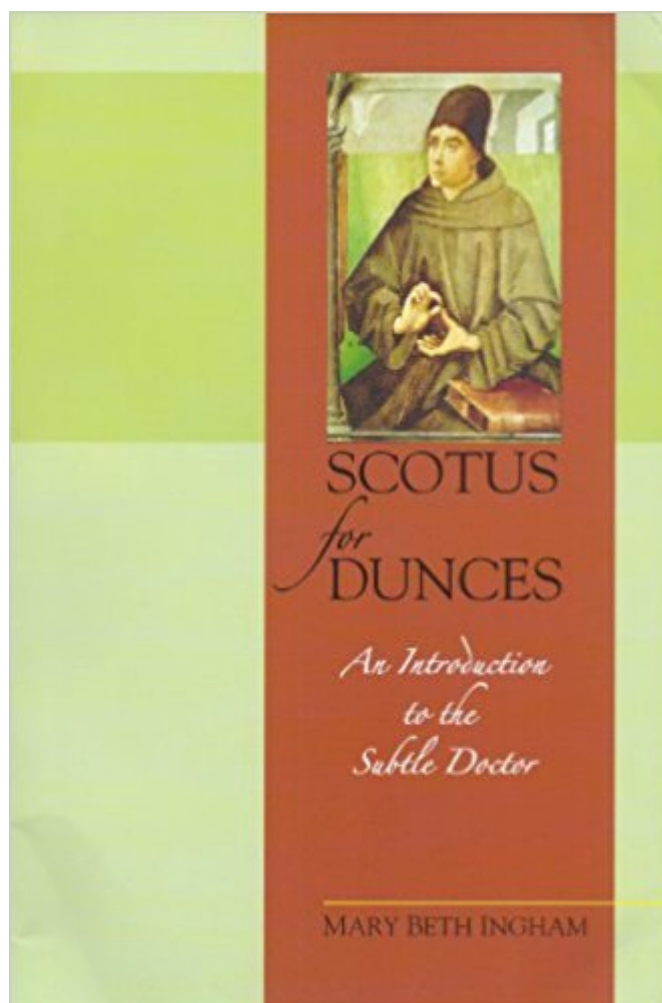


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Scotus For Dunces: An Introduction To The Subtle Doctor



Synopsis

This book is a "simple guide" to theological and philosophical aspects of the thought of the medieval Franciscan, John Duns Scotus. Known as the Subtle Doctor, Scotus has a reputation for intricate and technical reasoning. Ingham provides an insightful and creative introduction to his thought in this book. Philosophical and theological principles are explored with clarity and demonstrated by the use of numerous practical examples. By organizing the book around themes that are both timely and urgent, Ingham invites the reader into thoughtful reflection, encourages lively discussion, and challenges Franciscans in particular to consider choosing patterns of relationships that strive for the good and beauty in all things.

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Customer Reviews

I'm not a Christian, and I've only heard of Scotus before this in connection with the problem of aesthetics. Ingham makes Scotus quite interesting, by outlining the problems he engages with and the original solutions he offers; some of these, she suggests, might be worth reconsidering as a way out of the philosophical impasses we have reached today. Overall, after reading this book, I was

inspired to seek out some translations of Scotus's work, and some other scholarly works on "the subtle doctor." I was left wondering why the Catholic Church doesn't talk about these things today--it seems it would make the religion more engaging, and help explain why it is still relevant. I live in a predominantly Catholic town, and I asked around--and not even the most devout Catholics had ever heard of Duns Scotus (they had heard of Aquinas, but nothing more than the name). On a critical note, I will admit that by the end of the book, certain terms become, well, a bit overused, so that we get claims along the lines of "a spiritual journey founded on recognition of divine beauty which leads to freedom and love and the desire to respond freely with love in beauty." (I'm condensing a bit, here). The terms "beauty" and "love" and "freedom" are philosophically difficult terms, that need explanation, not assumption--and especially with the term "beauty" Ingham doesn't do that explanation here. Also, she ends with some discussion of the problems of "postmodernism," but I cannot think of a single philosopher who would actually hold the "postmodern" position she describes--although maybe she is addressing more the general cultural assumptions? Still, a very good introduction, and some good suggestions for further reading, as well as a selection of translations of Scotus's writing in the appendices.

A knowledgeable and solid introduction to the main themes of the thought of John Duns Scotus and the Franciscan order. The writing is clear and relatively precise, though not so much so that the reader who lacks either theological or philosophical training will not understand the issues and arguments. I recommend it for anyone who wants a deeper and more conceptual understanding of the work of Pope Francis, who, although a Jesuit, does exemplify a Franciscan orientation in his leadership of Roman Catholicism.

Scotus is notoriously difficult to read, and so feeling like a real dunce while taking a course about him, I ordered this book. I had read quite a few of Ingham's articles in philosophical journals, and I had found them clear and helpful. This book is also clear, but maybe a little too adulatory to be helpful. It touches the main Scotian themes of haecceity, univocity, and intellect versus will, but not in great depth. Ingham seems to emphasize Scotus' theological contributions (for example, to the not yet doctrinal at that time "immaculate conception") over his philosophical thought and his engagement with contemporaries like Henry of Ghent. Also, because other philosophical works emphasize it, I would have appreciated more delineation of the differences between Aquinas and Scotus, and maybe between Scotus and Ockham. All in all though, it was one of the first examples of Scotus scholarship that I could read easily, and it made me feel much less duncish! Thanks,

Sister Ingham!

The author really makes Scotus and the philosophical underpinnings of his thought comprehensible to an age in which this kind of philosophy is not really thought about or learned about, at least not on purpose. I really appreciate Mary Beth's work in making Scotus' thought available to anyone who dares to get it. I highly recommend it.

Excellent introductory doing justice to this great thinker.

An outstanding book. Makes me want to learn more about this whole way of thinking. Where can I learn more?

I enjoyed reading this philosophical explanation of Dun Scotus' writings. It is not light reading and perhaps only for those interested in Scholastic Philosophy.

The book made Scotus' theology understandable. I learned more of his thinking

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