

theory of what constitutes a responsible action underlies the legal notion of responsibility.

The philosophical technique displayed throughout is as scintillating as one would expect from the contributors, the issues raised much less academic (in the pejorative sense) than one might have feared. After all, everyone must be worried by the problem of free-will sometimes, and some people seem to be worried by it most of the time. Those who suspect that linguistic philosophy is necessarily devoted to trivialities might do well to defer a final judgment on the subject until they have read this book.

HUGO MEYNELL

ACTION, EMOTION AND WILL, by Anthony Kenny; Routledge; 25s.

If the marriage between Aquinas and Wittgenstein is blessed with offspring of this calibre, I cannot believe that the partners' difference in age, which was deplored by Mr C. J. F. Williams in a recent issue of *The Downside Review*, is of much account.

The book begins by considering the theories of 'the passions' advanced by Descartes and Hume, which, though by no means the most successful aspects of the work of their illustrious authors, have been so influential as to vitiate much modern experimental psychology. They thought of such emotions as anger, pleasure and desire as being definable solely in introspective terms, and therefore treated the fact that we are always angry *with* someone whom we regard as being disposed to us in a certain way, and always experience desire *for* what we believe will do us good of some kind, as merely contingent; as though it were logically possible for us to be angered at a benefit; or afraid of some event which we knew to have already happened. On this assumption, attempts have been made to isolate emotions such as anger in the laboratory, and it has been thought worthwhile to announce the inevitable result, that such sheer anger of a subject with no object is impossible, as though it constituted a discovery of empirical psychology. But in fact, as Aristotle and the Scholastics knew very well, one can be angry only *with* someone, and *withal* with someone *for* one of a fairly restricted range of reasons. Supposing every object of anger to be of the genus x , in such a way that 'I am angry because of a , and a is not x ' is logically contradictory, x may conveniently be termed, following the Scholastics, the 'formal object' of anger. Thus emotions are neither introspectible entities nor patterns of behaviour, but are definable only in relation to particular types of object and people's dispositions to act towards them, in certain ways.

That the formal object of burning is that which is inflammable is trivial; that the formal object of stealing is somebody else's property is rather less so. But that emotions have their formal objects is not trivial at all, since neglect of this philosophical truth has in fact led to a great deal of muddle and consequent wasted effort in psychology. That the formal object of thought is being

as such—i.e. that one can think of anything at all, whereas one cannot cuddle or be eaten by anything at all—is interpreted oddly by Neo-Scholastics as meaning that Thought is an intuition of Pure Being. The schema of formal objects is applied also by the author to make a distinction between actions and relations, and to construct a theory of volition. The argumentation of these sections is far too intricate and condensed to summarise.

The author brings a formidable logical technique and great historical erudition to his task, which he executes with unflinching concision and wit. In all, the book seems to me to be very good indeed, and I know of no better recent treatment of the problems with which it deals.

HUGO MEYNELL

GENERALIZATION IN ETHICS, by Marcus George Singer; Eyre and Spottiswoode; 30s.

This book is a description, elaboration and defence of the generalization principle as that on which moral judgments are grounded and by appeal to which they may be justified.

Scepticism in moral philosophy is only too often accompanied, remarks the author, by dogmatism in actual moral judgments. But it has at least the merit of being a stimulus to more accurate thought on the part of those who, like the author himself, believe that their judgments can be objectively grounded. The generalization principle states that what is right (or wrong) for one person must be right (or wrong) for any similar person in similar circumstances. Many influential authors have objected to the principle as vacuous, saying that I might argue on this basis that it is right for me to steal, lie, and commit adultery, but not for anyone else, since I am in a class of my own as having freckles, being the fourth cousin of a peer, and being an employee of the Egg Marketing Board. The author answers, very reasonably, that the dissimilarity must be relevant to the case, and one must be able to show that it is relevant to the case, for it to constitute an exception. A moral judgment is similar to a causal judgment in that both imply some general principle. If one states for instance, that a particular death was caused by carbon monoxide poisoning, one implies that death would occur to others in a similar situation, apart from special circumstances to the contrary. These differ, of course, according to the situation envisaged. In the same way, the principle that it is wrong in general to lie does not entail that one ought not to lie to a lunatic who wishes to know where someone is in order to kill him. The generalization principle validates the exception here just as much as it validates the rule. Kant would have disagreed about this, but his ethical rigorism does not follow from his use of the generalization principles; philosophers have often been misled into rejecting the principle by confusing it with the unnecessary consequences which Kant drew from it.