

row sense? Is he, as Ackrill several times suggests, chiefly concerned with “bring[ing] out the implications of ordinary linguistic usage” (p. 26), concerned with “descriptive, not revisionary” metaphysics (p. 113)? Ackrill himself at least once suggests otherwise. The *Posterior Analytics*, he plausibly argues, is concerned with formulating real definitions, and discovering natural kinds; Aristotle, in common with some contemporary philosophers, does not draw a sharp division between the analytic and synthetic, between the necessary and contingent, between conceptual and nonconceptual truths (p. 98f.). The *APo.* is not an isolated example of this sort of concern. The *EN* self-consciously reaches counterintuitive conclusions about *akrasia*; and it may be doubted whether *Met.* VII’s defense of substance as form, or the *Physics*’s claim that time is dependent on souls, are primarily results of investigating ordinary language. Aristotle is sensitive to features of his language, and to ordinary beliefs; but his philosophical procedure is not generally that of Ackrill’s analytical philosopher.

Although Ackrill links Aristotle’s “conceptual investigations and those of recent philosophy” (p. 113), he also sees some differences; Aristotle “does not entertain the possibility of there being *alternative* conceptual schemes of equal validity and applicability” (p. 113); we are now “more relativistic and more modest” (p. 113). But Aristotle does *consider* alternative conceptual schemes (such as Plato’s and the presocratics’); he may be forgiven for denying that incompatible schemes have *equal* validity. It is also unfortunate to suggest, as Ackrill does, that relativism is an advance on realism; or that modesty goes more naturally with relativism than with realism.

Ackrill’s “aim in this book is not just to impart information, but to arouse interest in the philosophical problems Aristotle tackles, and in his arguments and ideas” (Preface). His aim would have been better achieved had he been more expansive in his analysis of Aristotle’s arguments. Further, although the book is admirably clear, it is not simple; one needs to read carefully to absorb Ackrill’s pithy remarks. One eagerly awaits a lengthier treatment from him.

GAIL FINE
TERENCE IRWIN

Cornell University

The Philosophical Review, XCII, No. 3 (July 1983)

JOHN DUNS SCOTUS: GOD AND CREATURES. THE QUODLIBETAL
QUESTIONS. Translated with an introduction, notes, and glossary by

FELIX ALLUNTIS, O.F.M., and ALLAN B. WOLTER, O.F.M. Princeton, N.J., and London, Princeton University Press, 1975. Pp. xxxiv, 568. Reprint in paperback by Catholic University Press, Washington, D.C., 1981.

This is the first complete English translation of any of Scotus's major works. It is based closely on Alluntis's edition (from the most important manuscripts) and Spanish translation of the *Quodlibetal Questions*,¹ though the numbering of the paragraphs has been altered. The footnotes report variant readings from several manuscripts not used in the Alluntis edition, and an appendix deals with variants from the Wadding-Vives edition. Emendations to Alluntis's work are few. Although more needs to be done to establish a completely critical edition, such an edition is unlikely to change the picture of Scotus's work that emerges here in any important regard.

The introduction provides a brief and scholarly account of Scotus's life and works, and of *quodlibeta* in general, but no overview of Scotus's thought or the theological controversies in which Scotus was involved. The inexpert reader will sorely miss such an overview, for it is needed to see the point of much that goes on here. The *Quodlibetal Questions* do not form a coherent whole. They are a collection of responses to more or less unrelated questions on specific points, for the most part theological rather than philosophical. The need for a global view of Scotus's thought and its context before diving into these questions is therefore acute, but the reader will have to go elsewhere to fill the need. (The references to Scotus's other works, though quite thorough, are largely useless to anyone without Latin, for the works cited are almost all unavailable in translation.)

The glossary does the job of explaining the terms used and the special doctrines presupposed here reasonably well, though it does not fill the lack referred to above. It is certainly adequate for a reader trained in medieval philosophy, but without special knowledge of Scotus. It comes close to adequacy, I expect, for a philosopher with no more than a smattering of medieval thought, though it may fall short. The glossary does require intelligent use. There are too few cross-references both within it, and back to the text. A closer correlation between what is mentioned in the glossary and what is mentioned in the index would also be nice.

The philosopher with little interest in scholastic theology *per se* will have to dig around a little to find the philosophy, and find it serving as more than a mere *ad hoc* device to support theological positions. But it is there, and in some abundance. Here are a few good places to look: on the

¹*Questiones Quodlibetales in Obras del Doctor Sutil Juan Duns Escoto* (Madrid, 1968).

“formal distinction,” and natural kind terms vs. descriptive terms, Questions I and IV; on individuation, relations and the existence of particulars (in connection with the existence of the three individuals as one within the Trinity—I found this especially interesting), Question II, esp. Paragraphs 9–12 and 16–25, Questions III and IV; on Rationalism as necessary to avoid skepticism, Question VII, Article II (occasionalism is mentioned here, as well); on the immortality of the soul, Question IX; on space (a non-Aristotelian view apparently divorcing space from physical law), Question XI, entitled “If both body and place remain, can God cause the body not to have ubiety?”; relative to Descartes on God’s power, Question XII; on religious language, knowledge, faith, and reason (Scotus held a view intermediate between Aquinas’s optimism and Ockham’s skepticism on the question how much of the faith is provable by reason), Questions VII and XI, but esp. Question XIV; on a Humean view of causation, Question XVI, Paragraphs 12, 19–21; on freedom of choice, Question XXI, Paragraphs 29–32. There is much discussion throughout of possibility, often in connection with individual essences (Scotus’s *haecceitates*), as, for instance, in connection with the Eucharist in Question X, though this is a more or less *ad hoc* application of Scotus’s philosophical views to theology.

The translation is accurate and readable, though the inexperienced are duly warned that a Scotistic Question is a hard nut to crack even when rendered as readably as possible. I was bothered by a certain fussiness at some points (why, given its clearly intended meaning of “incomplex,” read “*unica*” as “unique” rather than “one” on p. 7, l. 2?), especially since it was inconsistently combined with excessive colloquialism at others (“being *simpliciter*” rendered as “being, period” on p. 8, l. 4). Sometimes the English seemed to have the wrong emphasis (surely “absurd” is better than merely “implausible” for “*inconveniens*” on p. 6, l. 20). These are small things, though. The presentation of the book is attractive, and the price of the reprint is moderate by today’s standards. Any philosopher interested in metaphysics or philosophy of religion would probably learn something, perhaps a lot, from a careful reading of this volume (but only, I fear, from a careful reading). Remember that C. S. Peirce claimed to have learned a great deal from Scotus. Any historian of philosophy with an interest in medieval work, or in the background of early modern rationalism, surely ought to own the book. Alluntis and Wolter are to be congratulated for a fine addition to the small collection of works in later medieval philosophy available in English.

JOHN LONGEWAY

University of Wisconsin at Parkside