there are other reasons that should lead one to doubt their claim. Thus the early reviews of Hume in the *Göttingische Anzeigen*, which emphasized his moral philosophy, do not really support it. Secondly, several important philosophers did discuss Hume's epistemological or metaphysical theses, as Gawlick and Kreimendahl admit at least indirectly, when they acknowledge that "one of the few exceptions is Moses Mendelssohn" (84n). But Mendelssohn was hardly alone. The fact that Sulzer, one of the best-known philosophers of the time, wrote a preface and commentary to the German translation of the first *Enquiry* is hardly irrelevant. That the members of the Berlin Academy, and especially Maupertuis, Merian, and Formey, discussed Hume's epistemological doctrines, that Hagedorn, still another "exception," recommended him highly, that Kant discussed him in his lectures, that Hamann used him in his *Socratic Memorabilia*, and that Basedow and Unzer appreciated the epistemological basis of his critique of miracles suggests that there are too many "exceptions" to Gawlick and Kreimendahl's rule. It also suggests that their summary dismissal of Mendelssohn's claim that the *Enquiry* was in "everybody's hands" (84n) needs to be dismissed itself.

If we add to this the fact that one of the "great exceptions" of the later period, Johann Nicolaus Tetens, actually wrote and published *before* the *Critique of Pure Reason* appeared, Gawlick and Kreimendahl's conclusion becomes still more suspect. It is just wrong to take Tetens as an "exception" of the later period. We are forced, by the historical record, to consider his work as one of the best examples of the philosophical discussion of Hume *before* Kant. Furthermore, the immediate reception of Tetens's work proves that Hume's epistemological doctrines were well understood, and not universally rejected. Thus, when Tetens's main work appeared in 1777, its reviewer in the *Göttingische Anzeigen* called special attention to his treatment of Hume's analysis of causality, suggesting that Tetens's objections to Hume were, while central to his enterprise, not to the point. Hume had good answers to all of them. Clearly, Johann Georg Heinrich Feder, who wrote this review, had already learned a great deal from Hume. And Feder was far from being alone.

Contrary to Gawlick and Kreimendahl's claims, it can be shown that by 1777 the discussion of Hume's epistemological theses was well under way. Kant's understanding of Hume was almost certainly colored by it. Kant's contemporaries, however much else they missed, understood this well, and that is one of the reasons why Hume continued to be discussed in relation to Kant. Hume's influence on the German Enlightenment runs far deeper than Gawlick and Kreimendahl realize.

For these (and many other) reasons, I would, while highly recommending the book for the wealth of bibliographical details, caution the reader about its conclusions. It raises an interesting issue, and it provides most of the materials for dealing with it. However, it fails to provide an adequate historical and philosophical treatment of it. Its

value lies in the bibliographical details, *not* in the general claims about the broad outlines of Hume's influence in Germany.

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Ronald Hamowy. *The Scottish Enlightenment and the Theory of Spontaneous Order*. The *Journal of the History of Philosophy* Monograph Series. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1987. Pp. xii + 65. Paper, \$10.95.

The theory of "spontaneous order" as elaborated by eighteenth-century Scotsmen is in Ronald Hamowy's words an "explanatory device for complex social phenomena" (6). As a term we learn that it originated in the writings of the modern-day political theorist F. A. Hayek (*The Constitution of Liberty*, 1960). As an idea, however, it has roots in Chinese political thought of the fourth century B.C. As a theory it hypothesizes that society's institutions (political, religious, legal, economic, moral) arise and evolve out of "the unanticipated result of a myriad of human actions operating through a process of adaptive evolution" not out of intentional design (4). Hamowy stresses that the theory "refers only to those acts the unanticipated results of which issue in complex social patterns" (4). He writes clearly and convincingly within the defined area of discussion.

The focus of the monograph is on the development and application of the theory of spontaneous order in the writings of the Scottish literati. Hamowy initially cites sources for the theory in the writings of Vico and Bossuet and then examines it in more detail in Mandeville's *Fable of the Bees*. From Mandeville he turns to the most important exponents of the theory—David Hume, Adam Smith, and Adam Ferguson. Ferguson, a key figure in the development of the sociological approach, is handled efficiently. Smith justly receives the greatest portion of attention, but more might have been said about Hume. Furthermore, one is led to wonder what contribution Francis Hutcheson may have made to the systemization of the theory. With Smith, Hamowy emphasizes the continuity of the theory of spontaneous order not only in the economic domain but also in his moral, legal, and historical thought. He explains the significance of the Smithian "invisible hand" and the argument for *laissez-faire* government in the context of this theory. In the extensive endnotes Hamowy shows how these ideas have been reworked to different ends by subsequent economic and political theorists (a point elaborated on in the Conclusion). While economic liberalism was one consequence of acknowledging a model of spontaneous social order, it could also be (and was) appropriated as an argument for a conservative ideology.

Hamowy continues his discussion with summaries of the contributions of four others Scottish thinkers. Henry Home (Lord Kames), Gilbert Stuart, Thomas Reid, and John Millar all shared or built upon the ideas of their fellow Scotsmen when they incorporated the theory of spontaneous order in their works. It would also have been interesting to know what uses other writers such as James Dunbar, David Dalrymple (Lord Hailes), James Burnett (Lord Monboddo), and William Robertson made of the