

conditioned by presuppositions and how little the criteria have been evaluated. Rendtorff and Blum certainly discard the Documentary Hypothesis altogether but fail to say whether they are dealing with oral or literary traditions and so, though they go some way, they still do not go far enough. Again a useful summary follows with the points of the argument enumerated.

So, one approaches Section III, An Alternative Approach, with expectations raised, but we are given only 20 pages and a substantial part of this deals with the work of Sandmel, Schmid and Van Seters. Gradually we are coming closer to Whybray's own views for all these have in common the belief that the Pentateuch is the work of one person. In particular there is an interesting discussion of the comparison made by Van Seters between the Pentateuch and the work of Herodotus. Finally we discover that Whybray believes that the Pentateuch was written by a single author who was a national historian at work during the 6th Century BC and who was using folk material, most of which was of recent origin. The only piece which has any historical value is the recollection of the Exodus, though this is now 'buried in an enormously complex body of narrative'.

The whole argument of the book thus moves inexorably to this conclusion by destroying the alternatives. One could have wished for more positive support for his own solution; otherwise it appears as though this is the only possibility left to us. When all is said and done, this too remains a hypothesis, no more capable of proof than any other and, one suspects, open to criticisms similar to those he makes of others. Still, Professor Whybray has done us an enormous service even if it will leave many of us uncomfortable and without any rock to stand on. Perhaps we shall have to be content to tread water!

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DAVID HUME: PHILOSOPHER OF MORAL SCIENCE by Anthony Flew, *Basil Blackwell*. 1986, Pp. ix + 189, £7.95 p/b., £22.50 h/b.

Hume's Philosophy of Belief, Flew's first book on Hume, appeared a quarter of a century ago. His new production invites comparison with it. The former was a concentrated, critical, chapter by chapter exposition and discussion of the *Enquiry concerning Human Understanding*. It has acquired an enduring and honoured place in Hume studies. By contrast the new book (whose title misled me into hope that he had done for the second *Enquiry* what his former book had done for the first) is an eclectic gathering of topics which, according to Flew, show Hume at his best or at his most relevant to our contemporary interests. *Philosophical Essays concerning Humeian Undertakings* would have perhaps better described the contents. The contents themselves are stimulating, prickly, and full of perceptive and provoking thoughts: the whole, as one would expect, characterized by Flew's occasionally knotty and frequently memorable prose.

There are ten chapters. The first contains a masterful thumb-nail sketch of Hume's life and works and sets out the objectives which inform the book as a whole. They are: to consider topics of interest wherever they arise in his writings; to treat the topics in the perspective of Hume's concern with moral sciences ('human studies' is Flew's helpful gloss); and to treat the topics with particular regard to 'the fact that almost all his conclusions are, for better or for worse, conditioned and sometimes determined by an interlocking set of Cartesian assumptions' (p. 2). It is this last objective which is the most interesting and rewarding of the three. Flew summarizes the assumptions thus:

First ... that all arguments must be either deductive or defective, since the only sufficient reasons for believing any proposition are (other) propositions which entail it. Second ... that we are (all of us) forever imprisoned behind Veils of appearance, since we can never be immediately aware of any mind-

independent realities. Third ... that we essentially are incorporeal subjects of (only) the limited and ingrown sort of experience allowed for under the second of these three principles (p. 17).

Flew undoubtedly performs a valuable service in highlighting and finding fault with these three (although his fault finding is perhaps a little too compressed for the importance and subtlety of the subjects) and the points at which Hume uncritically relies upon them are, as Flew rightly points out on a number of occasions in the body of his text, some of the points at which Hume produces his most *outré* conclusions.

The remaining chapters contain essays on such well established topics as the impressions/ideas dichotomy, the distinction between matters of fact and relation of ideas, the necessity of causes, bodiless persons, and scepticism. Some of the matter is drawn from previously published articles but its reappearance in collected form is welcome. Other essays include Flew's latest observations on miracles, on liberty and necessity, on 'the religious hypothesis' and on justice (as it relates to property). In such a wide-ranging work every reader will be able to name *some* topic that he would have wished to see included. Mine would be an in-depth discussion of the epistemic status of 'natural belief' as a counter to scepticism.

The only one of the ten chapters which is wholly devoted to moral philosophy, 'Values as Socially Projected', is admirable. In a few vigorous pages Flew fastens upon the essentials of what Hume has to say about moral values (particularly in the second *Enquiry*). I have seen less achieved in hundreds of pages elsewhere. Having said that, and noted the vigour and interest of much of what Flew says in other chapters, I am still left with some doubts about the nature of the audience he is addressing. Every Hume specialist will certainly have to read it—not for the last word or complete story on anything, but for stimulating insights into practically everything. But I suspect that the student audience which the blurb claims as potential readers will find that on occasions Flew is rather too inclined to launch them into medium or high level discussions, or into disputed territory, before they have grasped what Hume's position actually is concerning the topic in question.

The book is attractively presented and bound but I found the printing rather thin and pale for lengthy perusal. This may, however, be nothing more than a comment on my own mediatric eyesight or the quality of the electricity supplied in Dublin in November.

I only spotted one factual error. On page 90 Flew states that the suppressed essays 'Of the Immortality of the Soul' and 'Of Suicide' in fact appeared for the first time in the 1777 edition of his *Essays*'. The 1777 edition of the much issued *Essays and Treatises* does not contain the two suppressed essays. Indeed they were never included in that work. The publication of 1777 to which Flew refers was of the *Two Essays* by themselves: an edition without author's or printer's names which was in all probability pirated.

In summary: Flew has given us a stimulating series of essays in which Humeian topics are vigorously discussed and often illuminated by attention to Hume's Cartesian presuppositions and his concern with moral science. But this is not really an introduction for students who are approaching Hume for the *first* time.

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