

without reference to some of the extraordinarily illuminating articles on his poem that have been penned in the last decade. Did the editors really stop reading ten years ago, or does it just seem that way?

The Plato and Aristotle volume is an enlarged version of one first published in 1960, and it is in many ways a better book than that on the presocratics. The selections from both philosophers are reasonably good ones, and the "recommended reading" is more up to date. However, it is regrettable that the Plato translations are those of the unreliable Jowett (just as it was regrettable that those in the presocratics volume are largely from the even more unreliable Freeman). It is of course understandable that for purposes of keeping down costs older translations should be used, but Jowett and Freeman have long since been surpassed, and students are ill-served by their resuscitation in these volumes.

The scholarship, too, leaves much to be desired. Even though the "recommended reading" on Plato includes items up to 1977, for example, I found nothing in the commentary on Plato to suggest that anything significant had happened since 1960. To pick one item among many: on page 89 a famous question in the *Timaeus* is (conventionally) translated, "and what is that which is always becoming and never is?", without mention of Whittaker's celebrated demonstration that the adverb "always" here is almost certainly an early interpolation—with crucial consequences for a cardinal element in Plato's cosmogony and metaphysics. And where in Plato's "writings," it may be asked, is there reference to an "indeterminate dyad" (92)? Examples of this sort could be multiplied to fill a lengthy review.

Can these volumes be used as textbooks? Only, it seems to me, with misgivings, and with the use of extreme caution. □

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Forthcoming in *Teaching Philosophy*  
**A Course on the Philosophy and Physics of Space and Time**  
 Michael Bradie and Comer Duncan

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### **Making Decisions: A Multidisciplinary Introduction,**

Percy H. Hill, Hugo A. Bedau, Richard A. Chechile, William J. Crochetiere, Barbara L. Kellerman, Daniel Ounjian, Stephen G. Pauker, Susan P. Pauker, and Jeffrey Z. Rubin  
 Addison-Wesley, 1979, 243 pages. \$14.50 pbk.

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The purpose of this volume, we are told in the preface, is "to teach skill in decision making to an interdisciplinary audience with no prior background in the discipline." And there is good initial reason to think that this purpose will be satisfied since the published essays "grew out" of an interdisciplinary team-taught course in decision-making at Tufts University. Participating faculty members came from the departments of economics, engineering design, political science, and psychology. In addition, there were special lectures by faculty from English, philosophy, and the school of medicine.

Given the close connection between decision-making and what philosophers call "practical reasoning," or less attractively, "relevant logic," this book is potentially of very great interest to teachers of applied logic, especially since many of us have begun teaching some decision theory in our courses. There is also the embarrassing surfeit of second-rate logic texts and the corresponding shortage of first-rate ones. So it was with keen anticipation that I began reading this collection of essays. Regrettably I must report that the collection does not live up to the claims of its preface. It does not even come close.

It is stated that "the case study method of teaching was used to introduce concepts dealing with all aspects of the decision making process" (xvii-xviii). Immediately one wonders whether a consideration of *all* aspects of decision-making might not be just a bit too ambitious for a single slim volume. But

overambition is not the problem with the introductory case study, which is a pedagogic disaster. The fictitious case concerns "dear Aunt Sarah" who is finagling to move in with her niece "Connie" and husband "Jim." This case is then discussed by each of the program participants who brought, we are assured, their special expertise to deal with the problem of what to do with dear Auntie. It is impossible to imagine what could have prompted those responsible to have selected this example, as it is surely of no interest whatsoever to an undergraduate college audience! The case could be of interest only to those of middle age who have to face such problems. Furthermore, the case is described in a prose style that is offensively inane and maudlin. The discussions by the participants are no better. Once the jargon and artificial attempts to incorporate the "insights" and "viewpoints" of the respective specialities are stripped away, it is patently clear that no special expertise is involved in an extremely dull examination of the case. The only saving grace is mercifully supplied by Professor Oujian of the economics department who, with what I trust is intended humor, explains how to calculate Auntie's true financial worth just in case we want to turn a profit at her expense.

This volume had no overall editor responsible for the coordination and quality of the essays. There is no explanation of this peculiar fact other than to suggest that no editor was needed since "the authors worked very closely with one another in the development of cases and materials" (xviii). Even if this is no more than a slight exaggeration, the book suffers *fatally* from the lack of a responsible editor because, among other things, the essays do *not* cohere in any discernible pattern. Concepts are not introduced, developed and then consistently used. Instead they appear and disappear willy-nilly among the chapters. For example, the chapters alternate without apparent design between the normative and descriptive aspects of decision-making. There are just isolated and unrelated comments about decision-making. The discus-

sion of whether utility theory represents a normative or a descriptive theory is rather pedestrian and gives little evidence that the authors seriously considered how such a theory was best *taught* in the interdisciplinary context. Furthermore, there are lapses of quality control, some of the essays being, in my judgment, of scandalously poor quality. University professors suffer from the same temptations and weaknesses that everyone else does; it was unrealistic to expect that a volume such as this could spontaneously arise from the evidently good intentions of the program participants.

The lack of proper organization and quality control is much to be regretted since there are some very nice individual essays randomly scattered throughout the book. The chapter on medical decision-making by Stephen and Susan Pauker is a true gem with many virtues. It is well organized and written, has relevant and interesting subject matter, and there is an obvious appreciation of the pedagogic role that is to be played. Very clear and clearly useful applications are made of decision theory. I recommend this piece very highly. There are also some straightforward and useful chapters on the concept of utility and the decision matrix (chapters 7 and 8). Many of the chapters though are too compressed to be of any real use. Chapter 9, "Decision Making Under Conditions of Uncertainty," for instance, attempts too much too quickly to be understandable other than to those who *already* know the material.

Special anti-laurels must be awarded to chapter 5, entitled "Individual and Social Decision-making Processes." (Chapter 6 on "decision making in politics," comes in a close second for most awful.) This chapter, written by a "social psychologist," begins promisingly enough with a discussion of a case, the slaying of Kitty Genovese, where 38 witnesses watched passively without intervention. It is noted that several laboratory experiments, designed to get at the explanation of the phenomenon, indicated an inverse relationship between crowd size and the speed and strength of social action.

There is then an immediate jump to the explanation that "the larger the number of bystanders, the more likely it is for any one person to reason that he is no more responsible for what is going on than anyone else...and also no more guilty than his neighbor if anything bad should happen..." (58). No alternatives are considered, nor are standards of explanatory adequacy discussed. But presumably laudatory jargon is introduced: "diffusion of responsibility," and "diffusion of guilt." Things go quickly downhill after this, and there is one of the most incredible displays of cliché and useless jargon-mongering I have ever seen. For example, we are told that "Lewin...has theorized that an individual's behavior may be understood as a function of two parameters: E (environment) and P (person)" (66). Or how about, "Rotter...[who] argued for the existence of a personality variable called *locus of control*, defined as the subjective probability that outcomes are determined by self-effort (internal control) or by outside agency (external control)" (68). Not to be missed is the truly significant comment of "Janis and Mann...[who] have observed...[that] effective decision making requires a willingness to think carefully before acting"(67). There are nearly fifteen solid pages of this sort of drivel.

In conclusion, it is oppressively apparent that this rather expensive paperback volume will be of little use to anyone contemplating a course in decision-making. There is no indication, except in the few mentioned cases, that the authors of these essays ever singly or jointly *taught* an interdisciplinary course in decision-making. No special insights into the teaching of the subject matter are revealed or can be gleaned. Even the bibliographies at the ends of the chapters are of little value since they are neither complete, nor structured, nor explained. They are simply lists of books and articles with *heavy* emphasis on the publications of the chapter authors! Bibliographies are to be guides to students and faculty and not advertisements for the authors. It is really a shame that such a good idea as the

interdisciplinary decision-theory course at Tufts should have such a sorry representative as this volume. They really should withdraw it from circulation and try again. □

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**Selected Philosophical Papers of Robert Boyle,**

M. A. Stewart, ed.

Barnes and Noble, 1980, 280 pages. \$19.50

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The scientific fame of Robert Boyle is permanently recorded in "Boyle's laws." This anachronistic nomenclature, which ignores the conceptual developments and upheavals of the last three hundred years or more, is harmless so long as it is restricted to a mere honorific function. Unfortunately, more substantive signification is implied in the associated suggestion that Boyle was "the father of modern chemistry." This judgment arises out of an earlier historiographical tendency to emphasize the modernity of certain aspects of late seventeenth-century intellectual life. The view urges a cleavage between Boyle and the major traditions of his day, portraying him as an isolated precursor of Lavoisier, and as one who failed to carry any weight with his chemical contemporaries because he was "ahead of his time." More recent scholarship has abandoned this unfortunate image of the lone genius, and sees Boyle as a man whose thought was totally immersed in the scientific discourse of the time. The result has been not only a re-evaluation of his contribution to the development of chemistry but the emergence of a new appreciation of his stature as a philosopher, as a thinker who carried the "new learning," championed by Bacon, Gassendi, and Descartes, forward to the more familiar lineage of Locke, Berkeley, and Hume. M. A. Stewart's new source book makes a valuable contribution to the