1991

David Hume: A Philosopher Discovered

Steven Viner

College of Saint Benedict/Saint John's University

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.csbsju.edu/honors_theses

Part of the English Language and Literature Commons, and the Philosophy Commons

Recommended Citation

http://digitalcommons.csbsju.edu/honors_theses/772

Available by permission of the author. Reproduction or retransmission of this material in any form is prohibited without expressed written permission of the author.
David Hume: A Philosopher Discovered

A THESIS
The Honors Program
College of St. Benedict/St. John's University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for a Distinction in Honors
in Philosophy
and the Degree Bachelor of Arts
In the Department of Philosophy and English

by
Steven Viner
May, 1991
PROJECT TITLE:  David Hume: A Philosopher Discovered

Approved by:

[Signature]
Project Advisor / Professor of Philosophy

[Signature]
Dept. Reader / Professor of Philosophy

[Signature]
Dept. Reader and Chair / Department of Philosophy

[Signature]
Director, Honors Program
Foreword

The following pages are a result of discussion, thought, and research. I have taken on the role of David Hume. Though I do not always use his exact words, I have tried to present those words and ideas he would want to deliver if given the opportunity today. The main part of what follows pertains to the Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion. It would be helpful to have read the Dialogues, but it is by no means necessary. As I intended, I have presented this, my Senior Thesis, in an eighteenth century costume. I hope you enjoy it as much as those who were present for the theatrical performance said they enjoyed it.
David Hume: A Philosopher Discovered

(Setting: A stage (the little theater), a desk, two lamps, one on the desk, one in the corner (both are the only lights on), a quill pen, papers in disarray, half done)

(Hume is busily writing at the desk. He sporadically stops, stands up, and urges people to come in and asks them to please take a seat. All the while, he is more concerned with his writing. The last time he sits down, he makes a few pen scratches, and decides that is all he has time for. He has to begin.)

Good Evening.

My name is David Hume.

I am pleased to see so many people in attendance. One often wonders after deciding to make a presentation such as this if anyone will come at all . . . especially in my case. For during my lifetime, the 26th of April 1711 to the 25th of August 1776 (the year of your revolution), my popularity was not at all what it is today . . . I hope I will not reverse my rather recent claim to fame by speaking to you tonight. However, you have come, and I have already made my
therefore, I shall be short" (Miller xxxi). I believe this temptation to vanity is even greater when a man attempts publicly to comment on his own writing; thus, though I may not be as short as you would like, I will, at least try to remain somewhat objective in my presentation.

Since I believe the quality of studies attending to my work has greatly increased only recently -- unfortunately about 200 years after my death -- I have decided it is finally time to express additional and more personal thoughts concerning the ideas which spurred my writing. It seems that the contemporary times in which you live are more suitable for this discussion. The world in which you live may finally be ready for the certain philosophical discoveries I lay claim to. The people in my past were not afforded such an opportunity. Even the most intelligent person cannot discern why some people would choose to ignore insightful truths that lie before them on the page.

But you, my friends, are unique. You live in a rich time. The time in which you live has made knowledge accessible if only you choose to pursue it. You have finally lost many of the religious zealots and their followers who constantly looked for ways to persecute my writing. Once they attach a label to you it is often very difficult, without wasting time in fierce argument, to rid yourself of wrongful accusations. Yet now, since religion,
religious fanatics and religious speakers no longer enjoy the authority they once possessed, you may be ready to accept my philosophy. Yes, I believe you are ready to make great philosophical discoveries, and though I played many roles in my life, the role of a historian, a soldier, a public servant, and as a writer, what I hope you would truly remember me for is my role as a philosopher.

The time has finally come in which my own thoughts concerning the accusations against me of being a "skeptic" and an "atheist" may finally be brought into the light of day. For surely, now, you will not view me as either. Like Socrates, whom you have continued to admire, I trust you will see me only as a man in pursuit of the truth -- a man who has made discoveries concerning what knowledge is actually accessible to a human being's understanding.

* * * * * * *

I believe public oratory for a writer often forces the author to defend his writing. Often, the audience tends to take one's spoken words, reactions, and interpretations as final, when actually the words which have been written on the page (by "good" writers) have been given more thought and care. Hence, they should be given more consideration than any speech or lecture. More worthy ideas come from the
books themselves: "As you know," I once told a colleague at Edinburgh University in 1735, "there is nothing to be learned from a professor, which is not to be met with in books" (Phillipson 6). I urge you then to read my works. For certainly there is more to be found in them than in my talk tonight, and besides ... I cannot deny the gratification I still receive from seeing an increase in sales.

One of my early unfortunate works which fell dead-born from the press, without reaching such distinction as even to excite a murmur from the zealots, was the Treatise of Human Nature. Another piece, in my own opinion (who perhaps ought not to judge), of all my writings, historical, philosophical, or literary, which is incomparably the best, though it came into the world unnoticed and unobserved, is An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding (Miller xxxiv). A book worthy of your attention, which was probably the most popular during my lifetime, is the essays that have recently been collected in the Essays: Moral, Political, and Literary. And, finally, I come to the book I will give the most attentions to tonight, the Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion.

Though I hope to assist you in making progress tonight, I must warn you, a speech such as mine becomes an attempt to interpret one's own writing for one's readers, and
consequently, for both, a great deal of discovery and education may be lost. Again, my suggestion to you is read.

For those of you who may not be aware, making any commentary on my own writing is new for me. In fact, this is the first time I will make a public appearance concerning my works. In the past, "I made a resolution never to reply to anyone, a resolution I inflexibly maintained; and not being irascible in my temper, I have easily kept clear of all literary squabbles" (xxxvi).

Forgive me if I go astray or do not attend to those issues and questions you find most important. I have tried to remain silent in my reaction to public criticism concerning my writings because I have always wished to be a good enough writer that my literary works would stand on their own. When I was young my family tried to convince me that law was the proper profession for me. But "while they fancied I was poring over Voet and Vinnius, Cicero and Vergil were the Authors I was secretly devouring" (xxxiii). I have always desired to match their literary expertise. Like them, I demanded knowledgeable, attentive reader participation and interpretation. Unfortunately, in my time, my readers attributed to me little of the same success. It may be that they were not "good" readers. It seems their feeble analyses of my writing were looking for
something to attack rather than something to read and understand.

Tonight I will discuss my own thoughts on the Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion. I drafted this book in 1751. Though, I anticipated a poor reception, and delayed its publication. In 1751, I was only 40 years old and still had many literary aspirations. More unfavorable criticism at that time would not have been in my best interest.

But, before I begin, I will tell you a little more about myself. For those of you who have read my essay, My Own Life, I ask you to please bear with me.

I was born in Edinburgh, Scotland. I was of a good family. My father died when I was still an infant, leaving me with an elder brother and sister, and under the care of our loving mother, Katherine Home, who devoted herself entirely to the rearing and educating of her children. I kept close family ties all my life; supported the family throughout my entire life, a responsibility I could not have fulfilled simply on the rewards from my writing. I passed through the "ordinary course of education with success, and was seized very early with a passion for literature, which has been the ruling passion of my life, and the great source of my enjoyments" (xxxiii). I returned to Edinburgh often to write, and it is there, in Edinburgh, that I was able think through most of my philosophical ideas.
I am very fond of the way most of your scholars have reconstructed my life around my literary achievements, though I have indeed held many other positions. My writing did not simply emerge from some dark room in a dark corner during the night. I went to Bristol to be a merchant (a poor time in my life both in money and career). I was a candidate for the chairs in Moral Philosophy at the Universities of Edinburgh and Glasgow (though skeptical and atheistic accusations along with the "wrong" friends kept me from receiving these positions). Finally, I retreated to Paris.

In Paris, I laid that plan of my life which I successfully pursued: "I resolved to make a very rigid frugality supply my deficiency of fortune, to maintain unimpaired my independence, and to regard every object as contemptible, except the improvements of my talents in literature" (xxxiv). The small wealth supporting my independence came from many sources: I was a tutor to the Marquis of Annandale; I donned the uniform of an officer and became the Judge-Advocate of all of General St. Clair's forces and almost travelled to Canada with him. Later, I became one of his aides-de-camp "in his military Embassy to the Court of Vienna and Turin"; I was also the Librarian to the Faculty of Advocates at Edinburgh; and the official secretary of Lord Hertford the British Ambassador to France.
I would like to say that in Paris I met with the most success and with temperate minds. For it was the French society, in Paris, in which I was to live out what you might call my "life of moderation," (teasing) tasting of the sentiments and controlling the passions (hold stomach).

I have lived with the aristocracy, and I have observed them. I have risen from the common people, and I have felt their common needs and financial tribulations. Through my active life in both worlds, social and philosophical, I have come to certain, objective realizations no sensible human could deny.

Let us begin.

The *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* is in itself one of my more "cared for" pieces of literature. I purposely delayed its publication because of the subject matter and the detrimental effects I thought criticism might have on my future writing. At that time, I had more to write. In fact, its publication almost was not brought about at all, since after my death both my good friends and confidants Adam Smith and William Strahan refused to sponsor its publication for fear of defaming my name further. However, even later, in attempt to bring fame to my name, my nephew published the *Dialogues* in 1779 --three years after my death (Aiken xii).
I delight in the fact that the Dialogues are indeed modelled (to some extent) after Cicero's *De natura deorum* (xiii). In all honesty, I hope that my works will be considered good enough that someone would consider them a model. Like Cicero, I address the topic and questions concerning religion and God by assuming there is a God and then asking the question which inevitably follows, What is the nature of God? Thus, I use the words natural religion which to eighteenth century writers refers to the natural beliefs concerning the Divine to which the exercise of human cognitive faculties, unaided by revelation, necessarily leads (xv). By taking this perspective, I have most openly and honestly attempted to use, as one of your twentieth century writers, Henry David Aiken, has so exquisitely expressed, "a judicious and acute understanding as free from cant as one is likely to find anywhere" (vii).

"Free from cant" . . . "free from cant!" Ah ha! This was the major barrier for almost everyone in the eighteenth century, and still remotely exists today. If only they could have understood --as surely you will.

Well, nonetheless, Mr. Aiken has given you and me a marvelous critique.

And with that said and done, my noble pursuit expressed, I would like to explain why I chose the dialogue form for this topic, the nature of God, which, "rightfully so," is
delicate even today.

A dialogue, as many of your contemporary writers have discovered, is one of the most difficult literary forms to create. Yet, if properly presented, its advantages are too great to ignore. If I may reiterate what I have sincerely written in the introduction to the Dialogues, a dialogue is most suitable for the treatment of natural religion because: (1), "Any point of doctrine, which is so obvious, that it scarcely admits of dispute, but at the same time is so important, that it can not be too often inculcated, seems to require some method (of this type) in handling it;" and (2), "Any question of philosophy on the other hand, which is so obscure and uncertain, that human reason can reach no fixed determination with regard to it; if it should be treated at all; seems to lead us naturally into the style of a dialogue and conversation" (Taylor 432).

I created five characters for the Dialogues: Pamphilus who is the narrator; Hermippus, his student and "listener"; and the three central figures: Cleanthes, Demea, and Philo who participate in the actual conversation as reported by Pamphilus. The last three characters, all equally important, comprise the "whole" of the Dialogues. Each character I hope you will find not only necessary but noteworthy and credible in their comments and contributions. The Dialogues presents a discussion, not a cynical,
skeptical conviction disguised as a dialogue. As in a good
discussion, when each part of an argument is expressed to
its fullest, it is often unclear at first who may possess
the "right" opinion; I have tried to write the proper words
and ideas appropriate to each character's position.

For centuries scholars have debated which character in
the Dialogues represents me. Their consternation on this
point is proof of my success. For years some said, It must
be Cleanthes. Hume must be siding with Cleanthes for he
explicitly praises Cleanthes through the words of Pamphilus,
"the accurate philosophical turn of Cleanthes," and calls
Philo "a careless skeptic" (433). Later, for many more
years, others said, clearly it is Philo. Philo is the last
to leave. Philo becomes the victor in the dialogues. He
outsmarts the others and leaves them dumbfounded.

(At this point,) I do not wish to comment directly on
which one represents me, if I am represented by any one of
them at all. It is quite possible you may able to make even
greater conclusions after tonight. Yet I hope with further
reading you will come to some conclusion of your own.

I hope the Dialogues speaks to you as a whole. This was
my intention, a discussion "free from cant." In response to
the conclusions reached by some of the critics I have just
mentioned, I would also like to remind you that the words
spoken by a speaker in the dialogues, though they have an
effect, does not mean the author intended this effect, and just because a character speaks more extensively than another, does not mean his argument is more sound.

Let me explain what each character in the Dialogues represents and his arguments. I will attempt to be as brief and clear as possible.

You might say as surely some critics have, Demea represents a type of "orthodox rationalism," that is to say the traditional and established beliefs of the time (Aiken xiii). But mostly, like many, he trusts in faith. Yet, he uses rational a priori arguments in attempting to understand God. Cleanthes, as well as Philo, is opposed to these a priori arguments and he reasons from empirical evidence, evidence gained from human experience.

Philo, the "careless skeptic," (teasing) admits to none of it. Evidently, he logically and cleverly refutes Cleanthes and Demea. He does admit to using reason in order to gather all the empirical evidence we can. This is within our limits as human beings, and seemingly our purpose. But to use this evidence to make one, narrow conviction about something that is beyond us, beyond the comprehension of our human faculties, from a world of experience that offers us numerous causes and possibilities, is not within the limits of human reasoning. He challenges both Demea and Cleanthes to show him evidence for their convictions. He even turns
Demea and Cleanthes against each other.

But where does this "skepticism" of Philo get us?

I see that many of you look as if you already believe, based on the character description I have just given, I must be represented by Philo (pause). Yet isn’t Philo an atheist and skeptic? And isn’t that what I came to tell you tonight I was not?

I will tell you this. Though Demea’s a priori arguments "rightfully" become invalid (except to him), I cannot help but find favor in his open avowal of faith in a Supreme Being, even after it is made to seem irrational, "supported by nothing but its own intensity and fervor" (ix). As Aiken wrote later, "It appears to be better than "the specious attempt to establish the existence of God by reason" (ix).

However, likewise, I agree with Cleanthes and Philo that "experience and inferences based upon experience are to be regarded as the sole basis of warranted belief" (xiv). This would imply that "the only point at issue is whether by our natural faculties of sense and understanding we can know anything about the Deity" (xiv).

Am I being deceptive if I support, to some extent, the positions taken by all three characters? I think not. For when we attempt to take human reason too far, when we try to extend human reason into a world that is not human but divine, deep rooted faith becomes the only link to the
existence of God. Yet, as soon as we lose reason in trying
to explain beyond our understanding, we lose warranted
belief.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I am not a skeptic or an atheist;
I am a realist. What a realist can say about God and the
afterlife is minimal. I rely heavily upon my reason and my
human faculties. Other philosophers use reason to some
desired extent to achieve their desired cause. They are
biased contrivers and manipulators. I do not have a desired
Cause. All the same, I do not deny there might be a Cause.
If I would have denied it, I would have given up looking for
it long ago. I do think there are too many impressions from
the world to ignore, and these impressions are important for
humans to gain understanding of themselves and the world.

Demea does not understand (pause). Afraid that science
supports the atheist (and Philo), he ignores the impressions
of the world. Afraid that Cleanthes' anthropomorphic
arguments are making vainglorious boasts, he does not wish
to give human attributes to a "Divine Being." Demea simply
states we can only say, as well as know, that God
necessarily exists, God is eternal, and God is the First and
Final Cause. This presumptuous knowledge which Demea
contends for is almost entirely derived from the a priori
argument, something cannot come from nothing. This
statement becomes so reasonable to Demea that from it he
concludes there must necessarily be some always existent Being, a First or Final Cause.

So what is it that Demea does not understand? He does not understand that his a priori argument can be equally refuted by Cleanthes a priori argument, "Nothing is demonstrable, unless the contrary implies a contradiction. Nothing, that is distinctly conceivable, implies a contradiction. Whatever we conceive as existent we can also conceive as non-existent. There is no being whose non-existence implies a contradiction. Consequently, there is no being, whose existence is demonstrable" (Taylor 483). Demea simply does not understand that his a priori arguments, as well as Cleanthes, are deficient, obscure, and abstract.

Further, he does not understand that his beliefs are personal. They are founded on some deep sense of faith caused either by some great need for hope, some exaggerated experience, or by some divine intervention, a miracle perhaps. But neither cause for the foundation of his beliefs can legitimately be explained to other human beings: fear of the world or an unknown is not enough; exaggerating one’s experiences and desires is not philosophy; and a miracle, though it may be believed by its witnesses, can never sway the opinion of a sensible man who adheres to nature’s stringent laws, remarkable order, and admits of the
human's lack of knowledge concerning this complicated issue.

However, though it appears that Demea does not understand, can "truth" be found in a position such as his? Yes. Though, it cannot be communicated to others. Demea may have the "right" opinion about what is the nature of God, and he might still possess good reasons for having the knowledge he claims to have. Yet his reasons are unintelligible to others and therefore should be unconvincing to others; if Demea, or someone in his position, had somehow become informed, be it through a miracle, divine revelation, or by some divine sense, then this event allowed its viewers or informants to have some faculty for understanding or some knowledge not accessible to other human beings.

Ladies and Gentleman, I do take Demea's arguments seriously. But, I also mean to make light of the fact that his "orthodox rationalism" consists of personal, complicated qualities. If such a miracle took place, if certain humans were "all of a sudden," momentarily or eternally, given some extra faculty or aid by which they were able to view what is the nature of God, I could not criticize them for believing. They would be justified in believing based on this knowledge which was miraculously revealed to them.

But, I also stand fast to some indictments. To simply believe in a solution to a subject you find is an
"inexplicable riddle," is not philosophy and does not by any means compel others to believe the same solution (456). Philosophy and Natural Theology should not be composed of intuitions. Also, the followers of those who claim to give witness to what is beyond all other humans' faculties are blind; they are merely guessing at what is "right." Surely, this miraculous event could not be communicated and, upon hearing it, believed by a true philosopher or any other sensible human being.

* * * * * * * * *

The majority, if not all, the people are not as lucky as Demea might claim to be. The rest will more likely, reasonably, side with the tangible arguments of Cleanthes and Philo.

Cleanthes and Philo lose patience with the likes of Demea. They believe they have easily refuted his position, his theology and skewed philosophy.

Cleanthes criticizes Demea's stupidity for not recognizing the obvious design in nature. Philo recognizes the design, but doubts its validity concerning Natural Religion. (pause)

When I created Cleanthes, I knew his role would be convincing. Cleanthes combines reason and the objects and
the events in the world around him; he champions the argument of "cause and effect." I have given to Cleanthes one of the most influential roles.

Cleanthes states, "look around the world: contemplate the whole and every part of it: you will find it to be nothing but one great machine, subdivided into an infinite number of lesser machines, which again admit of subdivisions, to a degree beyond what human senses and faculties can trace and explain" (444).

Philo obviously shares this observation.

"If you will only observe," continues Cleanthes, "every cause must have an effect." (I am not using the exact words I wrote for Philo and Cleanthes but conveying their ideas more briefly. I will cite where they are exact.)

"Ah! This must be true," says Philo.

"And the causes resemble the effects," adds Cleanthes.

"You may be right." hesitates Philo.

Cleanthes goes further, "Therefore, we are led to infer, by all the rules of analogy, that the Author of Nature is somewhat similar to the mind of men" (444).

To this, Philo cannot agree.

"What!" cries Cleanthes. "Surely, you do not ignore the evidence of design in our world?"

"No," says Philo, "I cannot."

"I thought not," affirms Cleanthes. "I did not think
you would be like Demea. Certainly, you see that order such
as is evident in our world must have had a Builder or a
Great Architect with an incredible design."

"Well?" says Philo.

"Oh come now." says Cleanthes, "It is like the
carpenter who builds a set of stairs. They are plainly
contrived, that human legs may use them in mounting; and
this inference is certain and infallible" (446).

"Well?" Philo starts again.

"Please," Cleanthes begs, now exasperated. "If you hear
a man's voice in the next room and don't logically infer
that a man is in the next room, you are a fool. Simply
look, Philo! Look at the anatomy of an eye! Consider it,
and tell me from your own feeling, if the idea of a
Contriver does not immediately flow in upon you with a force
like that of a sensation" (455).

"Well, there is something there indeed," says Philo.
(pause)

"Maybe like a tree. Take a tree for instance."

"A tree, in all its order and splendor, grows from a
seed. This tree sheds its seed into the neighboring fields,
and produces other trees" (472).

Cleanthes now encourages Philo.

"So the great vegetable, the world, or this planetary
system," deduces Philo, "Produces within itself certain
seeds, which, being scattered into the surrounding chaos, vegetate into new worlds" (472).

In disbelief Cleanthes shouts, "Chaos? The great vegetable?"

"Then again," says Philo, "it might not be a vegetable."

"I knew you had more wit," states Cleanthes in relief.

"A tree bestows order and organization on that tree," continues Philo, "which from it, without knowing, (unlike humans), springs the order" (474).

"Ah. Yes," relaxes Cleanthes.

"An animal, then," begins Philo, "In the same manner, on its offspring: a bird on its nest: and instances of this kind are even more frequent in the world, than those of order, which arise from reason and contrivance" (474).

"Surely you are not suggesting God is an animal!" Cleanthes interjects.

"In your haste, like many others, you have missed some very important points," says Philo. "First, just as you infer a man in a room from the sound of a man’s voice coming from that room, another analogy can be used to illustrate the (express loudly, almost taunting) difficulty of your inferring.

"Where you see a body raised in a scale, we are sure there is in the opposite scale, however concealed from sight, some counterposing weight equal to it: but it is
still allowed to doubt, whether that weight be an aggregate of several distinct bodies or one uniform mass. And if the weight requisite very much exceeds anything which we have ever seen joined in one single body, the former supposition becomes still more probable and natural" (465).

"I see" says Cleanthes, "but..."

"Wait" says Philo, "I am not finished. (loud) Though I have proved to you I may not be a fool, there is more. The matter of finding a "First Cause" seems entirely arbitrary. When you ask me what is the cause of my great vegetative or generative faculty, I am equally entitled to ask you the cause of your great reasoning principle. Further, I might add, judging from our limited and imperfect experience, generation has some privileges above reason: for we see every day the latter arise from the former, never the former from the latter" (475).

Demea has been refuted by Cleanthes, and now Cleanthes seems to be refuted by Philo; a priori arguments seem to demonstrate nothing and a posteriori arguments are abused in attempt to demonstrate too much. While following their arguments in search of the truth, Philo is able to put both Demea and Cleanthes in their proper place and show each the inadequacy of their approach to natural religion.
My good friends, my fellow philosophers, I could go on. Obviously, there are more scientific and social arguments to be debated by these three characters I have presented to you. I believe most of the worthier arguments are found in the Dialogues. But for tonight, I would like to stop here. I would like to stop with just enough of each character presented to you in order to truly illustrate the special qualities each character possesses, and the qualities I hope you will discover.

Think. What is it that is most important about each character?

All three characters participate in search for finding the unknown. Discovering what God is and making metaphysical claims are very much the same. For humans, there appear to be two very important ways in which to claim metaphysical knowledge and knowledge of God. One is Demea's way, and the other is Cleanthe's. One way is using "divine intervention," and the other way is to use analogies and make inferences from all the knowledge allowed to humans who are trapped in their faculties and the world which these exhibit to them.

Note, there are three characters, yet so far only two ways in which to claim metaphysical knowledge and knowledge
of what God is. Philo does not claim such knowledge. Philo constantly reminds Demea and Cleanthes of their human limitations. He presents and reiterates the tools by which humans are able to work and reason with. He, though appearing to be a skeptic, simply, realistically presents human capabilities. Philo, in all his realistic contemplation, expresses human limitations clearly when he says "perfection is relative, we ought never to imagine, that we comprehend the attributes of this divine Being, or to suppose that his perfections have any analogy or likeness to the human creature" (444), and "Our ideas reach no farther than our experience: we have no experience of divine attributes and operations" (444).

Who then is the champion of the Dialogues? You are still asking for a champion. (shake my head)

Philo, though he has made useful insights is not a contestant in this race for metaphysical and religious claims. As I have appeared most of my life, Philo constantly corrects those who go astray (and most people do not want to be corrected). He is able to explain what human beings have knowledge of have do not have knowledge of. He can explain our faults and see our attributes but he does not go any farther. Ultimately, he explains to us what we already know . . . or are able to know.

The real contestants, if there be a competition though I
would prefer a discussion, are Cleanthes and Demea. They are following a greater pursuit; they are trying to understand what we do not know and what it appears we do not have the knowledge to understand. Though Demea stands for a tradition, any good evidence for his beliefs, is personal. His beliefs are only good for him and cannot logically support the beliefs of others. Cleanthes, and his position, is all that most humans are normally afforded. Thus, that is why I wrote through Philo "that the cause of causes of order in the universe probably bear some remote analogy to human intelligence" (516), and "if this really is the case, what can the most inquisitive, contemplative, and religious man do more than give a plain, philosophical assent to the proposition, as often as it occurs; and believe that the arguments, on which it is established, exceed the objections, which lie against it?" (516).

An essential character, Philo, a character who appears as I have appeared and who cannot bring himself to make claims concerning the nature of God, sides slightly with Cleanthes. Why? Because after honestly reviewing human beings and their faculties, he sees Cleanthes as the epitome of the human condition. Cleanthes' pursuits are noble; he searches for the unknown.

What good is it to learn what we already know? Science has made remarkable advances since my day. Though we must
always keep in mind the limitations of our faculties, still let us continue the noble pursuit of knowledge.

I thank you for coming tonight, and I hope I did not tire you excessively.

If you could please leave by the side door. Please be quiet on your way out. I am very busy. I have more to write yet tonight, and even more to understand.

Thank you. I am

Your most humble and obedient servant

David Hume

(Hume sits back down at his desk and begins thinking and writing vigorously.)
Bibliography


Pedrizetti, Raymond A. David Hume and Modern Culture. A Faculty Colloquim. Collegeville, MN: Office of Academic Affairs St. John's University, May 1983.
