Carneades’ introduction to philosophy

Notes of: <https://www.carneades.org/courses/introduction-to-philosophy-beginners-start-here/> (Dumbfounding definition, dizzying distinctions and diabolical doctrines) (jargons, don’t worry me neither)

1: What is philosophy?

*1.1 What is philosophy?*

Philo-sophy: philo comes from a Greek word meaning love. A bibliophile loves books, a hydrophilic molecule loves water, and a pedophile loves children (a sisyphus loves meaningless life). Sophy comes from another Greek word meaning wisdom. This makes philosophy the love of wisdom and philosophers those that love wisdom (but can’t get any lol).

*1.2 Problem*

This is very vague though. It's like science. Yes, the word suggests certain things but definitely doesn’t get you to the point of the scientific method and more complicated things a true scientist does.

*1.3 History of knowledge*

The reason why this definition is so vague, is because it started as something well defined, since there didn’t exist science, nor arts, nor any of the other forms of knowledge, anything was philosophy. As time progressed, things changed, and some may very well be experts in physics, but not have ever questioned knowledge, or the world, or their ethics the way a philosopher does. We call people who have completed their formal education in a topic PhDs, or Doctorates, because it started as “Philosophy Degree (PhD)”, and Doctorate of philosophy, simply because at the time there was no relevant distinction on these, so we chose to just say they were expert in philosophy.

Though this may seem confusing, it is actually of great honour, as you are being formally called a lover of wisdom.

*1.4 The task of philosophy*

Philosophy holds all forms of knowledge, since it started as them, any interdisciplinary topic between an area of knowledge today considered not philosophy, to a part of knowledge considered philosophy is called “the philosophy of *[place area of knowledge]*”, like:

* Philosophy of science
* Philosophy of arts
* Philosophy of politics

the parts of knowledge considered philosophy by themselves, are:

* Metaphysics
* Epistemology
* Logic
* Ethics

The reason why these connect is through philosophical questions like:

* Is arts logical
* Is science ethical
* Is politics just

These paths can give us the coherence that the non philosophical forms of knowledge must follow: if science and arts are considered ethical through the philosophy of science and philosophy of arts, then, we can say that these are ethically coherent.

*1.5 Lets bridge things*

Now the only question we still have for this discussion is: what are the parts of knowledge considered philosophy by themselves? Let's study ethics, logic, metaphysics, epistemology, religion, philosophy of science, history of philosophy.

Quiz:

*1Q.1*

In Greek, what does “Philo” mean?

* Wisdom
* Study of
* Knowledge
* Love of ✅

*1Q.2*

Which of the following is NOT considered a field of philosophy?

* Logic
* Metaphysics
* Mycology ✅
* Epistemology

2: What is logic?

*2.1 What is logic?*

Logic is very basic and its core in philosophy. It's the way we choose to ration through philosophy without making errors, it's a system for making deductions. It is in some way the most basic programming language as all others are inspired in logic. It contains what any other language would:

1. Semantics: How a language looks, sounds and is written, and what these mean
2. Syntax: the rules these follow. “Work I sisyphus maybe uribng” is not an actual sentence because the syntax is wrong.

The point of either of these is to find valid and invalid arguments, but unlike English where the sentence being grammatically correct doesn’t make it true, for a sentence to be true in logic it must actually follow our rules of logic. A solid example of this is the exclusion of the middle principle, p cannot be both true and false, we must exclude the middle.

*2.2 Types of logic*

There are many types of logics that are used in philosophy:

1. First Order/Classical/Elementary logic
2. Second Order/Higher logics
3. Non-Classical logic
4. Modal logics

We will be going through these specifically, but it is important to note that:

* First order logic is mostly about intuition
* Second order logic does more non-intuitive things, and makes definitions much more often
* Non classical logic is similar to first order but they disobey certain things assumed in first order logic (like the exclusion of the middle principle)
* Modal logic goes beyond truth and tries to find truth in our day to day world (studies things like possibility and necessity)

*2.3 First Order logic*

First order logic is divided into Categorical and Propositional logic:

1. Categorical logic: we study how we can think of groups and objects, and their predicates. It looks somewhat like this:

All men are mortal

Socrates is a man

Therefore Socrates is mortal

This is the written version of venn diagrams. The point of doing this is that we can generalize men to M, mortal to O, socrates to S, and say that given that all M are O, and that S is M, we can conclude that S is O:

All M are O

S is M

S is O

Then, from this conclusion S is O we can use it as a premise for another syllogism. We call categorical syllogisms these things, they always come in the shape of two premises and one conclusion.

1. Propositional logic: we study how we can describe all sentences of a language, and talk about the relations of statements, and not the micro group/objects. It looks somewhat like this:

If it is raining then it is cloudy

It is raining

Therefore it is cloudy

This is the written version of truth tables. The point of doing this is to create operators like and (^), or (v), if then (=>).

The combination of both Categorical and Propositional logic is Predicate Calculus/Propositional Calculus. It has nothing to do with rates of change, but it combines these to talk about sentences, objects, groups. A great example of this is:

(∀x)(Dx=>(∃y)(Cy^CHSxy^(∃z)(Rz^CHSyz^CHEz))))

Which means:

all dogs chase some cats who chase some rats who eat some cheese

*2.4 Higher Order logic*

Second Order and Higher order logics all try to quantify over quantifications:

* First order logic may say: “all baseballs are round”, such that we are talking about individual objects.
* Second order logic may say: “all lists of objects with more than 3 objects must have more than two objects”, we are talking about sets/lists of objects, or sets/lists of properties. Higher order logics build set theory (as you might expect).

*2.5 Non-Classical logic*

Non Classical logic is divided into many types of logic, but they all focus on removing axioms of classical logic, such as the excluded middle.

*2.6 Modal logic*

Modal logic is divided into:

1. Alethic Modal Logic: we study the possibility and necessity of the truth values of statements.
2. Deontic Modal Logic: we study the logic of ethics, and obligations.
3. Temporal Logic: we study the logic of time, the past and the future.
4. Epistemic Logic: we study the logic of knowledge, belief, and justification.

It is much more practical and sometimes controversial simply because it sometimes reaches non-intuitive conclusions

Quiz:

*2Q.1*

Logic which denies the normal axioms can be referred to as:

* Modal Logic
* Propositional Logic
* Non-Classical Logic ✅
* Categorical Logic

*2Q.2*

Second Order Logic…

* ...is the logic of knowledge
* ...is the logic of subjects and predicates
* ...deals with ethics
* ...quantifies over properties ✅

*2Q.3*

Semantics is the study of

* The meaning of symbols? ✅
* The rules that the symbols follow
* Logical fallacies
* Valid logical forms

3: What is metaphysics?

*3.1 What is metaphysics?*

The original metaphysics dealt with the existence of things, “The world is everything that is the case”(Wittgenstein, 1), we are trying to figure out what things are “the case”.

To be more specific, we can start listing things that are and aren’t:

1. Are:

* Ontology (Existence)
* Modality (Necessity and Possibility)
* Identity (Persistence)
* Mereology (Parthood)
* Personal Identity
* Time (Travel and Reality of)
* Cause and effect
* Universals and Properties
* Free Will and Determinism
* Existence vs Subsistence
* Materialism vs Idealism

1. Aren’t:

* Ethics and Morality
* Knowledge
* Justification
* Belief
* Logic
* Beauty and Aesthetics
* Theories of Meaning (language)
* Theories of Mind
* Methods of science
* Theories of Math
* Rationality

Metaphysics does relate to these, but they are not labelled as metaphysics.

*3.2 A dumbfounding thought experiment*

Think of a computer. Philosophy aims to ask questions about it. Different questions are sectioned in different areas:

1. Metaphysics:

* What kind of thing is a computer?
* Does it have free will?
* How does it relate to its parts?
* Is it necessary or contingent?

1. Epistemology:

* What can we know about the computer?

1. Ethics:

* Is the computer good?
* How can it be used for good or bad?

1. Philosophy of Mind:

* Does the computer have consciousness?

1. Philosophy of Art:

* Is the computer beautiful?
* Is it sublime?

*3.3 Summary*

Metaphysics deals with existence and the way of existence.

Quiz:

*3Q.1*

Which of the following is studied by metaphysics (select all that apply)?

* Ontology ✅
* Time ✅
* Knowledge
* Art
* Identity ✅

*3Q.2*

Which of the following questions might be asked by metaphysics about a tree (select all that apply)?

* Does the tree have free will? ✅
* Is the tree good?
* Is the tree sublime?
* Can the tree have knowledge?
* Is the tree made of physical or mental substance? ✅

4: What is epistemology?

*4.1 What is epistemology?*

Epistemology studies knowledge. “What is necessary/sufficient for knowledge?” is a common question in Epistemology. It aims to find if we can gain and justify knowledge, and how we do so. This is very central in philosophy as all of what we do in philosophy is seeked to be knowledge.

*4.2 Common Epistemology*

Knowledge is commonly “justified, true, belief”. Of course, we still need definitions for these 3 words, and that is usually the central choice of an epistemological system, but it seems reasonable to most people that these 3 things should be necessary by our day to day use of them. There is a big issue with this, by Edmund Gettier, where there are instances where you have such true and justified belief, but it isn’t knowledge (Gettier problem). Then, the debate on how we define these 3 words is still very active.

*4.3 Central questions*

Here are some questions Epistemology commonly asks and the different answers that are given:

1. Is knowledge possible?

* Yes
  + Epistemism
* Depends on what you mean by “know”
  + Contextualism
* I don’t know
  + Pyrrhonian Skepticism
* No
  + Academic Skepticism

1. Does knowledge require experience? (only for Epistemism)

* Yes
  + Empiricism
* No
  + Rationalism

1. Is Justification “Internal” (based on mental factors) (only for Epistemism)?

* Yes
  + Internalism
* No
  + Externalism

Note that if it is based on external beliefs then you must only consider things from the outside world, for example, you must have a physical proof you can show to anyone. If it is internal, then you can use methods for reasoning through facts.

1. How are particular beliefs justified (only for Internalism)?

* Proof from axiomatic beliefs
  + Foundationalism
* Agreement with other beliefs
  + Coherentism

So technically you could be an epistemic empiricist internalist foundationalist

*4.4 Another dumbfounding thought experiment*

Lets again think of a computer, since philosophy aims to ask questions about it, different questions will be of different areas:

1. Epistemology:

* What can we know about the computer?
* How can we justify our beliefs about this computer?
* Can the computer have knowledge?

1. Metaphysics:

* What kind of thing is a computer?
* Does it have free will?
* How does it relate to its parts?
* Is it necessary or contingent?

1. Ethics:

* Is the computer good?
* How can it be used for good or bad?

1. Philosophy of mind:

* Does the computer have consciousness

1. Philosophy of art:

* Is the computer beautiful?
* Is it sublime?

4.5 Summary

Epistemology deals with questioning deeply held beliefs, and tries to justify them.

Quiz:

*4Q.1*

Epistemology is the study of:

* Language
* Epistles
* Existence
* Knowledge ✅

*4Q.2*

Someone that claims that justification is defined by agreement with other beliefs might be called a:

* Coherentist ✅
* Internalist
* Foundationalist
* Empiricist

*4Q.3*

Epistemology might ask which of the following questions about a dog:

* Does the dog have consciousness?
* How can we justify beliefs about the dog? ✅
* How is the dog related to its parts?
* Is the dog a good boy? Is he?

5: What is ethics?

*5.1 Ethics vs Morality*

You grew up with the word ethic, so we ain’t explaining this for you ok?

Now, the distinction between ethics and morality is basically non. Most people use them interchangeably, people who study ethics don’t make a distinction. Some people say that ethics are individuals and morals are societies. Another way to distinguish them is: ethics are good or bad imposed from society. Morality is someone’s own sense, not imposed by anyone. The fact that different sources say opposite things about the distinction, just goes to show how little it matters.

Note that:

Philosophers talk about what is right and wrong (period). Some talk about what certain groups/societies say, but that is sociology. Relativism is the idea that there only exists societal ethics. Others think that there only exists our own ethics (Emotivism).

*5.3 Ethics vs Metaethics*

Definitions first, ok?

Ethics:

* Good and bad. 3 different kinds of questions plague ethics:

1. What is good and what is bad. This is answered by the field of applied ethics.
2. What general principles can we use to determine our goods and bads. This is answered by the field of ethical theory.
3. What kinds of things are good or bad. This is answered by metaethics!

Metaethics:

* Metaethics deals with kind of things that are good or bad
* What we mean by labelling something such
* Whether ethics are global or to specific cultures
* On the existence of moral facts (this sounds like one of those 18th century books On human existence A critique of your mom On your need to eat candy everyday)

Some theories of metaethics are:

1. Metaethical cognitivism: statements about ethics can have truth values
2. Metaethical non-cognitivism: statements about ethics cannot have truth values
3. Emotivism: ethical claims are simply emotional dispositions
4. Realism/Objectivism: there are real objective facts of the matter about ethical issues that are independent of our beliefs about them
5. Relativism/Subjectivism: moral statements are not separate from beliefs
6. Naturalism: moral facts are reducible to some scientific facts about the world

Quiz:

*5Q.1*

Philosophers would generally characterize the distinction between Ethics and Morality as:

* Ethics is about external standards, morality is about personal beliefs
* Morality is about societal practices, ethics is about individual views
* Ethicists think that good is relative while moralists think that good is objective
* Philosophers generally do not make a distinction between the terms ✅

*5Q.2*

Which of the following is NOT a general category of ethics:

* Normative ethical theory
* Applied ethical theory
* Metaethical theory
* Culturally relativistic ethics ✅

*5Q.3*

True or false: metaethics asks whether statements about good and evil can be true or false

* True ✅
* False

*5Q.4*

True or false: noncognitivism is a metaethical position

* True ✅
* False

6: What is the philosophy of religion?

*6.1 Religion vs Philosophy of religion*

Religion and philosophy of religion both study religion, but do so differently:

1. Religion: we assume the metaphysical, epistemic and ethical claims of a religion and from there we study how such a world is like
2. Philosophy of religion: we try to question religion and decide on their validity

*6.2 God*

In religion, we think a lot about God(s). Religion tries to describe God (the thing’s existence is considered a premise (I don’t know if I can call it a they, person, him, her, so I will just say “thing” ok? Dm if disrespectful)), and philosophy of religion actually analyses the thing not as a premise but as an argument, they try to prove or disprove god, and tries to concretely define and explain it.

*6.3 meaning*

Philosophy of religion tries to understand the meaning of religious claims.

*6.4 morality*

There does exist a doctrine of morality in various religions. Many have a strict moral code on ancient religious books.

Quiz:

*6Q.1*

True or false: the purpose of philosophy of religion is to advocate for a particular worldview:

* True
* False ✅

*6Q.2*

True or false: Philosophy or Religion translates religious claims into a form in which they can be analysed on the same playing field as those of other disciplines:

* True ✅
* False

*6Q.3*

True or false: Philosophy of religion deals only with logic, epistemology, and metaphysics, it does not touch on ethics:

* True
* False ✅

*6Q.4*

True or false: Philosophy of Religion assumes that claims about God have meaning:

* True
* False ✅

7: What is the philosophy of science?

*7.1 Science vs Philosophy of science*

These are different:

1. Science is a methodology that performs experiments, and tries to explain phenomena. It tries to give the best fit for evidence. It uses inductive methods to provide justifications for theories through experiments that control variables. The trick is going from correlations to causations (in phenomena). It uses the scientific method (magic!). Science assumes the scientific method.
2. Philosophy of science does not assume the scientific method, but tries to justify it. It deals largely with the truth of scientific knowledge.

Quiz:

*7Q.1*

True or false: Philosophy of Science deals with the ethics of scientists, not the logical justification of the scientific method:

* True
* False ✅

*7Q.2*

True or false: The truth of claims of philosophy of science depends on the truth of the claims of science:

* True
* False ✅

*7Q.3*

True or false: Philosophy of Science generally uses inductive arguments, while science generally uses deductive arguments:

* True
* False ✅

*7Q.4*

True or false: Science puts forward claims about the world, while philosophy of science looks for justification for those claims:

* True ✅
* False

I find this question kind of misleading, since science does not make up claims without any justification, I think a better question would be:

True or false: Science puts forward claims about the world through the scientific method while philosophy of science looks for justifications for the scientific method.

8: What is the history of philosophy?

*8.1 Philosophy of history vs history of philosophy*

They are similar, but not the same:

1. The history of philosophy studies the specific things philosophers talked about in the past
2. Philosophy of history studies the way that “history” should be practiced and documented.

*8.2 History of philosophy*

The history of philosophy is in of itself used by philosophers and non-philosophers. It is used by philosophers to better understand the past philosopher’s thoughts and lives, as an example, understanding that Epicurus lived in pain for his whole life, which possibly influenced his view on pleasure.

*8.3 Philosophy of history*

Philosophy of history (in practice) asks what method we should have for studying history.

Quiz:

*8Q.1*

History of philosophy could be described as:

* The study of what philosophers in the past thought or argued ✅
* The study of how we should study history
* The study why we study history
* The study of the metaphysical possibility of time travel into the past

*8Q.2*

One of the central philosophers of the philosophy of history was:

* Plato
* Aquinas
* Hegel ✅
* Russell

*8Q.3*

What discipline would ask the question: does humankind make progress?

* Philosophy of history ✅
* History of philosophy
* Another discipline of philosophy
* None of the above

Bibliography

Wittgenstein, L., Ogden, C. K., & Russell, B. (2021). Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus (Pocketbook ed.). Pattern Books.

Please check my in-house pdf for the english version: <https://github.com/Y0N1N1/cogitare/blob/main/archive/Tractatus-Logico-Philosophicus.pdf>

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