

*The Philosophical Quarterly* Vol. 43 No. 170  
ISSN 0031-8094 \$2.00

## BOOK NOTES

*Handbook of Metaphysics and Ontology*. EDITED BY HANS BURKHARDT AND BARRY SMITH. (Munich: Philosophia Verlag, 1991. 2 vols. Pp. xxiii + 1005. Price £210.)

From *The Absolute to Zeno of Citium*, via *Kripke* and *Lambda Abstraction*, in 1005 pages. There are over 275 authors, including Ashworth, Aune, Barcan Marcus, Bealer, Brand, Burge, Chisholm, Emmet, Gale, Harré, Hochberg, Inwagen, Kim, Loux, Madden, Mellor, Moravcsik, Nuchelmans, Plantinga, Resnik, Seifert, Simons, Sosa, Sprigge, Sylvan, Wolenski and Yolton. The entries range from the brief, for example, Christopher Martin on *Sensus Communis*, to the quite lengthy, such as Lohr on *Aristotelianism* and Cocchiarella on *Conceptualism*. In many cases they constitute concise authoritative expositions – Adams on *Ockham*, Burge on *Frege*, Burkhardt and Dufour on *Part/Whole*, Hallett on *Set Theory*, Kim on *Supervenience*, Knuttilla on *Plenitude*, Barcan Marcus on the *Barcan Formula*, Pelletier on *Mass Terms*, Plantinga on *Essentialism*, Sklar on *Space-Time*, Stroll on *Surfaces* and Walton on *Fiction* are all examples. This two-volume work is clearly printed and well constructed, being likely to withstand the wear a reference text can be expected to suffer. It is a delight to dip into; the phrase ‘hard to put down’ is certainly apt. At £210, however, it is not likely to appeal to individual buyers and, notwithstanding its merits, I cannot say that the considerable expenditure would be worth it to them. Professionals will already have a rough idea about the subject of most entries, and for them its value will be as an occasional source of new information, or, more often, as a fount of instruction on topics with which they need to be more familiar. Clearly, the majority of buyers will be university libraries. So, is it worth devoting limited resources to this *Handbook*? In part the answer depends on the more general question of the value of reference works. I judge, though, that if there are substantial teaching and research interests in logic, metaphysics and semantics, then this is a worthwhile purchase. It may be relevant to add that the selection of entries reveals a set of philosophical interests of broadly *neo-Aristotelian-scholastic-phenomenological-Austro-Liechtensteinean-Polonian-mereologico-modal-Chisholmian-analytico-realist* sorts. This adds to its interest and does not detract from its usefulness. The editors are to be congratulated.

J.H.