

Moreover such readings deny the enterprise they praise. The philosophy exemplified in Socrates does not match the interpreter's activity. Roochnik says the *Republic* "urges its audience to become philosophers" (131). But philosophers "push hard beyond the particulars, and long for the universal" (130) instead of fussing over what Plato meant. A Platonic philosopher would assess the division of the soul regardless of Plato's wishes; would ask what is worth accepting in the *Republic's* claims about Kallipolis. If you consider this dialogue "protreptic" (131) then learn from it and become a philosopher. Don't waste your energy reconstructing Plato's intention.

NICKOLAS PAPPAS

City College and the Graduate Center, CUNY

Jack Zupko. *John Buridan: Portrait of a Fourteenth-Century Arts Master*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2003. Pp. xix + 446. Cloth, \$70.00. Paper, \$40.00.

What does the name "John Buridan" call to mind? For many, including medievalists, not much at all—at best, perhaps, a set of apparently unrelated ideas: nominalism; an *impetus* theory of projectile motion; and a peculiar account of the will (although "Buridan's ass," the indecisive donkey caught between two equally appetizing bales of hay, is not found in Buridan's writing). In correcting this ignorance—an injustice to arguably the most famous and influential philosopher of the early-to-mid-fourteenth century—the temptation might have been to articulate Buridan's "positions" on "the big questions," allowing readers to fit Buridan into received categories. Thankfully, the present work, the first book-length study of Buridan in any language, resists this temptation. The John Buridan that emerges from Jack Zupko's skillful "exercise in philosophical portraiture" doesn't serve to simply fill gaps in our awareness of the historical record, but to enlighten and challenge our understanding of the practice of philosophy and the study of its history.

Zupko emphasizes throughout that Buridan was a teacher, a master of arts in Paris. Buridan's pedagogical concerns help make sense of his central work in logic. As the basis for his arts lectures, Buridan chose Peter of Spain's *Summulae Logicales*, but in commenting on Peter, Buridan moves beyond creative exegesis to comprehensive renovation. Buridan (c. 1300–c. 1361) naturally wanted to accommodate terminist or *via moderna* supposition theory; but more importantly, he wanted a logic text that would set out a general plan of philosophical inquiry, "a compendium of methods, a 'how-to' book for the philosopher" (135). Buridan thus designed his own *Summulae de Dialectica* as a new authoritative logic text, and Zupko persuasively argues that its "nominalism" should be understood as less a set of doctrines in theoretical logic, than a program of logical practice, an education in logic as the *ars artium*, the universal intellectual tool.

Zupko's portrait of "Buridan's vision of the philosophical enterprise" is thus appropriately divided into two parts. The first summarizes Buridan's method as described in the individual treatises of his *Summulae*. The second displays the method in practice, rehearsing and evaluating some of Buridan's arguments on various subjects. Many scholars will gravitate first to the latter part, where Zupko offers important interpretations and clarifications of Buridan's views. In these chapters, Zupko helps us to appreciate, among other things: how the problem of universals served to help Buridan define the scope of philosophy (ch. 10); the philosophical modesty of Buridan's account of the intellectual soul's presence in the body (ch. 11); the relationship between Buridan's epistemology and the skepticism of his Parisian contemporary Nicholas of Autrecourt (ch. 12); the sense in which Buridan is an "empiricist," *viz* an epistemic naturalist and reliabilist (ch. 13); how Buridan regarded moral psychology as applied physics, treating virtue as a kind of *impetus* (ch. 14); how Buridan's account of freedom can be regarded as a "perfection" of Thomistic intellectualism (ch. 15).

Throughout these discussions, Zupko always keeps in sight his larger purpose of illustrating Buridan's conception of philosophical inquiry. Zupko makes much of the fact that

Buridan never wrote as a theologian, remaining his entire career in the arts faculty, where he wanted logic to organize secular inquiry. As Zupko notes, in this way Buridan's scholastic project seems to prefigure the "modern." But Buridan seems modern in another way as well. As Zupko points out in his "Introduction," though a cleric, Buridan never joined a religious order, so that his ideas developed independently of the Franciscan and Dominican traditions. He was, then, a teacher without a tradition—at least without deliberate allegiance to tradition, although he was in many ways the product of traditional scholastic intellectual discipline.

Perhaps this accounts for a central paradox that can be drawn out of Zupko's portrait. Zupko suggests that Buridan's legacy is the conception of the practice of philosophy as the application of a rigorous, autonomous, and secular analytic method. But throughout the book, Zupko has persuaded us that Buridan's genius was in pedagogical sensitivity, hermeneutic sophistication, and faithfulness to the comprehensive, foundational ambitions of the arts faculty. In short, if Buridan prepares the way for "modern" philosophical trends, he does so largely by exploiting virtues of traditional medieval philosophical practice.

Zupko exhibits the same virtues, which is why his book appeals on several levels. Specialists will find well-documented, carefully-argued, and perceptive treatments of difficult topics. Non-specialists will find large portions (especially chapter 1, on medieval pedagogy and its attention to language) which accessibly introduce not only Buridan, but the study of medieval philosophy. Most generally, any historian of philosophy should find this book an education in the art of intellectual retrieval. Like Buridan, Zupko is a teacher, attuned to the demands of his audience(s), and an expert expositor of texts. In helping us to understand John Buridan, Zupko has offered us a model of historical philosophical scholarship.

JOSHUA P. HOCHSCHILD

Wheaton College

Clyde Lee Miller. *Reading Cusanus: Metaphor and Dialectic in a Conjectural Universe*. Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2003. Pp. viii + 276. Cloth, \$64.95.

In an age where the idea of postmodernity gains more and more ground, the period of postmodern thinking has turned into a major challenge to the human mind. Whereas the project of modernity revokes itself through the contradictions it has generated, the need to find new perspectives makes us wonder what happened in the 15th century when the Renaissance paved the way to modernity and still contained seeds of alternative developments which for one reason or another did not get a chance to germinate. This is an invitation to concentrate on the work of Nicholas of Cusa (1401–1464) as one of the major Renaissance thinkers.

Miller's book is an attempt to promote the understanding of Cusanus by a close reading of six of the major works of this author. In reading these works he focuses on Cusan thought both as this thought presents itself in these works, and as it appears against the background of traditional philosophy, especially when seen in the light of the Neoplatonic tradition.

The works in question are the books *On Learned Ignorance* (*De docta ignorantia*) and *On Conjectures* (*De coniecturis*), aptly presented under the title: "Envisioning the Whole," and "Conjecturing Oneness and Otherness" respectively. The remaining four works concern the *The Layman: About Mind* (*Idiota de mente*) in which Cusanus develops his understanding of the mind and of intellectual authenticity; *The Vision of God* (*De visione Dei*), a treatise on mystical theology and an invitation to enter the divine mystery through a combination of prayer and reflection; *On the Not Other* (*De non aliud*), a highly speculative work on divine immanence and transcendence; and *The Hunt for Wisdom* (*De venatione sapientiae*) in which Cusanus gives an account of his philosophy by connecting it with the metaphor of a hunt in ten different fields.