HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY & PHILOSOPHERS

Presocratics-Aristotle
Disclaimer

- All of the graphics and some of the text have been reproduced from the works referenced without citation.
  - The graphics have been taken from Donald Palmer’s *Looking at Philosophy*. 
General Introduction

Ought not a minister to have,
First a good understanding, a clear apprehension, a sound judgment, and a capacity of reasoning....Is not some acquaintance with what has been termed the second part of logic, (metaphysics), if not so necessary [as logic itself], yet highly expedient? Should not a minister be acquainted with at least the general grounds of natural philosophy?

- John Wesley
To be ignorant and simple now – not to be able to meet the enemies on their ground – would be to throw down our weapons, and betray our uneducated brethren who have, under God, no defense but us against the intellectual attacks of the heathen. Good philosophy must exist, if for no other reason, because bad philosophy needs to be answered

– C.S. Lewis
The history of philosophy is philosophy

-Gordon H. Clark
What is Philosophy?

- Philein = To Love
- Sophia = Wisdom
- Philosopher = Lover of Wisdom

- Philosophy is the attempt to think rationally and critically about life’s most important questions in order to obtain knowledge and wisdom about them. -J.P Moreland
Philosophy deals with problems that require a speculative rather than experimental approach.

- Conceptual analysis or logical scrutiny of general ideas (philosophy) vs. data gathering and experimentation (science)
Science
- Can there be successful experiments that explain this event?

Philosophy
- What is knowledge, truth, causality, value, explanation, science?
Disciplines of Philosophy
- Ontology (Theory of Being)
- Epistemology (Theory of Knowledge)
- Axiology (Theory of Value)
  - Ethics/Moral Philosophy (Theory of Right Action)
- Aesthetics (Theory of Beauty/Art)
- Logic (Theory of correct inference)
Why Philosophy?

- It aids in the task of apologetics and polemics
- It is an expression of the image of God in us
- It permeates systematic theology adding clarity
- It can facilitate the spiritual discipline of study
- It is essential for integration of other disciplines
The Pre-Socratics
The Pre-Socratic Philosophers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reality is One</th>
<th>Reality is Many</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thales</td>
<td>Empedocles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anaximander</td>
<td>Anaxagoras</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anaximenes</td>
<td>Democritus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pythagoras</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heraclitus</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parmenides</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zeno</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction

- Thinkers from the Greek world (sixth and fifth centuries BC)
- Attempted to create general theories of the cosmos (world)
- Mythos → Logos
  - There must be a good explanation to the appearances of the world beyond the tales of how the god’s had created everything
- Important for grasping the origins of Western philosophy and science
Thales of Miletus (580 BC)

- First successful prediction of a solar eclipse
- First recorded instance of universalizing
  (reducing multiplicity to unity)
If there is change, there must be some thing that changes, yet does not change.

- There must be a unity behind the apparent plurality of things

How did orderly multiplicity come to be?

What is it all made of?
Could it be that all things are made of just one elemental stuff?

- Men eat plants and animals
  - Must not the human body contain the same materials?
GRASS TO MILK
What substance must underlie grass to allow it to be transformed to milk?
Unity or oneness must exist

What is the nature of this unifying, unchanging substance that is disguised by the appearance of constant change?

Air, Fire, Water, or Earth?
Thales decided that all things are composed of water

“The first principle and basic nature of all things is water”
Anaximander (610-546 BC)

- Student of Thales
- Agreed that the plurality of kinds of things in the world must be reducible to one category
- Not satisfied with water as the single element of the universe
The ultimate stuff behind the four elements could not be one of the elements:

- Water is not fire, which is not air, and air is not earth

The unifying element he call the “Boundless” or “Unlimited”
Anaximenes (545 BC)

- How much better is an unspecified something or other than nothing at all?
- How could anyone know there was such a thing as the Boundless?
- The ultimate stuff must be an empirical substance
- Air seemed better than water
Rarefaction

Condensation
Thales, Anaximander, Anaximenes

- Not far removed from twentieth century naturalism (Natural phenomena should be explained in terms of other natural phenomena)
- Corporeal Monism – the view that ultimately there is only one kind of stuff that makes up everything
Pythagoras (572-500 BC)

- The ultimate stuff is not some material element like water or fire.
- All things are numbers and a correct description of reality must be expressed in terms of mathematical formulas.
- Totality of reality can be explained by mathematical laws.
Pythagoras was a numerologist interested in the mystical significance of numbers.

- Eg. Is there something to the fact that music is mathematical and harmonies are easy fractions?
Heraclitus (525-475 BC)

- Lived in Ephesus
- Rejected water, air, and earth as elemental stuff
- **Fire** is the single original element
- Fire gives insight into the appearance of stability (unity)- for the flames form is stable; and the fact of change- for in the flame, everything changes
The order of the universe always has been, is now, and ever shall be an ever living fire.
Hebrews 12:29

for our "God is a consuming fire."
Did Heraclitus choose fire because of his desire to select a suitable explanation for the problem of motion and change? (Clark pg 17)

“No man can step into the same river twice”

(Clark pg 18)
There is one thing that does not change:
- change itself (the law of change)

He called it “Logos”
“You can’t go home again your childhood is lost. The friends of your youth are gone. Your present is slipping away from you. Nothing is ever the same”
Heraclitus wrote:

“Logos is always so”

Logos is the “logic” which governs change and makes change rational rather than chaotic or arbitrary.
Key Concept

- **Logos (Word)**
  - Means the theory, study, or rationalization of something
    - Biology, psychology, theology, etc.
  - Any expression of thought, act of speaking, or setting forth an idea
  - Designates a certain kind of thinking about the world that places things in the context of reason
    - Logical analysis
Wisdom is to understand the intelligence (Logos) that steers all things
“In the beginning was the Word (Logos), and the Word (Logos) was with God, and the Word (Logos) was God”

- John 1:1
Parmenides (515-440 BC)

- Successor to Heraclitus
- Thales had said that fire & earth are really water. Heraclitus said earth & water are really fire.
- Parmenides said: fire is not water
- What is the underlying unity?
What is Being?

- Fire is existent
- Water is existent
Being is:

- Rational – only what can be thought can exist
  - “Nothing” cannot be thought w/o thinking of it as something
  - There is no “nothing” there is only being
- Uncreated, Indestructible, Eternal, Indivisible
  - (Clark pg 26-27)
- Spherical Matter
  - Being is equally real in all directions
  - There is no place where being is not
Motion is impossible

- Motion would involve being going from where being is to where it is not. (But there is no such place)

- Empty space is impossible
What about Multiplicity & Change?
- Unity excludes multiplicity

How can a simple One, generate plurality?

If Unity is basic, then motion, plurality, change and differences cannot possibly exist

If one starts with Unity, does not one end with unity and unity alone?
Zeno (490 BC-?)

- A disciple of Parmenides
- wrote a series of famous paradoxes “proving” that motion is impossible
- Is motion really impossible?
- Are all things One and thus are motion and change simply illusions?
One could never move from point A to B. In order to get to point B you must go halfway, but before you can go halfway you must go halfway of the remaining halfway, but first you must go halfway of halfway. Thus, motion is impossible even if it were possible.
Conclusion derived from the mathematical notion of the infinite divisibility of all numbers, and indeed, of all matter

- Do we choose Mathematics or Sensory information?

- Information based on senses (empiricism) vs. Information based on pure reason (rationalism)
The Pluralists

- Sense experience tells us that we can get from A to B.
- The greeks who immediately followed Parmenides and Zeno decided to reject corporeal monism (reality is one).
- Why?
Because differences exist and they must be accounted for

Thus, ultimate reality is composed of a plurality of things rather than of only one kind of thing
Empedocles (?-440 BC)

- Everything is composed of the simplest part of the four elements or “roots”: Fire, Air, Earth, and Water
- Similar to nineteenth century chemistry
  - The world is to be explained in terms of a finite number of differences, i.e., elements or atoms
The elements, atoms, or roots were small editions of Parmenides’ Being:
- Unchangeable and indivisible
- Their mixture with each other accounted for the multiplicity in the world.

How do these things come to mix?
How can the Pluralist explain life? And motion?

If the four roots cannot move of themselves, there must be some other reality to cause the motion for mixings and separations of the atoms.

He called these forces Love and Hate.
Love
- The force of unity bringing together unrelated items to produce new creations

Hate
- The force of destruction, breaking down old unities into fragments (Clark pg 31-32)

Do these forces explain universal motion?
Anaxagoras (500-428 BC)

- Empedocles, too simplistic
  - How can the amazing variety of qualities in the world be derived from so few elements?

- The world of appearances requires many bodies (elements) that move, mix, and separate.
These elements are unchangeable

Four roots $\rightarrow$ “infinite seeds”
Every object in the world contains seeds of all elements

“In all things there is a portion of everything…For how could hair come from what is not hair? Or flesh from what is not flesh?”
The existence of inanimate particles of matter demands the existence of a principle of motion.

How do these seeds move?

- Not Love & Hate but,
- Mind or Nous
The universal Mind is omniscient and omnipotent.

All bodies are mixtures of elements, but the moving principle (Mind) is unmixed.

- It exists alone by itself, for if it were not by itself its complete power over everything would be diminished.
Democritus (460-370 BC)

- Known as an “atomist”
- The world is composed of material bodies composed of atoms (a term meaning “indivisible”)
- Each atom is a little peace of Permenidean Being: uncreated, indestructible, eternal, indivisible
Atoms- Solid indivisible bodies that have no qualities not even weight. (Clark pg 36-37)

What about motion? How do these atoms move?
- Motion has always existed
Conclusion

Pre-Socratic philosophers:
- Made obvious the dichotomy between reason and senses
- Attempted to explain reality without religion (mythos)
- Attempted to understand how mathematical numbers were related to the flux of reality
- Attempted to explain the problems of the One and the Many
Did the Pre-Socratic Philosophers leave a legacy of confusion? Or clarity?
Numbers, only numbers.

Everything is made of the four roots.

Seeds, infinite seeds.

It's air.

No, it's indeterminate.

Everything is in motion.

Everythings is water.

All is atoms.

Nothing ever moves.
The Sophists
& Socrates
## Introduction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-Socratics</th>
<th>Sophists &amp; Socrates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nature</td>
<td>Humans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ultimate Principles</td>
<td>Moral Behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scientific Concerns</td>
<td>Ethical Concerns</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Is it possible to discover any universal truth?
Is there a universal concept of goodness?
Is morality social convention or natural?
Is truth relative?
Protagoras (490-422BC)

- Customs, truth, morality, everything
  - Not absolute/relative to human subjectivity
- Primary Assumption
  - Universal Flux
  - Knowledge = Perception
If changing perception = knowledge then…

“Man is the measure”
Man is the measure of all things, of things that are, that they are, and of things that are not, that they are not.
Gorgias (483-375BC)

- Protagoras → Gorgias
  - Truth relative to spectator
  - No truth at all
There is nothing
If there were anything, no one could know it
If anyone did know it,
no one could communicate it
THERE IS NOTHING!...
Hey! Where did everybody go?
Thrasymachus (late 5th Century BC)

“The sound conclusion is that what is right is the same everywhere: the interest of the stronger party”
All disputation about morality is empty, except in so far as it is reducible to a struggle for power.

Might Makes Right
Socrates (469-399 BC)

- Socratic Discourse
  - Two directions
    - Inward - to discover the inner person, the soul
    - Outward - to objective definitions
Truth (trüoth): verity, conformity with fact. Honesty, integrity.
“The unexamined life is not worth living”
He asked specific questions:

- What is Piety? – Euthyphro
- What is Justice? – Republic
- What is Virtue? – Meno
- What is Meaning? – Sophist
- What is Love? - Symposium
Socratic Dialogue Three Divisions

- Pose a question
- Find flaws with answers
- Agree with student about not knowing
Plato

(427-347 BC)
The Cave

- Imagine prisoners chained in such a way that they face the back wall of a cave. There they have been for life and can see nothing of themselves or of each other: They see only shadows on the wall of the cave.
These shadows are cast by a fire that burns on a ledge above and behind them. Between the fire and the prisoners is a wall-lined path along which people walk carrying statues and other artifacts on their heads. The prisoners hear the echoes of voices and see the shadows of the artifacts, and they mistake these echoes and shadows for reality.
Imagine that one prisoner is unchained, turned around, and forced to look at the true source of the shadows. But the fire pains his eyes. He prefers the pleasant deception of the shadows.
Steep and Rugged Ascent- (Education)

First must look at the shadows of the trees because the sun is too bright and he is used to shadows

Finally he is able to see the sun- (Enlightenment)
Simile of the Line

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KNOWLEDGE</th>
<th>EPISTEMOLOGY</th>
<th>ONTOLOGY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pure Reason</td>
<td>The Forms</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding</td>
<td>Scientific Concepts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belief</td>
<td>Particular Objects</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conjecture</td>
<td>Images</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

THE GOOD

THE SUN

The Intelligible World

The Visible World
Theory of Forms

What are the Forms?

- Forms are those changeless, eternal, and nonmaterial essences or patterns of which the actual visible objects we see are only poor copies.
- Forms are the source of all reality.
The Form of Beauty

The Concept of Beauty

Individual Beautiful Entities

Imitations of Beautiful Entities (paintings, photos, reflections, shadows)
The Good is a superform, or the Form of all Forms.

The whole of reality is founded upon the Good, which is reality’s source of being.

All knowledge is knowledge of the Good.

The sun represents the Good in the myth of the Cave.

Good → God → Sun → Son
The Form of the Good is:

“the universal author of all things beautiful and right, parent of light and lord of light in this world, and the source of truth and reason in the other.”
Other Questions

- What is the relation of Forms to things?
- What is the relation of Forms to each other?
- Where do the Forms exist?
- How do we know the Forms?
Aristotle

(384-322 BC)
A Break from Plato

Aristotle asked:

- If Forms are essences of things, how can they exist separated from things?
- If they are the cause of things, how can they exist in a different world?
This won’t do!

Mere Dog Copies
“To say that they [Forms] are patterns and that other things share in them, is to use empty words and poetical metaphors.”
Did Plato’s compromise really solve the problem of motion and change?

Is it really comprehensible to explain “changing things” by saying that they are bad imitations of unchanging things?
Aristotle thought not:

- He argued that a distinction must be drawn between form and matter, but that these two features of reality can be distinguished on in thought, not in fact.
Thought

Bronze Stuff

Sphericity

Can be separated here, ... but not here.

A BRONZE SPHERE

REALITY
Matter and Form

- Matter = What is unique to an object
  - “Thisness”
- Form = What something is
  - “Whatness”

Matter + Form = Substance
Substance

- **Essences**
  - Features of a substance essential to it

- **Accidents**
  - Features of a substance *not* essential to it

- **Example**
  - Substance = Human
    - Essence- Rationality
    - Accident- Baldness
- Plato
  - Reality composed of upper tier Eternal Forms
  - Lower tier matter (that unsuccessfully attempts to imitate the Forms)

- Aristotle
  - Reality composed of plurality of substances
Does Aristotle's pluralism solve the problem of motion and change?

How does one form become another?

Can one substance become another?
Potentiality and Actuality

- Acorn $\rightarrow$ Oak Tree
  - The acorns matter contains the potentiality of becoming an oak tree, which is the acorns actuality.
Each individual substance is a self-contained teleological system.

Everything is striving unconsciously toward its end- perfection or the Good
The Process of Change

The Four Causes-
  Cause = Explanation

1. Formal Cause
   - the form explains what a thing is.
   “What is it?”
   e.g. Statue
2. Material Cause
   - the matter out of which a thing is made
What is it made of?
e.g. marble
3. Efficient Cause
   - The actual force that brings about change
   By what is it made?
   e.g. sculptor
4. Final Cause
   - The end or ultimate purpose for which a thing was made
   For what end is it made?
e.g. in order to decorate
Moral Philosophy

- The notion of goal or purpose is the overriding one
- Meaningless → Meaningful
- Circular series → ultimate good
- Wasted life → happiness
What is good?

- Good is performing the intended function
  - Good Hammer → does what hammers are designed to do
  - Good Carpenter → fulfills function as a builder

- Good doctor ≠ Good person
What is the good person?
- The good person is the person who is fulfilling his/her function as a human being.

What is human function?
- To engage in activity of the soul which is in accordance with virtue and which is in conformity with reason- *happiness is the end*
- Ends for the sake of something else
  - Pleasure, wealth, honor
- Self sufficient final end
  - Happiness
What is ultimate end?

- Happiness is the end that alone meets all the requirements for the ultimate end of human action
- Happiness = Good (the fulfillment of our function)
Works Referenced