HZT4U: Philosophy

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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).

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.

1.2 Something about online usage

COME BACK.

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.

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.

1.4

1.4.1 Compare and Contrast The Cave and Barbieland

Both Plato's cave and Barbieland present a world where the population mistake an illusion for reality. In the cave, prisoners only see shadows on a wall, not knowing a greater reality exists beyond their perception.

Barbieland is a closed system, where both Barbie and Ken believe in an amicable world, unaware of the external forces structuring it (Mattel and consumer culture).

The difference between them is that Barbieland is a constructed utopia that works for those within it. The cave swellers are trapped in by ignorance, but Barbieland's population accept their roles, as their world appears to be perfect.

That said, both worlds fall apart when their illusions are challenged: the freed prisoner struggles with the blinding light of truth, just as Barbie experiences an existential anxiety when she becomes aware of death, imperfection, and objectification.

1.4.2 How is Barbieland reality? How is leaving Barbieland reality?

Barbieland's inhabitants do not have true freedom; they follow scripts written by an external force, much like characters in a play. True existence requires *radical freedom*, the ability to define oneself without imposed meaning. Since Barbie lacks the ability to choose who she is, her existence is inauthentic, and acts more as an object, rather than a being.

If Barbieland were truly an existential choice rather than a corporate illusion, the situation would be different. If Barbie knew she was in a controlled reality but still chose to stay, she would be creating her own meaning.

But because her world is shaped by invisible forces (Mattel, consumerism, etc.), she does not live authentically. In this sense, she only becomes real when she leaves Barbieland; not because she enters a physical world, but because she begins to define herself outside of an imposed role.

1.4.3 Does the lack of free will affect the level of reality? Given this if living and how you live in Barbieland was a choice (and not assigned by some corporate hack), would this change your perception of reality?

There is no true freedom; they follow scripts written by an external force, much like characters in a play. We can use the idea of *Radical Freedom* (Sartre), where true existence requires it in order for an individual to define themselves without imposed meaning. As Barbie lacks this ability, her existence is more object than being.

If Barbie knew she was in a controlled reality but still chose to stay, she would be creating her own meaning. But because her world is shaped by invisible, ideological forces, she doesn't live authentically. She only becomes real when she leaves Barbieland; not because she enters a physical world, but she defines herself outside of an imposed role.

1.4.4 What is Plato's cave, and how do we get out? What is Barbieland? How do we get out?

Plato's Cave is a metaphor for ideology. People live in shadows, mistaking illusions for truth, with the only way to escape is through painful and treacherous enlightenment; realizng that what we once believed was real, was really a distortion. In doing so, a person must leave, see this light, and return to help others.

Barbieland functions similarly, but with a twist: leaving it doesn't reveal a singular truth, but exposes Barbie to a world filled with competing illusions. She doesn't wake up into pure reality, she moves on from one ideology to another, and this is very akin to our reality, where there is no final truth, only a different structure, and escaping Barbieland is realizing all realities are constructed. The film doesn't go into depth about this, suggesting that self discovery is enough, but that's something for the review.

1.4.5 "Barbie is all these women. And all these women are Barbie." What does she mean? Relate this to the film, and Plato's theory of forms.

This suggests that identity is not defined by external markers; beauty, career, caste; but by something deeper, something beyond labels. Plato's Theory of Forms suggests that every object is just an imperfect copy of a more perfect idea. Barbie, as a doll, represents an idealized form of womanhood, yet when she enters the real world, she realizes she is not that form; she is something else, something uncertain.

We are not defined by external expectations but by the choices we make. Barbie thought she was her role, but she is not; she is whatever she chooses to become. Ruth's statement suggests that identity is fluid, not fixed by societal definitions, and that true selfhood is discovered in the process of questioning those definitions.

1.4.6 In Barbieland, the focus is on human happiness. However, this does not make Barbie happy. Can you only be happy? Support with your experience, film examples, and ideas from Plato's allegory.

Happiness is not a self-sustaining state; it is always fleeting, dependent on external conditions and internal contradictions. True fulfillment does not come

from mere pleasure but from knowledge and virtue. In Barbie, Barbieland is designed to be perfect, yet Barbie finds herself experiencing sadness, fear, and existential dread.

A person cannot simply be happy, because happiness depends on contrast; it only makes sense when one has experienced suffering, choice, and self-awareness. An artist cannot appreciate creativity without struggle; a person in love values it because they know loneliness. True happiness is not just feeling good, but understanding oneself in relation to the world, even when that understanding is painful.

1.4.7 Are we different from the inhabitants of Barbieland? How can you tell?

No. People of Barbieland think they're in control of their lives, just as we do, yet both are shaped by external forces; ideology, capitalism, social norms and narratives, etc. We are told who we are through media, education, and nroms, much like Barbie is told she is the "stereotypical Barbie" until she questions it.

The main difference is awareness. When Barbie begins to question her world, she disrupts the system, proving that ideological structures can be challenged. The question is whether we, in our own world, are capable of that same realization. If our identities are shaped by forces we do not see, are we truly free? Or do we, like the Barbies and Kens, live under the illusion that we are choosing our own path?

1.4.8 What does Ruth mean by "Maybe the things that you think make you you, are not actually the things that make you you"?

Ruth is telling us that identity is not defined by external markers; beauty, career, roles, etc.; but by something deeper, something beyond labels. In Plato's Theory of Forms, every object is just an imperfect copy of a more perfect idea.

Barbie, as a doll, represents an idealized form of womanhood, yet when she enters the real world, she realizes she is not that form—she is something else, something uncertain.

We are not defined by external expectations but by the choices we make. Barbie thought she was her role, but she is not; she is whatever she chooses to become; a sort of *radical freedom.*

Identity is fluid, not fixed by societal definitions, and that true selfhood is discovered in the process of questioning those definitions, which, on par with us, Barbie struggles to accept.

1.4.9   If reality is a construct, how did it happen to us?

Reality is structured through ideology; narratives that shape how we see the world. These narratives are built over time by history, economics, and culture, reinforced by media, education, and power structures.

Just as a child learns to see the world through language and symbols, we are all trained to interpret reality through a framework we did not choose.

We live in a hyperreality; where symbols and media representations replace any original reality. The "real world" is not a neutral space but one shaped by advertisements, political propaganda, and cultural myths.

Barbie stepping into reality does not mean she finds truth; it means she enters a system where ideology is less obvious but just as powerful. We do not "fall" into illusion; we are born into it.

1.4.10   As we learn about reality, how can we escape its illusions? Was Barbie able to do this?

We cannot escape illusions. We can only navigate them. Every ideology claims to be reality, but realizing that they are all constructed gives us a form of freedom: the ability to critically engage with the structures that shape us. This does not mean rejecting all narratives, but understanding their influence.

Barbie does not fully escape illusion, but she simply moves into another framework where she can at least question and define herself. If escaping illusion meant finding a pure, unfiltered reality, then she failed. But if it means recognizing that every world has its own myths and power structures, then she succeeded.

A better question would be "Can we see how 'reality' shapes us, and choose how to engage with it?"

1.4.11   What did Barbie teach you about reality?

Like Sisyphus, one must imagine Barbie happy.

1.5 Logical Fallacies with Representations in Set Theory

1. **Personal Attack (*Argumentum ad Hominem*)**
   Instead of addressing an argument, the opponent is attacked personally.

   > Let A be a set of arguments.
   > Let $p \in A$ be an argument presented by person x.
   > Instead of refuting p, a property $P(x)$ about x is attacked.
   > $\therefore \neg p$ is asserted without addressing the argument itself.

2. **Guilt by Association (*Argumentum ad Odium*)**
   An argument is dismissed because it is associated with an undesirable group.

   > Let G be a set of individuals with property P.
   > $x \in G \Rightarrow P(x)$
   > y is associated with $x \Rightarrow y$ is assumed to have $P(y)$
   > (fallaciously, even if there is no evidence for $P(y)$).

3. **Straw Person (*ad Stramineum hominem*)**
   A misrepresented or weaker version of an argument is attacked instead of the actual argument.

   > Let A be a set of valid arguments.
   > $p \in A$ is transformed into a weaker $p' \notin A$, where $p' \subset p$.
   > p' is refuted, implying incorrectly that p is refuted.

4. **Post Hoc (*Post Hoc, Ergo Propter Hoc*)**
   Assuming that because one event follows another, the first event caused the second.

   > E_1 occurs before E_2.
   > $E_1 \rightarrow E_2$ (fallaciously assumed causation from sequence).

5. **Begging the Question (*Petitio Principii*)**
   The conclusion is assumed within the premises.

   > $p \Rightarrow p$ (Premise implicitly assumes its own truth).

6. **Hasty Conclusion or Generalization (*Secundum quid*)**
   A conclusion is drawn from an insufficient sample.

   > Let $S \subset P$ be a small sample of a larger population P.
   > $\forall x \in S, P(x)$ is observed.
   > $\therefore \forall y \in P, P(y)$ is assumed (fallaciously).

7. **Inconsistency**
   Contradictory statements are made within the same argument.

   $$p \text{ is asserted and } \neg p \text{ is also asserted.}$$
   $$p \wedge \neg p \Rightarrow \bot \text{ (contradiction).}$$

8. **False Dichotomy**
   Only two options are presented when more exist.

   $$\text{Let } S \text{ be a set of possible choices.}$$
   $$S = \{A, B, C, ...\} \text{ but only } \{A, B\} \text{ are presented.}$$
   $$\therefore \neg A \Rightarrow B \text{ (fallacious exclusion of other options).}$$

9. **Glittering Generalities**
   A vague, emotionally appealing statement is used without substantive argument.

   $$\text{Let } P(x) \text{ be a positively connoted property.}$$
   $$\forall x \in A, P(x) \text{ is vaguely claimed but not defined.}$$
   $$\therefore P(A) \text{ is accepted without evidence.}$$

10. **Appeal to Authority (Argumentum ad Verecundiam)**
    A claim is assumed true because an authority figure supports it.

    $$x \text{ is an authority on subject } S.$$
    $$x \text{ states } p.$$
    $$\therefore p \text{ is assumed true without evidence.}$$

11. **Card-Stacking**
    Selective evidence is presented to favor one side.

    $$P = \{p_1, p_2, ..., p_n\} \text{ (full set of evidence).}$$
    $$P' = \{p_1, ..., p_k\} \subset P \text{ (subset chosen to support a claim).}$$
    $$\therefore P' \text{ is presented as if it represents all of } P.$$

12. **Bandwagon (Argumentum ad Populum)**
    A claim is accepted because many people believe it.

    $$|X| \gg 1 \text{ (large number of people accept } p\text{).}$$
    $$\therefore p \text{ is assumed true (fallaciously).}$$