to translate the dialogue into a known language — English — he veers in the direction of Cornford (who, unlike Bloom, did not allow himself to forget that Plato had written a brilliant, readable piece of prose in a known language — Greek). The result is about as reasonable a compromise as one is likely to get, given the inevitable inadequacies in any translation. As a piece of prose it reads gracefully and easily (thanks not least to the master-stroke of simply omitting the several hundred “he said”s of the dialogue, and signalling their presence by an unobtrusive dash), and more often than not successfully avoids jargon. Quasi-technical terms are translated appropriately, according to context: eidos, for example, is a “class” at 511a, a “Form” at 596a, a “part” at 435bc. Time-honoured translations of basic concepts are jettisoned if they are thought misleading; “wisdom,” for example, is a great improvement over “prudence” for phronesis, and “moderation” is a big improvement over “temperance” for sophrosyne. (The source of the original error is clear: Moerbeke’s “prudentia” and “temperantia” were excellent Latin translations in their day — and precisely because they did not mean “prudence” or “temperance”; the meaning-shifts that went with transliteration are post-Renaissance.) Particularly troublesome terms (e.g. arete) get a footnote. And each book gets a short introductory synopsis.

Students particularly interested in Platonic metaphysics and epistemology will find the Grube translation largely satisfactory, though inevitably it must be supplemented by sophisticated commentaries if it is not to mislead in certain passages, such as 5. 476ff., 6. 505ff. However, they should be warned at the outset of a number of slips. At 509a Grube has unaccountably omitted to translate the phrase ten hexin, and (more importantly) at 509b has passed over the phrase to einai; whether Plato distinguished essence and existence or not, there is something in the Greek here that might seriously suggest it, and Grube has simply failed to translate a crucial piece of the evidence. At 477aff. he talks of that to which knowledge and opinion are “directed,” but it seems more likely that Plato has a military-cum-gubernatorial metaphor in mind: knowledge “has as its province” a certain specified field of objects, etc. (see LSJ-9, s.v. te, B II 6). And at 510d Plato is surely talking of the “inner agreement” of the steps of a carefully formulated argument, rather than a specified objective that investigators are “agreed upon.”

But these slips are a small matter, in view of the general accuracy and readability of the whole. It is an unassuming, sensitive, and sensible translation that can be safely recommended to teachers and students alike.

— Thomas M. Robinson


Some claim Hegel cannot be taught. The reason they frequently give is that Hegel cannot be thought. Others claim to teach the Science of Logic to large bands of admiring disciples. The current book is for neither group of extremists. It is designed to introduce students to Hegel’s thought with as little pain as that difficult task can be accomplished. The selections are not uniformly easy — little in Hegel is — but they are well-adapted to giving the student an adequate first grasp of what may well be the most difficult philosophical system ever devised.

Those of us who have used Loewenberg’s Hegel Selections in the Scribner’s series or Friedrich’s volume in The
Modern Library for purposes of introduction for many years owe a debt of gratitude to Professor Weiss for providing an alternative. Loewenberg continues to have the advantage of an unusually elegant Introduction. But Weiss' book provides selections that are, on the whole, richer and closer to the heart of Hegel's system. Weiss also makes full use of the translations that have appeared in the more than forty years which have elapsed since the original publication of the Scribner's volume.

Weiss limits his selections to portions of the Phenomenology, Science of Logic, Encyclopaedia and Philosophy of Right. Evidently, there is no end to possible disagreement over what specific sections of which books should be included in a volume whose title claims to provide the reader with "the essential" writings of Hegel. Perhaps there are several possible introductory books, each presenting a somewhat different set of "essential" works. But this does not much matter, nor does it detract any from the value of Weiss' selections. He has included many of the indispensable classical passages and much else besides, and the book as a whole has enough breadth and depth for any ordinary introductory purposes.

Professor Weiss' own Introduction is workmanlike and helpful. He is close to the center of the current revival of interest in Hegel and shows himself invariably well informed about scholarly developments. Inclusion of a Foreword by J. N. Findlay is a little more difficult to justify. It makes no scholarly contribution but I presume that Findlay's imprint is supposed to help the publisher sell more copies. Even this purpose, however, might not have required the non-functional presence of a distinguished name. I suspect that the book will be widely used for what it is: a useful introduction to a philosophical mind that demands attention and respect.

— John Lachs


Professor Hartnack attempts to cover quite a lot of ground in this short (20,000 words) book. The first ten pages of the book are spent in a discussion of Kant's life. The next fifty-six pages are devoted to the discussion of Kant's theory of knowledge. Hartnack takes a different approach from most modern English-speaking commentators on Kant, for he emphasizes the importance of the antinomies in motivating the Kantian project and in understanding Kant's aims. Kant's relation to his predecessors, both rationalist and empiricist, is deliberately downplayed, and his attempt to show that Reason was not in conflict with itself is given center stage. Hartnack concentrates upon the first and second antinomies in his exposition of the Kantian problematic, and then introduces the rest of the Kantian apparatus as needed in order to exhibit Kant's explanation of the occurrence of the antinomies and their resolution. The section on the theory of knowledge is closed with a brief comparison of Kant and Wittgenstein.

The next thirty-four pages are devoted to Kant's ethics and philosophy of religion. Hartnack's exposition, as is usual, follows the lines of the Grundlegung, and though quite short, is a fairly direct and effective introduction to some of the problems. There is a short section on Kant's attitude towards the existence of God that counts as a discussion of his philosophy of religion. Hartnack then appends a few pages of "concluding remarks" to the book, in which extremely brief mention is made of some of Kant's successors, both immediate and remote.

I am not at all sure what audience this book is aimed at. It does not contain