



Truth and Existence: A Philosophical Inquiry

Michael Gelven

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Writing deliberately in a nontechnical style so as to make his book accessible to readers who are not professional philosophers, Michael Gelven here offers an extended meditative essay on the nature and meaning of truth. He approaches this subject directly, rather than through a critique of what others have said about it, and takes off from the realization that truth has a wider meaning than that which can be found in the analysis of true sentences, which is the focus of traditional epistemology.

Pursuing philosophical inquiry as a voyage of discovery, the book begins with ordinary questions about the worth and meaning of truth. A fundamental distinction is drawn between the "true" (as in a true proposition) and "truth" as essence, that which we confront as the ultimate terminus of our questioning—for example, between the true definition of mother as a female parent and truth as what we understand being a mother to mean, as one who sacrifices her own interests and safety for her child. The analysis then proceeds to examine the four ways in which we confront truth—through affirmation, acceptance, acknowledgment, and submission—and the existential modes of experience in which these confrontations are embodied: pleasure, fate, guilt, and beauty. Each of these four confrontations has consequences for how we understand the world in which we dwell. Thus the book concludes with interpretation of the world as our home, our history, our tribunal, and ultimately that which lures or beckons us to confront ourselves.

Plato, Kant, and Heidegger are the primary sources of philosophical inspiration for Gelven, but he eschews textual exegesis and academic debate in favor of engaging the reader as co-explorer in the discovery of what it means for each of us to be in truth.

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