

**A FIRST BOOK  
IN METAPHYSICS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649039128

A First Book in Metaphysics by Walter T. Marvin

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.  
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

[www.triestepublishing.com](http://www.triestepublishing.com)

**WALTER T. MARVIN**

**A FIRST BOOK  
IN METAPHYSICS**



A FIRST BOOK  
IN  
METAPHYSICS

BY  
WALTER T. MARVIN  
COLLEGIATE CHURCH PROFESSOR OF LOGIC AND MENTAL  
PHILOSOPHY IN RUTGERS COLLEGE

UNIV. OF  
CALIFORNIA

New York  
THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

1912

*All rights reserved*

COPYRIGHT, 1919,

By THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

Set up and electrotyped. Published November, 1919.

TO VINU  
AMBROSIAD

PRINTED BY T. MOORE & SON  
GREENFIELD, MASS., U. S. A.

## PREFACE

This book is planned to be a student's first book in philosophy, though the course which it outlines may either precede or follow a course in the history of philosophy. In writing the book I have had in mind to fulfil the following three purposes: First, I wished the book to be simple, clear and definite, and as brief as possible in order that the student using it might devote by far the larger part of his time to further reading. That is, the book should form a system of closely connected topics, an outline to be filled in by extensive outside reading and an outline to keep this reading from becoming hopelessly confusing. This reading should be selected from current philosophical literature and especially from those philosophical classics which are intelligible to the beginner.

Secondly, I wished to write, not an outline of the historical development of the problems of metaphysics, nor a long discussion regarding the definition and division of philosophy, nor again an account of rival philosophical schools and their theories, but a book in metaphysics, a book representing consistently one contemporary philosophical tendency. This forced the book to be partisan, but I believe that the beginner demands, and has the right to demand, a modern philosophical creed. Later he may have to outgrow this creed, but

in the meantime he insists upon being a partisan and takes little interest in being led through a philosophical museum. Accordingly, following my own philosophical convictions, I have tried to formulate briefly and rigorously that type of neo-realism which is a return at least to the spirit, though not always to the letter, of Plato and of Aristotle.

Lastly, I wished to adapt the book especially to the Oxford or preceptorial method of instruction. According to this method, the text-book and the lectures in class should serve to give a general view of the subject but should play a far less important part than the student's independent reading and study. The results of this reading and study should be expressed in a weekly, or better fortnightly, essay submitted to the preceptor and afterward discussed with him in an informal conference held preferably in his private study and attended by not more than three or four students. This enables the teacher to deal with his students as individuals and to vary greatly the amount and kind of reading he assigns to each. Some will do not only more difficult reading than others but three or four times the amount of reading.

Besides being adapted especially to the use of undergraduate students in philosophy, the book is, if I mistake not, adapted also to the use of graduate students as an outline of a course of reading in metaphysics.

A few words should be added regarding the reading I have selected to which to refer the student. One has to select from writings which are easily available and, unfortunately, as far as possible only from those in the



English tongue. Hence, it is often a matter of good fortune to find articles or chapters which fit precisely the subject of study and which are suitable for the beginner. However, this responsibility will be shared with me by every instructor who uses the book, for not only can he add to or select from the list of readings which I give but he can do what of course the book itself can not do, keep selecting from new articles and books as they appear. My chief regret is that many of the great classics, especially the logical and metaphysical writings of Aristotle, are not intelligible to the beginner and therefore have had to be either omitted or assigned only for advanced reading.

WALTER T. MARVIN.

GREENSBORO, VERMONT,  
*August 1, 1912.*



## CONTENTS

### PART I. INTRODUCTORY

CHAPTER I. DIFFERENT VIEWS REGARDING THE NATURE OF PHILOSOPHY .....	3
1. Introduction. 2. The belief that philosophy is a matter of feeling and appreciative insight. 3. The belief that philosophy is a science. 4. The standpoint of the present book.	
CHAPTER II. THE DEFINITION OF PHILOSOPHY AND OF METAPHYSICS .....	12
1. The difficulty of defining philosophy. 2. The cause of this difficulty. 3. Popular philosophy. 4. The definition of philosophy. 5. Metaphysics defined. 6. The program of this book.	

### PART II. THE NATURE OF SCIENCE

CHAPTER III. THE NATURE OF THAT WHICH IS KNOWN . . .	25
1. The nature of information. 2. The nature of truth. 3. The nature of propositions. 4. The knowledge of propositions. 5. The ascertainment of truth. 6. The nature of explanation. 7. The world. 8. Existence.	
CHAPTER IV. EVERYMAN'S THEORY OF REALITY .....	42
1. Introduction. 2. The world as perceived. 3. The world of common sense. 4. Appearance and reality.	
CHAPTER V. THE NATURE OF SCIENCE .....	53
1. The nature of science. 2. Faith. 3. Two ultimate types of fact. 4. The definition of science.	