15 Minute Learning Series

15 Minute Theological Thinking

A General Survey of Theological Philosophy

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15 Minute Theological Thinking:
From Thought to Faith

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As for that, those parts which may be considered new or not as belonging to the author and appropriated from others, belong to them as should be noted by citation (*mea culpa* if not) and should not be considered a part of this work except by guilt through association.

[1] Or in the words of Qoheleth "*There is nothing new under the sun*." *Ecclesiastes 1:9*

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Thanks

This work, part of my personal *Summa* if you will, is a compendium of several earlier books which relied on the impetus of two people and a series of lunchtime 'lectures', but it is founded in the gift of so many. So first to Julien and Allison, thanks for the *Food For Thought* challenge. To my parents and everyone else, thanks for giving me the love of critical thinking and later of philosophy. Thanks especially to my wife, Alice, who married me even though I had a degree in philosophy. Finally an apology to my kids, as they had no choice in the matter.[2]

As for philosophy itself, I also owe a debt of gratitude to the Monks of St. Joseph Abbey and Monty Python's Flying Circus and to the many others who spent their time giving us such a rich history of thinking and the critical exploration of that thinking.

By Way of Introduction…

If one agrees with Hegel on this matter[3], then this preface will be short.

With so many volumes on the subject, why do philosophy and theology deserve yet another book about them?

Despite the moniker, there is no promise that it will only take 15 minutes to understand all of philosophy and the way the Church uses it within theology! The idea of these discussions is to take about 15 minutes of reading and a lifetime of understanding. Not too much to ask or expect?

As for this work, the thinkers discussed here in fact thought of more things than we discuss, and to a much deeper degree than is shown in this work. The pericopes included here show the limited nature of the limited nature of this discussion.

As for myself, I hold but a mere undergraduate degree in this field. Why do I feel qualified to produce such a work? Well, I hold a mere undergraduate degree in this field.

Dedication

I dedicate this book to everyone who has struggled with the idea of thinking, and especially to those who struggled to teach me this fine art.

Biblical Quotations

[2] *THE appearance of this volume demands more than the usual amount of apology.* Introduction to *Humanism*, by F.C.S. Schiller

[3] And one should; c.f. *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 1, Georg W. Hegel

PART I

Intro through Aristotle

Prehistory to 2nd Century BC

> "*I say this so that no one may deceive you by specious arguments. For even if I am absent in the flesh, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing as I observe your good order and the firmness of your faith in Christ. So, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, walk in him, rooted in him and built upon him and established in the faith as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving. See to it that no one captivate you with an empty, seductive philosophy according to human tradition, according to the elemental powers of the world and not according to Christ. [For in him dwells the whole fullness of the deity bodily, and you share in this fullness in him, who is the head of every principality and power.]*" (*Colossians 2:4-8*)

This work starts with an admonishment for the student and the teacher to keep what is being done here in context. This work will endeavor to show the place of human reason within the sacred mysteries and not the other way around. We shall attempt in this time together to emulate Augustine and Anselm in their great quest to bring the mysteries of God into the realm of human understanding, and by doing so increase their love of those mysteries. To think about God in a purely academic form is to be distracted from the very reason for theology, to be deceived by "*specious arguments*" as Paul so succinctly puts it.

With that in mind, and making no excuses, the foundational thread of this work is Christ – "*as we received him*" as the old translation used to say; "*He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation… He is before all things, and in him all things hold together."* (*Colossians 1:15, 17*) Philosophy studied without ground or direction is fruitless, and its followers are easily left with little or no sense of the purpose of philosophy or its benefits, especially as the "handmaiden of theology". That said, it is off the soapbox (for a moment) and on to the task at hand.

Mysterion

As implied above, we start with God. Humans have always exhibited a sense of *other*, of not just other people but of something outside of ourselves, what we call *the sacred*. This sense of *sacred* can be caused by or at least often can contain another element, that of the 'unknown' or the 'unknowable'. The word we use to express that comes to us from the Greek word *mysterion*. It does not mean *mystery* as we might think like a puzzle to be solved or something which cannot be explained, but rather something that is *mystical*, i.e. *associated with the sacred*. In our discussion, the term refers to something that is outside of our experience, natural reason, or understanding and therefore *requires* some type of extra-human (divine) revelation in order to be known and have meaning, or at least be understandable. The word we might be more familiar with is its Latin translation: *sacrament*, hence the relationship between *sacer* and *mysterion*.

When we think about this we want to think of it in active terms. Mystery or sacrament speaks to the *encounter* with the sacred, the *active* seeking and the act of a perceived response of the sacred. Since it is the *sacred*, that encounter takes place outside of 'normal' or 'secular' or 'profane' space, i.e. those places where we do not directly encounter the sacred. And like the sacred, there is a type of knowledge which accompanies mystery. We *know* that it is there. We *know* that it is different than the normal world. We *know* some of the attributes (positively or negatively) of the sacred. Mystery is not something which is unobtainable or can be dismissed

because it is not directly or empirically knowable; it is the word we use to describe something we know which is *beyond* the directly knowable.

Once again, 'Knowledge' in this sense is understood as perhaps more of a perception than a scientific proof or certainty, an *understanding* rather than a *certainty*. The understanding that this kind of knowledge exists is somewhat based in what we call "*speculation*". This is not to say there is not a degree of certainty, but that it is not a certainty in a secular, scientific sense. Mystery implies a connection to something that we do not fully understand yet which we acknowledge and seek, and we can have a type of knowledge of. We might think of it as we think of the scientific theories of relativity or black holes. We did not have, for many years, certain 'proof' of black holes, except speculative, logical, or rational mathematical 'proof'.

Mystery and proof may seem at odds, and are often put there, but mystery is the very human trait of accepting things we cannot grasp, see, smell or touch.

Philosophos

General human speculation then, is not necessarily directly connected to theology, but it is directly connected to the sense of mystery. Religion and science are both natural human actions based in this sense of wonder about the world around us. How does the world work? Why does the world work? These questions are at the center of our being, the very mesh with which we are created, and whether we know God or not, we seek understanding from both a sense of wonder and self-survival. We call that basic instinct *philosophy*.

If Aristotle, the great Greek philosopher is right and "*definition is understanding"*, then Philosophy could simply (and literally) be the "love of wisdom"[4] and we could be done with it. But alas, that would first make for a short book, and second be untrue to the modern philosophical spirit of obfuscation and double meaning. So let us confound it further and state that it is also known in some circles simply as *Metaphysics* (somewhat literally pertaining to and the study of things "beyond the physical", but more on that later). This would be slightly inaccurate as I hope we will see. Those circles are trying to relegate it to some obscure mumbo-jumbo fringe, which has no bearing in our lives. Since Aristotle himself gives us the notion of physics (and metaphysics, and psychology, and biology) which they so seem to love, then to heck with them – they do not know what they are talking about anyway. Let us embark upon our own journey, unfettered by the confusion or judgments of others and delve into the true meaning and place of philosophy and from there to theology.

For our purposes then, philosophy is *the devotion* (hence the word 'love') *and discipline of thinking* (hence the idea of study: '-ology') *which is committed to understanding*. It is not just a commitment of knowing *how the world is put together*, like the molecular components of water, but *also* of an understanding of 'truth' of *how the world works and our place in it*. One can see then, that philosophy, rather than being separate and inconsequential to science, math, politics, ethics or whatever you can come up with (thanks again, Aristotle), is integral to all human thought and action. A fairly "bold statement for a one eyed fat man"[5], but one which I hope will be vindicated by the end of this work.

[4] think *Philadelphia* – the city of 'brotherly love'
[5] *True Grit*

So on what basis is such a claim made? Before we jump into theology then we spend a bit of time understanding the *language* of theology. Before theology became a discipline in its own right, thinkers explored the world. Before the Greeks knew of Scripture and the Jewish understanding of God who is the basis for meaning, they approached meaning from a physical, homo-centric foundation. So they started with the world around them.

The Greeks divided this world into physical categories: tangible objects (earth, wind, fire and water) and the metaphysical ones: as said, the things which were beyond the physical (beauty, truth, etc.). Perhaps more speculative than tangible, they created logic and science, using reason and experience to transform knowledge into understanding and that understanding in action. In its own way it is similar to what we presently call science[6] in that it too seeks a 'Unified Theory', not just of the physical universe but of life and living. We will use words like '*being*' and '*substance*' to help us understand this world, but mostly to help us understand ourselves. What are we? What is thought? How are we different than the world around us? How are we part of it? We will examine critical methods using words like '*logic*' and '*dialectic*'. In this form it is as legitimate of a science as physics itself (and was considered such by the Greeks – but again, that is another discussion).

Understanding: Thinking About Thinking

This seems like such a simple term, and in order to stave off that kind of quick conclusion let us here and now strip it of such a simplistic dismissal. *Understanding*, or as we will also call it *wisdom*, is getting your head around an idea, not just at your level but on its level. What I mean by this is seeing it 'eye to eye', on its own ground and not with hubris or bias. In perhaps an inappropriate appropriation of an idiom: *Seeing is skin deep but Understanding goes right to the bone*.[7]

Understanding is not a passive activity. It should be, and is, efficacious as we will see. We come together, then, here within these pages seeking more knowledge and wisdom than when we entered, as both student and teacher. It is a road to understanding God, not a destination (to over-coin a phrase) and in order to begin we need to shod our feet with good shoes for the journey and take the first steps. On our way we can both look ahead on our journey and behind to where we have been, but we must always keep our focus: *understanding* is the main goal and the art of *logic* is our main road.

Logic: Testing the Waters

Another word which we must wrest from the hands of infidels is *logic*. Logic is the *art and action of critical thinking*, not merely the means by which you 'win' an argument[8]. By that I mean it contains the tools and methods to allow us to evaluate *validity* and *falsity* and therefore determine the *truth* of a statement or proposition. It is primarily systematic and deductive in nature, that is, it follows a deductive reasoning path called a *syllogism* which uses *thesis* (aka

[6] Or perhaps more correctly we should say that in its own way science is similar to and based within what we call philosophy.

[7] As my father always says "'I see', said the blind man to the deaf mute".

[8] And by 'winning' they mean crushing the life out of your opponent with nothing more than clichés and pat slogans, not the Truth.

premises, or truths) to reach a *conclusion* (aka new truth) as in: 'If A and B then C', and not 'A and B imply C' or 'I think A therefore C'. The art of argumentation, known as 'rhetoric' was formalized in the West by the Greeks and was taught religiously (or philosophically, I suppose) until recently (think *classical* education systems like the English). The art of critical thinking requires a chest of tools, and logic is their source – though they are often now delegated not to Philosophy but the realm of Psychology (which too has been discounted as a speculative science, and not just because it rises from philosophy, but more on that later perhaps) and is by that means often used against us rather than for us. But then I digress. Let us continue on the path of definition and the understanding which comes from it.

Logic then is the study of *truths* (*known as thesis* or *premises*) and the systematic methods for determining the validity of such truths. It evaluates not the *source* of the truth but the '*truth*' itself. Truths therefore may originate from rational thought, science or experience, and may develop from any resource available to the human mind and heart. What we want to understand is a *truth* in the context of the *argument* being made *with* it and then ultimately the truth of the conclusion made *from* it.

Thinking Well: Logical Basis

But what is truth? Are mine the same as yours (*with all apologies to Pilate and the Evangelist John*)? Logic gives us an answer to this question because it is the best objective basis (so far) for the determining of *truth* available to us mere humans. All well and good but how do we fight our way through the pervasive chicken-and-egg problem to objectively determine what is logical? At what point do we determine that the premise is sufficiently 'true' and 'true' in and of itself? These questions and many others have been used to establish the logical ground rules, and the means to accomplish them have been proposed, honed and 'perfected' over time.

Terms Logic

The problem with defining things is finding all of the words you need to define first in order to define that thing. When honing our definition of logic there are terms to be addressed in order to understand the definition, and so let us start by defining a few of them. Do not worry, many other definitions will follow so you will definitely[9] get your money's worth. Think of this first set of definitions as the *how is human thought organized* group (in descending order):

Methods: ways of demonstrating and formulating ideas, like a syllogism ($A^2 + B^2 = C^2$).

Systems: classes from which logical premises may be derived (like axioms in Trigonometry – remember?)

Truths: basics by which other methods, systems or arguments may be measured or developed ('humans think') also known in an argument as the *theses* or *premises* or...well you get the idea.

List 1: Basic Thought Organization Terms

The Logical Playing Field

On our journey, we will be concentrating on Western thought, and while some exploration of Eastern thinking will take place, for now, as they say, write what you know. In order to understand

[9] Ha, ha…get it?

the basics we will keep it basic. That said, there are (basically) two main systems of Logic developed in the West:

Predicative:	based in terms (nouns and verbs).
Propositional:	based on the operators between those terms (+, -, =, and, or).

List 2: Major Types of Western Logic

For our purposes the two main representative Logics of these systems are:

Aristotelian: Classic basis for Western logic. It is of the predicative type because it uses *syllogisms* (if A and B then C *or* if A is B and B is C then A is C) involving nouns and verbs and such words as *all*, *some*, *are*, *not*.

Boolean: Familiar to all computer programmers, a symbolic pared-down version of Aristotle's form. It fashions "truth tables" using *and*, *or*, *not*, and is more about how the propositions are paired using those operators.

For simplicity, suffice it to say that our focus is on *deductive* styles of thinking and that these two representative forms fit the bill. They also bookend us nicely in time with Aristotle's classical style coming from ancient Greece and Boole's coming from the 20th century.

The Last Word?

One final thought to keep in mind. Gottfried Leibniz (*1646-1716, see Chapter 38*) postulated that propositions can be thought of as *contingent* (may or may not be true) or *necessary* (can only be true). That said, what we really want to pull out of this tidbit is his two 'great' premises for establishing this basis:

The Identity of Indiscernibles	This is the paring down of something until it is undistinguishable from another thing, that is, all of their properties are identical, meaning that the things themselves are for all practical purposes the same thing.
Principle of Sufficient Reason	The acceptance of a premise because at this point no reasonable argument can be made *against* it.

List 3: A Useful Subset of Leibniz's Theory of Proof

Thinking Poorly: Logical Fallacy

This section is probably the most important, in a negative way (the *via negative* as St. Thomas would say), because it is sometimes easier to understand where an argument fails than where it succeeds. We do not want to always be skeptical, but it is best to make sure an argument is formed correctly first in order to judge its validity. Arguments can seem very successful if you ignore their fallacies!

The term *fallacy* is used in Logic to imply several types of 'error' in an argument. Though there are probably as many methods of fallacy categorization as fallacies, most fallacies can be categorized into three basic types of errors by *where* the error takes place:

In argument	the actual components of the argument are flawed.
In Reasoning	the thinking behind the argument is flawed.
In Belief	roughly, what we *think* to be true is flawed.

Another way to think about them is to categorize them by the *format* of the error, or to put it another way, *how* they take place:

Formal structure based *('form-al')*, that is, the physical structure of the argument is flawed.

Informal internal to the structure *('in-form-al'*), that is, one part, a premise or conclusion for example, is flawed.

Most fallacies have very fancy name but for our purposes we will lump, I mean organize, errors into three 'quick' ways to identify them (though there are many more specifically identified):

1. ***Some invalid idea presented as valid***: Using irrelevant, incorrect or insignificant information (which is similar to *belief*), for example:
   Ad hominem – personal attack ("*This person says they have a plan, but that cannot be correct because they're a liberal/conservative*") not attacking the validity of the argument but the person/group making the argument.
2. ***Applying an unjustified premise****:* Use of *non-sequitur*[10] (non-following) statements (as with *reasoning,* or *formal*), for example:
   Consequent Affirmation – bi-directional logic; using the premise to prove itself ("*Aristotle was Greek, that guy's name is Aristotle so he must be Greek*")
3. ***Fact Misuse****:* Ignoring or suppressing relevant information (an *informal* type), for example:
   "No I did not touch my sister." (*the stick I poked her with touched her*).

List 4: Three Habits of Highly Ineffective Thinking

By way of thinking well about thinking poorly, in the end we want to keep in mind that what most of these categories and fallacies deal with is the improper use of ideas or their presentation. We must think before we speak.

Putting It Together

Theology uses the language of Philosophy. Philosophy and philosophical thinking rely on a structured, consistent language. If we spend all of our time arguing terms, where does that leave us? No, really that is just a rhetorical question. Logic is the tool of philosophy, but the aim is to examine life, in a consistent and repeatable manner.

As confusing as all those categorizations may be, do not be worried. Rome was not philosophized in a day, as we might but probably should not say. Philosophers have proposed various ideas for centuries, using different words and groupings but all seeking the same end – a common language for discussing ideas, so we should not get bogged down in the terms, and then creating a common structure for presenting those terms. Placing these errors within categories only serves us mnemonically and so there are no hard and fast rules which dictate their commitment to memory. Thousands of years have gone into perfecting our understanding of logic, and probably thousands more will continue in their development. Keeping in mind the notions which they represent is the first step to utilizing them. It is also the most important step in utilizing them.

[10] Just one non-sequitur after another….

Once again: *do not expect to remember every one of them*, even generally. Expect instead to understand them and utilize every one of them in avoiding and identifying error when constructing or understanding arguments.

One last wrench in the works: suffice it to say these methods do not speak to the veracity or the morality of the truths being examined, merely that they are or are not relevant to the argument. When looking at logic we are not making judgments so much about the *content* of the thesis but their *context*.

"These common thoughts are expressed in a shared public language, consisting of shared signs...a sign has a 'sense' that fixes the reference and is 'grasped by everybody' who knows the language..."

Noam Chomsky, *Language and Thought*

Logic

In the last chapter I presented two mainstream logical methods, Aristotelian and Boolean and I would like to continue our discussion using them. Are they by any means the only two methods? No, but then this is the *15-minute* lesson not the spend-the-rest-of-your-life-committing-terms-to-memory lesson. For our purposes at this point, we will stick to these two as sufficient to illustrate the point about how do we think about truths.

With that in mind, let us get this out of the way: when we use the word *truth* we think of it in terms of a specific statement not an overall general idea. That is to say we are formally thinking of it more as a promulgated statement which is the basis for other statements and not necessarily as the end objective conclusion (as in 'ultimate truth'), nor necessarily as 'true' in the sense of *valid*. Do not quote me on this but as an initial way of offering explanation, *truths* in Logic are the premises of arguments from which we derive a conclusion or another *truth*. To this we apply logic standards which are the meat of this discussion (structure, fallacy, etc.). The fancy words we could use for a truth are *thesis* or *premise,* but *a rose by any other name, will still give us a conclusion*.

Supercalifallacylogicalidoscious

To start with a concept which, like *supercalifragilisticexpialidocious* may be the strangest word you have ever heard: Logic. We may think we understand what it means, but we do not. Logic is not merely a term, it is a system, a way of life. When we think logically we are thinking *critically*. We are categorizing, ordering and curtailing our thoughts, keeping a watch over our tongues as it were, in best tradition of the truly humble saints. By this method we can consistently share, organize and evaluate specific aspects of an argument and determine its validity and soundness. Starting here gives us a *lingua franca*, the confidence and the means to examine and understand. That said (again) let us move to logical thinking.

Aristotle: The Square of Opposition

Establishing a framework from which to operate is primary to our journey. Among his many gifts to the world, Aristotle (4th century BC) laid out for us the 'limits' of thinking, that is, what thoughts are viable within logic, or to put it another way (which I apparently do with great alacrity throughout this work) *what are the possible viable deductive paths of argumentation*?

The sum of Aristotle's thought is encased in the doctrine known as the 'Square of Opposition'. Through it he hoped to finalize the boundaries of argumentation making it possible to have an argument in a controlled, logical way (do not worry, there will be more on this later) as to how it was being practiced around him at the time.

Syllogisms (in the form of *truth, truth, new truth*) are the basis of Aristotelian logic. The square of opposition is a diagram showing how *theses* (hypothesis/ideas hence *thesis* and *antithesis*) – not the 'truths' themselves – are logically related. The diagram is just a useful way to keep them straight (or diagonal as the case may be). The *theses* concern logical relations among four logical forms or *operations* (logical relationships):

NAME	FORMAT	AKA
A	Every *S* is *P*	Universal Affirmative
E	No *S* is *P*	Universal Negative
I	Some *S* is *P*	Particular Affirmative
O	Some *S* is not *P*	Particular Negative

Table 1: Aristotle's Logical Theses

These theses are fairly self-explanatory, but I will expound anyway: what it comes down to are a *general* true and false and a *particular* true and false. For Aristotle these four statement types pretty much summed up all that you could say, at least logically. It is the relationship of these four simple statements that are shown in the square. The four theses are placed at the corners of a diagram in opposition to one another and is, as said, called the *square of opposition* (Figure 1, though to be honest it looks more like a rectangle of opposition).

The corners are connected by specific oppositions:

- ***Contradictories***: if they cannot both be true and they cannot both be false.
- ***Contraries***: if they cannot both be true but can both be false.
- ***Subcontraries***: if they cannot both be false but can both be true.
- ***Subaltern*****:** (think *sub* as in *below*) must be true if its superaltern is true
- ***Superaltern*****:** (think *super* as in *above*) must be false if the subaltern is false

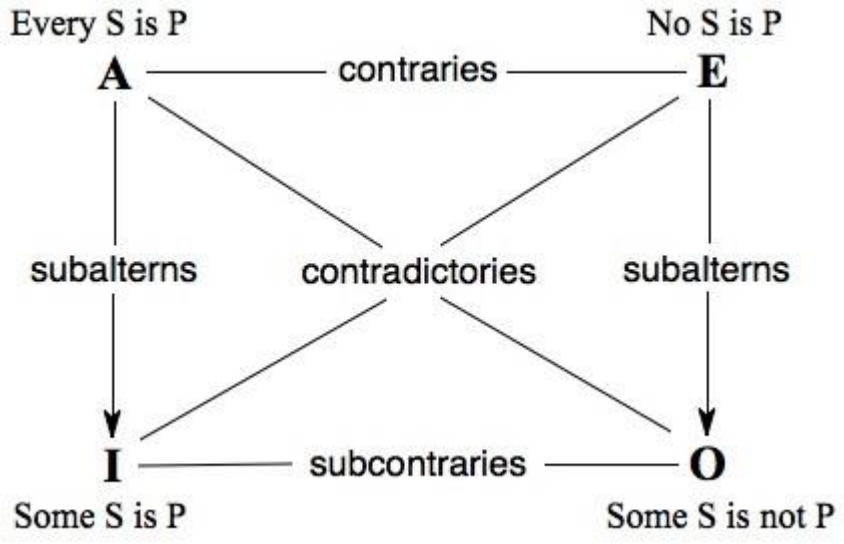

Figure 1: The really non-rectangular *Square of Opposition*

Just as the four logical operations are set in pairs, the *theses* embodied in this diagram are thereby further grouped into relational pairs:

- 'Every *S* is *P*' and 'Some *S* is not *P*' are contradictories.
- 'No *S* is *P*' and 'Some *S* is *P*' are contradictories.
- 'Every *S* is *P*' and 'No *S* is *P*' are contraries.
- 'Some *S* is *P*' and 'Some *S* is not *P*' are subcontraries.
- 'Some *S* is *P*' is a subaltern of 'Every *S* is *P*'.

- 'Some *S* is not *P*' is a subaltern of 'No *S* is *P*'.

Confused? Don't be. When we think of an idea, we place it somewhere in this square and then evaluate it. The next idea added is in relationship to that point at another point on the square. If the idea does not fall into a relationship noted by the square then we must disregard it. Simple Enough? Think of it this way: "*Every planet is made of rock*" and "*Some planets are not made of rock*" are *contradictory* ideas, only one can be true, and we can disregard the one which is not. Either all planets are made of rock or they are not, simple enough. If we add "Every planet is made of gas" then we can evaluate it on its own or in relationship to the premise we kept.

The verbiage added with *alterns* and *contraries* is only a means to evaluate the ideas placed on the square or better yet *where* to place them on the square for evaluation. Contraries exist between like types (general to general or particular to particular); alterns between different types (general to particular or particular to general).

By thinking this way we share a common ground for discussion. This gives logic its power: common understanding and rules.

Boole: Truth Tables

George Boole was a 19th century AD mathematician and I'll spend a minute on his stuff at, as above, a very high and rough level. Logic looks for tools of expression, and Boole proposed the logic method which became the main method for that period (and therefore influences into the 20th century) using mathematical means.

Boole broke the logic down to three basic *operations* (logical relationships, remember?):

NAME	*FORM*
AND	A and B
OR	A or B
NOT	not A

Table 2: Boole's Theses of Operators

These three are part of a total of 16 *operations* which can be applied in what we usually call 'truth tables'; Boole did not invent the truth table but it is the best illustration of them, like the 'square' above.

AND Form		
Argument A	Argument B	Function Value
False	*false*	False
False	*true*	False
True	*false*	False
True	*true*	True

OR Form		
Argument A	Argument B	Function Value
false	*false*	False
false	*true*	True
true	*false*	True
true	*true*	True

NOT Form	
Argument A	Function Value
false	True
true	False

Table 3: Boole's Truth Tables

Boolean logic presents us with a pared-down, bare-bones semantic guide for discussing a truth (or *premise*). The thought here being that we really do not need to muddy the water with discussions (i.e. all that baggage which Aristotle saddles us with) which are fruitless (in the end) because they are merely manufactured subsets of the basic argument and its truths. He felt that by eliminating all that extra stuff we could have gotten to and through the main truths faster and more logically rather than the 20+ centuries it took to get where he was.

Of course the worst thing about this is that you have been studying using Aristotelian logic for almost a whole semester and suddenly they drop this in your lap. But that is a personal pain which I will bear alone; I on the other hand, have been merciful.

Gödel: *Incompleteness*

As a further sign of my benevolence, at this time I'll throw in the Kurt Gödel (20th century AD) tidbit at no extra cost. You may have heard of Gödel from the popular book *Gödel, Escher and Bach* by Hofstadter. If not (and even if), Gödel demonstrated that in any branch of mathematics (or as we might say 'system'), you would eventually find propositions which you could not prove or disprove using that system. The implication is that *all* logical systems of any complexity have, by definition, a level of *incompleteness*; that is, each of them contains more true statements than it can possibly prove by the methods and rules of that system. In other words they will in and of themselves always be incomplete systems for demonstrating truth.

You are welcome.

Fallacy

Incomplete, flawed or just plain wrong thinking is the source of so many misunderstandings that it deserves its own section just for that reason. For our purposes though, we will restrict ourselves to the realm of philosophical logic. Therefore let us start with the defining of the idea and its ramifications. *Logical fallacy* hinders our ability to form understanding and ultimately our ability to live the 'examined life'. This affects most often our moral decisions which in my humble opinion (and as you shall see, a large number of philosophers') are the true driving force for which we seek understanding.

Argumentation is mainly a *deductive* process but may sometimes involve *inductive* reasoning. For logic purposes, deductive is preferred because in the end you have a solid *argument* from which you can derive an agreed upon *truth*. Inductive logic tends to only provide a plausible truth, which even though agreed to by a majority of thinkers could still leave the truth up for grabs. Inductive reasoning also avails one to go down the primrose path of fallacy, because it *sounds* reasonable. But as we should be learning, in logic just because it sounds reasonable does not make it so. *Ergo sum*[11], the use of inductive reasoning for further argumentation might/can really lead to problems later in a method or system but, as we will see, the use of deductive reasoning, with its internal pitfalls, may be misused and not be any better.

Fallacious Thinking

[11] Let's just call it "therefore it is".

As introduced earlier, a technical way of thinking about fallacies is *formal* (invalid form) and *informal* (invalid argument). The best way to understand these are to think in terms of someone deliberately or accidently misshaping the argument to confuse or confound (formal) or someone deliberately or accidently misshaping some aspect of the argument to confuse or confound (informal). Suffice it to say, most errors tend to be informal.

Recognizing fallacious thinking can be harder than we think, especially because so many of the fallacies appeal to prejudices and stereotypes or seem 'logical enough'. Affronts to logic aside, we define fallacies as flaws or errors in the argument, introduced usually in the premises (though sometimes in the conclusions) and *are often very minor*. Think of adding instead of subtracting or misplacing the parenthesis in a mathematical formula. The effect is that any conclusion drawn from the flawed argument which is used as a later premise only compounds the error throughout the whole of the argument or system. This is a very important point to keep in mind.

The other scariest thing about logical error is that you can reach a *correct* conclusion from *flawed* arguments. For example "Aristotle is a man; All men die; Aristotle is dead" or something like "whales are fish, fish live in the sea, whales live in the sea". In the first argument, the premises are both correct but the order does not lend itself *deductively* to the conclusion – though it does *inductively* (the name Aristotle does not just apply to the Greek philosopher Aristotle but in this context we can *imply* that it does.). In the second example the first fact is wrong, but the conclusion is correct.

Think back to the Aristotle's square or Boole's tables. These are the tools we keep in mind when constructing or evaluating an argument, so that we do not run into the error of the first argument; keeping the logical fallacies in mind helps to keep us from making the error in the second argument.

Thinking Fallaciously

In addition, we must be vigilant in even detecting an argument. Here are some classic example statements like:

"*Have you stopped beating your wife yet?*"

This is not an argument, though it seems to have conclusions all throughout it (it is a formal violation: *Plurium Interrogationum* – too many questions)*. Another inference style statement is:

"*If the Bible is accurate, Jesus must have been the Son of God.*"

This is not an argument but an *assertion* that looks like an argument; there seems to be one 'premise' and one 'conclusion' but no statement in the sentence proves any other statement. Arguments are not open to opinion or only one premise.

Finally for your viewing pleasure, look at this one:

"*Einstein made his famous statement 'God does not play dice' because of his belief in God.*"

This also is not an argument but an *explanation*. We cannot derive that Einstein believed in God or what that belief was just because he used the word 'God' in a sentence once. Again there are no statements within the sentence which give proof of any other statement within the sentence. One could even argue that in the last part the word *belief* could be ambiguous.

Get the idea?

Thought Exercise: *What would be an argument then? Let's take the assertion and see if we can do anything with it for example by restructuring it and adding a premise: "The Bible is an*

accurate, historical document; Jesus makes statements recorded in the Bible;…" What conclusion can we draw? In this case is the first statement a good premise? Is the second?

Bias and Logical Bias

(Warning: the following contain personal logical reflections of the author that may or may not be embraced by the wider philosophical world but possibly by my mother but only because she loves me)

I think we understand bias (a particular leaning which colors the argument) but is there something known as 'logical bias'? Can we over intellectualize something? Are some statements seen as true by some but not by others? Does a statement *have* to mean something? Can we unwittingly make one system (or even a single truth) the only system for gauging truth?

The simple answer to all these and many other questions is *yes*. In addition to (and usually containing) logical fallacy, we can be biased toward one system or another or method to the exclusion of all others. The argument that something is wrong merely because it disagrees with our own conclusions, or does not follow what we *believe* to be the logic rules is what I would term a logical bias (some might call it intellectual hubris). This is in addition to any other biases we bring into the argument. This may not seem like an important point but think about it this way. Religion is often dismissed not from any logical reason but because of a rejection of the principles upon which it is founded. Or worse, some try to use the logic of a system to prove the truth of another system. Science will never prove or disprove religion.

This leads me to address one particular effect from this attitude: the tendency to speak in absolutes based on logic. Some things are considered true throughout history and they can pretty much be depended upon to continue to be true. Say, the earth is round. That was true whether people knew it or understood it to be true (which incidentally they did pretty early on). Well surprise, actually the earth is kind of egg-shaped. Does that bar us from using 'the earth is round' as a premise? If we are figuring rocket trajectories then round may not be good enough, but for most argument's sake, 'the earth is round' works pretty well. What we have to watch is 'once-thought-always-true' mentality (or as I like to classify it: *one track mind, derailed*) as well as the 'well-that-was-disproved-and-therefore-completely-useless' (or *baby with the bathwater*) syndrome.

Fallacies Bergere

Okay, enough wandering. If I recall correctly[12], Aristotle divided fallacies up into three types:

1. **Material**: subject matter of or within the statement(s) – often *unquantifiable* or *incorrect* statements.
2. **Verbal**: communication errors or abuses.
3. **Formal**: structural errors in the argument.

List 5: Aristotelian Forms of Fallacy

(Another probably less formal way to think about them is to divide them up as fallacies of ***relevance***, fallacies of ***causal*** (cause and effect) ***reasoning***, and fallacies caused of ***ambiguity***…as

[12] Really…someone should really do some fact checking on this work.

I have said, there are probably as many ways as there are philosophical systems and again, you just have to find the one that suits you.).

Fallacies are easily identifiable as they often have Latin names (** below). The list of fallacies seems to be growing even since I first studied them, but I think that most are subsets of a basic few. By that I mean that you can place most into families which involve the same basic flaw, just as you can group them like we do above. Sometimes the categories fail and some are defined which cross over between two or more categories but that is just me covering up the paucity of this discussion. Still the most effective way to keep them in mind is to group them and remember the groupings. Whatever mnemonic helps go for it! I am sorry, what was I saying? Oh yes. For now and to be able to continue writing we will stick with the above method.

Here then, are a choice few with a short description:

***Material (their subject)*:**

- ***Ad Verecundiam***: (argument from/to modesty) deferring to another source
    - ***Related Common Example*: Ipse Dixit**: (he himself said) *so and so said/believes it therefore it must be true* (aka Appeal to Authority/Celebrity, etc) slightly different but in the same family.
- ***Ad Hominem***: (at/to the man) as mentioned above, attacking the individual not the truth; one of the most prevalent fallacies in use today.
- ****Plurium Interrogationum*:** (too many questions) also mentioned above, questions couched within statements such that no answer is sufficient for all of the questions.
- ****Non Sequitur*:** (does not follow) presenting two disparate statements as connected, a favorite of conspiracy nuts everywhere.
- ***Circulus in Probando***: (circular argument) assuming the conclusion in the premise(s)
- ***Ignoratio Elenchi***: (ignoring of the chosen [argument]) intentionally diverting attention away from the facts at hand.

***Verbal (their parts)*:**

- ***Argumentum Verbosium***: (verbose arguing) overwhelming by the sheer repetition of words.
- ***Unum Ad Pluribus***: (…from one to all) assuming the whole is true because the parts are [this has an opposition of assuming each from the whole]. This is verbal because it is a confusion of terms.
- **Equivocating** (equal words; can't recall the Latin, or even make it up – just use the root somehow if you feel the need to: *equi vocare*) using a word ambiguously or using a word which could have two or more meanings.

***Formal (crimes against argument structure)*:**

- ***Quaternio Terminorum***: (four terms) introducing a fourth element (premise) into the normal three element argument.
- **Negative Premises**: assuming the positive from two negatives – two wrongs do not make a right.
- ***Petitio Principii*:** (appealing to the prinicple) *assuming* the conclusion implicitly (or explicitly) within a premise

List 6: Fallacy Styles and Examples

Putting It Together

When we approach a 'truth' or a proposed conclusion logically in order to determine the value or validity of that truth or conclusion, we have to determine what path we will take to get there. There has to be a defined, agreed upon set of rules by which we will argue our truth.

The logical systems presented by philosophers are used to set the boundaries within which they will think and argue. Is the loss of Aristotelian grey areas presented by Boolean logic the end word? Is Aristotelian logic better or worse at reaching logical consensus? Why am I asking you? Peace. Here is where Gödel comes in: to keep ourselves honest we must admit that in any system there comes a time where we will run into a quandary or paradox or whatever that we will be unable to solve within the scope we are working…and you know what? That is okay because it forces us to continue to think beyond what we know and are secure/comfortable with. We may even, dare I say, look to other systems in which to seek the answers. Logic is a pretty Zen experience then. We *must not* allow ourselves to be overly influenced by either emotional passion or intellectual passion. We *must* allow ourselves to be *open* to all influences and yet *disciplined* to eliminate those which are redundant, extraneous, erroneous or false.

Still, it is not a cold and passionless discipline. Understanding, enlightenment, peace, or whatever you want to call it should be the result of our search, which should energize our thinking and our actions. Calm rational discussion, based in specific rules and methods will eventually produce for us a system of operation from which we will tackle the world. Like theology, philosophical pursuits only have validity if applied in the real world, the day-to-day workshop of life, not just for ourselves but for everyone and should always involve kindness.

If theology or philosophy insulates us from life then we have failed in our attempt make sense of the world and have fallen into the reality fallacy: what we think is real actually is not, kind of like the oxymoron "Reality TV".

Post Discernment Exercises:

1. When asked about a particular point within a candidate's speech, the commentator's response was "I don't think he really had anything to say." Discuss.
2. The Bible says: "There is no God." (*Psalm* 14); The Bible is literally true; Therefore, there is no God. Discuss.

Man: I came here for a good argument!
Mr. Vibrating: No you didn't, you came for an argument.
Man: Well, an argument's not the same as contradiction.
Mr. Vibrating: It can be.
Man: No it can't. An argument is a connected series of statements to establish a definite proposition.
Mr. Vibrating: No it isn't.
Man: Yes it is. It isn't just contradiction.
Mr. Vibrating: Look, if I argue with you I must take up a contrary position.
Man: Yes, but that's not just saying 'No it isn't.'
Mr. Vibrating: Yes it is!
Man: No it isn't!
Mr. Vibrating: Yes it is!
Man: Argument is an intellectual process. Contradiction is just the automatic gainsaying of any statement the other person makes.
(short pause)
Mr. Vibrating: No it isn't.

Monty Python's Flying Circus: *The Argument Clinic*

Decisions, Decisions

In this episode, we want to delve deeper into the basic facts and influences on our thinking, and at the same time increase the size of the playing field by introducing another definition. We have to understand what clouds, controls, influences, and enhances our thinking. Logic gives us the basis for proving or disproving truths. We can see how faulty logic or hubris can influence the ongoing argument but what are some of the truths from which our system will ultimately operate? That is, what we might consider as our rational foundational truths whenever we approach a subject. In what can only be called audacious, let me state that in theology we call this idea "God" but in philosophical terms this basic founding principle is often called the *Prime Cause* or the *Prime Mover* or the *First Principle(s)*, that is, the one thing which gets the whole ball rolling. This overlaps but should not be confused with Aristotle's idea of 'first principles' (lower case), which are basic ideas without being *the* basic idea.

For now, remember that this is often a premise or thesis which should at a minimum meet the two rules we mentioned earlier from Herr Leibniz:

- ***Identity of Indiscernibles*** (reduction renders the two things indiscernible from one another)
- ***Sufficient Reason*** (no logical argument exists against it at this time)

So when we begin to look at this Prime Mover idea, we are trying to come up with the primal cause of all things, the agreed upon singularity or truth from which we can begin to establish other truths.

Time To Focus

Usually, when we examine something, we are fixed within a space and time frame. That is, we reason it out, not from its very foundational cause, but usually within the time and space frame in which it happened/happens/will happen (*I wonder what I will have for lunch*). We do this not from its very source, that is, its primary cause or as we might say, the '*PRIME*' *Prime Mover*, position (*I only have peanut butter and jelly, so I cannot have a steak*).

This is mostly because we are trying to solve or understand the problem right before us. Our needs are very immediate, or seem limited to the immediate. How though, do we know we are even on the right path when we begin our investigation? I am not so much worried about why I am hungry, only what in this moment will remove the feeling of hunger.

For us, in order to fully explore our own thinking, we need to establish base camp truths from which we can feel confident in our exploration up the Everest of Truth. To put it simply (and trust me on this one) at this time, this primary cause is our Prime Mover (the connection between cause and movement will be discussed later).

In our discovery we want to avoid the chicken-and-the-egg problem, or the always-half-way-there problem of never knowing where to start (or to stop). So we can reason that there must be a place where truth starts. We will 'postulate' (assume or take something for granted based on sufficient reasoning, i.e. our two principles above) a beginning.

Cause and *Effect* are two portions of the argument. Most often we observe an effect and we postulate or premise a cause. A ball rolls by on a billiards table, followed by the cue ball. What

caused it? Was there a cause? What cause operated on which ball? On both? We know from experience of the rules of pool that it usually means that someone with a cue stick hit the cue ball into the other ball causing both to roll past our field of vision, but is that true? If we did not see the initial cause it is mere speculation on our part as to what that cause was. Perhaps someone just grabbed one of the balls and rolled it into the other; perhaps the white ball was hit by the other and not the other way around, etc., etc.

Yet, even though we observe effects and causes after the fact, we naturally apply cause and effect as a normal mental operating environment. For that reason, we will begin to take on two of the more common postulates. Hmmm. Sounds suspiciously like a segue.

But First, A Detour: A Priori and *A Posteriori*

Ha! Not so fast! Of course, as you may increasingly be beginning to understand, you just cannot begin there. There are always more terms which must be utilized so that we can say that we are all on the same page. Two concepts we need to explore now are the idea of *a priori* (from before) and *a posteriori* (from afterwards) which I have already bantered about in less formal terms.

A priori: This is kind of what we are thinking of when we talk about deductive reasoning; it is sequential as in one thing depends on the thing before it. In this thinking, we take the things from *before* (our premises) and come to a conclusion. A priori, it can be postulated, is done mainly without or at least does not depend upon experiential knowledge or more precisely perhaps, independent of experience. What we are really talking about is working from the obvious (2+2=4).

A posteriori: This is what we think of when we doing more analytic reasoning; we take the things from *after* (our experiences, the *effects,* etc.) and come to a conclusion. Posteriori is really based on experience, sometimes the unquantifiable (men grow beards).

Ultimately, and for our needs (as there are/will be other uses of these terms and the fact that I forgot what I was about to write), these are the terms for understanding how we might arrive at a premise. Some things just *are*, independent of our thoughts and experience and other things *are* because experience (or experimentation) has shown it to be so.

Another way to look at these might be by using the terms themselves. Prior means *before* so think of *a priori* as 'before the conclusion', that is, we are moving toward an unknown conclusion through deductive argument. Posterior means (well aside from that) *after*, so we can see *a posteriori* as moving back from the conclusion. *A priori*: think science experiment; *a posteriori*: think crime investigation.

Sooooo, when we look at an idea, we have to evaluate its *a priori* or *a posteriori* nature. There is no value judgment per se, as to which is more better. What judgment we have to exercise is whether the argument has merit, as we have discussed before.

Thought Exercise: *The statements "The Earth revolves around the Sun" and "The Sun revolves around the Earth" can both be considered 'true'. How? What kind of thinking (a priori or a posteriori) is involved in each statement?*

In the end, all that out-of-the-way ruminating will help us to look at two of the possible *Prime Movers*.

Postulating 'God' as the *Prime Mover*

The really great thing about God is that you can throw Him in at the end of any argument when you reach the boundary of truths reachable within that system (kind of like that old joke of adding *in my bed* to the end of any fortune cookie fortune, or the student answering "Jesus" to every question).

There is the argument (St. Anselm's (11th century) actually, but more on him later) that states that God is *that thing which we can conceive of which nothing greater can be conceived*…that is, try to think about the greatest thing you can think of in the universe and whatever that is, for which you can think of nothing greater (simply because it is the greatest), well, that is God. This is not a definition of God, nor is the word 'God' the definition for this thing, but it is the word that we use for such a concept.

This begs the question then, because we have conceived it, does that make it so? Is there such a being, just because we can conceive it (think unicorns)? So we have a *definition* of what could be construed as God, but no *proof*. Now we begin to argue about the conception versus the objection or 'thought' versus 'reality'. Very soon after that our heads explode.

Blaise Pascal (17th cent, *Chapter N*), known to many due to the computer language named for him, posited a square of oppositions or truth table if you will where he basically used the following four 'truths':

1. God exists
2. God does not exist
3. I believe in God
4. I don't believe in God

and sub to these:

a) Heaven and Hell exist
b) Heaven and Hell do not exist

From these four 'premises' of sorts he (basically) worked out that:

A. If God exists and I believe in him (and heaven exists) then 'whoo hoo'! ☺
B. If God exists, and I don't believe in him (and hell exists) then 'oops', ☹.
C. If God does not exist and I don't believe in him, nothing happens, 😐.
D. If God does not exist and I believe in him then nothing happens, 😐.

List 7: Pascal's Proof For God

So one has to ask oneself what is the worst outcome if I do believe and what is the worst outcome if I do not believe. Pascal would say 'two out of three ain't bad', so you might as well believe.

The 'strength' of this God as PM is that the design of the universe is logically and soundly based in an immutable *external*. There ultimately is no randomness or sense of deterministic Fate.

The 'weakness' of God as PM is the 'improvability' of God.

Postulating Physics as the *Prime Mover*

The really great thing about Physics is that you can throw in speculations based on experiential observation and call it plausible when you reach the boundary of truths reachable within that system.

Modern thought (~17th century and on) often relegates the God PM to the outer fringe, having kicked off the whole business but now absent or dismisses the idea as unobservable and therefore not valid as a premise or truth. This comes from the argument that any 'proof' (think not only 'provable' but also the 'mathematical proof') of God is no proof at all. Rationalism and Empiricism view the world as knowable within itself and apart from any mystical or external cause. This post-medieval thinking champions the sensible/rational human being as origin of knowledge over an external all-powerful entity.

Throughout philosophical history, there are many advocates of the 'no god' school, like Epicurus (3rd cent BC) who saw the only viable world as the here and now and Nietzsche (19th cent AD) whose point was less that there was no God but more that if there was we had long since supplanted him/her/it. His famous quote of "God is dead." is actually larger: "*God is dead, and we have killed him. Now who will clean up the blood"* (or something in German to that effect).[13] Nietzsche really pushed into the psychological realm looking more to the achievements of man through science, obviously exclusive of any repressive religious or godly influence. We can look at Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), Jean Paul Sartre (1905-1980) and even Carl Sagan (1934-1996) and a host of others, arising from the intellectual revolution which questioned the nature and source of intelligence. For this group, the universe seems like an unlikely but well-tuned machine which runs by immutable rules.

The 'strength' of this PM is that it relies on the observable world and does not rely on any extra-human miracles or mystical universals to explain any phenomena.

The 'weakness' of Physics as PM is the *a posteriori* nature of the scientific method (as per our billiards example earlier).

Final Answer?

Actually, neither mover precludes the other. If we postulate God, God could control all of the forces within Himself or could have created them, to act independently of Him yet completely within the confines of His created forces; if physics, by the earlier statements, their independence from anything could be complete, but they may have been designed by their creator to be in and of themselves. Nothing solved, eh?

Making the Decision

So what we are really exploring is the beginnings of philosophy. What are the questions which spur philosophical endeavors? Who am I? Where did I come from? Why am I here? What is the meaning of life? What does all this have to do with the price of tea in China?

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[13] "*Where has God gone?" he cried. "I shall tell you. We have killed him - you and I. We are his murderers…Do we not hear anything yet of the noise of the gravediggers who are burying God? Do we not smell anything yet of God's decomposition? Gods too decompose. God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed him. How shall we, murderers of all murderers, console ourselves? That which was the holiest and mightiest of all that the world has yet possessed has bled to death under our knives. Who will wipe this blood off us? With what water could we purify ourselves? What festivals of atonement, what sacred games shall we need to invent? Is not the greatness of this deed too great for us? Must we not ourselves become gods simply to be worthy of it?*" *(The Gay Science)* To be exact.

The first thing we must remember at this point is that the search is for *understanding*, not just *knowledge*. Knowledge without understanding enhances our view of the world but really does not lead us to critical thinking about that knowledge and how it should be applied. Still without knowledge, in all of its forms, our wisdom would be lacking.

What means of argument can help us come up with the Prime Mover? There is no limit to the number that have been attempted, but we have to do some leg work. Anselm uses a *reductio ad absurdum* (reduced to the absurd) argument which means he switches the argument around (takes its opposite) until he reaches an absurd conclusion, thereby 'proving' because the opposite is ridiculous or self-contradictory (per the Square of Opposition – remember that?). Think of it like the conclusion "water is wet"; how does one prove this? Well let's take the opposite: water is not wet, therefore it is dry, but dry is the absence of water so how could water not be wet? Or something to that effect.

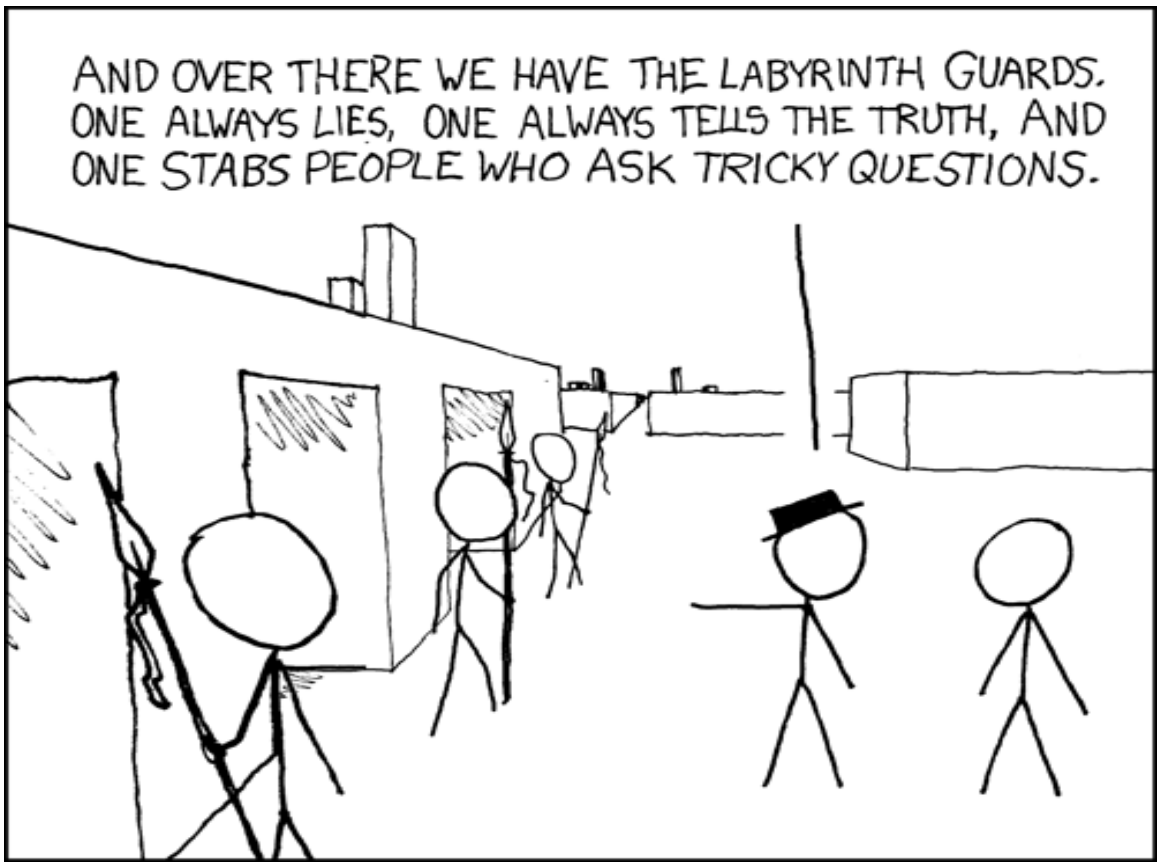
Others, would argue *epistemologically*, from the point of "*what can we know?*" This tact relies heavily upon our senses and our perceptions, which may or may not be faulty and therefore to what level can we depend upon them? However we approach the problem, the quandary of beginnings is one of the toughest in all of philosophy.

Putting It Together

When we begin to ask the *cause and effect* questions and we discuss such notions as 'god' or 'physics', what kind of knowledge are we discussing? Many might pooh-pooh one or the other because of what they consider through *a posteriori* knowledge (science *or* faith), but are there any *a priori* arguments which might overcome these conjectures?

Think back to the billiard ball example. Understanding the prime mover is important for answering some of the questions, but not necessary for all the questions which might arise from the situation. For instance we know, *a posteriori*, that an *object will remain at rest until acted upon by a greater force* and that *for every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction*. Ergo, some of the events taking place on the table are explained or have their arguments taken care of by the fundamental forces at work, that is, we do not have to argue them within the framework of the event because there is a larger framework. Still we may be able to backtrack, using them in seeking out the prime mover. Then again they may lead us down a winding and rocky path to nowhere.

So, two things: we do not always need to know the prime mover or first cause to discuss something and we may not be able to determine the prime mover from our discussions. In theology, we are fortunate to have decided upon God but we must always keep in mind in our discussions that many to whom we are speaking or wish to reach with the rich message of the Gospel are not so inclined.



From Xcdr (A webcomic of romance, sarcasm, math, and language)

The Name Game

Where do we go now? This chapter will be a collection of ideas we need in order to continue. First, and after our last chapter, in what would seem to be beating a dead horse, we still have one more discussion of 'thinking'. So far, in an effort to shift our way of thinking toward theological understanding, we have looked at what philosophy is, what its tools are, how to go about 'thinking', what are some good habits to develop as well as what are some faults to avoid, and even how to think about a possible place to start. Let us take some time to look at places to stop.

When we begin to look at the 'bigger picture' ideas like the ones we explored in the last chapter, we begin to see the limits of systems and argumentation. But it does not mean that we do not seek ways to discuss these difficult topics. After all we are seeking wisdom and there are difficult questions which must be asked, some of which we may not be able to answer within our present framework, but will open up after consideration of other systems.

The limitations and boundaries of discussion have been the focus of previous examinations of the subject. Now we will take some time and examine the playing field itself. *Caveat Emptor*: Still, as the author of this work, I feel it is my duty to say that I am not really sure where this section is going but that has never stopped me before. Hopefully by the end we can all make some sense of it.

It's All Just Semantics

The 'final' (at least in this conversation) roadblock to understanding is ironically the road itself. While the discipline of Symbolic Logic (a branch of Logic) seeks to avoid confusion by logical communication through the use of only symbols (hence the symbolic part) – thereby reducing any confusion there may be by eliminating language – it may be considered a bit 'cold' or un-nuanced. It also could be considered, depending upon how you define 'language', merely another 'language' among the myriad ways of human communication.

So that is what we tackle here. Language is the most complex of human characteristics and developments. One moment, it is a shared meaning, i.e. a word is attached to a concept by which we communicate the same idea to another, no matter what the language being used ('hat' or 'chapeau'). The next it is a confusion of meaning, i.e. the concept behind the word evokes different meanings ('love'). And furthermore, it might contain several meanings evoked by the user, all, some or none of which might be available to the hearer. But I ramble.

Often in philosophy, in order to be unmistaken about a concept, a word from the writers' native language will be used, for example *zeitgeist*[14]. Like so many words in English, that word becomes an entity unto itself, holding a different meaning than just the plain word or words from which the 'term' is derived.

Since words are the main means of the communication of ideas, we must also be prepared to learn to keep words within their context, that is, a word used in Greek times may be re-used in Medieval times and then again later, but with *different meaning* each time; we need to keep the

[14] Ger. *Spirit of the time*.

meanings separate and within their time context. This may also be true between methods and systems of the same time/thought period.

Sometimes the thing itself drives the meaning, for instance, as from above, 'hat' or 'chapeau'; either word works for that thing which you set on your head. Often though, it is the word which drives the meaning, for instance, as from above, 'love'. English uses the word 'love' for many things, to cover many concepts and it is the context alone which gives the meaning, whereas the Greeks use five different terms, *eros*, *agape*, *philia* (the three main ones), *storge* and *thelema* with each one carrying its specific meaning, that is, having no need for context.

All this worthy of its own discussion but I think you get the idea so I will finally move on. We do not want to get bogged down here, as semantics can be a branch of study all on its own – and that is another chapter, one not in this book incidentally. Suffice it to say that verbal context is another factor to keep in mind when approaching systems or methods. Put it also in the context of biases; some words may just get your hackles up unless you can keep them compartmentalized in their proper place.

The Branches of the Philosophical Tree

There are several 'flavors' of philosophy, each fixing on some of the great questions of the world (and many conveniently laid out by Aristotle – therefore easily recognized, like fallacies, because they are in Greek) such as:

- **Epistemology – the mind:** How do we know? What do we know?
- **Ontology – the soul or being:** What are we? Why are we?
- **Aesthetics – the senses:** What is beauty? What is art?
- **Hermeneutics – the mouth (communication):** How do we understand written texts? How should they be interpreted?
- **Ethics – praxis (putting thought into actions):** How should we live? How do we live together?
- **Theology – the Other:** What/who is God? What is the relationship between God and humans?

List 8: The Disciplines of Philosophy

The Flowering of Philosophical Thought

Why did we put Theology under Philosophy? At this time, for ease of association. Each of these branches can involve one or all of the other branches. So the answer is that there is a parallel of philosophy and theology, and at times one has seen as the 'handmaid' of the other, and we will discuss this later. When we look at each of these we see some of the basic avenues of thought. Why do humans think? What is thinking? Am I something special or just a figment of mine or someone else's imagination? Why do I care about things that most creatures do not? Why can we speak? Does it matter how I act?

If we want to put a name on the rose, it might be how the Greeks thought of wisdom, as understanding truth, and from that truth, meaning and action.

Final Thoughts On The Subject

Each discipline can help to give us consistent language within an idea which may be incorporated or utilized within a system or method, as well as a place to refer to, a well pre-thought out series of truths on which we can rely, keeping most systems from wandering too far or reaching a dead-end.

Think about it this way, if you were to define a system, where would you start? How long could you discuss before wandering? Having these areas of pre-defined discussion can be an aid in our own journeys into understanding.

We Have A History

Okay. Another way of categorizing is through the lens of history. It seems that nowadays no one can agree on a basic principle or even what language to use or how to approach a problem or question. Still, we might, through the means of looking at philosophical systems over time, be able to find a few basic principles and terms

The History of Philosophy

In one of the greatest simplifications of this over-simplified discussion, we can probably make a generalization that there are two branches of philosophical thought: Dynamic and Static or as they are often designated 'Western' and 'Eastern'.

East vs. West

Well perhaps it is not so aside, because when we speak of Eastern versus Western thought we must be aware of the direction the sun moves in the sky. In a further example of previous discussion about understanding in context, earlier thinkers spoke of the whole world in terms of that path. "From East to West" meant everywhere. Okay, digression done, really. Where we geographically draw the philosophical line for East/West is about as arbitrary as the one we use for maritime purposes.

(*Warning: author influenced attempts at explanation to follow, which even my mother may disagree with even though she loves me*)

It might be safe to say that even though 'Western' thought developed from Greek thought, Greek thought is 'Eastern' in nature. That said, while there may be a difference in approach, all basic philosophical thoughts are all 'Eastern' in basis, which is to restate that people are people, no matter where they live. They just develop different ideas of what is important and what is not and these differences are often culturally based.

At the risk of seeming trite or of reducing all of human thought to a couple of catch-phrases, let me put forth that Eastern thought tends to seek 'enough' of an answer – at the risk of leaving some things 'unanswered' (*mysterion*), hence its more 'static' nature, whereas Western thought tends to want the final answer, splitting hairs to leave no stone unturned, producing a more dynamic nature in thought.

Think of it like 'liberal' and 'conservative' in their broadest of meanings. Conservatives, seeking to conserve, present a very static system; liberals, seeking to broaden, present a very dynamic system. People's tendency toward one system or another is dependent on many factors, including place and time. More on that later.

Either way, each system has strengths and weaknesses. The East can make grand pronouncements leaving you thinking 'yeah, but what does that *mean*?'; the West can beat a horse to death, leaving you thinking 'okay, but where is the answer?' As an example, the words *catholic* as in Roman Catholic and *orthodox*, as in Greek Orthodox reflect these two positions, and as such can be seen within their respective theologies.

Geographically

Philosophies are sometimes associated with a specific geography or country, and as such are often labeled 'Greek' or 'Chinese' or 'German'. This is usually because philosophies can often be culturally related. Socrates and Plato are directly related not only to each other but to the Sophists before them (incidentally they are grouped together because all we know of Socrates comes through the writings of Plato, but that is another chapter). Aristotle depends directly upon them. Hence there is a Greek 'school' of philosophy, though the systems are not necessarily congruent in time or thought.

Chronographically

Philosophies are also associated with specific times, such as 'The Enlightenment', grouping several philosophers or systems together by time frame. Often, the systems grouped this way are more congruent because the authors are building on similar ideas within a similar framework, even though they are spread out over different systems.

Philosophically

Philosophies are most often grouped by system, 'Pragmatism' or 'Existentialism'. These systems are related by an idea or grounding, and are usually different approaches to the same situations. An example would be *Empiricism* or *Rationalism*, which gives you an idea of the nature of the thinker even though they may be spread out over time and reach different conclusions. For our purposes, we will proceed by looking at the idea of philosophical thought through time, and the parallel impact on theology.

Pre-History

Think back to our original discussion of the meaning of philosophy: *the love or search for understanding*. In its earliest practice, human communication takes many forms, a majority of which are non-verbal. We can look at cave paintings or material artifacts[15] and get an idea of what people are/were thinking. We look at burial practices, religious or cultural buildings, listen to oral stories handed down, observe tribal behavior untainted by modern society or thinking and we will hear what is important to people.

When humans looked out and tried to live in their world, they came up against a broad range of obstacles: Nature, limitations of the human body, cruelty, death. Life could seem very arbitrary. If the rain came, you were fine. If the rain did not come you were in a world of hurt, so to speak. Slowly the cycles of nature became apparent, but still arbitrary events happened,

[15] This would be such things as pottery, weapons, housing, or art.

earthquakes, floods, sunshine, crops, death. Stories developed to pass on the knowledge of the seasons, of the dangers of life, and of life lessons.

These stories often took the form of myths. The telling of a myth involves the exchange of an idea in a teaching format. Like Aesop's fables there is always a moral at the end in a form which can be understood, and reached 'logically' by the individual. Looking at our myths (even the Judeo-Christian ones) we see a vast amount of understanding especially of human nature. Are these 'myths' factual? Yes, inasmuch as they reveal 'truths' about ourselves and our world to us (c.f. M. Eliades or J. Campbell for good discussions in this realm). Even as our scientific knowledge grows we still must make facts fit into our understanding. Einstein shifted the way we look at time, yet the Greeks already had a concept of time which was relative (*Kiaros* versus *Chronos*).

The search to explain and to transmit that explanation is at the root of the human experience. Without such thinking and transmittal we would not have made it very far. Myth and ritual are the reference manuals by which we can operate. When we begin to have a good operations manual, we begin to branch out beyond just the basic, what shall I eat, what shall I wear, where will I sleep existence. The questions of life, death, birth, illness, love, happiness, fear begin to rise up in our minds beyond the level of physical survival to that of mental survival.

Philosophy then, is not a 'modern' invention. People have always sought understanding and systems have developed, usually what we call religions or sacred rituals, myths and thoughts. The validity of these myths or religions lies not in their 'scientific' or 'factual'[16] nature but in their 'true' insights and archetypes.

History

Within our 'recorded' time we start with snippets of writings which continues until today. What would be the difference between pre-history and history? Nothing really, except that we have datable, serial understanding and a greater practical knowledge of the workings of the universe which a) causes us to re-evaluate and b) gives us deeper understanding. Again, though, this is not better or worse. Truth comes to us through both a priori and a posteriori means. Perhaps then the main difference is the systemization of philosophical thought, aside from and somewhat independent of the a posteriori nature of the earlier period. Here we develop logic and other a priori methods of coming to knowledge and understanding. Philosophy becomes detached from survival concerns (why doesn't it rain?) and becomes more humanistic (why do I…?).

Putting It Together

The first thing we will notice is that some questions are eternal. They have always been asked and they will always be asked: Why are we here? What makes something beautiful? What makes us human?

We need to evaluate each idea or system within its own framework, but mainly within the body of established 'truth', not by some unrelated standard. We are striving to develop objective criteria for critical thinking. This is not promoting a face-value, non-critical evaluation but the exact opposite. As we plow through writers and writings, we must listen, as we might to a myth

[16] At least not how we define science and fact today.

or allegorical story, for the 'truth' within it, as well as the fallacies which hinder the truths. Through this we can build a broad and deep understanding of ourselves and our world.

As we discussed earlier (well at least I did), many understandings and 'truths' can be lost by invalidating systems based on hubris and bias, and no time in human development and history should be discounted, even though the 'factual' nature of the observations may be suspect to our modern ears. As a final judgment call, we can categorize most philosophical 'thought' of this period is *a posteriori* or experiential in nature.

Here you are trying to learn something, while here your brain is doing you a favor by making sure the learning doesn't stick. Your brain's thinking, "Better leave room for more important things, like which wild animals to avoid and whether naked snowboarding is a bad idea."

Head First Servlets and JSP™ Second Edition by Bryan Basham, Kathy Sierra, and Bert Bates, 2008

Philosophical Journeys

So now where do we go? We have established the rules, tip-toed through thinking, rummaged about the attic of philosophy, run down the steps to the basement of meaning, and finally examined the first floor of a very basic basis of human understanding. Where else but the back yard? You know, that place where you can lounge safely, often behind the boundary of a fence and the comfort of a hammock.

Where theology is rooted in God and mystery, the ultimate root of philosophy is human experience and the ultimate foundation of human experience comes from the shared experience of humanity. One might say that philosophy is in our very soul. It is passed from generation to generation, tinged by the time and situations through which it passes. Are times good? Are times bad? Are the ills human caused or natural disasters? What effect does each generation have on an idea? What nudges or changes of direction become part of the propulsion of an idea?

In the end, ideas survive because they have objective merit outside of the slice of time in which we consider them. Our journey then, is through the human condition.

Western Philosophy Quick Reference

Philosophers	Time	Main concerns
The `Pre-Socratics'	to 469 BC/BCE	How is the world ordered? How is change possible? What is everything made of?
Socrates	469-399 BCE	How should one live? Living and knowledge go together. The world is based on objective Forms.
Plato	427-347 BCE	Expanded on Socrates. What is knowledge and how is it possible? What is the relationship between mathematical (rational) objects and every day (sensual) objects? Is the world as it appears to be? How should we act within it?
Aristotle	384-322 BCE	You name it – and he did.
Early Christians (Apologists)	100-500 AD/CE	What is the nature of God and Humanity? How does God want people to live? What is the nature of the divine order? How can we make God understandable in light of secular (non-Christian – usually Platonic) thought?
Medieval philosophers	500-1200 CE	How can God and his properties be made logically comprehensible? What is the relationship between faith and reason?
Thomas Aquinas, Scholasticism and the Catholic Doctors	1250-1500 CE	How can Aristotle's philosophy be reconciled with Christian doctrine? A resurgence of Ancient texts.

Philosophers	Time	Main concerns
Early Modern / pre-Newtonians	1530-1716 CE	The 'Death' of Scholasticism. How can knowledge be built on new foundations (other than God) that will guarantee truth? What is the relationship between reason and material causation?
Post-Newtonians	1716-1804 CE	What is the relationship between the scientific (Newtonian) picture of the world and the common sense picture?
19th century Moralists / Existentialists	1800-1910 CE	What is the place of humanity and its moral concerns in the wider intellectual landscape, and in the modern State? We know we are the dominant beast but why can't we just get along?
Analytic philosophers	1910-1960 CE	Can all non-scientific problems be dissolved by examining logic and/or language? What is being?
Contemporary philosophers	since ~1960 CE	What is the relationship between the scientific (post-Newtonian) picture of the world and the everyday (moral, social, religious) picture? What is social justice and how can it be increased in the contemporary state? What is the philosophy of everything?

Table 4: Western Philosophical Systems

The Development of Philosophy

When we examine early philosophy, we must keep in mind its theo-philosophical nature. Often knowledge, wisdom and faith are tied together. This is true of many philosophies throughout time but at this time there is a struggle to step beyond mere anthropomorphism or pantheism to understand reality in a more human-centric view.

The Players

Get'cher program heah! Can't know the players without'cher program! We will start out each period with a quick reference of the major thinkers.

Dates	Philosopher	Main Points
Ionians, Italians, Greeks, Orientals		
~625-547	Thales	*One thing, an underlying 'spirit' (anima - water) orders everything; the world is 'one'*
~610-545	Anaximander	*The underlying principle must be 'other' than the things which make it up found through reason*
~560-478	Xenophanes	*One god, a conscious universe; the 'father' of epistemology*
~545-?	Anaximenes	*Air is the founding spirit.*
~540-480	Heraclitus	*Change; everything is transitory except the 'Logos'*
~581-507	Pythagoras	*Reincarnation. Numbers reveal the order of the universe.*
?	Lao Tse	*Balance, harmony yin-yang. The underlying principle is unfathomable yet not transcendent.*

Table 5: The Early Players

Early Thinking

This lesson is our first foray into the format we will use from here on out. We will discuss thinkers, some concepts, and the ramifications of some of those concepts. So by way of introduction, we can take a moment here and point out some names from the list above. The ones you might easily recognize would be Heraclitus and Pythagoras from the West and Lao Tse from the East. Take a moment and contemplate why you know their names (aside from why you do not know the others). Most of us know Pythagoras because of his theorem and prowess as a mathematician but not so much as a philosopher and Heraclitus because of his famous river metaphor, but not so much a natural scientist and his observations of the natural world which play into later philosophies. What we know and what we think we know are not just two different things but may also be different than the reality.

So it is for our early philosophers. What is the nature of reality, of humans, of the world? Are all things one or are they separate? Are they different but connected? How do we come to know? Is the world a place of laws and predictability or is it completely random? Is what is in front of me real or what is in my head? These questions may seem obvious to us but they were not obvious at that time (and some may still be not obvious!). The early thinkers set about to understand their world and their place in it, so without discussion specific systems or philosophers let us examine some of these basic early ideas.

Something Or Nothing

Is there something or nothing? Seems like a strange question to us but it was a hot topic back then. When I move my arm through the air is there something, some medium, some substance which allows for that movement? If there is something, would that not stop my arm from moving, like a wall in the way? Does nothing imply non-existence? If it does how could there be nothing in between the two point of my arm's movement?

You can begin to see the depth to which this simple question plumbs. We have insight that they did not have, about molecules and such. We know that technically there is something in the way but we are able to push it out of the way because air is not as solid as a wall. They begin to postulate such things but they have no empirical proof. Common sense tells me that I can move my arm, and nothing stops it from happening. But the question is *why*?

Cause And Movement

Whether there is something or nothing, we still observe change. Heraclitus said that you never stand in the same river twice. He understood the linear nature of a river, and he extrapolated that to time as well. We can see how movement implies change. We see a boy become a man. We see the earth change with the seasons. All of this change implies not just *physical* movement but also movements of *state*, that is, change from one state to another, as well. Pretty impressive. Of course he also thought that everything is made of fire.[17]

The earlier thinkers pondered on the meaning and the mode of this. If I roll a ball down the bowling alley I observe its movement from point A to point B (and hopefully point B is not the gutter) and I see pins fall when the ball hits them. So I *know* that the ball hitting the pins *caused*

[17] This really makes sense, trust me.

them to fall. I *know* that my throwing the ball *caused* it to roll toward the pins. Basically one begins thinking about cause as a thing in itself. With light I can see, without light I cannot. Is the thing that changed destroyed? Does it remain with the object, but we just cannot see it?

Animal, Mineral, Or Vegetable?

Where do humans fit into the universe? We are obviously different than starfish, but we have hair like dogs. Philosophers will make observations about what makes us *us*. In terms of the other two sections, this is the logical next step for us. No matter how the universe is constructed, we *think*. We are aware that we are our self.

Western Philosophy

Figure 2: Raphael Sanzio, School of Athens, 1509, Vatican

Our pre-Socratics intro now leads us to the more mainstream philosophers. Before we start though, let us set the scene. Picture Athens in its Golden Age; Thinkers are moving from theo-philosophy to philo-theology to philosophy. Art is moving from representation and symbol to realism and sign. Democracy is producing a powerful democratic state as worthy of reckoning as much as the powerful military states.

Most of the folks in the list are heavily influenced (initially) by the Pythagoreans. As with many philosophers, there is a seminal point from which they began but from which they broke away for some reason. We are all influenced by the world around us, at it is the sign of intellectual maturity when we begin to question that status-quo (or at least adolescence). Still they are developing new ideas which they are not afraid to share with one another, and in some cases with the next generation of thinkers.

The Players

Dates	Philosopher	Main Points
Greeks (Italians)		
515-450	Parmenides	*Step by step arguments – others rely on senses too much*
500-428	Anaxagoras	*Everything must be in everything else – 'seeds'; external causes; the 'Mind'*
490-430	Empedocles	*Both a priori and a posteriori; 'opposite' principles*
490-420	Protagoras	*Sophism; relativism: truth is in the eye of the beholder*
490-430	Zeno of Elea	*Paradoxes; 'reduction ad absurdum'*
483-376	Gorgias	*Sophist – rhetoric; reality = appearance; knowledge = opinion*
? & ~460-?	Leucippus & Democritus	*Atomism; movement and nothingness*
470-399	Socrates	*Socratic Method – 'birthing' ideas; 'Why?'; unity of virtue*

Table 6: The 'Pre-Socratics'

Fate

This may seem a strange concept to introduce in a work on philosophy, but Fate, in Greek thought especially, plays a big role. At this time, Fate was not really a philosophical concept but a religious one. Fate is basically the inevitable course of events, that thing which happens no matter what. One can think of Fate as the 'end of something' or the 'purpose' of something, that is examine it from a *teleological* point of view. Suffice it to say, these guys do not.

The Sophists

Our first players, the Sophists, were a school of thought and teaching which originated with Protagoras (do not confuse him with Pythagoras) but had many exponents. Today we have a pejorative association with this name, mainly thanks to a fellow named Socrates, but it was not always that way. They were an extremely influential group within Greek society.

In general, the Sophists believed that there were always two sides to every argument. They taught an idea which we would call *relativism* – that is everything is relevant to its observer. Truth is *subjective* not *objective*. For Protagoras it is the art of persuasion which determines truth. Gorgias also put forth that the stronger argument basically trumped the weaker argument. He made his living from teaching rhetoric or oratory skills and so better argumentation made right, and if you wanted to be right, hire him.

Before we write this off, consider that in the Sophist's view, Humanity, not the gods or Fate, is the 'measure of all things'; of what exists and does not exist. Because of this, things should seem the same to you as they do to me, via our shared humanity. I just understand it better than you, so my job is to persuade you to greater understanding.

Protagoras also felt that even though one opinion was as good as another, people would do what is best (because of laws or social pressure), not just what they felt like doing. In a final note here, Gorgas also taught that laughter was a great tool: "*In contending with adversaries, destroy their seriousness with laughter.*" Good advice in any corner.

***PHILOSOPHICAL MOMENT*:** We end up with two questions here, which we somewhat cover above. First, if everyone's knowledge/opinions are the same who is right? And secondly, in terms of moral action, who is right? Ponder these for a moment.

The Others

In this section we will look at the non-Sophist pre-Socratics and their contributions to the whole of human thought. You can see from the table above that the list is beginning to grow. The number of people out plying the philosophical shingle is growing rapidly in response to the relative stability of the Greek empire. Leisure time is growing. A wealthier class is growing from the merchant community. No longer is thought and learning the playground of the original privileged class (royalty) but in Athens democracy gives political power to that wealth as well. An educated ruling class becomes the staple of the masses, at least the non-slave, land-holding masses. People, no longer scrounging for their next meal or fleeing invading hordes, hang out in the agora or main plazas and listen to sages. These sages are transforming into teachers, and these teachers are teaching philosophy for a living.

Parmenides bears mentioning here as the guy who decided that *a priori* argumentation was the way to go. What he does is distinguish between our reason and our senses. He believed that we can only know the things which are not changing, because basically, truth relies on objective concepts (*a priori*).

Zeno (*of Elea*), a disciple of Parmenides, wrote mainly to defend his mentor's thoughts, but by doing so introduces a style of argumentation: '*reduction ad absurdum*', which we have mentioned before. He uses it to show the paradoxes within his mentor's detractors' arguments, as well as introducing paradoxes which confound to this day.

Empedocles, saw things somewhat differently. For him, both reason and senses were flawed, but together they did a pretty fair job of getting us through the day. For him, things in reality are paired together for such a purpose. One by itself would be insufficient to give us a clear understanding of things. These opposites or pairs were *complimentary*. In addition, he did postulate a theory of evolution where the best adapted are the ones who survive.

Anaxagoras was very curious and very *scientific* in his approach to things. He is notable for looking at things and trying to understand how something can be at the same time 'of itself' (an apple) and 'of something else' (me, after I eat the apple). He also wonders in the same vein, things like how does a thing like hair (a thing in itself) come from me (a different thing). Based on Parmenides idea that nothing can be created or destroyed, he solves the problem by stating that within everything is a share of everything else. These 'seeds' as he calls them were separated by a force called the 'Mind'. We might think of this a God, but that was not what he saw, and it was probably what eventually got him kicked out of Athens.

Finally let us look at Leucippus and Democritus. Most of what we know of Leucippus comes from Democritus, though most of both their works is still fragmentary. Leucippus wrote that nothing is random but is necessity (our one sentence fragment) upon which (fortunately) Democritus expounds a bit. There is something and there is nothing, but even nothing is something. Everything is made up of something which is ultimately indivisible (literally *a-tomos*) and that there is something in the nothing, we just cannot perceive it. They bounce off one another and into our senses. These 'atoms' are not controlled by a force or deity.

The Gist

Okay, let us take a second and talk about overall concepts which are developing in this period. Logic is on the rise and ground rules are being laid by Zeno and Parmenides. Parmenides, Anaxagoras, Empedocles and Democritus are defining the natural world in a way that we can almost understand. Parmenides tells us that there is something not nothing. Leucippus and Democritus say that there is nothing which is not nothing. The Sophists are telling us, aside from the "I'm okay, you're okay" thing, that most of life is a confusion which must be cleared up.

The Sophists are probably the best known 'school' from this time but one of the other main 'schools' is the Pluralists and most of these other thinkers fall into this school. Pluralists, as the name implies, put forth that there is a plurality of things, that is, everything is not 'one'. The ability to 'separate' things, like movement from objects or people from dogs is laying the groundwork for not just a physics we recognize but a broadening of the questions we are able to ask.

Where Do We Go From Here?

Movement is of great concern to these guys. Odd as that may seem, they question back and forth whether it really exists or is a mere illusion. Remember, movement implies change. It gets to the core of the question of permanence. Therefore substance (that which makes a thing a thing) and movement (change within a thing) dominate many of these discussions. Being able to distinguish between an object's '*substance*' (the things which make it up, make it what it is) and its '*accidents*' (its attributes) and thereby distinguish it from other things is really the heart of this.

What does this mean? For some, no 'nothingness' means there can be no movement, because there is no space to move in, therefore no change. Some nothingness means that there is space for movement, but that confuses how things come together and stay together (like people and ice cream). Both ideas call into question our senses and our reason. How we perceive and or know a thing bears heavily on their arguments for and against. Ultimately these questions are really concentrating on what makes things up, what makes them distinguishable from one another and how do they operate together and finally, how do we know.

Another one of the many things we get from this group goes back to our discussion of the Prime Mover. Their ideas like 'The Mind' posit a purposeful, external force acting upon the stuff that makes up everything. Others argue a more mechanical nature of things, unguided and random.

Putting It Together

During this period of time, there develops an interesting mix of thoughts on the nature of things. Questions about what we know, what we can know, how can we know it and how does it all fit together are really beginning to take front row seats. For the most part, this is the environment into which Socrates enters and participates. We place more emphasis on Socrates mainly because we have a more broad understanding of his thought as provided for us by the extensive writings of Plato (lucky for Socrates but unlucky for these guys, they or their followers where just plain out-written; Socrates = better press).

Still there is a depth of thought and connection between these guys which I have really not touched on or developed. What we can pull away is the idea that Sophists pretty much saw the world in a very practical way, and that your brain and your ability to argue is your ticket around. Second, the others were not a group, like the Pythagoreans or the Sophists. They were mainly individuals or becoming more individual. Not that they did not consult or question one another, but they were postulating as individuals, not for lifestyles per se but espousing critical thinking in those around them.

They were also responsible for the development of styles of logic and argumentation which are still in force. The formulation of logic and logical systems really begins to develop and blossom during this period, as well as many ideas, such as the 'seeds'/atoms or survival of the fittest.

"*Whoa, Sam Gamgee, your legs are too short, so use your head!*"

J.R.R Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring*.

Introduction to Socrates and Plato

If we were to assign the title of "greatest influence" on the language of Christian theology, after Jesus and the Scriptures of course, it would have to be Plato. Plato does not fall directly under this era of philosophy, but without him we would know little to nothing of his mentor and inspiration, Socrates. Socrates was a teacher and so we rely mainly on Plato who was his student. At the same time, Plato is a filter. Plato tells stories about Socrates, so he advances Socrates' philosophy and his own at the same time. Think of it this way: Plato tells stories or aspects of stories from Socrates teaching which promote Plato's way of thinking, kind of a 'selective philosophy'.

Still scholars tell us that the 'early Socrates' of Plato's early writing may reflect more closely Socrates' actual thinking. From that we can guess that as Plato's thoughts emerge and develop, Socrates may become more of a mouthpiece as time goes on, but couched within a recognizable true Socrates. If that were not true then more of a ruckus would probably have been raised at the time. **Understanding Aside**: When we talk about authorship in this time (and probably until 'modern' times), we have to be aware of the idea that one might write quotes from or 'in the thought or vein of' the character mentioned as the author. That is to say, *this is what so-and-so said or would have said had he said it*, so we can 'attribute' it to him, ergo he is the 'author' of the piece. This was a widely accepted practice and is visible even in the Scriptures.

Who Is That Guy Behind Those Platonic Dialogues?

With the aforementioned in mind, what can we say about Socrates? A bunch. Ultimately, for Socrates, it was all about living, and living right at that. He flouted many of the social norms of the day and directly attacked many, like the Sophists, who had political influence, because he felt their thinking and their lifestyles did not reflect the 'examined life'. He was not afraid, at least in Plato's telling, to broach any subject, lifestyle or mannerism. In the end he was condemned to drink poison at a trial from which he should have escaped punishment. In the *Apology* (from the Greek for *defense*), a 'transcript' of the trial and some 'subsequent' dialogues, we see that instead he turns on his detractors and supporters alike to keep to his principles and stubbornly make his point. Needless to say, it did not extend his life.

Enough of the man; how did he view the world? Unlike the Sophists, he does not stop at sensations, at opinion based knowledge; his 'investigations' tended to scrutinize the more intimate part of man, by what makes a human a human: reason. Like the Sophists, he was not concerned with metaphysics, saying simply that nature is under the direction of gods. He concentrated all his attention on the search for moral concepts; he was convinced that the practice of morality could only be accomplished by having an objective concept of justice. From this rose his opposition to the destructive ideas which Sophists espoused.

First and foremost Socrates is a teacher. He is not the first full-time teacher in Athens (as we saw above in the Sophists among others). He is different in that he is not only teaching but challenging the notions of other teachers and political and moral leaders. Now a cynic might say that like the sophists he was just looking for a buck and so had to discredit the competition, but

as they did not die for doing the same thing, one has to lend a bit more credence to Socrates as a 'gadfly' and trouble maker for a cause.

Socrates states in Plato's *Apology* that the whole direction of his life is due to the Oracle's at Delphi answer to a simple question his friend Chaerephon asked of it: *who is the wisest man?* The Oracle answer was "*Socrates*." This 'simple act' set Socrates, a famous general, on the path to understand why he was the wisest of men. According to him (or his PR man, whoever you choose to believe), he did not see himself as wise so he set out to understand this Oracle. It was not his fault that those he sought out, those whom he saw as wise, were unable to answer his simple questions.

Natural Law

Something I probably should have covered earlier but will do so here because I like the placement better is a concept known as 'Natural Law'. In a nutshell, within each of us lies an innate knowledge of how things should be, i.e. a natural or (human) nature-based, hard-wired knowledge. We would attribute this to the "image and likeness" of God within us as Genesis tells us. But these Greeks have only met few Jews or been influenced by their thoughts on the Law. Still, as with our understanding, Socrates recognizes that it differs from secular or human law in that human law is imposed from the outside. Natural Law is considered the basis for secular Law.

To the Sophists Natural Law meant "the right of the stronger" (*Republic*), that is the one who can impose his will (*usually* through rhetoric). Socrates saw it more as an innate understanding of right and wrong.

The Socratic Method

Socrates is perhaps best known for, or perhaps the best known thing associated with his name, his dialectic method of inquiry, what we call the "*Socratic Method*." Basically, dialectic is discourse between two or more people holding different points of view about a subject, who use reasoned arguments to establish the truth of the matter they are discussing. It is an extremely precise tool for allowing two people to hone their thoughts while they speak with one another. Technically, it is not a match of wits but a rational culling of superlative statements to the benefit of both parties.

That aside, the method to the madness of Socrates seems truly rooted in his immersion into his times. Socrates seems to embody many of the thoughts and theories of his day. His search for wisdom and understanding brings him into contact with the movers and shakers of politics, philosophy and science. For this reason he discusses a great many subjects which may seem odd in that we present Socrates as mainly an ethical-moral philosopher, but it is not odd in *why* he discusses a great many things.

Whenever a concept is being proffered, espoused, or ranted about, Socrates often leaps into the fray asks everyone else to define it, ostensibly because he is ignorant and needs their wisdom in the matter. People are always trying to help poor Socrates understand. They are patient as he continues to ask questions, to draw out meaning from the individual. This process, which Socrates thought of as 'midwifery', we call his 'method'

This questioning honed the person's *own* understanding, and we would think of it as an informal form of logic, as we have discussed before. Socrates' directed questioning was often sly

but served to remove poor premises and lead to logical thinking. His rhetoric is based in drawing out the truth from within the person, questioning until they saw the fluff in their thoughts, as opposed to the Sophist's external imposition of truth. For him, generalities should only be used when sufficient cause could be shown that they could be; reason alone should be the rule by which we judge them and that eventually we could arrive at general concepts by which other concepts could be judged, and so on and so on. Function and meaning go hand in hand – wisdom was right action.

For Socrates, wisdom was the end.

Virtue

Another term we hear him use often is *Virtue*, but what does Socrates mean by the word we translate as 'virtue'? First let us start with what it is not. For Socrates *ignorance*, not malice *per se*, is why one does evil. To know good is to do good. Therefore wisdom and learning are not just virtues in and of themselves as we would think of them, they *are* Virtue.

Virtue is knowledge/wisdom and knowledge/wisdom is virtue. What the wise man does is virtue and what the virtuous man does is wisdom. Ignorant and unwise people are not virtuous because they cannot act virtuously. Still, they are not evil, because since they are ignorant they are not responsible. It is really impossible to do wrong voluntarily because you would really only do good voluntarily. Therefore Virtue and Wisdom also go hand in hand. Socrates asks what good are worldly possessions or power if you do not have the sense to use them? That becomes especially pertinent when say, we are the powerful person wielding them. As Jesus would say, "*what profit is there for one to gain the whole world and forfeit his life?*" (*Mark* 8:36)

Wisdom leads to right living. For Socrates that is paramount. That is the reason we gain wisdom. By working from the particular (usually a particular circumstance) we can gain wisdom and see general patterns which, in turn, further guide us in the particular. Socrates called this a 'unity of virtues', in the sense of all things being one.

This sense is why we classify Socrates, at least the one presented mainly by Plato, as an ethical philosopher, because for him, all things, all knowledge, all learning are about living right. For this reason "*the unexamined life is not worth living*." (*Apology*, 38a) This is not an intellectual hubris; knowledge is virtue and virtue is everything – to live any other way is a waste.

The Dichotomized Man

Above I talked about the "Unity of Virtues" but that is not to be confused with a unit of all things. In another reaction against his times Socrates believed in 'duality.' Humans were body *and* soul. In terms of ontology or being, the idea of the 'soul', i.e. that thing which is separate from the 'body', is that which makes us, well, *us*. This is somewhat different from other *Weltanschauung* (world-view), like say the Hebrews, who saw the person as unity, that is, the 'head' and the 'heart' made up the person. So who cares, right? Well what the concept of a separate soul does is allow within Western philosophy the idea of the after-life (which will eventually creep into Hebrew thoughts as well). We brushed against this in the early Western philosophers section. The idea of heaven, the idea of something beyond us becomes more immediate, more ethical in nature here, as opposed to concepts like 'the Mind' which we saw in earlier pre-Socratic thought.

Think back. Is everything *one* or is everything *plural*? This dichotomy places Socrates squarely within the Pluralist's camp but more importantly means that not only can I be outside of something else, but also that something else can be outside of me, as well as both together. Take a long drag on that thought cigarette and hold it. (*you know how to argue don't you Steve? You just put your two premises together and cognate….*) Because of this, Virtue plays into Socrates' understanding of the soul and vice versa.

The Early Dialogues: Questions, I Got Questions…

(Ethics, Religion, Psychology and Epistomology)

Once more, due to the nature of our inquiry, let us sift through and reduce Socrates' thoughts to some quick one-liners. Socrates' ethical/theological (I will tie them together) and epistemological (how we *know* things) understanding can be found in the early dialogues of Plato, which as discussed are probably the closest thing to Socrates' thought as we can divine. The fight here is opinion verses knowledge, ignorance versus virtue.

Reading Philosophy

As a pretty major aside here, as earlier sections were given in order to help with the beginning of *thinking* philosophy, this section is the introduction to beginning to *read* philosophy. Reading can be difficult, especially in translated works. Depending on how the translator chooses to translate (*word for word; meaning for meaning; timeframe, etc.*), how contemporary the philosopher's thought or culture is to our own, just to name a few, we can have more or less difficulty in plowing through the text. In the end most of the thought are thoughts which are familiar to us in one form or another. Still, we are seeking to understand what the author is *trying to tell us*, not necessarily *what we think is being said*. The ultimate goal is to be able to pick up a work and read it from beginning to end, all the while marking arguments and conclusions as we go along, finally gleaning some understanding after we are done. Be aware that this may take more than one reading!

In fact it is really a three-step process. Think about what we have discussed so far and why. Well, this is why. First we want to be able to *objectively* read a work or series of works. In this step we are really just seeking to hear what the author is trying to tell us, that is the work in and of itself (or the body of work), free of our own thinking on the subject. Second, we want to examine it within a context, still objectively, understanding the author's subjective and environmental influences and how that plays into the work. Thirdly, we begin to examine it for the purpose of 'usefulness' to us, i.e. *critically*, using the tools we have stuck into our belts as a work of influence in our own thoughts.

We do not just want to depend upon the learned and consumed commentaries of others. We want to read the texts themselves and not take it for granted that is what they say or what they mean for us. Therefore think of this exposition as a good 'reading list' for us to start with. Rather than tackling whole body of a single work, we will start with ideas, and see if we can recognize these ideas within the text. For now, baby steps.

Putting It Together

So, without getting into the nitty-gritty of the texts we can see the powerful influence Socrates has, not only for his time but for all times to follow. His inability to be satisfied with the status quo (or whatever the Greek equivalent of that phrase is) drove him to examine everything and everyone all by asking questions. Do not worry that Socrates was an idiot by protesting his ignorance, as "*methinks my lady doth protest too much*." Socrates is crafty and vicious in his pursuit of wisdom. He defers and grovels, cajoles and angers, praises and self-deprecates, but he is a bull dog for virtue.

This chapter is primarily a hands-on activity, so the conclusions to draw from its reading are mainly of the personal type. Socrates has some very definite ideas about how the world works/should work and he is not afraid to share them. We can get a sense from this short reading set of his 'method', and the effectiveness (and annoyingness) of it.

There is another small point here. Hopefully from this reading session, some of his sense of humor comes through too.

Homegame

Question: Even with all of his protestations, does Socrates use rhetoric similarly to the Sophists (i.e. as a blunt object)?

Activity: Let us look at one <u>short</u> work from the early period as a whole, *Ion;* a seemingly odd discussion with an actor.

Technical Terms

Art: *techne* = skill or craft, as in the *art* of medicine.

Knowledge: *epistome* = knowledge of or about a thing (sometimes *inspiration* or *science*), as in a doctor *knows* about the flu.

So in this case, you go to your doctor feeling achy and sniffling and coughing. The doctor *knows* this is the flu and he *does* something to make you feel better.

OTTO: Don't call me stupid….

WANDA: To call you stupid would be an insult to stupid people. I've known sheep who could outwit you. I've worn dresses with higher IQs, but you think you're an intellectual, don't you, ape?

OTTO: Apes don't read philosophy.

WANDA: Yes they do, Otto, they just don't understand it.

WANDA: What would Plato do?

OTTO: Apologize.

A Fish Called Wanda (1988)

Plato: Ion

Personae

- Socrates
- Ion – an actor/singer (*rhapsodes*) from Ephesus

530a ***Socrates*** Welcome, Ion. Where have you come from now, to pay us this visit? From your home in Ephesus?

Ion No, no, Socrates; from Epidaurus and the festival there of Asclepius.

Socrates Do you mean to say that the Epidaurians honor the god with a contest of rhapsodes also?

Ion Certainly, and of music in general.

Socrates Why then, you were competing in some contest, were you? And how went your competition?

Ion We carried off the first prize, Socrates.

530b ***Socrates*** Well done: so now, mind that we win too at the Panathenaea.

Ion Why, so we shall, God willing.

Socrates I must say I have often envied you rhapsodes, Ion, for your art: for besides that it is fitting to your art that your person should be adorned and that you should look as handsome as possible, the necessity of being conversant with a number of good poets, and especially with Homer, the best and divinest poet of all, and of apprehending

530c his thought and not merely learning off his words, is a matter for envy; since a man can never be a good rhapsode without understanding what the poet says. For the rhapsode ought to make himself an interpreter of the poet's thought to his audience; and to do this properly without knowing what the poet means is impossible. So one cannot but envy all this.

Ion What you say is true, Socrates: I at any rate have found this the most laborious part of my art; and I consider I speak about Homer better than anybody, for neither

530d Metrodorus of Lampsacus, nor Stesimbrotus of Thasos, nor Glaucon, nor any one that the world has ever seen, had so many and such fine comments to offer on Homer as I have.

Socrates That is good news, Ion; for obviously you will not grudge me an exhibition of them.

Ion And indeed it is worth hearing, Socrates, how well I have embellished Homer; so that I think I deserve to be crowned with a golden crown by the Homeridae.

Socrates Yes, and I must find myself leisure some time to listen to you;

531a but for the moment, please answer this little question: are you skilled in Homer only, or in Hesiod and Archilochus as well?

Ion No, no, only in Homer; for that seems to me quite enough.

Socrates And is there anything on which Homer and Hesiod both say the same?

Ion Yes, I think there are many such cases.

Socrates Then in those cases would you expound better what Homer says than what Hesiod says?

Ion I should do it equally well in those cases, Socrates, where they say the same.

531b ***Socrates*** But what of those where they do not say the same? For example, about the seer's art, on which both Homer and Hesiod say something.

Ion Quite so.

Socrates Well then, would you, or one of the good seers, expound better what these two poets say, not only alike but differently, about the seer's art?

Ion One of the seers.

Socrates And if you were a seer, would you not, with an ability to expound what they say in agreement, know also how to expound the points on which they differ?

Ion Of course.

Socrates Then how is it that you are skilled in Homer,

531c and not in Hesiod or the other poets? Does Homer speak of any other than the very things that all the other poets speak of? Has he not described war for the most part, and the mutual intercourse of men, good and bad, lay and professional, and the ways of the gods in their intercourse with each other and with men, and happenings in the heavens and in the underworld, and origins of gods and heroes?

531d Are not these the subjects of Homer's poetry?

Ion What you say is true, Socrates.

Socrates And what of the other poets? Do they not treat of the same things?

Ion Yes; but, Socrates, not on Homer's level.

Socrates What, in a worse way?

Ion Far worse.

Socrates And Homer in a better?

Ion Better indeed, I assure you.

Socrates Well now, Ion, dear soul; when several people are talking about number, and one of them speaks better than the rest, I suppose there is some one who will distinguish the good speaker?

531e ***Ion*** I agree.

Socrates And will this someone be the same as he who can distinguish the bad speakers, or different?

Ion The same, I suppose.

Socrates And he will be the man who has the art of numeration?

Ion Yes.

Socrates And again, when several are talking about what kinds of foods are wholesome, and one of them speaks better than the rest, will it be for two different persons to distinguish the superiority of the best speaker and the inferiority of a worse one, or for the same?

Ion Obviously, I should say, for the same.

Socrates Who is he? What is his name?

Ion A doctor.

Socrates And so we may state, in general terms, that the same person will always distinguish, given the same subject and several persons talking about it,

532a both who speaks well and who badly: otherwise, if he is not going to distinguish the bad speaker, clearly he will not distinguish the good one either, where the subject is the same.

Ion That is so.

Socrates And the same man is found to be skilled in both?

Ion Yes.

Socrates And you say that Homer and the other poets, among whom are Hesiod and Archilochus, all speak about the same things, only not similarly; but the one does it well, and the rest worse?

Ion Yes, and what I say is true.

Socrates And since you distinguish the good speaker,

532b you could distinguish also the inferiority of the worse speakers.

Ion So it would seem.

Socrates Then, my excellent friend, we shall not be wrong in saying that our Ion is equally skilled in Homer and in the other poets, seeing that you yourself admit that the same man will be a competent judge of all who speak on the same

things, and that practically all the poets treat of the same things.

Ion Then what can be the reason, Socrates, why I pay no attention when somebody discusses any other poet, and am unable to offer any remark at all of any value,

532c but simply drop into a doze, whereas if anyone mentions something connected with Homer I wake up at once and attend and have plenty to say?

Socrates That is not difficult to guess, my good friend; anyone can see that you are unable to speak on Homer with art and knowledge. For if you could do it with art, you could speak on all the other poets as well; since there is an art of poetry, I take it, as a whole, is there not?

Ion Yes.

532d ***Socrates*** And when one has acquired any other art whatever as a whole, the same principle of inquiry holds through all the arts? Do you require some explanation from me, Ion, of what I mean by this?

Ion Yes, upon my word, Socrates, I do; for I enjoy listening to you wise men.

Socrates I only wish you were right there, Ion: but surely it is you rhapsodes and actors, and the men whose poems you chant, who are wise; whereas I speak but the plain truth, as a simple layman might.

532e For in regard to this question I asked you just now, observe what a trifling commonplace it was that I uttered—a thing that any man might know—namely, that when one has acquired a whole art the inquiry is the same. Let us just think it out thus: there is an art of painting as a whole?

Ion Yes.

Socrates And there are and have been many painters, good and bad?

Ion Certainly.

Socrates Now have you ever found anybody who is skilled in pointing out the successes and failures among the works of Polygnotus son of Aglaophon, but unable to do so with the works of the other painters;

533a and who, when the works of the other painters are exhibited, drops into a doze, and is at a loss, and has no remark to offer; but when he has to pronounce upon Polygnotus or any other painter you please, and on that one only, wakes up and attends and has plenty to say?

Ion No, on my honor, I certainly have not.

Socrates Or again, in sculpture, have you ever found anyone who is skilled in expounding the successes of Daedalus son of Metion, or Epeius son of Panopeus,

533b or Theodorus of Samos, or any other single sculptor, but in face of the works of the other sculptors is at a loss and dozes, having nothing to say?

Ion No, on my honor, I have not found such a man as that either.

Socrates But further, I expect you have also failed to find one in fluting or harping or minstrelsy or rhapsodizing who is skilled in expounding the art of Olympus

533c or Thamyras, or Orpheus, or Phemius, the rhapsode of Ithaca, but is at a loss and has no remark to offer on the successes or failures in rhapsody of Ion of Ephesus.

Ion I cannot gainsay you on that, Socrates: but of one thing I am conscious in myself—that I excel all men in speaking on Homer and have plenty to say, and everyone else says that I do it well; but on the others I am not a good speaker. Yet now, observe what that means.

Socrates I do observe it, Ion, and I am going to point out to you

533d what I take it to mean. For, as I was saying just now, this is not an art in you, whereby you speak well on Homer, but a divine power, which moves you like that in the stone which Euripides named a magnet, but most people call "Heraclea stone." For this stone not only attracts iron rings, but also imparts to them a power whereby they in turn are able to do the very same thing as the stone,

533e and attract other rings; so that sometimes there is formed quite a long chain of bits of iron and rings, suspended one from another; and they all depend for this power on that one stone. In the same manner also the Muse inspires men herself, and then by means of these inspired persons the inspiration spreads to others, and holds them in a connected chain. For all the good epic poets utter all those fine poems not from art, but as inspired and possessed, and the good lyric poets likewise;

534a just as the Corybantian worshippers do not dance when in their senses, so the lyric poets do not indite those fine songs in their senses, but when they have started on the melody and rhythm they begin to be frantic, and it is under possession—as the bacchants are possessed, and not in their senses, when they draw honey and milk from the rivers—that the soul of the lyric poets does the same thing, by their own report. For the poets tell us, I believe, that the songs they bring us are the sweets they cull from honey-dropping founts

534b in certain gardens and glades of the Muses—like the bees, and winging the air as these do. And what they tell is true. For a poet is a light and winged and sacred thing, and is unable ever to indite until he has been inspired and put out of his senses, and his mind is no longer in him: every man, whilst he retains possession of that, is powerless to indite a verse or chant an oracle. Seeing then that it is not by art that they compose and utter so many fine things about the deeds of men—

534c as you do about Homer—but by a divine dispensation, each is able only to compose that to which the Muse has stirred him, this man dithyrambs, another laudatory odes, another dance-songs, another epic or else iambic verse; but each is at fault in any other kind. For not by art do they utter these things, but by divine influence; since, if they had fully learnt by art to speak on one kind of theme, they would know how to speak on all. And for this reason God takes away the mind of these men and uses them as his ministers, just as he does soothsayers and godly seers,

534d in order that we who hear them may know that it is not they who utter these words of great price, when they are out of their wits, but that it is God himself who speaks and addresses us through them. A convincing proof of what I say is the case of Tynnichus, the Chalcidian, who had never composed a single poem in his life that could deserve any mention, and then produced the paean which is in everyone's mouth, almost the finest song we have, simply—as he says himself—"an invention of the Muses." For the god, as it seems to me,

534e intended him to be a sign to us that we should not waver or doubt that these fine poems are not human or the work of men, but divine and the work of gods; and that the poets are merely the interpreters of the gods, according as each is possessed by one of the heavenly powers. To show this forth, the god of set purpose sang the finest of songs through the meanest of poets:

535a or do you not think my statement true, Ion?

Ion Yes, upon my word, I do: for you somehow touch my soul with your words, Socrates, and I believe it is by divine dispensation that good poets interpret to us these utterances of the gods.

Socrates And you rhapsodes, for your part, interpret the utterances of the poets?

Ion Again your words are true.

Socrates And so you act as interpreters of interpreters?

Ion Precisely.

535b ***Socrates*** Stop now and tell me, Ion, without reserve what I may choose to ask you: when you give a good recitation and specially thrill your audience, either with the lay of Odysseus leaping forth on to the threshold, revealing himself to the suitors and pouring out the arrows before his feet, or of Achilles dashing at Hector, or some part of the sad story of Andromache or of Hecuba, or of Priam, are

you then in your senses, or are you carried out of yourself, and does your soul in an ecstasy suppose

535c herself to be among the scenes you are describing, whether they be in Ithaca, or in Troy, or as the poems may chance to place them?

Ion How vivid to me, Socrates, is this part of your proof! For I will tell you without reserve: when I relate a tale of woe, my eyes are filled with tears; and when it is of fear or awe, my hair stands on end with terror, and my heart leaps.

535d ***Socrates*** Well now, are we to say, Ion, that such a person is in his senses at that moment,—when in all the adornment of elegant attire and golden crowns he weeps at sacrifice or festival, having been despoiled of none of his finery; or shows fear as he stands before more than twenty thousand friendly people, none of whom is stripping or injuring him?

Ion No, on my word, not at all, Socrates, to tell the strict truth.

Socrates And are you aware that you rhapsodes produce these same effects on most of the spectators also?

535e ***Ion*** Yes, very fully aware: for I look down upon them from the platform and see them at such moments crying and turning awestruck eyes upon me and yielding to the amazement of my tale. For I have to pay the closest attention to them; since, if I set them crying, I shall laugh myself because of the money I take, but if they laugh, I myself shall cry because of the money I lose.

Socrates And are you aware that your spectator is the last of the rings which I spoke of as receiving from each other the power transmitted from the Heraclean lodestone?

536a You, the rhapsode and actor, are the middle ring; the poet himself is the first; but it is the god who through the whole series draws the souls of men whithersoever he pleases, making the power of one depend on the other. And, just as from the magnet, there is a mighty chain of choric performers and masters and under-masters suspended by side-connections from the rings that hang down from the Muse. One poet is suspended from one Muse, another from another:

536b the word we use for it is “possessed,” but it is much the same thing, for he is held. And from these first rings—the poets—are suspended various others, which are thus inspired, some by Orpheus and others by Musaeus; but the majority are possessed and held by Homer. Of whom you, Ion, are one, and are possessed by Homer; and so, when anyone recites the work of another poet, you go to sleep and are at a loss what to say; but when some one utters a strain of your poet, you wake up at once, and your soul dances,

536c and you have plenty to say: for it is not by art or knowledge about Homer that you say what you say, but by divine dispensation and possession; just as the Corybantian worshippers are keenly sensible of that strain alone which belongs to the god whose possession is on them, and have plenty of gestures and phrases for that tune, but do not heed any other. And so you, Ion, when the subject of Homer is mentioned, have plenty to say, but nothing on any of the others. And when you ask me the reason

536d why you can speak at large on Homer but not on the rest, I tell you it is because your skill in praising Homer comes not by art, but by divine dispensation.

Ion Well spoken, I grant you, Socrates; but still I shall be surprised if you can speak well enough to convince me that I am possessed and mad when I praise Homer. Nor can I think you would believe it of me yourself, if you heard me speaking about him.

Socrates I declare I am quite willing to hear you, but not until

536e you have first answered me this: on what thing in Homer's story do you speak well? Not on all of them, I presume.

Ion I assure you, Socrates, on all without a single exception.

Socrates Not, of course, including those things of which you have in fact no knowledge, but which Homer tells.

Ion And what sort of things are they, which Homer tells, but of which I have no knowledge?

537a ***Socrates*** Why, does not Homer speak a good deal about arts, in a good many places? For instance, about chariot-driving: if I can recall the lines, I will quote them to you.

Ion No, I will recite them, for I can remember.

Socrates Tell me then what Nestor says to his son Antilochus, advising him to be careful about the turning-post in the horse-race in honor of Patroclus.

Ion "Bend thyself in the polished car slightly to the left of them; and call to the right-hand horse"

537b "and goad him on, while your hand slackens his reins. And at the post let your left-hand horse swerve close, so that the nave of the well-wrought wheel may seem to come up to the edge of the stone, which yet avoid to touch." (*Hom. Il. 23.335 ff*).

Socrates Enough. Now, Ion, will a doctor or a charioteer be the better judge

537c whether Homer speaks correctly or not in these lines?

Ion A charioteer, of course.

Socrates Because he has this art, or for some other reason?

Ion No, because it is his art.

Socrates And to every art has been apportioned by God a power of knowing a particular business? For I take it that what we know by the art of piloting we cannot also know by that of medicine.

Ion No, to be sure.

Socrates And what we know by medicine, we cannot by carpentry also?

Ion No, indeed.

537d ***Socrates*** And this rule holds for all the arts, that what we know by one of them we cannot know by another? But before you answer that, just tell me this: do you agree that one art is of one sort, and another of another?

Ion Yes.

Socrates Do you argue this as I do, and call one art different from another when one is a knowledge of one kind of thing, and another a knowledge of another kind?

537e ***Ion*** Yes.

Socrates Since, I suppose, if it were a knowledge of the same things—how could we say that one was different from another, when both could give us the same knowledge? Just as I know that there are five of these fingers, and you equally know the same fact about them; and if I should ask you whether both you and I know this same fact by the same art of numeration, or by different arts, you would reply, I presume, that it was by the same?

Ion Yes.

538a ***Socrates*** Then tell me now, what I was just going to ask you, whether you think this rule holds for all the arts—that by the same art we must know the same things, and by a different art things that are not the same; but if the art is other, the things we know by it must be different also.

Ion I think it is so, Socrates.

Socrates Then he who has not a particular art will be incapable of knowing aright the words or works of that art?

538b ***Ion*** True.

Socrates Then will you or a charioteer be the better judge of whether Homer speaks well or not in the lines that you quoted?

Ion A charioteer.

Socrates Because, I suppose, you are a rhapsode and not a charioteer.

Ion Yes.

Socrates And the rhapsode's art is different from the charioteer's?

Ion Yes.

Socrates Then if it is different, it is also a knowledge of different things.

Ion Yes.

Socrates Now, what of the passage where Homer tells how Hecamede,

538c Nestor's concubine, gives the wounded Machaon a posset? His words are something like this: "Of Pramneian wine it was, and therein she grated cheese of goat's milk with a grater of bronze; and thereby an onion as a relish for drink." (*Hom. Il. 11.639-40*) Is it for the doctor's or the rhapsode's art to discern aright whether Homer speaks correctly here or not?

Ion For the doctor's.

Socrates Well now, when Homer says:

538d "And she passed to the bottom like a plummet which, set on a horn from an ox of the field, goes in haste to bring mischief among the ravenous fishes" — (*Hom. Il. 24.80-82*) are we to say it is for the fisherman's or for the rhapsode's art to decide what he means by this, and whether it is rightly or wrongly spoken?

Ion Clearly, Socrates, for the fisherman's art.

Socrates Then please observe: suppose you were questioning me and should ask:

538e "Since therefore, Socrates, you find it is for these several arts to appraise the passages of Homer that belong to each, be so good as to make out those also that are for the seer and the seer's art, and show me the sort of passages that come under his ability to distinguish whether they are well or ill done"; observe how easily and truly I shall answer you. For he has many passages, both in the *Odyssey*, as for instance the words of Theoclymenus, the seer of the line of Melampus, to the suitors:

539a "Hapless men, what bane is this afflicts you? Your heads and faces and limbs below are shrouded in night, and wailing is enkindled, and cheeks are wet with tears: of ghosts the porch is full, and the court full of them also, hastening hell-wards 'neath the gloom: and the sun is perished out of heaven, and an evil mist is spread abroad;" (*Hom. Od. 20.351-57*)

539b and there are many passages in the Iliad also, as in the fight at the rampart, where he says:"For as they were eager to pass over, a bird had crossed them, an eagle of lofty flight, pressing the host at the left hand,

539c and bearing a blood-red monster of a snake, alive and still struggling; nor had it yet unlearnt the lust of battle. For bending back it smote its captor on the breast by the neck, and the bird in the bitterness of pain cast it away to the ground, and dropped it down in the midst of the throng;" "and then with a cry flew off on the wafting winds." (*Hom. Il. 12.200-7*) This passage, and others of the sort, are those that I should say the seer has to examine and judge.

Ion And you speak the truth, Socrates.

Socrates And so do you, Ion, in saying that. Now you must do as I did, and in return for my picking out from the *Odyssey* and the *Iliad* the kinds of passage that belong severally to the seer,

539e the doctor, and the fisherman, you have now to pick out for me—since you are so much more versed in Homer than I—the kinds which belong to the rhapsode, Ion, and the rhapsode's art, and which he should be able to consider and distinguish beyond the rest of mankind.

Ion What I say, Socrates, is—"all passages."

Socrates Surely you do not say "all," Ion! Can you be so forgetful? And yet forgetfulness would ill become a rhapsode.

540a ***Ion*** Why, how am I forgetting?

Socrates Do you not remember that you said that the art of the rhapsode was different from that of the charioteer?

Ion I remember.

Socrates And you also admitted that, being different, it would know different things?

Ion Yes.

Socrates Then by your own account the rhapsode's art cannot know everything, nor the rhapsode either.

Ion Let us say, everything except those instances, Socrates.

540b ***Socrates*** By "those instances" you imply the subjects of practically all the other arts. Well, as he does not know all of them, which kinds will he know?

Ion Those things, I imagine, that it befits a man to say, and the sort of thing that a woman should say; the sort for a slave and the sort for a freeman; and the sort for a subject or for a ruler.

Socrates Do you mean that the rhapsode will know better than the pilot what sort of thing a ruler of a storm-tossed vessel at sea should say?

Ion No, the pilot knows better in that case.

540c ***Socrates*** Well, will the rhapsode know better than the doctor what sort of thing a ruler of a sick man should say?

Ion Not in that case either.

Socrates But he will know the sort for a slave, you say?

Ion Yes.

Socrates For instance, if the slave is a cowherd, you say the rhapsode will know what the other should say to pacify his cows when they get fierce, but the cowherd will not?

Ion That is not so.

Socrates Well, the sort of thing that a woman ought to say—a spinning-woman—about the working of wool?

40d ***Ion*** No.

Socrates But he will know what a man should say, when he is a general exhorting his men?

Ion Yes, that sort of thing the rhapsode will know.

Socrates Well, but is the art of the rhapsode the art of the general?

Ion I, at any rate, should know what a general ought to say.

Socrates Yes, since I daresay you are good at generalship also, Ion. For in fact, if you happened to have skill in horsemanship as well as in the lyre, you would know when horses were well or ill managed:

540e but if I asked you, "By which art is it, Ion, that you know that horses are being well managed, by your skill as a horseman, or as a player of the lyre?" what would your answer be?

Ion I should say, by my skill as a horseman.

Socrates And if again you were distinguishing the good lyre-players, you would admit that you distinguished by your skill in the lyre, and not by your skill as a horseman.

Ion Yes.

Socrates And when you judge of military matters, do you judge as having skill in generalship, or as a good rhapsode?

Ion To my mind, there is no difference.

541a ***Socrates*** What, no difference, do you say? Do you mean that the art of the rhapsode and the general is one, not two?

Ion It is one, to my mind.

Socrates So that anyone who is a good rhapsode is also, in fact, a good general?

Ion Certainly, Socrates.

Socrates And again, anyone who happens to be a good general is also a good rhapsode.

Ion No there I do not agree.

Socrates But still you agree that anyone who is a good rhapsode

541b is also a good general?

Ion To be sure.

Socrates And you are the best rhapsode in Greece?

Ion Far the best, Socrates.

Socrates Are you also, Ion, the best general in Greece?

Ion Be sure of it, Socrates and that I owe to my study of Homer.

Socrates Then how, in Heaven's name, can it be, Ion, that you, who are both the best general and the best rhapsode in Greece, go about performing as a rhapsode to the Greeks, but not as a general?

541c Or do you suppose that the Greeks feel a great need of a rhapsode in the glory of his golden crown, but of a general none at all?

Ion It is because my city, Socrates, is under the rule and generalship of your people, and is not in want of a general; whilst you and Sparta would not choose me as a general, since you think you manage well enough for yourselves.

Socrates My excellent Ion, you are acquainted with Apollodorus of Cyzicus, are you not?

Ion What might he be?

Socrates A man whom the Athenians have often chosen as their general, though a foreigner;

541d and Phanosthenes of Andros, and Heracleides of Clazomenae, whom my city invests with the high command and other offices although they are foreigners, because they have proved themselves to be competent. And will she not choose Ion of Ephesus as her general, and honor him, if he shows himself competent? Why, you Ephesians are by origin Athenians, are you not, and Ephesus is inferior to no city?

541e But in fact, Ion, if you are right in saying it is by art and knowledge that you are able to praise Homer, you are playing me false: you have professed to me that you know any amount of fine things about Homer, and you promise to display them; but you are only deceiving me, and so far from displaying the subjects of your skill, you decline even to tell me what they are, for all my entreaties. You are a perfect Proteus in the way you take on every kind of shape, twisting about this way and that, until at last you elude my grasp in the guise of a general, so as to avoid displaying your skill

542a in Homeric lore. Now if you are an artist and, as I was saying just now, you only promised me a display about Homer to deceive me, you are playing me false; whilst if you are no artist, but speak fully and finely about Homer, as I said you did, without any knowledge but by a divine dispensation which causes you to be possessed by the poet, you play quite fair. Choose therefore which of the two you prefer us to call you, dishonest or divine.

Ion The difference is great, Socrates; for it is far nobler to be called divine.

542b ***Socrates*** Then you may count on this nobler title in our minds, Ion, of being a divine and not an artistic praiser of Homer.

Determine Three 'Ideas' From This Work

Idea	Passage(s)	Reason(s)
1.		
2.		
3.		

A Quick Analysis

Some of the ideas Socrates seems to be investigating are art, knowledge, inspiration, expertise. From where do the better natures we participate in derive?

Plato

Though he probably regarded himself a teacher, artistically, by some accounts Plato started out life as a playwright. I guess then, artistically, as the chronicler of Socrates he ended his life as a playwright as well. Anyway this is what makes the Dialogues so readable. They are witty and insightful. The language is rich and full, just as you would expect from a poet or writer during this high time of Greek culture.

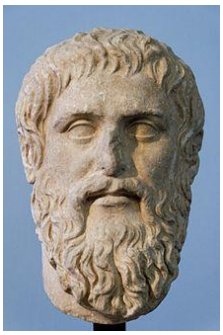


Figure 3: Bust of Plato

Still, Plato saw the dialogues only as popular reading. We will find little of him in the dialogues as they mainly feature Socrates. If that is the case, what do we know of Plato the Philosopher? Now we have sort of the opposite problem. As we try to see Socrates shine through the words of Plato so we try to see Plato within the words he gives to Socrates.

We know that he met Socrates early in his life, yet pursued a military career (as would be the want of his family) and politics. However, with the death of Socrates at the hands of an increasingly autocratic government, he seems to have shifted away from politics. He began to see only the worthy, those who have followed Socrates' lead and sought wisdom, as viable leaders.

Plato takes Socrates' basic ideas and expounds, extends and conforms them to his view of the ideal state, where people get along and the state looks out for the needs of its citizens. And not just an ideal state but a state of ideals where we can move beyond the partial images of selfish and ignorant thought to full vision and wisdom.

To this end he returned to Athens and sets up the "Academy" (named for its location near the Grove of Academus) in order to educate future statesmen.

Virtue

As with Socrates, Virtue is everything for Plato as well. Striving for the best is the only way to live life; in this he is truly Socrates' disciple. Sure the bar is high and may seem pie in the sky, but that does not mean we do not strive for it. "*Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp, Or what's a heaven for?*" (Robert Browning). Plato tempers and expands Socrates' ideas, giving form and meaning to the incessant questioning. He handles a lot of the how as well as the why, but he too sees an objective truth and guiding principle. There must be an objective base for all things. If the subjective is the rule then there is nothing which permanently binds us to the Good; I can change social or cultural norms or abide by them only as a matter of convenience and convenience is not virtue.

The Forms

Plato's foundational idea is the differentiating of material and immaterial, one that influences many early Christian theologians, what is called *the Forms*. We must now take a moment then and explore Plato's idea of *the Ideal*. In many of his dialogues, Plato mentions 'supra-sensible' (above the senses) entities he calls '*Forms*' (or 'Ideas'). In the *Phaedo* (c.f. *Phaedo* 74a-75d), Plato talks about 'equality' as a thing and also the *idea of* equality as a concept ("equality in the abstract" he calls it), that is, particular sensible things like sticks and stones are *equal* and can be considered equal because of their "participation" or "sharing" in the character of the *Form of Equality*, which embodies absolutely,

changelessly, perfectly, and essentially 'equal'. It is important to see that Socrates views this Form as the driving force. We know two sticks are equal from the Form; we do not posit the Form from two equal sticks.

Think of it this way: for us to recognize two pieces of a tree on the ground as 'sticks', because their *accidents* could be completely different (one could be oak and the other magnolia, making them unequal) there must be some set formal idea of what is a 'stick' *is*, aside from its accidents. Not only must there be an *ideal* but we must be something that we humans are able to grasp, that is, that these things can 'participate' in the larger idea of 'stick'. Plato sometimes characterizes this participation in the Form as a kind of imaging, or 'approximation' of the Form.

The same may be said of insensible, non-particular things, the many things that are greater or smaller and the *Forms of Great and Small* (*Phaedo* 75c-d), or the many tall things and the *Form of Tall* (*Phaedo* 100e), or the many beautiful things and the *Form of Beauty* (*Phaedo* 75c-d, *Symposium* 211e, *Republic* V,476c). When Plato writes about 'instances' of Forms 'approximating' Forms, for Plato, Forms are *archtypes*. So, in this way the *Form of Beauty* is also *perfect* beauty, the *Form of Justice* is *perfect* justice, and so on. This also allows for judgment calls about how much an object participates in the Form. The nearer to perfection, the nearer to the Form; that is to say we can make a judgment about the quality of a thing in relationship to the perfect aspect of it. We can easily judge the value of a desk created by a master craftsman and one made by a five year old. In the end this allows the judging of something by an *objective* norm.

Keep In Mind: this is different than the relationship of *substance* and *accidents*.

One question: is this *a priori* or *a posteriori* thinking?

Answers, I got Answers: The Middle Dialogues

(Forms, Morality and Love)

As mentioned in previous chapters (and rehashed here), Plato's early works mainly reflect the teachings of his teacher, Socrates, and are almost all in the form of *Socratic Dialogues*, using the *Socratic Method* in which Socrates because he is merely seeking to understand (cough, cough) asks somebody what appears at first glance to be a straightforward question, such as "what is beauty?" or "can virtue be taught?". The person, often sought out by Socrates because of their expertise in an area (though the encounters *seem* accidental) confidently gives an answer, but Socrates, by asking further 'questions', shows that the person really *doesn't* know the answer after all. The key feature of the early works is that they never give the answer to these questions – their purpose is to make the reader think for himself and come to conclusions about the subject being asked. These dialogues are skillfully written 'plays' in their own right and often feature real historical figures, other philosophers or their disciples. They probably give a reasonably accurate picture of what Socrates was really like (an astonishingly irritating man to try to have a conversation with!).

In the "middle" dialogues, Plato's Socrates actually begins supplying answers to some of the questions he asks, or at least beginning to put forth positive doctrines on the subjects. This is generally agreed to be the first appearance of Plato's own views. What becomes most prominent in the middle dialogues is the idea that knowledge comes of *grasping* knowledge one already has of objective truths, the unchanging *Forms*, along with active seeking of the knowledge of such Forms. The immortality of the soul, and specific doctrines about justice, truth, and beauty, begin appearing here. The *Symposium*

(originally a drinking party) and the *Republic* (a political party?) are considered the prime examples of Plato's middle dialogues. It is here that we also meet the *Allegory of the Cave* (see below).

The Late Dialogues
(Methodology, Forms and Law)

Those dialogues considered to be written last by Plato look more at the "big picture" – how was the world created; what are the ideal characteristics of the good ruler; what laws should the state have, etc. Plato has danced about the edges in the earlier dialogues, laying foundations for the difficult ideas, and now begins to hammer them out. Consequentially these are probably the most difficult and challenging philosophical works. These are not, it must be said, remotely as easy and enjoyable to read as his earlier works.

Timaeus, *Sophist*, and *Laws* probably represent the centerpieces of the Late writings, with *Laws* being one worth concentrating on for understanding their influence on later ideas of governance.

Putting It Together

Reading, as one might say, *is believing*. Once again it is the delving into the works which will help us to fully appreciate and understand these over-simplifications. Alfred North Whitehead, a 20th Century mathematician and philosopher stated that all of Western Philosophy was a series of *footnotes* to Plato[18].

In terms of theology, Plato's influence cannot be over-emphasized. His decisions about the nature of the things and the division of material and immaterial things (with the immaterial being the foundation of the material) as well as the idea of body and soul sync very nicely with the Judeo-Christian understanding of God, Creation, and humanity. We will examine these ideas in the Christian context in later chapters.

But that does not mean that Plato is swallowed by Christianity hook, line, and sinker. Plato is considered inspired but has the flaw of being just human, without the advantage of Revelation. Later theologians point out his genius but, as always happens with mere human speculation, they also point out where he gets some things wrong. His teachings about the immortality of the soul were good; his belief in what is called the "Transmigration of the Soul" in which the soul is immortal because it basically keeps recycling, not so much.

There is far greater peril in buying knowledge than in buying meat and drink: the one you purchase of the wholesale or retail dealer, and carry them away in other vessels, and before you receive them into the body as food, you may deposit them at home and call in any experienced friend who knows what is good to be eaten or drunken, and what not, and how much, and when; and hence the danger of purchasing them is not so great. But when you buy the wares of knowledge you cannot carry them away in another vessel; they have been sold to you, and you must take them into the soul and go your way, either greatly harmed or greatly benefited by the lesson.

Plato, *Protagoras*

There is great reason to hope that death is good; for one of two things -- either death is a state of nothingness and utter unconsciousness, or, as men say, there is a change and migration of the soul from this world to another. Now if you suppose

[18] "*The safest general characterization of the European philosophical tradition is that it consists of a series of footnotes to Plato*." To be exact.

that there is no consciousness, but a sleep like the sleep of him who is undisturbed by the sight of dreams, death will be an unspeakable gain. For if a person were to select the night in which his sleep was undisturbed even by dreams, and were to compare with this the other days and nights of his life, and then were to tell us how many days and nights he had passed in the course of his life better and more pleasantly than this one, I think that any man ... even the great king will not find many such days or nights, when compared with the others. Now if death is like this, I say that to die is gain; for eternity is then only a single night. But if death is the journey to another place, and there, as men say, all the dead are, what good, O my friends and judges, can be greater than this?

Plato, *Apology*

A Plato Addendum: Allegory of The Cave

Socrates (and Plato) uses illustration and comparison in order to educate and convince; what we might (and probably should) call a*llegory* (the using of symbolic or physical representations to express spiritual or abstract ideas). Recall how Socrates said that just like a body does ill or well and we can see that, so the soul too can be understood in the same light (*Crito 47*). We can see a certain a posteriori method in his illustrations – take what you know and push through to understanding. Hopefully I am making some sense here (and sense of Platonic thought): we move (journey) from partial, incomplete or faulty knowledge to pure complete knowledge; this is equally true in the material world and the objective world.

But First: The Analogy of the Divided Line

The basic framework for understanding Platonic thought is a table, divided into quadrants. The quadrants are further divided by level of 'reality' so to speak, in an ever increasing upward depth.

	Objects	Mental States
Intelligible World	The Good	Knowledge / Wisdom
	Forms	Thinking
	Mathematical Objects	
World of Appearances	Visible Things	Belief
	Images	Imagination

Table 7: Plato -- The Divided Line

The sensible world is the world of things, but these things are only sense-perceived images of things. Whether physical or mental, these things really are not *real* in the sense that they are mere reflections of the *real* things which we can know through our intellect.

Therefore there is a 'division' between the flawed sensible/mental world and the perfect objective/intelligible world.

Digging Deeper – The Cave

So what is all this talk I hear about a cave? In Chapter XXV of the dialog known as *The Republic*, Plato seeks to illustrate the above tenets using a cave in which prisoners are trapped in a pretty stringent time-out corner. Unable to move or look around they are left with only the things they can see by which they can understand their world, which in their case turns out to be the back wall of the cave. Behind and unbeknownst to them is an elevated walkway on which passers-by carry objects. To light their way is a large fire. This fire casts shadows on the back wall, which consequentially are all that the prisoners can perceive. Most people, Plato feels, live at this level, never knowing the source of their understanding or the faint shadow of reality which it represents.

The cave then shows the nature of the universe as well as the levels of knowledge, understanding, reality and frankly effort which go with the path of enlightenment. Outside the cave lies the pure light of Forms and Reason, which he also says can be a bit overwhelming even for the seeker of Wisdom. It serves the dual purpose of explaining the physical and the interior worlds at the same time. Everything in one is paralleled in the other for we are beings of both body and soul, in a universe which is both physical and non-sensible.

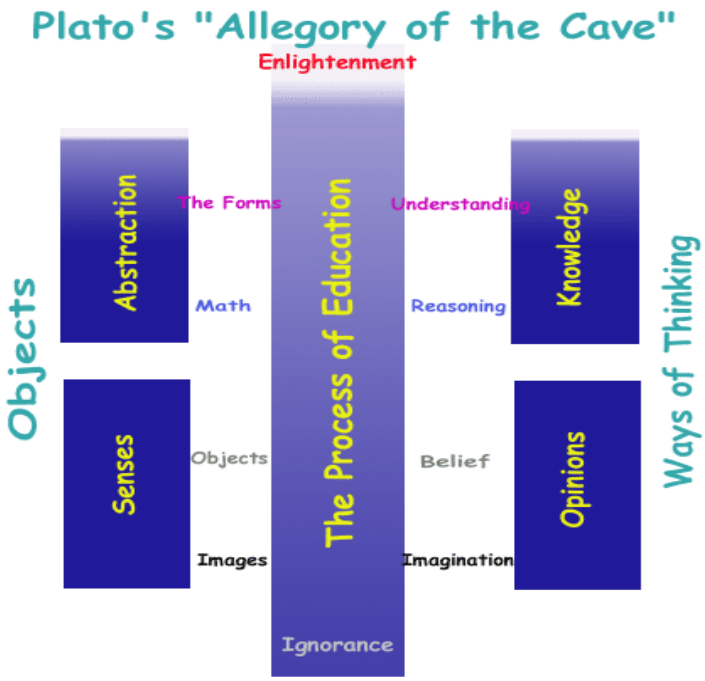


Figure 4: The Allegory Of the Cave

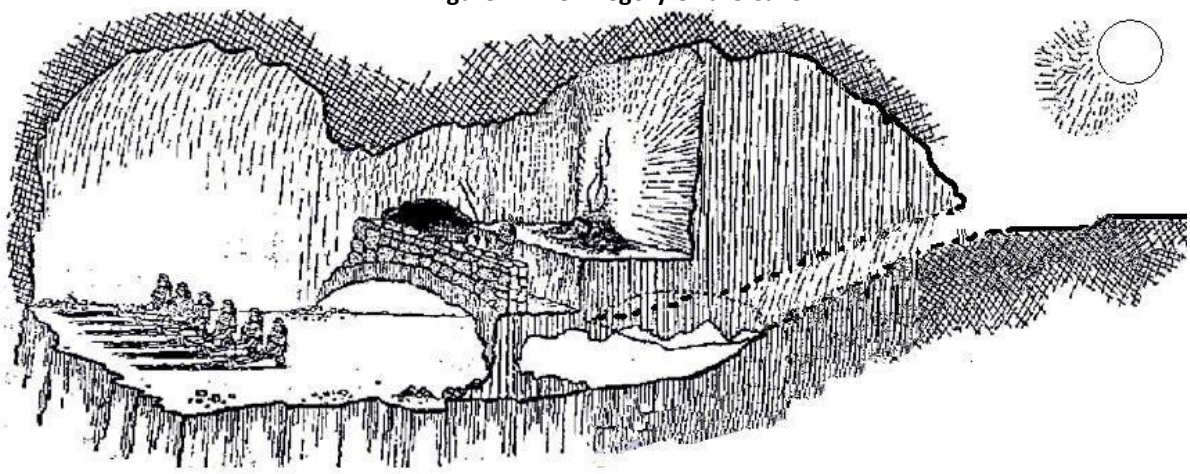


Figure 5: Illustration of the Cave Allegory

Post-Plato

We recognize Plato as a major influence in Western philosophical and theological thought but that is mainly because so many of the later philosophers picked up on his ideas and tried to integrate or replace them. But what about them during or just after his lifetime? Was it just a fluke that his works and thought were preserved and persevered? Did he have any immediate influence? Well, I guess the answer had better be yes, or else this chapter will be really short.

The Academia

The short answer is that even within his lifetime Plato was considered one of the most influential and celebrated teachers in Greece. The Academia (or Academy) of Athens was opened by Plato in about 387 BC and lasted until it was closed down by the Emperor Justinian in 529 AD (for strictly political purposes). This 800 year *unbroken* existence speaks volumes for the ideas implanted there by its founder. History on the other hand, may not be as kind to the students.

The school's influence in a secular sense was carried over about mid-way through its existence and into the 300's (AD) to the non-secular theologies of Philo of Alexandria (Jewish, ~20 BC – 50 AD) as well as Christian theologians and apologists who rise up at this time due to the legitimization of Christianity by the Emperor Constantine.

While it was mainly focused on the correct instruction of political leaders, it managed to keep intact, alive and fresh the ideas of its founder for countless generations. An extremely good reference, as references go.

The Minor Prophets

While only Plato seemed best able to present and expound on the whole of Socrates' thought, producing a balanced notion of discipline and virtue, he was not the only one who was able to glean something from it. Even then, as we can see from the later dialogs, Plato eventually mainly focused on the leadership aspect. But Socrates and Plato were not the only players on the field. Many other people follow the thinking of a particular individual, presenting what they believe the main point or focus to be. Sometimes they are right, and sometimes they are wrong. Other times they are just lunatics.

Cynics

From the Greek for '*dog-like*', the Cynics took up Socrates' call for austerity, and pretty much little else. One should reject traditional desires (power, fame, etc.) and be free of possessions. Antisthenes (445-365 BC) identified self-denial as virtue; Diogenes (412-325 BC) felt Antisthenes did not take it far enough and took it farther by living in a tub, which might account for the lunatic title given him. The term as we use it today only took on that meaning later in history.

Cyrenaics

Named for their port of origin, these folks while often confused name-wise, were actually the counterparts of the Cynics. Aristippus (435-356 BC) identified more with the instant and short-term

pleasure side of Socratic thought, and pretty much little else. One can only guess the reason these guys are not still around as well as their Cynic counterparts.

Aristotle

Plato really had no real use for what we might call the 'hard sciences'. To him knowledge only had use in terms of 'right action'. Oddly enough then, that one of his star pupils became known as the father of modern science and the hierarchical classification of everything upon which we rely so heavily. We really do not want to spend much time here, because we will be spending a lot of time on him later. Suffice it to say, his reaction against and rejection of his master Plato, produced a singularly large volume of work. Together, Plato and Aristotle form what we basically consider to be Hellenistic Philosophy (with all apologies to everyone else we have looked at), and the backbone of Christian theological language.

He, for the West and because we tend to gloss over the details sometimes, begins that idea that every generation produces a genius who seems to step outside the boundaries of traditional thought to guide the world. But one (at least this one) wonders why philosophers hold up both Plato and Aristotle, but scientific thinkers only hold up Aristotle. But I cause us to wander.

Stoics

An early fusion of Plato and Aristotle, these guys get their name from the *stoa* or columns in the downtown market from near which they spouted their philosophy. Zeno of Citium (334-262 BC) is considered their main founder and their 'school', lasted even into Rome (Seneca, Marcus Aurelius). The Stoic doctrine is divided into three parts: logic, physics, and ethics. Stoicism is essentially a system of ethics (like Plato) which is guided by logic (Aristotelian) and has physics (observable phenomena) as its foundation.

What they taught was that life should be lived in accordance with nature and controlled by virtue. Their teaching on morality though, is stern; it is an ascetic system, teaching self-denial, restraint and denial of worldly pleasures as well as a perfect indifference (*apathea*: apathy) to everything external, for nothing external could be either good or evil. Hence to the Stoics both pain and pleasure, poverty and riches, sickness and health, were supposed to be equally unimportant.

This group will influence later Christian asceticism. We might also think of them as Taoists of the West, but that would be another chapter.

Eclecticism

As the name implies, an attempt from the 1st century BC at a synthesis of Stoicism, Platonism, Neo-Pythagoreans, the various Platonic sects, and a smattering of others thrown in for good measure. Basically they tried, from all the existing philosophical beliefs, to select the doctrines that seemed to them most reasonable, and out of these constructed a new system. To their credit though, they tried to balance the logical search for pure truth, the attainment of practical virtue and happiness, and the idea that pure truth was impossible to discover. Eclecticism was the original cafeteria-style belief system, seeking to reach by selection from the various systems, to the best possible degree of probability, with the full knowledge of the despair of attaining to what is absolutely true. That is to say, they knew they would not reach perfect knowledge but they also knew that fact should not keep them from trying.

Neo-Platonism

Sure, okay, not really immediately after his life, but in terms of our timeline fairly close, this is the much later (3rd century AD) 'rediscovery' of Plato founded by Plotinus (204-270 AD), an attempt to integrate Socratic/Platonic thought into newer systems. Alexandria in Egypt had replaced Athens as the center of learning and the new-found sense of peace led back to the pursuit of higher knowledge, truth, virtue and the state, in light of modern thinking. Naturally then, they were drawn to the writings of Plato for their ethical sense. We will be covering these thinkers later but they bear mention here, within this context.

Clement of Alexandria, Origen and Augustine

These Christian theologian/philosophers pick up the neo-Platonic movement and carry it into the 4th century and beyond. They struggle with some of the notions of Plato, trying to reconcile them with Christian Orthodoxy but for the most part they create a smooth integration of Greek ideas into Christian thinking.

Alkindus, Alpharabius, Avicenna and Averroes

These Islamic theologian/philosophers pick up platonic ideas around the 11th century and produce an Islamic philosophic-theological synthesis similar to their Christian counterparts. These re-thinkings will be re-introduced into the West later in the late Middle Ages where they will have an influence.

Putting It Together

Socrates and Plato had a great influence in Western philosophy on the immediate and the long term thinking of the philosophers which followed them, even to this day. Their thinking on morality gave a language and a basis for discussing the larger human situation which seems to make the most sense to the largest number of people. While most of their 'scientific' thinking has subsequently been dismissed, it has been hard to shake their moral discussions, or the thinking that within each of us lays a certain amount of knowledge which we can use to act correctly or at least discover how to act correctly and the responsibility to do so, as well as a certain amount of self-denial which is necessary to accomplish it.

Our modern notions of law, of morality, of the 'greater good', of asceticism, even some aspects of God all have their inception here, in Plato. Whether it has been embraced or rejected, consciously or subconsciously integrated, the vestiges of Platonic thought are solidly woven into the modern Western mindset.

Thought Exercise

Would you consider the thinkers of this period, even Plato, to be *a posteriori* or *a priori* thinkers?


MORAL VALUES FOR DUMMIES

Aristotle

Next to Plato, Aristotle holds the title as one of the most influential thinkers in the West. Still it is probably his 'scientific' thinking which has the most influence in our daily lives. If, as Whitehead said, all of Western philosophy is a footnote to Plato, think that all Western science is a footnote to Aristotle. One of the main things we can say about Aristotle is that he absolutely loved the world around him. It filled him with awe and wonder.

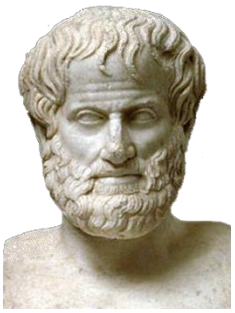


Figure 6: Bust of Aristotle

We remember him philosophically because Aristotle represents a serious break in thought with previous philosophers (re: Socrates and Plato) and yet in the greater scheme of things he breaks little new ground in terms of the questions he is seeking to answer. His innovation comes in his belief in the foundation of knowledge. While he starts with and refines some of Plato's ideas, he abandons his mentor's view of higher, non-physical truths and seeks meaning within the world. He creates the analytical/deductive method, observing with the senses to understand and know something, creating the movement from *a posteriori* to *a priori* thinking. Where Plato was strictly in the immaterial as the foundation of knowledge for the material, Aristotle finds truth within the material world and sees the immaterial from there.

A Man, A Plan….

Surprisingly we know a lot about Aristotle's life. *A lot*. We will hit just the highlights though. His father was a physician to the king of Macedonia but he was orphaned early and eventually placed into Plato's Academy at 17. Plato himself was impressed with the lad, so impressed that he called him "*the mind of the school*", which probably sounds much more poetic in Greek.

After Plato's death, he found his thought too different from his mentor and therefore the school Plato had founded. Aristotle headed out, seeking his own way, hanging with other graduates and classmates (sounds like some teen-age coming of age movie). Eventually, he was summoned back to educate the young son of a certain Macedonian ruler named Phillip. This young man Alexander (356-323 BC), who eventually became known as 'the Great' (which sounds pretty good even in English), also went on to have some influence on the thinking patterns of a large number of people.

In connection with the ascendency of Alexander, Aristotle made his way back to Athens to open a school in the Lyceum. Here he assembled a large library aided by money and materials sent by Alexander from all over the new empire.

Unfortunately for him, all good things must come to an end and with the death of Alexander the negative reaction to his rule swept Aristotle up. Similarly accused of crimes against the state like his mentor's mentor Socrates, he choose to not let Athens "*sin twice against philosophy*" (which sounds bad in both Greek and English) and unlike his grand-mentor, fled the city. Soon afterwards he got sick and died which may or may not prove Socrates' point.

Not a bad resume. His parentage places him squarely within the political system which the Academy that he attended sought to influence. His natural intellect and impressive mind guarantee him a seat there and influence in the regime. The peace and influence of Alexander ensured a wide effect of his thought. The idea of the library flourished, most famously later in Alexandria in Egypt and still survives

to this day, though not in Alexandria. Many of his thoughts, captured most probably from lecture notes, survive. The right man in the right place at the right time.

The Big Themes

What distinguishes Aristotle from earlier thinkers? Not much really but to be fair it is more than just his position in the historical timeline which calls our attention to him. Logic; Vices and virtues; understanding objects through Categories; final cause; Biology; Psychology; Rhetoric; Poetics. You name it he had a thought on it. He accomplished this volume of thought by breaking things down in to their components in order to better understand them. He was a *divider not a uniter* to paraphrase. Since knowledge was for more than just ethical living, he divided the 'sciences' (think of the word as meaning understanding/knowledge) up into three categories: the *theoretical*, the *practical* and the *productive*. Science gives us information, but that information has different ultimate *ends* which correspond to those three categories: *knowledge*, *conduct*, and the *making of 'beautiful' objects*.

For Aristotle, the material world (and therefore life) surrounds us and is larger than just our moral actions. The quantification and qualification of the universe around us requires a portion of our thought as well. At the same time that does not mean that knowledge for knowledge's sake is all there is to it, knowing also involves right action. That is to say, contrary to some opinions just because we can do something, we should not because it is not ethical, perhaps a rude awakening for those secular humanists who look to him as their hero.

Thought Exercise

Compare and contrast this understanding of knowledge and the purpose of knowledge with Plato's. What are its possible ramifications?

Aristotle Interrupted

But we digress. As stated previously, Aristotle wrote on a great many things. The following are notes on some of the works or lectures which are part of his main thought. Later we will explore these and other ideas but for now, a mere overview.

One final observation on the genius that is Aristotle was that he was truly the master of the opening line. He can succinctly sum up most of what he is thinking about in the first sentence of each of his works.

Metaphysics

"*All men desire to know*." (*Metaphysics 1:1*) This fundamental function within humans requires much thought. If Nature is the physical world around us, what is the nature of what is beyond Nature? What knowledge is best characterized as 'Wisdom', and how do we acquire it? While he takes a slightly different approach than Plato, the subject is similar.

Science (Physics)

What is the nature of Nature? Here he takes on some of the big ideas we have glanced at: motion; something or nothing; time and change; Biology and Psychology also fall into this realm. Here he looks at the question of what are some of the 'first principles' of Nature? The term 'natural philosopher' is used for a follower of science, one that has been dropped in favor of 'scientist'.

Logic

We have previously examined this idea, but let us now look at the term in terms of the man. Well, now comes the hard part. Sheepishly and with as much as the word is bandied about here, contritely, I must inform you that Aristotle never formally assign a work to it, nor did he actually use the word. It comes to us later, probably from Cicero. His word would be more correctly translated 'analytics'. Aristotle saw logic not so much as a science but a function of every human being and society. That is to say, it is, as we have proffered it to you, an *instrument* of science and the necessary basis of science. He took it for granted that it had to be understood and practiced in order to do any of the sciences.

Still we brazenly assign the moniker 'Aristotelian Logic' because he did wax at length on the subject as it was so important to his system. He introduces the syllogism as the basis for all reasoning.

The Soul

How different could this be from Plato, right? For Aristotle the study of the soul is Psychology (think *Psyche*); therefore the end of Psychology is to study and reach an understanding "*first of its essential nature and secondly its properties*" (*De Anima Bk. 1:7*). As he presents it, the study of how and why we understand is perhaps the greatest in rank of the sciences. In this way he still reflects Plato. What is the end of knowledge except that we should live better and our souls be saved?

Ethics (Nicomachean)

More than just a motivation, a system unto itself. Its formal name *Nicomachean* derives from the fact that it was most probably written down by his son, Nicomachus. For Aristotle, everything by all accounts is aimed toward the good, so it must be that the good is that toward which all is aimed. I wished I had said that and people would be quoting me instead of the first line of the *Ethics*. An interesting development is the non-relativistic notion that some goods are subservient to other goods, one that Epicurus rejects.

So what is the Good? Think back; virtue, as Plato saw it was involved the whole of the person working toward a synthesis of thought and deed. Aristotle, never content to let whole things be whole, dissects virtue back into two parts: *intellectual* (thoughts) and *moral* (actions).

Politics

Well everyone has an opinion right? Aristotle's opinion was that Politics was the science of the good, that of which Ethics speaks. In that sense and if we look at the categories of knowledge, this would be the most practical science. As with Plato, Aristotle puts high value on political thought because it is for the good of everyone.

Aristotle Unveiled

That brief overview gives very little in the way of depth. The ultimate problem in this venue not just for us in our limited format, and not just for the voluminous Aristotle, but for most philosophers, is the extent of their writings and thought. What to pick and choose? What to survey that will be good for later? What is good just to know in and of itself? Well, not easily answered questions, at least for this writer. In the meantime, I have never let ignorance stop me. Knowing that the extent of our treatment will be a mere pale shade compared to the works themselves, let us press on. To do that we must pierce

the veil; well maybe at best we can spend some time peeking beneath the curtain and come to understand some of the language and thought of Aristotle.

Like his mentor, Aristotle often invokes the *dialectical* method. Plato (and Socrates) employs it but in his earlier works leans toward the Socratic method because he really believes in drawing the answer out of the individual. Aristotle *dialogs* with other thinkers to work through the idea. Whereas Plato believes the answer lies within the individual, Aristotle believes the idea lies within the thinking, that it is more external, because it lies in the observation.

And The Categories Are…

We will first tackle the *idea* of Categories. This is an essential part of the understanding of not only Aristotelian thought but that of many later philosophers (like Kant 1724-1804). In a rash and completely generalized statement we can state that Socrates and Plato really did not care as to the minutiae when it came to thinking. They were more about the big ideas. Aristotle, on the other hand saw that *not* being exact led to errors in thinking and so he set out to formalize thought and thinking. Therefore it is not so much the ideas, but the methods that are new. Many people before him have mentioned many of the things he will explore, but his genius comes in providing a formal structure to the thinking about those things.

Aside from just an obvious glee about how the world is put together, he really wants to get down to a how we can think about things that will give us a consistent way to discuss them. Now on Aristotle's cue we must define the word *categories*. The Greek word is probably best transliterated as 'predicate' as in *subject* and *predicate*. So, at their simplest, categories are those things which can be the predicate or subject in a statement or an argument.

We might also say that one thing is predictable of or predicated on another, as in "*this sentence is predicated in the idea that I know what I'm talking about.*"

So how do categories help us and how are they determined? The two questions are actually the same question. The determining of categories helps us to understand them and vice versa. Okay, okay, I hear the cynics (small 'c') among you saying "*that sounds like a load of…categories*." Were we not always taught that you cannot define a thing with itself? Did not Aristotle himself classify that as a logical fallacy? Well, yes. Okay you caught me.

The main problem with categorizing categories is that there are so many ways to do it and so many ways to understand it. Aristotle himself relies on categorizing yet his official list of categories seems to be fluid. The main point is that when we are thinking about things we are trying to get to their heart, not by stripping away everything but getting down to their basic definition and their definition to everything else, that is understanding the stuff that makes thing a thing and not something else. Along the way we do not abandon what we know about the thing, just come to greater understand of the thing in its larger context.

Meaning, for 100

How do I categorize things, let me count the ways. We tend to think in generals and specifics. Sometimes the two can get in each other's way. The meaning of words, the concepts they represent need to be bounded, so that we can understand the context in which we use them. Aristotle starts out by addressing this problem using three words:

1. ***Equivocally***: That is to say something has the same name as something else but the definition is different (equivalency) – *world*: the collection of people as well as the planet itself.
2. ***Univocally***: Is the case when the name and the definition applied to that name are the same (oneness) – *car*: same whether it is a Ford or a Toyota.
3. ***Derivatively***: Something derives its name from something else (inheritance) – *computer*: something which computes.

But how do we get meaning? What are the ways in which something is the thing on which other things depend? This *definition* is in a sense what a category is, that is, it is the thing on which others are based, or the bucket into which they fall. Hence we can talk about humans and birds as both being animals, even though they are not the same kind of animal. He tells us that the definition of something, that by which we know it as *it*, is what we have when we strip away everything which can exist apart from it. This is how I *know* a bird from a human.

Double Jeopardy

Okay, that seems obvious so why is definition and defining and categorizing things so important? Why did Aristotle feel the need to go in this direction? What aspect of Platonic thought caused him diverge from defining things by their Form? Taking three steps forward and two steps back we dance back to Plato and take a look at that central tenet of Platonic thought: the *Forms*. There are three theses about Forms which I conveniently left out till now for purposes of comparison:

1. ***Individual*:** Forms are individual things that express (and explain) all features common to the individuals that share that nature.
2. ***Distinct from particulars*:** General versus particular; the common nature (goodness, humanity) is distinct from any of the individual things that share it (good things, humans).
3. ***Self-predicable*:** The common nature must be predicable of the individual thing; Goodness is good, Humanity is human, etc.

From this Platonic definition, Aristotle, in a kind of Sherman and Peabody flight through the *Way-Back* machine, runs into the *Third Man* paradox:

> *Human* is predicable both of Socrates and of *humanity*. So *human* must be distinct from both Socrates and *humanity*. So we need yet another common nature *human' (human prime)* distinct from *human* and from Socrates. And yet another nature again that is distinct from *human'*, *human* and Socrates. But this will go on forever, which means we really have no explanation for what makes Socrates human. He tells us the same problem would also occur with the notion "white".

Basically Aristotle counters with the idea of *Substance* and *Accidents*. Recall from our earlier brief discussions that *Substance* is that which makes something what it is – human for example, and *Accidents* are what distinguish the individual Substances from one another – hair color and height. This avoids the way-back argument because you distinguish things from one another not by some external 'form' but by their individual accidents; something *observable*. As an extra thought remember that definition-wise what for Aristotle could be a substance for one thing might be an accident for another, but that is where having categories helps us (more on that later).

Logic, for 500

Logic is the core tool or as Aristotle would call it, an *instrument* (*organon*) for all thinking. Heard that one before? That aside, as you can see from the discussion of Categories why their idea was necessary before he could even posit the idea of logical thinking, and that logical thinking would be required to define the categories. Go back and look at the *Square of Opposition* (Chapter 2) where you can see the categories at work.

Aristotle has works on both the *a priori* and *a posteriori analytics* (logic), as he would call them. This is not to re-hash all of the logic section, as helpful as that may be, but put it into context. For Aristotle the reasoning for anything in the theoretical sciences was based in true-false statements in relationship to one another. The idea of the syllogism, based on 'truths', is basically statements predicated about a subject, or more succinctly: *propositions*. Aristotle believed that the flaw in so many explanations was the lack of logic. The idea and imperative nature of logic meant that consistency is assured and that also 'foundational truths' or *demonstration* can be established. As with the categories, this just means that you do not have to go back a re-prove everything in order to proceed in an argument. You also avoid confusing yourself and committing a fallacy.

Language, for 1000

"*Spoken words are the symbols of mental experience and written words are the symbols of the spoken word*." (*De Interpretatione* 16). Words have to be understood. The words we use for communicating ideas must be understood. Aristotle acknowledges that there are a variety of linguistic possibilities dealing with truths and the means of communicating them. These ideas, like so many others contained here, will be bounced about by later philosophers.

But for now, our discussion is not so much on the words themselves, but word forms and their definition such as nouns, verbs and the like (that is *language*). Truth and falsity are derived here by combining words together which, like thoughts, have neither validity nor non-validity in and of themselves, they just are. So this is a step beyond just the categories, which in and of themselves are neither true nor false but are so *only in context of an argument*; only in the context of predication, do they acquire some truth or falsity.

By reducing language down to these simple ideas, Aristotle makes it easier to create the categories for which Science and we ourselves are so indebted. But is there a down side? Does this reduce language to a very base and uninteresting phenomena in humans? Not for Aristotle. Remember, he really wants to understand things and he knows that you can be distracted when you start complicating matters by asking about different languages and colloquial words and phrases, etc. His motto is "*Stay on target…."* (Gold Five, *Star Wars*).

Final Jeopardy

"*This is the understanding of what knowledge is*." And the question is "*What is Metaphysics?*" Close; how much did you wager? The question we were looking for "is what knowledge for Aristotle" (*epistemology*). Well, we know that it was important to him; we know that there are types of knowledge (*theoretical*, *practical*, and *productive*) but how did he see the sciences (the *instruments* of thinking) falling into those categories? Well here are some quick examples:

Metaphysics, physics and mathematics fall under the theoretical knowledge realm, that is to say their end aim is to provide knowledge that is of the thing itself not of the *thinker*. Alternatively, practical knowledge, in which ethics and politics fall, concentrates on action and it emerges from the *doer* not in some external reality.

Theoretical knowledge requires the understanding of the principles of and the application of deductive thinking or Logic, with the capital 'L'. Basically, how can you discuss/learn anything unless you have a definition of argumentation?

Productive knowledge kind of speaks for itself, but just in case the voice is too quiet I will boldly speak for it. Think back to Plato's *Ion*. How did he see 'practical' knowledge? For Aristotle it was not much different. He classified medicine, construction, and the like here, as Plato might say, 'the arts'.

Practical knowledge is an interesting distinction from productive knowledge in that these would seem to be 'productive' as anything practical would be productive, right? Not exactly; think of the root more in terms of 'practice' instead of 'pragmatic'.

Putting It Together

So as we begin to examine this great thinker, we have to stand in awe of the effect his formalized thought has on so much of what we think today. Ironically (if irony were not dead, but that is another class), at least to this observer, the modern atheistic idea of 'free-thinking' that our society seems to cling to and the ideas we often dismiss through modern science, are often at odds with what was embraced by the author of Science.

This was a massive presentation, and yet very incomplete. The ideas and notions which lie behind it press unseen like the water behind a dam. Aristotle cannot really be encapsulated without some loss, so some reading is required. What we seek here is to understand how important it was for Aristotle that distinctions be made, and not just arbitrarily, at the time you want to prove your point but at all times, such that the point remains valid from there on (one true always true and not open to interpretation). Defining and understanding things in relationship to one another gave them distinction but also kept them in the big picture. As for Plato, knowledge was the goal, and not just knowledge but *right* knowledge.

Plato felt reason alone was the means to wisdom. Aristotle really wants to add observation to the mix. He begins with our sense of wonder and awe of the world around us. In his system reality must count for something. As a consequence of this realism, things are knowable in and from themselves (thing *qua* thing). Think of it this way. As opposed to Plato who put the perfect as outside of the individual thing, Aristotle maintains that the perfect is held *within* every individual thing as opposed to some external place. This is a difference in *Epistemology* between the two.

"That which is there to be spoken of and thought of, must be."

Parmenides, *Fragment* 6

"*I'm not talking about clams in general; I'm talking about each clam individually. I mean, how can you have each one generally? Well I guess you could, but it wouldn't be, like…what I mean*."

***Arlo Guthrie**, The Story of Reuben Clamzo and His Strange Daughter in the Key of A.*

CATEGORIES (*Chapters 1-6*)

1

1ª1 Things are said to be named 'equivocally' when, though they have a common name, the definition corresponding with the name differs for each. Thus, a real man and a figure in a picture can both lay claim to the name 'animal'; yet these are equivocally so named, for, though they have a common name, the definition corresponding with the name differs for each. For should any one define in what sense each is an animal, his definition in the one case will be appropriate to that case only.

1ª6 On the other hand, things are said to be named 'univocally' which have both the name and the definition answering to the name in common. A man and an ox are both 'animal', and these are univocally so named, inasmuch as not only the name, but also the definition, is the same in both cases: for if a man should state in what sense each is an animal, the statement in the one case would be identical with that in the other.

1ª12 Things are said to be named 'derivatively', which derive their name from some other name, but differ from it in termination. Thus the grammarian derives his name from the word 'grammar', and the courageous man from the word 'courage'.

2

1ª16 Forms of speech are either simple or composite. Examples of the latter are such expressions as 'the man runs', 'the man wins'; of the former 'man', 'ox', 'runs', 'wins'.

1ª20 Of things themselves some are predicable of a subject, and are never present in a subject. Thus 'man' is predicable of the individual man, and is never present in a subject. By being 'present in a subject' I do not mean present as parts are present in a whole, but being incapable of existence apart from the said subject.

1ª25 Some things, again, are present in a subject, but are never predicable of a subject. For instance, a certain point of grammatical knowledge is present in the mind, but is not predicable of any subject; or again, a certain whiteness may be present in the body (for color requires a material basis), yet it is never predicable of anything.

1ᵇ Other things, again, are both predicable of a subject and present in a subject. Thus while knowledge is present in the human mind, it is predicable of grammar.

1ᵇ3 There is, lastly, a class of things which are neither present in a subject nor predicable of a subject, such as the individual man or the individual horse. But, to speak more generally, that which is individual and has the character of a unit is never predicable of a subject. Yet in some cases there is nothing to prevent such being present in a subject. Thus a certain point of grammatical knowledge is present in a subject.

3

1ᵇ10 When one thing is predicated of another, all that which is predicable of the predicate will be predicable also of the subject. Thus, 'man' is predicated of the individual man; but 'animal' is predicated of 'man'; it will, therefore, be predicable of the individual man also: for the individual man is both 'man' and 'animal'.

1ᵇ16 If genera are different and co-ordinate, their differentiae are themselves different in kind. Take as an instance the genus 'animal' and the genus 'knowledge'. 'With feet', 'two-footed', 'winged', 'aquatic', are differentiae of 'animal'; the species of knowledge are not distinguished by the same differentiae. One species of knowledge does not differ from another in being 'two-footed'.

1[b]20 But where one genus is subordinate to another, there is nothing to prevent their having the same differentiae: for the greater class is predicated of the lesser, so that all the differentiae of the predicate will be differentiae also of the subject.

4

1[b]25 Expressions which are in no way composite signify substance, quantity, quality, relation, place, time, position, state, action, or affection. To sketch my meaning roughly, examples of substance are 'man' or 'the horse', of quantity, such terms as 'two cubits long' or 'three cubits long', of quality, such attributes as 'white', 'grammatical'. 'Double', 'half', 'greater', fall under the category of relation; 'in the market place', 'in the Lyceum', under that of place; 'yesterday', 'last year', under that of time. 'Lying', 'sitting', are terms indicating position, 'shod', 'armed', state; 'to lance', 'to cauterize', action; 'to be lanced', 'to be cauterized', affection.

2[a]4 No one of these terms, in and by itself, involves an affirmation; it is by the combination of such terms that positive or negative statements arise. For every assertion must, as is admitted, be either true or false, whereas expressions which are not in any way composite such as 'man', 'white', 'runs', 'wins', cannot be either true or false.

5

2[a]11 Substance, in the truest and primary and most definite sense of the word, is that which is neither predicable of a subject nor present in a subject; for instance, the individual man or horse. But in a secondary sense those things are called substances within which, as species, the primary substances are included; also those which, as genera, include the species. For instance, the individual man is included in the species 'man', and the genus to which the species belongs is 'animal'; these, therefore-that is to say, the species 'man' and the genus 'animal,-are termed secondary substances.

2[a]19 It is plain from what has been said that both the name and the definition of the predicate must be predicable of the subject. For instance, 'man' is predicted of the individual man. Now in this case the name of the species man' is applied to the individual, for we use the term 'man' in describing the individual; and the definition of 'man' will also be predicated of the individual man, for the individual man is both man and animal. Thus, both the name and the definition of the species are predicable of the individual.

2[a]27 With regard, on the other hand, to those things which are present in a subject, it is generally the case that neither their name nor their definition is predicable of that in which they are present. Though, however, the definition is never predicable, there is nothing in certain cases to prevent the name being used. For instance, 'white' being present in a body is predicated of that in which it is present, for a body is called white: the definition, however, of the color white' is never predicable of the body.

2[a]34 Everything except primary substances is either predicable of a primary substance or present in a primary substance. This becomes evident by reference to particular instances which occur. 'Animal' is predicated of the species 'man', therefore of the individual man, for if there were no individual man of whom it could be predicated, it

2[b] could not be predicated of the species 'man' at all. Again, color is present in body, therefore in individual bodies, for if there were no individual body in which it was present, it could not be present in body at all. Thus everything except primary substances is either predicated of primary substances, or is present in them, and if these last did not exist, it would be impossible for anything else to exist.

2[b]7 Of secondary substances, the species is more truly substance than the genus, being more nearly related to primary substance. For if anyone should render an account of what a primary substance is, he would render a more instructive account, and one more proper to the subject, by stating the species than by stating the genus. Thus, he would give a more instructive account of an individual man by stating that he was man than by stating that he was animal, for the former description is peculiar to the individual in a greater degree, while the latter is too general. Again, the man who gives an account of the nature of an individual tree will give a more instructive account by mentioning the species 'tree' than by mentioning the genus 'plant'.

2[b]15 Moreover, primary substances are most properly called substances in virtue of the fact that they are the entities which underlie every.

else, and that everything else is either predicated of them or present in them. Now the same relation which subsists between primary substance and everything else subsists also between the species and the genus: for the species is to the genus as subject is to predicate, since the genus is predicated of the species, whereas the species cannot be predicated of the genus. Thus we have a second ground for asserting that the species is more truly substance than the genus.

2[b]22 Of species themselves, except in the case of such as are genera, no one is more truly substance than another. We should not give a more appropriate account of the individual man by stating the species to which he belonged, than we should of an individual horse by adopting the same method of definition. In the same way, of primary substances, no one is more truly substance than another; an individual man is not more truly substance than an individual ox.

2[b]29 It is, then, with good reason that of all that remains, when we exclude primary substances, we concede to species and genera alone the name 'secondary substance', for these alone of all the predicates convey a knowledge of primary substance. For it is by stating the species or the genus that we appropriately define any individual man; and we shall make our definition more exact by stating the former than by stating the latter. All other things that we state, such as that he is white, that he runs, and so on, are irrelevant to the definition. Thus it is just that these alone, apart from primary substances, should be called substances.

2[b]37 Further, primary substances are most properly so called, because they underlie and are the subjects of everything else. Now the same

3[a] relation that subsists between primary substance and everything else subsists also between the species and the genus to which the primary substance belongs, on the one hand, and every attribute which is not included within these, on the other. For these are the subjects of all such. If we call an individual man 'skilled in grammar', the predicate is applicable also to the species and to the genus to which he belongs. This law holds good in all cases.

3[a]7 It is a common characteristic of all substance that it is never present in a subject. For primary substance is neither present in a subject nor predicated of a subject; while, with regard to secondary substances, it is clear from the following arguments (apart from others) that they are not present in a subject. For 'man' is predicated of the individual man, but is not present in any subject: for manhood is not present in the individual man. In the same way, 'animal' is also predicated of the individual man, but is not present in him. Again, when a thing is present in a subject, though the name may quite well be applied to that in which it is present, the definition cannot be applied. Yet of secondary substances, not only the name, but also the definition, applies to the subject: we should use both the definition of the species and that of the genus with reference to the individual man. Thus substance cannot be present in a subject.

3[a]21 Yet this is not peculiar to substance, for it is also the case that differentiae cannot be present in subjects. The characteristics 'terrestrial' and 'two-footed' are predicated of the species 'man', but not present in it. For they are not in man. Moreover, the definition of the differentia may be predicated of that of which the differentia itself is predicated. For instance, if the characteristic 'terrestrial' is predicated of the species 'man', the definition also of that characteristic may be used to form the predicate of the species 'man': for 'man' is terrestrial.

3[a]29 The fact that the parts of substances appear to be present in the whole, as in a subject, should not make us apprehensive lest we should have to admit that such parts are not substances: for in explaining the phrase 'being present in a subject', we stated' that we meant 'otherwise than as parts in a whole'.

3[a]33 It is the mark of substances and of differentiae that, in all propositions of which they form the predicate, they are predicated univocally. For all such propositions have for their subject either the individual or the species. It is true that, inasmuch as primary substance is not predicable of anything, it can never form the predicate of any proposition. But of secondary substances, the

3[b] species is predicated of the individual, the genus both of the species and of the individual. Similarly the differentiae are predicated of the species and of the individuals. Moreover, the definition of the species and that of the genus are applicable to the primary

substance, and that of the genus to the species. For all that is predicated of the predicate will be predicated also of the subject. Similarly, the definition of the differentiae will be applicable to the species and to the individuals. But it was stated above that the word 'univocal' was applied to those things which had both name and definition in common. It is, therefore, established that in every proposition, of which either substance or a differentia forms the predicate, these are predicated univocally.

3^b10 All substance appears to signify that which is individual. In the case of primary substance this is indisputably true, for the thing is a unit. In the case of secondary substances, when we speak, for instance, of 'man' or 'animal', our form of speech gives the impression that we are here also indicating that which is individual, but the impression is not strictly true; for a secondary substance is not an individual, but a class with a certain qualification; for it is not one and single as a primary substance is; the words 'man', 'animal', are predicable of more than one subject.

3^b17 Yet species and genus do not merely indicate quality, like the term 'white'; 'white' indicates quality and nothing further, but species and genus determine the quality with reference to a substance: they signify substance qualitatively differentiated. The determinate qualification covers a larger field in the case of the genus that in that of the species: he who uses the word 'animal' is herein using a word of wider extension than he who uses the word 'man'.

3^b24 Another mark of substance is that it has no contrary. What could be the contrary of any primary substance, such as the individual man or animal? It has none. Nor can the species or the genus have a contrary. Yet this characteristic is not peculiar to substance, but is true of many other things, such as quantity. There is nothing that forms the contrary of 'two cubits long' or of 'three cubits long', or of 'ten', or of any such term. A man may contend that 'much' is the contrary of 'little', or 'great' of 'small', but of definite quantitative terms no contrary exists.

3^b33 Substance, again, does not appear to admit of variation of degree. I do not mean by this that one substance cannot be more or less truly substance than another, for it has already been stated' that this is the case; but that no single substance admits of varying degrees within itself. For instance, one particular substance, 'man', cannot be more or less man either than himself at some other time or than some other man. One man cannot be more man than another, as that which is white may be more or less white than some other

4^a white object, or as that which is beautiful may be more or less beautiful than some other beautiful object. The same quality, moreover, is said to subsist in a thing in varying degrees at different times. A body, being white, is said to be whiter at one time than it was before, or, being warm, is said to be warmer or less warm than at some other time. But substance is not said to be more or less that which it is: a man is not more truly a man at one time than he was before, nor is anything, if it is substance, more or less what it is. Substance, then, does not admit of variation of degree.

4^a10 The most distinctive mark of substance appears to be that, while remaining numerically one and the same, it is capable of admitting contrary qualities. From among things other than substance, we should find ourselves unable to bring forward any which possessed this mark. Thus, one and the same color cannot be white and black. Nor can the same one action be good and bad: this law holds good with everything that is not substance. But one and the selfsame substance, while retaining its identity, is yet capable of admitting contrary qualities. The same individual person is at one time white, at another black, at one time warm, at another cold, at one time good, at another bad. This capacity is found nowhere else, though it might be maintained that a statement or opinion was an exception to the rule. The same statement, it is agreed, can be both true and false. For if the statement 'he is sitting' is true, yet, when the person in question has risen, the same statement will be false. The same applies to opinions. For if anyone thinks truly that a person is sitting, yet, when that person has risen, this same opinion, if still held, will be false. Yet although this exception may be allowed, there is, nevertheless, a difference in the manner in which the thing takes place. It is by themselves changing that substances admit contrary qualities. It is thus that that which was hot becomes cold, for it has entered into a different state. Similarly that which was

white becomes black, and that which was bad good, by a process of change; and in the same way in all other cases it is by changing that substances are capable of admitting contrary qualities. But statements and opinions themselves remain unaltered in all respects: it is by the alteration in the facts of the case that the contrary quality comes to be theirs. The statement 'he is sitting' remains unaltered, but it is at one time true, at another false,

4b according to circumstances. What has been said of statements applies also to opinions. Thus, in respect of the manner in which the thing takes place, it is the peculiar mark of substance that it should be capable of admitting contrary qualities; for it is by itself changing that it does so.

4b4 If, then, a man should make this exception and contend that statements and opinions are capable of admitting contrary qualities, his contention is unsound. For statements and opinions are said to have this capacity, not because they themselves undergo modification, but because this modification occurs in the case of something else. The truth or falsity of a statement depends on facts, and not on any power on the part of the statement itself of admitting contrary qualities. In short, there is nothing which can alter the nature of statements and opinions. As, then, no change takes place in themselves, these cannot be said to be capable of admitting contrary qualities.

4b12 But it is by reason of the modification which takes place within the substance itself that a substance is said to be capable of admitting contrary qualities; for a substance admits within itself either disease or health, whiteness or blackness. It is in this sense that it is said to be capable of admitting contrary qualities.

4b16 To sum up, it is a distinctive mark of substance, that, while remaining numerically one and the same, it is capable of admitting contrary qualities, the modification taking place through a change in the substance itself.

4b19 Let these remarks suffice on the subject of substance.

6

4b20 Quantity is either discrete or continuous. Moreover, some quantities are such that each part of the whole has a relative position to the other parts: others have within them no such relation of part to part.

4b24 Instances of discrete quantities are number and speech; of continuous, lines, surfaces, solids, and, besides these, timeand place.

4b25 In the case of the parts of a number, there is no common boundary at which they join. For example: two fives make ten, but the two fives have no common boundary, but are separate; the parts three and seven also do not join at any boundary. Nor, to generalize, would it ever be possible in the case of number that there should be a common boundary among the parts; they are always separate. Number, therefore, is a discrete quantity.

4b31 The same is true of speech. That speech is a quantity is evident: for it is measured in long and short syllables. I mean here that speech which is vocal. Moreover, it is a discrete quantity for its parts have no common boundary. There is no common boundary at which the syllables join, but each is separate and distinct from the rest.

5a A line, on the other hand, is a continuous quantity, for it is possible to find a common boundary at which its parts join. In the case of the line, this common boundary is the point; in the case of the plane, it is the line: for the parts of the plane have also a common boundary. Similarly you can find a common boundary in the case of the parts of a solid, namely either a line or a plane.

5a6 Space and time also belong to this class of quantities. Time, past, present, and future, forms a continuous whole. Space, likewise, is a continuous quantity; for the parts of a solid occupy a certain space, and these have a common boundary; it follows that the parts of space also, which are occupied by the parts of the solid, have the same common boundary as the parts of the solid. Thus, not only time, but space also, is a continuous quantity, for its parts have a common boundary.

5a15 Quantities consist either of parts which bear a relative position each to each, or of parts which do not. The parts of a line bear a relative position to each other, for each lies somewhere, and it would be possible to distinguish each, and to state the position of each on the plane and to explain to what sort of part among the rest each was

contiguous. Similarly the parts of a plane have position, for it could similarly be stated what was the position of each and what sort of parts were contiguous. The same is true with regard to the solid and to space. But it would be impossible to show that the arts of a number had a relative position each to each, or a particular position, or to state what parts were contiguous. Nor could this be done in the case of time, for none of the parts of time has an abiding existence, and that which does not abide can hardly have position. It would be better to say that such parts had a relative order, in virtue of one being prior to another. Similarly with number: in counting, 'one' is prior to 'two', and 'two' to 'three', and thus the parts of number may be said to possess a relative order, though it would be impossible to discover any distinct position for each. This holds good also in the case of speech. None of its parts has an abiding existence: when once a syllable is pronounced, it is not possible to retain it, so that, naturally, as the parts do not abide, they cannot have position. Thus, some quantities consist of parts which have position, and some of those which have not.

5[a]37 Strictly speaking, only the things which I have mentioned belong to the category of quantity: everything else that is called quantitative is a quantity in a secondary sense. It is because we have in mind some one of these quantities, properly so called, that we apply

5[b] quantitative terms to other things. We speak of what is white as large, because the surface over which the white extends is large; we speak of an action or a process as lengthy, because the time covered is long; these things cannot in their own right claim the quantitative epithet. For instance, should any one explain how long an action was, his statement would be made in terms of the time taken, to the effect that it lasted a year, or something of that sort. In the same way, he would explain the size of a white object in terms of surface, for he would state the area which it covered. Thus the things already mentioned, and these alone, are in their intrinsic nature quantities; nothing else can claim the name in its own right, but, if at all, only in a secondary sense.

5[b]11 Quantities have no contraries. In the case of definite quantities this is obvious; thus, there is nothing that is the contrary of 'two cubits long' or of 'three cubits long', or of a surface, or of any such quantities. A man might, indeed, argue that 'much' was the contrary of 'little', and 'great' of 'small'. But these are not quantitative, but relative; things are not great or small absolutely, they are so called rather as the result of an act of comparison. For instance, a mountain is called small, a grain large, in virtue of the fact that the latter is greater than others of its kind, the former less. Thus there is a reference here to an external standard, for if the terms 'great' and 'small' were used absolutely, a mountain would never be called small or a grain large. Again, we say that there are many people in a village, and few in Athens, although those in the city are many times as numerous as those in the village: or we say that a house has many in it, and a theatre few, though those in the theatre far outnumber those in the house. The terms 'two cubits long, “three cubits long,' and so on indicate quantity, the terms 'great' and 'small' indicate relation, for they have reference to an external standard. It is, therefore, plain that these are to be classed as relative.

5[b]30 Again, whether we define them as quantitative or not, they have no contraries: for how can there be a contrary of an attribute which is not to be apprehended in or by itself, but only by reference to something external? Again, if 'great' and 'small' are contraries, it will come about that the same subject can admit contrary qualities at one and the same time, and that things will themselves be contrary to themselves. For it happens at times that the same thing is both small and great. For the same thing may be small in comparison with one thing, and great in comparison with another, so that the same thing comes to be both small and great at one and the same time, and is of such a nature as to admit contrary qualities at one and the same moment. Yet it was agreed, when substance was being discussed, that nothing admits contrary qualities at one and the

6[a] same moment. For though substance is capable of admitting contrary qualities, yet no one is at the same time both sick and healthy, nothing is at the same time both white and black. Nor is there anything which is qualified in contrary ways at one and the same time.

6ª4 Moreover, if these were contraries, they would themselves be contrary to themselves. For if 'great' is the contrary of 'small', and the same thing is both great and small at the same time, then 'small' or 'great' is the contrary of itself. But this is impossible. The term 'great', therefore, is not the contrary of the term 'small', nor 'much' of 'little'. And even though a man should call these terms not relative but quantitative, they would not have contraries.

6ª11 It is in the case of space that quantity most plausibly appears to admit of a contrary. For men define the term 'above' as the contrary of 'below', when it is the region at the center they mean by 'below'; and this is so, because nothing is farther from the extremities of the universe than the region at the center. Indeed, it seems that in defining contraries of every kind men have recourse to a spatial metaphor, for they say that those things are contraries which, within the same class, are separated by the greatest possible distance.

6ª19 Quantity does not, it appears, admit of variation of degree. One thing cannot be two cubits long in a greater degree than another. Similarly with regard to number: what is 'three' is not more truly three than what is 'five' is five; nor is one set of three more truly three than another set. Again, one period of time is not said to be more truly time than another. Nor is there any other kind of quantity, of all that have been mentioned, with regard to which variation of degree can be predicated. The category of quantity, therefore, does not admit of variation of degree.

6ª26 The most distinctive mark of quantity is that equality and inequality are predicated of it. Each of the aforesaid quantities is said to be equal or unequal. For instance, one solid is said to be equal or unequal to another; number, too, and time can have these terms applied to them, indeed can all those kinds of quantity that have been mentioned.

6ª31 That which is not a quantity can by no means, it would seem, be termed equal or unequal to anything else. One particular disposition or one particular quality, such as whiteness, is by no means compared with another in terms of equality and inequality but rather in terms of similarity. Thus it is the distinctive mark of quantity that it can be called equal and unequal.

Translation by E. M. Edghill

Making Sense Of It All: *Categories* Thought Sheet

Thought Point	Points of Thought
Describe this Lecture Section	
Main Point (What is he talking about?)	
What is a Category?	

What are the attributes of a Category?	
What does *predicated* mean?	
What is Substance?	
What are the two types of Substance?	
What is Quantity? Why is it separate from Substance?	

Aristotle's More Physical Side

Okay we have an overview and a foundation, now let us examine the specifics of his philosophy, specifically his more earthy side: *Physics*. Theoretical knowledge itself has forms and while this subject may seem to be less theoretical than practical, for Aristotle it still falls within the *theoretical* realm (never let it be said that if Aristotle thought that if it was good enough to be categorized, it was not good enough to be sub-categorized). It is because of the *type of thinking* involved not the subject that Physics falls under the theoretical sciences, which would seem odd to our 'modern' minds except that *we cognoscenti* understand the way Aristotle classifies knowledge. In order to understand Aquinas, we need to understand Aristotle, not as we understand the world but as he understood the world.

More Than Just Good Looks

That said, the depths to which we plunge are still very shallow, after all looks are only skin deep, right? With that in mind, in this episode let us examine what we might call the 'hard' sciences. Aristotle's Physics deals with "*things which have a separate existence but are changeable*" or to put it another way, things which are in and of themselves what they are (regardless of what I may think about them) but are able to be 'changed'. The stars are the stars *and* are subject to the laws of motion, i.e. they change positions.

To look at it from a different perspective, *Physical* things (nature) are the things that have *form* (*substance*) but do not have within themselves *causes* (actions) for change, that is, they are acted upon externally. In the study of physical things, the first level is that of matter and form (define 'star'). Next comes the inquiry into movement ('change') and finally into the cause of movement (what is the source of the change/movement). What all this means is that Aristotle will spend time on the physical attributes of a thing, but in order to *fully* understand it we must also understand the forces which work upon it. Let us return again to the example of stars. Simply put, the motion of heavenly bodies is part of who they are. If we merely look at the substance and accidents of stars but do not look at planetary motion and the relationship of that to the star itself our knowledge is incomplete. Further, if we do not understand the causes of planetary motion we still do not understand stars and their significance. *N'est-il pas*?

A Rugged Exterior

So the physical is observable and the observable gives us knowledge. We know that the Categories help us to understand things and how they relate. We can understand the idea of primary and secondary substances as defining aspects of the thing. We understand all these things, right?

Well, let us just move on anyway. Suffice it to say from all we understand that the thing itself (not just the individual instances) needs to be kept separate in understanding from the things which are part of it but are not necessarily the thing itself. That is to say, that while we are bi-pedal (which is a thing-in-itself) we cannot say human = bi-pedal. We do know that bi-pedal separates us from quad-pedal dogs even though we are both animals, and therefore

defines us in the animal genus as different from dogs. If you noticed, that little discussion used both the substance and the quantity Categories to discuss a thing or things. Rolling so far?

So physics deals with the things which we encounter every day, the things that surround us and make up our world. These are things which have meaning in and of themselves but they also help us to understand deeper patterns and concepts. Ultimately Aristotle has a sliding scale of reality that includes everything we can know from the physical world to intangibles, from matter without form on one end (think: the *ether*) to form without matter (think: ideas, similar to Plato's *Forms*) at the other. All of these things are observable and quantifiable in some sense even the theoretical ones. We know the sky exists because we see the stars move through it. We know ideas exist because we can think them. All of these things can be understood and not only understood but they allow us through their various properties to understand other things.

So to state it formally, things have four *defining features*: an *origin*, a *purpose*, a *matter*, and *defining characteristics*. A thing's origin is its *efficient* cause; a thing's purpose is its *final* cause; a thing's matter is its *material* cause; a thing's defining characteristics are its *formal* cause.

Ch-Ch-Ch-Ch-Changes

Motion is basically *change* according to Aristotle. He postulates four types of motion: *substantive* (changing 'thing', particularly its beginning and its ending), *qualitative* (changing qualities), *quantitative* (increasing and decreasing it), and *locomotive* (changing its place). In addition the ideas of *potentiality* and *actuality* get thrown in for good measure. Recall back to our original discussion (kindly referenced as such) of motion and the idea of *something* or *nothing*. We know that Plato was in the *something* class (a *pluralist*) and Aristotle seems to follow in his footsteps. So, let us take a moment and examine the ramifications of motion. Until now some people argued that if the fact that there is motion implies that there is *something* and if motion stops, then logically the thing stops being *something* because the motion was part of what it was; ergo, no motion. Well we just cannot have that, can we? For our man, activity can be thought of as something even just being itself. Life is in an active state one might say. **Couch Potato Alert**: good news: you are what you are (aside from just being a slug) even at rest, because rest itself does not stop you from being what you are.

So when one asks a question or better, makes a statement like U2's Bono does in *Mysterious Ways*, that we should *see the boy inside the man*, is the man the same as the boy was or has the boy disappeared and stopped being and been replaced by the man? We can see that the *ideas* and *words used* are intricately linked. Change/Motion/Activity then is more than just a movement from here to there, i.e. of position but also *state*: bat to ball, boy to man, egg to chicken. This idea of remaining the same even in change relies on Aristotle' *substance* category we mentioned earlier. Static states rely upon and are the result of some activity of the thing. So, the primary substance defines the thing and secondary substance(s), which might be static, rise from that.

Mysterious Ways

So just what causes a boy to become a man? This is the final idea physics talks about. In what may once again seem a contrary notion to our modern ears, when Aristotle fixes something into its place, he leaves it there. Physics does not imply evolution because the individual thing contains its definition *within* it. There would be no dinosaur-to-bird evolutionary movement because the bird would already have to be in the dinosaur (or better, be a *dinobird*); part of its *primary* substance or to put it better, due to *contraries* (remember that from the reading?) it would have to cease to be in order for the other to be (extinction aside).

Things do not really shift place because Aristotle believes in a hierarchical structure of nature. Some things are 'higher' than others. Humans over animals over sponges over rocks…you get the idea.

Again, remember way back when our discussion of movement and *something or nothing*? We can place Aristotle in the *something* camp. Aristotle rejects the idea of space being a void because empty space is simply impossible (there must be *something* by definition). In an Einsteinian move he links space, time, and motion together. Space is defined as the boundary of that which surrounds towards that which is surrounded, that is, there is a relationship between things defining their limits (we know when a tree stops being a tree and the bird on the branch starts being a bird). Time is defined as the *measure of motion* in regard to 'before' and 'after', and so depends for its very existence upon motion (queue *Twilight Zone* theme music).

Simply put, if there were no motion/change, there would be no time. This linking them together proves both. Since Time is the measuring of motion, it also depends for its existence on an intellect able to count (something must perceive it) and measure it. If there were no mind to count, there could be no time (hmm, sounds suspiciously like a Biology and Psychology segue).

…Don't Know Much Biology

And so it shall be. Everything has a place and everything in its place (in time that is). Aristotle provides in this groundwork the basis for the main idea for his physics: the study of the *hierarchy* of being. Also called the *scale* of being, it is a movement from simplicity to complexity, with the higher, more complex things being 'worth more' than the lower things (think rocks versus humans). Organizing things together into organisms is based on this idea of a rising scale. So the higher on the totem pole, the more 'valuable'; humans, *the animal that thinks*, which therefore possess a *rational soul*, are at the top.

Still, after all that Aristotle struggles with classification. He knows that a single difference is insufficient to distinguish things, yet he really does not give hard and fast rules for deciding which differences qualify. Again he turns to levels of general divisions and that (as we can still see today) is fairly sufficient.

Put simply, Biology is the classification of the world around us. We divide and understand things within this framework. In this sense there is a bit of *via negativa* here because ultimately we understand, via the logic rule of contraries, what we *are* by what we *are not*. For obvious reasons the definition of Body rests here and by extension the basic concepts of

Being and not-Being also fall under this topic (people = being, rocks = !being so we do not study rocks in Biology) but not at the level that we will discuss in the next section.

As a single aside, he also appears to be the first to realize that there are sea mammals, i.e. that dolphins are mammals not fish.

A Heart Of Gold

If Biology is the classification of the world around us, Psychology is the classification of the world within us. The Soul rests here. The focus of this science is different than the study which will take place at other times. The focus here is strictly on the human. There really is not a psychology of non-humans (or rocks). The 'soul' within the contraries (i.e. not-humans) is of a different nature than that of humans, due to the complexity of the human organism and therefore its height on the totem pole. Living or life or the animating principle or the Soul (the Greek term *anima* is most often translated 'soul') is the principle which gives *internal* organization to the higher or organic items on the scale of being. That is to say, the *life-force* of any animate object is part of the level of the organism in the hierarchy.

Souls also fall into categories, and so into the hierarchy. In addition each level contains the attributes of the level below it. Starting at the bottom, plants are the lowest forms of life on the scale, and their souls contain a *nutritive* element by which it preserves itself. Animals are above plants on the scale, and their souls contain an *appetite* (not just hunger but as we see St. Paul use the word to mean *desires*) feature which allows them to have sensations, desires, and thus gives them the ability to move (*hmmmm* ***Philosophy Action****:* stroke chin pensively). Finally, at the top, the human soul shares the *nutritive* element with plants, and the *appetitive* element with animals, but also has a *rational* element. This rational element takes us to places plants and animals can never go.

For Aristotle, there really is no dichotomy between the body and the soul. They are distinctive but not separate. The soul is the animating principle of the body, and the organization of the body involves the soul. One cannot exist without the other.

Aristotle's (Meta) Physical Side

We know he likes kids and long walks along on the Mediterranean but what kind of puppies are his favorite? Okay, not the other side we had in mind. Aristotle's Metaphysics is about, as stated earlier, things that we would consider 'beyond the physical'. But I also have a confession to make. The original reason that it was called Metaphysics is that an early editor placed these lecture notes *after* the ones on Physics; hence he called them *meta*-Physics. Not as sexy, I know, so we will cling in ignorant bliss to our earlier understanding.

Still if we know an object, as Aristotle professed in *Physics* (Bk 1) by understanding its substance, the 'first principles', and its 'simplest elements' what can we know about the ineffable?

Accentuate The Positive

Oddly enough, the ineffable is not so ineffable. For Aristotle, the source of *cause* is the difference between the physical and the metaphysical. If physical things do not have their cause within themselves, then by Aristotle's logic rule of the contrary, there must be things

which *do* have their cause within them and are not subject to change. In physics we study the thing through its substance/principles and its change/cause; in metaphysics we study causes and principles, which are knowable through a thing's *being*. Again, in an observable world, first principles and causes are knowable. As a note, things like mathematics studies objects that, although not subject to change are nevertheless not separate from matter.

Let us approach this muddled beginning from another angle by hopping on the *via positiva* line and ask "*What do we know?*" For Aristotle, *Knowledge* consists of two types of truth: *particular truths,* that we learn through experience and the *general truths* that come to us through art and science (observation). *Wisdom*, on the other hand, consists in understanding the most general truths of all, which are the *fundamental principles* and causes that govern *everything*. Remember, in Aristotle's thought, Philosophy provides the deepest understanding not just of the world around us *but* of everything through pursuing the inborn sense of wonder and awe we feel toward reality. This is the innate drive toward good if you will, the only reason we even pursue knowledge. This is why Metaphysics is the *first* science/philosophy, because in his hierarchical world it is the ultimate one by which we even try to know anything.

So, as with all things according to Aristotle, we start with what we know and move to what we do not yet know, and that first thing is *cause*. This idea of cause is larger than just physical causes like bat to ball, and is focused on the idea of *being*. Similar to the four definitions discussed earlier there are four kinds of cause (or kinds of explanation for things, if you will): the *efficient* cause, which explains the process by which it came into being; the *material* cause, which explains what a thing is made of; the *formal* cause, which explains the form a thing assumes; and the *final* cause, which explains the end or purpose it serves (*teleology*). Aristotle acknowledges (dialectically) that Plato's Theory of Forms gives a viable accounting of the formal cause (I.e. that they exist), but it fails to answer any of the other types or even to prove that Forms exist *and* to explain how objects in the physical world participate in said Forms.

From The Beginning

So Aristotle wants to understand not just the thing, but the relationships of the thing, as we in philosophical circles say: thing *qua* another thing (thing understood by other thing). Plato on the other hand would argue that knowing the Form is sufficient because there is no higher knowledge that will lead you to virtue. But Aristotle wants more; where is the connection? Where is the proof? The problem becomes one of *how to get there*. Metaphysics is the way, he tells us, because it concerns itself with the loftier thoughts and questions we have (wisdom, theology, and the like). Okay, all well and good but how do we begin to talk about them? Aristotle introduces us to the principle of *non-contradiction*. Think back to some of our earlier discussions. *"…the same attribute cannot at the same time belong and not belong to the same subject and in the same respect*" (*Metaphysics* 1005b19). Things cannot both be and not be within for defining of the subject they are part of at the same time. Anti-matter and Matter cannot both be present in the *essential* make-up (form/substance) of the universe (though to wander, both can be together as *secondary* substances).

This understanding is the most basic and integral known of all principles, that is the primary "truth", and it is not just a hypothesis. It cannot, however, be proved, since it is used *implicitly* in all proofs, no matter what the subject matter – which would violate his rules of logic. It is what he calls a "*first principle"* because it is not derived from anything more basic.

In this way Aristotle performs a kind of George Jetson treadmill cry "*Jane, stop this crazy thing!*" saying that we have to start somewhere, or else we keep running into a *Chicken and the Egg* circular argument. This truth, of something not both having and not having an attribute is therefore a foundational statement in our pursuit of truth, one we can and must, according to Aristotle, take for granted; I think he dares us to deny it.

If you have noticed, while we have returned to the idea of *Substance* we are also touching on the idea of the eternal, the *Prime Mover/Cause* or the *Unmoved Mover* as well. So, if you think about it theologically, *God* must exist because the idea of an infinite causal series is absurd, and thus there must be a first cause which is not itself caused.

Mind Games

Knowledge in and of itself then is different than wisdom. The eternal things, which we study here are only studied by humans; dogs and rocks do not care. Dogs may know to come when you call, but what is the *end* (telos) of that knowledge?[19] The same question applies to humans. We can understand how a clam is put together or that whales and dogs are mammals but what understanding do we gain from that?

Because we do have gain from thinking about things like God and ethics, humans are different than every other being in the universe. Our sense of wonder and awe causes us to ask the deeper questions, to seek something other than just the bare minimum level of existence. We desire more than just sustenance and, procreation.

Why is this so? What is it about our mind which sets us apart from the minds of animals? How do we come to know? Is the sensible world sufficient to tell us everything we know? I can know that a rock is a rock or a table or a table because its sensible (observable) properties help me identify it as such but in addition, allow me to communicate that understanding; I can identify it to you by the mere action of pointing. We on the other hand are defined by something more, something ineffable, we are in a sense responsible for our own definition. We eat food, drink liquids but do not become those things. Unlike a wet rock the water we drink becomes part of us. Despite the changes we undergo physically, our true nature is eternal and unchangeable. So in terms of our last section, Metaphysics is the study of the One Substance (and its Properties) which exists and causes all things, and is therefore the necessary foundation for all human knowledge.

Knowledge of cause is the key. Those that know the first principles, i.e. acquire wisdom, are wise because they know the *why* of things, unlike those who only know *that* things are a certain way based on their memory and sensations. Thus Aristotle's ideas are very important, for within them are the clues to the solution of this most profound of all problems, "*what exists?*", and thus what it means to be 'human'.

[19] I do not know about your pet but for my dog, it is food.

Soul Man

Aristotle was a true soul man, minus the hat, soul patch, and dark sun glasses. He tells us that while metaphysics is the first science, the study of the soul is the top of the top, the *primary* first science. The soul is the reason for the body. Sure, he says, we look at it in Psychology, because it is so bound to the body, but its realm of study of its nature is here (in actuality, and by way of full disclosure, it actually is not in *Metaphysics* but is instead in the work devoted solely to it, *De Anima,* but we tend to think of it as a major metaphysical subject so I lump it here). ***Caution – Big Words Ahead***: Substance (that which makes a thing that thing) and essence (the actuality of the thing) become closely identified in Aristotle's thought. Being, and the animating force which powers it, in this case is still called substance but is more like *be-ing*. What he is really saying is that in the category of substance, regardless of the study (physics or metaphysics), *the thing is what the thing is* (thing qua being). The Soul defines the Body and asking if they are separate is as, Aristotle says, like asking "*whether the wax and the shape given it by the stamp are one…*" However, the soul does survive the body, at least *parts of it* do.

As to how and where, well there is some discussion on that. This work is looking at the philosophical language of theology and so this author falls into the camp that it is in relationship to the Prime Mover (God). As some of our earlier discussions (and some of Aristotle's later ones) it is something from which we are separate (else by definition, we would be that thing) and yet we participate within it via our soul, our mind and wisdom. Sounds like God to me.

Being There

For a moment let us wander through this thought garden. From the basic understanding of categories and substance we arrive at the understanding or wisdom which helps us to understand ourselves in terms of two things: the *observable substances* and the *principle substances*. These two boundaries (in the simplest of terms) help us to understand our *being*. That is to say that our ability to distinguish one thing from another and the fact that things have something which helps us to identify them as things similar yet separate from one another help give us the idea that there must be something like 'being'. Still simplicity is apparently not in his vocabulary, and so there are many forms of being and Aristotle explores them. So, similarly, because being and substance are so closely related for Aristotle, an ability to separate things and 'this-ness' are also fundamental to our concept of *substance*. Our individuality relies on these concepts. Along these lines Aristotle distinguishes within the human mind the *active* and *passive* intellects in a way similar to the idea that there is kinetic and potential energy. Aristotle says that the passive intellect receives the intelligible forms of things, but that the active intellect is required to make the *potential knowledge* into *actual knowledge*, in the same way that colors always exist but it takes light to make those 'potential' colors into 'actual' colors.

Because there could be objections to this teachings, Aristotle embarks on an exploration of the idea *Potentiality* verses *Actuality* or you might say Actual (visible) to Potential (unseen). These are part and parcel of the fundamental questions about how we know something *is*

something, of potential possible and potential probable. Will a rock always remain a rock? Is a boy a man? Does God or the gods exist? Are there hidden and plain natures?

Substance is potential; Being is an action. Hence our words for life are active. Ah, but could you not argue though that someone sleeping is not truly alive? Do the things which define and explain a thing all have to be present *and* active in order for the thing to be the thing? This is where the singular view of Aristotle must be kept in mind. Nothing can be pigeon-holed, except that a pigeon-hole is part of a cote. Though we categorize we categorize to separate for understanding, not for isolation; everything is in relation to everything else. What we see are recognizable patterns.

We derive such terms as kinetic energy from the Greek word Aristotle uses to define cause within the thing (*kinêsis*). Cause within the thing is probably best re-worded as the ability within the thing to change. We even tend to think of it that way. For instance a yo-yo has potential or kinetic energy stored within it and we attribute its return up the string to that internal force. Of course, we also use the other word he uses for actuality – *energeia*. So if irony were not dead then the term *kinetic energy* could be used to describe the whole of Aristotle's thought on the subject.

Actuality is to potentiality, Aristotle tells us, as "*someone waking is to someone sleeping, as someone seeing is to a sighted person with his eyes closed, as that which has been shaped out of some matter is to the matter from which it has been shaped*". (*Metaphysics* 1048b) Great, but what does this mean? Ultimately and for our purposes, it means that the thing remains itself regardless of the state it finds itself. This is true of the ineffable as much as it is of the observed.

Putting It Together

Metaphysics was the *First Philosophy* to Aristotle but unlike Plato he recognized it was not the only one. The physical had its understanding within the metaphysical, because it is understood by the Soul first. Only by understanding these physical things first could we come to understand the world around us and our place within it. Still, in opposition to Plato, you did not have to leave the world to understand its forms and to be led to an understanding of the metaphysical. There was no need to posit a Form when every instance of everything has within it its *form*, its *motion* and its *cause*.

Relationships are what Aristotle is talking about. Everything is in relationship to something else, whether it be in time, space or complexity. But even the complex things are based on the simpler things and it is the relationship of those simpler things in the complex which help us to understand complex systems. Certainly we categorize and organize things based on traits but that does not mean they are not dependent on each other, or in any way separate. The reason to make distinct species or distinguish between things is to enable the understanding of all things and ultimately ourselves; eventually this will be the basis for the idea of evolution.

There is a great struggle within this section. Besides the obvious struggle to put complex works and ideas into some order, there is the challenge to follow Aristotle down some roads we may or may not be willing to take. For Aristotle, Metaphysics is the ultimate goal of thought and learning. With echoes of Plato ringing in our heads, knowledge in and of itself

has only wisdom as its end and is not an end in itself. This really flies in the face of modern scholarship and the scientific pursuit of knowledge. That we have to ask ourselves "just because we can do something should we?" is not something Aristotle would have ever asked himself; knowledge had only one end – wisdom.

Aristotle knew that Physical Science is not the final answer. To reduce human thought and spirit down to a couple of electrodes and hormones/chemical reactions really does injustice to the human which is only slightly beneath the unmoved mover at the top of the being chain. The whole is not just the sum of its parts, though without those parts one would not be what one is. How do we understand/come to understand the distinctions which make us human and individuals? And past that, where do we fit in the larger universe of being?

There are also many ramifications of this question and its answer which we will cover in the next and final installment of the Aristotle series. For now, know that there are many approaches to Aristotle and many aspects of his thought which overlap and the ability to easily and chaotically shift from one subject to another is ably demonstrated here by this humble author. Reading his works in order may be the best route, but the Metaphysics can be daunting because of the sometimes disjointed nature of the notes, most probably redacted together into the one work. Still, it is a good place to see the overlap of Aristotle's thought and how one aspect relies on another.

PHILOSOPHICAL MOMENT:

1. Do Aristotle's idea of *Substance* and Leibniz's idea of *Identity of Indiscernibles* (*from Chapter 1*) correlate?

2. "*The first philosophy (Metaphysics) is universal and is exclusively concerned with primary substance. ... And here we will have the science to study that which is just as that which is, both in its essence and in the properties which, just as a thing that is, it has. The entire preoccupation of the physicist is with things that contain within themselves a principle of movement and rest. And to seek for this is to seek for the second kind of principle, that from which comes the beginning of the change*"**.** (**Aristotle**) What is he trying to say? Is this a good summary of Metaphysics?

Aristotle's Fourth Third

Are we worn out on Aristotle yet? I hope not, because if you are it is best to stop this train and get off now, because honey, this becomes a non-stop to a far destination.

Transportation aside, we actually are close to our primary destination, but what we have to remember is that the train of Western Thought is powered by and runs on Plato and Aristotle. We will never get very far without it. So in this final stop before Grand Central Station, let us explore some final aspects of Aristotle's thought which will be the shuttle that carries us to our hotel.

Logic: Syllogism In A…And B Therefore C minor

Come on now, logically, do we really need another section on logic? Well frankly yes. If Aristotle for all practical purposes defined Western Logic and therefore things like the scientific method, then we just will not be able to get enough. What we have spoken of until now is Aristotle's *method* for *how to think correctly*. In this section we will examine what the *act* of thinking correctly means and how it is accomplished. Think of it just like we have looked at the physical/metaphysical, where one is knowledge and the other wisdom.

Suffice it to say that you should know up front that there have actually been many things left out of our discussion on Aristotelian Logic. That said, since this may seem like the last word on the subject, we have discussed that we see the world in both *a priori* and *a posteriori* ways. Simplistically speaking we can put forth that this is pretty much what Aristotle would call *modal* thinking.

These *modes* of thinking might be thought of as *unqualified* (deductive) or *assertoric* and *qualified*, with the qualifications being *possible* and *necessary*. Again (and I cannot stress this enough) in the simplest terms: *deductive* and *inductive*. We can use arguments but we must be aware that things are relative to their mode. This does not mean that Aristotle is wishy-washy or that relativism creeps into his thought, but more that we can weigh thoughts by their mode.

The modes can be in the following combinations:

- Two necessary premises
- One necessary and one assertoric (a fact versus an evaluation) premise
- Two possible premises
- One assertoric and one possible premise
- One necessary and one possible premise

So what does this come down too? Well, aside from the oversimplification, it allows for a bit of inductive reasoning to be part of our deductive reasoning. Aristotle is not an all or none kind of guy. Just because something is possible does not automatically mean that it is a legitimate argument, but in an argument we can apply a certain amount of possible as long as we remember to qualify it. We argue in many modes, *syllogistically*, *dialectically* and *demonstratively*.

Aristotle often contrasts *dialectical arguments* (talking through it) with *demonstrations* (showing it). The difference, he tells us, is in the character of their premises, not in their logical

structure. An argument is a *syllogism* depends on whether its conclusion is the result of necessity from its premises. The premises of dialectical deductions must be *accepted*, that is to say the majority of people would accept it as true, or it is commonly held by the majority. As the nature of demonstrative arguments implies, the premises of demonstrations, by contrast, must not only true but also prior to their conclusions, that is, be *true and primary*.

As one final note on argumentation, *Rhetoric*, the favorite practice of the Sophists, is more along the lines of persuasive speech, kind of the opposite or more precisely the counterpoint of *dialectic* which Aristotle employs liberally. It is used similarly because knowing what premises an audience of a given type is likely to believe, and knowing how to find premises from which the desired conclusion follows will accomplish the goal of convincing the audience of the point.

Ethics: *Andante Ma Non Troppo*

We are now good on thinking, right? So now we look to the best end (*telos*) of thinking and so we have to ask "*what is virtuous thinking*?" In a word: *moderation*. Well that is suspiciously too simple of an answer to let it go at that, right?

For Aristotle Ethics (*virtuous thinking*) is tied to his understanding of human nature (i.e. our *being*). By our very nature as humans (and that innate sense of wonder and awe and the drive to knowledge and therefore wisdom), everyone is intent upon the good (which we might call happiness, but only carefully), and that which is good is good in and of itself. The soul, and specifically the human soul (the rational part), has one end (*telos*). Basically, the activity of the rational soul guided by virtue is (hierarchically) the *supreme* good ("happiness").

But happiness seems a fleeting thing so how and when do we gauge it? Remember that some part of the soul survives death. So we have to the examine happiness or goodness of both the living *and* the dead. When talking about happiness, we have to consider a person's life as a whole, not just brief moments of it. This raises the paradoxical idea that a person can then only be considered happy after their death, that is, once we can examine the person's life as a whole. Only then, in light of all the facts can we pronounce whether someone was happy or not. But that does not seem right, does it?

We know per Socrates and Plato that a good person will always behave in a virtuous manner. Aristotle feels the same way, but carries it even further: even when faced with great misfortune, a *good* person will bear themselves well and will not descend into mean-spiritedness. What we might call the human spirit displays itself and we call it virtuous. Therefore some amount of happiness must be applied to a person during life.

But can we still be happy after death? Yes, but it probably will be based on your life because once you are dead the accolades or derisions placed upon you or the actions of your children can only have minimum effect.

We also know that Plato and Socrates saw knowledge as virtue, and knowing oneself as probably the greatest of virtues. Aristotle as we have seen likes to find the Forms of Plato in the reality of everyday life, ergo virtue is found all around us. Next we know that things have an end (*telos*). If we set up a contraries square of opposition, we always find that what lies in the crossroads is a virtue. That is to say, virtues are really the middle ground between positive

and negative traits. For example *Courage*. Courage is a virtue placed between *Rashness* and *Cowardice*. Rashness consists of too much confidence and not enough fear; Cowardice of too much fear and not enough confidence. Where the contraries cross, there you have courage. It is the right balance of fear and confidence.

Ethics, simplistically, consists of grasping the middle ground in a situation. This is not to say the path of least resistance or even compromise. Middle ground does not mean giving up but finding the truth, the balance. We only give the name *courage* to certain actions. We know those actions to be courageous; other actions we recognize as not courageous or almost courageous but not *as courageous*. It is possible then for us to make the judgments necessary to live a virtuous life, and to judge ours and the actions of others as virtuous or non-virtuous to the end of happiness.

Politics: The Art Of The Possible

Since, as we have seen, everything has a *telos*, what is the most practical end of virtuous thinking? Why people living together in harmony of course! Humans are a "*political animal*", Aristotle informs us. Before we get too far and people get their thoughts all out of whack, let us look at what he means by the term *political*. It derives from the word Aristotle uses: *polis*, meaning *city*. What he is saying is not that we are naturally Democrats and Republicans, but that we naturally gravitate together into societal units, mainly cities and specifically the city-state (like Athens or Sparta).

Nothing we do will take place in a vacuum. Our natural propensity to do good, as hard as it may be, benefits not only ourselves but everyone else as well.

As a short side note, in an extension of Plato's Philosopher Kings, Aristotle does actually defend (like Plato), slavery. This is because there are two kinds of people: *thems what need to be led and thems what do the leading*. But he does differ on the point as well. For Aristotle, while slavery is a reality it is not a *natural* condition – that is slavery is not a substance/essence in and of itself. Slaves are not a separate entity from humans. That is to say, for example, persons born of slaves are not automatically slaves nor are those conquered in battle automatically slaves. It is an individual assessment, based more on the person than on their genetics or situation. This radical departure, though it may not seem so to us, means that though one may find one's self in slavery, one is not always destined to be a slave, unless, that is your nature. Humans are humans and humans have certain ends, all of which are *primary* to the *substance* of human.

This innate right to human dignity (non-slavery) makes sense in Aristotle's system. If it is the nature of each individual to seek the good (and to think otherwise just makes no sense according to Aristotle), then it is the responsibility of the state (*polis*) to see that each individual is able to achieve that goal. Almost ironically Aristotle holds that only as a collective can each of us fulfill our full potential for "happiness".

There are many types of political systems and Aristotle does disagree with Plato (and most Americans) on the subject of which is best. When a single person rules, a system is a monarchy if the ruler is good and a tyranny if the ruler is bad. When a small elite rules, a system is an aristocracy if the rulers are good and an oligarchy if the rulers are bad. When the masses rule, a system is a polity if they rule well and a democracy if they rule badly.

Aristotle does not fail to discuss the tension between individual liberty and the demands of the state. The idea of a private life would seem absurd in a Greek city-state. All the highest aims in life, from political debate to physical exercise, take place in and for the public sphere, and there is no conception of a "private persona," which would be different from the face people present in public. Consequently, the interests of the individual and the interests of the state are equivalent in Aristotle's view. We can see the logical extension of this from his Ethics.

Putting It Together

Aristotle is a multi-faceted thinker. From just our short reading earlier we can see the immense amount of thinking which must have gone into each work before the work was even produced. Now multiply that by all the other works and we see a very impressive intellect at work.

Still, it is based in some fairly simple ideas, which rely upon each other and are interwoven within the whole of his thought. This is true of his thought and his thoughts on human interaction and purpose. Friendship is so important to Aristotle that he devotes whole sections of his work to the types, meaning and ramification of this relationship. Like his thoughts on physical relationships between substances, our interactions start at the smallest level and progress toward the whole of humanity. Small to big, lower to higher, what we know to what we do not know, what we can perceive to what we cannot perceive; everything is in relation. Not a relation of relativistic nature but one of *inter-dependence*.

Keeping this in mind will keep us from falling into a trap of segmenting his thought into separate boxes, creating a relativistic justification based on his thought

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"*Let me 'splain…No, there is too much. Let me sum up*."

Inigo Montoya – *The Princess Bride*

Nicomachean Ethics

BOOK I

1

Every art and every investigation, and likewise every practical pursuit or undertaking, seems to aim at some good: hence it has
[2] been well said that the Good is *That at which all things aim* (It is true that a certain variety is to be observed among the ends at which the arts and sciences aim: in some cases the activity of practicing the art is itself the end, whereas in others the end is some product over and above the mere exercise of the art; and in the arts whose ends are
[3] certain things beside the practice of the arts themselves, these products are essentially superior in value to the activities). But as there are numerous pursuits and arts and sciences, it follows that
[4] their ends are correspondingly numerous: for instance, the end of the science of medicine is health, that of the art of shipbuilding a vessel, that of strategy victory, that of domestic economy wealth. Now in cases where several such pursuits are subordinate to some single faculty—as bridle-making and the other trades concerned with horses' harness are subordinate to horsemanship, and this and
[6] every other military pursuit to the science of strategy, and similarly other arts to different arts again—in all these cases, I say, the ends of the master arts are things more to be desired than the ends of the arts subordinate to them; since the latter ends are only pursued for the sake of the former (And it makes no difference whether the ends of the pursuits are the activities themselves or some other thing beside these, as in the case of the sciences mentioned.

2

If therefore among the ends at which our actions aim there be one which we will for its own sake, while we will the others only for the sake of this, and if we do not choose everything for the sake of something else (which would obviously result in a process *ad infinitum*, so that all desire would be futile and vain), it is clear that this one ultimate End must be the Good, and indeed the Supreme
[2] Good. Will not then a knowledge of this Supreme Good be also of great practical importance for the conduct of life? Will it not better enable us to attain our proper object, like archers having a target to
[3] aim at? If this be so, we ought to make an attempt to determine at all events in outline what exactly this Supreme Good is, and of which of the sciences or faculties it is the object.
[4] Now it would seem that this supreme End must be the object of the most authoritative of the sciences—some science which is pre-
[5] eminently a master-craft. But such is manifestly the science of
[6] Politics; for it is this that ordains which of the sciences are to exist in states, and what branches of knowledge the different classes of the citizens are to learn, and up to what point; and we observe that even the most highly esteemed of the faculties, such as strategy,
[7] domestic economy, oratory, are subordinate to the political science. Inasmuch then as the rest of the sciences are employed by this one, and as it moreover lays down laws as to what people shall do and what things they shall refrain from doing, the end of this science must include the ends of all the others. Therefore, the Good of man
[8] must be the end of the science of Politics. For even though it be the case that the Good is the same for the individual and for the state, nevertheless, the good of the state is manifestly a greater and more perfect good, both to attain and to preserve. To secure the good of one person only is better than nothing; but to secure the good of a nation or a state is a nobler and more divine achievement.
This then being its aim, our investigation is in a sense the study of Politics.

3

Now our treatment of this science will be adequate, if it achieves that amount of precision which belongs to its subject matter. The

same exactness must not be expected in all departments of
[2] philosophy alike, any more than in all the products of the arts and crafts. The subjects studied by political science are Moral Nobility and Justice; but these conceptions involve much difference of opinion and uncertainty, so that they are sometimes believed to be
[3] mere conventions and to have no real existence in the nature of things. And a similar uncertainty surrounds the conception of the Good, because it frequently occurs that good things have harmful consequences: people have before now been ruined by wealth, and
[4] in other cases courage has cost men their lives. We must therefore be content if, in dealing with subjects and starting from premises thus uncertain, we succeed in presenting a broad outline of the truth: when our subjects and our premises are merely generalities, it is enough if we arrive at generally valid conclusions. Accordingly we may ask the student also to accept the various views we put forward in the same spirit; for it is the mark of an educated mind to expect that amount of exactness in each kind which the nature of the particular subject admits. It is equally unreasonable to accept merely probable conclusions from a mathematician and to demand strict demonstration from an orator.
[5] Again, each man judges correctly those matters with which he is acquainted; it is of these that he is a competent critic. To criticize a particular subject, therefore, a man must have been trained in that subject: to be a good critic generally, he must have had an all-round education. Hence the young are not fit to be students of Political Science. For they have no experience of life and conduct, and it is these that supply the premises and subject matter of this branch of
[6] philosophy. And moreover they are led by their feelings; so that they will study the subject to no purpose or advantage, since the
[7] end of this science is not knowledge but action. And it makes no difference whether they are young in years or immature in character: the defect is not a question of time, it is because their life and its various aims are guided by feeling; for to such persons their knowledge is of no use, any more than it is to persons of defective self-restraint. But Moral Science may be of great value to those who
[8] guide their desires and actions by principle.

Let so much suffice by way of introduction as to the student of the subject, the spirit in which our conclusions are to be received, and the object that we set before us.

4

To resume, inasmuch as all studies and undertakings are directed to the attainment of some good, let us discuss what it is that we pronounce to be the aim of Politics, that is, what is the highest of all
[2] the goods that action can achieve. As far as the name goes, we may almost say that the great majority of mankind are agreed about this; for both the multitude and persons of refinement speak of it as Happiness, and conceive 'the good life' or 'doing well' to be the same thing as 'being happy.' But what constitutes happiness is a
[3] matter of dispute; and the popular account of it is not the same as that given by the philosophers. Ordinary people identify it with some obvious and visible good, such as pleasure or wealth or honor—some say one thing and some another, indeed very often the same man says different things at different times: when he falls sick he thinks health is happiness, when he is poor, wealth. At other times, feeling conscious of their own ignorance, men admire those who propound something grand and above their heads; and it has been held by some thinkers that beside the many good things we
[4] have mentioned, there exists another Good, that is good in itself, and stands to all those goods as the cause of their being good.
Now perhaps it would be a somewhat fruitless task to review all the different opinions that are held. It will suffice to examine those that are most widely prevalent, or that seem to have some argument in
[5] their favor.
And we must not overlook the distinction between arguments that start from first principles and those that lead to first principles. It was a good practice of Plato to raise this question, and to enquire whether the true procedure is to start from or to lead up to one's first principles, as in a race-course one may run from the judges to the far end of the track or the reverse. Now no doubt it is proper to start from the known. But 'the known' has two meanings—'what is known to us,' which is one thing, and 'what is knowable in itself,' which is another. Perhaps then for us at all events it proper to start

[6] from what is known to us. This is why in order to be a competent student of the Right and Just, and in short of the topics of Politics in general, the pupil is bound to have been well-trained in his habits.

[7] For the starting-point or first principle is the fact that a thing is so; if this be satisfactorily ascertained, there will be no need also to know the reason why it is so. And the man of good moral training knows first principles already, or can easily acquire them. As for the person who neither knows nor can learn, let him hear the words of Hesiod:

"Best is the man who can himself advise;
He too is good who hearkens to the wise;
But who, himself being witless, will not heed
Another's wisdom, is a fool indeed."

5

But let us continue from the point where we digressed. To judge from men's lives, the more or less reasoned conceptions of the Good or Happiness that seem to prevail are the following. On the one hand the generality of men and the most vulgar identify the

[2] Good with pleasure, and accordingly are content with the Life of Enjoyment—for there are three specially prominent Lives, the one just mentioned, the Life of Politics, and thirdly, the Life of

[3] Contemplation. The generality of mankind then show themselves to be utterly slavish, by preferring what is only a life for cattle; but they get a hearing for their view as reasonable because many persons of high position share the feelings of Sardanapallus.

[4] Men of refinement, on the other hand, and men of action think that the Good is honor—for this may be said to be the end of the Life of Politics. But honor after all seems too superficial to be the Good for which we are seeking; since it appears to depend on those who confer it more than on him upon whom it is conferred, whereas we instinctively feel that the Good must be something proper to its

[5] possessor and not easy to be taken away from him. Moreover men's motive in pursuing honor seems to be to assure themselves of their own merit; at least they seek to be honored by men of judgment and by people who know them, that is, they desire to be honored on the ground of virtue. It is clear therefore that in the opinion at all

[6] events of men of action, virtue is a greater good than honor; and one might perhaps accordingly suppose that virtue rather than honor is the end of the Political Life. But even virtue proves on examination to be too incomplete to be the End; since it appears possible to possess it while you are asleep, or without putting it into practice throughout the whole of your life; and also for the virtuous man to suffer the greatest misery and misfortune— though no one would pronounce a man living a life of misery to be happy, unless for the sake of maintaining a paradox. But we need not pursue this subject, since it has been sufficiently treated in the ordinary

[7] discussions.

The third type of life is the Life of Contemplation, which we shall

[8] consider in the sequel.

The Life of Money-making is a constrained kind of life, and clearly wealth is not the Good we are in search of, for it is only good as being useful, a means to something else. On this score indeed one might conceive the ends before mentioned to have a better claim, for they are approved for their own sakes. But even they do not really seem to be the Supreme Good; however, many arguments against them have been disseminated, so we may dismiss them.

6

But perhaps it is desirable that we should examine the notion of a Universal Good, and review the difficulties that it involves, although such an inquiry goes against the grain because of our friendship for the authors of the Theory of Ideas. Still perhaps it would appear desirable, and indeed it would seem to be obligatory, especially for a philosopher, to sacrifice even one's closest personal ties in defense of the truth. Both are dear to us, yet 'tis our duty to prefer the truth.

[2] The originators of this theory, then, used not to postulate Ideas of groups of things in which they posited an order of priority and posteriority (for which reason they did not construct an Idea of numbers in general). But Good is predicated alike in the Categories of Substance, of Quality, and Relation; yet the Absolute, or Substance, is prior in nature to the Relative, which seems to be a sort of offshoot or 'accident' of Substance; so that there cannot be

a common Idea corresponding to the absolutely good and the relatively good.

[3] Again, the word 'good' is used in as many senses as the word 'is'; for we may predicate good in the Category of Substance, for instance of God, or intelligence; in that of Quality—the excellences; in that of Quantity—moderate in amount; in that of Relation—useful; in that of Time—a favorable opportunity; in that of Place—a suitable 'habitat'; and so on. So clearly good cannot be a single and universal general notion; if it were, it would not be predicable in all the Categories, but only in one.

[4] Again, things that come under a single Idea must be objects of a single science; hence there ought to be a single science dealing with all good things. But as a matter of fact there are a number of sciences even for the goods in one Category: for example, opportunity, for opportunity in war comes under the science of strategy, in disease under that of medicine; and the due amount in diet comes under medicine, in bodily exercise under gymnastics.

[5] One might also raise the question what precisely they mean by their expression the 'Ideal so and-so,' seeing that one and the same definition of man applies both to 'the Ideal man' and to 'man,' for in so far as both are man, there will be no difference between them; and if so, no more will there be any difference between 'the Ideal

[6] Good' and 'Good' in so far as both are good. Nor yet will the Ideal Good be any more good because it is eternal, seeing that a white thing that lasts a long time is no whiter than one that lasts only a day.

[7] The Pythagoreans seem to give a more probable doctrine on the subject of the Good when they place Unity in their column of goods; and indeed Speusippus appears to have followed them. But this subject must be left for another discussion.

[8] We can descry an objection that may be raised against our arguments on the ground that the theory in question was not intended to apply to every sort of good, and that only things pursued and accepted for their own sake are pronounced good as belonging to a single species, while things productive or preservative of these in any way, or preventive of their opposites,

[9] are said to be good as a means to these, and in a different sense. Clearly then the term 'goods' would have two meanings, 1) things good in themselves and 2) things good as a means to these; let us then separate things good in themselves from things useful as means, and consider whether the former are called good because

[10] they fall under a single Idea. But what sort of things is one to class as good in themselves? Are they not those things which are sought after even without any accessory advantage, such as wisdom, sight, and certain pleasures and honors? For even if we also pursue these things as means to something else, still one would class them among things good in themselves. Or is there nothing else good in itself except the Idea? If so, the species will be of no use. If on the contrary

[11] the class of things good in themselves includes these objects, the same notion of good ought to be manifested in all of them, just as the same notion of white is manifested in snow and in white paint. But as a matter of fact the notions of honor and wisdom and pleasure, as being good, are different and distinct. Therefore, good is not a general term corresponding to a single Idea.

[12] But in what sense then are different things called good? For they do not seem to be a case of things that bear the same name merely by chance. Possibly things are called good in virtue of being derived from one good; or because they all contribute to one good. Or perhaps it is rather by way of a proportion: that is, as sight is good in the body, so intelligence is good in the soul, and similarly another thing in something else.

[13] Perhaps however this question must be dismissed for the present, since a detailed investigation of it belongs more properly to another branch of philosophy And likewise with the Idea of the Good; for even if the goodness predicated of various in common really is a unity or something existing separately and absolute, it clearly will not be practicable or attainable by man; but the Good which we are now seeking is a good within human reach.

[14] But possibly someone may think that to know the Ideal Good may be desirable as an aid to achieving those goods which are practicable and attainable: having the Ideal Good as a pattern we shall more easily know what things are good for us, and knowing

[15] them, obtain them. Now it is true that this argument has a certain plausibility; but it does not seem to square with the actual procedure of the sciences. For these all aim at some good, and seek to make up their deficiencies, but they do not trouble about a knowledge of the Ideal Good. Yet if it were so potent an aid, it is improbable that all the professors of the arts and sciences should
[16] not know it, nor even seek to discover it. Moreover, it is not easy to see how knowing that same Ideal Good will help a weaver or carpenter in the practice of his own craft, or how anybody will be a better physician or general for having contemplated the absolute Idea. In fact it does not appear that the physician studies even health in the abstract; he studies the health of the human being—or rather of some particular human being, for it is individuals that he has to cure.

Let us here conclude our discussion of this subject.

7

We may now return to the Good which is the object of our search, and try to find out what exactly it can be. For good appears to be one thing in one pursuit or art and another in another: it is different in medicine from what it is in strategy, and so on with the rest of the arts. What definition of the Good then will hold true in all the arts? Perhaps we may define it as that for the sake of which everything else is done. This applies to something different in each different art—to health in the case of medicine, to victory in that of strategy, to a house in architecture, and to something else in each of the other arts; but in every pursuit or undertaking it describes the end of that pursuit or undertaking, since in all of them it is for the sake of the end that everything else is done. Hence if there be something which is the end of all the things done by human action, this will be the practicable Good—or if there be several such ends, the sum of
[2] these will be the Good. Thus by changing its ground the argument has reached the same result as before. We must attempt however to render this still more precise.

[3] Now there do appear to be several ends at which our actions aim; but as we choose some of them—for instance wealth, or flutes, and instruments generally—as a means to something else, it is clear that not all of them are final ends; whereas the Supreme Good seems to be something final. Consequently if there be some one thing which alone is a final end, this thing—or if there be several final ends, the one among them which is the most final—will be the Good which
[4] we are seeking. In speaking of degrees of finality, we mean that a thing pursued as an end in itself is more final than one pursued as a means to something else, and that a thing never chosen as a means to anything else is more final than things chosen both as ends in themselves and as means to that thing; and accordingly a thing chosen always as an end and never as a means we call absolutely
[5] final. Now happiness above all else appears to be absolutely final in this sense, since we always choose it for its own sake and never as a means to something else; whereas honor, pleasure, intelligence, and excellence in its various forms, we choose indeed for their own sakes (since we should be glad to have each of them although no extraneous advantage resulted from it), but we also choose them for the sake of happiness, in the belief that they will be a means to our securing it. But no one chooses happiness for the sake of honor, pleasure, etc., nor as a means to anything whatever other than itself.

[6] The same conclusion also appears to follow from a consideration of the self-sufficiency of happiness—for it is felt that the final good must be a thing sufficient in itself. The term self-sufficient, however, we employ with reference not to oneself alone, living a life of isolation, but also to one's parents and children and wife, and one's friends and fellow citizens in general, since man is by nature a social
[7] being. On the other hand a limit has to be assumed in these relationships; for if the list be extended to one's ancestors and descendants and to the friends of one's friends, it will go on ad infinitum. But this is a point that must be considered later on; we take a self-sufficient thing to mean a thing which merely standing by itself alone renders life desirable lacking in nothing, and such a thing
[8] we deem happiness to be. Moreover, we think happiness the most desirable of all good things without being itself reckoned as one among the rest; for if it were so reckoned, it is clear that we should consider it more desirable when even the smallest of other good

things were combined with it, since this addition would result in a larger total of good, and of two goods the greater is always the more desirable.

Happiness, therefore, being found to be something final and self-sufficient, is the End at which all actions aim.

[9] To say however that the Supreme Good is happiness will probably appear a truism; we still require a more explicit account of what
[10] constitutes happiness. Perhaps then we may arrive at this by ascertaining what man's function is. For the goodness or efficiency of a flute-player or sculptor or craftsman of any sort, and in general of anybody who has some function or business to perform, is thought to reside in that function; and similarly it may be held that the good of man resides in the function of man, if he has a function.
[11] Are we then to suppose that, while the carpenter and the shoemaker have definite functions or businesses belonging to them, man as such has none, and is not designed by nature to fulfill any function? Must we not rather assume that, just as the eye, the hand, the foot and each of the various members of the body manifestly has a certain function of its own, so a human being also has a certain function over and above all the functions of his particular members?
[12] What then precisely can this function be? The mere act of living appears to be shared even by plants, whereas we are looking for the function peculiar to man; we must therefore set aside the vital activity of nutrition and growth. Next in the scale will come some form of sentient life; but this too appears to be shared by horses,
[13] oxen, and animals generally. There remains therefore what may be called the practical life of the rational part of man. (This part has two divisions, one rational as obedient to principle, the others possessing principle and exercising intelligence). Rational life again has two meanings; let us assume that we are here concerned with the active exercise of the rational faculty, since this seems to be the more proper sense of the term. If then the function of man is the
[14] active exercise of the soul's faculties in conformity with rational principle, or at all events not in dissociation from rational principle, and if we acknowledge the function of an individual and of a good individual of the same class (for instance, a harper and a good harper, and so generally with all classes) to be generically the same, the qualification of the latter's superiority in excellence being added to the function in his case (I mean that if the function of a harper is to play the harp, that of a good harper is to play the harp well): if this is so, and if we declare that the function of man is a certain form of life, and define that form of life as the exercise of the soul's faculties and activities in association with rational principle, and say that the function of a good man is to perform these activities well
[15] and rightly, and if a function is well performed when it is performed in accordance with its own proper excellence—from these premises it follows that the Good of man is the active exercise of his soul's faculties in conformity with excellence or virtue, or if there be several human excellences or virtues, in conformity with the best and most perfect among them. Moreover, to be happy takes a complete lifetime; for one swallow does not make spring, nor does
[16] one fine day; and similarly one day or a brief period of happiness does not make a man supremely blessed and happy.
[17] Let this account then serve to describe the Good in outline—for no doubt the proper procedure is to begin by making a rough sketch, and to fill it in afterwards. If a work has been well laid down in outline, to carry it on and complete it in detail may be supposed to be within the capacity of anybody; and in this working out of details Time seems to be a good inventor or at all events coadjutor. This indeed is how advances in the arts have actually come about, since
[18] anyone can fill in the gaps. Also the warning given above must not be forgotten; we must not look for equal exactness in all departments of study, but only such as belongs to the subject matter of each, and in such a degree as is appropriate to the
[19] particular line of enquiry. A carpenter and a geometrician both try to find a right angle, but in different ways; the former is content with that approximation to it which satisfies the purpose of his work; the latter, being a student of truth, seeks to find its essence or essential attributes. We should therefore proceed in the same manner in other subjects also, and not allow side issues to outbalance the main task in hand.

[20] Nor again must we in all matters alike demand an explanation of the reason why things are what they are; in some cases it is enough if the fact that they are so is satisfactorily established. This is the case with first principles; and the fact is the primary thing—it **is** a first
[21] principle. And principles are studied—some by induction, others by perception, others by some form of habituation, and also others
[22] otherwise; so we must endeavor to arrive at the principles of each kind in their natural manner, and must also be careful to define
[23] them correctly, since they are of great importance for the subsequent course of the enquiry. The beginning is admittedly more than half of the whole, and throws light at once on many of the questions under investigation.

1 BOOK II

Virtue being, as we have seen, of two kinds, intellectual and moral, intellectual virtue is for the most part both produced and increased by instruction, and therefore requires experience and time; whereas moral or ethical virtue is the product of habit （ethos）, and has indeed derived its name, with a slight variation of form,
[2] from that word. And therefore it is clear that none of the moral virtues formed is engendered in us by nature, for no natural property can be altered by habit. For instance, it is the nature of a stone to move downwards, and it cannot be trained to move upwards, even though you should try to train it to do so by throwing it up into the air ten thousand times; nor can fire be trained to move downwards, nor can anything else that naturally behaves in one way
[3] be trained into a habit of behaving in another way. The virtues therefore are engendered in us neither by nature nor yet in violation of nature; nature gives us the capacity to receive them, and this capacity is brought to maturity by habit.

[4] Moreover, the faculties given us by nature are bestowed on us first in a potential form; we exhibit their actual exercise afterwards. This is clearly so with our senses: we did not acquire the faculty of sight or hearing by repeatedly seeing or repeatedly listening, but the other way about—because we had the senses we began to use them, we did not get them by using them. The virtues on the other hand we acquire by first having actually practiced them, just as we do the arts. We learn an art or craft by doing the things that we shall have to do when we have learnt it: for instance, men become builders by building houses, harpers by playing on the harp. Similarly we become just by doing just acts, temperate by doing temperate
[5] acts, brave by doing brave acts. This truth is attested by the experience of states: lawgivers make the citizens good by training them in habits of right action—this is the aim of all legislation, and if it fails to do this it is a failure; this is what distinguishes a good
[6] form of constitution from a bad one. Again, the actions from or through which any virtue is produced are the same as those through which it also is destroyed—just as is the case with skill in the arts, for both the good harpers and the bad ones are produced by harping, and similarly with builders and all the other craftsmen: as you will become a good builder from building well, so you will
[7] become a bad one from building badly. Were this not so, there would be no need for teachers of the arts, but everybody would be born a good or bad craftsman as the case might be. The same then is true of the virtues. It is by taking part in transactions with our fellow-men that some of us become just and others unjust; by acting in dangerous situations and forming a habit of fear or of confidence we become courageous or cowardly. And the same holds good of our dispositions with regard to the appetites, and anger; some men become temperate and gentle, others profligate and irascible, by actually comporting themselves in one way or the other in relation to those passions. In a word, our moral dispositions are formed as a
[8] result of the corresponding activities. Hence it is incumbent on us to control the character of our activities, since on the quality of these depends the quality of our dispositions. It is therefore not of small moment whether we are trained from childhood in one set of habits or another; on the contrary it is of very great, or rather of supreme, importance.

2

As then our present study, unlike the other branches of philosophy, has a practical aim (for we are not investigating the nature of virtue for the sake of knowing what it is, but in order that we may become good, without which result our investigation would be of no use),

we have consequently to carry our enquiry into the region of conduct, and to ask how we are to act rightly; since our actions, as we have said, determine the quality of our dispositions.

[2] Now the formula 'to act in conformity with right principle' is common ground, and may be assumed as the basis of our discussion. (We shall speak about this formula later, and consider both the definition of right principle and its relation to the other virtues.)

[3] But let it be granted to begin with that the whole theory of conduct is bound to be an outline only and not an exact system, in accordance with the rule we laid down at the beginning, that philosophical theories must only be required to correspond to their subject matter; and matters of conduct and expediency have nothing fixed or invariable about them, any more than have matters

[4] of health. And if this is true of the general theory of ethics, still less is exact precision possible in dealing with particular cases of conduct; for these come under no science or professional tradition, but the agents themselves have to consider what is suited to the circumstances on each occasion, just as is the case with the art of

[5] medicine or of navigation. But although the discussion now proceeding is thus necessarily inexact, we must do our best to help it out.

[6] First of all then we have to observe, that moral qualities are so constituted as to be destroyed by excess and by deficiency—as we see is the case with bodily strength and health (for one is forced to explain what is invisible by means of visible illustrations). Strength is destroyed both by excessive and by deficient exercises, and similarly health is destroyed both by too much and by too little food and drink; while they are produced, increased and preserved by

[7] suitable quantities. The same therefore is true of Temperance, Courage, and the other virtues. The man who runs away from everything in fear and never endures anything becomes a coward; the man who fears nothing whatsoever but encounters everything becomes rash. Similarly he that indulges in every pleasure and refrains from none turns out a profligate, and he that shuns all pleasure, as boorish persons do, becomes what may be called insensible. Thus Temperance and Courage are destroyed by excess and deficiency, and preserved by the observance of the mean.

[8] But not only are the virtues both generated and fostered on the one hand, and destroyed on the other, from and by the same actions, but they will also find their full exercise in the same actions. This is clearly the case with the other more visible qualities, such as bodily strength: for strength is produced by taking much food and undergoing much exertion, while also it is the strong man who will

[9] be able to eat most food and endure most exertion. The same holds good with the virtues. We become temperate by abstaining from pleasures, and at the same time we are best able to abstain from pleasures when we have become temperate. And so with Courage: we become brave by training ourselves to despise and endure terrors, and we shall be best able to endure terrors when we have become brave.

3

An index of our dispositions is afforded by the pleasure or pain that accompanies our actions. A man is temperate if he abstains from bodily pleasures and finds this abstinence itself enjoyable, profligate if he feels it irksome; he is brave if he faces danger with pleasure or at all events without pain, cowardly if he does so with pain.

In fact pleasures and pains are the things with which moral virtue is concerned.

For 1) pleasure causes us to do base actions and pain causes us to

[2] abstain from doing noble actions. Hence the importance, as Plato points out, of having been definitely trained from childhood to like and dislike the proper things; this is what good education means.

[3] 2) Again, if the virtues have to do with actions and feelings, and every action is attended with pleasure or pain, this too shows that virtue has to do with pleasure and pain.

[4] 3) Another indication is the fact that pain is the medium of punishment; for punishment is a sort of medicine, and the nature of medicine to work by means of opposites.

[5] 4) Again, as we said before, every formed disposition of the soul realizes its full nature in relation to and in dealing with that class of objects by which it is its nature to be corrupted or improved. But

men are corrupted through pleasures and pains, that is, either by pursuing and avoiding the wrong pleasures and pains, or by pursuing and avoiding them at the wrong time, or in the wrong manner, or in one of the other wrong ways under which errors of conduct can be logically classified. This is why some thinkers define the virtues as states of impassivity or tranquility, though they make a mistake in using these terms absolutely, without adding 'in the right (or wrong) manner' and 'at the right (or wrong) time' and the other qualifications.

[6] We assume therefore that moral virtue is the quality of acting in the best way in relation to pleasures and pains, and that vice is the opposite.

[7] But the following considerations also will give us further light on the same point.

5) There are three things that are the motives of choice and three that are the motives of avoidance; namely, the noble, the expedient, and the pleasant, and their opposites, the base, the harmful, and the painful. Now in respect of all these the good man is likely to go right and the bad to go wrong, but especially in respect of pleasure; for pleasure is common to man with the lower animals, and also it is a concomitant of all the objects of choice, since both the noble and the expedient appear to us pleasant.

[8] 6) Again, the susceptibility to pleasure has grown up with all of us from the cradle. Hence this feeling is hard to eradicate, being engrained in the fabric of our lives.

7) Again, pleasure and pain are also[1] the standards by which we all,

[9] in a greater or less degree, regulate our actions. On this account therefore pleasure and pain are necessarily our main concern, since to feel pleasure and pain rightly or wrongly has a great effect on conduct.

[10] 8) And again, it is harder to fight against pleasure than against anger (hard as that is, as Heracleitus says); but virtue, like art, is constantly dealing with what is harder, since the harder the task the better is success. For this reason also therefore pleasure and pain are necessarily the main concern both of virtue and of political science, since he who comports himself towards them rightly will be good, and he who does so wrongly, bad.

[11] We may then take it as established that virtue has to do with pleasures and pains, that the actions which produce it are those which increase it, and also, if differently performed, destroy it, and that the actions from which it was produced are also those in which it is exercised.

4

A difficulty may however be raised as to what we mean by saying that in order to become just men must do just actions, and in order to become temperate they must do temperate actions. For if they do just and temperate actions, they are just and temperate already, just as, if they spell correctly or play in tune, they are scholars or musicians.

[2] But perhaps this is not the case even with the arts. It is possible to spell a word correctly by chance, or because someone else prompts you; hence you will be a scholar only if you spell correctly in the scholar's way, that is, in virtue of the scholarly knowledge which you yourself possess.

[3] Moreover the case of the arts is not really analogous to that of the virtues. Works of art have their merit in themselves, so that it is enough if they are produced having a certain quality of their own; but acts done in conformity with the virtues are not done justly or temperately if they themselves are of a certain sort, but only if the agent also is in a certain state of mind when he does them: first he must act with knowledge; secondly he must deliberately choose the act, and choose it for its own sake; and thirdly the act must spring from a fixed and permanent disposition of character. For the possession of an art, none of these conditions is included, except the mere qualification of knowledge; but for the possession of the virtues, knowledge is of little or no avail, whereas the other conditions, so far from being of little moment, are all-important, inasmuch as virtue results from the repeated performance of just

[4] and temperate actions. Thus although actions are entitled just and temperate when they are such acts as just and temperate men would do, the agent is just and temperate not when he does these

acts merely, but when he does them in the way in which just and
[5] temperate men do them. It is correct therefore to say that a man becomes just by doing just actions and temperate by doing temperate actions; and no one can have the remotest chance of
[6] becoming good without doing them. But the mass of mankind, instead of doing virtuous acts, have recourse to discussing virtue, and fancy that they are pursuing philosophy and that this will make them good men. In so doing they act like invalids who listen carefully to what the doctor says, but entirely neglect to carry out his prescriptions. That sort of philosophy will no more lead to a healthy state of soul than will the mode of treatment produce health of body.

1 BOOK VI

We have already said that it is right to choose the mean and to avoid excess and deficiency, and that the mean is prescribed by the right principle. Let us now analyze the latter notion.

In the case of each of the moral qualities or dispositions that have been discussed, as with all the other virtues also, there is a certain mark to aim at, on which the man who knows the principle involved fixes his gaze, and increases or relaxes the tension accordingly; there is a certain standard determining those modes of observing the mean which we define as lying between excess and defect, being in conformity with the right principle. This bare statement however, although true, is not at all enlightening. In all departments
[2] of human endeavor that have been reduced to a science, it is true to say that effort ought to be exerted and relaxed neither too much nor too little, but to the medium amount, and as the right principle decides. Yet a person knowing this truth will be no wiser than before: for example, he will not know what medicines to take merely from being told to take everything that medical science or a
[3] medical expert would prescribe. Hence with respect to the qualities of the soul also, it is not enough merely to have established the truth of the above formula; we also have to define exactly what the right principle is, and what is the standard that determines it.

[4] Now we have divided the Virtues of the Soul into two groups, the Virtues of the Character and the Virtues of the Intellect. The former, the Moral Virtues, we have already discussed. Our account of the latter must be prefaced by some remarks about psychology.

[5] It has been said before that the soul has two parts, one rational and the other irrational. Let us now similarly divide the rational part, and let it be assumed that there are two rational faculties, one whereby we contemplate those things whose first principles are invariable, and one whereby we contemplate those things which admit of variation: since, on the assumption that knowledge is based on a likeness or affinity of some sort between subject and object, the parts of the soul adapted to the cognition of objects that are of different kinds must themselves differ in kind. These two rational faculties may be designated the Scientific Faculty and the
[6] Calculative Faculty respectively; since calculation is the same as deliberation, and deliberation is never exercised about things that are invariable, so that the Calculative Faculty is a separate part of the rational half of the soul.

[7] We have therefore to ascertain what disposition of each of these faculties is the best, for that will be the special virtue of each.

But the virtue of a faculty is related to the special function which
2 that faculty performs. Now there are three elements in the soul which control action and the attainment of truth: namely, Sensation, Intellect, and Desire.

[2] Of these, Sensation never originates action, as is shown by the fact that animals have sensation but are not capable of action.

Pursuit and avoidance in the sphere of Desire correspond to affirmation and denial in the sphere of the Intellect. Hence inasmuch as moral virtue is a disposition of the mind in regard to choice, and choice is deliberate desire, it follows that, if the choice is to be good, both the principle must be true and the desire right, and that desire must pursue the same things as principle affirms. We are here speaking of practical thinking, and of the attainment of
[3] truth in regard to action; with speculative thought, which is not concerned with action or production, right and wrong functioning consist in the attainment of truth and falsehood respectively. The attainment of truth is indeed the function of every part of the

intellect, but that of the practical intelligence is the attainment of truth corresponding to right desire.

[4] Now the cause of action (the efficient, not the final cause) is choice, and the cause of choice is desire and reasoning directed to some end. Hence choice necessarily involves both intellect or thought and a certain disposition of character [for doing well and the reverse in the sphere of action necessarily involve thought and character].

[5] Thought by itself however moves nothing, but only thought directed to an end, and dealing with action. This indeed is the moving cause of productive activity also, since he who makes something always has some further end in view: the act of making is not an end in itself, it is only a means, and belongs to something else. Whereas a thing done is an end in itself: since doing well (welfare) is the End, and it is at this that desire aims.

Hence Choice may be called either thought related to desire or desire related to thought; and man, as an originator of action, is a union of desire and intellect.

[6] (Choice is not concerned with what has happened already: for example, no one chooses to have sacked Troy; for neither does one deliberate about what has happened in the past, but about what still lies in the future and may happen or not; what has happened cannot be made not to have happened. Hence Agathon is right in saying:

"This only is denied even to God,
The power to make what has been done undone."

The attainment of truth is then the function of both the intellectual parts of the soul. Therefore their respective virtues are those dispositions which will best qualify them to attain truth.

1 BOOK VIII

Our next business after this will be to discuss Friendship. For friendship is a virtue, or involves virtue; and also it is one of the most indispensable requirements of life. For no one would choose to live without friends, but possessing all other good things. In fact rich men, rulers and potentates are thought especially to require friends, since what would be the good of their prosperity without an outlet for beneficence, which is displayed in its fullest and most praiseworthy form towards friends? And how could such prosperity be safeguarded and preserved without friends? For the greater it is,

[2] the greater is its insecurity. And in poverty or any other misfortune men think friends are their only resource. Friends are an aid to the young, to guard them from error; to the elderly, to tend them, and to supplement their failing powers of action; to those in the prime of life, to assist them in noble deeds— " When twain together go—

[3] "

for two are better able both to plan and to execute. And the affection of parent for offspring and of offspring for parent seems to be a natural instinct, not only in man but also in birds and in most animals; as also is friendship between members of the same species; and this is especially strong in the human race; for which reason we praise those who love their fellow men. Even when

[4] travelling abroad one can observe that a natural affinity and friendship exist between man and man universally. Moreover, as friendship appears to be the bond of the state; and lawgivers seem to set more store by it than they do by justice, for to promote concord, which seems akin to friendship, is their chief aim, while faction, which is enmity, is what they are most anxious to banish. And if men are friends, there is no need of justice between them; whereas merely to be just is not enough—a feeling of friendship also is necessary. Indeed the highest form of justice seems to have an element of friendly feeling in it.

[5] And friendship is not only indispensable as a means, it is also noble in itself. We praise those who love their friends, and it is counted a noble thing to have many friends; and some people think that a true friend must be a good man.

[6] But there is much difference of opinion as to the nature of friendship. Some define it as a matter of similarity; they say that we love those who are like ourselves: whence the proverbs 'Like finds his like,' 'Birds of a feather flock together,' and so on. Others on the contrary say that with men who are alike it is always a case of 'two of a trade.' Some try to find a more profound and scientific explanation of the nature of affection. Euripides writes that 'Earth years for the rain' when dried up, 'And the majestic Heaven when

filled with rain Yearns to fall to Earth.' Heracleitus says, 'Opposition unites,' and 'The fairest harmony springs from difference,' and 'Tis strife that makes the world go on.' Others maintain the opposite view, notably Empedocles, who declares that 'Like seeks after like.'

[7] Dismissing then these scientific speculations as not germane to our present enquiry, let us investigate the human aspect of the matter, and examine the questions that relate to man's character and emotions: for instance, whether all men are capable of friendship, or bad men cannot be friends; and whether there is only one sort of friendship or several. Those who hold that all friendship is of the same kind because friendship admits of degree, are relying on an insufficient proof, for things of different kinds also can differ in degree. But this has been discussed before.

2

Perhaps the answer to these questions will appear if we ascertain what sort of things arouses liking or love. It seems that not everything is loved, but only what is lovable, and that this is either what is good, or pleasant, or useful. But useful may be taken to mean productive of some good or of pleasure, so that the class of

[2] things lovable as ends is reduced to the good and the pleasant. Then, do men like what is really good, or what is good for them? For sometimes the two may be at variance; and the same with what is pleasant. Now it appears that each person loves what is good for himself, and that while what is really good is lovable absolutely, what is good for a particular person is lovable for that person. Further, each person loves not what is really good for himself, but what appears to him to be so; however, this will not affect our argument, for 'lovable' will mean 'what appears lovable.'

[3] There being then three motives of love, the term Friendship is not applied to love for inanimate objects, since here there is no return of affection, and also no wish for the good of the object—for instance, it would be ridiculous to wish well to a bottle of wine: at the most one wishes that it may keep well in order that one may have it oneself; whereas we are told that we ought to wish our friend well for his own sake. But persons who wish another good for his own sake, if the feeling is not reciprocated, are merely said to feel goodwill for him: only when mutual is such goodwill termed

[4] friendship. And perhaps we should also add the qualification that the feeling of goodwill must be known to its object. For a man often feels goodwill towards persons whom he has never seen, but whom he believes to be good or useful, and one of these persons may also entertain the same feeling towards him. Here then we have a case of two people mutually well-disposed, whom nevertheless we cannot speak of as friends, because they are not aware of each other's regard. To be friends therefore, men must 1) feel goodwill for each other, that is, wish each other's good, and 2) be aware of each other's goodwill, and 3) the cause of their goodwill must be one of the lovable qualities mentioned above.

3

Now these qualities differ in kind; hence the affection or friendship they occasion may differ in kind also. There are accordingly three kinds of friendship, corresponding in number to the three lovable qualities; since a reciprocal affection, known to either party, can be based on each of the three, and when men love each other, they wish each other well in respect of the quality which is the ground of their friendship. Thus friends whose affection is based on utility do not love each other in themselves, but in so far as some benefit accrues to them from each other. And similarly with those whose friendship is based on pleasure: for instance, we enjoy the society of witty people not because of what they are in themselves, but

[2] because they are agreeable to us. Hence in a friendship based on utility or on pleasure men love their friend for their own good or their own pleasure, and not as being the person loved, but as useful or agreeable. And therefore these friendships are based on an accident, since the friend is not loved for being what he is, but as

[3] affording some benefit or pleasure as the case may be. Consequently friendships of this kind are easily broken off, in the event of the parties themselves changing, for if no longer pleasant or useful to each other, they cease to love each other. And utility is not a permanent quality; it differs at different times. Hence when the motive of the friendship has passed away, the friendship itself is dissolved, having existed merely as a means to that end.

[4] Friendships of Utility seem to occur most frequently between the old, as in old age men do not pursue pleasure but profit; and between those persons in the prime of life and young people whose object in life is gain. Friends of this kind do not indeed frequent each other's company much, for in some cases they are not even pleasing to each other, and therefore have no use for friendly intercourse unless they are mutually profitable; since their pleasure in each other goes no further than their expectations of advantage.

With these friendships are classed family ties of hospitality with foreigners.

[5] With the young on the other hand the motive of friendship appears to be pleasure, since the young guide their lives by emotion, and for the most part pursue what is pleasant to themselves, and the object of the moment. And the things that please them change as their age alters; hence they both form friendships and drop them quickly, since their affections alter with what gives them pleasure, and the tastes of youth change quickly. Also the young are prone to fall in love, as love is chiefly guided by emotion, and grounded on pleasure; hence they form attachments quickly and give them up quickly, often changing before the day is out.

The young do desire to pass their time in their friend's company, for that is how they get the enjoyment of their friendship.

[6] The perfect form of friendship is that between the good, and those who resemble each other in virtue. For these friends wish each alike the other's good in respect of their goodness, and they are good in themselves; but it is those who wish the good of their friends for their friends' sake who are friends in the fullest sense, since they love each other for themselves and not accidentally. Hence the friendship of these lasts as long as they continue to be good; and virtue is a permanent quality. And each is good relatively to his friend as well as absolutely, since the good are both good absolutely and profitable to each other. And each is pleasant in both ways also, since good men are pleasant both absolutely and to each other; for everyone is pleased by his own actions, and therefore by actions that resemble his own, and the actions of all good men are the same

[7] or similar. Such friendship is naturally permanent, since it combines in itself all the attributes that friends ought to possess. All affection is based on good or on pleasure, either absolute or relative to the person who feels it, and is prompted by similarity of some sort; but this friendship possesses all these attributes in the friends themselves, for they are alike, et cetera, in that way. Also the absolutely good is pleasant absolutely as well; but the absolutely good and pleasant are the chief objects of affection; therefore it is between good men that affection and friendship exist in their fullest and best form.

[8] Such friendships are of course rare, because such men are few. Moreover they require time and intimacy: as the saying goes, you cannot get to know a man till you have consumed the proverbial amount of salt in his company; and so you cannot admit him to friendship or really be friends, before each has shown the other that

[9] he is worthy of friendship and has won his confidence. People who enter into friendly relations quickly have the wish to be friends, but cannot really be friends without being worthy of friendship and also knowing each other to be so; the wish to be friends is a quick growth, but friendship is not.

In an effort to save some space I have not reproduced the complete work. Still it produces a fairly hefty tome. *(Edited by H. Rackham)*

Making Sense Of It All: *Nicomachean Ethics* Thought Sheet

Thought Point	Points of Thought
Describe these Lecture Sections	
Main Point(s) (What is he talking about?)	
What is the Good?	
What is Virtue?	
What is Ethics?	
What is Friendship?	
What does "the Mean" mean?	
Do you agree with Aristotle?	

Philosophical Terms and Catch Phrases

This section is designed to alleviate the need for deep thought on subjects which require it.

A

- **AD**: *Anno Domini* – the year of our Lord (Jesus). A means of demarking eras; *see CE*.
- **Accident**: traits or characteristics of a thing incidental to what it is, like facts to this work.
- **Allegory**: using imagery to explain ideas, like, well, like.
- **Apophatic**: the art of negative thinking.
- ***A posteriori***: a) analytical reasoning based in experience. Thinking based on evidence and rational from a conclusion. b) something that is known from external sources
- ***A priori***: a) deductive reasoning based on syllogisms consisting of theses and a conclusion; a kind of the turducken of thinking. b) something that is pre-known, is the basis for knowledge or is a 'given'
- **Argument**: not merely a series of contradictory statements.
- **Aristotelian**: of or applying to the philosophy of the Greek Aristotle.
- **Asceticism**: the doctrine that through renunciation of worldly pleasures it is possible to achieve a high spiritual or intellectual state.

B

- **BC**: *Before Christ* – a means of demarking eras.
- **BCE**: *Before Common Era* – a more politically correct means of demarking eras.
- **Boolean**: of or applying to the mathematical constructs of Boole and ways of demonstrating and formulating arguments (most often called *Truth Tables*).

C

- **Cartesian**: of or applying to the philosophy/mathematics of Renee Descartes.
- **Cataphatic**: the power of positive thinking.
- **Cause**: action or thought which is the basis for another action or thought.
- **CE**: *Common Era* – a means of demarking eras; *see AD*.
- **Change**: the observation that one thing becomes another or moves from one point to another. *c.f. movement*
- **Conclusion**: the logical end to an argument. May or may not be correct but in a properly constructed argument should be considered 'true'.
- **Consciousness**: a debatable aspect of human existence or essence.
- **Copernican Revolution**: the radical rethinking of held beliefs and ideas, especially as illustrated by Nicholas Copernicus' (*1473 –1543*) theory that the Earth orbited the Sun as opposed to the long held *a posteriori* belief of the opposite.

D

- **Dialectic**: a teaching method between two or more people who

hold different ideas and wish to persuade each other, aka. The Socratic Method. Contrasted with didactic and rhetoric.

- **Didactic**: a teaching method that follows a consistent scientific approach or educational style. Contrasted with dialectic.
- **Doubt**: often the impetus of inquiry, but not of answers if you happen to be a Skeptic.

E

- **Eastern**: an arbitrary designation for division of philosophical thought and systems.
- **Empiricism**: the system by which all knowledge is sense based and there are no abstract universal: *see* Locke.
- **Epicurean**: the system which extols the quaint jungle-Jamaican-Bobby McFarin-*hacuna matata-don't worry, be happy* mantras.
- **Exegesis**: the *critical* discussion or interpretation of text, usually applied to sacred texts.
- ***Ex nihlio***: the idea of creation from or out of nothing, kind of like most of the author's discussions.
- ***Evil***: a quality which for various groups has various manifestations. Suffice it to say that it is an absence of moral action.

F

- **Faith**: (*Noun*) the immutable sum and total of truths contained within a religious system; not to be confused with the action of 'having faith' or the act of believing.
- **Fallacy**: incorrect or faulty thinking pattern.
- **Formal**: having to do with structure (the thing's *form*).

G

- **Greeks**: a body of thinkers who owe their citizenship to various Greek powers, whether they be on the Greek homeland or scattered about the Greek empire; not to be confused with campus student associations.

H

- **Hypothesis**: not to be confused with its root *thesis*.
- **Hedonism**: from the Greek word meaning 'delight'; finding happiness through pure pleasure; often associated with Epicurus.
- **Hellenism**: the 'Greek-ifying' of thought. Mainly through the influence of Plato and Aristotle.

I

- **Informal**: having to do with thinking.
- **Imperative**: a thing which must be; for Kant, it also elicits a necessary response.
- **Idealism**: a system in which reality is dependent upon the mind rather than independent of it.
- **Identity**: a word of various meanings;

J

- **Justice**: the achievement of balanced results for the individual or the group.
- **Justification**: the rational used in and for an argument; in a salvific sense, the yardstick of righteousness.

K

- **Kantian**: of or applying to the philosophy of the German Immanuel Kant.

L

- **Legal**: something which follows the rules but may not be valid.
- **Licit**: something which is permissible but not necessarily fully following the rules.
- **Logic**: the 'science' of thinking; the means by which one comes to intellectual consensus.

M

- **Matrix, The**: *see Skepticism*.
- **Methods**: ways of demonstrating and formulating ($A^2 + B^2 = C^2$).
- **Modal/Non Modal**: Methods of logical proof either unqualified (*assertoric*) or qualified by *possible* and *necessary*.
- **Monastery**: a collection of individuals into a community bound together by a shared desire; for Christians, to live Gospel values in an early Church community style; for Buddhists, .
- **Movement**: a word used to denote many aspects of knowledge and being.

N

- **Nonsense**: a charge often leveled by and at philosophers.
- **Neo-Platonism**: the re-introduction of Platonic ideas into 'modern' systems.

O

- **Ontology**: the study of being, that is what is being what does it mean to be.
- **Operation**: a logical relationship between statements.
- **Orders**: the classification of a monastic group bound together by a rule: example – Benedictines and Franciscans.

P

- **Pericopes**: a fragment or section of a larger work.
- **Philosophy**: Come on…you're kidding, right?
- **Platonic**: of or applying to the philosophy of the Greek Plato.
- **Predicate Logic**: the system of logic based on subjects and predicates as proposed by Aristotle and different than the propositional one proposed by the Stoics.
- **Premise**: one assertion in a deductive argument.
- **Prime Mover**: designation of the beginning principle or cause.
- **Propositional Logic**: the logic system proposed by the Stoics which focuses on the relationship between propositions as opposed to Aristotle's Logic.

Q

- **Query**: the asking of questions.

R

- **Rationalism**: knowledge is based in the mind and relies on innate, abstract universal ideas: *see* Descartes.
- **Rhetoric**: teaching method which is discourse conducted by a single person. Often confused with meaningless blather which has usurped the word.
- **Reality**: one of the myriad ways of organizing perceptions. For empiricists, reality is the sum of sensory perceptions; for rationalists it is the sum of the constructs of the mind.

S

- **Sign**: something which contains within itself its meaning; for example, an eight-sided figure on a

street corner. Symbol would be its antonym.

- **Sin:** that thing which is probably best defined in non-religious/moralistic terms as that which if it feels *really* good while you feel *really* bad as you are doing it must be wrong.
- ***Sine Qua Non***: *without which none*. A pretty basic (though fancy sounding) principle of existence.
- **Skepticism**: the idea that no truth can be determined, *believe it or not*!
- **Socratic**: of or applying to the philosophy of the Greek Socrates.
- **Socratic Method**: the activity of asking questions in order to teach by drawing out answers; used by the philosopher Socrates and many fine teachers after him. See dialectic.
- **Square Of Opposition**: an illustration proposed by the Greek Aristotle of possible thesis operations placed in opposition for clarity's sake.
- **Stoicism**: the system which extols the rational over the emotional as culturally expressed in the *Star Trek* character Spock.
- **Substance**: that which makes up a thing, which makes it what it is.
- **Syllogism**: the basic form of deductive Aristotelian logic in the form of thesis, thesis, conclusion.
- **Symbol**: something which points to a meaning *beyond* itself; for example, an owl symbolizing *wisdom*. Sign would be its antonym.
- **Systems**: classes from which logical premises may be derived (Trigonometry – think axioms).
- **Synthetic**: not polyester but a synthesis of ideas.

T

- **Teleology**: understanding things by their 'end purpose'.
- **Thesis**: a basic statement in an argument.
- **Truths**: basics by which other methods, systems or arguments may be measured ('humans think').
- **Truth Table**: a tool of logic comprised of a grid showing possible outcomes for various combinations of premises.

U

- ***Ubermensch***: German for the super- or over- man.
- **Unconditional**: the classifying of a statement as in and of itself (all whales are mammals).

V

- **Validity**: the assertion that an argument has structural merit.
- **Vulcan**: see *Stoicism*.

W

- **Western**: an arbitrary designation for division of philosophical thought and systems.
- **Will**: Various meanings depending upon the philosophy; Natural Law; the idea of human thought or action.
- **Word**: .

X

- **Xylophone**: because there always has to be an 'X' entry.

Y

- **Yo-Yo**: the perfect example of Aristotle understanding of *kinêsis*.

Z

- **ZZZZ**: what can happen to you while reading philosophy.

Philosophical Timeline

By no means complete, this is a compilation of all of the tables in this book in one place, with a few supplemental aids.

Approx. Dates	Philosophers	Works	Notables	Events
Pre-History to History B.C.E.				
			Homer	
6TH CENTURY B.C.E.				
~625-547	*Thales*			
~610-545	*Anaximander*			
5TH CENTURY B.C.E.				
~560-478	*Xenophanes*		*Persian War (Darius)*	*Redaction of Hebrew Canon: (~580)*
~545-?	*Anaximenes*			
~540-480	*Heraclitus*			
~563-483	*Buddha*			
~581-507	*Pythagora*			
551-479	*Confucius*			
?	*Lao Tse*	*Tao Te Ching*		
5TH CENTURY B.C.E.				
515-450	*Parminedes*			*Development of* Bhagavad Gita(*~400) The Peloponnesian War*
500-428	*Anaxagoras*			
490-430	*Empedocles*			
490-420	*Protagoras*			
490-430	*Zeno of Elea*			
483-376	*Gorgias*			
470-391	*Mo-tzu*			
470-399	*Socrates*			
4TH CENTURY B.C.E.				
460-370	*Democratus*		*Alexander*	*Fall of Athens*
460-377	*Hippocrates*			
428-348	*Plato*	*Apology, Symposium, Republic*		
369-289	*Chuang-Tzu*	*Zhuangzi*		
384-322	*Aristotle*	*Physics, Metaphysics, Poetics, Politics, Nicomachean Ethics*		
412?-320?	*Diogenes*			
3RD CENTURY B.C.E.				
341-270	*Epicurus*			
335-263	*Zeno*			
298-230	*Hsun-tzu*			
1ST CENTURY B.C.E.				
214-129	*Carneades*			

106-43	*Cicero*			
100-55	*Lucretius*	*The Way of Nature*		
1ST CENTURY C.E.				
20-40	*Philo of Alexandria*		*Jesus (~6 BCE - 30 CE.)*	
2ND CENTURY				
55-135	*Epictetus*			*Fixing of Hebrew Canon*
?-165	*Justin Martyr*	*Adverse Heresy*		
121-180	*Marcus Aurelius*	*Stoic Lectures*		
160-240	*Tertullian*			
150-213	*Clement Alexandria*			
185-255	*Origen*			
3RD CENTURY				
204-270	*Plotinus*			*Fixing of the Christian Canon*
4TH CENTURY				
354-430	*St. Augustine*	*Confessions, City of God*		
5-6TH CENTURY				
480-525	*Boethius*	*Consolation of Philosophy*	*Muhammad (570-632)*	
7-9TH CENTURY				
801–873	*Alkindus*			
810-877	*John Scotus Eriugena*	*On the Division of Nature*		
872-951	*Alpharabius*			
10TH CENTURY				
980-1037	*Avicenna*			
11TH CENTURY				
1020-1070	*Avicebron*			
1033-1109	*St. Anselm*	*Proslogium*		
1058-1111	*Algazali*	*The Incoherence of the Philosophers*		
1079-1144	*Peter Abelard*			
12TH CENTURY				
1126-1198	*Averroes*	*The Incoherence of Incoherence*		
1135-1204	*Moses Maimonides*	*Guide For The Perplexed*		
13TH-14THCENTURY				
1206-1280	*Albert the Great (Magnus)*		*Genghis Khan* *Marco Polo*	The Renaissance (1304-1576)
1225-1274	*Thomas Aquinas*	*Summa Theologia, Summa Contra Gentiles*		
1260-1327	*Meister Eckart*			

1266-1308	*John Duns Scotus*			*Canterbury Tales* (~1380-1400)
1285-1349	*William of Ockham*			
15TH CENTURY				
1466-1536	*Erasmus*	*In Praise of Folly*	*Christopher Columbus Martin Luther (1483-1546)*	Printing Press *America*
1469-1527	*Niccolo Machiavelli*	*The Prince*		
1472-1529	*Wang Yang-Ming*			
1478-1535	*Thomas More*	*Utopia*		
16TH CENTURY				
1561-1626	*Frances Bacon*		*John Calvin (1509-1564)*	
1588-1679	*Thomas Hobbes*	*Leviathan*		
1596-1650	*Rene Descartes*	*Meditations*		
17TH CENTURY				
1623-1662	*Blaise Pascal*	*Pensees*	*William Shakespeare (1564-1616)*	
1634-1677	*Baruch Spinoza*	*Ethics*		
1632-1677	*John Locke*	*Essay Concerning Human Understanding, Two Treatise on Government*		
1646-1716	*Gottfried Leibniz*	*Monadology*		
1668-1744	*Giambattista Vico*			
1685-1753	*Bishop Georg Berkeley*	*Principles of Human Knowledge*		
18TH CENTURY				
1689-1755	*Montesquieu*		*Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758), Candide (Voltaire 1693-1778)*	*The American Revolution, The French Revolution*
1706-1790	*Benjamin Franklin*			
1711-1776	*David Hume*	*An Enquiry Concerning the Human Understanding, Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*		
1712-1778	*Jean-Jacques Rousseau*	*Discourse on Inequality, The Social Contract, Confessions, Reveries of a Solitary Walker*		
1723-1790	*Adam Smith*	*Wealth of Nations*		
1724-1804	*Immanuel Kant*	*Critique of Pure Reason, Critique of Practical Reason, Critique of Judgment*		
1743-1826	*Thomas Jefferson*	*Declaration of Independence, Virginia Act for Establishing Religious Freedom*		

1744-1803	*Johann Herder*	*Storm and Drag*		
1748-1832	*Jeremy Bentham*			
1762-1814	*Johann Fichte*	*Attempt at a Critique of All Revelation*		
1770-1831	*Georg Wilhelm Hegel*	*Phenomenology of Spirit*		
19TH CENTURY				
1788 -1860	*Arthur Schopenhauer*	*The World As Will and Representation; On the Freedom of the Human Will*	*Frederick Douglas (1817-1895)*	*Jane Austen (1775-1817), The American Civil War*
1803-1882	*Ralph Waldo Emerson*			
1806-1873	*John Stuart Mill*	*Utilitarianism, On Liberty, The Subjection of Women, On Representative Government*		
1813-1855	*Soren Kierkegaard*	*Fear and Trembling, The Concept of Anxiety, Sickness Unto Death, Philosophical Fragments*		
1817-1862	*Henry David Thoreau*	*Walden*		
1818-1883	*Karl Marx*	*Communist Manifesto, Das Capital*		
1821-1881	*Fyodor Dostoyevsky*	*Notes From Underground*		
1828-1910	*Leo Tolstoy*			
1839-1914	*Charles Sanders Peirce*	*The Fixation of Belief*		
1842-1910	*William James*	*Pragmatism: A New Name for an Old way of Thinking, Pragmatism, Varieties of Religious Experience*		
1844-1900	*Frederick Nietzsche*	*Thus Spoke Zarathustra, Beyond Good and Evil, Genealogy of Morals*		
1848-1925	*Gottlob Frege*			
1859-1938	*Edmund Husserl*			
1856-1939	*Sigmund Freud*	*Civilization and Its Discontents*		
20TH-21ST CENTURY				
1859-1952	*John Dewey*	*Democracy and Education,*	*Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr.,*	*Kafka (1883-1924);*

		Experience and Nature, The Quest For Certainty, Liberalism and Social Action		*The Russian Revolution, Powered Carriage, Powered Flight, WWI, WWII, Cold War, Space Flight*
1861-1947	*Alfred North Whitehead*	*Process and Reality, Adventures of Ideas*		
1864-1920	*Max Weber*	*Protestant Ethic and the Rise of Capitalism*		
1864-1936	*Miquel de Unamuno*			
1866-1952	*Benedtto Croce*			
1868-1963	*W.E.B. Du Bois*	*The Souls of Black Folk*		
1872-1970	*Bertrand Russell*	*Principia Mathematica, Why I am Not a Christian*		
1889-1951	*Ludwig Wittgenstein*	*Tractatus, On Certainty, Philosophical Investigations*		
1889-1976	*Martin Heidegger*	*Being and Time, Basic Writings*		
1897-2000	*Charles Hartshorne*			
1905-1980	*Jean-Paul Sartre*	*Being and Nothingness, No Exit*		
1908-1986	*Simon de Beauvoir*	*The Second Sex*		
1913-1960	*Albert Camus*	*The Myth of Sisyphus, The Stranger*		
1926-1984	*Michel Foucault*	*Order of Things*		
1905-1982	*Ayn Rand*	*The Fountainhead, Atlas Shrugged*		

Nota Bene: *Because of the nature of the names of philosophers which change in form over time, some main entries for names will be in the form of first-last, not last, first. Socrates will be under 'S' and Zeno of Citium is under 'Z'.*

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