

does not, to my knowledge, explicitly categorize the socialist principle, he ought to have thought of it as regulatory. For one, the socialist principles is reflective of values that Cohen affirms: ‘from each according to his ability’ is a productive requirement that reflects the value of efficiency, and the further requirement that what’s produced by ability go ‘to each according to his need’ reflects the importance of caring relationships (the value of community). What’s more, the socialist principle is partially supported by, though it does not completely mirror, luck equality. Whether one is born with certain abilities or talents (or the capacity for them) is a matter of luck rather than choice, so it makes sense, from a luck egalitarian perspective, for the extra resources produced by productive talents to be redistributed. Understood this way, any discrepancy between the socialist principle and luck equality is simply what’s necessary for the former to be a reasonable, all-things-considered regulatory principle, rather than a principle that solely reflects justice.

On the whole, *The Political Philosophy of G.A. Cohen* is a clearly written, insightful contribution to Cohen scholarship that identifies connections and tensions even Cohen’s close readers may have missed. I highly recommend it.

Trent University, Canada

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KYLE JOHANSEN

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*Hume’s Critique Of Religion: ‘Sick Men’s Dreams’*. BY ALAN BAILEY AND DAN O’BRIEN (Dordrecht: Springer, 2014. Pp. 247.)

The first three chapters of *Hume’s Critique of Religion* (hereafter HCR) present a useful account of Hume’s reputation among his own contemporaries: a description of the various interpretations now on offer among our own contemporaries, a review of the sort of historical considerations that are relevant to a proper grasp of Hume’s intentions (especially in relation to religious issues), and a survey of the range and scope of Hume’s writings on this subject. This is followed by a chapter devoted to Hume’s theory of ideas and another to his scepticism and epistemology, showing how these issues are relevant to problems of religion. The next four chapters take up topics that are generally regarded as Hume’s central contributions on this subject. These are his criticisms of the ontological and cosmological arguments, his assessment of the argument from design, his presentation of the problem of evil, and his criticism of the doctrine of miracles. Following these discussions Bailey and O’Brien turn to Hume’s natural history of religion, morality and religion, and Hume’s historical work as it concerns religion. The book finishes with a

discussion of the question of whether Hume was an atheist. Taken together, this is a comprehensive and complete survey of all the main topics and texts. The only possible exception to his is the absence of any extended discussion of the immortality of the soul and the doctrine of a future state—an issue that Hume’s contemporaries regarded as essential and fundamental to Christian theology (and about which Hume has important thing to say).

The modern interpretations that Bailey and O’Brien give most attention to are those that suggest that Hume is either an agnostic or some sort of deist (i.e. as having genuine but minimal theistic commitments). Over the past forty years the most influential study of Hume’s philosophy of religion has been J.C.A. Gaskin’s *Hume’s Philosophy of Religion*, which defends an ‘attenuated deism’ reading of Hume (1978/1988). Bailey and O’Brien’s ‘nondogmatic atheist’ reading provides a strong and powerful challenge to views of this kind (HCR, p. x, 16, 18, 228–29). Although they are non-committal with regard to the extent to which Hume’s concerns with religion should be treated as fundamental to his overall philosophy, their atheistic interpretation is, nevertheless, well integrated with other elements of Hume’s philosophy (e.g. his naturalism, scepticism, etc.).

How do Bailey and O’Brien suggest we should understand Hume’s ‘atheism’? There are, on their account, two fundamental components. The first, ironically, consists of an *agnostic* stance in relation to the issue of whether or not the order and means-end adaptation observable in the world is best explained by postulating an intelligence similar to the human mind. This is what Bailey and O’Brien refer to as ‘the Mindedness Hypothesis’ (HCR: 21). Hume’s agnosticism with respect to the Mindedness Hypothesis, they claim, actually supports their second claim, which is that Hume also believes that any form of traditional theism or deism is ‘probably false’ (HCR: 21, 228). The conjunction of these two components depends on allowing that the Mindedness Hypothesis may or may not maintain that the intelligent being that orders the world is itself ‘dependent for its existence on the existence of the universe it orders and shapes’ (HCR: 21). This distinction keeps open the possibility that the intelligent cause of order in the world is not a distinct and independent immaterial being—as is assumed by the traditional theist hypothesis. The interesting twist here is that on this interpretation Hume can consistently be agnostic about the Mindedness Hypothesis and still deny or reject the theist hypothesis (even in its weaker ‘attenuated deist’ form). According to Bailey and O’Brien, this interpretation can account not only for the arguments in the text, it also has a ‘satisfactory explanation of why Hume’s writings provide so much scope for seemingly plausible rival interpretations’ (HCR: 20).

I am in general agreement with the atheistic interpretation that Bailey and O’Brien defend (Russell 2005, 2016). If there is any flaw or failure in this study it rests, I think more with its manner than its matter (to paraphrase Hume). What could, perhaps, be clearer is how exactly ‘the Mindedness Hypothesis’ (hereafter MH) relates to the theist hypothesis (hereafter TH). As Bailey

and O'Brien note, TH straddles a spectrum of possible positions, ranging from 'traditional theism' to deism (HCR: 228). On their interpretation, while Hume is an agnostic with respect to MH he is 'for all intents and purposes' an atheist with respect to TH (including 'attenuated deism'). While Hume is not a *dogmatic* atheist with respect to TH, he still holds that theistic beliefs 'are considerably more likely to be false than true' (HCR: 228; cp. 19–20). This analysis still needs further unpacking and requires a rather different schema for analysis. As Bailey and O'Brien point out, MH could be understood in naturalist/materialist terms that maintain that any intelligent cause of order and means-end adaptation in the world need not be a disembodied or immaterial being. Nevertheless, typically, MH does take the form of theism and, as such, it makes more specific claims about this intelligent cause as being immaterial—both independent and prior to 'the universe it orders and shapes' (HCR: 21; also 227–29). If this is correct then, with respect to MH, when it takes the form of theism (hereafter MHT), Hume is *not* an agnostic. Hume is an agnostic with respect to MH only when it takes a non-theistic form (i.e. MHN). To the extent that MH is relevant to or involves TH, Hume is a denier (i.e. about *both* hypotheses). For this reason, presenting Hume as an agnostic about MH is liable to mislead or at least obscure the point that he is not an agnostic about MHT.

There are two reasons, I would suggest, why it is important to separate these issues more sharply and carefully than Bailey and O'Brien have done. First, MH, as Bailey and O'Brien describe it, does not address the crucial issue about the cause or origin of the *existence* of the world—rather than just the order and design that we discover in it. The atheist still faces a challenge from the theist with respect to the cosmological question, which seeks an explanation for the existence of the world. This is one reason why many of Hume's contemporaries insisted on the importance, if not the priority, of the cosmological argument over the design argument (this being an issue that is still very relevant to the contemporary debate). More importantly, considerations of this kind provide the theist with reason to prefer MHT over MHN—since MHN does not offer any explanation for the existence of the world.

Second, we may grant that Hume is an agnostic with respect to MH(N) but ask for a more nuanced account of his (non-dogmatic) atheism with respect to TH. More specifically, the extent to which theists insist on the 'closeness' of the analogy between the human mind and the divine mind allows for *degrees* of denial with respect to TH. The analysis provided by Bailey and O'Brien rather obscures some alternative views that Hume might embrace here. In particular, it may be argued that while Hume is a denier of theism (THT) his attitude to deism (THD) may be more circumspect and much weaker—he may even be read as agnostic with respect to THD despite his atheism with respect to THT. While I would tend to agree with Bailey and O'Brien that Hume is an atheist or denier with respect to *both* THT and THD, it is, nevertheless,

important to separate his stance with respect to them—not the least because THD presents the sceptic with a more difficult challenge when it comes to providing grounds for rejecting agnosticism. I believe that Bailey and O’Brien have the resources to respond to these critical and interpretive issues but their account—with its emphasis and focus on the Mindedness Hypothesis and Hume’s agnosticism—tends to obscure what is going on here with regard to Hume’s (variable) attitude to the TH.

*Hume’s Critique of Religion* is a valuable and rewarding contribution to Hume scholarship. The atheistic interpretation that the authors defend is well supported and convincingly argued. Although Gaskin’s *Hume’s Philosophy of Religion* is (rightly) highly regarded, I believe that Bailey and O’Brien provide a more compelling and convincing interpretation. Their account is, in particular, much stronger in respect of the historical background and contextual considerations that they draw on to support of their interpretation. These historical advances are achieved without weakening the care and attention that is given to Hume’s philosophical arguments. Students and more advanced scholars alike will find this study highly illuminating and instructive. It deserves to be widely read and carefully considered.

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*Lund University, Sweden*

*University of British Columbia, Canada*

PAUL RUSSELL

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*The Subject of Experience*. BY GALEN STRAWSON. (Oxford: OUP, 2017. Pp. xvi + 315. Price £35.00.)

This anthology collects fourteen of Strawson’s papers published between 1997 and 2015, all of them in one way or another about the epistemic and metaphysical status of ‘the subject, the I, the self, the “first person”’ (p. xi). His agenda throughout is to defend a realist, but starkly minimal conception of the self. Strawson’s ‘subject’ is an infallibly identifiable object of introspection, but one