



Chapter One – Why Philosophy? Is That All There Is?

Roots of Wisdom
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Chapter Review



The Issued Defined

- In this chapter we take our first look at the early Greeks and their efforts to separate appearance from reality.
- As they examined the world around them in search of the basic “world stuff” from which every particular thing is derived.

Pre-Socratic Cosmologists

All sought to offer a portrait of the cosmos as comprehensible and ordered whole

- Milesians

Sought to establish the fundamental substance underlying the cosmos

- Thales argued that it was water
- Anaximander argued that it was what he called “the boundless”
- Anaximenes argued that it was air

Pre-Socratic Cosmologists

All sought to offer a portrait of the cosmos as orderly and knowable

- Other Monists

Like the Milesians, sought to establish a single substance or principle underlying the seeming multiplicity of the cosmos

- Pythagoras argued that it was numeric values
- Heraclitus argued that it was change as regulated by the logos
- Parmenides argued that it was unchanging being itself

Pre-Socratic Cosmologists

All sought to offer a portrait of the cosmos as orderly and knowable

- **Pluralists**

Rejected views that ascribed a single substance or principle to the Foundation of the cosmos

- Empedocles argued for four elements (earth, air, fire, water)
- Anaxagoras argued for “germs” or “seeds” in motion
- Democritus argued for “atoms and the void”

Pre-Socratic Philosophers

Philosopher

Thales

Anaximander

Anaximenes

Pythagoras

Heraclitus

Parmenides

Empedocles

Anaxagoras

Democritus

Arche

Water

The boundless

Air

Numbers

Change (Fire)

Being

Earth, Air, Fire, Water

Seeds, or germs

Atoms and the void

Cosmogony and Cosmology

Classical Greek philosophers also attempted accounts of the origins or characteristics of the cosmos

- Thales: the earth is a disc floating on water
- Anaximander: the boundless, in motion, gives off heat (fire) and cold (earth, air, water), the motions of which produce the sun, the moon and its phases, and eclipses. Earth is a cylinder hanging in space
- Anaximenes: the earth is a disc floating on air
- Pythagoras: the earth is a sphere; not at the center of heavenly bodies
- Parmenides: the moon reflects the sun's light

The Sophists

- The Sophists are literally the “wise ones”
- Championed individualism and relativism in knowledge
- Using the science of rhetoric, which literally means “public speaking” they asserted they could teach argumentation to anyone.
- Despised by Plato, who blamed them for the death of his teacher and friend, Socrates
- Sophists were accused of making the weaker argument appear stronger and, generally, of distorting the truth.

Classical Period in Greek Philosophy

- Socrates
 - portrayed by Plato as arguing by dialectic, his method of asking questions, which was designed to elicit the truth.
 - maintained that we can remember fundamental knowledge from before the time of our birth
 - refused to relinquish his philosophizing, though it meant his death
- Plato
 - student of Socrates
 - argued via his Cave metaphor in “The Republic” that the senses can be fooled but that reason offers a reliable source of knowledge

Classical Period in Greek Philosophy

- Perictyone
 - developed Pythagoras's ideas regarding harmony in terms of women's roles in society
- Aristotle
 - studied at Plato's Academy
 - developed the doctrine of the golden mean in conduct – habits of character or virtue ethics

Metaphysics, Epistemology and Axiology in Asian Thought

- Buddhism
 - Self not seen as abiding and completely independent
 - Knowing is direct and intuitive
- Pan Chao
 - argued that women require education for the cultivation of virtue

Metaphysics, Epistemology and Axiology in African Thought

- Proverbs as reliable guide to knowledge
- In Akan case, abstract principles rejected in favor of lived experience
- Specific considerations of proper conduct in terms of what benefits the community

The Peoples of the Americas

- Based on the worldview of the indigenous peoples of the Americas, we find a cosmology in the Sun and the Moon are the “pillars of the universe”.
- Among the Nahuatl-speaking people in the central Mexican highlands, all that humans ordinarily perceive as the universe is generated by teotl in its “endless process of self-generation and regeneration”.

Logic

- In a deductive argument, a group of premises claim to support a conclusion
 - Premises consist of terms, arranged in subject-predicate order as statements
 - When the premises support the conclusion, the argument is valid
 - Only valid arguments, consisting of true premises, are sound [true]

Branches of Philosophy

- Metaphysics – investigates what is real
- Epistemology – deals with the study of knowledge – what it is and how we acquire it
- Axiology – deals with the study of values

Classical Western Philosophy

- **Metaphysics** – reality is composed of separate and discrete units of matter
- **Epistemology** – trusts reason and experimentation
- **Axiology** – values the individual as more important than the group

African Philosophy

- **Metaphysics** – all of reality is part of an integrated whole, which includes nature
- **Epistemology** – knowing is intellectual, physical, and emotional – based in experience
- **Axiology** – values the community as more important than the individual

Buddhism

- **Metaphysics** – reality is a web of interconnectedness; everything is mutually dependent on everything else; there is no separate, independent “self”
- **Epistemology** – knowing is direct and intuitive, rather than rational
- **Axiology** – values the whole web; the law of karma assures that whatever we do we do to ourselves; this continues until we see things as they are, achieving enlightenment

Key Terms

- Cosmos
- Cosmology
- Arche
- Monists
- Pluralists
- Cosmogony
- Metaphysics
- Epistemology
- Axiology
- Ontology
- Philosophy

- Sophists
- Dialectic
- Socratic method
- Apology
- Tripartite soul
- Harmonia
- Ethics
- Golden mean
- Karma
- Samsara
- Teotl
- Stoicism