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### Emilie du Châtelet between Leibniz and Newton

Karen Detlefsen <sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> University of Pennsylvania

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as real modifications of Euclidean space instead; a discussion of Locke's quasi-perceptual theory of demonstration (136–152) that takes it seriously as an alternative to the Aristotelian syllogistic and propositional approach; and a very promising employment of Richard Boyd's 'homeostatic property clusters' theory (209–214) as an interpretative tool in understanding Locke's account of species. Overall the book is a carefully researched and highly stimulating contribution to our understanding not just of Locke's reflection on natural philosophy itself, but also of the intellectual ferment of the seventeenth century from which it emerged.

James Hill

*Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic*

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R. Hagengruber (ed.): *Emilie du Châtelet between Leibniz and Newton*. International Archives of the History of Ideas, vol. 205. Dordrecht: Springer, 2012, pp. xvi + 253. €99.99 (hb.). ISBN 9789400720930.

Emilie du Châtelet was a pivotal figure in the French Enlightenment, particularly in the field of natural philosophy. That said, her historical importance has been routinely underestimated. This, thankfully, has started to change. In recent years, there has been increasing attention paid to all aspects of her work – her ethics, her role as a translator and her theory of translation, her Biblical commentaries and more. While the bulk of this scholarship has been in French and German, there is more and more interest being paid to her thought by the English-speaking world. The current volume is one such example. It is a collection of eight papers, written in or translated into English, focusing on du Châtelet's natural philosophy. Also, as the series title indicates, it is a work in the history of ideas, and it does indeed naturally fit into that category as opposed to the category of history of philosophy if the latter indicates significant attention paid to rigorous analysis and criticism of arguments.

Even within the limits of du Châtelet's natural philosophy, there is vast and rich terrain to cover, and this volume deals with a wide range of topics while elucidating du Châtelet's personal relationships with (or intellectual engagement with the ideas of) a large cast of early modern thinkers. A quick summary of the central point of each paper will serve to show the range of topics broached in this volume.

Ruth Hagengruber's long chapter tackles a number of topics central to du Châtelet's natural philosophy, including the proper role of hypotheses and metaphysics therein, the nature of bodies and the impact of du Châtelet's theories on freedom of the will. This material is all meant to support the belief that du Châtelet's 'contribution is to establish a new metaphysics,

which satisfies the demands of rationality as well as the standards of the experientially dependent contents' (3).

Hartmut Hecht's paper focuses on the contrast between du Châtelet and Maupertuis in their reactions to Leibniz, concluding that '[w]hile Mme du Châtelet favoured metaphysics, Maupertuis concentrated on the natural sciences' and 'both approaches turn out to be mutually beneficial for an eventual redefinition of the fields of philosophy and natural sciences in the eighteenth century' (74).

Sarah Hutton turns to a key figure in understanding the relation between Leibniz and Newton, the two figures who loom largest as context to this volume. That figure is Samuel Clarke, and Hutton's goal is to examine what du Châtelet says about Clarke in her writings. Hutton concludes that there is 'more common ground between Clarke and Madame du Châtelet' than her 'dismissive' remarks of him would suggest. Hutton further uses du Châtelet's intellectual relation with Clarke's thought to explore 'her attempted reconciliation of Leibniz and Newton in her *Institutions [de Physique]*' (78).

Fritz Nagel explores the intellectual relations between du Châtelet and members of the Bernoulli family, narrowing his focus to what we can learn about these relations from du Châtelet's *Essai sur l'optique*. Indeed, in 2006 Nagel recovered the complete version of the *Essai* – long thought to be lost – from the Bernoulli correspondence in Basel.

Dieter Suisky's sometimes highly technical paper traces the development of mechanics in post-Newton Europe, focusing on how du Châtelet and Euler contribute to this development. According to Suisky, du Châtelet's approach is a '*methodological and historical analysis of the controversial debates on the foundation of mechanics that completes advantageously Euler's systematic presentation of the principles of mechanics. . .*' (152).

Andrea Reichenberger's piece – the philosophically most satisfying work in the volume – discusses du Châtelet's role in the *vis viva* controversy, arguing 'that the *vis viva* controversy was not just a pointless quibble over semantics and fuzzy definitions, but rather an examination of the ontological presuppositions underlying the metaphysics of the three dominant physico-philosophical theories of that time, the Cartesian, Leibnizian and Newtonian mechanics' (159). An analysis of du Châtelet's role in that controversy may well help us understand how she thought she could integrate Leibnizian and Newtonian thought into a single system (158).

Finally, Ursula Winter deals with the transition of du Châtelet from translator-as-interpreter (186) to philosophical commentator (187). In elucidating du Châtelet's role as philosophical commentator, Winter draws upon several of her texts, including her *magnum opus*, the *Institutions de physique* (1740). Lest the reader protest that the *Institutions* surely deserves to be regarded as much more than a mere commentary, Winter acknowledges that '[i]n addition to her commentaries on Newton's and Leibniz's

work, du Châtelet's *Institutions* also provided her with an outlet for her own theories and can thus indeed be said to constitute a philosophical discourse in its own right' (194).

This volume has many virtues. The range of topics covered by the papers gives a clear sense of the fecundity and technical power of du Châtelet's own mind. As a whole, the papers give the reader a good sense of her role in French (indeed, European) intellectual life of the eighteenth century. Many of the papers also suggest avenues for future research, including research that can delve more deeply and rigorously into the rich conceptual material introduced here. Reichenberger's piece seems especially open to a much longer, deeper and sustained treatment of what promises to be a philosophically very satisfying analysis. Similarly, Winter's indication that the *Institutions* constitutes 'a philosophical discourse in its own right' urges a careful and sustained philosophical treatment of that work. Nagel's discovery and close treatment of du Châtelet's *Essai* is an important and exciting moment in du Châtelet scholarship. The massive, 40-page bibliography is also extremely helpful, not to mention indicative of the fact that du Châtelet's work is finally beginning to gain the attention it deserves.

The volume is, however, frustrating at times. As indicated, the bulk of the papers will be less interesting to one keen on sharp, close, careful and creative philosophical interpretation, analysis and criticism. This is no fault of the volume; it is, after all, a volume in the history of ideas, and on that score, it certainly delivers. But du Châtelet's corpus is itself so *philosophically* fertile and exciting that the time is now ripe for scholars to plumb her thought for its philosophical riches. To that end, this volume will certainly contribute relevant historical context that will help to make future philosophical work especially rich. More germane are the frustrations that arise due to the sometimes clumsy translation and to the often careless editing and proof reading. There are far too many ungrammatical, or otherwise awkward, sentences to make this a fluid read. These flaws aside, it is heartening to see the writings of Emile du Châtelet gaining the attention they have deserved these past two and half centuries.

Karen Detlefsen

*University of Pennsylvania*

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Leonard Lawlor: *Early Twentieth-Century Continental Philosophy*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012, pp. xviii + 275. £18.99 (pb.). ISBN 978253223722.

That there is a meaningful distinction to be made between analytic and continental styles or forms of philosophical inquiry is certainly a belief that