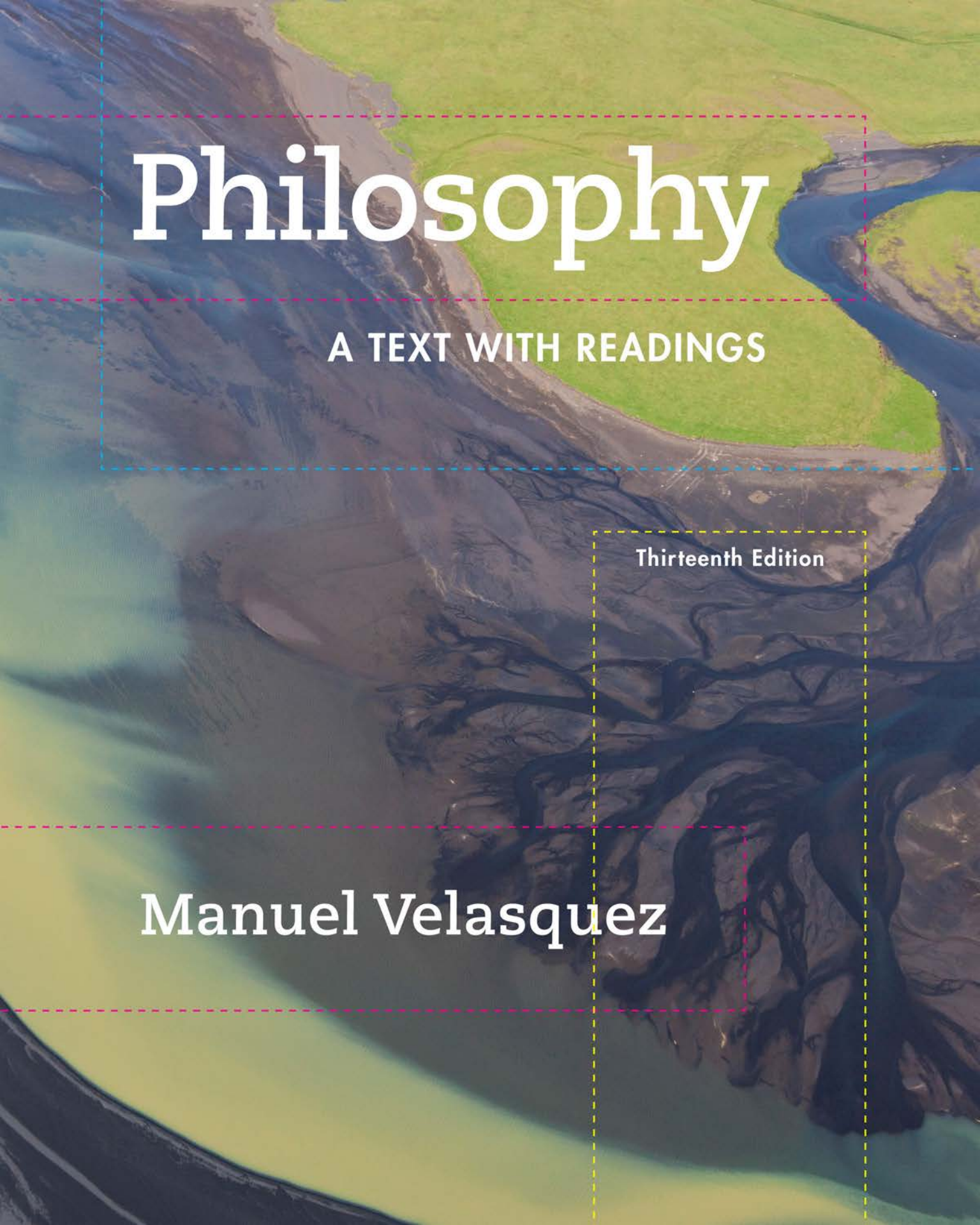

Philosophy

A TEXT WITH READINGS

Thirteenth Edition

Manuel Velasquez

CENGAGE Learning

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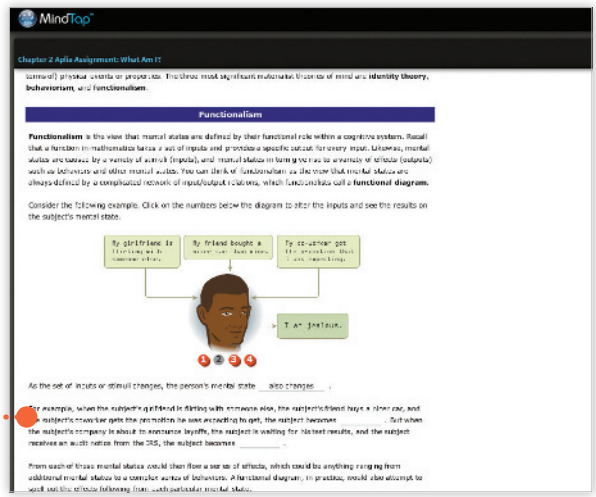

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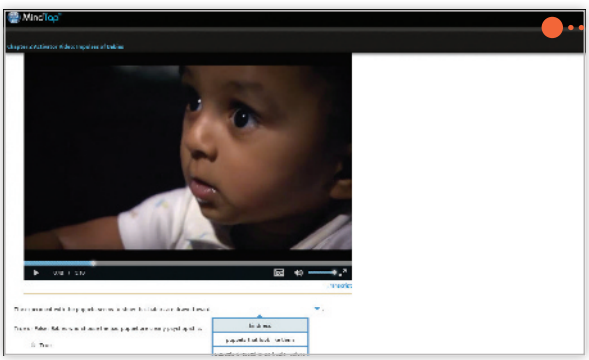

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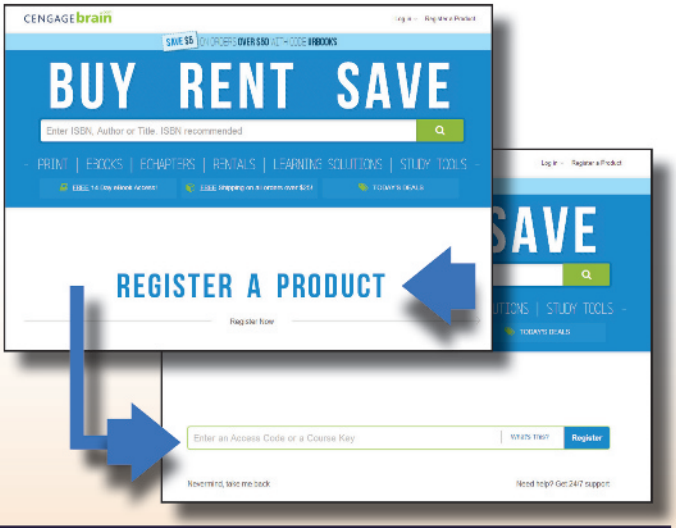

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PHILOSOPHY

A Text with Readings

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A Text with Readings

THIRTEENTH EDITION

Manuel Velasquez

The Charles Dirksen Professor

Santa Clara University

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For my sons, Brian, Kevin, and Daniel

Contents

Preface

When the early Greek philosopher Heraclitus declared "Everything changes!" he could have been speaking of our own era. What word could characterize our time better than the world "change"? New fashions, fads, styles, technologies, and philosophies now supplant each other in ever shorter periods of time. Many believe that the increasing pace of change has profound implications for philosophy. Whether or not this is so, rapid change forces revisions of a more mundane kind in textbooks on philosophy such as this. So although *Philosophy: A Text with Readings* continues to excite readers about philosophy, changes in philosophy and in the world we inhabit necessitate revising the text. I have tried to retain what users have said they like best about this book: that it provides depth and rigor yet is easy to read, fun to use, and manages to cover all the traditional issues with a unique combination of attention to the history of philosophy, regard for interesting contemporary concerns, and substantial selections from classical and contemporary texts. I have worked hard to explain the difficult concepts and texts of philosophy in a way that is technically rigorous and accurate, yet uses language and style that make it easy for a beginning college student with modest reading skills to understand. I have also worked hard at making philosophy interesting and relevant to contemporary undergraduates by showing how it is directly related to their real-life concerns and preoccupations. In addition, a series of sections on critical thinking provide the tools that will enable students to develop their thinking and logical reasoning skills.

I should emphasize what a quick glance at the table of contents will confirm: this text is designed to cover more than most instructors would want to cover in a single course. The coverage is intentionally broad so that the instructor can select those topics that he or she believes are most important and is not limited by the choice of topics that someone else has made. To make it easier for an instructor to choose what his or her course will cover, the chapters are largely independent of one another so that reading a later chapter will not require reading an earlier one. Moreover, the materials within each chapter are arranged so that the most basic or fundamental topics are at the beginning of the chapter, while later sections in the chapter address aspects of the topic that are less fundamental but that probe more deeply or more broadly into the topic. This arrangement gives the instructor the option of either having students study only the basic issues in a chapter by assigning only the early sections or pursuing the subject matter of the chapter more in depth by also assigning the later sections. Some instructors may want to cover the basics in class, and then assign students (or groups of students) the later sections as special projects. There are many different ways of teaching the materials in the book and many different courses that can be put together from these materials.

I have always found that working to revise this text is an enormously satisfying and exciting experience because of the new perspectives and ideas it leads me to confront. I hope that readers will be just as excited by their own explorations of the many visions philosophy offers of what it is to be a human being in today's changing world.

Changes in the Thirteenth Edition

The most important change in this edition is one that affects all of the chapters. I have gone through the text sentence by sentence and have rewritten every sentence whose construction was too complex to be easily understood. I have simplified the syntax of each complex sentence, eliminated any jargon or abstruse vocabulary, and shortened any long or convoluted sentences. I believe the text now can be easily comprehended by any reader, including one with poor reading skills.

A second set of changes that affects every chapter is the introduction of two new types of small "boxes" containing questions designed to help students understand the numerous excerpts from primary sources. Each box contains two or three questions

about the excerpt and is positioned next to or immediately after the excerpt. Some of the boxes are entitled Analyzing the Reading. These contain questions that help the student focus on the important philosophical claims made in the excerpt, and to understand and evaluate those claims and the arguments on which they are based. A second type of boxed feature is entitled Thinking Like a Philosopher. These contain questions that ask the student to apply the ideas expressed in the excerpts to his or her own life. Virtually every reading selection has at least one box of questions associated with it. Because these boxes now offer a wealth of questions that are directly related to the readings, I have not felt it was necessary to include the end-of-chapter questions that were in previous editions. However, readers who would like to have such questions can go to the text's website where such questions are provided for each chapter.

As in the previous edition the text includes sixteen modules entitled Thinking Critically that are spread out over several chapters. Each Thinking Critically module not only teaches important reasoning skills, but also helps the reader apply these skills to the philosophical topics discussed in the text. Beginning with the introduction to critical thinking in Chapter 1, the aim of these logic modules is to teach students, step by step, how to critically evaluate their own philosophical thinking and reasoning, as well as the philosophical thoughts and arguments of others. Because critical thinking skills are so important to doing philosophy, most of the Thinking Critically modules occur in the earlier chapters of the book (most, in fact, are in Chapters 1–4).

Five new end-of-chapter readings, some from works of fiction, have also been added to this edition, while numerous new or expanded excerpts from classical and contemporary texts have been incorporated into the chapters.

In addition to hundreds of minor or stylistic revisions, the more substantive changes in specific chapters are as follows:

Chapter 1

- In Section 1.3 the excerpts from Socrates' *Apology* and from the *Crito* have been expanded.

Chapter 2

- In Section 2.2 the excerpts from Plato's *Republic*, the *Phaedrus*, and the *Phaedo*, and the excerpts from St. Augustine's *Confessions*, have been expanded.
- The previous edition's short excerpt from Sartre's *Being and Nothingness*, in Section 2.2, has been replaced with several much longer excerpts from his *Existentialism and Humanism* and the accompanying discussion has been revised.
- New excerpts from Descartes' *Discourse on Method*, new excerpts from two of Smart's articles on the identity theory of the mind, and several new excerpts from Ryle's *The Concept of Mind* have been added to Section 2.2. New discussions of these materials have also been added.
- A new extended excerpt from one of Armstrong's articles on functionalism and a new extended excerpt from an article by Churchland on eliminative materialism also have been added to Section 2.2, and the accompanying discussions have been revised.
- New excerpts from Hume's *Treatise* have been added to Section 2.4 and the discussion has been revised.
- The end-of-chapter readings that accompanied the previous edition have been removed and replaced with three new readings on female identity: Kate Chopin's "The Story of an Hour" ; Janice M. Steil's "Contemporary Marriage: Still an Unequal Partnership"; and Jean Grimshaw's "Women's Identity in Feminist Thinking."

Chapter 3

- New excerpts from the writings of the Indian Charvaka philosophers have been added to Section 3.2.
- New excerpts from de La Mettrie's *Man a Machine* have been added to Section 3.2 together with new accompanying discussions.
- Several new excerpts from Berkeley's *Principles of Human Knowledge* have been added to Section 3.2 and the excerpts from the previous edition have been expanded, while discussions of these additions have also been added.
- The Critical Thinking module in Section 3.2 now discusses only conditional arguments and not disjunctive arguments.
- The discussions of pragmatism in Section 3.3 have been revised, and new excerpts from the writings of Pierce and James have been added, while the James excerpts from the previous edition have been expanded.

- In Section 3.6 the discussions of Husserl and Heidegger that were in the previous edition have been removed, while most of the discussion of Kierkegaard has been moved into Chapter 4 and much of the discussion of Sartre has been moved into the discussion of determinism and freedom that now occupies Section 3.6.
- The discussions of determinism and freedom in Section 3.6 have been revised, and several extended excerpts from the writings of Laplace, Sartre, and Stace have been added.
- The end-of-chapter readings in the previous edition have been removed and replaced with two new readings: Sophocles' *Oedipus the King*, and Robert Solomon's "Fate."

Chapter 4

- In Section 4.3 the excerpt from Mackie's article on the problem of evil has been expanded, and new excerpts from Rowe's article on the problem of evil and from Augustine's discussion of the nature of evil, have been added, together with new or revised accompanying discussions.
- The excerpt from James' "The Will to Believe" in Section 4.4 has been substantially expanded, an extended excerpt from Clifford's "The Ethics of Belief" has been added, and the accompanying discussions have been revised.
- In Section 4.5 new excerpts from Kierkegaard's writings on religion and the "leap of faith" have been added, as well as new excerpts from Tillich's writings on attempts to prove that God exists, and new excerpts from the *Bhagavad-Gita*. The discussions accompanying each of these have been revised.

Chapter 5

- New excerpts from Descartes' *Discourse on the Method* have been added to Section 5.2 along with a fuller discussion of his views.
- In Section 5.3 several new excerpts from Locke's *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* and from Hume's *Treatise* and his *Enquiry* have been added.
- In Section 5.4 the excerpts from Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* have been expanded and several new excerpts have been added. In addition the text's discussion of his transcendental idealism has been revised.

Chapter 6

- Section 6.1, the introduction to the chapter, has been considerably shortened and simplified by eliminating the discussion of basic and nonbasic beliefs, of foundationalism, and of coherentism. A new brief discussion of truth-bearers has been added.
- The discussion of the correspondence theory of truth in Section 6.2 has been simplified and shortened and the discussion of Tarski's definition of truth has been removed.
- The discussion of the coherence theory of truth in Section 6.2 has been completely revised, and several extended excerpts from Blanshard's *The Nature of Thought* have been added.
- In the discussion of the pragmatic theory of truth in Section 6.2 the excerpts from James' *Pragmatism* have been expanded and the discussion has been revised.
- A new discussion of "pluralist" views of truth has been added to Section 6.2.

Chapter 7

- The discussion of ethical relativism in Section 7.2 has been revised.
- The discussion of utilitarianism in Section 7.3 has also been revised.
- In Section 7.4, the discussion of the "principle of double effect" has been revised as well as the discussions of Kant and of Buddhist ethics.
- The discussion of Aristotle's theory of virtue in Section 7.5 has been revised, the excerpts from his *Nicomachean Ethics* have been expanded, and new excerpts from the writings of Gilligan and Noddings have been added.
- In Section 7.6, a new discussion of the implications of the principle of double effect has been added, along with a new excerpt from Aquinas' *Summa*.

Chapter 8

- The introduction, Section 8.1, has a new short discussion of power and authority.
- In Section 8.2 a new excerpt from Plato's *Republic* has been added, and the excerpts from Hobbes' *Leviathan* and Locke's *Second Treatise* have been expanded and the accompanying discussion has been revised. The short discussion of Rousseau in the previous edition has been removed.

- The excerpts from Mill's *Utilitarianism* in Section 8.3 have been expanded, and new excerpts from Rawls' writings have been added, and the discussion of these has been revised.
- The excerpts from Mill's *On Liberty* in Section 8.4 have been substantially expanded, along with the discussion of his views.

Chapter 9

- In Section 9.1 the excerpt from Tolstoy's *My Confession* has been expanded and a new excerpt from Ayer's writings has been added.
- In Section 9.2 the excerpt from Tolstoy's *My Confession* has been expanded, and a new excerpt from Baier's writings has been added.
- The excerpt from Taylor's *The Meaning of Life* in Section 9.4 has been expanded and the supporting discussion has been revised.
- The excerpts from the writings of Kierkegaard and Sartre in Section 9.5 have been expanded.
- The aesthetics section entitled "What Is Art?" that was formerly part of this chapter is now available in the MindTap, and instructors who wish to use it may have it custom-published with the text.

Organization

Self-discovery and autonomy remain the central notions around which this edition is organized (although these notions are critically discussed in Chapter 2). Each chapter repeatedly returns to these notions and links the materials discussed to the reader's growth in self-knowledge and intellectual autonomy. The ultimate aim of the text is to empower and encourage self-discovery and autonomy in the reader, in part by developing his or her critical thinking skills.

Although the text is organized by topics, the chapters have been arranged in a roughly historical order. The book opens with an introductory chapter on the nature of philosophy that focuses on Socrates as the exemplar of philosophy and includes substantial selections from the Socratic dialogues. Because of the book's focus on the self and the intrinsic importance of the topic, and because human nature was an important concern from the earliest time of philosophy, I turn immediately in Chapter 2 to the discussion of human nature, a discussion that raises several issues more fully treated in later chapters. Then, because Chapter 2 raises many metaphysical and religious issues, I turn to metaphysical issues in Chapter 3 and then to discussions of God and religion in Chapter 4. These issues, of course, were of passionate concern during the medieval and early modern periods of philosophy. Chapters 5 and 6 focus on questions of epistemology, interest in which historically followed the medieval and early modern interest in metaphysical issues. Chapters 7 and 8 are devoted respectively to ethics and social and political philosophy, topics that have preoccupied many philosophers during the late modern and contemporary periods. Chapter 9 focuses on the meaning of life, an issue that is particularly important for many of us today.

Yet no historical period has a monopoly on any of these topics. Consequently, each chapter moves back and forth from classic historical discussions of issues to contemporary discussions of the same or related issues. The chapter on metaphysics, for example, moves from the early modern controversy between materialism and idealism to current discussions of antirealism, some of which hark back to idealism.

Special Features

This text is unique in many ways and includes the following special features:

Learning Objectives. The first page of each chapter outlines the chapter contents and describes the pedagogical objectives of each section of the chapter.

Extended Selections from Primary Sources. Substantial excerpts from primary source materials are introduced in the main text, where they are always carefully explained. To make these materials accessible to beginning undergraduates, new and simplified translations of several texts (by Plato, Aristotle, Aquinas, and others) have been prepared, and several standard translations (such as Max Mueller's translation of Kant) have been simplified and edited. In addition, full versions of many of the excerpts are linked to the eBook in the MindTap for *Philosophy*, via the Questia database. These Questia versions of the readings are also collected in a folder so that instructors and students can see all the supplemental Questia readings in a single location.

Analyzing the Reading Boxes. These boxed features appear alongside each primary source excerpt and contain questions designed to help the student

understand the source text and the arguments it advances.

Thinking Like a Philosopher Boxes. These boxed features are also associated with each excerpt and contain questions that apply the concepts in the excerpts to the student's personal life.

Marginal Quick Reviews. These summaries, which appear alongside the text they summarize, help readers identify the main contents of the chapter and give them an easy way to review the materials they have read.

Thinking Critically Modules. A sequence of sixteen modules entitled Thinking Critically, designed to develop the critical thinking and reasoning skills of the reader, is integrated into the text.

Philosophy and Life Boxes. These inserts throughout the text show the impact of philosophy on everyday life or its connections to current issues such as medical dilemmas, sociobiology, psychology, and science. Each box ends with a set of questions designed to spark further thought on the subject.

Color Illustrations. Color photos and art reproductions are used throughout the text to provide visual illustrations of the people and ideas discussed in the text and to stimulate student interest.

Glossary of Terms. Unfamiliar philosophical terminology is explained and defined in the text and highlighted in bold. These highlighted terms are defined again in an alphabetized glossary at the end of the book for easy reference.

Philosophy at the Movies. At the end of each section of the text is a short paragraph that summarizes a film that addresses the topics treated in that section, along with questions that link the film to those topics.

Chapter Summary. The main text of each chapter ends with a summary of the major points that have been covered, organized according to the chapter's main headings and learning objectives (initially laid out at the chapter opening), making them particularly helpful as an overall review.

Readings by Philosophers. Near the end of each chapter are highly accessible readings examining a philosophical question raised in the text. These questions are as diverse as "Does the existence of evil prove God does not exist?" and "Is war morally justified?"

Literature Readings. At the end of each chapter is a short literature selection that raises the issues discussed in the chapter. These readings provide a friendly entry into philosophy for readers who are unaccustomed to traditional philosophical style.

Historical Showcases. Substantial summaries of the life and thought of major philosophers, including female and non-Western philosophers, are placed at the end of each chapter. These historical discussions feature large selections from the works of philosophers who have addressed the issues treated in the chapter. Arranged in chronological order, the Historical Showcases provide a clear and readable overview of the history of philosophy and enable students to see philosophy as a "great conversation" across centuries.

Historical Timeline. Inside the front and back covers is a timeline that locates each philosopher in his or her historical context.

Ancillaries

MindTap. Available for this edition is MindTap for *Philosophy: A Text with Readings*. A fully online, personalized learning experience built upon Cengage Learning content, MindTap combines student learning tools—readings, videos, and activities supporting critical thinking—into a singular Learning Path that guides students through their course. Each chapter contains a wealth of activities written to support student learning. Critical thinking exercises help guide students through complex topics, extended and related readings are integrated with the ebook via the Questia database, and video activators spark connections to the real world, while video lectures reinforce the complex topics presented in the text.

MindTap provides students with ample opportunities to check their understanding, while also providing a clear way to measure and assess student progress for faculty and students alike. Faculty can use MindTap as a turnkey solution or customize by adding their own content, such as YouTube videos or documents, directly into the eBook or within each chapter's Learning Path. The product can be

used fully online with the eBook for *Philosophy*, or in conjunction with the printed text.

***The Examined Life* Video Series.** A series of videos has been produced to accompany *Philosophy: A Text with Readings*. Entitled *The Examined Life*, the 26 half-hour videos cover most (but not all) of the topics treated in this edition and move in sequence through each section of each chapter. Each video consists of interviews with contemporary philosophers, dramatizations, historical footage of well-known philosophers, discussions of classical philosophical texts, and visual interpretations of key philosophical concepts. Among the philosophers specially interviewed for this video series are W. V. O. Quine, Hilary Putnam, John Searle, James Rachels, Martha Nussbaum, Marilyn Friedman, Hans Gadamer, Gary Watson, Susan Wolf, Peter Singer, Michael Sandel, Daniel Dennet, Ronald Dworkin, and many others. The course is available at www.intelecom.org.

Instructor's Manual and Test Bank. This extensive manual contains many suggestions to help instructors highlight and promote further thought on philosophical issues. It also comes with a comprehensive Test Bank featuring multiple-choice, true/false, fill-in-the-blank, and essay questions for each chapter.

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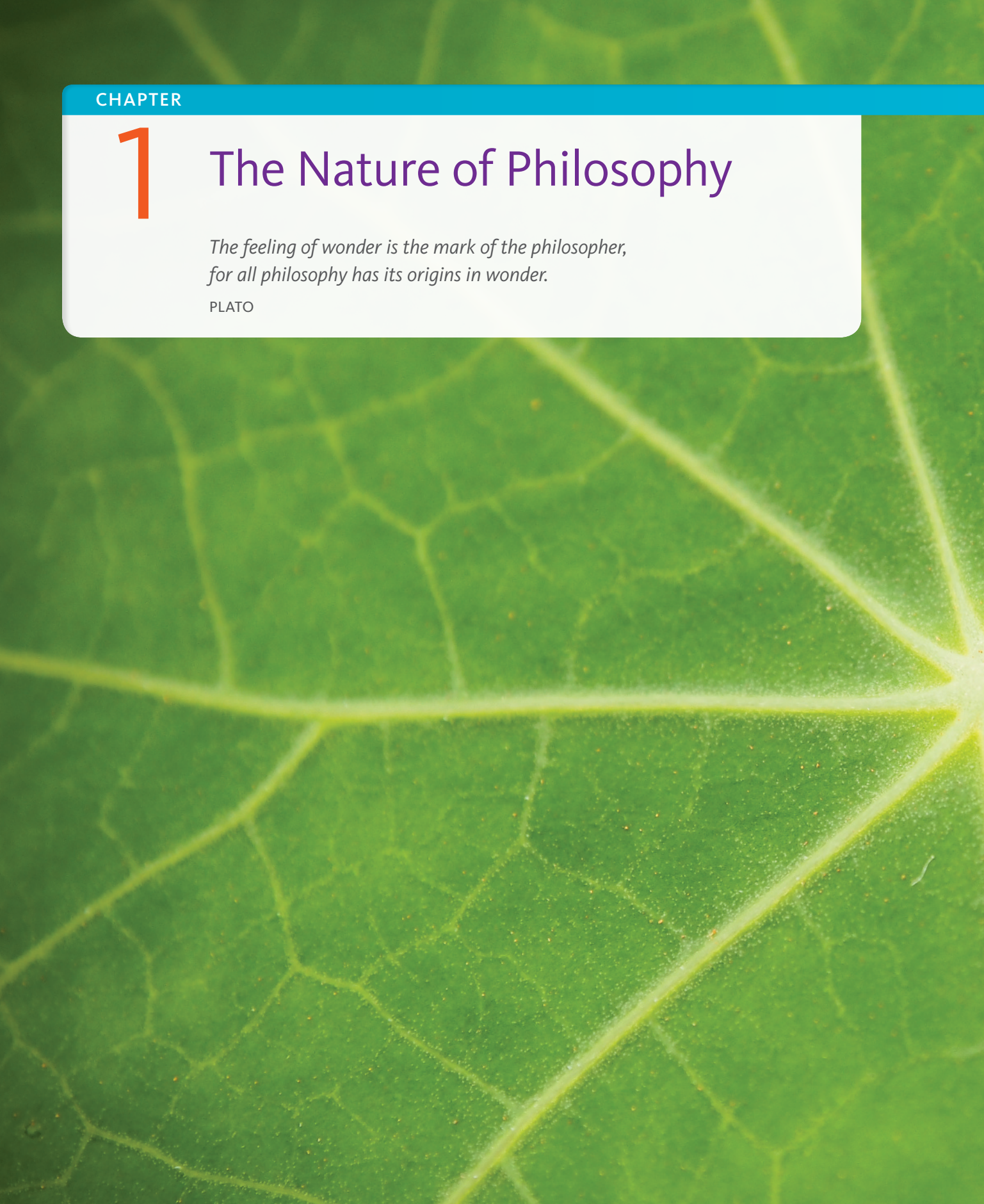
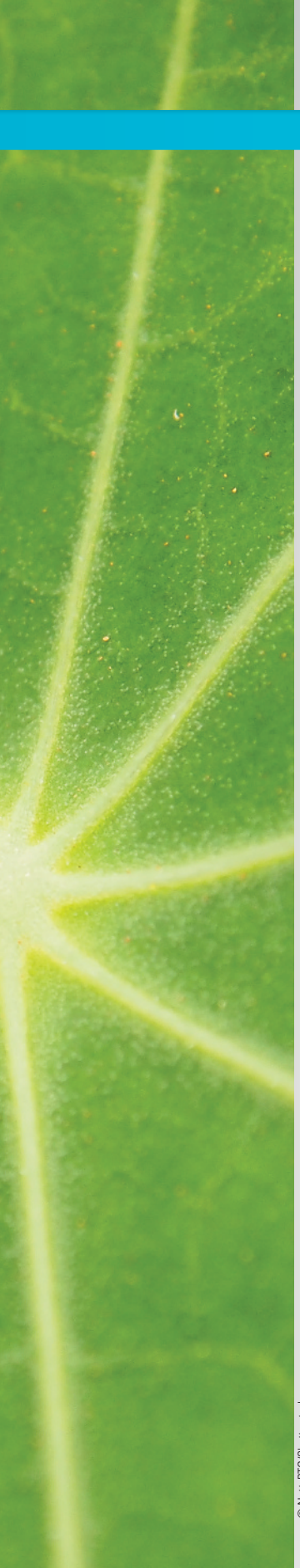
CHAPTER

1 The Nature of Philosophy

The feeling of wonder is the mark of the philosopher, for all philosophy has its origins in wonder.

PLATO





OUTLINE AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1.1 What Is Philosophy?

LEARNING OBJECTIVES: When finished, you'll be able to:

- Explain how Plato's Allegory of the Cave shows that philosophy is a freeing activity.
- thinking critically Explain what critical thinking is and how it is related to philosophy.
- Explain the importance of the philosophical perspectives of women and non-Western cultures.
- thinking critically Define reasoning and its role in critical thinking.

1.2 The Traditional Divisions of Philosophy

LEARNING OBJECTIVES: When finished, you'll be able to:

- Define epistemology, metaphysics, and ethics, and explain the kinds of questions each asks.
- thinking critically Recognize and avoid vague or ambiguous claims.
- thinking critically Identify an argument, its conclusion, and its supporting reasons.

1.3 A Philosopher in Action: Socrates

LEARNING OBJECTIVES: When finished, you'll be able to:

- Explain how Socrates' unrelenting questioning of conventional beliefs exemplifies the quest for philosophical wisdom.
- thinking critically Identify the main premises and conclusions of an argument, and its missing premises or assumptions.

1.4 The Value of Philosophy

LEARNING OBJECTIVES: When finished, you'll be able to:

- Compare Plato's and Buddha's claims that philosophical wisdom is related to freedom.
- State how philosophy can help you build your outlook on life, be more mindful, and become a critical thinker.

Chapter Summary

1.5 Reading

Voltaire, "Story of a Good Brahman"

1.6 Historical Showcase: The First Philosophers

MindTap MindTap for *Philosophy: A Text with Readings* includes:

- Activator videos that spark connections to the real world
- Critical thinking exercises that help guide student understanding
- Extended versions of the readings excerpted in the text via the Questia database, linked directly from the eBook text
- Video lectures that reinforce complex topics
- Assignable essays and chapter quizzes

1.1 What Is Philosophy?

Philosophy begins with wonder. Although many of us know very little about the jargon and history of philosophy, we have all been touched by the wonder with which philosophy begins. We wonder about why we are here; about who we really are; about whether God exists and what She or He is like; why pain, evil, sorrow, and separation exist; whether there is life after death; what true love and friendship are; what the proper balance is between serving others and serving ourselves; whether moral right and wrong are based on personal opinion or on some objective standard; and whether suicide, abortion, or euthanasia is ever justified.

QUICK REVIEW
Philosophy begins when we start to wonder about and question our basic beliefs.

This wondering and questioning begin early in our lives. Almost as soon as children learn to talk, they ask: Where did I come from? Where do people go when they die? How did the world start? Who made God? From the very beginning of our lives, we start to seek answers to questions that make up philosophy.

In fact, the word *philosophy* comes from the Greek words *philein*, meaning "to love," and *sophia*, meaning "wisdom." Philosophy is thus the love and pursuit of wisdom. It includes the search for wisdom about many basic issues: what it means to be a human being; what the fundamental nature of reality is; what the sources and limits of our knowledge are; and what is good and right in our lives and in our societies.

QUICK REVIEW
The goal of philosophy is to answer these questions for ourselves and achieve autonomy.

Although philosophy begins with wonder and questions, it does not end there. Philosophy tries to go beyond the answers that we received when we were too young to seek our own answers. The goal of philosophy is to answer these questions for ourselves and to make up our own minds about our self, life, knowledge, society, religion, and morality.

QUICK REVIEW
In Plato's Allegory of the Cave, chained prisoners watch shadows cast on a cave wall by objects passing in front of a fire. They mistake the shadows for reality.

We accepted many of our religious, political, and moral beliefs when we were children and could not yet think for ourselves. Philosophy examines these beliefs. The aim is not to reject them but to learn why we hold them and to ask whether we have good reasons to continue holding them. By doing this we make our basic beliefs about reality and life our own. We accept them because we have thought them through on our own, not because our parents, peers, and society have conditioned us to believe them. In this way, we gain a kind of independence and freedom, or what some modern philosophers call *autonomy*. An important goal of philosophy, then, is **autonomy**, which is the freedom and ability to decide for yourself what you will believe in, by using your own reasoning powers.

School of Athens, from the Stanza della Segnatura, 1510–1511 (fresco), Raphael (Raffaello Sanzio of Urbino) (1483–1520)/© Vatican Museums and Galleries, Vatican City, Italy, Giraudon/The Bridgeman Art Library International

Walking with his student Aristotle, Plato points upward: "And the climb upward out of the cave into the upper world is the ascent of the mind into the domain of true knowledge."

Plato's Allegory of the Cave

Plato is one of the earliest and greatest Western philosophers. He illustrated how philosophy aims at freedom with a famous parable called the Allegory of the Cave. The Allegory of the Cave is a story Plato tells in *The Republic*, his classic philosophical work on justice. Here is an edited translation of the Allegory of the Cave, which Plato wrote in his native Greek:

Now let me describe the human situation in a parable about ignorance and learning. Imagine men live at the bottom of an underground cave. The entrance to the cave is a long passageway that rises upward through the ground to the light outside. They have been there since childhood and have their legs and necks chained so they cannot move. The chains hold their heads so they must sit facing the back wall of the cave. They cannot turn their heads to look up through the entrance behind them. At some distance behind them, up nearer the entrance to the cave, a fire is burning. Objects pass in front of the fire so that they cast their shadows on the back wall of the cave. The prisoners see the moving shadows on the cave wall as if projected on a screen. All kinds of objects parade before the fire including statues of men and animals. As they move past the fire their shadows dance on the wall in front of the prisoners.

Those prisoners are like ourselves. The prisoners cannot see themselves or each other except for the shadows each prisoner's body casts on the back wall of the cave. They also cannot see the objects behind them, except for the shadows the objects cast on the wall.

Now imagine the prisoners could talk with each other. Suppose their voices echoed off the wall so that the voices seem to come from their own shadows. Then wouldn't they talk about these shadows as if the shadows were real? For the prisoners, reality would consist of nothing but shadows.

Next imagine that someone freed one of the prisoners from his chains. Suppose he forced the prisoner to stand up and turn toward the entrance of the cave and then forced him to walk up toward the burning fire. The movement would be painful. The glare from the fire would blind the prisoner so that he could hardly see the real objects whose shadows he used to watch. What would he think if someone explained that everything he had seen before was an illusion? Would he realize that now he was nearer to reality and that his vision was actually clearer?

Imagine that now someone showed him the objects that had cast their shadows on the wall and asked the prisoner to name each one. Wouldn't the prisoner be at a complete loss? Wouldn't he think the shadows he saw earlier were truer than these objects?

Next imagine someone forced the prisoner to look straight at the burning light. His eyes would hurt. The pain would make him turn away and try to return to the shadows he could see more easily. He would think that those shadows were more real than the new objects shown to him.

But suppose that once more someone takes him and drags him up the steep and rugged ascent from the cave. Suppose someone forces him out into the full light of the sun. Won't he suffer greatly and be furious at being dragged upward? The light will so dazzle his eyes as he approaches it that he won't be able to see any of this world we ourselves call reality. Little by little he will have to get used to looking at the upper world. At first he will see shadows on the ground best. Next perhaps he will be able to look at the reflections of men and other objects in water, and then maybe the objects themselves. After this, he would find it easier to gaze at the light of the moon and the stars in the night sky than to look at the daylight sun and its light. Last of all, he will be able to look at the sun and contemplate its nature. He will not just look at its reflection in water but will see it as it is in itself and in its own domain. He would come to the conclusion that the sun produces the seasons and the years and that it controls everything in the visible world. He will understand that it is, in a way, the cause of everything he and his fellow prisoners used to see.

MindTap To read more from Plato's *The Republic*, click the link in the MindTap Reader or go to the Questia Readings folder in MindTap.

QUICK REVIEW
If a prisoner is freed and forced to see the fire and objects, he will have difficulty seeing and will think the shadows are more real than the objects.

QUICK REVIEW
If the prisoner were to be dragged out of the cave to the light of the sun, he would be blinded, and he would look first at shadows, then reflections, then objects, then the moon, and then the sun, which controls everything in the visible world.

ANALYZING THE READING

1. At the end of his allegory Plato says the journey up to the sunlight represents the mind acquiring knowledge. What does the sunlight represent? What does the darkness of the cave represent? What do the shadows on the wall of the dark cave represent? Who do the people who stay in the darkness of the cave represent? Who does the person who guides the prisoner out of the dark cave represent? Read the allegory again and indicate what you think other things in the Allegory are supposed to represent.
2. What is Plato trying to say when he writes that a person who sees the real sunlit world and then returns to the dark cave will seem "ridiculous" to those who have stayed in the dark? Do you think Plato is right?
3. What is Plato trying to say when he writes that a person who sees the real sunlit world will "feel happy" and will "endure anything rather than go back to thinking and living like" those who stay in the dark? Is Plato right?
4. Is Plato assuming that knowledge is always better than ignorance? Is it ever true that "Ignorance is bliss"? So do you think Plato is right or not?

QUICK REVIEW
If he returns to the cave, he would be unable to see and would be laughed at.

MindTap™ In Plato's Allegory of the Cave, the prisoners perceive the cave as the whole world. How can we trust our senses? Go to MindTap to watch a video about what philosophers have thought about this.

QUICK REVIEW
The climb out of the cave is the ascent of the mind to true knowledge.

Suppose the released prisoner now recalled the cave and what passed for wisdom among his friends there. Wouldn't he be happy about his new situation and feel sorry for them? Perhaps the prisoners would honor those who were quickest to make out the shadows. Or perhaps they honored those who could remember the order in which the shadows appeared and were best at predicting the course of the shadows. Would he care about such honors and glories or would he envy those who won them? Wouldn't he rather endure anything than go back to thinking and living like they did?

Finally, imagine that someone led the released prisoner away from the light and back down into the cave to his old seat. His eyes would be full of darkness. But even though his eyes were still dim, he would have to compete in discerning the shadows with the prisoners who had never left the cave. Wouldn't he appear ridiculous? Men would say of him that he had gone up and had come back down with his eyesight ruined and that it was better not to even think of ascending. In fact, if they caught anyone trying to free them and lead them up to the light, they would try to kill him.

I tell you now, that the prison is the world we see with our eyes; the light of the fire is like the power of our sun. The climb upward out of the cave into the upper world is the ascent of the mind into the domain of true knowledge.[1]

Plato's Allegory and "Doing" Philosophy

Plato wrote this intriguing allegory more than two thousand years ago. It is important for us because we can interpret it as an explanation of what philosophy is.

Philosophy as an Activity. First, in the allegory, the activity of journeying upward from the dark cave to the light can be seen as what philosophy is. That is, philosophy is an activity. In this respect, it differs from other academic subjects. Unlike some other subjects, philosophy does not consist of a lot of information or theories. True, philosophers have developed many theories and views. However, philosophical theories are the *products* of philosophy, not philosophy itself. While studying philosophy, of course, you will study the theories of several important philosophers. But the point of studying them is not just to memorize them. You will study them, instead, as an aid to help you learn how to "do" philosophy. By seeing how the best philosophers have "done" philosophy and by considering their views you will better understand what philosophizing is. More importantly, you can use their insights to shed light on your own philosophical journey. It's the journey—the activity—that's important, not the products you bring back from your journey.

Philosophy Is Hard Work. Second, as Plato made clear in the allegory, philosophy can be a difficult activity. The journey upward is hard because it involves questioning the most basic beliefs that each of us has about ourselves and the world around us. As the allegory suggests, your philosophical journey sometimes may lead your thinking in directions that society does not support. It may lead you toward views that others around you reject. Philosophy is also hard because it requires us to think critically, consistently, and carefully about our fundamental beliefs. We may rebel against being asked to systematically and logically question and criticize views that we have always accepted. Yet the journey out of the darkness of the cave requires intellectual discipline and the hard work

[1] Plato, *The Republic*, from bk. 7. This translation copyright © 1987 by Manuel Velasquez.