

### Explaining Your World

Read the following selection from Thomas I. White's *Discovering Philosophy*, and answer the questions at the end.

You are on a tropical cruise and you're having a terrific time. The people are friendly and the weather is great. On the last night of the cruise . . . you decide to take a walk around the deck to clear your head. . . . [T]he ship unexpectedly runs into heavy winds and rough seas. The ship lurches, and you fly across the deck. . . . [A] huge wave crashes over the ship. The ship pitches again, and you are washed overboard. Unfortunately, no one realizes you're gone until the ship returns to port. Your disappearance is a mystery.

The good news is that when you were thrown overboard, you grabbed hold of a log in the water, and the winds and currents carried you to a small island nearby. You are safe. The bad news is that you don't have the faintest idea where you are. In fact, your head hit a stanchion before you went overboard, and you have a ferocious headache and complete amnesia. You do not know who you are, where you came from, or anything about your past. Worse than that, you remember almost nothing of what you learned through your years of schooling. You know you need food and water, but beyond that, your mind is blank. It works, but it's empty. . . .

So here you are . . . surrounded by a complex world. Light turns into darkness as a disc in the sky that is too bright to look at moves across the sky and sinks into the waves. . . . Then countless smaller lights appear that move very slowly. After what seems like a set period, the darkness goes away and the bright circle returns—but from the other side of the island. The sky is usually blue, the breeze warm and comfortable. But sometimes for no reason dark gray objects cover the blue, and drops of water, loud noises, hard winds, and lines of light come from the sky. Then the blue returns. Food grows on the trees, and even replaces itself. You also see other living beings, but they are different from you. Some live in the water, others fly. . . . What does it all mean?<sup>2</sup>

1. In trying to comprehend your world, you need to answer the following questions. (Remember, you've had amnesia.)
  - a. What are the things that move?
  - b. What are the things that are stationary?
  - c. What events in your world seem to occur periodically?
  - d. What events in your world are difficult to predict?
2. Now that you understand what is in your world, how do you explain why they are in your world? How is it they have come to exist? Be creative in your answers.

<sup>2</sup>Thomas I. White, *Discovering Philosophy* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1991), 302-303.