

causation with little or no apparent knowledge of what Aquinas said on the topic. Should they read Frost's book, they will learn a lot about how one of the premodern giants of Western philosophy thought about causation and might thereby be led to improve on what they typically say on the topic. Frost often contrasts what Aquinas says about causation with what philosophers from Hume onward have said about it. Her way of doing so, coupled with her accounts of Aquinas, leaves her book standing not only as an excellent essay in the history of philosophy but also as a distinguished contribution to philosophy as such.

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Marilyn McCord Adams. *Housing the Powers: Medieval Debates about Dependence on God*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022. Pp. 240. Hardback, \$80.00.

*Housing the Powers* is a collection of eight interrelated articles by the late Marilyn McCord Adams (the fourth one coauthored with Cecilia Trifogli), pieced together as chapters of a book by Robert Merrihew Adams, who also provides an introduction to the volume and a bibliography. The chapters are detailed and rigorous, and provide new perspectives on some old issues in medieval Aristotelian philosophy. The book is a must-read for anyone interested in medieval theories of causal powers and their surrounding clusters of problems, whether in the context of metaphysics, epistemology, the philosophy of mind, or even ethics.

The book receives its title from some persistent conundrums in the medieval discussion concerning how to find suitable subjects for some Aristotelian causal powers, what these subjects must be like, how they and their power(s) are related, and some connected issues on the side of these powers' objects. The subtitle indicates that the book also pays attention to the theological considerations that often played a significant role in the medieval treatments of these puzzles.

*Housing the Powers* divides roughly into four parts. The first two chapters give a general introduction to the basic hylomorphic framework, discussing issues such as why to posit causal powers in the first place and how to account for the appearance of self-actuation (a causal power's ability to reduce itself from potency to act) in some but not all instances of observed causal interaction. The next two chapters apply this general theory of causal powers to the human soul, discussing how the soul is related to its powers while dealing with various theological issues mostly in connection with the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. Specifically, these two chapters analyze various solutions to a central conundrum: although the intellect is purely inorganic and immaterial, and the sensory part of the soul is necessarily tied to bodily organs, nevertheless they constitute some kind of a unity, since we commonly think that the subject of intellection and the subject of sensation are the same. Chapters 5 and 6 turn to the problem of knowledge and divine illumination, presenting various solutions to another puzzle: while for certainty and knowledge proper we need stability of objects and subjects, in our current life we seem to have neither. Finally, chapters 7 and 8 discuss some issues related to habits and virtues—especially regarding the role they play in relation to powers—and the problems arising from the theological thesis that some of these virtues are supernaturally infused.

The greatest strength of the book is Adams's almost ruthless way of getting to the bottom of things: she sees where certain seemingly innocuous claims eventually lead and chases disagreements to their ultimate source—which can be a rather difficult task in the case of the authors under consideration, who share a basic theological outlook as well as a broadly speaking Aristotelian background. This ruthlessness makes the discussion of these otherwise relatively well-known issues unique and fascinating. Thus, in chapter 2, we can see how the seemingly niche question of self-actuation led to broader disagreements between Henry of Ghent, Godfrey of Fontaines, and Duns Scotus on the matter of free will and the basic nature of causal powers. Similarly, in chapter 3, we see how the question of the essential

relationality of powers led to remarkably different views concerning the number of distinct powers or even the number of distinct substantial forms.

Disagreements between the discussed authors come in many forms and from many sources. Thus, already in the first chapter, we glimpse a disagreement between Aquinas and Scotus on the adequate object of powers, which ultimately points to their deeper disagreement regarding how to define powers in the first place. Similarly, chapter 6 leads us to an exhilarating search for the roots of the disagreement regarding the question of divine illumination: while it is well known that Henry of Ghent thinks that some divine illumination is necessary to achieve certainty and that Scotus rejects this claim, it is not obvious what this divergence amounts to, given that they work with a common notion of certainty and a shared understanding of the most basic features of the created order. As Adams shows, the disagreement is ultimately rooted in different conceptions of the role of phantasms in the cognitive process, on top of a further difference regarding the univocity of being. Again, as chapter 7 shows, disagreements between Aquinas and Scotus on the role of infused habits derive from their different conceptions of material causes, and, ultimately, of potency.

As one familiar with Adams's other works may expect, the book as a whole exhibits a broad and detailed knowledge of the philosophical and theological landscape of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. It introduces the reader to a variety of figures: apart from the celebrated Bonaventure, Thomas Aquinas, Duns Scotus, and William of Ockham, as well as the somewhat less popular but still highly influential Henry of Ghent, Giles of Rome, and Peter John Olivi, we also learn about the views of some whose names would be known only to medievalists (e.g. Matthew of Aquasparta, Guido Terreni, and Thomas Wylton). All these authors are discussed with great facility by drawing on a variety of sources, which showcases Adams's deep familiarity with their intellectual milieu.

*Housing the Powers* is not a particularly easy read. While it does not presuppose detailed knowledge of any of the aforementioned authors and presents the basic issues clearly, in some cases it can verge on being rather technical. More importantly, it assumes in the reader a general understanding of many parts of the general philosophical and theological framework—such as a general understanding of Aristotelian science, philosophy of mind, and theory of cognition, as well as some understanding of the theory of divine concurrence with secondary causes and some parts of Christology and Trinitarian theology. It also requires at least a modicum of philosophical stamina to follow Adams's digging to the roots of problems to its end.

Due to its unfinished nature, the book might at times feel a little fragmentary: some chapters build on others, but there are topics that are introduced multiple times without referencing their earlier treatment (as in the case of the general theory of causal powers in chapters 1 and 7, and of divine illumination in chapters 5 and 6). Some figures (such as Henry of Ghent) are given more detailed treatments, while others receive little or none at all. If a concluding chapter had been written, it would have helped the reader to draw the various, seemingly loosely connected areas together and retrace some of the important conceptual shifts that the individual chapters sketch.

Of course, due to the circumstances of this book's publication, none of these issues is imputable either to its author or to its editor. And in spite of them, the book remains a highly rewarding read. Just as the rest of Adams's earlier works, *Housing the Powers* is likely to become a point of reference for specialists working on any problem related to medieval theories of causal powers.

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