



Philosophy and Contemporary Issues

By John R. Burr, Milton Goldinger

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One of the most successful volumes in its field over the last 20 years, *Philosophy and Contemporary Issues* introduces today's readers to philosophy with timely, approachable readings of philosophical significance. The authors strive to demonstrate how philosophy illuminates and helps solve some of the important problems facing contemporary man, and they encourage readers to engage in philosophizing themselves. This book successfully makes the subject interesting and intelligible for readers encountering philosophy for the first time. Essays address freedom and determinism, morality and society, state and society, and knowledge and science. For individuals interested in an accessible introduction to philosophy.

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Editorial Review

From the Back Cover

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About the Author

One of the most successful texts in its field over the last 30 years, *Philosophy and Contemporary Issues* introduces today's students to philosophy with timely, approachable readings of philosophical significance. The authors strive to demonstrate how philosophy illuminates and helps solve some of the important problems facing contemporary man, and they encourage students to engage in philosophizing themselves. This book successfully makes the subject interesting and intelligible for students encountering philosophy for the first time.

Features of the Ninth Edition:

- **Seventeen new readings**—Incorporated throughout in sections devoted to philosophical issues, contemporary issues, and puzzles and problems. Includes selections from Richard Dawkins, Richard Swinburne, A.C. Grayling, Peter Singer and others.
- **One major philosophical problem covered in each section**—Followed by contemporary issues stemming from that problem.
- **Articles selected for their readability.**
- **Interesting pro and con articles on various contemporary issues.**
- **Problems and Puzzles section.**
- **The relation of traditional philosophical issues to key contemporary problems**—An explanation of each issue is followed by a related reading and a Puzzles and Problems reading.
- **Challenges conventional thinking and presents opposing viewpoints**—Covers topics such as the limitation of immigration, the existence of God, science and pseudo-science and the relation of mind and body.
- **End-of-section bibliographies**—Lists books and articles that are accessible to undergraduates.

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The purpose of this anthology is to show how philosophy illuminates and in some measure helps solve some of the important problems troubling contemporary humankind. The editors intend it to be an introductory text. Unfortunately, many introductory texts in philosophy are flawed by one of two major defects: (1) they are too difficult for the beginning student, or (2) they are too simple for the beginning student. Some introductory philosophy texts are introductory in name only because they demand of the philosophically innocent student a mastery of technical philosophical language and a knowledge of the history of philosophy one could reasonably expect only from a professional philosopher. No wonder students struggling to

understand such books become convinced of the truth of the popular view that philosophy is a subject that is wholly unintelligible to all except a few compulsive adepts and is completely irrelevant to life outside the classroom. On the other hand, in an attempt to eliminate excessive philosophical sophistication, other introductory philosophy texts are philosophical in name only because they contain no technical philosophy. Not surprisingly, students reading such books in order to learn about philosophy as a distinct discipline find them hollow and conclude that philosophy is not worth serious study.

In designing the structure of this book, in selecting the readings, in writing the introductions to the various parts, and in choosing the books to be listed in the bibliographies, the editors have striven to produce a work avoiding both defective extremes. Throughout, the guiding aim has been to make philosophy interesting and intelligible to students undertaking their first sustained study of the subject and, above all, to encourage them to engage in philosophizing themselves. To achieve this end, each part of this volume contains pro and con articles on provocative contemporary issues, which in turn raise fundamental philosophical issues. In addition to the material dealing directly with contemporary issues, each part includes other selections discussing at length and in depth some of the philosophical problems raised by the contemporary controversies. Each part closes with a "Problems and Puzzles" section focusing on some deep logical disquietudes embedded in the earlier readings. These problems and puzzles have been chosen not only for their intrinsic fascination but also for their power to lure students into broader philosophical argument. Therefore, each part forms a coherent unit of mutually relevant sections rather than a miscellaneous grouping. Every effort has been made to pick readings as appropriate as possible for the beginning student of philosophy rather than for the advanced or professional student of the subject. Because the editors planned a single volume and not a library, not all philosophical issues, methods, and movements could be included. It should be pointed out also that the readings in one part often will throw light on the material discussed in other parts. Nevertheless, the readings are also numerous and diverse enough to enable individual instructors to select just those they deem most suitable for their courses.

This introductory text is a mutual enterprise, each editor sharing equally in its production and benefiting in the same proportion from the comments and suggestions of his colleague.

This new edition of *Philosophy and Contemporary Issues* is a revision, not a reprint. New readings replace some of those in previous editions, and the introductions have been rewritten accordingly. Changes have been made in the bibliographies. We believe our ninth collaboration has resulted in a fresh edition superior to its eight predecessors.

The editors thank particularly Ross Miller, Editor of Philosophy and Religion at Prentice Hall; Wendy Yurash, Assistant Editor; the faculty of the Forrest R. Polk Library of the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh; the staff of the Oshkosh Public Library; and Terri L. Wouts. Finally we have profited greatly from the thoughtful comments, criticisms, and suggestions of the many users of the previous eight editions of *Philosophy and Contemporary Issues* and take this opportunity to express our appreciation. We especially wish to thank Michael J. Connelly, Longview Community College; Frederick Becker, Illinois Central College; and Carlos Colombetti, Skyline College, for their helpful reviews.

J.R.B.
M.G.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Johanna Garrett:

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Linda Justice:

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