

# CONTENTS

## PREFACE

xvii

## INTRODUCTION: THE INDESTRUCTIBLE QUESTIONS

1

The main branches of philosophy and the questions they raise and try to solve. Why study philosophy? The attacks upon philosophy. Try to imagine a world without philosophy. In this book the works of six philosophers and their views of man, God, nature, history, truth, ethics, and politics will be explored; and the philosophic viewpoints dominating the contemporary scene in philosophy will be examined.

## PART ONE: PLATO

### VIRTUE IS KNOWLEDGE

9

The historical situation: from the Golden Age of Athens under Pericles to the defeat of democratic Athens by authoritarian Sparta in the Peloponnesian War. The Rule of the Thirty; Charmides and Critias. The Socratic philosophy. The trial and death of Socrates (399 B.C.). Plato's life. Plato and counterrevolutionary politics in Athens. The concept of the philosopher-king.

### SHADOW AND SUBSTANCE

20

Plato as synthesizer of the conflicting philosophies of the Greek world. The dialogue form. Plato's sources: Socratic method; Socratic definition; the pre-Socratic philosophers: Heraclitus and Parmenides; the Sophists. Plato's metaphysical synthesis and its expression in the Allegory of the Cave. Contemporary relevance of the allegory.

### 3 THE DIVIDED LINE 31

Plato's theory of knowledge. What is true knowledge and how is it reached? The divided line: diagram of four levels of knowledge, each level with its own objects and its own method for knowing them. Opinion versus knowledge. Plato's theory of forms (ideas, essences). The Idea of the Good. The meaning of "dialectic" for Plato. The ascent out of the cave to the Idea of the Good as Christian symbolism.

### 4 THE TRIPARTITE SOUL 43

Plato versus the Sophists; the immutable truth of Plato's forms versus contemporary cultural and ethical relativism. Analysis of the idea of justice, Book I of the *Republic*. The form or idea of man. Theory of the tripartite soul. Relation to contemporary psychology, especially to Freud. The charioteer and the two horses. The man, the lion, and the dragon. Plato's ethics: "Justice" in the soul. The highest good is the life of reason. Virtue is knowledge.

### 5 THE IDEAL STATE 54

Plato's political philosophy: Justice in the ideal government is modeled upon the tripartite nature of the human soul and its justice, the proper harmony of the parts. The three classes of society and their education for their tasks: the producers; the administrators and warriors; the philosopher-kings. The Noble Lie. The status of women. "Getting and spending," the life of the producers. The ascetic, disciplined life of the guardian class. Political absolutism. Criticism of justification by absolute truth. Who guards the guardians? The charge of totalitarianism against the *Republic*.

## PART TWO: DESCARTES

### 6 HISTORICAL TRANSITION TO THE MODERN WORLD 68

The "terror of history" seen in the loss of the Athenian civilization, the "decline and fall" of the Roman Empire. The classical world view of Plato and Aristotle was of a natural cosmos, rational, ordered, moral, and purposeful which is known solely by human

reason. This was replaced by the supernaturalistic world view of the Church, whose source is divine revelation and whose fundamental beliefs must be accepted by faith, and are beyond the power of human reason to explain or to prove. Platonists versus Aristotelians. From the fourth to the fifteenth century the domination by Christianity of the entire social and cultural world of Europe. The survival of Plato and Aristotle in Christian philosophy; the recovery of Aristotle in the twelfth century. The emergence of the Renaissance, the regaining of classical learning and art. The Discoveries and the rise of technology. The shift to the view of truth as accessible to human reason. The rise of astronomy: the transition from Ptolemy to Copernicus, Kepler and Galileo; their challenge to existing beliefs. Galileo and the Inquisition. The growth of mathematics, physics, chemistry, physiology. The seventeenth century: The continued advance of scientific methods, technologies, and discoveries: the rise of philosophic interest in the new scientific method. Descartes's historical situation. The life of Descartes: mathematician, physicist, philosopher.

## 7 DOUBTING TO BELIEVE

91

Descartes's theory of knowledge. Rationalism versus empiricism. Descartes's goal: to build a system of philosophy as certain and imperishable as geometry by using the methods of mathematics: self-evident truths and deduction. The first two Meditations: the search for a self-evident first principle as foundation for philosophy. Requirements this principle must meet. Skepticism as method of discovering this absolutely certain belief. Deceptiveness of sense perception; possible deceptiveness of mathematics by demon. But I think, therefore I am (*Cogito ergo sum*): the one belief self-evidently true. Meaning of thinking. Does the *Cogito* meet the three requirements? Criticisms of *Cogito* proof. Influence of *Cogito*: Subjectivism.

## 8 GOD EXISTS

100

From the proof of my existence to the proofs of the existence of God. How to prove that God exists and that He is not a deceiver. Three kinds of ideas: innate, invented, and from external world. Cosmological proof of God's existence. Second proof: God exists as the only possible cause of my existence as a thinking substance. Third proof: ontological proof of God's existence. Criticism: "The Cartesian circle."

## CONTENTS

### 7 THE CLOCKWORK UNIVERSE 110

From the proof of the existence of God to the proof of the existence of physical things as the causes of our sensations. Attributes of physical substance. The piece of wax: extension is its only clear and distinct attribute. Mechanism. The clockwork universe.

### 10 BODY AND SOUL 121

Metaphysical Dualism. Two kinds of substances: mind and body; thinking and extended. The physical world: bodies in mechanical motion; determinism. Psychophysical dualism. Mind excluded from nature; free will. Metaphysical dualism and its insuperable difficulties: How can mind and body interact? Failure of the attempt to harmonize scientific mechanical universe with separate realm for the Christian soul. Yet the mind-body dualism, the dualism between self and its objects, and subjectivism remain influential for every philosopher since. A philosophy of absolute certainties for an age of conflict.

## PART THREE: HUME

### 11 HOW DO YOU KNOW? 134

Historical situation: the Age of Enlightenment: from the death of Descartes in 1650 to the death of Hume in 1776, high point of vitality and self-confidence in European philosophy. The prestige of Newtonian science, basing itself upon scientific experiment rather than reason; a growing impatience with rationalistic philosophic systems like Descartes's; and the conflicting interpretations of the new sciences by empiricism and rationalism. British empiricism: Bacon, Locke, Berkeley, Hume.

### 12 "A WELL-MEANIN' CRITTER" 147

Life of Hume. Impact of these empiricist currents of thought upon Hume at age eighteen. *Treatise of Human Nature* begun, finished after intense work and illness in eight years. The development of the arguments of empiricism to devastating conclusions. Hume drives home the empiricist claim that knowledge is only by sensory experience. Impressions and ideas are the only contents of the mind. Complex ideas. Without impressions, there

can be no ideas. Use of the relation between impressions and ideas to attack any "suspicious" philosophic term: substance, self, God, causality (all Cartesian terms). For none of these can sense impressions be shown; therefore they have no meaning. "Commit it then to the flames." Ideas fall into groups. Association of ideas, by which one idea leads to another: the three laws of resemblance, contiguity, cause and effect.

### 13 WILL THE SUN RISE TOMORROW? 159

Hume on causality. The causal relation is the foundation of scientific knowledge. What impression is the source of the idea of causality? The idea of causality arises in the mind when these relations can be observed between cause A and effect B: (1) contiguity; (2) priority in time; (3) constant conjunction. But none of these yields the idea of necessary connection. The idea of necessary connection has no source in sense impression, but only in psychological expectation. Necessary connection cannot be established for any "causal law." Uniformity of nature is meaningless. "The sun will arise tomorrow" is not denied but the necessity of the effect following the cause is denied. Two kinds of statements: relations of ideas and matters of fact. The limits of knowledge.

### 14 REASON: "SLAVE OF THE PASSIONS" 170

Self, God, ethics. Denial of idea of continuous identical Self. Self only a "bundle or collection of different perceptions." Religion: attack upon rationalistic proofs of God; refutation of Deism and belief in miracles. Morality: Reason does not guide action. Reason is the slave of the passions. Good and bad, right and wrong, have no source in reason or sense impression, but only in presumably universal sentiments of sympathy, fellow-feeling, and self-interest. Empiricism pushed to radical extreme. Hume's mitigated skepticism: instinctive animal faith. Criticisms of Hume. Influence greatest upon contemporary British "analytic" philosophy. Refuting Hume the task of all philosophers who followed him.

## PART FOUR: HEGEL

### 15 A REVOLUTION IN THOUGHT 186

The historical situation: the Enlightenment in France. The *philosophes*. The truths of physical nature and human nature will

make man free. The natural law of progress. The French Revolution: paradoxes and reversals. The Enlightenment in Germany. Kant: his theory of knowledge and his "answer" to Hume. The Kantian turn in philosophy.

## 16 THE REAL IS THE RATIONAL 199

The life of Hegel. Hegel's philosophic sources. German Romanticism; Kant; the philosophy of science, natural rights, and progress of the *philosophes*. Hegel synthesizes these into a powerful philosophy of conservatism, antiindividualistic nationalism. Organicism and historicism. Philosophy is an organic totality developing historically. This is the model for Hegel's theory of reality, his metaphysics. Reality is the totality of truth, the Absolute, Spirit or God. The Absolute is not separate from the world but immanent in it. Hegel's absolute idealism. Dialectic: The method by which reality can be grasped as rational. Hegel's dialectic compared with Plato's.

## 17 MASTER AND SLAVE 214

*The Phenomenology of Spirit* a systematic survey of the human spirit as it develops attitudes, religions, world views, philosophies. Truth now to be seen not only as truth of substances, but truth of the subject as well. Self-consciousness and its relation to objects: mastery, negation, cancellation, death. Self-consciousness in relation to physical objects; to organic objects; to human objects. The Struggle unto Death; Master-Slave; Stoicism; Skepticism; the Unhappy Consciousness. The truth which religion presents symbolically now to be transcended by philosophy. The end of the Master-Slave relation.

## 18 THE CUNNING OF REASON 226

Hegel's Philosophy of History is his dialectical method applied to the whole of human history. History as a slaughter bench. But Spirit, the Absolute, is embodied in human society. The Spirit of a People. All history is the history of groups, nations. The dialectic of human history is the triadic movement in the development of the concept of freedom from the Oriental World to the Graeco-Roman World to the Christian-Germanic World. How is this accomplished in the face of conflicting human desires? The Cunning of Reason accounts for the stability of societies and for social change. Problems with Hegel's philosophy of history, raised also against Marx.

**19 THE OWL OF MINERVA**

240

Hegel's Ethics and Political Philosophy. Ethics can only be social ethics, the value system of the society. There is no universal ethics or private ethics to which an individual might appeal. Internalization and alienation. The family; civil society; the state. The State and not the individual embodies the Absolute and its rationality, reality, and morality. Statism. The relations between states not governed by law. Within states formal freedom must be distinguished from substantial freedom. This is the heart of Hegel's conservatism. The status of dialectic; Influence: the principle influence on Marx and on many other theorists (Freud, Sartre); also on the social sciences.

**PART FIVE: MARX****20 THE YOUNG HEGELIAN**

261

Marx's philosophy the official philosophy of perhaps one-half of the present world population. Like Hegel, his philosophy was a response to the French Revolution and to the Industrial Revolution. Marx's life. Trier. The Young Hegelians. Exile. Paris years. Brussels. London. What is the power of Marxism?

**21 ALIENATED MAN**

274

Problem of the two Marxisms. The Young Marxism of alienation and humanistic fulfillment; the Mature Marxism of scientific socialism. Analysis of the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts*; of "The Jewish Question." Economics as the key to Hegel's philosophy. World revolution to overcome alienation. Relation to Engels. *The German Ideology* and Marx's shift to the scientific scenario.

**22 THE CONFLICT OF CLASSES**

288

Marx's historical materialism. The explanation of social structure and social change. Organicism and historicism. Social structure: the economic foundation of society. Conditions of production; forces of production; mode (relations) of production. Division of labor. Class struggle. Social existence determines consciousness. The relation between economic substructure and ideological superstructure. Marx's concept of ideology and its influence on intellectual culture. Marx's philosophy of history. History is the

dialectical progress of modes of production as each in turn becomes a fetter on the forces of production and is abolished. Theory of Revolution. The inevitable destruction of the capitalist mode of production.

## 23 THE WORLD TO COME

302

Analysis of *Communist Manifesto*: History of class struggles; the proletariat, the last enslaved class remaining to be freed. Achievements of the capitalist mode of production; but capitalism is unable to control the forces it has unleashed. The call to revolution. Why fight for an inevitable revolution? Status of the *Manifesto*: objective truth or propaganda? Science or philosophy? *Theses on Feuerbach*. Analysis of *Capital*. The "scientific" explanation of world history. The labor theory of value, surplus value, theory of exploitation, the polarization of classes. Capitalist competition, overproduction, crises, revolution. Marx's theory of the state. After the revolution, the classless society, the communist world to come. First stage: the dictatorship of the proletariat. Second stage: the last state "withers away." Fully developed communism: liberation from the division of labor. Theory of species Man. Marx's apocalypticism. Marx's predictions. Marx's contributions to the intellectual culture have transformed it.

## PART SIX: SARTRE

### 24 MY EXISTENCE IS ABSURD

322

Existentialism of the twentieth century the product of a line of development of philosophy from Kierkegaard and Nietzsche. The perception of the world in crisis: after World War I, the weakening of external structures of authority; the retreat to the self. Existentialism and nineteenth-century Romanticism. Crisis versus social existentialism. The fundamental existentialist premise: Existence precedes essence. The major themes of existentialism.

### 25 NAUSEA

335

Sartre's life. Analysis of autobiography of childhood, *The Words*. Sartre's philosophic sources. Analysis of philosophic novel *Nausea*. Things are divorced from their assigned essences: The world of existence has no connection with the world of words and reason. The superfluousness of things. Absurdity: the chestnut-tree vision. *Nausea* in the face of the absurd. The loss of the Cartesian self and of Cartesian physical substance.



## 26 "CONDEMNED TO BE FREE"

349

Sartre's life: the war years. Sartre and the French resistance movement; German occupation of France. Analysis of *Being and Nothingness*. Influence of Descartes, Husserl, on theory of consciousness. The two "regions of being": being-for-itself; being-in-itself. Facticity and transcendence. Conscious being: conscious of itself and objects; brings nothingness into the world; has power of negation; has freedom from the casually determined world; has total freedom (rejection of causal determinism of Marx and Freud); has total responsibility; has experience of dread. Morality as the recognition of my total freedom and responsibility. Bad faith as the escape from my freedom.

## 27 NO EXIT

365

Postwar appeal of Sartrean existentialism. "Existentialism Is a Humanism" lecture, 1945; analysis. Bad faith and inauthenticity; alienation; the spirit of seriousness; total freedom and responsibility: but existentialism is a moral philosophy which offers no principles for the guidance of action. Sartre's false claim that existentialism rests on the humanistic value of universal freedom. Sartre's view of human relations: *No Exit* analyzed: "Hell is other people." *Being and Nothingness*, Part III: Being-for-others; the look; the struggle to overcome the Other's freedom; "Conflict is the original meaning of being-for-others." Love and the cycle of sadism-masochism. The body as being-in-itself; the response is nausea. Nature horrifying, superfluous; symbolized by the viscous: sticky, slimy, softly engulfing, feminine.

## PART SEVEN: IN SEARCH: THE CONTEMPORARY SCENE IN PHILOSOPHY

## 28 IN SEARCH

386

Analysis of *Critique of Dialectical Reason*: Sartre's conversion to Marxism to provide "an ethics of deliverance and salvation." "Marxism is the inescapable philosophy of our time." Relation of existentialism to Marxism. The passionate longing for a foundation, to be both being-for-itself and also to be being-in-itself: But there can be no such being. Hence, God does not exist and "man is a useless passion." Aside from Marxism as foundation, Sartre had no exit from absurd, dreadful freedom. Sartre's relation to the Communist Party of France. Relation to Stalin, labor camps, colonial violence, Cuba, China. Break with Communists May, 1968. At death an ultraleftist.

Present philosophic scene outside the Marxist world. The philosophical descendants of Hume and Hegel in polar opposition. Principles and themes of phenomenology; Husserl and focus on quest for certainty: Sartre and Heidegger: focus on issues and modes of conscious being in alien world. Linguistic philosophy. Logical positivism. Return to Hume. Theory of meaning. Verifiability principle of Vienna Circle. Attack upon metaphysics. Philosophy as an activity. Ludwig Wittgenstein: from logical positivism to analytic philosophy. First stage: logical positivism. *The Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* and the picture theory of language; the meaninglessness of philosophic "problems" and their "answers." Second stage: analytic philosophy. *Philosophical Investigations* and the theory of language games. The appeal of analytic philosophy; philosophy as the activity of analyzing language games to dissolve philosophic problems. Criticism of Phenomenology and of logical positivism and of analytic philosophy. The death of philosophy? The search for a new philosophic vision. The promise of American philosophy, a synthesis of Hume and Hegel; the promise of history of philosophy; and of renewed research relating philosophy to the sciences and the arts—all of these having been buried under the avalanche of analytic philosophy.

**GLOSSARY**

**415**

**INDEX**

**419**