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The Providence of God Regarding the Universe. Part Three of the First Principal Part of The Universe of Creatures (review)

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*The Providence of God Regarding the Universe. Part Three of the First Principal Part of
The Universe of Creatures (review)*

E. R. Truitt

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tended not to be as attentive to the distinct purposes to which these arguments were first put, Meijer may have gone too far in the other direction. One may wonder whether some of these distinctions were even observed by the Stoics themselves. For example, the Zenonian argument that the traditional gods exist because they are worthy of honor was rescued from Alexinus's parody by Diogenes' proof that the gods are of such a nature as to exist. A plausible reading of being of such a nature as to exist is to understand it as some kind of necessary or essential existence. This has led some commentators to see shades of an ontological argument in Diogenes' response to Alexinus. But while it may make sense to attribute necessary existence to the cosmic god, it is dubious in the case of the traditional gods, who, at least in the Stoic account, would be swallowed up in the conflagration that ends each world cycle. Diogenes, then, has failed to honor the distinction that Meijer would have us uphold. So is Diogenes, like the modern scholars whom Meijer accuses of illicitly interchanging the singular and plural gods (148), himself confused? Or maybe this *communicatio idiomatum*, as it were, is one that many Stoics themselves routinely observed. A fuller engagement with Diogenes' argument than that which Meijer provides is needed to strengthen his case.

Finally, the book is marred by frequent typographical errors, solecisms, and stylistic infelicities. Meijer's work would have been served better by a careful editor. Happily the linguistic shortcomings rarely impede comprehension.

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William of Auvergne. *The Providence of God Regarding the Universe. Part Three of the First Principal Part of The Universe of Creatures*. Roland J. Teske, SJ, translator. *Mediæval Philosophical Texts in Translation*, 43. Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2007. Pp. 204. Paper, \$25.00.

Roland Teske's new English translation of *The Providence of God*, part of William of Auvergne's sprawling work, *De universo*, is a necessary addition to the works of William available in English. William (c. 1190–1249), theologian, philosopher, and Bishop of Paris, was one of the first scholars to attempt to assimilate Aristotelian philosophy (at that time available from Arabic sources and commentaries, and translated into Latin by Christian and Jewish translators) into a Christian intellectual and moral framework. His works comprise a seven-part opus called *Magisterium divinale et sapientiale*, translated by Teske as *Teaching on God in the mode of wisdom*. *De universo*, or *The Universe of Creatures*, is part of the first principal part of the *Magisterium*, and is itself divided into two principal parts on the material and spiritual universe, respectively. The first principal part of *De universo* has three sections, of which this volume is the third. Teske previously published a translation of selections of the first and second parts of *De universe*, with a lengthy introduction to William's life and works. It is not clear, from reading this volume, why Teske chose to translate this part in its entirety, but the inclusion of all of William's text in *The Providence of God* is welcome and valuable, as there is no other translation from the Latin available.

In *The Providence of God Regarding the Universe*, William demonstrates the importance of God's providence, that is, the manner in which God provides for all things in the universe, and how the refusal to believe that good will be rewarded and evil punished is contrary to Christian belief. According to William, God is omniscient and attentive to everything in the universe, and created each thing for a specific purpose and particular goal. The purpose, or final end, of humans is to experience divine union, and thus, bliss. William spends a significant amount of time discussing apparent evil in the universe, refuting any claims that the presence of evil negates any idea of a loving or just God. Some evident cruelties, such as the manner in which insects are eaten by spiders, are actually indications of the teleological nature of the universe, in that God intended flies to fulfill this role. Other evils, such as pestilence, are manifestations of divine justice. In William's formulation, pain is God's

way of disciplining or conditioning people to achieve their divinely appointed purpose, not evidence of his callousness. Likewise, human iniquity results from a misuse of free will, rather than from an uncaring or tyrannical God.

Teske has provided a clear and accurate translation of William's often digressive and confusing Latin prose. He points out that a new critical edition of William's *opera* is overdue, as the Latin in the 1674 Hotot edition is often confusing, and he has made it clear where he has conjectured at what he believes is the intended meaning of the original. The introduction contains a succinct overview of the material in each chapter and brief context, although it is a shame that one must turn to his earlier translation of the first two sections of *De universo* for comprehensive information on William's biography and writings. However, as William's philosophy is integral to understanding the development of scholasticism and medieval theology, this translation will be useful for undergraduates and scholars in the history of philosophy and science, medieval history, and intellectual history.

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Catarina Dutilh-Novaes. *Formalizing Medieval Logic: Suppositio, Consequentiae and Obligationes. Logic, Epistemology and the Unity of Science*, 7. Dordrecht: Springer, 2007. Pp. xii + 316. Cloth, \$169.00.

The overarching aim of this excellent book is to demonstrate the common ground between medieval logic and logical theories of the twentieth century by analyzing some important medieval approaches to three important topics in medieval logic (*suppositio*, *consequentiae*, and *obligationes*) and then showing that in each case, once we determine what is really going on in the medieval theory, it can be formalized in such a way as to show how it resembles one or more developments in twentieth-century logical theory. Analysis in terms of modern logical theory has a lot to offer the study of medieval logical theories, the author claims, and twentieth-century theory can learn some interesting lessons from examining its medieval counterparts. Much of the material in these specific discussions has been presented in earlier versions in the author's published articles. "The Philosophy of Formalization" (part 4), however, is new. English translations are used in the text, though the Latin is supplied in the footnotes.

Mature supposition theory (Ockham, Burley, and Buridan) is presented, not as a theory of reference or quantification, but as a unified theory of "algorithmic hermeneutics" (77); it allows us to calculate systematically the possible meanings of a proposition as a whole from the meanings of its component parts, with an eye to "distinguishing" the different contents that can be asserted (*denotatur*) by speaking, writing, or thinking the expression. Such multiple meanings may be due to allowing terms to be self-referential (material supposition) or to stand for species or the like (simple supposition), but also to the sorts of ambiguities of quantifier scope, modal operators, and the like that regularly turn up in discussions of fallacies and sophisms. Some results agree substantially with earlier analyses of Ockham's logic. Ockham's theory ultimately amounts to "an extensional theory of intensions" (31), and the distinction among personal, simple, and material supposition turns out to be more or less functionally independent of the modes of personal supposition. Still, it is a very interesting metatheoretical point that the two parts of the theory are co-ordinate strategies for achieving a single objective: the calculation of propositional meanings. Moreover, the understanding of the distinctive usage of *denotatur* is not only new and significant; it sounds right.

Part 2, "Buridan's Notion of *Consequentia*," energetically pursues a search for twentieth-century near-relatives to Buridan's theory of entailment, an "intriguing combination of semantics and pragmatics" (113). Buridan's "token-based semantics" resembles the "two-dimensional semantics of Kaplan and Stalnaker," on which evaluation of the truth of a proposition involves both its content (abstract meaning) and its particular context of