HZT4U: Philosophy

G. Polstvin

February 13, 2025

Contents

Chapter 1

Intro., Nat. Phil. + Logic

Homework TODO:

- Dinner Table Philosophy - Due February 10
- Natural Philosophers Presentation - Due February 6
- Reduce Feb 5 note for Philosophers

1.1 Ancient Philosophers of Knowledge

1.1.1 Sophists

Where natural philosophers looked at the world, sophists focused on people.

- Athenian teachers who prioritized persuasion over truth.
- Truth was whatever one could argue convincingly.
- Politically motivated to persuade rather than seek truth.
- Used logical fallacies to influence others.

An example of a modern day sophist would be Donald Trump, who often persuades without much truth. (E.g. tariffs)

1.1.2 Socrates

- Opposed Sophists, seeking truth through questioning.
- Developed the Socratic Method—asking questions to find truth.
- Used dialectics (critical discussion).
- Wrote nothing; known through Plato's works.
- Executed for "corrupting the youth."

1.1.3 Plato

- Student of Socrates, believed knowledge is innate.
- Observations are opinions; true knowledge comes from reasoning.
- Theory of Forms—everything we see is an imperfect replica.
- Used dialectics to uncover deeper truths.

1.1.4 Aristotle

- Student of Plato, but believed knowledge comes from observation.
- Senses are reliable; knowledge is learned, not innate.
- Everything has a purpose (teleology).
- Human purpose is to live virtuously (Golden Mean).

Lecture 2: Ancient Philosophers of Knowledge

1.1.5 Thales

- Greek philosopher, considered the first in Western philosophy.
- Believed everything originated from water, as it was the fundamental substance of all things.
- Though incorrect by modern standards (due to atomic theory), his ideas were revolutionary at the time.
- Pioneered early scientific thinking by seeking natural explanations for the world.

1.1.6 Anaximander

- Greek philosopher and a student of Thales.
- Part of Thales' school and expanded on his teacher's ideas.
- Considered the father of modern cosmology, with interests in mathematics and astronomy.
- Questioned what things were truly made of, arguing that water was not the fundamental element but rather a secondary state of matter.
- Proposed the concept of the "Apeiron" (the infinite or boundless) as the source of all things.

1.1.7 Pythagoras

- Born on a Greek island but later moved to what is now Italy.
- A mathematician and philosopher who founded a secretive school of thought.
- Believed that everything in nature could be reduced to mathematical principles.
- His ideas influenced later mathematical and philosophical thought, though the claim that the world is purely mathematical is debated.
- Mathematics can describe the world, but what seems rational to one person might be irrational to another.

1.1.8 Parmenides

- Greek philosopher who focused on the nature of existence.
- Argued that change is an illusion; reality is unchanging and eternal.
- Believed that knowledge must come from reason, not the senses.
- His ideas laid the foundation for metaphysical thought in Western philosophy.

1.1.9 Zeno

- Greek philosopher from southern Italy, a student of Parmenides.
- Famous for his paradoxes, which challenged the nature of motion and change.
- Argued that motion is logically impossible, despite being observed.
- His paradoxes, like Achilles and the Tortoise, influenced mathematical and philosophical discussions on infinity.

1.1.10 Heraclitus

- Greek philosopher who believed everything is in constant change.
- "You cannot step into the same river twice"—everything is in flux.
- Thought that even if objects appeared unchanged, they were constantly evolving over time.
- Distinguished between everyday experience (which seems stable) and deeper change (which happens scientifically and philosophically).
- His views contrast with Parmenides, who claimed reality is unchanging.

Lecture 3: Autistic Guy and Online Usage

1.2 Something about online usage

COME BACK.

Lecture 4: Reading on Logic

1.3 Pages 30-33

1.3.1 Question 1

Define and explain briefly the meanings of each of these terms: **logic, reasoning, argument, and inference.**

Definition 1 (Logic). The inquiry which has for its object the principles of correct reasoning.

In current usage, *logic* is mainly the inquiry into deductive reasoning, that is, into inferences in which the conclusion follows *necessarily* from the premises.

Definition 2 (Reasoning). The process of providing reasons in support of an idea or an action. A reason can be valid or invalid; convincing or unconvincing; sound or unsound; yet all justify or suport a belief or action.

NOTE: Reasoning is important, as it is the primary method by which philosophers support their ideas. One of the most important aspects of philosophy is understanding and judging the validity of reasons provided for ideas.

Definition 3 (Argument). A set of propositions of which one, the conclusion, is supposed to follow from the other ones, the premises. An argument is valid or invalid; correct or incorrect; sound or unsound; it cannot be said to be true or false.

Of course, each of the following constiuent propositions, including the conclusion and premises, can be said to be true or false.

Definition 4 (Inference). Mental process that occurs when we move from premises or reasons to a conclusion. The process of using existing information to develop new information.

1.3.2 Question 2

For each sentence below, determine which statement is an example of reasoning and which is not.

- I enjoy the weekends and I spend time with my friends.
- On the weekends I spend time with my friends because I have more free time.
- Philosophy teaches logical thinking; it is also a way to learn to analyze arguments.
- Logical thinking in philosophy helps us think critically.