

Note

1. John of Rupescissa, *Liber secretorum eventuum*, ed. Robert E. Lerner and Christine Morerod-Fattebert (Fribourg: Editions Universitaires, 1994); Jean de Roquetaillade, *Liber ostensor quod adesse festinant tempora*, ed. Clémence Thévenaz Modestin, Christine Morerod-Fattebert, André Vauchez, et al. (Rome: École Française de Rome, 2005).

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Sten Ebbesen, *Topics in Latin Philosophy from the 12th–14th Centuries: Collected Essays of Sten Ebbesen, Volume 2*. Ashgate Studies in Medieval Philosophy. Farnham: Ashgate, 2009. Pp. x, 244.

This book by Sten Ebbesen of the University of Copenhagen is the follow-up to *Greek-Latin Philosophical Interaction: Collected Essays of Sten Ebbesen, Volume 1* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2008), and it explores, like its predecessor, the history of logic and semantics. Whereas the first volume is broader in scope, dealing with the “connections and/or differences between Greek and Latin theory and scholarly procedures, with special emphasis on late antiquity and the Middle Ages” (i in the first volume), the second volume deals “with issues in twelfth-century logic and semantics,” which mainly means the development of a terminist approach to logic (chapters 1–6), and “with the ‘modist’ philosophers of the late thirteenth century” (chapters 8–12) (vii in the second volume). Chapters 7 and 13 are centered around Albert the Great and on Buridan, respectively. Albert the Great was once thought to be a link between the terminist and the modist approaches (which he is not, according to Ebbesen), and Buridan stands for a revival of the terminist tradition in Paris.

Volumes 1 and 2—volume 3 is already announced—both draw from the author’s rich production of papers between 1981 and 2005 (with the slight difference that volume 1 also has two completely new papers and one based on an earlier study). This has made it possible to create a very coherent book on the two important topics of terminism and modism. Combined with the author’s skill to explain these rather complicated issues in a vivid and clear fashion, we think that this book is a

good means of exploring these topics. However, students may want to use the excellent chapters that L. M. de Rijk and J. Pinborg contributed to the *Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy* (Cambridge 1981) on terminism (chapter 7, “The Origins of the Theory of the Properties of Terms,” 161–173) and modism (chapter 13, “Speculative Grammar,” 254–69), respectively, as an additional introduction.

According to the structure of the book, this review will first deal with terminism and then with modism.

L. M. de Rijk defined a *terminist logic* as “a logic of the terms considered as functional elements in a (verbal) context.”¹ Ebbesen illustrates this with the following example: If you have two sentences like (1) *Man is an animal* and (2) *Animal is a genus*, then to avoid fallacies, you have to understand that *animal* in sentence 1 stands for some individual, while in (2) it stands for the “form of animal—i.e., the significate of the word, not any spatiotemporal particular” (5). The Latin word for *stand for* is *supponere*, and therefore a theory of supposition is at the center of terminism (or *suppositionism*, 19). In sentence 1, *animal* has *suppositio personalis*, whereas in sentence 2 it has *suppositio simplex*.

So it is part of the terminist program to investigate the exact functions or properties that the terms have or can have in different contexts. This procedure means that things are becoming more complicated. But the terminist program also brings about an important simplification in comparison to a comprehensive theory of signs, because the term *sign*, in most cases, entails a relation to the cognitive powers of the recipient, which makes the sign relation triadic.² Supposition theories, in contrast, focus on the dyadic relation between the term and that which it stands for.

Supposition theory, due to its simplicity, is not only helpful in solving sophisms or fallacies (as in the example with *animal*). It is also used as “a method of stating the truth-conditions of sentences” (7). Take for example the sentence *Every man will run*. This is grammatically correct, but “if we wish to uphold the belief that *Every man will run* is a logically well-formed sentence, we must infer from the occurrence of the future tense in the predicate verb that *every man* has not past tense” (ibid.)—just as in the sentence *laborans sanus erit* (the ailing [man] will be well) we infer from *sanus* that *laborans* is masculine.

What Ebbesen shows in a conclusive way is that the terminist approach has roots that are independent of the study of the *Ars Nova* (*Analytics*, *Topics*, *Elenchi*), and at one point he even says that the modistic theory “was much more congenial to Aristotelian logic” (10). As sometimes happens when new instruments are discovered, the old problems

are being dropped. And some of the old sophisms with which the *Logica Nova* could not deal very well were simply dropped.

This brings us to modism. Ebbesen says, “I am not convinced modism and *suppositionism* are incompatible, but they represent so different approaches to semantics and logic that it is no wonder occupation with one of them was usually at the expense of the other” (10). Pinborg is of the same opinion, but he adds that “the entire modistic theory of semantics obviously belongs to a type of semantics in which sense, not reference, is the focal point.”³ This explains why, as Ebbesen says, reference-related problems were solved by the modists with the old supposition theory (10 sq.).

What makes modism so complicated and so promising is its endeavor to find similar structures on the levels of thoughts, signs, and things and to interrelate these structures. The starting point were *modi significandi*—as signs are a logician’s primary subject. But these *modi significandi* were said to follow *modi intelligendi* and *modi essendi*. By analyzing the *modi significandi*, the modists were optimistic to find out about the structure not only among signs but also among thoughts and things. “Modism seemed to hold promises of a unified system of grammatical, logical, epistemological, and ontological analysis” (10).

To explain this, in chapter 8, “Concrete Accidental Terms,” Ebbesen uses the difference between concrete accidental terms (*cats*) like *something white (album)* and abstract accidental terms (*aats*) like *whiteness (albedo)*. The modists assume that *aats* and *cats* “signify the same” (128), but under a different mode of being (122). *Albedo* signifies some property absolutely, whereas *album* signifies the same property as being in something (121).

A problem that arose from this theory was that, if the truth of the sentences *Socrates is white* and *Whiteness is a color* and the falsity of the sentences *Socrates is whiteness* and *Whiteness is white* is to be explained with *modi significandi*, these modes have to be mutually exclusive (123). If the *modus essendi* of the abstract was “not as in a subject” and the *modus essendi* of the concrete was “as in a subject,” there would be no mutual exclusion (125). The famous modist Boethius of Dacia, in this case, deviated from modism by saying “that although it is impossible to conceive of a subjectless accident, *albedo* may signify an accident as subjectless” (126)—just as one half (*dimidium*) can be signified but not conceived of without the other half (*nec tamen unum potest intelligi praeter alterum*).

A genuinely modistic solution was developed by Radulphus Brito and John Duns Scotus: First, they insisted that there is no “modally neutral name” for the property that is the subject of modification and that we

might—in the case of white/whiteness—just call the *unmodified form of whiteness* (130). Second, they declared that the mode of being of *album* is *ut est in subiectum* and that the mode of being of *albed* is *ut est essentia distincta* (ibid.). This ingenious move leads to a mutual exclusiveness of whiteness and something white, and at the same time it preserves the connection between the two, namely through the (slightly opaque) unmodified form of whiteness.

Having thus studied Ebbesen's wonderful explanations and discoveries, we have to admit that modism remains much harder to understand than terminism. Maybe the reason is that the *modistae* located things like whiteness, or universality in general, on the level of being, whereas from an Aristotelian perspective they can only be found on the level of the intellect. But if all three levels (signs, thoughts, and things) are to be structured in a highly similar way, a process like abstraction would create unwanted discrepancies.

What modism did definitely attain through resorting to the "Avicennian notion of common natures, each with several expressions called *modes of being*," was a strong epistemological optimism: "There is something, we can know it, and we can communicate it" (181).

Terminism's approach, in contrast, in its limitation to the question of supposition, is very modest. But it is also very effective. Let me conclude with an example: Realists like Paul of Venice are going over long pages to show that the sentence *Socrates says something wrong*, uttered by Socrates, has a true adequate significate (*adaequatum significatum*) but is nevertheless wrong (because only a proposition that has a true adequate significate *and* does not contradict itself is true). William of Ockham takes the easy path by referring to the rule that no part can stand for the whole of which it is a part (*Summa Logicae*, III, 3, 46). After confirming that this case does not meet the requirements for an exception to this rule, he judges that *something wrong* cannot stand for the whole sentence. But as this is the only sentence Socrates utters (according to the case), it is not true that Socrates says something wrong. So the sentence in question is wrong.

Notes

1. L. M. de Rijk, *Logica modernorum: A Contribution to the History of Early Terminist Logic* II/1 (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1967), 117. See also S. Meier-Oeser, "Terminismus," in *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, vol. 10 (Basel: Schwabe, 1998), 1004–1009, here 1005.
2. See also S. Meier-Oeser, "Signifikation," in *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, vol. 9 (Basel: Schwabe, 1996), 759–95, here 766.

3. J. Pinborg, "Speculative Grammar" in *Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy*, ed. N. Kretzmann, A. Kenny, and J. Pinborg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 254–69, here 264.

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Susan Einbinder, *No Place of Rest: Jewish Literature, Expulsion, and the Memory of Medieval France*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009. Pp. 280.

Susan Einbinder's book *Beautiful Death: Jewish Poetry and Martyrdom in Medieval France* appeared in 2002 and quickly became a landmark of scholarly, sensitive inquiry into the cultural politics and poetics of medieval religious violence. In *No Place of Rest*, Einbinder has once again produced work that takes us deep inside the cultural lives of diaspora Jews in medieval Europe. These Jews were poised between worlds: between cultural assimilation and religious ostracism, between great wealth and precarious dependency, between intellectual achievement and the abjection of enforced expulsion. Einbinder's elegant, often sophisticated, and calmly argued book takes as its main focus the expulsion of the Jews of France in 1306 and the way in which this expulsion was represented, rethought, and made sense of in the literature of following generations of European Jews. While the expulsion of 1306 was not the first such expulsion—notably the French Jews' cousins in England had been expelled by Edward I in 1290 while yet earlier expulsions had taken place from numerous English and French towns (e.g., Bury St Edmunds 1190) and provinces (Gascony 1287)—Einbinder's book suggests that in fourteenth-century France there developed a culture of Jewish expulsion and recall that culminated in the general decree of expulsion of 1394. Einbinder's reading of these expulsions traces how universal themes and generic imagery of liturgical poetry was used by Jews to connect religious history with local detail, suggesting that liturgical poetry allowed later medieval Jews "to read all subsequent tragedies as echoes of earlier prototypes" (6). The great strength of Einbinder's work is that she is not interested in providing a one-dimensional view of the terrible abjection of medieval Jewish life. On the contrary, her book reveals the highly literate, educated milieu of Jewish life in the diaspora, which Einbinder shows could be a "witty,

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