

Weinroth (Kendall/Hunt Publishing Co., 1971), Bruening's stands squarely in the middle, along with the Edwards-Pap compilation, as well as such other well-balanced books as *Philosophical Issues; A Contemporary Introduction*, edited by James Rachels and Frank Tillman (Harper, 1972), and *Philosophy and Contemporary Issues*, edited by John R. Burr and Milton Goldinger (Macmillan, 1972).

In place of an index, Bruening presents at the end of the table of contents a "Subject Guide to Contents," which organizes the selections into categories such as "ordinary language philosophy," "existentialism," "the nature of man," and "consciousness and knowledge". This cross-section of the material is useful—giving us perspectives different from that of the table of contents.

Bruening's philosophical outlook, insofar as it is manifest here, is open-minded, undogmatic, and somewhat upbeat.

— William Gerber

TOM REGAN. *Understanding Philosophy*. Encino, CA: Dickenson Publishing Co., 1974. Hardbound. 243 pp.

Three general categories of material are available for first level work in philosophy: interpretive textbooks, anthologies of primary source materials consisting principally of selections and abstracts, and the complete texts of primary materials. What selection or combination of these possibilities works best? Only an analysis of a particular classroom constituency set against consciously conceived goals for an introductory course can supply a reasonable answer. The typical class of forty eighteen and nineteen year-olds in semi-servitude to a standard liberal arts curriculum is no longer to be taken for granted. The range of ages among students expands enormously as philosophers, for not entirely altruistic motives, venture increasingly into adult education on the one hand, high school and the elementary grades on the

other. Regan's book is addressed to the intelligent freshman, but one wonders whether even this "average" audience might not fare better or at least as well with a few samples of philosophical thought which has not been pre-digested. Of course there is no reason to suppose that we could not pair a textbook with some such readings, as is the usual practice, and yet this choice needs more justification than it ordinarily receives—books are expensive.

The interpretive function served by a textbook would seem to duplicate what ought to be the chief activity of the classroom teacher. And we are all aware that whatever caveats are pronounced, the authority of the printed word presents a standing temptation to the student in the back of the room to avoid that very activity of mind in regard to the issues presented, the stimulation of which must be our purpose. As for the use of an anthology rather than a limited number of complete words, we must weigh the advantages of a wider view of the field against the merits—and difficulties—of teaching students to evaluate arguments at length. Practice in assimilating the entire texts of carefully selected works is practice in reading at a level higher than that ordinarily required of the student, and its value rests on a more than ordinary commitment by the teacher to the cultivation of those who will not be philosophy majors.

But these are qualms for the best of times and circumstances; the average situation no doubt dictates that we must compromise our ideals and throw a rope to the struggling student—that is, pick a textbook. Regan's book would not be a bad choice. It has a coherent structure, a lucid style and an overall air of intellectual honesty, open-mindedness and self-examination. This is as much as to say that the author is doing philosophy here in the best sense. The study of philosophy, he asserts, can make us aware of our prejudice, can cause us to scrutinize "the reasonableness of our whole way of life", and he sets a good example in this respect.

There is an initial even-handed presen-

tation of different conceptions of philosophy's task, of the creation of a *Weltanschauung* (a word he likes) against the positivist's more restricted aims. In his own effort to find an equitable perspective, Regan defines philosophy in terms of the search for good arguments, and proceeds to develop an analysis of classic philosophical positions according to the parameters of formal logic. As a first step, there is a chapter given to the elements of propositional logic, and to informal fallacies. The inclusion of such a section in an introductory text is something of a novelty. Presumably, many authors wish to avoid the possibly intimidating "technical" approach, although the presence of the logic material would seem to increase the options available to the teacher. An informed decision in terms of a specific undergraduate curriculum could be made about the usefulness of an exposition of deductive techniques in an introductory course. In a case where Regan's book was adopted, however, the mastery of such techniques, with the supplement of such epistemological concepts as the analytic-synthetic distinction, would clearly be prerequisite to following the rest of his presentation. Regan thus considers the problems of God, freedom, and immortality in the light of the formal validity of the principal positions associated with them. In his summary chapter, he explicitly questions the exclusive use of this model, yet his commitment to it will necessarily make the choice of *Understanding Philosophy* also a choice of his perspective.

The final definition of knowledge as "justified true belief" is an effort to connect this logical analysis with the opening description of philosophy as a purgative of prejudice. But even Regan's ingratiating candor about the absence of support in his book for this definition leaves a certain sense of dis-ease about the proceedings. What is lacking is any equivalent exposition of that process of creative synthesis by which the arguments he has dissected were developed as parts of competing worldviews. Such a statement would

seem to be an essential part of any genuinely balanced survey of how philosophers work.

— Carla R. Thomas

GEORGE WILLIAMS, Ed. *Man Asks Why*. Columbus, OH: Charles E. Merrill, 1973, pp. xiii + 701. \$12.95 paperbound.

Professor Williams' text meets a definite need. It is the first programmed introduction to philosophy yet to appear. As such, it is a pathbreaking book which promises new and innovative approaches in the teaching of philosophy. Its principal aim is to enable students to improve their reading comprehension and thinking skills through the study of primary sources of increasing difficulty. The author seeks to realize his aims by presenting the student with a number of frames from each selection which gradually increase in difficulty. Through the frames, the student acquires an ability to 1) distinguish the main and subsidiary ideas in a passage; 2) recognize and later originate new examples of philosophical concepts; 3) distinguish between statements that are implied by, consistent with, and inconsistent with a specific point of view. The reader is also required to anticipate the direction of a philosophical argument and to show how a philosopher might defend his view against certain criticisms. In later sections the frames become increasingly complex and the student is forced to think and rethink the issues being debated. The overall effect is a sharpening of the students' perception of philosophical problems and a fuller understanding of different positions. The reviewer has used the text during the past years and can testify to its success in contributing to these ends.

It may be worthwhile, at this point, to call attention to some of the limitations of the program-technique and to raise a few questions about the determination of results, at least so far as *Man Asks Why* is concerned. Professor Williams spent two years validating his program with nearly a