

*A Journey to*  
PHILOSOPHY

*Erkki Kemppainen*

# A Journey to Philosophy

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## Preface

I started my studies in philosophy in the autumn 1972 at the University of Turku and continued next year at the University of Helsinki. An effort to combine the accuracy of analytical philosophy and the depth of continental philosophy became my remote ideal.

Parallelly with philosophy, I started to study law in Helsinki to earn my living. A civil servant career followed, and during that time I was not active in philosophy. However, philosophy may have had an effect into my work. Philosopher Heikki Kannisto, a teacher respected by many, once said, when we by chance met at Kaisaniemi street, that when philosophy students are moving to other areas, they often keep an inclination to ask the fundamental questions of their new field.

When I retired I returned to philosophy. This philosophical pamphlet is the synthesis of my experiences and thoughts. It is not a systematical presentation of philosophy and its history, but a description of those thinkers and thoughts that I have since student years until today studied and thought about. It is my story of philosophy, a journey from one thought to another. It also became a short introduction to philosophy, especially in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The underlying current in this work is the question about the subject, its actions and decisions, and the world where it is.

Most actively in the end of 1970s we had a philosophical discussion group consisting of Timo Kaitaro, Kalervo Koskimies, Markus Lammenranta, Antti Pietiäinen, and me. I also talked philosophically with Jukka Ihatsu and Taina Schakir. Later I have discussed a lot with professor of social work Mikko Mäntysaari, who knows a lot of philosophy.

Tuija Kotiranta, Mikko Mäntysaari, my colleagues for many years, and Kalervo Koskimies have commented on this text. In a deepest way, I thank them, my teachers in philosophy, and all others with whom I have had philosophical discussions during years.

Tampere, January 2020

*Erkki Kemppainen*



## Preface to the English edition

This book is the English edition of my book *Kertomus filosofiasta*, which was published by Books on Demand, Helsinki, Finland, in 2020. The text follows the original text, but it is a largely rewritten text. At some sections I have added ideas or text, at some other places I have condensed and shortened the text. Some subchapters are quite largely rewritten. The basic course of my thinking is the same.

Markus Lammenranta and Mikko Mäntysaari have commented on the English edition. I thank them for this support.

Tampere, February 2022

*Erkki Kemppainen*



## Philosophical Issues

I met with philosopher Tauno Nyberg in the autumn evening on the 14<sup>th</sup> of September in 1998 at his home in Helsinki. We had planned to meet for some time, and the meeting took place in time. He died in October. He lived then in Helsinki at Kasarmi Street, on the top floor in a flat with a view over roofs, for example, to Johannes Church. He had been for a long time an independent philosopher after having worked earlier at the Institute of Philosophy in the University of Helsinki.

As a philosopher he was thorough. He thought for a long time about those questions he thought. He was known as a student of G. H. von Wright and the expert of the philosophies of Immanuel Kant and Ludwig Wittgenstein.

His thinking concerning the concept of pain was original. Earlier in his presentation at the Goethe Institute in Helsinki he analyzed the pain basically as the construction of a human being. And: "What a human being has constructed that the human being can deconstruct".

We talked about life and philosophy. For me it was important that he said to me that you are a philosopher. Your comments are philosophical. You understand what I talk.

He concentrated and started to speak systematically about philosophy. At some moments it was difficult for him to sit or stand and then he spoke while lying on the floor with a pillow, all time thinking and speaking peacefully and absolutely in a concentrated way. It became a lecture of 45 minutes.

He started: "After all, there are only three questions in philosophy." First, there is a question about what there is, what is real (metaphysics, ontology). Secondly, there is a question about how we can obtain knowledge about reality (theory of

What are cause and effect, and meaning? What connects people? What is law and what is its foundation? The book guides the reader to a journey to philosophy. The questions range from theory of knowledge and philosophy of science to the problems of the being as a human being, social philosophy, and philosophy of law.

The tradition of explanation, which is typical for natural sciences, focuses on the concepts of cause and effect. The tradition of understanding focuses on meanings and interpretation. Natural law theory and legal positivism are also analyzed.

The philosophies of Aristotle, Immanuel Kant, Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, Ludwig Wittgenstein, and Georg Henrik von Wright are discussed at many points in the book. Jürgen Habermas's discourse theory is presented as a synthesis in social theory and philosophy of law.



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