

cohesive book. Although the general theme running through *Permanent Red* is constant, the various chapters are written in so many different ways that they upset the shape of the book. But to find fault with the form is not to deny the content.

Mr Berger is that rare bird in English criticism, a Marxist realist (or idealist), and his convictions give him, naturally, a certain detachment from the milieu we tend to take for granted. His theme, broadly, is the inherent dignity and responsibility of the artist, who is forced to play the fool by society or the art-market system or his own deep-seated lack of assurance. He contrasts this lack of foundation with the qualities of artists he admires. Piero, Poussin, de la Tour, Rembrandt, Goya, Picasso, Matisse and, above all, Leger, are his heroes and vindicate his conviction that art must return to a rational, figurative basis as a result of the artist's re-integration with society—presumably a marxist society. I should have liked a fuller account of this crucial point. How far were Matisse and Leger attached to, or detached from, the society their art on the surface reflects? What explains the extraordinary power of both artists to transform and redeem their respective societies? Here I think Mr Berger's habit of simplification lets him down, because, in spite of his brilliantly succinct and accurate appreciations of Matisse, Leger and Picasso, he does not hint at the whole problem being essentially a mystery. He does not even suggest an answer in the social field except in the rather forlorn hope that Africans and Asians will learn from our plundering of their culture.

This inability to solve the question of the artist *vis-à-vis* the society in which he works seems to me a fatal defect in a marxist book. The author, needless to say, has little to give in appreciation of poetry or of the intuitive, none at all to religion. As a result all his criticisms lack that absolutely vital dimension.

PATRICK REYNTIENS

THE CONCISE ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF WESTERN PHILOSOPHY AND PHILOSOPHERS.

Ed. by J. O. Urmson. (Hutchinson; 50s.)

The editor of a popular encyclopaedia is expected to give some advice on how to use it. Mr Urmson's is the best possible. Read the philosophers, he says in effect, don't merely read about them. He hastens to add (for after all he must have spent a lot of time and energy editing this fine work) that textbooks and histories have their uses, but they can never be substitutes. In the end, like Wittgenstein's ladder, they must be thrown away.

If that is granted, this book can be warmly recommended. Mr Urmson has collected an excellent team of writers (though I wish they had been allowed to initial their articles: the brief biographies of the anonymous seem rather absurd) and it takes men with a mastery of the subject to write with the clarity and lack of technicality to be found here. The plan is a good one: a number of long articles on the main themes of philosophy, a reasonably extended treatment of the ideas of the major western philosophers, and

shorter articles to cover minor figures and explain terms. A simple cross-reference system, using bold type, makes the encyclopaedia easy to use.

Clearly it is impossible to attempt a criticism of even the major contributions here. They are, naturally, written from the prevailing English viewpoint, and a similar French or German production would read very differently. But they remain fair and balanced even where the writer has no very great sympathy with his subject. And in some cases, such as the articles on logic and ethics, taken with their cross-references, there is probably no comparable short modern account existing in English. It is to be hoped that first-year university undergraduates will resist the temptation to serve them up to their tutors.

For as Mr Urmson points out, in one sense an encyclopaedic of philosophy is impossible. There are no stock answers and no agreed conclusions of a positive kind, though a few mistakes have finally been disposed of. There are no authorities. The authorities he has called on to write for him have done their best not to contradict him in this.

The appearance of the book is rather alarming: a lurid jacket and endpapers, with a vast number of pictures of philosophers and near-philosophers and places thought to be of interest. But this is probably not the fault of the editor. Within all is plain prose.

LAURENCE BRIGHT, O.P.

A BURNT-OUT CASE. By Graham Greene. (Heinemann; 16s.)

We have been here before, of course, and we recognize the middle-aged traveller in the tropical suit as he sits in the cabin of the river-boat. 'I feel discomfort, therefore I am alive', he writes in his diary. His voyage to the interior is away from success. He was a famous architect, and now he has ceased to believe. Query (and the extra 'r' underlines the ambiguity of the Greenean hero) must be holy, thinks Father Thomas. After all, he has given up so much. He must be going through the dark night, thinks Rycker, the well-instructed Belgian layman. He is, in the language of leprosy, a 'burnt-out case': the disease is dead, but its mutilations remain.

The end of his journey is a leper-colony, and here among the priests and nuns (with an agnostic doctor to offset their faith) he begins to live again. He has come, not to be redeemed through suffering, not even to forget, but simply to be; and after all he can help with the building. But he is discovered, and the irony is that a man who has abandoned love is betrayed by it. He befriends Rycker's young wife: her husband is sure that Query was her lover, and Query is killed.

This is a novel of formidable strength, as spare as Query's own architecture, with nothing irrelevant or added to please. It has a wonderfully comic interlude when Query is pursued by a Sunday-paper journalist, and the life of the Community is observed with the hooded eyes of the trained observer.

The dilemma is not a new one, and its statement this time will give small comfort to those who map the Greenean territory and are determined to