

Chapter 1 : Philosophy - Wikipedia

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Truth and Fact World views and theories Further information: World view A common colloquial usage would have reality mean "perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes toward reality", as in "My reality is not your reality. For example, in a religious discussion between friends, one might say attempting humor , "You might disagree, but in my reality, everyone goes to heaven. Reality is the totality of all things, structures actual and conceptual , events past and present and phenomena, whether observable or not. It is what a world view whether it be based on individual or shared human experience ultimately attempts to describe or map. Certain ideas from physics, philosophy, sociology, literary criticism , and other fields shape various theories of reality. One such belief is that there simply and literally is no reality beyond the perceptions or beliefs we each have about reality. Many of the concepts of science and philosophy are often defined culturally and socially. Berger and Thomas Luckmann , was published in It explained how knowledge is acquired and used for the comprehension of reality. Out of all the realities, the reality of everyday life is the most important one since our consciousness requires us to be completely aware and attentive to the experience of everyday life. Western philosophy Philosophy addresses two different aspects of the topic of reality: On the one hand, ontology is the study of being, and the central topic of the field is couched, variously, in terms of being, existence, "what is", and reality. The task in ontology is to describe the most general categories of reality and how they are interrelated. If a philosopher wanted to proffer a positive definition of the concept "reality", it would be done under this heading. As explained above, some philosophers draw a distinction between reality and existence. In fact, many analytic philosophers today tend to avoid the term "real" and "reality" in discussing ontological issues. But for those who would treat "is real" the same way they treat "exists", one of the leading questions of analytic philosophy has been whether existence or reality is a property of objects. It has been widely held by analytic philosophers that it is not a property at all, though this view has lost some ground in recent decades. On the other hand, particularly in discussions of objectivity that have feet in both metaphysics and epistemology , philosophical discussions of "reality" often concern the ways in which reality is, or is not, in some way dependent upon or, to use fashionable jargon , "constructed" out of mental and cultural factors such as perceptions, beliefs, and other mental states, as well as cultural artifacts, such as religions and political movements , on up to the vague notion of a common cultural world view , or Weltanschauung. The view that there is a reality independent of any beliefs, perceptions, etc. More specifically, philosophers are given to speaking about "realism about" this and that, such as realism about universals or realism about the external world. Generally, where one can identify any class of object, the existence or essential characteristics of which is said not to depend on perceptions, beliefs, language, or any other human artifact, one can speak of "realism about" that object. One can also speak of anti-realism about the same objects. Anti-realism is the latest in a long series of terms for views opposed to realism. Perhaps the first was idealism , so called because reality was said to be in the mind, or a product of our ideas. Berkeleyan idealism is the view, propounded by the Irish empiricist George Berkeley , that the objects of perception are actually ideas in the mind. Phenomenalism differs from Berkeleyan idealism primarily in that Berkeley believed that minds, or souls, are not merely ideas nor made up of ideas, whereas varieties of phenomenalism, such as that advocated by Russell , tended to go farther to say that the mind itself is merely a collection of perceptions, memories, etc. Finally, anti-realism became a fashionable term for any view which held that the existence of some object depends upon the mind or cultural artifacts. The view that the so-called external world is really merely a social, or cultural, artifact, called social constructionism , is one variety of anti-realism. Cultural relativism is the view that social issues such as morality are not absolute, but at least partially cultural artifact. A correspondence theory of knowledge about what exists claims that "true" knowledge of reality represents accurate correspondence of statements about and images of reality with the actual reality that the statements or images are attempting to represent. For example, the scientific method can verify that a statement is true based on the observable evidence that a

thing exists. Many humans can point to the Rocky Mountains and say that this mountain range exists, and continues to exist even if no one is observing it or making statements about it. Being The nature of being is a perennial topic in metaphysics. For, instance Parmenides taught that reality was a single unchanging Being, whereas Heraclitus wrote that all things flow. The 20th century philosopher Heidegger thought previous philosophers have lost sight the question of Being qua Being in favour of the questions of beings existing things , so that a return to the Parmenidean approach was needed. An ontological catalogue is an attempt to list the fundamental constituents of reality. The question of whether or not existence is a predicate has been discussed since the Early Modern period, not least in relation to the ontological argument for the existence of God. Existence, that something is, has been contrasted with essence , the question of what something is. Since existence without essence seems blank, it associated with nothingness by philosophers such as Hegel. Nihilism represents an extremely negative view of being, the absolute a positive one. Timothy Leary coined the influential term Reality Tunnel , by which he means a kind of representative realism. The theory states that, with a subconscious set of mental filters formed from their beliefs and experiences, every individual interprets the same world differently, hence "Truth is in the eye of the beholder". His ideas influenced the work of his friend Robert Anton Wilson. Abstract objects and mathematics The status of abstract entities, particularly numbers, is a topic of discussion in mathematics. In the philosophy of mathematics , the best known form of realism about numbers is Platonic realism , which grants them abstract, immaterial existence. Other forms of realism identify mathematics with the concrete physical universe. Anti-realist stances include formalism and fictionalism. Some approaches are selectively realistic about some mathematical objects but not others. Finitism rejects infinite quantities. Ultra-finitism accepts finite quantities up to a certain amount. Constructivism and intuitionism are realistic about objects that can be explicitly constructed, but reject the use of the principle of the excluded middle to prove existence by reductio ad absurdum. The traditional debate has focused on whether an abstract immaterial, intelligible realm of numbers has existed in addition to the physical sensible, concrete world. A recent development is the mathematical universe hypothesis , the theory that only a mathematical world exists, with the finite, physical world being an illusion within it. An extreme form of realism about mathematics is the mathematical multiverse hypothesis advanced by Max Tegmark. All structures that exist mathematically also exist physically. The theory can be considered a form of Platonism in that it posits the existence of mathematical entities, but can also be considered a mathematical monism in that it denies that anything exists except mathematical objects. Problem of universals The problem of universals is an ancient problem in metaphysics about whether universals exist. For example, Scott, Pat, and Chris have in common the universal quality of being human or humanity. There are various forms of realism. Two major forms are Platonic realism and Aristotelian realism. Aristotelian realism, on the other hand, is the view that universals are real entities, but their existence is dependent on the particulars that exemplify them. Nominalism and conceptualism are the main forms of anti-realism about universals. Time and space Main article: Philosophy of space and time A traditional realist position in ontology is that time and space have existence apart from the human mind. Idealists deny or doubt the existence of objects independent of the mind. Some anti-realists whose ontological position is that objects outside the mind do exist, nevertheless doubt the independent existence of time and space. Kant , in the Critique of Pure Reason , described time as an a priori notion that, together with other a priori notions such as space , allows us to comprehend sense experience. Kant denies that either space or time are substance , entities in themselves, or learned by experience; he holds rather that both are elements of a systematic framework we use to structure our experience. Spatial measurements are used to quantify how far apart objects are, and temporal measurements are used to quantitatively compare the interval between or duration of events. Although space and time are held to be transcendently ideal in this sense, they are also empirically real, i. Idealist writers such as J. McTaggart in The Unreality of Time have argued that time is an illusion. As well as differing about the reality of time as a whole, metaphysical theories of time can differ in their ascriptions of reality to the past , present and future separately. Presentism holds that the past and future are unreal, and only an ever-changing present is real. The block universe theory, also known as Eternalism, holds that past, present and future are all real, but the passage of time is an illusion. It is often said to have a scientific basis in relativity. The growing block

universe theory holds that past and present are real, but the future is not. Time, and the related concepts of process and evolution are central to the system-building metaphysics of A. Whitehead and Charles Hartshorne. Modal realism is the view, notably propounded by David Kellogg Lewis, that all possible worlds are as real as the actual world. Other theorists may use the Possible World framework to express and explore problems without committing to it ontologically. Possible world theory is related to alethic logic: The many worlds interpretation of quantum mechanics is a similar idea in science. Theories of everything TOE and philosophy

Main article: Theory of everything philosophy The philosophical implications of a physical TOE are frequently debated. For example, if philosophical physicalism is true, a physical TOE will coincide with a philosophical theory of everything. The "system building" style of metaphysics attempts to answer all the important questions in a coherent way, providing a complete picture of the world. Plato and Aristotle could be said to be early examples of comprehensive systems. In the early modern period 17th and 18th centuries, the system-building scope of philosophy is often linked to the rationalist method of philosophy, that is the technique of deducing the nature of the world by pure a priori reason. Other philosophers do not believe its techniques can aim so high. Some scientists think a more mathematical approach than philosophy is needed for a TOE, for instance Stephen Hawking wrote in *A Brief History of Time* that even if we had a TOE, it would necessarily be a set of equations. He wrote, "What is it that breathes fire into the equations and makes a universe for them to describe? While this form of reality might be common to others as well, it could at times also be so unique to oneself as to never be experienced or agreed upon by anyone else. Much of the kind of experience deemed spiritual occurs on this level of reality. Such reflection was to take place from a highly modified "first person" viewpoint, studying phenomena not as they appear to "my" consciousness, but to any consciousness whatsoever. Husserl believed that phenomenology could thus provide a firm basis for all human knowledge, including scientific knowledge, and could establish philosophy as a "rigorous science". The "Brain in a vat" hypothesis is cast in scientific terms.

Chapter 2 : Reality - Wikipedia

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David Ben "Courage is a special kind of knowledge; the knowledge of how to fear what ought to be feared and how not to fear what ought not to be feared. Self-education will make you a fortune. Learning is the beginning of health. Learning is the beginning of spirituality. Searching and learning is where the miracle process all begins. The great Breakthrough in your life comes when you realize it that you can learn anything you need to learn to accomplish any goal that you set for yourself. This means there are no limits on what you can be, have or do. Imagination is more important than knowledge. Imagination encircles the world. Dyer "Every mind was made for growth, for knowledge, and its nature is sinned against when it is doomed to ignorance. Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge? Where is the knowledge we have lost in information? Elliot "Zeal without knowledge is fire without light. It controls access to opportunity and advancement. Drucker "God grant that not only the love of liberty but a thorough knowledge of the rights of man may pervade all the nations of the earth, so that a philosopher may set his foot anywhere on its surface and say: This is my country! Brian Tracy "Knowledge is of two kinds: We know a subject ourselves, or we know where we can find information about it. The mind cannot survive on junk food. Jim Rohn "It is nothing for one to know something unless another knows you know it. As our island of knowledge grows, so does the shore of our ignorance. All you have to do is go to the library. Only three percent of the people in America have a library card. Wow, they must be expensive! Probably in every neighborhood. Air Force "Not to know is bad; not to wish to know is worse. Advance or lose all. Convince yourself that you have no limits. Brian Tracy "Men have a tendency to believe what they least understand. For I am possessed by a fever for knowledge, experience and creation. Let that Knower awaken in us and drive the horses of the mind, emotions, and physical body on the pathway which that king has chosen. Arundale "Scientific apparatus offers a window to knowledge, but as they grow more elaborate, scientists spend ever more time washing the windows. They generate still, and cast their seeds in the minds of others, provoking and causing infinite actions and opinions in succeeding ages. Know your failings, passions, and prejudices so you can separate them from what you see. Know also when you actually have thought through to the nature of the thing with which you are dealing and when you are not thinking at all. I am Master of this college: He that knew all that ever learning writ, Knew only this? The more you learn, the more you earn and more self confidence you will have. Boorstin "The greatest obstacle to discovery is not ignorance? Boorstin "Many a man who has known himself at ten forgets himself utterly between ten and thirty. Bristol "One of the most common reasons so few people are consistently able to achieve meaningful results is that they are unwilling to experience the discomfort associated with relentlessly pursuing a correct perception of reality. Psychology is action, not thinking about oneself. We continue to shape our personality all our life. He learns to see himself, but suddenly, provided he was honest, all the rest appears, and it is as rich as he was, and, as a final crowning, richer. One helps you make a living; the other helps? Get clear about exactly what it is that you need to learn and exactly what you need to do to learn it. Make it thy business to know thyself, which is the most difficult lesson in the world. This is the foundation of wisdom and the highway to whatever is good. God, Nature, the wise, the world, preach man, exhort him both by word and deed to the study of himself. Christensen "I prefer tongue-tied knowledge to ignorant loquacity. Jim Rohn "Consider your origins:

Chapter 3 : "Reality, knowledge, and the good life : an historical introduction to " by Willem A. deVries

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That is, comparatively few believe either that a meaningful life is a merely neutral quality, or that what is of key interest is the meaning of the human species or universe as a whole for discussions focused on the latter, see Edwards ; Munitz ; Seachris Most in the field have ultimately wanted to know whether and how the existence of one of us over time has meaning, a certain property that is desirable for its own sake. Beyond drawing the distinction between the life of an individual and that of a whole, there has been very little discussion of life as the logical bearer of meaning. Returning to topics on which there is consensus, most writing on meaning believe that it comes in degrees such that some periods of life are more meaningful than others and that some lives as a whole are more meaningful than others perhaps contra Britton , Consider a consequentialist view according to which each individual counts for one in virtue of having a capacity for a meaningful life cf. Railton , or a Kantian view that says that people have an intrinsic worth in virtue of their capacity for autonomous choices, where meaning is a function of the exercise of this capacity Nozick , ch. On both views, morality could counsel an agent to help people with relatively meaningless lives, at least if the condition is not of their choosing. A life in an experience or virtual reality machine could conceivably be happy but very few take it to be a prima facie candidate for meaningfulness Nozick Goetz , in particular, bites many bullets. Of course, one might argue that a life would be meaningless if or even because it were unhappy or immoral, particularly given Aristotelian conceptions of these disvalues. My point is that the question of what makes a life meaningful is conceptually distinct from the question of what makes a life happy or moral, even if it turns out that the best answer to the question of meaning appeals to an answer to one of these other evaluative questions. If talk about meaning in life is not by definition talk about happiness or rightness, then what is it about? There is as yet no consensus in the field. One answer is that a meaningful life is one that by definition has achieved choice-worthy purposes Nielsen or involves satisfaction upon having done so Hepburn ; Wohlgennant However, for such an analysis to clearly demarcate meaningfulness from happiness, it would be useful to modify it to indicate which purposes are germane to the former. On this score, some suggest that conceptual candidates for grounding meaning are purposes that not only have a positive value, but also render a life coherent Markus , make it intelligible Thomson , 8â€”13 , or transcend animal nature Levy Now, it might be that a focus on any kind of purpose is too narrow for ruling out the logical possibility that meaning could inhere in certain actions, experiences, states, or relationships that have not been adopted as ends and willed and that perhaps even could not be, e. These are prima facie accounts of meaning in life, but do not essentially involve the attainment of purposes that foster coherence, intelligibility or transcendence. It is implausible to think that these criteria are satisfied by subjectivist appeals to whatever choices one ends up making or to whichever desires happen to be strongest for a given person. In that case, it could be that the field is united in virtue of addressing certain overlapping but not equivalent ideas that have family resemblances Metz , ch. For instance, the concept of a worthwhile life is probably not identical to that of a meaningful one Baier , ch. For instance, one would not be conceptually confused to claim that a meaningless life full of animal pleasures would be worth living. The rest of this discussion addresses attempts to theoretically capture the nature of this good. Supernaturalism Most English speaking philosophers writing on meaning in life are trying to develop and evaluate theories, i. These theories are standardly divided on a metaphysical basis, i. Supernaturalist theories are views that meaning in life must be constituted by a certain relationship with a spiritual realm. In contrast, naturalist theories are views that meaning can obtain in a world as known solely by science. Here, although meaning could accrue from a divine realm, certain ways of living in a purely physical universe would be sufficient for it. Note that there is logical space for a non-naturalist theory that meaning is a function of abstract properties that are neither spiritual nor physical. However, only scant attention has been paid to this possibility in the Anglo-American literature Williams ; Audi Supernaturalist thinkers in the monotheistic tradition are usefully divided into those with God-centered views and soul-centered views. The

former take some kind of connection with God understood to be a spiritual person who is all-knowing, all-good, and all-powerful and who is the ground of the physical universe to constitute meaning in life, even if one lacks a soul construed as an immortal, spiritual substance. The latter deem having a soul and putting it into a certain state to be what makes life meaningful, even if God does not exist. Of course, many supernaturalists believe that certain relationships with God and a soul are jointly necessary and sufficient for a significant existence. However, the simpler view is common, and often arguments proffered for the more complex view fail to support it any more than the simpler view. If a person failed to do what God intends him to do with his life, then, on the current view, his life would be meaningless. In addition, some critics argue that a universally applicable and binding moral code is not necessary for meaning in life, even if the act of helping others is. Other purpose theorists contend that having been created by God for a reason would be the only way that our lives could avoid being contingent. Craig ; cf. Furthermore, the literature is still unclear what contingency is and why it is a deep problem. Still other purpose theorists maintain that our lives would have meaning only insofar as they were intentionally fashioned by a creator, thereby obtaining meaning of the sort that an art-object has. Gordon Are all these objections sound? Not only does each of these versions of the purpose theory have specific problems, but they all face this shared objection: This objection goes back at least to Jean-Paul Sartre , 45 , and there are many replies to it in the literature that have yet to be assessed. e. Robert Nozick presents a God-centered theory that focuses less on God as purposive and more on God as infinite. Nozick , ch. The basic idea is that for a finite condition to be meaningful, it must obtain its meaning from another condition that has meaning. And, being finite, the spouse must obtain his or her importance from elsewhere, perhaps from the sort of work he or she does. And this work must obtain its meaning by being related to something else that is meaningful, and so on. A regress on meaningful finite conditions is present, and the suggestion is that the regress can terminate only in something infinite, a being so all-encompassing that it need not indeed, cannot go beyond itself to obtain meaning from anything else. And that is God. The standard objection to this rationale is that a finite condition could be meaningful without obtaining its meaning from another meaningful condition; perhaps it could be meaningful in itself, or obtain its meaning by being related to something beautiful, autonomous or otherwise valuable for its own sake but not meaningful. Thomson , 25â€”26, The purpose- and infinity-based rationales are the two most common instances of God-centered theory in the literature, and the naturalist can point out that they arguably face a common problem: Nature seems able to ground a universal morality and the sort of final value from which meaning might spring. And other God-based views seem to suffer from this same problem. For two examples, some claim that God must exist in order for there to be a just world, where a world in which the bad do well and the good fare poorly would render our lives senseless. Craig ; cf. However, the naturalist will point out that an impersonal, Karmic-like force of nature conceivably could justly distribute penalties and rewards in the way a retributive personal judge would, and that actually living together in loving relationships would seem to confer much more meaning on life than a loving fond remembrance. A second problem facing all God-based views is the existence of apparent counterexamples. If we think of the stereotypical lives of Albert Einstein, Mother Teresa, and Pablo Picasso, they seem meaningful even if we suppose there is no all-knowing, all-powerful, and all-good spiritual person who is the ground of the physical world. What is the difference between a deep meaning and a shallow one? And why think a spiritual realm is necessary for the former? At this point, the supernaturalist could usefully step back and reflect on what it might be about God that would make Him uniquely able to confer meaning in life, perhaps as follows from the perfect being theological tradition. For God to be solely responsible for any significance in our lives, God must have certain qualities that cannot be found in the natural world, these qualities must be qualitatively superior to any goods possible in a physical universe, and they must be what ground meaning in it. Here, the supernaturalist could argue that meaning depends on the existence of a perfect being, where perfection requires properties such as atemporality, simplicity, and immutability that are possible only in a spiritual realm. Metz , chs. Morris ; contra Brown and Hartshorne Although this might be a promising strategy for a God-centered theory, it faces a serious dilemma. On the one hand, in order for God to be the sole source of meaning, God must be utterly unlike us; for the more God were like us, the more reason there would be to think we could obtain meaning from ourselves,

absent God. On the other hand, the more God is utterly unlike us, the less clear it is how we could obtain meaning by relating to Him. How can one love a being that cannot change? How can one imitate such a being? Could an immutable, atemporal, simple being even have purposes? Could it truly be a person? And why think an utterly perfect being is necessary for meaning? Why would not a very good but imperfect being confer some meaning? There are two prominent arguments for a soul-based perspective. The first one is often expressed by laypeople and is suggested by the work of Leo Tolstoy ; see also Hanfling , 22â€™24; Morris , 26; Craig Tolstoy argues that for life to be meaningful something must be worth doing, that nothing is worth doing if nothing one does will make a permanent difference to the world, and that doing so requires having an immortal, spiritual self. Many of course question whether having an infinite effect is necessary for meaning e. Life seems nonsensical when the wicked flourish and the righteous suffer, at least supposing there is no other world in which these injustices will be rectified, whether by God or by Karma. Something like this argument can be found in the Biblical chapter Ecclesiastes, and it continues to be defended Davis ; Craig However, like the previous rationale, the inferential structure of this one seems weak; even if an afterlife were required for just outcomes, it is not obvious why an eternal afterlife should be thought necessary Perrett , Work has been done to try to make the inferences of these two arguments stronger, and the basic strategy has been to appeal to the value of perfection Metz , ch. Perhaps the Tolstoian reason why one must live forever in order to make the relevant permanent difference is an agent-relative need for one to honor an infinite value, something qualitatively higher than the worth of, say, pleasure. And maybe the reason why immortality is required in order to mete out just deserts is that rewarding the virtuous requires satisfying their highest free and informed desires, one of which would be for eternal flourishing of some kind Goetz While far from obviously sound, these arguments at least provide some reason for thinking that immortality is necessary to satisfy the major premise about what is required for meaning. However, both arguments are still plagued by a problem facing the original versions; even if they show that meaning depends on immortality, they do not yet show that it depends on having a soul. By definition, if one has a soul, then one is immortal, but it is not clearly true that if one is immortal, then one has a soul. What reason is there to think that one must have a soul in particular for life to be significant? The most promising reason seems to be one that takes us beyond the simple version of soul-centered theory to the more complex view that both God and a soul constitute meaning. Another possibility is that meaning comes from honoring what is divine within oneself, i. As with God-based views, naturalist critics offer counterexamples to the claim that a soul or immortality of any kind is necessary for meaning. Appeals to a soul require perfection, whether it be, as above, a perfect object to honor, a perfectly just reward to enjoy, or a perfect being with which to commune. However, if indeed soul-centered theory ultimately relies on claims about meaning turning on perfection, such a view is attractive at least for being simple, and rival views have yet to specify in a principled and thoroughly defended way where to draw the line at less than perfection perhaps a start is Metz , ch. What less than ideal amount of value is sufficient for a life to count as meaningful? Critics of soul-based views maintain not merely that immortality is not necessary for meaning in life, but also that it is sufficient for a meaningless life. One influential argument is that an immortal life, whether spiritual or physical, could not avoid becoming boring, rendering life pointless Williams ; Ellin , â€™12; Belshaw , 82â€™91; Smuts The most common reply is that immortality need not get boring Fischer ; Wisniewski ; Bortolotti and Nagasawa ; Chappell ; Quigley and Harris , 75â€™ However, it might also be worth questioning whether boredom is truly sufficient for meaninglessness. Suppose, for instance, that one volunteers to be bored so that many others will not be bored; perhaps this would be a meaningful sacrifice to make. Another argument that being immortal would be sufficient to make our lives insignificant is that persons who cannot die could not exhibit certain virtues Nussbaum ; Kass For instance, they could not promote justice of any important sort, be benevolent to any significant degree, or exhibit courage of any kind that matters, since life and death issues would not be at stake.

Chapter 4 : Reality Of Life Quotes (quotes)

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The Republic begins with Socrates explaining his claim that the just man is the happy man par excellence. Socrates argues that in order to have a happy and good life, man must first have an idea of the ends of human existence. This is what he means by the examined life. Socrates tells the other men who have assembled in the house of Cephalus, including Glaucon, Adeimantus, Polemarchus, Euthydemus, and Thrasymachus, that the truly just man does not want to appear just, but to actually embody and practice justice. Of course, this takes more effort and good will than just appearing just; to be just one actually has to demonstrate virtue in our actions. This Socratic conviction is later refuted by Thrasymachus, who argues that the unjust man demonstrates his superior intelligence in appearing to be just. Thrasymachus attempts to demonstrate that this type of individual always gets his way through the affronted appearance of justice. Affectation and effrontery in matters of justice, Thrasymachus tells Socrates, are more efficient ways of achieving recognition than the practice of genuine justice. Thrasymachus thinks of intelligence as craftiness. History demonstrates how much immediate personal gain this activity can offer. Plato cannot accomplish the latter without first demonstrating how morality is grounded in essence, which is communicated to man through the forms. For instance, the opposition between divine reason and irrationality is the main theme of the Statesman. On the other hand, the Good is equivalent to transcendent, divine perfection. The Good may be transcendent in relation to the make-work world of man, but it is not transparent, as this is the driving force behind all of our actions and behavior. This theme also appears in Gorgias, where Gorgias and Polus argue that the greatest good is defined as power. This line of questioning allows Plato to humanize and vitalize knowledge in his dialogues. Conveying lasting and universal understanding to children through analogy, Aesop goes a long way in explaining epistemological and metaphysical tensions that are central to the human condition. Plato posits the sun as being analogous to the form of the Good. As such, it is the nature of the sun, when seen as the Good, which allows man to live the good life. It is equally important to remember that ancient Greek philosophy conveys meaning through the juxtaposition of mythos and logos. Is it the case that not all people can possess the essence of truth? This is a question that subsequent philosophers have asked. Plato, and Parmenides before him, argued that truth requires an active engagement. This suggests that truth is never attained through a passive attitude toward human reality. This entails that man must be proactive in his search for truth. This also suggests that the quest for truth is fundamentally tied to the nature of man as a cosmic, metaphysical being. Plato argues that our ability to decipher truth will affect the nature of the ideal State, morality and the good life eudaimonia. We also encounter this question in Book VII of the Republic, where Plato begins by questioning how far our nature can become enlightened. In the allegory of the cave the prisoners are said to be captives of their own ignorance. In that allegory darkness exists in direct correlation to ignorance—as light is to truth. Light produces a liberating effect for people who attempt to live the good life. But truth at what price? There are truths that can be known in their immediacy—their essence easily intuited—but the test of truth in terms of the good life can only be attained with the passage of time. This is why Plato argues that time is the ultimate test of truth. The scientific method requires quantifiable evidence. Philosophical truth, more often than not, requires time to flush out fallacious premises. The dialectical nature of truth-seeking, especially as this acts as the ground of the good life, is ultimately arrived at—if at all—through sustained effort. Truth, Plato tells us, is objective and serves as the ground of human reality. This, he contends, remains the case regardless of our animated rants and machinations to the contrary. Neo-Platonism influenced Christian stained glass-making in the attention to color and the allegorical effect of the design in conveying a story. The idea that God partakes in creation as light was a central aspect of cathedral building, especially how light transparency and height verticality, are dispersed throughout the interior of the building. To them, the fire is all the light that exists. Thus, they construe appearance as reality. When light is immediately contrasted with darkness, as occurs in a total solar eclipse or a blackout in our own age, light is then no longer taken for

granted. The dilemma, as Plato views it, is that light, because of its translucent nature, is so near us that we fail to see it. Instead, truth reveals itself to the active participant in the struggle to attain the fruits of the Good. Socrates is clear about this: But whether true or false, my opinion is that in the world of knowledge the idea of good appears last of all, and is seen only with an effort. The prisoners who leave the cave face a dilemma; once they witness freedom and the warmth of the sun, they naturally want to remain free. In other words, once we come face to face with truth, it becomes difficult to concern ourselves with the banal vainglory brought on by appearances. This is why Socrates argues that after a cave dweller has left the cave and has seen the sun, he will refuse to partake in the ignorance of the prisoners who remain in the cave. At that point, the released prisoner begins to pity his fellow prisoners for living in a world of shadows. This is one reason why truthâ€™light in the allegoryâ€™has such a liberating effect on man. Truth has many practical benefits. This is certainly expected of parents in relation to their children, for instance. The purpose of truth, what amounts to living-in-truth, is to guide our lives through the objectifying forces that work against the individual. Truth allows us to better understand the many difficulties that we must deal with in everyday life. Truth is like a sieve that retains substance while discarding hollow opinions. Truth, as presented by Plato and other ancient Greek thinkers, delivers us from ignorance as a way of life. More importantly, the attainment of truth has a heroic quality that cannot be separated from virtue. Plato makes it clear that the rational part of the soul enables man to attain truth. This is the task of the enlightened. While this daemon does not tell him precisely what course of action to take, it does tell him what not to do. The daemon acts as a fiduciary of sincerity, one that forces him to understand his own ignorance. This is an essential characteristic of the spirit of philos-sophia that Socrates does not allow us to forget. Socrates seems to suggest: He comes close to suggesting that for many people the nature of man is more akin to the easy vagaries of sophism than it is to a lasting engagement with truth. To struggle against this objectifying impulse requires virtuous heroism. In his allegory of the cave, Plato addresses the question whether human life is commensurate with truth. This question is especially relevant to education. According to Platonic pedagogy, in order for education to take place, there must already be present a minimal capacity for understanding and knowledge in the student. This is the capacity for inference. When Socrates states that one cannot put sight into blind eyes, he is suggesting that some individuals have an innate disposition to envision the nature of truth. This is facilitated by the teacher, Plato tells us, who effectively positions the soul to view the world of Being in opposition to Becoming. This is the case with the prisoners who reflect about the nature of the figures that they see reflected on the wall.

Chapter 5 : Knowledge Quotes - BrainyQuote

View Notes - PHL Reading Notes from PHL at Creighton University. PHL Philosophical Ideas: Reality, Knowledge, and the Good Life Elizabeth Cooke c ookeef@theinnatdunvilla.com

Although experience of what happens is a key to all demonstrative knowledge, Aristotle supposed that the abstract study of "being qua being" must delve more deeply, in order to understand why things happen the way they do. A quick review of past attempts at achieving this goal reveals that earlier philosophers had created more difficult questions than they had answered: Aristotle intended to do better. Although any disciplined study is promising because there is an ultimate truth to be discovered, the abstractness of metaphysical reasoning requires that we think about the processes we are employing even as we use them in search of that truth. As always, Aristotle assumed that the structure of language and logic naturally mirrors the way things really are. Thus, the major points of each book are made by carefully analyzing our linguistic practices as a guide to the ultimate nature of what is.

Fundamental Truths It is reasonable to begin, therefore, with the simplest rules of logic, which embody the most fundamental principles applying to absolutely everything that is: The Law of Non-Contradiction in logic merely notes that no assertion is both true and false, but applied to reality this simple rule entails that nothing can both "be. Thus, neither strict Protagorean relativism nor Parmenidean immutability offer a correct account of the nature of reality. **Metaphysics IV** The Law of Excluded Middle in logic states the necessity that either an assertion or its negation must be true, and this entails that there is no profound indeterminacy in the realm of reality. Although our knowledge of an assertion may sometimes fall short of what we need in order to decide whether it is true or false, we can be sure that either it or its negation is true. **Metaphysics IV** In order to achieve its required abstract necessity, all of metaphysics must be constructed from similar principles. Aristotle believed this to be the case because metaphysics is concerned with a genuinely unique subject matter. While natural science deals with moveable, separable things and mathematics focusses upon immoveable, inseparable things, metaphysics especially in its highest, most abstract varieties has as its objects only things that are both immoveable and separable. Thus, what we learn in metaphysics is nothing less than the immutable eternal nature, or essence, of individual things. **Universals** In the central books of the *Metaphysics*, Aristotle tried to develop an adequate analysis of subject-predicate judgments. Since logic and language rely heavily upon the copulative use of "is," careful study of these uses should reveal the genuine relationship that holds between substances and their features. Of course, Plato had already offered an extended account of this relationship, emphasizing the reality of the abstract forms rather than their material substratum. But Aristotle argued that the theory of forms is seriously flawed: By identifying the thing with its essence, the theory cannot account for the generation of new substances. **Metaphysics VII** A more reasonable position must differentiate between matter and form and allow for a dynamic relation between the two. Aristotle therefore maintained that each individual substance is a hylomorphic composite involving both matter and form together. Ordinary predication, then, involves paronymously attributing an abstract universal of a concrete individual, and our experience of this green thing is more significant than our apprehension of the form of greenness. This account, with its emphasis on the particularity of individual substances, provided Aristotle with a firm foundation in practical experience. **Higher Truths** Aristotle also offered a detailed account of the dynamic process of change. Becoming, then, is the process in which the potentiality present in one individual substance is actualized through the agency of something else which is already actual. **Metaphysics IX** Thus, for Aristotle, change of any kind requires the actual existence of something which causes the change. The higher truths of what Aristotle called "theology" arise from an application of these notions to the more purely speculative study of being qua being. Since every being is a composite whose form and matter have been brought together by some cause, and since there cannot be infinitely many such causes, he concluded that everything that happens is ultimately attributable to a single universal cause, itself eternal and immutable. **Metaphysics XII 6** This self-caused "first mover," from which all else derives, must be regarded as a mind, whose actual thinking is its whole nature. The goodness of the entire universe, Aristotle supposed, resides in its teleological unity as the will of a single intelligent being. The

Nature of Souls According to Aristotle , every animate being is a living thing which can move itself only because it has a soul. Animals and plants, along with human beings, are more like each other than any of them are like any inanimate object, since each of them has a soul. Thus, his great treatise on psychology, *On The Soul* , offers interconnected explanations for the functions and operations of all living organisms. All animals and perhaps some plants also have a sensitive soul by means of which they perceive features of their surroundings and move in response to the stimuli this provides. Human beings also possess in addition to the rest a rational soul that permits representation and thought. This soul is the formal, efficient, and final cause of the existence of the organism; only its material cause resides purely in the body. Thus, all of the operations of the organism are to be explained in terms of the functions of its soul. Human Knowledge Sensation is the passive capacity for the soul to be changed through the contact of the associated body with external objects. Thus, without any necessary exchange of matter, the soul takes on the form of the object: *On the Soul II 5* Thought is the more active process of engaging in the manipulation of forms without any contact with external objects at all. Thus, thinking is potentially independent of the objects of thought, from which it abstracts the form alone. Even the imagination, according to Aristotle, involves the operation of the common sense without stimulation by the sensory organs of the body. Hence, although all knowledge must begin with information acquired through the senses, its results are achieved by rational means. Transcending the sensory preoccupation with particulars, the soul employs the formal methods of logic to cognize the relationships among abstract forms. Every animate being, to some degree, is capable of responding to its own internal states and those of its external environment in such a way as to alleviate the felt absence or lack of some pleasure or the felt presence of some pain. Even actions taken as a result of intellectual deliberation, Aristotle supposed, produce motion only through the collateral evocation of a concrete desire.

Chapter 6 : Plato Quotes - BrainyQuote

Aristotle considered the most fundamental features of reality in the twelve books of the $\hat{\iota}\alpha\epsilon\hat{\iota}\mu\hat{\iota},\hat{\iota}\pm\hat{\iota}\hat{\iota}... \hat{\iota}\hat{\iota}\hat{\iota}\hat{\iota}$ (Metaphysics). Although experience of what happens is a key to all demonstrative knowledge, Aristotle supposed that the abstract study of "being qua being" must delve more deeply, in order.

It tries to discover the nature of truth and knowledge and to find what is of basic value and importance in life. It also examines the relationships between humanity and nature and between the individual and society. Philosophy arises out of wonder, curiosity, and the desire to know and understand. Philosophy is thus a form of inquiry--a process of analysis, criticism, interpretation, and speculation. The term philosophy cannot be defined precisely because the subject is so complex and so controversial. Different philosophers have different views of the nature, methods, and range of philosophy. The term philosophy itself comes from the Greek philosophia, which means love of wisdom. In that sense, wisdom is the active use of intelligence, not something passive that a person simply possesses. These early philosophers tried to discover the basic makeup of things and the nature of the world and of reality. For answers to questions about such subjects, people had largely relied on magic, superstition, religion, tradition, or authority. But the Greek philosophers considered those sources of knowledge unreliable. Instead, they sought answers by thinking and by studying nature. Philosophy has also had a long history in some non-Western cultures, especially in China and India. But until about years ago, there was little interchange between those philosophies and Western philosophy, chiefly because of difficulties of travel and communication. As a result, Western philosophy generally developed independently of Eastern philosophy. The Importance of Philosophy Philosophic thought is an inescapable part of human existence. Almost everyone has been puzzled from time to time by such essentially philosophic questions as "What does life mean? Even a person who claims that considering philosophic questions is a waste of time is expressing what is important, worthwhile, or valuable. A rejection of all philosophy is in itself philosophy. By studying philosophy, people can clarify what they believe, and they can be stimulated to think about ultimate questions. There are people who simply enjoy reading the great philosophers, especially those who were also great writers. Philosophy has had enormous influence on our everyday lives. The very language we speak uses classifications derived from philosophy. For example, the classifications of noun and verb involve the philosophic idea that there is a difference between things and actions. If we ask what the difference is, we are starting a philosophic inquiry. Every institution of society is based on philosophic ideas, whether that institution is the law, government, religion, the family, marriage, industry, business, or education. Philosophic differences have led to the overthrow of governments, drastic changes in laws, and the transformation of entire economic systems. Such changes have occurred because the people involved held certain beliefs about what is important, true, real, and significant and about how life should be ordered. Democratic societies stress that people learn to think and make choices for themselves. Nondemocratic societies discourage such activities and want their citizens to surrender their own interests to those of the state. The Branches of Philosophy Philosophic inquiry can be made into any subject because philosophy deals with everything in the world and all of knowledge. But traditionally, and for purposes of study, philosophy is divided into five branches, each organized around certain distinctive questions. The branches are 1 metaphysics, 2 epistemology, 3 logic, 4 ethics, and 5 aesthetics. Metaphysics is the study of the fundamental nature of reality and existence and of the essences of things. Metaphysics is itself often divided into two areas--ontology and cosmology. Ontology is the study of being. Cosmology is the study of the physical universe, or the cosmos, taken as a whole. Cosmology is also the name of the branch of science that studies the organization, history, and future of the universe. Metaphysics deals with such questions as "What is real? These theories include materialism, idealism, mechanism, and teleology. Materialism maintains that only matter has real existence and that feelings, thoughts, and other mental phenomena are produced by the activity of matter. Idealism states that every material thing is an idea or a form of an idea. In idealism, mental phenomena are what is fundamentally important and real. Mechanism maintains that all happenings result from purely mechanical forces, not from purpose, and that it makes no sense to speak of the universe itself as

having a purpose. Teleology, on the other hand, states that the universe and everything in it exists and occurs for some purpose. Epistemology aims to determine the nature, basis, and extent of knowledge. It explores the various ways of knowing, the nature of truth, and the relationships between knowledge and belief. Epistemology asks such questions as "What are the features of genuine knowledge as distinct from what appears to be knowledge? We arrive at a priori knowledge by thinking, without independent appeal to experience. For example, we know that there are 60 seconds in a minute by learning the meanings of the terms. In the same way, we know that there are 60 minutes in an hour. From these facts, we can deduce that there are 3, seconds in an hour, and we arrive at this conclusion by the operation of thought alone. We acquire empirical knowledge from observation and experience. For example, we know from observation how many keys are on a typewriter and from experience which key will print what letter. The nature of truth has baffled people since ancient times, partly because people so often use the term true for ideas they find congenial and want to believe, and also because people so often disagree about which ideas are true. Philosophers have attempted to define criteria for distinguishing between truth and error. But they disagree about what truth means and how to arrive at true ideas. The correspondence theory holds that an idea is true if it corresponds to the facts or reality. The pragmatic theory maintains that an idea is true if it works or settles the problem it deals with. The coherence theory states that truth is a matter of degree and that an idea is true to the extent to which it coheres fits together with other ideas that one holds. Skepticism claims that knowledge is impossible to attain and that truth is unknowable. Logic is the study of the principles and methods of reasoning. It explores how we distinguish between good or sound reasoning and bad or unsound reasoning. An instance of reasoning is called an argument or an inference. An argument consists of a set of statements called premises together with a statement called the conclusion, which is supposed to be supported by or derived from the premises. A good argument provides support for its conclusion, and a bad argument does not. Two basic types of reasoning are called deductive and inductive. A good deductive argument is said to be valid--that is, the conclusion necessarily follows from the premises. A deductive argument whose conclusion does not follow necessarily from the premises is said to be invalid. The argument "All human beings are mortal, all Greeks are human beings, therefore all Greeks are mortal" is a valid deductive argument. But the argument "All human beings are mortal, all Greeks are mortal, therefore all Greeks are human beings" is invalid, even though the conclusion is true. On that line of reasoning, one could argue that all dogs, which are also mortal, are human beings. Deductive reasoning is used to explore the necessary consequences of certain assumptions. Inductive reasoning is used to establish matters of fact and the laws of nature and does not aim at being deductively valid. One who reasons that all squirrels like nuts, on the basis that all squirrels so far observed like nuts, is reasoning inductively. The conclusion could be false, even though the premise is true. Nevertheless, the premise provides considerable support for the conclusion. Ethics concerns human conduct, character, and values. It studies the nature of right and wrong and the distinction between good and evil. Ethics asks such questions as "What makes right actions right and wrong actions wrong? In many cases, our obligations conflict or are vague. In addition, people often disagree about whether a particular action or principle is morally right or wrong. A view called relativism maintains that what is right or wrong depends on the particular culture concerned. What is right in one society may be wrong in another, this view argues, and so no basic standards exist by which a culture may be judged right or wrong. Objectivism claims that there are objective standards of right and wrong which can be discovered and which apply to everyone. Subjectivism states that all moral standards are subjective matters of taste or opinion. Aesthetics deals with the creation and principles of art and beauty. It also studies our thoughts, feelings, and attitudes when we see, hear, or read something beautiful. Something beautiful may be a work of art, such as a painting, symphony, or poem, or it may be a sunset or other natural phenomenon. In addition, aesthetics investigates the experience of engaging in such activities as painting, dancing, acting, and playing. Aesthetics is sometimes identified with the philosophy of art, which deals with the nature of art, the process of artistic creation, the nature of the aesthetic experience, and the principles of criticism. But aesthetics has wider application. It involves both works of art created by human beings and the beauty found in nature. Aesthetics relates to ethics and political philosophy when we ask questions about what role art and beauty should play in society and in the life of the individual.

Some philosophers claim that all philosophic questions arise out of linguistic problems. Others claim that all philosophic questions are really questions about language. One key question is "What is language? The question has been raised whether there can be a logically perfect language that would reflect in its categories the essential characteristics of the world. This question raises questions about the adequacy of ordinary language as a philosophic tool.

Chapter 7 : Aristotle: Reality and Knowledge

What Is the Good Life According to Plato? Plato contends that the good life is lived by fulfilling the natural function that all things possess. Plato believed that any object, animal or man has a natural function. Discovering that function is the first step in living the good life, and it is.

Only fragments remain of the writings of Parmenides and Heraclitus, including some contained in the dialogues of Plato. Parmenides argued that there is and could be only one thing, Being. One could not even think or say what is not. Moreover, since change implies that something comes to be what it was not—change from not being tan to being tan, nothing can change. The appearance of change is just that, a deceptive appearance. Unfortunately, what little we have left of Parmenides does not allow us to decide whether he argued that there is just one item, Being, in his universe—strict numerical monism—or whether there is just one kind of thing, beings or things that are. Heraclitus is the apostle of change. For Heraclitus, the ordinary objects of the physical world seem to be continually changing. The only constant, the underlying commonality, is the pattern of change itself. That there are entities that do not change is, for Heraclitus, an illusion. However, it appears from the writings of Plato, as well as those of the historian Xenophon and the comic poet Aristophanes, that Socrates was almost exclusively interested in ethics. This is not to say that metaphysical or epistemological issues were of no concern to him. Rather, these sources convey the impression that Socrates was not particularly interested in articulating a metaphysical or epistemological theory see Vlastos a. Rather, concerned with caring for the soul so that one might live happily Apology 29db , he uses both epistemological and metaphysical theses in search of answers to his ethical questions. However, it is not easy to distinguish when one is engaged in metaphysical theorizing from when is merely using metaphysical notions. Since Plato uses Socrates as a mouthpiece in many of his writings, readers are forced to ask when or whether one is reading the doctrines of Socrates, or Plato, or neither. In all likelihood, Plato wrote different dialogues at different times. We typically divide his writings into three periods. The Hippias Major, Gorgias and perhaps the Meno belong to the end of this period, maybe with the Gorgias and more likely the Meno verging into the middle period. These are dialogues devoted to ethical inquiries into the virtues, e. In contrast, the middle period dialogues are thought to present the views of Plato, though nonetheless Socrates remains the speaker. Socrates, in the early Apology, is non-committal about the immortality of the soul. Similarly, in the early dialogues we find that Socrates, in keeping with the claim that he is neither a metaphysician nor epistemologist, has nothing to say about recollection and never explicitly appeals to Forms. To those topics we shall turn shortly. But these are, in the eyes of many, just first thoughts; for the dialogues in the late period suggest changes to key ethical, epistemological and metaphysical doctrines found in these middle period works. Over the course of the last fifty years, scholars have debated whether and to what extent Plato changed his views. The debate has grown so involved that it is perhaps best not to worry whether anyone believes the extreme positions that, on the one hand, Plato conceived of every one of his major doctrines before he ever wrote, or, on the other hand, that he changed his mind on central theses from one dialogue to the next. Broadly speaking, those who maintain that Plato keeps to his central theses from one period to the next are Unitarians see, for instance, Shorey Those who believe that he changes his views from one period to the next are Developmentalists see, for instance, Owen a. The most plausible position, and the perhaps the dominant position in the contemporary scholarship, is somewhere in the middle. About some theses, Plato, over the course of his writings, expands his thoughts, recognizes difficulties, and even changes his mind. About other theses he stands by his fundamental insights. A prime example of the interpretative problems facing the student of Plato is the development of his most distinctive doctrine, the theory of Forms. Universal is a technical notion in metaphysics: It is meant to capture the intuition that a variety of things can all have the same feature or property. For instance, a bowling ball, a basketball, and a figure drawn on a blackboard can all be round. Of course there seems to be a huge number of properties. Many different things are white. Many different things are animals. Thus, for Plato, Roundness and Whiteness are Forms. Following the lead of Aristotle, scholars have focused on what it means for Plato, in contrast to Socrates, to have separated his

universals, the Forms. Elenctic inquiry is fundamentally a form of cross-examination, where Socrates tries to elicit from others their beliefs about matters of justice or piety, etc. Typically the result is that his interlocutors turn out to have an inconsistent set of beliefs about the virtues. The answers offered to these questions fail usually because they are too narrow or too wide. An answer is too narrow if it fails to include all cases. An answer is too wide if, while it includes all cases of, for instance, piety, it also includes other things, cases of justice or impiety. He is seeking an answer which picks out a Socratic Property, e. In the Socratic dialogues Plato does not distinguish the metaphysical way in which Socrates is pious from the way in which Piety is pious—in these dialogues there appears to be just one ontological predication relation. One has knowledge of a Socratic Property when she can give an account logos that says what X is, that is, when she can give the definition of the property under investigation. Treating a definition as a linguistic item, we can say that the definition specifies or picks out the essence ousia of the property, and a definitional statement predicates the essence of the property whose essence it is. It is unclear from the Socratic dialogues whether any other property is predicated of a Socratic Property: In contrast, the things that are pious, e. In this respect, the essence of Piety is also found in Socrates and thus the linguistic definition of Piety is also linguistically predicable of Socrates. Towards that end we find a series of arguments whose aim is to prove the immortality of the soul. Here Plato draws a contrast between unchanging Forms and changing material particulars. Unfortunately, neither in the *Phaedo* nor in any other dialogue do we find Plato giving a detailed description of the nature of Forms, or particulars, or their interaction. In such a reconstruction scholars try to determine a set of principles or theses which, taken together, allow us to show why Plato says what he does about Forms, souls, and other metaphysical items. In the attempt to make more precise what Plato is after, one risks attributing to Plato notions that are either not his or not as well developed in Plato as scholars would hope. Perhaps the notion of a particular is such a case. Intuitively, particulars are things like my dog Ajax, Venus, my computer, and so on, the ordinary material things of the everyday spatio-temporal world. But we also speak of particular actions, particular events, particular souls, and much else. In a rational reconstruction, we can be more precise by stipulating, for instance, that a particular is that of which properties are predicated and which is never predicated of anything or anything other than itself. In the late dialogues, especially the *Timaeus* and *Philebus*, Plato attempts to give a systematic account of material particulars. The senses furnish no truth; those senses about the body are neither accurate nor clear. The soul reckons best when it is itself by itself, i. At this juncture, Socrates changes course: What about these things? Do we say that justice itself is something? And the fair and the good? Then have you ever seen any of these sorts of things with your eyes? But then have you grasped them with any other sense through the body. I am talking about all of them, for instance about size, health, strength, in a word about the essence ousia of all of them, what each happens to be. Is it through the body then that what is most true of these things is contemplated? Or does it hold thus? Whoever of us should prepare himself to consider most accurately each thing itself about which he inquires, that one would come closest to knowing each thing. This is the first passage in the dialogues widely agreed to introduce Forms. First, Forms are marked as *auto kath'auto* beings, beings that are what they are in virtue of themselves. In subsequent arguments we learn other features of these Forms. Then in the Affinity Argument we discover that Forms are simple or incomposite, of one form monoeidetic, whereas particulars are complex, divisible and of many forms. In the crucial Final Argument, Plato finally presents the hypothesis of Forms to explain coming into being and destruction, in general, i. Once Cebes accepts the hypothesis, a novel implication is announced 7: Well then, consider what then follows if you also accept my hypothesis. For it seems to me that if anything else is beautiful besides Beauty Itself, it is beautiful on account of nothing else than because it partakes of Beauty Itself. And I speak in the same way about everything else. Do you accept this sort of cause or explanation? At first blush, it seems that there are two kinds of subjects of which properties are predicated, namely Forms and material particulars. I exempt souls from this list. Similarly, at first blush it seems that there are Forms for every property involved in the changes afflicting material particulars. Helen of Troy, change from being not-beautiful to being beautiful, there is the Form Beauty Itself. Generalizing from what is said here about Beauty Itself, it seems that Forms inherit from the Socratic Properties their self-predicational status: Beauty is beautiful; Justice is just; Equality is equal. Partaking in

Beauty makes Helen beautiful because Beauty Itself is beautiful. The Nature of Forms: Self-Predication The debate over self-predication involves both statements and what the statements are about, i. Thus at times it may be important to distinguish linguistic predication from ontological predication. One question then concerns the copula, or linking verb: There are three basic approaches to consider. In his seminal discussion of self-predication, Vlastos maintained that we should understand the relation between the Form and itself to be the same as that between a particular and the Form Vlastos d. This is to say that Justice is just in the same way as Socrates is just, or that Beauty is beautiful in the same way as Helen is beautiful, or that the Circle Itself is circular in the same way as my basketball:

Chapter 8 : Socrates: The Good Life

The good life is a life that questions and thinks about things; it is a life of contemplation, self-examination, and open-minded wondering. The good life is thus an inner life—the life of an inquiring and ever expanding mind.

The Good Life Socrates is generally considered the first major philosopher of Western civilization. Before him there lived about a dozen other Greek thinkers, the so-called Pre-Socratics, who also produced significant work from about BCE on. But little of that work has come down to us. Socrates is the first Western philosopher about who a good deal is known. He was a widely discussed figure among the Greeks of his day, and he has remained an icon of wisdom in the history of Western thought. It is primarily through him that the West has gotten the idea of what philosophy is, and what it may be like to live a philosophical life. Socrates, one might say, gave us a philosophical definition of the good life. Socrates was born in , and he died in His entire life he lived in Athens. Athens emerged from that victory not only as one of the most important commercial centers of the Mediterranean world, but also as the leader of a military alliance that quickly transformed the city into a dominant naval power. By controlling the funds of the alliance, Athens managed to channel a significant portion of the annual contributions of her allies into a lavish building program that turned the city into a place of architectural and cultural splendor. Under the supervision of the famed sculptor Phidias, the Parthenon and other monumental structures were erected on the Acropolis. And around the agora--the market place and civic center of the city--numerous temples, court structures, halls, shrines and statues formed an environment that functioned as the visual and administrative center of a thriving imperial metropolis. Not far from the agora, the Odeon and the Theatre of Dionysus provided spaces for elaborate musical and theatrical productions. Twice a year such playwrights as Sophocles, Euripides, and Aristophanes competed for prizes with splendid performances for thousands of spectators. During official festivities countless visitors from all around the Mediterranean Sea came to admire the wonders of Athenian culture. The Acropolis of Athens During most of the 5th century Athens was a democracy. In addition, most court cases were decided by large juries of ordinary citizens. That made effective public speaking and forensic debating skills highly important for anyone who wanted to succeed in any area of public life. As a consequence numerous teachers of public speaking and forensic debating—known as the sophists--were attracted to Athens from all parts of Greece; the growing wealth of the city could afford handsome fees for their tutorial services. The presence of many sophists in the city was a primary reason for the transformation of Athens into the main center of Greek intellectual life. Sophists did not only educate the sons of the upper classes, they also absorbed and debated the works of Greek--and probably foreign--thinkers among themselves, thus creating an atmosphere of broad-minded intellectual exchange that laid the groundwork for a cosmopolitan civilization. While many smaller cities and outlying regions produced outstanding thinkers and artists, it was primarily in Athens that the various minds would meet and publish their work. Through cross-fertilization and competition within the context of a thriving and powerful metropolis, these minds developed their talents and productions to the high degrees of excellence by which classical Athens established itself as the first major center of Western civilization. Pericles was a powerful speaker and skillful politician. During the public funeral of the first casualties of the Peloponnesian War the popular leader of the city flattered his fellow-citizens by assuring them that they were the best, and that Athens was vastly superior to any other commonwealth in sight. Thus he declared, among other things: Our constitution does not copy the laws of other states: Our laws provide equal justice for all. Success in public life depends on ability and merit, not on social origin and class. I doubt that the rest of the world can produce a type of man that is as versatile, resourceful, and self-reliant as the Athenian. And that this is not just ceremonious bragging, but a plain fact, is proven by the power of the state based on such traits. For Athens alone among all cities is found, when tested, to be greater than her reputation. The war lasted from to Its basic cause was the imperial arrogance with which Athens treated not only her own allies, but also other Greek city states that were not under Athenian control. Some of her allies wanted to secede from the alliance, for example, because they did not wish to pay for the splendor of the domineering city with their annual contributions for defense. Athens prevented such secessions by military force and

economic sanctions, thus reducing many member states to virtual colonies. Athens also added further "allies" to her empire, whether these newcomers assented to such incorporation into the empire or not. In time more and more independent cities became afraid that they, too, would eventually be conquered and annexed. As a precaution they formed their own federation, and they made Sparta with its feared army their military leader. For a time the explicitly anti-democratic city of Sparta became thus, paradoxically, the widely acknowledged champion of Greek liberty. Many Greeks had no desire to engage in a major war. Even in Athens many were weary of such a prospect. Peace negotiations with Sparta took place. But Pericles, bent on making Athens the uncontested leader of the Greek world, repeatedly provoked hostilities and armed conflict. He was not only a competent administrator and general, but also a wily manipulator of public opinion; he knew how to nurture among ordinary citizens the kind of patriotism that assumed that everything Athenian was always better than anything else. A majority of Athenian voters was willing to follow Pericles wherever his ambition would lead them. The empire, after all, provided them with large amounts of tribute money, colonies, land for settlements in overseas regions, and with the emotional satisfaction of dominating the lives of other people. Given their powerful navy and their abundant resources, Athenians had plausible reasons for thinking that they could subdue Sparta and her allies in a short time, and thus crown their past achievements by making themselves the manifest hegemon of Hellas. The war proved to be a disaster not only for Athens, but for most Greeks. It lasted much longer than anyone expected. It decimated the population, caused vicious civil strife, wiped out whole cities, ruined much industry and commerce, brutalized Greek life, and in the long run subjected most of Greece to the power of foreign empires and rulers. The enterprise that Pericles conceived as the ultimate consummation of Athenian and Greek glory turned out to be a protracted exercise in self-destruction. Politically Greece never fully recovered from the events between and The only Athenian achievement that survived the war intact was Greek intellectual culture. Together with Greek as the international language of educated people it established itself as a dominant life-shaping force in the Mediterranean world for centuries to come. The brilliant achievements of Athenian and Greek culture did little to check the brutalities of armed conflict. Numerous atrocities were committed during the Peloponnesian War. One incident became especially notorious: The incident became well known because the Athenian general and historian Thucydides reported it in his history of the war "in conjunction with the sort of arrogant thinking that Athenian diplomats displayed when they tried to talk the citizens of Melos into an uncontested surrender. Mention of the incident is helpful, as it shows how dark the shadow was that the war cast on the city that had produced the cultural splendor of the "Golden Age. In that year, before also assaulting the much more powerful city of Syracuse in Sicily, Athens demanded that the small island become part of her empire and war effort. The Melians pleaded to be left alone; they had no desire to fight on either side. The Athenians threatened to attack them unless the Melians agreed to their demand. During a last parley the Athenian ambassadors offered the following piece of cynical reasoning: And we ask you on your part not to imagine that you will move us by saying that you, though once a colony of Sparta, have not joined Sparta in the war, or that you have never done us any harm. Instead we suggest that you should try to get what it is actually possible for you to get, taking into consideration what we both really think. For you know just as well as we do that, when these matters are discussed by practical people, the standard of justice depends on the power to coerce, and that the strong do what they have the power to do, and the weak accept what they are forced to accept. The Athenian Assembly then voted to put all Melian men, down to the age of fourteen, to death, and to sell the women and children into slavery to offset the cost of the military operation. After the mass execution the territory of the island was annexed and handed over to Athenian settlers. It was in response to the Melos incident that Euripides wrote the anti-war play *The Women of Troy*, a highly emotional pageant of misery that shows captured women as they are carted off, together with other war booty, as chattel or sex slaves. Euripides, although an ardent patriot at the beginning of the war, eventually became so disgusted with Athens that toward the end of his life he exiled himself from his native city. This, then, the splendor of the "Golden Age" as well as the brutality of the Peloponnesian War, was the social and cultural context within which Socrates lived his life. As will be seen, Socrates did not identify with the culture of his day. To understand Socrates the philosopher is to understand how much he stood against the very essence of the culture of his age. Socrates was a deliberate

outsider among his fellow-Athenians and fellow-Greeks, an intellectual stranger, and his critical distance to the culture and society that surrounded him is a significant part of what defines him as a philosopher. This should become clear by taking a closer look at some of the outstanding traits of his life and thought. Unlike many of his well-to-do and aristocratic friends and disciples, Socrates was of middle-class origin. His father was a stonecutter or sculptor, and his mother a midwife. He may have inherited a modest estate, which allowed him to pursue his true calling--philosophical inquiry. By dedicating his life to the intensive pursuit of wisdom, however, he eventually neglected the economic side of his life to such a degree that he became rather poor. That fact did not bother him personally, but it may have made life less than comfortable for his wife Xanthippe, who had to run their household and raise their three sons. Then as later, people differed with regard to the amount of material goods that are necessary for a good life. Xanthippe may have had her own ideas about the matter, and there may have been marital tensions because of that. Men who want to become expert horsemen will not acquire the most docile horses, but the spirited ones. They believe that if they can handle these they will be able to handle any horse. I take a similar approach. I want to be able to deal with all human beings. I have Xanthippe to deal with. Getting along with her insures me that I will get along with the rest of humankind. Although he never aspired to any elevated rank, he seems to have distinguished himself through courage and endurance under adverse conditions. In he held a minor office in the democratic administration of the city when it was his allotted turn. Otherwise Socrates deliberately stayed out of the politics of the city, the area in which most ambitious Athenians tried to distinguish themselves. The contribution that he wished to make to the life of Athens was of a different kind. The fame or notoriety that he enjoyed among his fellow-citizens was based entirely on his philosophical work. What, then, was this work? Considering that Socrates never wrote any books, what exactly did he do? He regularly went either to the agora, or to one of the gymnasiums outside the city walls, to meet his friends and to discuss certain fundamental questions with them. Often bystanders and chance visitors became involved in the discussions as well.

Chapter 9 : Plato's Middle Period Metaphysics and Epistemology (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy)

Fundamental understanding of reality as it relates to living a good life; (reasonable and practical, focusing on the true circumstances and character of each individual; good judgment about complex situations involving reflection, insight, and a plausible conception of the human condition).

Indian philosophy Indian philosophy Sanskrit: Some of the earliest surviving philosophical texts are the Upanishads of the later Vedic period " BCE. Important Indian philosophical concepts include dharma , karma , samsara , moksha and ahimsa. Indian philosophers developed a system of epistemological reasoning pramana and logic and investigated topics such as metaphysics, ethics, hermeneutics and soteriology. Indian philosophy also covered topics such as political philosophy as seen in the Arthashastra c. The commonly named six orthodox schools arose sometime between the start of the Common Era and the Gupta Empire. Later developments include the development of Tantra and Iranian-Islamic influences. Buddhism mostly disappeared from India after the Muslim conquest in the Indian subcontinent , surviving in the Himalayan regions and south India. Due to the influence of British colonialism, much modern Indian philosophical work was in English and includes thinkers such as Radhakrishnan , Krishna Chandra Bhattacharya , Bimal Krishna Matilal and M. Jain philosophy Jain philosophy separates body matter from the soul consciousness completely. Jain philosophy attempts to explain the rationale of being and existence, the nature of the Universe and its constituents, the nature of bondage and the means to achieve liberation. Jain texts expound that in every half-cycle of time, twenty-four tirthankaras grace this part of the Universe to teach the unchanging doctrine of right faith, right knowledge and right conduct. Buddhist philosophy begins with the thought of Gautama Buddha fl. Buddhist thought is trans-regional and trans-cultural. It originated in India and later spread to East Asia , Tibet , Central Asia , and Southeast Asia , developing new and syncretic traditions in these different regions. The various Buddhist schools of thought are the dominant philosophical tradition in Tibet and Southeast Asian countries like Sri Lanka and Burma. Because ignorance to the true nature of things is considered one of the roots of suffering dukkha , Buddhist philosophy is concerned with epistemology, metaphysics, ethics and psychology. The ending of dukkha also encompasses meditative practices. Key innovative concepts include the Four Noble Truths , Anatta not-self a critique of a fixed personal identity , the transience of all things Anicca , and a certain skepticism about metaphysical questions. Mahayana philosophers such as Nagarjuna and Vasubandhu developed the theories of Shunyata emptiness of all phenomena and Vijnapti-matra appearance only , a form of phenomenology or transcendental idealism. After the disappearance of Buddhism from India, these philosophical traditions continued to develop in the Tibetan Buddhist , East Asian Buddhist and Theravada Buddhist traditions. The modern period saw the rise of Buddhist modernism and Humanistic Buddhism under Western influences and the development of a Western Buddhism with influences from modern psychology and Western philosophy. East Asian philosophy The Analects of Confucius fl. East Asian philosophical thought began in Ancient China , and Chinese philosophy begins during the Western Zhou Dynasty and the following periods after its fall when the " Hundred Schools of Thought " flourished 6th century to BCE. These philosophical traditions developed metaphysical, political and ethical theories such Tao , Yin and yang , Ren and Li which, along with Chinese Buddhism , directly influenced Korean philosophy , Vietnamese philosophy and Japanese philosophy which also includes the native Shinto tradition. During later Chinese dynasties like the Ming Dynasty " as well as in the Korean Joseon dynasty " a resurgent Neo-Confucianism led by thinkers such as Wang Yangming " became the dominant school of thought, and was promoted by the imperial state. In the Modern era, Chinese thinkers incorporated ideas from Western philosophy. Modern Japanese thought meanwhile developed under strong Western influences such as the study of Western Sciences Rangaku and the modernist Meirokusha intellectual society which drew from European enlightenment thought. The 20th century saw the rise of State Shinto and also Japanese nationalism. The Kyoto School , an influential and unique Japanese philosophical school developed from Western phenomenology and Medieval Japanese Buddhist philosophy such as that of Dogen. African philosophy Main article: African philosophy African philosophy is philosophy produced by African

people , philosophy that presents African worldviews, ideas and themes, or philosophy that uses distinct African philosophical methods. Modern African thought has been occupied with Ethnophilosophy , with defining the very meaning of African philosophy and its unique characteristics and what it means to be African. Another early African philosopher was Anton Wilhelm Amo c. Contemporary African thought has also seen the development of Professional philosophy and of Africana philosophy , the philosophical literature of the African diaspora which includes currents such as black existentialism by African-Americans. Modern African thinkers have been influenced by Marxism , African-American literature , Critical theory , Critical race theory , Postcolonialism and Feminism. Indigenous American philosophy is the philosophy of the Indigenous people of the Americas. There is a wide variety of beliefs and traditions among these different American cultures. Among some of the Native Americans in the United States there is a belief in a metaphysical principle called the "Great Mystery" Siouan: Wakan Tanka , Algonquian: Another widely shared concept was that of Orenda or "spiritual power". According to Peter M. Whiteley, for the Native Americans, "Mind is critically informed by transcendental experience dreams, visions and so on as well as by reason. Another feature of the indigenous American worldviews was their extension of ethics to non-human animals and plants. The Aztec worldview posited the concept of an ultimate universal energy or force called Ometeotl which can be translated as "Dual Cosmic Energy" and sought a way to live in balance with a constantly changing, "slippery" world. The theory of Teotl can be seen as a form of Pantheism. Aztec ethics was focused on seeking tlamatiliztli knowledge, wisdom which was based on moderation and balance in all actions as in the Nahua proverb "the middle good is necessary". These groupings allow philosophers to focus on a set of similar topics and interact with other thinkers who are interested in the same questions. The groupings also make philosophy easier for students to approach. Students can learn the basic principles involved in one aspect of the field without being overwhelmed with the entire set of philosophical theories. Various sources present different categorical schemes. The categories adopted in this article aim for breadth and simplicity. These five major branches can be separated into sub-branches and each sub-branch contains many specific fields of study.