

niz's philosophy. The first deals with contingency, counterfactual non-identity, the containment theory of truth, and transworld identity. A discussion of Leibniz's logical and metaphysical views, as seen through Adams's eyes, about the necessity of events and the existence of some free events leads to the second section, the subject of which is God. Here, Adams provides a detailed account of Leibniz's notions of perfection, essence, and existence. The detailed discussion of the ontological argument is a bit less rigorous; when speaking of some key assumptions, Adams claims that "They are not uncontroversial, though I do not see any compelling reason to doubt their correctness as applied to the issue on necessary divine existence." The final, and longest, section argues that "the mature Leibniz tried to combine his phenomenalism with a theory of corporeal substances, but in a way that leaves intact the basic idealism of the system." A thorough and well-researched book that deserves to be placed in every library, next to Russell's classic Leibniz text. Graduate; faculty.—*W. F. Desmond, Black Hawk College*

**32-4424** B2430 93-36973 CIP  
Allen, Diogenes. **Spirit, nature, and community: issues in the thought of Simone Weil**, by Diogenes Allen and Eric O. Springsted. State University of New York, 1994. 241p bibl index afp ISBN 0-7914-2017-5, \$54.50

This is a valuable collection of essays on controversial points in the life and writings of a great 20th-century thinker. Allen (Princeton Theological Seminary) discusses Simone Weil's notions of reading, love and friendship, and parallels with the English metaphysical poet George Herbert and with the contemporary moral philosopher Charles Taylor. Springsted (Illinois College) examines her concepts of necessity, persons, community, and culture, her Christian humanism, and the evidence for her baptism *in extremis*. Both together discuss her supernaturalism and also her central idea of affliction as not contradicting but revealing the love of God. (The best pieces are the ones on reading, necessity, suffering, particular loves, and George Herbert.) There is constant reference to classical and modern thinkers such as Plato and Augustine, Descartes and Kant, Wittgenstein and Rorty. A striking feature of this book is its intention not to cover ground well covered elsewhere but instead to seek out disputed questions and propose new points of departure. Recommended for all collections on Weil, philosophy of religion, religious and moral psychology, and political philosophy, along with Allen's *Three Outsiders* (CH, Nov'83), Springsted's *Simone Weil and the Suffering of Love* (CH, Oct'86), Peter Winch's *Simone Weil* (1989), *Simone Weil's Philosophy of Culture*, ed. by Richard Bell (1993), and perhaps also Iris Murdoch's *Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals* (CH, Oct'93). Endnotes. Upper-division undergraduate; graduate; faculty.—*M. Andie, University of Massachusetts at Boston*

**32-4425** HB841 93-32166 CIP  
Berry, Christopher J. **The idea of luxury: a conceptual and historical investigation**. Cambridge, 1994. 271p (Ideas in context, 30) bibl index ISBN 0-521-45448-4, \$69.95; ISBN 0-521-46691-1 pbk, \$24.95

Berry's book superbly integrates intellectual history, philosophical analysis, cultural studies, and political thought. It makes clear that ideas of luxury and need, which vary somewhat among cultures, are tightly interconnected; there is almost as much discussion of need as of luxury. The chapters "The Platonic Prelude," "The Roman Response," and "The Christian Contribution" are a strong account of the classical paradigm in which excessive luxury is a threat to the community. The third of the book is devoted to the transition to modernity parallels, without duplicating, Albert O. Hirschman's *The Passions and the Interests* (1977). Tracing the "demoralization of luxury" in the 17th and 18th centuries, Berry (Univ. of Glasgow) uses the decline of sumptuary laws as a historical barometer. In discussing current ideas of luxury and need in the industrial West, Berry studies American and British tax policies (e.g., no sales tax on some clothing). Jean Baudrillard's claim, in *For a Critique of the Political Economy of Sign* (1981), that advertising is omnipotent and has a "totalitarian compass," is received with respectful skepticism. Recommended for both general readers and scholars; particularly suited for interdisciplinary, humanities education. Undergraduate; graduate; faculty.—*D. Christie, University of New Hampshire*

**32-4426** BP80 94-17044 CIP  
Chittick, William C. **Imaginal worlds: Ibn al-'Arabī and the problem of religious diversity**. State University of New York, 1994. 208p bibl indexes afp ISBN 0-7914-2249-6, \$57.50

This welcome volume from the most eminent English-language interpreter and translator of the great Islamic mystical philosopher Ibn al-'Arabī (1165-1240) is the sequel to his *The Sufi Path of Knowledge* (CH, Oct'90). Like its predecessor, this volume is valuable alone for the many translated passages from Ibn al-'Arabī's masterpiece, *Meccan Revelations*, which are organized around three interrelated themes: (1) the character traits and cognitive state of the Perfect Man; (2) the fascinating but bewildering topography of Ibn al-'Arabī's worlds of the transcendent imagination, their relationships to the states of human souls after death, and the correspondences between these supraphysical realms and the illumined souls who inhabit them; (3) Ibn al-'Arabī's views on religious diversity, as expressed through his complex views on the levels of belief and the unique features of individual prophets and revelations. This book is praiseworthy not only for its scholarly excellence but also because it presents Ibn al-'Arabī's mystical anthropology as a beacon for those looking to transcend "the impasses of modern and post-modern thought." Undergraduate; graduate; faculty; general.—*J. Bussanich, University of New Mexico*

**32-4427** BJ1461 93-51073 CIP  
Fischer, John Martin. **The metaphysics of free will: an essay on control**. Blackwell, 1994. 273p (Aristotelian Society series, 14) bibl index afp ISBN 1-557-86155-2, \$49.95

Fischer (Univ. of California—Riverside) provides a thorough statement of the major grounds for skepticism about the reality of free will and moral responsibility and develops a detailed, plausible rebuttal. The traditional debate on these issues features conflicting claims about control; and the notion of control lies at the heart of Fischer's book. He distinguishes between two species of control—regulative control and guidance control. Having regulative control over our behavior requires that we have "alternative possibilities," that more than one future is open to us. Guidance control, exhibited when our actions appropriately issue from our responsiveness to reasons, does not require this. Fischer offers detailed accounts of both sorts of control and argues that guidance control, but not regulative control, is necessary for freedom and moral responsibility. He argues persuasively that control of the former sort is compatible both with determinism and with the existence of a God possessed of perfect foreknowledge. This is an excellent book, a first-rate contribution to the literature. Its combination of thoroughness and accessibility is rare in the literature on free will. The arguments are skillfully crafted and sometimes stunningly ingenious. Highly recommended. Upper-division undergraduate; graduate; faculty.—*A. R. Mele, Davidson College*

**32-4428** BJ1031 94-6106 CIP  
Fleischacker, Samuel. **The ethics of culture**. Cornell, 1994. 260p bibl index afp ISBN 0-8014-2991-9, \$29.95

The author takes the reader on a journey out of the Enlightenment desert into a restructured cultural relativism built on the heritage of Herder, not a postmodern deconstruction. Trust in tradition and in the authorities or prophets appointed as interpreters of the good for a culture or society replaces reliance on reason as the source for ethical judgments about the good. Personal experience, the importance of the mythical story told to a people, and the influence of the philosophical anthropology approach enliven the journey. Universal ethics return as the attempt by each culture to attain "good" according to its own ways. Each section begins with a bold statement, which the author attempts to defend with a speculative description of possibilities that shades the "ought-is" distinction, intentional/genetic fallacy in a style bespeaking a training in the Western tradition. Although the rejection of the Enlightenment tradition and the dialogue between cultures to reach universal consensus are less than convincing, much of the book is thought provoking enough to deserve a critical reading. This book is not a must for any library, but some interesting speculative arguments move it slightly beyond the already extensive literature on cultural relativism. Upper-division undergraduate; graduate.—*J. Gough, Red Deer College*