

THE PHILOSOPHICAL JOURNEY

An Interactive Approach

William F. Lawhead

University of Mississippi



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To my grandchildren, Lauren and Will. May your lives be filled with the two dimensions of philosophy: love and wisdom.

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THE PHILOSOPHICAL JOURNEY, AN INTERACTIVE APPROACH

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THE PHILOSOPHICAL Journey

Preface

Socrates once complained in the *Protagoras* that eloquent orators and books are alike in that they provide massive amounts of information, "but if one asks any of them an additional question... they cannot either answer or ask a question on their own account." As I wrote this book, my challenge was to see to what degree I could provide a counterexample to Socrates's claim. Of course, Socrates is correct: there is no substitute for live philosophical conversations and debates. However, as you get acquainted with this book, you will find that it does ask you questions and provokes you to ask questions in turn. Instead of simply presenting information for you to passively absorb, its many exercises require your active involvement and some will even provide the opportunity for you to dialogue with your friends about the philosophical issues discussed. For this reason, I chose the title *The Philosophical Journey: An Interactive Approach.*

Rather than being like a slide show of landscapes you have never visited, this book is a guided, exploratory journey in which you will have to scout the terrain yourself. I hope that the journey will be fun, but there is also much to be done en route. This philosophy text is as interactive as is possible within the medium of paper and ink. Students taking courses in philosophy are often asked "What can you do with philosophy?" After taking this philosophical journey I have planned for you, I hope that you will realize that the really important question is "What can philosophy do with you?" You will certainly not agree with everything you will read in these pages, but do anticipate the fact that engaging with these ideas will not leave you unchanged.

Organization

This book presents philosophy by introducing the major philosophical topics, questions, positions, and philosophers. The different chapters are independent enough that they could be read in a different order if one so desired. However, everyone should start with the overview (section 1.0) in Chapter 1, which will prepare you for the journey. The remaining five chapters then lead into each of the major areas of philosophy. The first section of each chapter, as well as each subtopic, has the following features:

- Scouting the Territory—a scenario that raises engaging, philosophical questions.
- Charting the Terrain—a more precise presentation of the topic and its significance.

- *Choosing a Path*—a presentation of the opposing alternatives to help you clarify your own thinking on the issue.
- What Do I Think?—a questionnaire that will help you identify your current stand on the issue. An answer key will show you how philosophers label your own position and which answers are incompatible.

The opening section of each topic will be followed by sections that present and analyze the different alternatives that can be taken on the issue. Each of these sections has the following format:

- Leading Questions—a series of questions, asked from the standpoint of the
 position in question that will get you thinking about the philosophy and its
 merits.
- Surveying the Case for . . . —a presentation of the position under consideration and the arguments supporting it.
- A Reading from . . . —several brief readings will provide you with practice in analyzing philosophical passages and arguments. As always, you will be provided with guidelines for getting the most out of the passage.
- Looking through X's Lens—an exercise in which you will be asked to draw out the implications of the philosopher's position and apply the theory to novel situations.
- Examining the Strengths and Weaknesses of X—a series of considerations and questions that will guide you in forming your own response to the position.

Throughout the book, there will be a number of exercises that will require you to interact philosophically with the issues. These include:

- Philosophy in the Marketplace—a question, survey, or scenario that will allow you to apply the Socratic method of doing philosophy through structured conversations with friends outside of class.
- Thought Experiments—exercises that will give you the opportunity to make your own philosophical discoveries and to compare your conclusions with those of the great philosophers as well as classmates.
- Stop and Think Boxes—a brief pause in your reading to form some tentative conclusions about an issue.
- Spotlight on . . . —additional information that helps illuminate the topic.

(For a more detailed explanation of these unique features of *The Philosophical Journey*, turn to pages 10–13.)

Both students and teachers will find that these features provide a great deal to think about and talk about. In my attempts to make philosophy an activity and not just a course, I began developing this approach to introducing philosophy more than twelve years ago. The activities I have experimented with that have made it into the book have been the ones that my students most enjoyed and that have

made my task as a teacher easier. I hope that both the students and teachers using this book will find this to be true for them as well.

Teaching and Learning Package

Instructor's Manual Written by myself, this manual begins with an overall introduction to *The Philosophical Journey* and a general discussion of how to use the sundry pedagogical features to advantage in the classroom. This discussion is followed by a chapter-by-chapter, section-by-section series of lecture and discussion tips, including how to use some of the specific Thought Experiments and other interactive activities in the text. Finally, the manual contains a series of objective and essay test questions tailored to each chapter and section. Carefully crafted as a true teaching tool, the various elements of this instructor's manual provide an excellent resource for both first time and experienced philosophy teachers.

Presentation software with PowerPoint Lecture Outlines Prepared by Julius J. Jackson, Jr., San Bernardino Valley College, these slides outline important concepts, ask questions, and provide discussion topics. The presentational software can be used with either PC or Macintosh-based computers.

Talking Tutorial CD-ROM Developed by Julius J. Jackson, Jr., of San Bernardino Valley College, this unique CD-ROM Study Guide offers audio guided tours that highlight important chapter concepts, audio mini-lectures that provide in-depth study for selected concepts and philosophers, audio pronunciation guides for key terms, as well as flash cards, true-false, multiple choice, and fill-in-the-blank questions. This study guide can be used with either PC or Macintosh-based computers, and it is included free with each copy of *The Philosophical Journey*.

The Philosophical Journey Web Site Your students can continue their journey into philosophy online at www.mayfieldpub.com/lawhead, perhaps the first Web site designed specifically to accompany and supplement an introduction to philosophy text. The Web site, developed by Eric J. Salahub of Front Range Community College, has the following features:

- A *Hyperlinked Glossary* contains links to outside Web resources for further information on the philosophers and concepts described in the book.
- A Contemporary Connections section attempts to relate philosophical concepts from each chapter to modern dilemmas and current events. An Extended Discussion section contains chat room discussion links at outside institutions. An Explorations section invites students to investigate philosophical questions on their own on the Web.
- Interactive Polls and Questionnaires allow students to answer various philosophical questions of opinion and see the results contributed by their peers.
- Multiple Choice and True/False Questions are self-assessment quizzes for students distinct from those in the "Talking Tutorial" CD-ROM.

Instructors' Resources include a syllabus builder and PowerPoint Lecture Outlines in Adobe Acrobat[®] format.

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From the first rough outline to the final chapter revisions I have had the help of numerous reviewers who read it with an eye to its suitability for the classroom as well as its philosophical clarity and accuracy. I appreciate the comments of the following reviewers: Anne DeWindt, Wayne County Community College; Eric Gampel, California State University at Chico; Garth Gillan, Southern Illinois University; Achim Kodderman, State University of New York College; Mark A. Michael, Austin Peay State University; Benjamin A. Petty, Southern Methodist University; John F. Sallstrem, Georgia College; and Nancy Shaffer, University of Nebraska-Omaha.

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I also owe a debt of gratitude to the many people associated with the Mayfield Publishing Company who worked so hard on the book. Ken King, my editor, was the driving force (and I do mean driving). He persuaded me that the time to write the book was now and helped me take it from a bright idea to a finished work. My development editors, first Barbara Armentrout and then Kate Engelberg, quickly caught my vision of what the book was all about and helped me realize its potential. Carla Kirschenbaum was understanding, efficient, and everything a production editor should be. While the copyediting stage can be one of the less pleasant aspects of writing, Karen Dorman's insightful suggestions were instructive and I enjoyed working with her.

Whether you are a student or a teacher, I hope that you will enjoy interacting with my book as much as I enjoyed writing it. I would be glad to hear about your experiences with the book and its exercises as well as any suggestions you have for future improvements. You may write to me at Department of Philosophy and Religion, University of Mississippi, University, MS, 38677 or e-mail me at wlawhead@olemiss.edu.

William Lawhead

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