

Philosophy: Key Texts

Also by Julian Baggini

PHILOSOPHY: Key Themes

THE PHILOSOPHER'S TOOLKIT (*with Peter S. Fosl*)

NEW BRITISH PHILOSOPHY: The Interviews (*co-editor with Jeremy Stangroom*)

Philosophy: Key Texts

Julian Baggini

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For Beryl and Lino

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Preface

This book is designed to help the reader approach five key works of Western philosophy. It is not a substitute for reading the books themselves, but it will act as a guide for those thinking about or preparing to read or study the books for the first time.

The introduction contains some advice on how to read and make sense of original philosophical texts. Reading philosophy is not like reading a novel and the advice given here should make your encounters with such texts more rewarding.

Each chapter comprises an introduction which sets out the context of the book and its background, a systematic commentary on the text, a summary, a glossary of key terms and suggestions for further reading.

The commentaries combine two main features. First, they summarise and explain the main arguments of each text, clarifying and distilling their core. Second, the commentaries also contain critical points, questioning the validity or soundness of arguments, or bringing out unclarity or ambiguity in the text. The main purpose of this is not to provide an exhaustive catalogue of criticisms which could be made of the text, but to highlight potential weaknesses and to encourage the reader to question the claims being made in the texts for themselves.

There is also a glossary of key philosophical words at the end of the book, along with suggestions for further reading in philosophy.

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