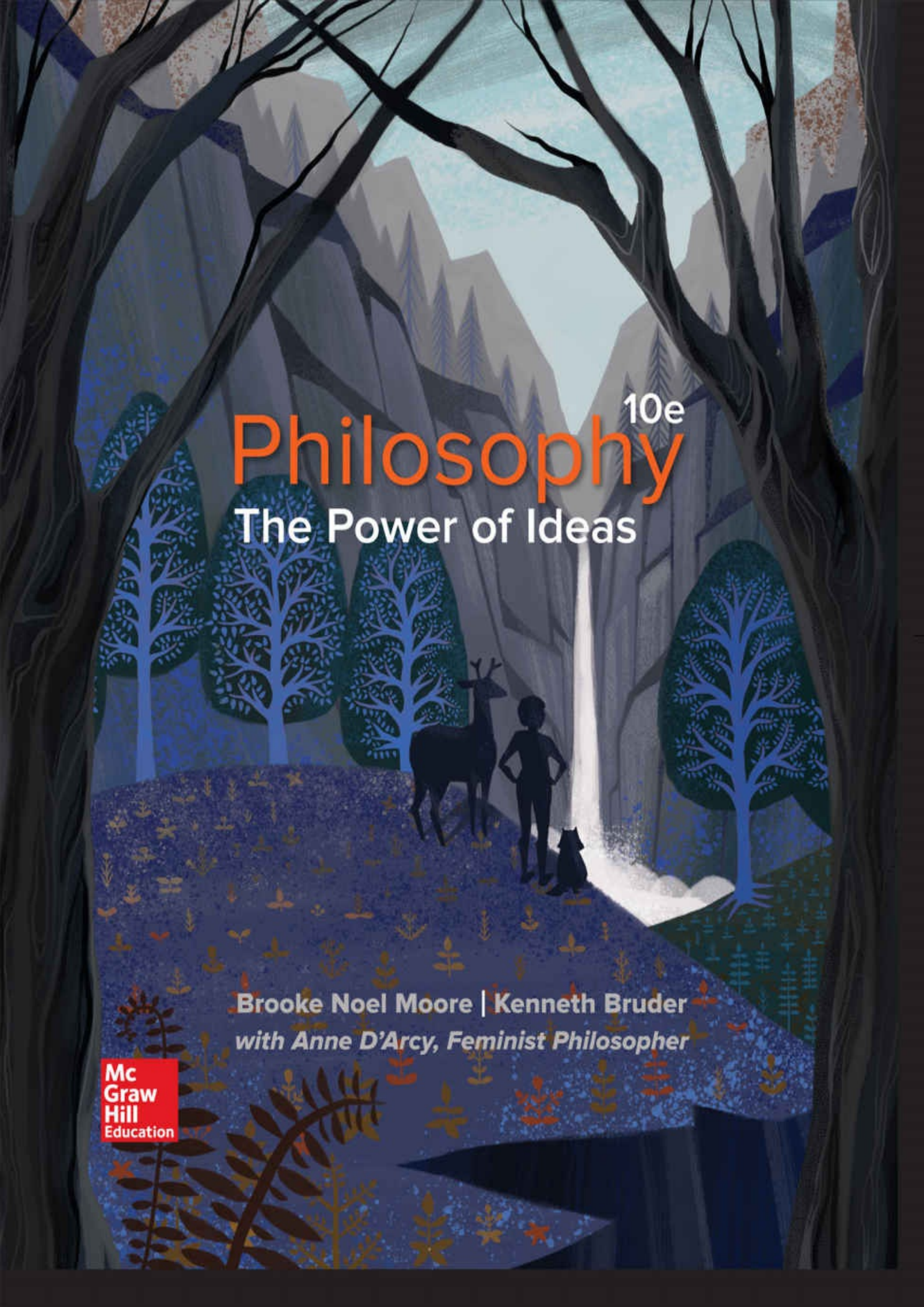
Philosophy
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The Power of Ideas
Brooke Noel Moore | Kenneth Bruder
with Anne D'Arcy, Feminist Philosopher
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Philosophy

The Power of Ideas

TENTH EDITION

Brooke Noel Moore and Kenneth Bruder

with Anne D'Arcy, Feminist Philosopher
California State University, Chico

Mc Graw Hill Education

PHILOSOPHY: THE POWER OF IDEAS, TENTH EDITION

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To Marianne Moore; Kathryn Dupier Bruder and Albert Bruder; and Xandria

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Preface

This is a straightforward ungimmicky introduction to philosophy written especially for first- and second-year university students. It contains separate historical overviews of the main subjects of Western philosophy and includes both the Analytic and the Continental traditions. It also covers Eastern philosophy, postcolonial philosophy, and feminist philosophy and contains a chapter devoted to major philosophical problems. We hope readers will learn that thinking deeply about almost anything can lead them into philosophy.

The following are important changes in the tenth edition:

- Revised and updated first chapter, making philosophy appealing to today's students
- New introduction to Analytic philosophy and Continental philosophy (Chapter 8; The Continental Tradition)
- New section on Non-Philosophy (non-philosophie) by Francois Laruelle in Chapter 8
- Substantially revised Chapter 14 (Feminist Philosophy), with new sections on The Fifth Wave, Analytic feminist philosophy vs Continental feminist philosophy, and Mary Daly; and revised treatment of Judith Butler, Simone de Beauvoir, and Ayn Rand
- New section covering feminist perspectives on major philosophers (Chapter 14)
- New Box on the Philosophy and The Simpsons (Chapter 17)

Philosophy—Powerful Ideas

We concluded years ago that most people like philosophy if they understand it and that most understand it if it isn't presented to them in exhausting prose. In this text, we strive to make philosophy understandable while not oversimplifying.

Which is not to say that everyone who understands philosophy is attracted to it. Philosophy is just not for everyone, and no text and no instructor can make it so. We do hope, however, that readers of this book will at least learn that philosophy is more than inconsequential mental flexing. Philosophy contains powerful ideas, and it affects the lives of real people.

Philosophy: A Worldwide Search for Wisdom and Understanding

Until the middle of the last century, most philosophers and historians of ideas in American and European universities thought philosophical reflection occurred only within the tradition of disciplined discourse that began with the ancient Greeks and has continued into the present. This conception of philosophy has changed however, first through the interest in Eastern thought, especially Zen Buddhism, in the 1950s, then through the increasingly widespread publication of high-quality translations and commentaries of texts from outside the Western tradition in the following decades. Of course, the availability of such texts does not mean that unfamiliar ideas will receive a careful hearing or even that they will receive any hearing at all.

Among the most challenging threads of the worldwide philosophical conversation is what has come to be known in recent years as postcolonial thought. The lines defining this way of thinking are not always easy to draw—but the same could be said for existentialism, phenomenology, and a number of other schools of thought in philosophy. In any event, in many cultures and subcultures around the world, thinkers are asking searching

questions about methodology and fundamental beliefs that are intended to have practical, political consequences. Because these thinkers frequently intend their work to be revolutionary, their ideas run a higher-than-usual risk of being lost to philosophy's traditional venues. We include in this book a small sample from such writers.

Women in the History of Philosophy

Histories of philosophy make scant mention of women philosophers prior to the latter half of the twentieth century. For a long time it was assumed that lack of mention was due to a deficit of influential women philosophers. Scholarship such as that by Mary Ellen Waithe (*A History of Women Philosophers*) suggests that women have been more important in the history of philosophy than is often assumed. To date, we lack full-length translations and modern editions of the works of many women philosophers. Until this situation changes, Waithe argues, it is difficult to reconstruct the history of the discipline with accuracy.

This text acknowledges the contributions of at least some women to the history of philosophy. We include women philosophers throughout the text in their historical contexts, and we also present a chapter on feminist philosophy. In it, among other things, we now include a section on feminist perspectives on some of the important Western philosophers.

Features

Among what we think are the nicer attributes of this book are these:

- Separate histories of metaphysics and epistemology; the Continental, pragmatic, and Analytic traditions; moral and political philosophy; feminist philosophy; and the philosophy of religion

- A chapter on selected perennial philosophical problems, including the problem of free will, the problem of consciousness, the problem of the gift (ethics of generosity), and problems in aesthetics
- A section comparing philosophy East and West
- A section on philosophical issues in quantum mechanics
- A section on zombies
- Coverage of postmodernism and multiculturalism
- A section titled "More Voices," which contains chapters on Eastern influences, feminist philosophy, and postcolonial thought
- Recognition of specific contributions of women to philosophy
- A generous supply of easy, original readings that don't overwhelm beginning students
- Boxes highlighting important concepts, principles, and distinctions or containing interesting anecdotes or historical asides
- Biographical profiles of many of the great philosophers
- Online checklists of key philosophers, with mini-summaries of the philosophers' leading ideas
- End-of-chapter questions for review and reflection and online lists of additional sources
- A pronunciation guide to the names of philosophers
- A brief subsection on American Constitutional theory, never more controversial than today
- A glossary/index that defines important concepts on the spot
- Teachable four-part organization: (1) Metaphysics and Epistemology, (2) Moral and Political Philosophy, (3) Philosophy of Religion, and (4) More Voices
- A section on arguments and fallacies

- For instructors, online detailed lecture ideas for each chapter

The tenth edition of *Philosophy: The Power of Ideas* is now available online with Connect, McGraw-Hill Education's integrated assignment and assessment platform. Connect also offers SmartBook for the new edition, which is the first adaptive reading experience proven to improve grades and help students study more effectively. All of the title's website and ancillary content is also available through Connect, including:

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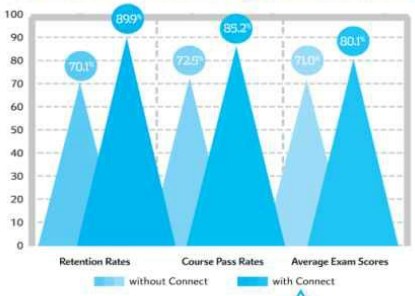

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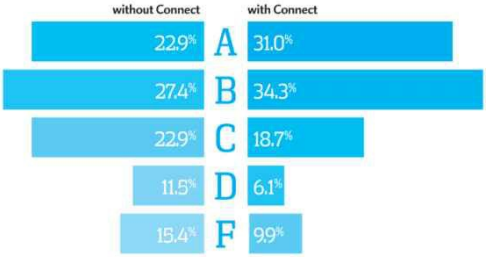

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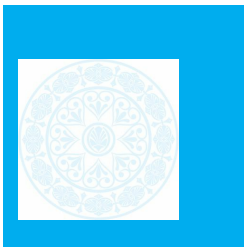

What is philosophy? What do you know about it? Did you know that before there was science, literature, or mathematics there was only philosophy? It's the umbrella discipline from which most other disciplines have evolved. The ancient Greeks, who invented philosophy, thought of any person who sought knowledge in any area as a philosopher. Thus, philosophy once encompassed nearly everything that counted as knowledge.

This view of philosophy persisted for more than two thousand years. In 1687, Sir Isaac Newton, universally regarded as one of the most important scientists of all time, set forth his renowned theories of physics, mathematics, and astronomy in the famous book *Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy*. At that time physics was still thought of as a variety of philosophy.

In fact, at some point nearly every subject currently listed in your university's catalog would have been considered philosophy. If you continue your studies and obtain the highest degree in psychology, mathematics, economics, sociology, history, biology, political science, or practically any other subject, you will be awarded a PhD, the doctorate of philosophy. If you wear an academic gown for commencement or other ceremonies, regardless of your discipline, it will be trimmed in the dark blue velvet that represents philosophy. On your sleeves will be three blue velvet stripes, again representing that you have earned a doctorate of philosophy, regardless of your specific field.

Understanding the complete history of your own academic subject in most cases means knowing something about the history of philosophy. That's what this book is intended to give you, a fairly detailed introduction to the history and problems of philosophy.

GOOMBAS

Would you be surprised to learn that you've been doing philosophy since you were a little boy or girl? Think about what you enjoyed then. Did you pretend you could wave a magic wand and sprinkle fairy dust on things? Did you imagine you had super powers and could fly? Did you read the book *The Velveteen Rabbit*—the one about the stuffed bunny who desperately wants to be real? Did you think about what is imaginary and what it is to be really real? Philosophy has plenty to say about that question—what it is to be really real and how we know it.

Did you play *Super Mario* and race through the Mushroom Kingdom and fight off Goombas? Then you were exploring power. Philosophy looks at the nature of power and at social relationships more generally. It also has plenty to say about ethics, acceptable behavior, and justice. Did you get in trouble when you did something that caused harm? Then you were looking at distinguishing right from wrong and building values to live by. Perhaps your parents taught you that there isn't any objective principle that describes right and wrong, that you would have to form your own sense of it, your own ethics, as you grew older, but in the meantime you had to do as they said. Are there such things as correct values, or is it all relative? What about different cultural values? Is it all a matter of where you happened to be born when it comes to values? Is there such a thing as ethical principles that apply to all situations? All these questions belong in the discipline of philosophy.

Did your parents teach you to tell the truth? Philosophy explores the nature of truth. Did you learn from your mistakes? Then you gained knowledge. Philosophy examines what knowlege is and whether knowing truth is possible. Did you think twice before telling a fib the next time? Thinking twice is a form of reasoning. Philosophy asks if we can trust reason, how to reason carefully, and use evidence to support our arguments when we take a position.

Did you like to draw or sing or maybe use a music app or play an instrument? Philosophy explores questions like what is art? and what is music? It wonders, why do some arrangements of sights and sound qualify as art or music while others don't?

If you're leaving your teens, you may have unanswered questions about life. You may be examining the values you grew up with, the ones you were taught, and now you wonder if you are merely conditioned to adopt the rules and opinions of your family. How will you assess which is your opinion and which is theirs? You may be asking yourself, "Who am I?" If you are not a person of faith, you may be questioning whether God exists, whether there is such a thing as a soul, whether life has meaning if you don't believe in God, and what is the meaning of life anyhow? What, if anything, happens after death? Where does your consciousness go, if anywhere? Is there such a thing as free will? Advances in neuroscience suggest that our brains make decisions before we're conscious of the decisions. How does that change the concept of free will? In order to contemplate these questions, wouldn't you have to know who you are, and what the self is? Philosophy is fascinated by these questions.

Well, then, what is philosophy? The word **philosophy**[1] comes from the Greek word *philein*, which means "to love," and *sophia*, which means "knowledge" or "wisdom." This isn't too helpful. We take the approach that you best understand what philosophy is by

looking at the questions it asks. You might be pleased to hear that philosophy also offers methods of inquiry for dealing with its questions and ways to attempt to arrive at conclusions you can accept.

QUESTIONS

The following are some of the philosophical questions we have already mentioned:

- What is it to be really real?
- How do we know what is really real?
- How do we know anything? What is knowledge?
- What is truth?
- What is the self? What is consciousness?
- Does life have meaning, a purpose?
- What happens, if anything, after death?
- Is there free will?
- What makes some actions right and others wrong? Is it all relative?
- What is art?

To this list we might add a few others:

- What is time?
- What is justice?
- Do people have natural rights?
- What are the ethically legitimate functions and scope of government?

- Do we have moral obligations to people we don't know? To nonhuman living things? To the environment?

Clearly, it is *possible* to go through life without spending much time wondering about such questions. But most of us have at least occasional moments of reflection about one or another of them. In fact, it is difficult *not* to think philosophically from time to time. Whenever we think about a topic long enough, if our thinking is the least bit organized, we may end up engaged in philosophy.

For example, situations arise in which we must balance our own needs against the needs of others we are concerned about—an aging parent might require care, for instance. Of course, we will try to determine the extent of our obligation. But we may go beyond this and ask what *makes* this our obligation, or even more generally, what makes *anything* our obligation. Is it simply that it strikes us that way? Or is there some *feature* of situations that requires a certain response?

If we are led to questions like these, the rest of the university curriculum will be of little help. Other subjects tell us how things are or how they work or how they came about, but not what we should do or why we should do it. Unfortunately, when most people reach this point in their reflections, they really don't know what to think next.

To take quite a different example of how philosophical questions crop up in everyday contexts, sci-fi movies often portray robots that think like people. Naturally, after seeing such a movie, or maybe just talking to Siri or Alexa, you might wonder if it may someday be possible to build a robot that can actually think? The question calls for a philosophical response. Of course, you might just wait and see what Google comes up with, but will that help? You can't just observe whether robots are thinking. Even if scientists succeed in building a robot that walks and talks and acts like Ava or Kyoko in the movie *Ex Machina*, one still might reasonably deny that the robot actually thinks. "It isn't made out of flesh and blood," you might say. But then beings from other galaxies might think even though they are not made out of flesh and blood, so why must computers be made out of flesh and blood to think? Is it perhaps because machines don't have souls or aren't alive? Well, what is a soul, anyway? Why aren't machines alive? What is it to be alive? These are philosophical questions. Philosophers have spent a great deal of time analyzing and trying to answer them.

Often, too, philosophers ask questions about things that seem so obvious we usually might not wonder about them—for example, the nature of change. That things change is obvious, and we might not see anything puzzling in the fact. If something changes, it becomes something different; so what?

For one thing, if we have a different thing, then we seem to be considering *two* things: the original thing and the new, different thing. Therefore, strictly speaking, shouldn't we say not that something changed but rather that it was replaced? Suppose George Washington puts a new head on his axe. It's still the same axe. Suppose the next year he replaces the handle. Still the same axe? Certainly George Washington thinks so; there can be no question about what he has in mind if he asks someone to bring him his axe. But is this right? Suppose we find the old handle and stick the old head on it. Isn't *that* George Washington's axe?

Perhaps this all seems to be a question of semantics and of no practical interest. But over the course of a lifetime, every molecule in a person's body may possibly be replaced. Thus, we might wonder, say, whether an old man who has been in prison for forty years for a murder he committed as a young man is really the same person as the young man. Since (let us assume) not a single molecule of the young man is in the old man, wasn't the young man in fact replaced? If so, can his guilt possibly pertain to the old man, who is in fact a different man? What is at stake here is whether the old man did in fact commit murder, and it is hard to see how this might be simply a matter of semantics.

PRESSING OR FUNDAMENTAL?

Philosophical questions, like the ones we have talked about, are among the most fundamental you can ask. That, of course, does not necessarily mean they are pressing questions. "How can I get this computer to run right?"—this is an example of a question that can be pressing in a way in which philosophical questions rarely are. You rarely have to drop what you are doing to answer philosophical questions.

But let's look more carefully at this question: How can I get my computer to run right? Notice that the question relates to the quality of your life. Not knowing how to get

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your computer working diminishes your ability to function efficiently. It impacts your life unfavorably.

But what kind of life should you live in the first place? This is a philosophical question. And there is a sense in which it is more fundamental than the question about how to get your computer to run right, because there are lives you might live in which you might not own a computer.

Notice now that this question (what kind of life should you live?) implies that the life you live is up to you. However, is this really correct? Is it true that the life you live is up to you?

"Excuse me," you may be saying. "What do you mean, is the life I lead up to me? Obviously it is up to me. Whatever I do is up to me. Nobody is making me read this book, for example. I'm reading it because I want to read it."

No doubt most people think our voluntary actions are up to us. That's sort of what it means to say than an action is voluntary. But what about our desires and values? Are these up to us? After all, our voluntary actions stem from our desires and values. This question—are our desires and values really up to us?—is deeply philosophical. As an experiment, you might try to change a desire or a value by an act of will. Will yourself to believe, for example, that it is actually right or good to hurt kittens. Can you do it? We can't either. Well, then, think of something you desire. Can you make yourself not desire it by an act of will? If you try such an experiment, it may not be so clear after all that your desires, values, actions, or the life you lead really is up to you.

MISCONCEPTIONS

You might think that something as old as philosophy would be fairly well understood by many or most people. Would you be surprised to learn that misconceptions of philosophy are common?

One misconception is the idea that *one person's philosophy is as correct as the next person's* and that *any philosophical position is as good, valid, or correct as any other opinion*. This idea is especially widespread when it comes to values. If one person thinks that people should contribute 10% of their income to their church, and another person disagrees, it may at first seem reasonable to say, *Well, the first person's view is true for that person, and the second person's view is true for the other person*. But if you look carefully, you will notice that the two may be disagreeing about whether *people in general* should contribute 10% of their income. If so, they cannot both be correct. If people in general should do such and such, then it cannot be that they need not do it.

Or let's say you think hunting is cruel and inhumane, but your roommate doesn't. He might say something like, *Well, that's okay for you, but that's not what I think*. What does he mean? Possibly he means just that it's fine with him if you don't like hunting, but he doesn't think there is anything wrong with it. But let's look at this more closely. When *you* said that hunting is cruel and inhumane, you probably didn't mean just that it would be cruel and inhumane for *you* to hunt. You may well have meant that hunting is cruel and inhumane, period. You may well have meant that, in your view, it is cruel and inhumane for *him* to hunt, and he shouldn't do it. If so, your opinion (that it is cruel and

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inhumane for *him* to hunt) and his opinion (that it isn't), cannot both be correct. Sometimes, when it seems as if opposing positions could both be correct, then closer inspection may disclose that in fact they couldn't.

Another misconception about philosophy is that it is *nothing but opinion*. In fact, we should distance ourselves from this notion. This is because philosophy *requires opinions to be supported by good reasoning*. If you express your opinion without providing supporting reasoning, your philosophy teacher is apt to say something like, "Well, that is an interesting opinion," but he or she won't say that you have produced good philosophy. Philosophy requires supporting your opinions—which, by the way, can be hard work.

Another idea people sometimes have when they first enter into philosophy is that "truth is relative." Now, there are numerous things a person might mean by that statement. If he or she means merely that people's beliefs are relative to their perspectives or cultures, then there is no problem. If, however, the person means that the same sentence might be both true and not true depending on one's perspective or culture, then he or she is mistaken. The same sentence cannot be both true and not true, and whatever a person wishes to convey by the remark, "Truth is relative," it cannot be that. Of course, two different people from two different cultures or perspectives might *mean* something different by the same words, but that is a separate issue.

Does a tree falling in the forest make a sound when nobody is around to hear it? Never mind that! Is there even a forest if there is nobody to observe it?

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A different sort of misconception people have about philosophy is that it is light reading, something you relax with in the evening after all the serious work of the day is done. In reality, philosophical writing generally takes time and effort to understand. Often it seems to be written in familiar, everyday language, but that can be deceiving. It is best to approach a work in philosophy with the kind of mental preparedness and alertness appropriate for a textbook in mathematics or science. You should expect to be able to read *an entire novel* in the time it takes to understand just a *few pages* of philosophy! To understand philosophy, you have to reread a passage several times and think about it a lot. If your instructor assigns what seem to be short readings, don't celebrate. It takes much time to understand philosophy.

TOOL KIT

Philosophy isn't light reading, and it isn't mere expression of opinion. Philosophers support their positions with arguments, which (ideally) make it plain why the reasonable person will accept what they say.

Argument

When you support a position by giving a reason for accepting it, you are making an **argument.** Giving and rebutting arguments (a rebuttal of an argument is itself an argument) are the most basic of philosophical activities; they distinguish philosophy from mere opinion. **Logic,** the study of correct inference, is concerned with whether and to what extent a reason truly does support a conclusion.

To illustrate, if you tell someone you believe that God exists, that's not philosophy. That's just you saying something about yourself. Even if you add, "I believe in God because I was raised a Catholic," that's still just biography, not philosophy. If, however, you say, "God must exist because the universe couldn't have caused itself," then you have given an *argument* that God exists (or existed). This remark counts as philosophy.

But if you want to be good at philosophy, you must also consider challenges to and criticisms of your arguments. Such challenges are known as **counterarguments.** Suppose, for example, someone challenges your argument with "Well, if God can be self-caused, then why can't the universe?" You are now being called upon to *defend* your assumption that the universe could not be self-caused. Good philosophizing requires the ability to reason correctly, to defend assumptions, and to anticipate and rebut rebuttals.

7

The Socratic Method

Philosophers have spent much time over the centuries trying to arrive at a proper understanding of several important concepts: truth, beauty, knowledge, justice, and others you will be reading about shortly. One of the most famous of all philosophers, the Greek philosopher Socrates [SOK-ruh-teez] (c. 470–399 B.C.E.), championed a method for doing this, which is now called the Socratic method. To see how this works, imagine that you and Socrates are discussing *knowledge:*

You: You're asking me what knowledge is? Well, when you believe something very strongly, that's knowledge.

Socrates: But that would mean that kids who believe in fairies actually know there are fairies, if they believe this strongly.

Y: That's a good point. To know something, then, isn't just to believe it very strongly. The belief also must be true.

S: That still doesn't sound quite right. That means a mere *hunch* is knowledge, if a person believes it strongly, and it turns out to be correct.

Y: Well, you're right again. So, for one to know something, one must believe it strongly, it must be true, AND it must NOT be a mere hunch. In other words, it must be based on good evidence or solid reasoning....

The exchange might continue until you offer an analysis of knowledge with which Socrates cannot take issue.

So, the **Socratic method** as practiced by Socrates involves proposing a definition, rebutting it by counterexample, modifying it in the light of the counterexample, rebutting the modification, and so forth. Needless to say, the method can be practiced by one person within his or her own mind. Clearly, the method can help advance understanding of concepts, but it can also be used to improve arguments or positions.

If you are reading this book as part of a class in philosophy, you may see your instructor utilizing the Socratic method with the class.

Thought Experiments

When we asked you to try to make yourself think, through an effort of willing, that it is good to hurt kittens, we were asking you to conduct a thought experiment. **Thought experiments** are not uncommon in science; in philosophy, they are among the most common methods used to try to establish something. You will encounter thought experiments in this book, and although some of them may seem far-fetched, you shouldn't discount them for that reason. For example, to establish whether time travel is possible, a philosopher might ask us to imagine someone stepping into a time machine, going back in time to before she was born and, while there, accidentally killing her parents. The thought experiment seems to show that, on one hand, the person existed at the time she entered the time machine; but, on the other hand, because her parents never gave birth to her,

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she could not have existed at that or any other time. The thought experiment thus shows, or seems to show, that time travel leads to contradictions and therefore is impossible.

Reductio ad Absurdum

Philosophers will often attempt to establish a thesis by using the ***reductio ad absurdum***—demonstrating that the contradictory of the thesis is or leads to (i.e., "reduces to") an absurdity. The thought experiment about time travel is an example of this method as well as an illustration of a thought experiment.

The most famous *reductio ad absurdum* in the history of philosophy is St. Anselm's ontological proof that God exists. As we shall see in detail in Chapter 13, St. Anselm (c. 1033–1109) began his famous proof by assuming—merely for the sake of argument—that God, a being "greater than which cannot be conceived," does *not* exist. This assumption, Anselm argued, leads to the absurd result that a being greater than which cannot be conceived is not a being greater than which cannot be conceived. In other words, the idea that God does not exist "reduces" to an absurdity; therefore, God exists. Likewise, in the foregoing dialog between you and Socrates, Socrates argued that the assumption that knowledge is identical with strong belief leads to an absurd result; which means that knowledge is *not* identical with strong belief.

Fallacies

A **fallacy** is a mistake in reasoning. Some mistakes are so common they have earned names, many in Latin. You won't often find philosophers making these mistakes, but you will often find them referring to the mistakes, so you should at least be familiar with the more common specimens.

• **Switching the burden of proof:** Logically, you can't prove your position by asking an opponent to disprove it. You don't prove God exists by challenging a listener to prove God doesn't exist.

• **Begging the question:** These days, you frequently hear people assert that something "begs the question." Generally, when people say this they mean the thing *invites* some question. However, this is not what "begging the question" means to logicians or philosophers. To them, you *beg the question* when you *assume* the very thing you are trying to prove, which means your "proof" doesn't go anywhere. For example, if you want to give a reason for thinking that God exists, and your reason is that "It says so in the Bible, and the Bible is the word of God," you are assuming that God exists, when that is what you were supposed to prove. It's like trying to prove that someone committed a crime because "he was the one who did it."

• ***Argumentum ad hominem*** (argument against the person): This fallacy amounts to transferring the qualities of a spokesperson to his or her insights, arguments, beliefs, or positions. For example, thinking that a person's *position* is frightening because the person himself is frightening would be an obvious mistake in reasoning, an *argumentum ad hominem*.

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It is especially important to note that when someone—Susan, let us say—has changed her mind about something, it doesn't mean that what she now thinks is incorrect. That *Susan* has contradicted herself doesn't mean that what she has just said is contradictory. If a critic of a war supported the war at an earlier time, that fact doesn't mean her criticism is defective. The earlier support and the present criticism are logically unrelated. That someone has changed positions is a fact about the *person*, not his or her position. Confusing these two things is perhaps the most common mistake in reasoning on this planet.

From time to time, you hear someone ask an opponent if he or she really believes what he or she has said. That question is irrelevant to the truth or falsity of what the person has said. In his book *Republic*, Plato portrayed Socrates as conversing with the Athenian general Thrasymachus. Socrates asks Thrasymachus whether he really believes his own argument. Thrasymachus responds by saying,

> What difference does it make to you whether I believe it or not? Why don't you test the argument?[2]