Donald Rutherford, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Early Modern Philosophy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006. xvi + 422 pp. index. illus. bibl. $29.99. ISBN: 978–0–521–52962–4.

For a long time, study of early modern philosophy was limited to the canonical works of Descartes, Hobbes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Locke, Hume, and Kant, and reflected contemporary concerns of a predominantly analytical slant. It focused on epistemology and metaphysics to the neglect of aesthetics, moral, and political philosophy. Thinkers were neatly divided into two camps, rationalism versus empiricism. It was quite common to find historians saying that they were only interested in the logic of some piece of argument, preferably those parts which were amenable to what Richard Rorty called "rational reconstruction." In the last few decades historians have taken a much broader interest, looking also at religious, institutional, social, and cultural developments. The scientific and philosophical innovation is no longer treated as a phenomenon on the scale of Athena springing from Zeus's head fully grown, but one with roots in medieval scholasticism and various strands of Renaissance thinking, including the rediscovery of ancient systems such as Stoicism, Epicureanism, Platonism, and skepticism. The temporary crown of this historically more sensitive approach is the wonderful *Cambridge History of Seventeenth Century Philosophy* (1998), weighing in at over 1,500 pages.

On a much smaller scale, this *Companion* successfully reflects and embraces these wider perspectives, and as such carries an ambitious character. In a way it is even more ambitious than the History, since the *Companion* had apparently to cover the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, while the *History* only the seventeenth. (There is another *History*, published in 2006, on the eighteenth century.) This should have provoked some reflection on the concept of *early modern*, but this is not undertaken here. The period is conveniently defined as roughly 1600–1800, or "Montaigne through Kant" (xiii). On the one end of the spectrum the volume works with a rather strict demarcation between Renaissance and early modern, as hardly any Renaissance thinker comes in for discussion. At the other

end, the line is fuzzier: Kant is apparently modern, not early modern, since his philosophy, apart from his conception of Enlightenment, is not discussed, but Hume's status is less clear: his moral philosophy is treated but not his epistemology. The French *philosophes* (De Lamettrie, Condillac, Voltaire, and Diderot, with the exception of Holbach), are wholly absent, and so is Vico and Herder. The discipline of aesthetics, gaining a prominent place in French thinking of the period, is not discussed at all. *Early modern*, then, seems to be especially a seventeenth-century phenomenon.

But this is all very understandable, and we should be grateful for what the book does contain. In a series of twelve authoritative essays the reader is guided through the vast and complicated world of early modern debates on a host of issues. The old canon is well represented but many other figures make a more than fleeting appearance too, such as Michel de Montaigne, Francisco Suárez, Hugo Grotius, Pierre Gassendi, Nicholas Malebranche, Pierre Bayle, Samuel Pufendorf, and Thomas Reid. There are essays on epistemology, natural philosophy, and science (S. Gaukroger and D. Des Chene), metaphysics (N. Jolley), the science of mind (T. Schmaltz), language and logic (M. Losonsky), moral philosophy (S. James, S. Darwall), political philosophy (A. J. Simmons), philosophy and religion (T. Lennon, D. Rutherford), the scholastic traditions (M. Stone), and on the concept of Enlightenment up to Kant (J. Schneewind). Short biographies and a full index complement the volume.

Together the essays testify to the immense vitality and innovation of early modern philosophy. The scholastic world of substantial forms, formal and final causes, sensible and intelligible species, and all the rest was gradually replaced by a world of matter in motion, to be described in the language of mathematics. But the word *gradually* must be emphasized, for the language of the early modern philosophers continued to be indebted to earlier traditions, just when trees are turned into telegraph poles, the grain of the wood remaining visible (to borrow an apt phrase from John North). This is

stressed by various contributors: for example, by Jolley, who, in his excellent contribution, speaks of new wine in old bottles.

All essays give a state-of-the-art picture of current scholarship and can all be recommended. Most stimulating and clear I found those by Gaukroger, Des Chene, Jolley, Simmons, and Lennon. Of course there are minor points on which one may disagree with a particular author. Darwall provides a stimulating and wide-ranging discussion of early modern debates on the foundations of morality, but to my mind starts from the questionable idea that modern ethics arose out of the ethical skepticism that Hugo Grotius allegedly faced (what Schneewind has called the "Grotian problematic"). As Brian Tierney, Perez Zagorin, and others have showed, this only played a marginal role in Grotius's *On the Law of War and Peace* from 1625, and the "if there were no God" formula already occurred in scholastic sources. It may well be time to review critically this line of interpretation, especially now scholars (such as M. Ayers, D. Perler, and S. Menn) have begun to qualify the Popkin thesis of the importance of skepticism in the rise of early modern philosophy. Stone provides a useful "provisional cartography of the most prominent scholastic schools" but starts unnecessarily on a very defensive note, arguing that scholasticism is still viewed as "recondite or rebarbative" and "largely irrelevant" (299), a claim difficult to maintain in the face of much scholarship of the last twenty years or so. But this makes his plea for recognition of the intrinsic worth of the scholastic traditions no less important. Unfortunately, however, his plea remains abstract since he does not zoom in on specific arguments or theories which would substantiate his claim that, for example, "anyone interested in philosophy will gain something from reading Caramuel" (320, and cf. 309 on John of St. Thomas); we are not given any indication of what we would gain by doing so. It would not be too difficult to find other things to quibble over in some of the other chapters (Losonsky's reference to outdated scholarship on Agricola and Ramus; some debatable interpretations of Hobbes in James and Losonsky; Gaukroger's statement that in the Middle

Ages topics were "exclusively" associated with "rhetoric" (45). But this is all to the good; a handbook too should encourage rather than stifle argument and discussion, and this is what this handbook admirably does.

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