

Nigel Warburton

Philosophy: Basic Readings. Third Edition.
New York: Routledge 1999.
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Philosophy: Basic Readings is a collection of essays and selections from larger works that cover a wide range of contemporary philosophical issues. As may be expected, most readers who have studied philosophy would have already been exposed to most of the writings that are included. The audience, however, is the students who are taking an introductory course in philosophy. More accurately, the immediate audience is the teachers who are searching for an edited work to include in such a course.

And so the reviewer ought to be primarily concerned with the question: Is this a good book for introducing students to philosophy? The book begins well, with a series of contemporary answers to the basic question: what is philosophy? Warburton includes answers given by Bertrand Russell, A.J. Ayer, Mary Warnock and D.H. Mellor. While these responses would engage with the question and encourage discussion, there are many other important and varied responses to this question that could have made this section of the book more interesting, beginning with the Socratic dialogues and including some of the better-known passages from Wittgenstein's notebooks.

The remaining selections in the book focus on some of the core problems of contemporary philosophy. These problems are organized into general sections: god, politics, mind, art, and so on. As with the first section, these selections could encourage significant engagements with some of the key contemporary debates but could also have been more varied.

There are very few pre-twentieth-century selections, except short selections from earlier philosophers who happen to fit into contemporary debates. Thus Berlin's 'Two Concepts of Liberty' is included, while a selection from Hobbes's *Leviathan* is the only selection in the 'Politics' section from before the twentieth century. In Warburton's defense, even if he did not include extensive selections from pre-twentieth-century philosophers, many of the people that he did include discuss many earlier thinkers. Berlin, for instance, discusses Locke and Rousseau, and could be used to point students in these directions.

The general character of the selections is clearly in favor of analytical philosophy (from Hume to Russell). Beyond short selections from Descartes, Kant, and Pascal, the writings are almost completely Anglo-American. In part, the character of the selections arises from the obvious decision to organize these selections without a concern for the history of philosophy. But another result of these selections is that a wide variety of issues and thinkers are not given a place in the 'basic readings'. Where, for instance, is Nietzsche? or the Existentialists? or the Marxists?

From another direction, however, a concern for the organization of the selections raises important questions concerning how 'the problems of philosophy' ought to be classified. It is interesting to note, for instance, that while Warburton includes a section on 'politics,' he has not included a section on 'ethics'. There is a section labelled 'right and wrong', which contains many of the selections that people would expect to find in the section dealing with 'ethics'. But there is a key philosophical debate that is being obscured here. Warburton assumes that philosophical ethics is primarily about right and wrong, which means that the so-called 'virtue-ethics' of writers such as Aristotle simply do not fit. The section begins, quite expectedly, with Kant's 'Categorical Imperative'.

Another series of issues that the organization of the selections raises is how the different classes of problems can be related. How, for instance, do the selections in 'Politics' relate to those in 'Right and Wrong'? Or those in 'Science' relate to those in 'Art'? These are not obvious issues in the book. Rather, students are encouraged to pass from one set of issues to another, as if from one study component to the next.

But do these criticisms mean that the book is not a good book for an introductory course in philosophy? As with most teachers who decide which books to use as textbooks, there are some selections that I would not use, others that I would have included, and complaints that I would raise in class. I would encourage students to worry about the way that the book classifies problems and the way that various important people and issues are absent or marginal. But I would do that with any introductory text book; in part because these concerns are also an important aspect of philosophy.

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Fred Wilson

*The Logic And Methodology of
Science in Early Modern Thought*.
Toronto: University of Toronto Press 1999.
Pp. xxiv + 608.
\$95.00. ISBN 0-8020-4356-9.

There has been a growing tendency among historians of science to adopt a continuity thesis between Aristotelian and medieval science on the one hand and modern (post-Galilean) science on the other. Wilson's impressive book is a systematic attempt to reverse this tide by showing that there was a real break between the two in the characterisation of both the cognitive end which science aims to achieve *and* the method by which it is best achievable. Put