

*The Cambridge Companion to Quine*, Edited by Roger F. Gibson Jr. Cambridge University Press, 2004.

The philosophical series of *Cambridge Companions* offers historically well-informed, critical, and philosophically rich papers written by leading experts and scholars. The *Cambridge Companion to Quine* is no exception.

The book is a collection of eleven papers on the philosophy of one of the most radical thinkers of the twentieth century, Willard Van Orman Quine. In addition to the papers the volume contains an extensive bibliography, and an introductory essay written by the editor (a former student of Quine's) Roger F. Gibson Jr. As well as the introduction, Gibson Jr offers his own expository paper 'Quine's Behaviourism Cum Empiricism' concluding that 'Quine's brand of behaviourism is less rigorous than some' (p. 198), food for thought for those wanting to criticise Quine for being overly behaviouristic.

One of the most philosophically stimulating papers in this volume is Robert Fogelin's contribution 'Aspects of Quine's Naturalized Epistemology'. In 'Epistemology Naturalized' (in *Ontological Relativity and Other Essays*, 1969), Quine espouses a radical perspective on how we should deal with epistemological questions such as how we come to have an accurate picture of the world. Quine's thought is that all we need is natural science, he puts the point rhetorically as follows

'The stimulation of his sensory receptors is all the evidence anybody has had to go on, ultimately, in arriving at his picture of the world. Why not just see how this construction really proceeds? Why not settle for Psychology?' (p. 75)

Fogelin notes how the 'revolutionary core' (p. 19) of Quine's naturalized epistemology is a reversal of the traditional Cartesian starting point which aims to find metaphysical and epistemological foundations for science. For Quine, Fogelin notes, 'epistemology does not provide an independent standpoint for validating empirical science; instead, empirical science provides the framework for understanding empirical knowledge...' (ibid).

Quine, we are told, rejects the Cartesian starting point since he endorses Humean scepticism about the possibility of such a project. To put it crudely, the Humean thought is that if we try to give the foundations of science we will have to appeal to scientific truths in that very process, hence our foundational project will be circular. Fogelin notes how for Quine such scepticism is not to be understood as a 'counsel of despair and inaction', rather, it is in the 'scientific spirit' (p. 24). Unfortunately Fogelin doesn't disclose what the 'scientific spirit' is supposed to be and why scepticism is supposed to be in that spirit. The reader is left to wonder about the cogency of Quine's attempt to reject the Cartesian starting point on Humean grounds, since no critical attention is given to the Humean grounds. It is not much help to be told, as Quine tells us, that "The Humean predicament is the human predicament" (p. 72).

Whilst chapters one through to ten occupy new papers, chapter eleven is a unique contribution by the late Burton S. Dreben. In 'Quine on Quine' Dreben has compiled five or so pages of remarks by Quine responding to comments on his – Quine's – own work. This is usefully placed as the last chapter giving the reader a taste of how Quine might have responded to the preceding discussions of his own work had he been alive.

If the aim of this book is to offer perspectives on how to understand Quine's various philosophical views, then it succeeds. The book also succeeds, admirably, in relating Quine's work to that of his predecessors, and in some cases, to that of his successors.

*The Cambridge Companion to Quine* strikes the right balance between exposition and criticism. The critical remarks themselves indicate the contentious (and often *radical*) nature of Quine's philosophy. In some cases we are given a flavour of debates that have engaged Quine and his critics, in others we are given original criticisms, all of which is welcome.

It is unfortunate that no space was found in this volume for discussion of Quine's little known paper on ethics, 'On the nature of moral values', nonetheless *The Cambridge Companion to Quine* is a satisfying and important addition to the Cambridge Companions in Philosophy.