

What is Philosophy?

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In this paper, I build up the background knowledge of how I view history of philosophy and how it changes from the ancient world up today. What people think of as philosophy today, is not what people thought of as philosophy in the ancient world, but there is a continuous tradition that has changed multiple times due to external influence and kind of cornered itself away from all the disciplines that previously was considered part of philosophy. Modern people tend to view the history of philosophy through the lens of a modern perspective on philosophy. However, this has actually less in common with ancient philosophy than people think, despite that there is indeed a continuous tradition of thought from the biased perspective that modern people have. This background knowledge is going to be important for future papers where I go back to more ancient ideas and how they were originally understood, instead of building upon the theoretical tradition of modern mathematics, where things gets harder to understand than necessary. The goal is to help people understand their own history better, while grasping recent ideas in modern mathematics.

In the mathematical community today, some people are obsessed with the irrational number π , which describes the ratio between the circumference of a circle to its diameter. This obsession with this number has a long history that goes back to the ancient world. Yet, it is one of the few traditions that survived, among a large number of cultural obsessions, most which were lost in time.

Theoretically, from a perspective of Avatar Extensions, one can argue that it is not π (pi) that is the most important number, but τ (tau). Tau is the ratio of the circumference of a circle to its radius. So, $\tau = 2\pi$. The π people are obsessed about is due to arbitrary cultural influence and historical coincidences, that put the focus in the mathematical community on the “wrong” number.

Understanding how such cultural traditions appeared and why they went extinct, is important when studying how people use symbols. This goes back to a very simple question: What is philosophy?

When asking this question, it is important to acknowledge that the meaning of the word “philosophy” has changed over time. It is not a static idea invented once and remained that way forever. People had their own perspectives of what they thought philosophy was, in ways that might seem surprising, sometimes shocking, but also very influential in ways that are hard to understand.

Through history, people who put their ideas out there in the world often wanted to be seen as philosophers. Now, the problem is that their concept of philosophy is not necessarily the same as how mainstream philosophy was practiced. Mainstream philosophy is generally not accessible historically, even from our perspective where scholars tend to think they know what it is. The more evidence is brought up in science, scholars start doubting whether our way of looking at history is the correct one. It is common that some scholars discover new ways of thinking about this topic and write books about their views. However, it is easy to still operate inside a very modern approach and mindset. Viewing philosophy historically, as how it was practiced, is very difficult.

When starting to piece together this enormous puzzle, a picture emerges which is very different from most textbooks tell today. A lot of the things that shape our culture has to do with philosophy in ways that can get uncomfortable to sensitive minds. This happens because how people perceive the world, changes over time. What peaks curiosity for people living in the ancient world, does not always overlap with the kind of things people find interesting in modern times.

Keep in mind that people today do not “own” the ideas of people living in the ancient world.

Similarly, people in the ancient world are not responsible for how their ideas influenced our way of thinking, in ways that can be destructive to our modern mindset when these things resurface again.

Just take a simple thing like the number π . One would think that at some point, people would pay more attention to τ , because it is more aesthetically “correct” to give τ more attention. However, this has not happened. The cultural momentum behind π is too large for any single person to change the whole tradition. It is a self fulfilling prophecy: Because people are paying attention to a specific number, new people also pay attention to the same number thinking that there must be a reason why this number is important and they come up with arguments to show and convince other people why this is the case. Instead of arguing in favor of other numbers and perspectives.

This means, when answering what philosophy is throughout history, it is impossible to ignore the cultural momentum. The things that people are obsessed by and see as philosophy, is generally not the same things that modern people think of as philosophy today. From our perspective, it might seem obvious that this is not what philosophy is. Yes. From our perspective, it is not. You will see.

How people think of philosophy today fits in a modern context of collective human knowledge. The problem? This is simply not what people thought of as philosophy historically. It means, one should accept people’s perspectives on philosophy on their own, without judging how much one personally agrees with it. This can be difficult when emotionally, these perspectives undermine our own mindset. Many things that people today take for granted, are not historically accurate. When studying history this way, it might feel like taking apart the things people love with our mindset and making these ideas feel incomplete.

The real history of philosophy is often more shocking and unsatisfying than the simplistic views that modern humans impose and demand. The issue is that when demanding too much from history, this also prevents us from learning about our own past. You have a choice: Either you give up your attachment to the past and let it go, or you get stuck inside your own mental constructs about it.

There is one sentence I believe summarizes what is wrong with our lens:

Religion was primarily related to practices of medicine.

Now, this might not seem to have anything to do with philosophy. This fact can look uninteresting and irrelevant. However, this is the major issue that causes people today to view the history of philosophy in a biased perspective shaped by a modern mindset. You have to break down what happened in history to this core insight, over and over, to really get what is going on.

For example, what people are taught today is that there is a break between what people call “natural philosophers” and “social philosophers” in Ancient Greece. This is wrong.

Why is it wrong? The division that people constructed between “natural philosophy” and “social philosophy”, is the result of reading the dialogues in Plato, where Socrates walks around asking people questions. In reality, Socrates probably did not walk around having philosophical debates this way. Plato wrote these texts to train new students thinking about what philosophy is. With other words, these stories is a stage that Plato constructs mentally, a scene where he can perform his own thought experiments. When people read these stories as evidence of a change in how philosophy was practiced, they completely misunderstand how these stories were used.

Plato does not write about actual historical events. This is just not how people write philosophical texts in the ancient world. None of the stories that Plato writes can be taken as historical, nor any stories that continues in the later philosophical tradition.

Why not? These stories seem to have some historical content. Why would they not write about historical events? The reason is that students are there to study medicine.

Here, it might seem as a conceptual gap, that students who study medicine, shows that Plato could not have written about historical events. However, you are not reading stories about how philosophy is practiced. What you are reading about, is introductory texts to the ideas of philosophy. It is like, taking the first course in a multi-year education and think you have nailed down what the field is about. This is very far from the actual reality of how philosophy was practiced at the time.

The first rule when ancient people teach medicine: You do not give it away to everyone. The secrets of medicine knowledge are well kept in close social circles, where people could control access. It is a gatekeeping mechanism, carefully crafted to ensure the wealth and prosperity of a particular group of people. Everyone wants to steal their knowledge if they could, because scammers could mask themselves as professional practitioners of medicine to ignorant victims.

The mechanism of protecting medicine knowledge is the mystery cult. This consists of a priesthood that initiates people into the secrets of a divine mystery, which was the requirement to be accepted as students in schools of medicine. The initiation ritual is used to mark the transition into adulthood. With other words, you were not considered a grown up until you passed the initiation ritual, before you were sworn into protecting the secrets of medicine for that particular cult.

This means, the stories about Socrates are texts that people learn before they get initiated. It is for children. They can prepare for their training in philosophy, by listening to and memorizing these stories. So, it is not how adults practiced philosophy. This is what they taught their children.

When people confuse stories design for children as the historical events of how philosophers lived, you get a conceptual gap between “natural philosophy” and “social philosophy”, because what you believe is “social philosophy” is just a pre-school text, before children’s minds are capable of the abstract thought necessary to advance to levels where they also can keep secrets of medicine. Do you see how problematic it is to assume that you know how Socrates lived from these texts?

Here is when people with a modern mindset start to get uncomfortable. Because, if what they understand as philosophy today is just introductory texts from the ancient world, then they also risk that everything they thought about philosophy as a whole is wrong.

Now, do scholars know how Socrates lived? No. The texts that survived were introductory texts.

To answer how, one has to piece together evidence from Plato, Aristotle and the library of Alexandria. A very different perspective of philosophy emerges from this evidence.

You might think you know what a philosopher is, but the real situation is that you do not know. I do not know either. The little that I have learned is what I get from piecing together evidence from multiple sources. From this evidence, I can confirm that philosophy is not what I thought it was.

What I believe is happening, is what people call “social philosophy” is more or less a continued tradition of “natural philosophy” and there is not much of a breaking away from it. Instead, one can think about it as increasing levels of sophistication that gets more and more involved with religion and politics over time. Yet, the key insight is that all of this activity is evolving around medicine.

Mystery cults are in many ways the barrier that prevents people today from learning about the practice of philosophy in the ancient world. It is a cultural barrier. A mystery cult is something one has to grow up with to understand properly. From the outside, this barrier of knowledge might not

make sense, because modern humans are used to people sharing their knowledge. However, in the ancient world, knowledge is a garden that is protected from intruders. You are not supposed to be in that garden when you are not welcome there. In that sense, knowledge is a forbidden fruit. It is not forbidden in a general sense, like for all people, but it is forbidden for outsiders. The insiders do get to eat from this tree without fear. The outsiders are told that everything that is wrong in the world is their own mistakes, for being curious and try to eat from the forbidden fruit of knowledge.

If this sounds like the Garden of Eden, then it is because this story was likely written in the library of Alexandria, by philosophers. This was one of the ways philosophy was practiced. Like the stories of Socrates, this is another introductory text. It is designed for children.

When you fall off this track of arguments, remember to keep going back to this sentence:

Religion was primarily related to practices of medicine.

Everything people today think of as religion, was focused toward indoctrinating children. This is not how adults practiced religion. Most of the texts that adults used were lost. You read the texts that survived, but those texts were not the real deal, but just introductory texts. All people got was one book today, but the truth was a whole library.

This sentence has to be revisited over and over, until you really get what is going on. It is uncomfortable for our modern mindset, but this is just how people practiced philosophy. Your idea of philosophy is not the same as how these people viewed philosophy.

We do not get to “own” philosophy, in the sense that you can decide what these people did and how they influenced how modern humans view history of philosophy. Similarly, these people are not responsible for our wrong ideas. Philosophy today does not mean the same as their philosophy.

Basically, philosophy was going through extensive training to learn a diverse set of topics, but most importantly, students were trained in the secret knowledge of medicine. This secret knowledge was safeguarded by initiation rituals into mystery cults. What we in our modern mindset consider as religion at the time, is based on introductory texts that advertised for various mystery initiations.

This means, what we consider religion, was not separated from philosophy. It is made up of fairy tales that people tell to children, to get them interested in learning medicine.

Making up stories with religious content, was not something philosophers did to mislead people. They did not think about these stories this way. It is just a natural way of doing advertisement for their schools. It is not their mistake that these stories they advertised is how you think of as religion.

Many people today have invested their entire careers into what they think of as religion and philosophy, but the truth is that these things were not how we think of them. The difference is so huge in cultural gap that people today struggle to bridge this gap mentally. It simply does not “compute” from their perspective, using a modern mindset to view history of philosophy.

This is not caused by people who lived in the ancient world. By historical accidents and coincidences, modern humans ended up viewing ancient religion in a particular way that is not reflecting actual reality of that history. What happened is a slow change over centuries, where our lens of history got distorted by new cultural layers, that our mindset struggle to penetrate through.

There is no attempt to steal ideas from philosophy, e.g. about the soul, by Early Christians. Likewise, philosophers did not intentionally mislead people into believing myths and fairy tales.

The whole idea that you can accuse these people of lying to or corrupting others, is just because you feel betrayed in your modern cultural identity. Historically, this cultural identity simply did not exist. It was never there. People just practiced medicine. It was a vital part of their training.

If people did not practice medicine this way, then they would not survive. They lived in constant fear of violent conflicts. It was no option to them. There is a good reason why practice of medicine converges to a similar social dynamics of initiation rituals, before revealing the secrets.

Everybody that practiced medicine in the ancient world, did it more or less the same way. It is not anything peculiar e.g. about the mystery cult of Dionysus, or the mystery cult of Jesus. It is part of the same cultural tapestry, although the savior figures vary between cults.

When you carry on the burden of multiple centuries of Christian dogma, there is no wonder why this idea, that philosophy is very far from what you thought it was, gets uncomfortable. It is completely understandable why people feel this way today. However, we can not change the past. Either we acknowledge what happened and let it go, or we stay imprisoned with our mental chains.

Remember, it is not somebody's fault that this ended up this way. It is just an accident.

You think you know what philosophy is, but that is based on introductory texts. Furthermore, new mystery cults produced new texts that celebrate their own teachers. Just like Plato celebrated Socrates, the followers of Paul celebrated Jesus. Jesus was not walking around in Judea performing miracles, anymore than Socrates walked around debating people in the streets of Athen. Neither was Thomas walking around in India without a skin, like in one version of The Acts of Thomas.

Some stories are more believable as historical events because they have less supernatural elements in them, but they are all functioning in the same way: To attract new students to their schools.

The Acts of Thomas story has also Jesus writing a slave contract, when he sells his twin brother Thomas. Now, this might seem horrifying. However, do not get obsessed by this particular event, because you will miss the forest for the trees. The truth is much more horrifying: Remember this text is used as advertisement for schools, so when people write about slave contracts, it is because they advertise that when joining this school, you will learn to write such contracts, so you can make a stable income by participating in slave trade. This is a slave economy. Early Christians were not hiding in the catacombs waiting for the final days. They were profiting off the slave economy like everyone else and did not think too much about it. If this were the final days, then what you did to others was not that important, since Jesus forgave your sins anyway. This is even more horrifying.

Slavery and persecution in the ancient world is not what you think it is. Everybody complain that their people are persecuted by other people, because everybody fought against everybody and took slaves as part of the war profit. Taking new slaves was one of the major motivations to go to war. What else would feel better than to see your nemesis in chains, after previously captured your brother or sister and exploited them for years? No wonder when big armies invaded, people felt their were punished by their gods and goddesses. Now, you might think that the empire took sides in such conflicts. Nope! The empire would govern over tribes who continued to fight each other and took slaves, some which they sold on the market place. The military made sure that the transactions went through safely, despite people seeing their own family members getting sold and deported. What better way to get more slaves than to stir a little conflict here and there between tribes? It is a safe bet that a lot of unethical things happened behind the scenes of official records.

The temples functioned as national symbols, where gods and goddesses where thought to live as invisible giant-sized human beings. People believed their food was Ambrosia, a kind of divine drug.

Many people believed that deities were previously historical humans who lived on Earth, but who became divinized, eating Ambrosia and gaining immortality. For example, the historian Diodorus of Siculus believed that Zeus, the head deity of the Greek pantheon, was once a mortal who became divinized. Deities were not all-knowing, everywhere-present and very far from omni-benevolent. They were very much like humans in behavior, except they were super-human. The masculine traits were super-masculine. The feminine traits were super-feminine. However, people did not think about gender as binary either. Several deities were androgynous. Some versions of Aphrodite had a penis. Temple prostitution was common, both for men and women.

The emperor Nero killed his own wife, Claudia Octavia, but later regretted it. So, Nero castrated a boy to a eunuch, dressed him into woman's clothing and married him to punish himself for Claudia's death. This tells something disturbing about how people in the ancient world viewed gender: Women was not just a biological gender, but a social status. Nations were described as wives of gods. The bride of Christ were both men and women. Men could castrate themselves, often in wild sexual religious rituals, throwing their own genitals into somebody's house to make them provide them with women's clothing. This showed devotion to the deities and was considered holy.

Jesus was also in this game. He advocates that people become eunuchs. Now, eunuchs today are usually associated with asexuality. However, in the ancient world, eunuchs were often associated with bisexuality. This is why scholars are puzzled by Jesus' words today, because it seems that he is advocating a form of religious sexual prostitution. This can be very shocking to modern humans, but it is completely in line with the general understood practice of religion at Jesus' time.

A prophet or prophetess could warn the people or the king about coming events, but they were not hermits living ascetic lives, like how many people think today. They used drugs. The drug use was one of the reasons that people listened to them, because they believed altered state of consciousness could reveal secrets from the divine. People thought that when you were on a high trip, you had a connection to the cosmos, the 7 planets who marked the boundaries between the 7 heavens. Each heaven was thought of as a copy of this world and everything functioned in a cosmic harmony. One event might have seemingly no explanation on this world, but could have a mysterious function on some other world. This belief in cosmic harmony was enforced by the training in crafting and playing musical instruments and teaching the harmonious tones to students. Music was an important part of the initiation rituals. Paul himself brags about having been to the third heaven. He was high.

When the temple fell to an invading army, people made up stories of prophets and prophetesses who warned against this beforehand. Historians wrote history this way, to explain to people how something so bad could happen to their own people. Josephus writes about Jesus of Ananias, a miserable character who was captured by the Romans, tortured and released. This Jesus lost his mind and yelled from the walls of Jerusalem "Woe to Jerusalem!". When the Roman army came, Jesus was struck by a ballista and killed on the spot, a large rock hurled against the walls with a catapult. Josephus writes that right before being hit, Jesus yells a final "And woe to me also!".

In the Gospel of Mark, Yahweh, the head deity in Jerusalem, gets so angry at the death of Jesus that he rips the curtain that separated the most holy room from the second most holy room, on his way out, to abandon Jerusalem to the Roman army. Now, Jerusalem lies open and unprotected. Later versions add earthquakes, seemingly from Yahweh's stamping foot steps, the sky darkens from Yahweh's mood and even the dead rises and walk around. This is how angry Yahweh is. Jesus is used as a character, not to evangelize forgiveness of sins, but to explain how Jerusalem could fall.

Later, when Early Christians experiment with various belief systems, somebody thought they were supposed to sin to be saved, while some believed they were not supposed to. It took some time before they figured out this part, until Marcion of Sinope published letters he claimed came from

Paul in the mid 2nd century and settles the debate, by explaining that there was a secret plan to save humanity from their sins in the older stories about Moses. People were impressed by that argument.

Marcion of Sinope is a philosopher and merchant, who traded with the Roman army. Marcion single-handedly changed Christianity forever, by canonizing his texts. This prevented competitors from forging new versions... just kidding. His competitors forged new letters of Paul and canonized their own texts, which later became the official bible. Next, they accused Marcion of Sinope for heresy and made him the bad guy in their own version of history. To make this new version more believable, the mother of the emperor Constantine, Helen, travels to Judea and finds both the cross that Jesus died on and the grave he was buried. People still visit this place today. I have been there.

After Constantine took the power over the Roman empire, the Christians use Galen's texts for their own Dogmatic school of medicine and start to prevent new students to their competitors. Translated into religious terminology: This meant that all other theology than the very one used to support the official monopoly on medicine, was forbidden. However, people did not give up their traditions of practicing medicine so easily. Specially women tried to pass on what they knew to new generations. As punishment they were burned at the stake, accused of witchcraft. Now, the word "witch" in some languages, like my own, is "heks" (Norwegian), or "hex" (how people would write it in English). This word comes from Hecate, the priesthood that Medea served in. She was the Queen of Babylon, the woman who rides on the beast with 7 heads in the text of Revelation holding a drink of porneia. That cup is the precursor of the eucharist, the cup that Jesus tells his disciples to drink from in his last meal. So, when people accused a woman of being a witch, this meant somebody who followed Medea as their Christ. Medea is a much older savior figure than both Moses and Jesus.

Medea was believed to have been the granddaughter of Helios, the sun god. She belonged to a tribe of pirates, who sacrificed people they found on the shore to their deities. Think about a ship of traders venturing into the dangerous territory of pirates in the Black Sea. Their ship gets taken over or sunk, and later, the pirates search along the shores for survivors. Because if you get away from the death of drowning, then an even worse faith is waiting. Circe, Medea's niece, figures out that since these poor people are gonna die anyway, she can learn a great deal about medicine from them. Now, without going into details, because we do not have much evidence to go on, still I can imagine that this way of dying was not the best way people could imagine at the time. However, Medea uses the knowledge of medicine she learned from her family and produces a drink so potent that when she disguises herself and offers it to people in a city, the whole city become ecstatic and enters a religious euphoria, upon event, the civilization itself gets born. Medea is their savior and starts a mystery cult.

Now, it is hard to trace back when mystery religions started. Some of the rituals involved seem to come from Egypt. People tell different stories of how it all began. It is common for all mystery religions to have their own spin on it, that explains how their particular version is better than the next one. Frequently, when a neighboring cult adds a new thing to their dogma, people add something to their own beliefs in return. They mimic each other, not by reusing the same ideas, because they could be accused of plagiarizing, but as a response to what others did.

People also engage in theological writings where they bring up texts from other sects than their own and explain to their audience how this is really just their own version but disguised behind a mask. They "know" that they are the ones who know the truth. This means, people are not hostile toward other people's beliefs, at least not at first. When money and property get involved, that is when the hostility starts. Early Christians also adopt names from other religions as labels on themselves, such as the Set deity in the Egyptian pantheon. This shows a cultural level of knowledge and insight into how people think about them in society, that suggests Early Christians were more concerned about fitting in, than to stay fixed in their dogmas.

The most plausible explanation why people are so flexible in their religious beliefs, is because religion in general is primarily about practices of medicine. It gives a better scientific picture. When people practice medicine, they are making decisions about life and death. Naturally, this means that other concerns, such as saving a patient, is more important than exactly what people believe in. It is modern humans who struggle with this blend of religion and medicine, not people who lived in the ancient world. The way modern humans think about religion today, comes from centuries of persecution against anyone that threatened the official monopoly on medicine. This language or way of thinking, punishes people harshly for deviating, just a tiny change, in doctrine.

How people thought in the ancient world is so radically different from modern religion, that it is almost impossible to bridge the language gap. Just in Early Christianity, there is much more diversity, among fewer people, than the tens of thousands different versions of Christianity today.

Some people believed that Jesus swapped place with Simon of Cyrene when he carried his cross and stood laughing at Simon while he got crucified in Jesus' place. Some people believed Jesus was a giant angel several kilometers tall and had a twin sister Sophia, who was equally tall. This diversity is simply mind blowing and very entertaining. We have many texts from Early Christianity, but almost none of it reflects what people later called Orthodoxy. It is so different that scholars first suggested that the texts found in Nag Hammadi were actually texts who were condemned as heresy. Later on, that argument seems much less convincing.

So, this idea that Early Christians were hiding from authorities in the catacombs, is misleading. Yes, it is true that some Early Christians were persecuted. However, this might not have anything to do with their particular beliefs. You see, the authorities did not like mystery cults in general, because they were breeding ground for rebellions. So, the authorities forbade secret societies, unless they did charity. Now, this puts charity in a new light: Early Christians advocated charity, perhaps not out of good will, but because it was necessary to keep avoiding the spotlight. Also, they visited prisoners, which was a good way to collect dirt on political figures, because some people ended up in prison when they fell out of favor of the emperor. Women were used to avoid suspicion. Powerful women were often running spy networks and commanding slaves. In the stories Early Christian wrote, the patroness faints easily, but in reality this was likely a very tough women that knew how to give orders. If you messed with these women, then you might end up one day without a head.

When a patroness faints at the sight of blood or Jesus says people should pay taxes in their texts, is not a sign of meakness. The reason people mention these things explicitly, is precisely because they are not doing this in reality. These parts of the stories are kind of like insurance, that when the authorities go through their stuff in search of a crime, they will find "evidence" that supports the opposite. So, when Jesus says people should pay taxes, it is most likely because people do not. This text makes it easier for people to hide away their fortunes and incomes. Popes have done a lot of things through history, even given birth in the middle of the parade (it was a woman disguised as a man), but being poor is not one of them. Early Christians did not like paying taxes. It is normal.

The reason I bring up Christianity so much, is because modern people are so accustomed to thinking about people living in the ancient world as distinguishing religion from philosophy. My point is precisely that although Early Christians are not what we consider mainstream philosophy at the time, they are still very engaged in philosophical debates and consider themselves as philosophers. The word "philosopher" means somebody who is trained intellectually. When somebody calls themselves a philosopher at the time, this meant they were not nobody, but they had the guts to call themselves a such title without being ashamed of it in public. That probably meant they were familiar with libraries, accounting, slave trade, geography, history, tactics of war, geometry, often spoke and wrote multiple languages and not the least: Medicine.

A philosopher is somebody that demands respect in public. Even if you come from a small cult in some backwater region of the empire, then the title of philosopher still carried weight. When people fight over theological points in their texts, it is not because they see these points as vital for their own religious beliefs. Think about it more like an academic argument. They are writing treaties on some topic and try to think stuff through by writing. When people later see these texts as holy, it is because they lack the academic training to recognize this way of debating. That same person who argued heatedly for position A in some text, might also have written another text where some position B conflicts with A. Academic treaties do not have to be logical consistent, only locally coherent. A person can change their views multiple times during their lives.

This is why modern religion is so different and would be very alien to how people in the ancient world thought. Just the idea that you had a text which could not be edited, is simply unthinkable. Ancient people did not think of their texts as static, despite that they would write warnings against editing the texts. This is to protect themselves from forgeries, not to prevent themselves from changing their minds. The Dead Sea Scrolls shows that people were modifying and editing texts, most likely because they tried to make the stories more coherent and flow better, comparing different versions in different languages. Christians like to point out some section that matches word for word with some later copy, but they are usually less eager to show all the parts that differ. When a text does not change much, this is a sign that many people have a copy and are very familiar with the composition to easily detect changes. When a text changes frequently, it is a sign of being written recently and modified to fit new purposes.

Philosophers did not see themselves as fixed to a specific set of doctrines. The entire purpose of philosophy was to change their minds with convincing arguments, divine revelation from use of drugs and observations of the natural world. This is how they produced so many myths, from Atlantis to Moses, which has kept people digging around for many decades in modern times. When philosophers write down laws, it is to give their fictional universe a more credible backstory. They do not have anything against laws, as long it is not applied to themselves. These people do not have a problem with associating themselves with the snake in Garden of Eden and seeing the deity behind the laws as evil. They live out their fantasies as law breakers to enjoy their own freedom of thought. Others are more conservative in their mindset and try to show off loyalty and obedience.

The idea that these texts were things people should follow, only applies to people who are not philosophers. Otherwise, what is the point in being a philosopher, if you could not argue your way out of all the bad things you did on the side? These people trained themselves in rhetoric specifically to avoid justice and accountability. It is one of the skills you were expected to have as a philosopher. Nobody who could not snake their way out of a tricky situation were suitable as advisors or teachers for kings. Breaking laws, fabricating lies, manipulating people into getting what you want... those are not bugs, but features. This was how ancient people saw it.

When some ancient person met a philosopher in the streets of some city, they knew that they would have covered entertaining for the whole evening. They invited them for dinner and their friends too, who would sit and zone out, by all the stories that went in one ear, while enjoying some good wine and beverages. This meant, if you were a philosopher, then you would not have to worry about food. You were covered. There were always people who wanted to listen to good stories. If people get tired of you in one city, then there was always a new one nearby. So, when they went on journeys, the philosopher brought a stick or staff to make the children looking for strangers along the road: "The Magi is coming! The Magi is coming!". This is top entertainment for these people.

Jesus gets invited into homes of people you might think of as his enemies. Why? Because these people know they are gonna get entertained. It is a common cultural thing that everybody knows happen all the time. They look forward to these events. Now, if they do not like what the stranger is

saying, then they can just chase the stranger away from the village. The welcoming arms can quickly turn into a violent mob. Guess who is enjoying it the most? The village.

Like, Jesus enters Jerusalem while children wave palm leaves, but ends up on a cross. This is part of the village mentality. People reading these texts would recognize it immediately. They would think “Well, maybe crucifying the stranger is going too far. Throwing a few rocks might be fine.” This part of the story would be hilarious, because people know how other people react when a stranger comes to the village. The more welcoming the stranger is received, the funnier it is when the mood turns. At the end of the day, the village stands together. That is the point.

This is why philosophers travel around in these texts. The reader knows that when somebody is welcomed with opened arms to a village, they will run for their lives while people throw rocks at them in the end. It is a much funnier and entertaining story than somebody running a dusty school with bored students sending each other secret messages in class, or dissecting animals. No normal person wants to read about somebody vivisecting an animal (dissecting while it is still alive). They want to do the vivisecting themselves, for real! This is not a thing that you put in your story.

The good story is an advertisement for the school. Of course it is not going to be that way when you study under Socrates. Where do people get the idea that they will follow Socrates around in the streets while he is debating people? You can not learn about medicine this way.

There are things that people get fascinated by when studying, but the good story is for entertaining children. It is a marketing device. It is not a real behavior of some philosopher. The philosopher or prophet might keep some drugs on them in case they get invited to dinner and share their “spices” to make the beverage a more interesting experience. However, the teacher does not do this with kids. Children are given stories that make them curious, to build up the market demand for education.

Why would Paul brag about being in the third heaven? It is to tell people that if he gets invited to dinner, then you will get a real good experience, because Paul is a master with these “spices”. This guy has even been in Arabia for whole three years. Who knows what people are smoking over there.

This is not the version of Christianity you learn in Sunday school, for obvious reasons. When people trade slaves and use their body fluids as ingredients for drugs, or produce anti-venoms for snake bites, or plug up some alabaster in their butt, it is not the kind of practice of medicine that modern humans think is proper for children. However, this is what ancient religion is about. It is not the kind of religion that you would expect using a modern mindset.

It was common to slaughter animals and look at their insides to predict the future, or to measure the positions of the stars in heaven, looking for comets or eclipses. The trajectory of the planet Venus in the morning and evening is a symbol of whatever savior figure you have in mystery cults. We have texts who use this symbolism explicitly. This is often the high point, the climax, in the story. Look up at the planet sky and you will find your savior. It is right there, in the sky. No reason to worry, look at the birds and flowers, the whole cosmos functions in a perfect mysterious harmony.

Everybody did the same thing in the ancient world, over and over. They all celebrated at the same days during the calendar, but to their own favorite deities. People fought each other over which diety was the best. They took slaves and sought revenge. Jesus did not condemn slavery even once and Paul was none the better. This is exactly what you would expect if these were normal ancient people. They live in the same cultural environment with so many similarities that people often compared pantheons and matched up deities one to one. It is so common that you can only pick out Jesus from any other savior figure, by arguing from the perspective of the later official religion that

forbade all other competitors to their monopoly on medicine. You can make the argument work this far that Jesus was special, but not further.

Is that different from what philosophers do? Nope! They argue over which city state is “perfect”. How can people live best together in society? When somebody writes a book about e.g. Marxism being the hot new thing, this is just another variant on the same theme that has been repeated thousands of times. You sell books. You open up schools. People call each other comrades and friends or brothers and sisters. There is a mystery you have to figure out. There is some ritual you have to go through to get accepted. People invite you to dinner and bring some stuff with them to make the evening better and more interesting. If you take apart Marxism and analyses it in every detail, then it will have the exact same cultural ingredients that you will find in Early Christianity.

What is the difference? To the modern mind, Marxists can call themselves philosophers. You might not need to agree with them, but they have the right to call themselves by that title. However, for Early Christianity, modern humans do not tend to view them as philosophers because they have an agenda to protect. It is an agenda to present history in a particular way to defend a single group.

When people do this, they do not accept ancient people as they were. People that just lived their lives: Bad, good and ugly. You are creating a mythical origin, a fabricated fairy tale, to explain the tradition of your own mental constructions. These people were philosophers. They might not been the kind of mainstream philosophy as you think about today. The fear that these people just made up a bunch of stuff that had huge consequences for what people believe today, is a kind of trauma, that people hold onto because they need something to believe in. People refuse sometimes to believe that somebody would just lie to them, not because of ill intent, but simply to sell more books. Right now, there are probably hundreds of people who are still digging or diving looking for Atlantis.

Plato invented Atlantis, Hell, Soul, Republic and a philosopher named Socrates walking around asking people questions, ending with sacrificing his own life for philosophy, which might or might not have been based on some real historical person, who probably was not the kind of character you get impressions from reading these texts. Because, these texts are introductory texts to philosophy and Socrates is used in thought experiments to teach children how philosophy works.

To put it in other terms: Plato is simply kidding with you.

Aristotle, a student of Plato, went to an island to study animals with his friend and student Theophrastus, who studied plants. Aristotle is considered the world’s first zoologist, while Theophrastus is considered the world’s first botanist. Aristotle became later the teacher of Alexander the Great, who spread his school to the whole Hellenistic empire. A few generations later, students of this school builds a Zoo in the Musuem of Alexandria. There, people could study and observe animals from their entire known world.

There were likely hundreds of schools like the one of Aristotle. It just survived because it managed to get to the top of an empire. All the schools, every single of them, does the same marketing gimmick to advertise. They produce good stories, or what we call it in the bible: A gospel.

When people just learn about Jesus and Aristotle, they are ignoring the hundreds of schools who all did the same thing, over and over. The main reason people do this, is to teach medicine. If you do not pass the initiation ritual, then you do not get to learn their secrets. This is how stuff worked.

If you want to know what philosophy is: Go visit a Zoo. There is no difference between “natural philosophy” and “social philosophy” in Ancient Greece. Studying animals is as natural as it gets.

The connection between religion and practice of medicine continues up until the Scientific Revolution. Jan Baptist van Helmont was a chemist and physician who founded pneumatic chemistry. However, at the end of his career, van Helmont went too far according to the church's taste and was put under house arrest. This meant that van Helmont's works became suspicious in academic circles and people hesitated to build on them. This tension increases and increases while science makes progress. It turns out that this tension would give birth to modern philosophy and help the monopoly on medicine to transition away from religious doctrines.

In England, Erasmus Darwin, James Watt and others start the Lunar Society. They are seeking new methods of medicine by capturing gases from chemical experiments. James Watt's daughter Margaret suffers from tuberculosis and they believe that oxygen and hydrogen captured from experiments might help. They open up a clinic to do controlled experiments on patients. It is a revival of the Empiric school of medicine, a competitor to the Dogmatic and Methodic schools. This is where the word "empiric" comes from. It is about practice of medicine.

Just like in the ancient world, when it comes down to a matter of life and death, it is much less important than what people believe in. I can imagine that James Watt did everything in his power to save his own daughter. Yet, this attempt was building on van Helmont's works and was opposed by the church. Since religion and practice of medicine went hand in hand, in their eyes, which might seem strange to our modern minds, they had to develop their own theology to go with this attempt.

The person who fronted this new theology in the Lunar Society was Erasmus Darwin. Due to England having no central institution of censorship, his texts were published without the church capable of stopping them. Darwin grew in popularity and was read with great interest on the continental Europe, possibly with help from Voltaire (François-Marie Arouet), who moved close to Geneva (where the Large Hadron Collider is located today) and built a new house (with a view to Mount Blanc and several thousand trees on the property planted by Voltaire, still standing), because of the access to underground publishers in Geneva. The king in France was powerless to stop this and it would build up political tension in the nation that resulted in the French revolution.

The theology that Erasmus Darwin fronted was a kind of proto-religion based on empiricism. Two things caused Erasmus Darwin to fall in popularity: First, the medical trial failed to produce new useful treatments. Second, the Terror after the French revolution made people fear violent rebellions. However, what killed Darwin's popularity was another philosopher: Immanuel Kant.

At the time, the underground debate was very heated, between proponents of the Empiric school and proponents of the Dogmatic school of medicine. The Empiric school was the new underdog and the Dogmatic school had a monopoly, which it defended with tooth and nail. However, a third group, the Rationalists, thought that they could think their way through these problems. These were like the intellectual clowns in class, that neither did the science nor had centuries of tradition behind them. To avoid controversy, Immanuel Kant comes up with a genius strategy: He presents the Rationalists as the main opponents of the Empiric school. Next, he pretends to "unite" them, by copying the ideas from people like Erasmus Darwin and "purify" them for academic purposes. How? By claiming these ideas as his own work! This receipt was an astonishing success.

To the elite who held a monopoly on medicine, Kant's "new philosophy" was a saving angel descending down from heaven. Now, they could ally themselves with the Rationalists, which ever since were used by them to push right-wing agenda. They could claim ownership over philosophy as a whole discipline, by tracing it back to thinkers like Descartes. However, most importantly, they could run the Empiric school into the ground, while they were absorbing the very same ideas and changing their own practice of medicine to keep up with the times. Erasmus Darwin was crushed. Kant's philosophy was developed by philosophers like Fichte, Schlegel, Schelling and Hegel.

With Hegel, who managed by his Immanent Contradiction to bring the non-duality between nature and the mind on a pure basis of Rational Idealism, the Rationalists and the Dogmatic school were ready to declare absolute victory. People were reading Hegel loud in public and claimed that he had solved philosophy. However, one thing who started to cause the tides turning: Hegel died, in 1833.

The year, 1833, is a special year in the history of philosophy. One reason is that this is the year Hegel died. The other reason, is that Erasmus Darwin's grandson, Charles Darwin, goes onboard HMS Beagle to study nature around the globe. Charles is escaping away from his infame grandpa. The Darwin family has long given up on medicine. However, Charles forges a new path: Biology.

The philosophy of Rational Idealism paved a way for people to separate between religion and practice of medicine. Doctors started to take in patients regardless of what they believed in and did not require them to be blessed by priests to get help. With better patient rights, people soon started thinking about other things like secular citizen rights. It was a society in change, more rapidly than any century before. Scientific advancements only fueled the flames of progress. This meant that a few generations after the Lunar Society, people were ready to consider medicine a completely secular issue. Yet, this also opened up a new perspective to view humans as a species of animals.

Charles Darwin published first a book on the origin of species in general. He did not intend to publish a book about humans in particular, because he knew that people would infer a lot between the lines. It was a good idea to not move too fast in academic circles. However, soon after his first book, others started to publish books on humans, which pressured Charles. It was now or never: He could sit back and let others front the fight. Or, you know, he could get a little revenge on behalf of his dear grandpa. Guess what he did? Charles Darwin published "The Descent of Man" – the most controversial and important book in science – ever published in the entire history of mankind.

This book, "The Descent of Man", was like a nuclear explosion in academia. There is no exaggeration to say that philosophy as a field was still in shock, a century later. From now on, Hegel became every philosopher's favorite target. Everyone attacked Hegel. It is in this aftermath we find Existentialism (which changed how people viewed religion), Marxism (which underpinned Communism), Freudian psychoanalytics (which underpinned the evolution of Capitalism) and National Socialism (which caused a whole world war). All these new philosophies, which caused all the major conflicts in the entire 20th century, came from this book. Why did these philosophers attack Hegel? Because they wanted to surpass Charles Darwin subconsciously, but did not dare to target him directly as a philosopher in his own right. Charles Darwin became the big non-philosopher, the philosopher who put the whole field of philosophy under its shadow and therefore was never addressed, but a kind of invisible and unspeakable danger that people tried to escape.

This shadow of Charles Darwin's philosophy was so choking in the field, that it completely separated itself from Aristotle's zoology. Aristotle, the world's first zoologist, became a new figure, completely detached from worldly concerns and boring like a Sunday lecture in church. Any trace to animals was cut away, out of fear of associating philosophy with Darwin.

The elite has bend over backwards in mental gymnastics to push right-wing ideology through Rationalism ever since. They spewed so much nonsense that it literally transformed the surface of the Earth and destroyed most of wildlife on the planet. They fronted policies so cruel and toxic, like cigarettes and led in gasoline, that millions of people have died from it. This elite still keeps going on in a rabiat, drone-level-unconscious, insanity that consumes everyone and everything in its path. Currently, they are Hell-bent on destroying civilization to rebuild it in their own fantasy. More people die in air pollution every year than prisoners in death camps under the second world war. It is the elite that wants to keep it this way, because fossil fuels keeps the economy under their control. The radicalization of people online, toward religious and political extremity, is their work.

All of this comes from this book, “The Descent of Man”. Think about it.

There has been not a single more philosophy book published in our history, ever, than “The Descent of Man”. It is completely in the tradition of what the natural philosophers and Aristotle started. Just like the Early Christians are not “allowed” to be recognized as philosophers in their own right, Charles Darwin can absolutely under none circumstances be recognized as a philosopher in the modern mindset, because it undermines the claim to ownership, both of history and to the field of philosophy as a whole, that the elite uses to push their incredibly dangerous agendas.

The problem? Nobody “owns” what philosophy was to people through history. All we can do, is to tell the truth. Maybe it is time to move on and let the past be what it was. Just let it go.

We should also stop blaming people like Charles Darwin and Karl Marx for what happened later on history. Just like we can not accuse Plato’s role in undermining the authority of women over time. It was not Plato’s fault that he only knew about Thoth’s side of the mythology of writing and did not know about Seshat. How could he? Plato was just a person, like everyone who have lived.

When you are absolutely sure that Socrates really walked around in Athen and held debates, and you do not see that this is a character written for children to teach them the ideas of philosophy, you are being childish, naive, thinking literally what the text says instead of looking at how it was used. You are holding these stories about Socrates to a level of historicity that is unreasonable for any living person. Socrates would figure out after two days, this is very uncomfortable and think “I want to go back to my friend’s shoe shop, where he can work on shoes, while I am spewing my bullshit on him. My friend never argues back and just listens. No man could ask for a better friend.”

A group of philosophers are planning the next temple. They stand around in circles and study the drawings while it is sunlight. One person is in charge. The others do not speak unless they have something useful to say. They are going over the numbers, which are alphabetic encodings of the names of various construction pieces, or the deities they plan to depict on them. This system is developed to make sure that as few possible people die under its construction. They spend the whole day, going over details, checking stuff over and over, discussing a few new ideas. Weeks and months go by. The construction takes years.

Day after day, philosophers think, plan, write stories to advertise their schools, train students. They train students to train students. In the evening they gather in homes where the discussion flows freely under influence of wine and entheogens, to the accompany of music. They behave just like any human body would in any society that has ever existed. The comfort of friends after a hard days work. Not too much talking and debating over pointless things. Actions speaking louder than words.

In many ways, the works of philosophers astonishes people. Yet, it is just a surface of that person’s life. If you knew that person, then you would not see that much change from day to day. Another improvement made here and there. A short new text being written. All this work adds up and becomes a work that people consume, sitting in an intense session of reading. The philosopher is not a super-human. Neither is the philosopher super-good nor super-evil. Most people are just normal. They accept the atrocities that society commits, because it takes too much energy to try change all of it by themselves. Philosophers aim toward long term plans. They are thinking about tomorrow, the next year and next generations.

Imagine a mirror that shows you what you want to see. Most people know about this mirror from the movies of Harry Potter. However, the myth itself goes back to philosophers. It is not an actual historical mirror they are describing. The mirror is a device, to teach children what philosophy means. However, when you see this mirror as property by someone, you do not deserve its secrets.

This mirror is a device that philosophers use, but it does not only contain a lesson. It also contains a warning and a test, to check whether somebody are suitable for the extensive training as philosophers. Now, we do not have access to these secrets that were taught beyond the mirror. We only see what we want to see. We can not see behind the mirror. These secrets are not owned by anyone. Nobody has the right to “own” philosophy. The secrets probably were very practical things that only mattered to a single group of people for a given time and place, but knowing them was often a matter of life and death. There is a reason people were kept out of it. The mirror test is meant to screen away people that only see opportunity for gaining more power themselves. It is meant to screen away people who will only obey a ruler without questioning their commands.

Now, why do you think that every mystery cult claimed that they were the “original” mystery cult? The reasons are very simple: First, it brings more people into their own group. Second, it was understood among the cults that nobody “owns” it. So, by anyone claiming ownership, there is no reason to take anyone of these claims as serious. Only children think that way.

Do you see the play on words? This gives philosophers the ability to tell when somebody are not genuine, but greedy. When people start to use violence over which story is the “correct” one, they are not worthy to be called philosophers. Philosophers coexist without violence. It is a social norm among themselves, that the only acceptable way of convincing each other is by arguments. However, debate is not the major form of competition. The real struggle is in the relationship between master and student. The master teaches their craft to students, but the students also have to create their own paths. This has always been the case in these relationships.

When Jesus says to his disciples to go and make the whole world into disciples, he does not mean it literally. Philosophers exist in society, but they are not society. Turning the whole society into disciples is impossible, because without society, there is no reason for philosophers to exist. What Jesus means here, is “Try to open up as many schools you can”. Like, this is what all the philosophers did. No reason to over-think it.

Training as a philosopher, means to master the relationship between master and student and make that student capable of mastering the same relationship when they grow up. Otherwise, you fail as a philosopher. Remember, you can not pass these secrets without the relationship between master and student. This is the only way these people can guard the knowledge from falling into wrong hands.

These secrets consisted of techniques to avoid as many deaths as possible in a violent conflict. To mix ingredients while not getting intoxicated. To administer drugs to sick people. How to behave when you are visiting a village. How to write a text to convince a judge to release a prisoner. Every aspect of a philosopher’s life required those secrets, but also behaving in a such way that you do not give away the secret while living it. That is why all philosophers got this kind of mysterious aura associated with them. People try to figure out their secrets.

The mystery cult allows a group of philosophers to share their experiences. So, they can keep themselves powerful and competitive with other groups. They are in constant conflicts with other groups and fight this battle out in texts, but this conflict is non-violent. Sometimes, when the power gets out of balance, the conflict heats up into violence, but philosophers themselves rarely participate in war. On the other hand, they receive the wounded soldiers and do what they can to save their lives.

In some ways, when we look at the ancient world, we see the mythology first. We see this world through a child’s eyes, because the world is new and unfamiliar to us. However, at the other end, you have the surgeons, who make decisions about life and death every day. It is not about the words you can write, but about the actions you can do. A single life is a whole world. It is what matters.

You can theorize as much as you want about the history of philosophy. However, the reason philosophers study nature and animals, is because they want to develop better methods to save lives. It is a very simple, practical reason. While we celebrate ideas such as asking philosophical questions about world is made of, in the end the whole motivation to ask a such question is to be of utility for the human species. Philosophers learn from experience that despite all debate and theory, they have to do something to save. This is why these stories they make are so fascinating. They stir something deep inside of us all, which is not based on some theoretical understanding, but a deep need to be useful. The story is a device meant to make people act.

When you see history of philosophy as something you can “own”, because you are trying to protect your bottom line from going red, there is corruption of truth that happens. You forget the point of saving lives. Your view of philosophers themselves change into a kind of comfortable zone of thinking where philosophers just do something because they are curious about nature. You become a person who divides things into stuff to be owned and controlled. It kills all life.

This is the reason why philosophers require initiation through mystery cults, before the training starts. People who want to own and control things tend to cause more deaths. To prevent that, it is very important to exclude these people from their secrets. Otherwise, if you fail to protect the secrets, then you have done the greatest error that any philosopher can do. Naively thinking that all people can be philosophers, is extremely stupid. People have to be protected from people.

Debate does not define a philosopher. Debate is needed when society is in unrest. This is how philosophers settle disputes among themselves. However, the debate might be how most people view philosophy. They do not really understand what it is. They do not understand how important it is to recognize and acknowledge other people as philosophers in their own right. They do not understand the relationship between the master and student. They do not understand that stories are only devices for teaching, not historical truth. These are things that every philosopher knows.

Moving on from the past is impossible when people only see history through their own mental constructs. When you lay claim on the past, this means you do not give other people room for their own interpretations. You want to win. You are not looking for debate and ways to settle disputes.

I do not claim to know what philosophers did. Nothing can replace the actual training. I do not have that training, so I do not know what it means. It is an inaccessible part of history. I have only learned enough to say with confidence that other people do not know either. I think we should just let the past be the past and move on. Clear the way for new ideas.

In the past, new philosophies have caused hundreds of millions of deaths. This happens because these new philosophies lay claim to particular ways to view history and the world. I think this is a tradition that we should not pass on to future generations. I think it is OK that a new philosophy is kept to small group and not bothering society as a whole with it. Imposing new philosophy on society as a whole is usually not a good idea. When you keep it in smaller circles, it is easier to ensure that people understand it as, not something to be taken literally, but a way to share ideas.

This idea of keeping things in small groups, is difficult for the modern mind, because everybody knows or have heard about Plato. Remember, in the ancient world, few people could read and write at a level to do philosophy, so there were not that many who understood Plato's texts. It was basically limited in the same circles who could read and write.

Today, almost everybody can read and write. This poses a relatively recent challenge, because everybody feel that their opinion about philosophy is worth debating in public. It is like having a conversation with thousands of people at once. Historically, this is different from what it has been.

When many people think they know what philosophy was historically, but obviously they do not, this causes a kind of group mentality where people settle on impressions of what all the other people think. They feel that if their own opinion does not match up with that impression, then it means that they are wrong. So, few people voice opinions that are radically different from other people. Those who feel confident in their opinion as what most people think, are often loud and their noise drowns out the voices that argues a different perspective.

It is not hard to understand how in a society where most people can read and write, that people form an opinion on what is supposed to be philosophy. It is also true that philosophy is a field that changes and people applies it in a modern context. This means, we should not let philosophy as it was constrain what philosophy can be. After all, the whole point is to let philosophy take the shape that provides most utility to people. That said, if we struggle letting go of the past, then our mental constructs about the past can make people feel they have a “correct” perspective and that anyone who disagrees are trying to take it away from them.

What I struggle with most here, is that the mindset of people living in the ancient world is so different from my own, that I have to carefully pick it apart to try understand and imagine how a thing might make sense to them. This is because we do not actually have the texts. Certainly, how I think about things are often wrong. I have been changing my mind many times over in this process.

When I change my mind so many times, I hope that I do not drift away from a better direction. It is also a limitation of the human brain that we can not integrate all details into one mental model. However, the overall idea is that I believe people make a distinction between “natural philosophy” and “social philosophy”, which is most probably artificial. Historically, the largest impacts on philosophy as a field has been by people who work on both, such as Aristotle and Charles Darwin.

The problem is when we do not recognize philosophers as working on both these aspects. Instead, I believe we tend to focus on the conflicts between the natural and social world. As if there are two teams and you are either on one team or the other. You are either for use of drugs or against use of drugs. Obviously, there is no modern medicine without use of drugs. However, today we do not think that way about philosophy. It is kind of like, religion, philosophy and medicine, who were more mixed together, have drifted apart and we put ourselves on different sides. We view history through a religious lens, or through a philosophical lens, or through a lens of medicine. However, in reality, people did not think that way in the past. We might get better overview by separating concerns, but it is not the same as trying to walk in these people’s shoes. In the reconstruction of the past, those three separate things today only makes sense when they come together culturally.

Early Christians were very interested in these 3 topics: Religion, philosophy and medicine. The result is from our perspective, to put it mildly, very weird. For example, I doubt there much value from a medical perspective. Nor would I recommend it as good advice for finding the meaning of life. However, from a cultural perspective, I find it very entertaining. It is fun!

I believe most people today who do philosophy, are more interested in it as a profession than this cultural lens, where reconstructing the past and seeing things through other perspectives are the major motivations. With that, I totally agree. I absolutely believe that if we practiced philosophy by mystery cults and initiation rituals, guarding secrets of medicine knowledge, then it would be highly efficient and impractical today. I do not argue in favor of this stuff. For the same reason I do not argue for slavery either. This is just what people did. However, when we are used to talk about the history of philosophy through the attempt to “own” it, that makes it easy to misunderstand people as if they are talking about how they want philosophy to be. This is not my point. Understanding what philosophy is, does not mean that it is the same as how you should practice philosophy. I believe people have to figure out this for themselves. Certainly, it is bad advice to take my stories literally.