

## Study guide

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Schumacher, E. F. *A Guide for the Perplexed*. Harper Perennial, 1977, pp. 1-14. In Chapter 1, "On Philosophical Maps", Schumacher begins to articulate how contemporary science differs from traditional science; he is a critic of scientific materialism.

*The slenderest knowledge that may be obtained of the highest things is more desirable than the most certain knowledge obtained of lesser things.*

— St. Thomas Aquinas

1. What, according to Schumacher, is the purpose of a map? What is often missing from the philosophical maps provided by modern school and university education? What philosophy—or philosophies—guide such map-makers?
2. Which do you think is a better principle for map-makers: “when in doubt leave it out” or “when in doubt, show it prominently”? What does Schumacher mean when he says that “people are asking for bread, and they are being given stones”? What does this have to do with modern *scientific materialism*?
3. What are the four great truths, or landmarks, that are featured in Schumacher’s guide? What is the purpose of including these truths on his map? How does Schumacher’s map differ from that of other map-makers—Descartes for instance? And in what sense is every modern philosopher a Cartesian?
4. What are the ethical implications of losing the *vertical* dimension in philosophical map-making? How is the notion of a vertical dimension different in traditional thinking and in modern, evolutionary, thinking? Do you agree with Aquinas that man has an inborn desire for higher things—to “rise above” the current state of affairs? If so, what are the implications for apologetics?