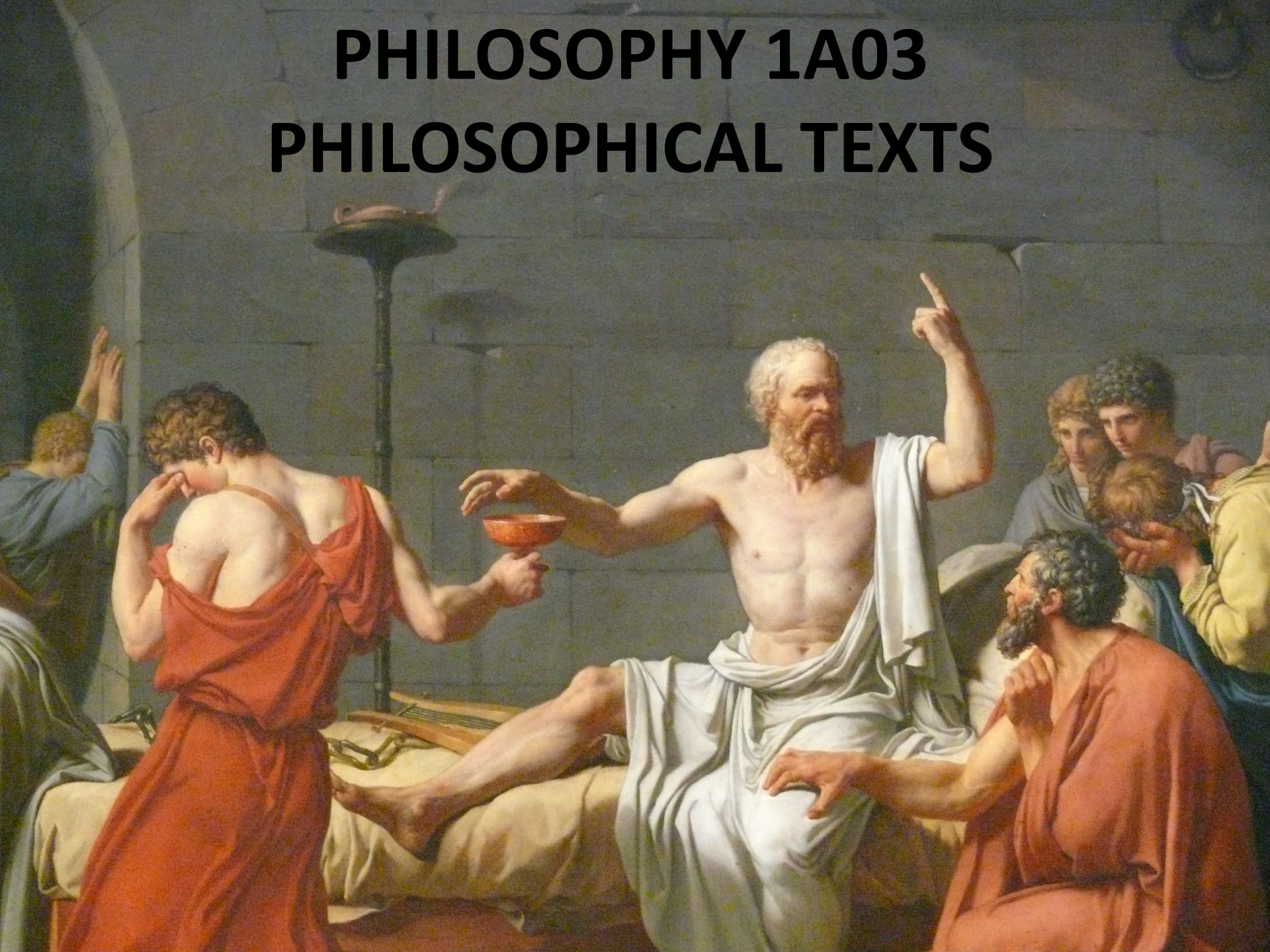


PHILOSOPHY 1A03

PHILOSOPHICAL TEXTS



Ancient Greece

Socrates
Plato
Aristotle

Epicurus
Stoics

17th - 18th Century

Descartes
Spinoza
Hume

19th Century

J. S. Mill
Nietzsche

PHILOSOPHY 1A03

PHILOSOPHICAL TEXTS

Instructor

Barry Allen

Office: UH-301

Office Hour: Wednesday @ 12.30PM

E-mail: <bgallen@mcmaster.ca>

The Course

A historically based survey of western philosophical works from Socrates to Nietzsche.

Required Texts

Philosophical Texts Coursepack. All this material is available on the course Avenue page

Evaluation

1st Writing Assignment	20%
2nd Writing Assignment	25%
3rd Writing Assignment	25%
Final Exam	20%
Tutorial	10%

ANCIENT PHILOSOPHY

600-500 BCE

First Greek philosophers in Ionia and S. Italy

PRE-SOCRATIC PHILOSOPHY

470-320 BCE

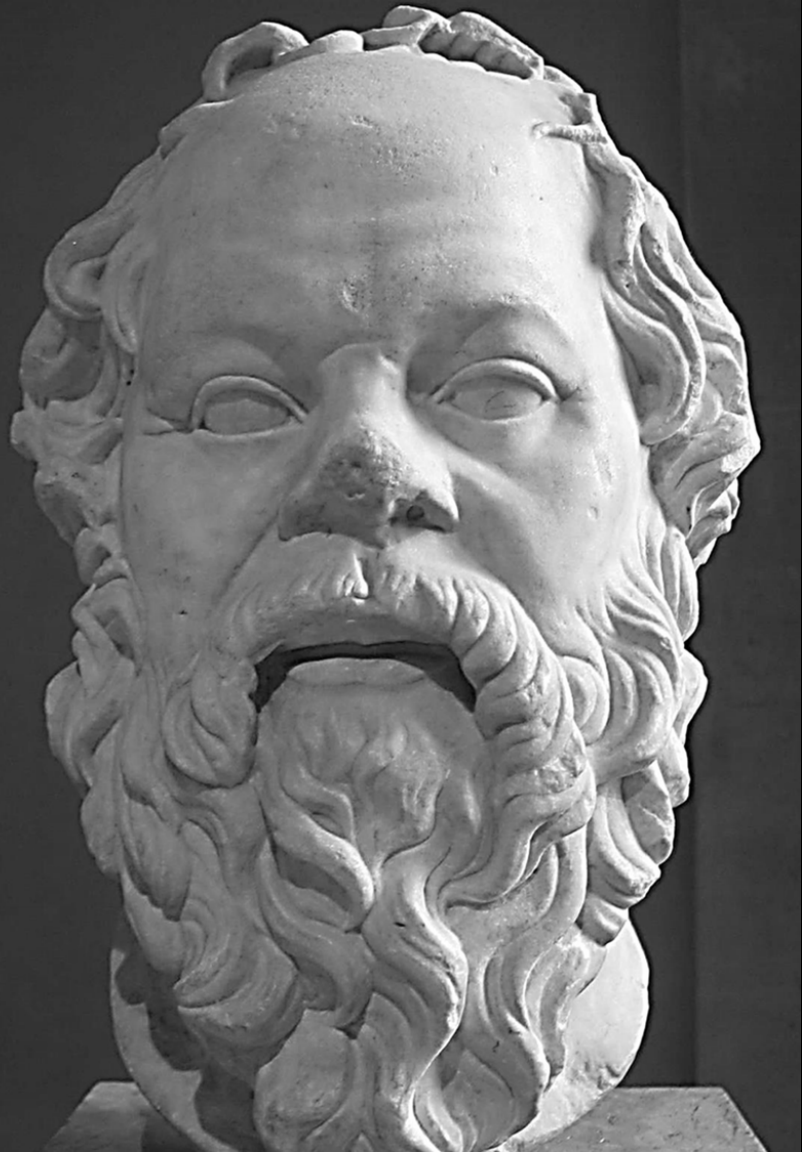
Socrates, Plato, Aristotle in Athens

CLASSICAL PHILOSOPHY

300-100 BCE

Epicureans, Cynics, Stoics

HELLENISTIC PHILOSOPHY



Socrates



Athens

PLATO
Euthyphro

Socrates: Knowledge is knowing some one thing, some form or idea.

Euthyphro: The pious is all and only that which all the gods love.

Socrates: Do the gods love some actions because they are pious, or are some acts pious for the simple reason that the gods love them?

Euthyphro: The gods love pious acts because of their piety

Socrates: So, what is this quality of piety? You have not answered my first question!

Socrates: “Knowledge is fine and such as to rule the person, and if someone recognizes what is good and bad, he would not be overpowered by anything else so as to act otherwise than knowledge dictates.”

- Knowledge overcomes everything evil or bad. The only reason a person does a bad thing is ignorance.
- Thinking you know when you do not really know is the worst thing anyone can do.
- It is a fortunate city that has someone like Socrates to teach people what they do not know.

Greek Philosophy Before Socrates

Arche — principle, meaning both origin (beginning) and cause

Phusis — nature

Ionia — Athenian colony, Eastern Aegean coast of Asia Minor

Miletus — City in Ionia, home of Thales and Anaximander



Greek colonies in
southern Italy and Sicily

Athens

Ionia

Miletus

Pre-Socratic Philosophers

Ionian Theories of the *Arche*

sixth to fifth centuries BCE

Thales

Anaximander

Xenophanes

Heraclitus

Monism

early fifth century

Pythagoras

Parmenides

Pluralism (materialism)

later fifth century

Empedocles (earth, air, fire, water)

Democritus (atom theory)

SOCRATES

470-399

Anaximander

(ca. 611-547 BCE)

The *arche* is the *aperion*, the unbounded, unlimited, or indeterminate.

Because the *arche* is unbounded, therefore:

It has no beginning. The absolute beginning of all things that have a beginning.

Imperishable

All-encompassing

All-governing

Indestructible

Immortal

Divine

Rationalism: Reason rules. What reasoning deems necessary really has to exist. The universe is reason through and through, a logical cosmos that ultimately makes good sense.

Xenophanes

(later 6th century)

Against popular images of the gods

14: Mortals deem that the gods are begotten as they are, and have clothes like theirs, and voice and form.

15: Yes, and if oxen and horses or lions had hands, and could paint with their hands, and produce works of art as men do, horses would paint the forms of the gods like horses, and oxen like oxen, and make their bodies in the image of their several kinds.

16: The Ethiopians make their gods black and snub-nosed; the Thracians say theirs have blue eyes and red hair.

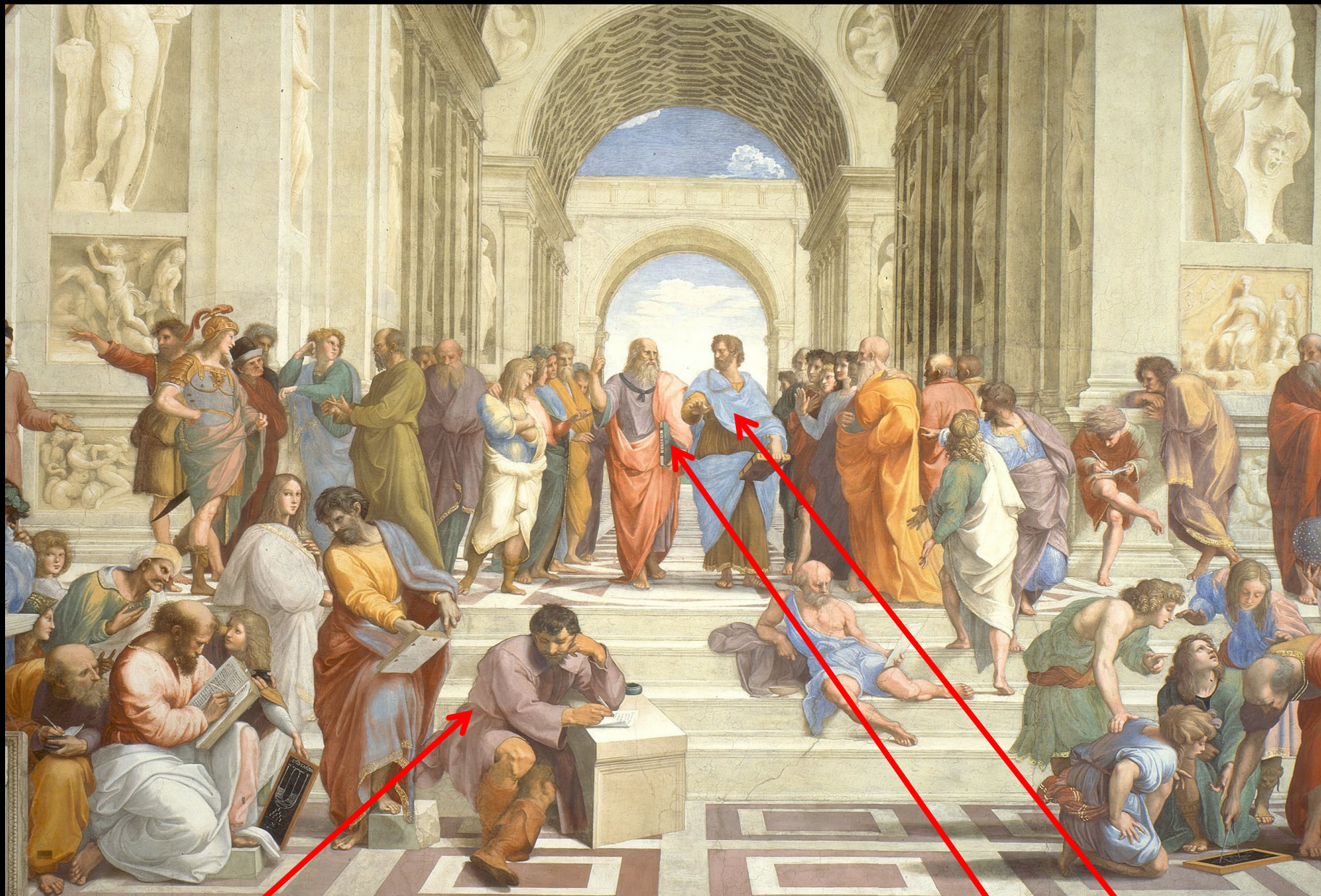
Xenophanes on God

23: One god, the greatest among gods and men, neither in form like unto mortals nor in thought.

24: He sees all over, thinks all over, and hears all over.

25: Without toil he moves all things by the thought of his mind.

26: And he abides ever in the selfsame place, moving not at all; nor does it befit him to go about now hither now thither.

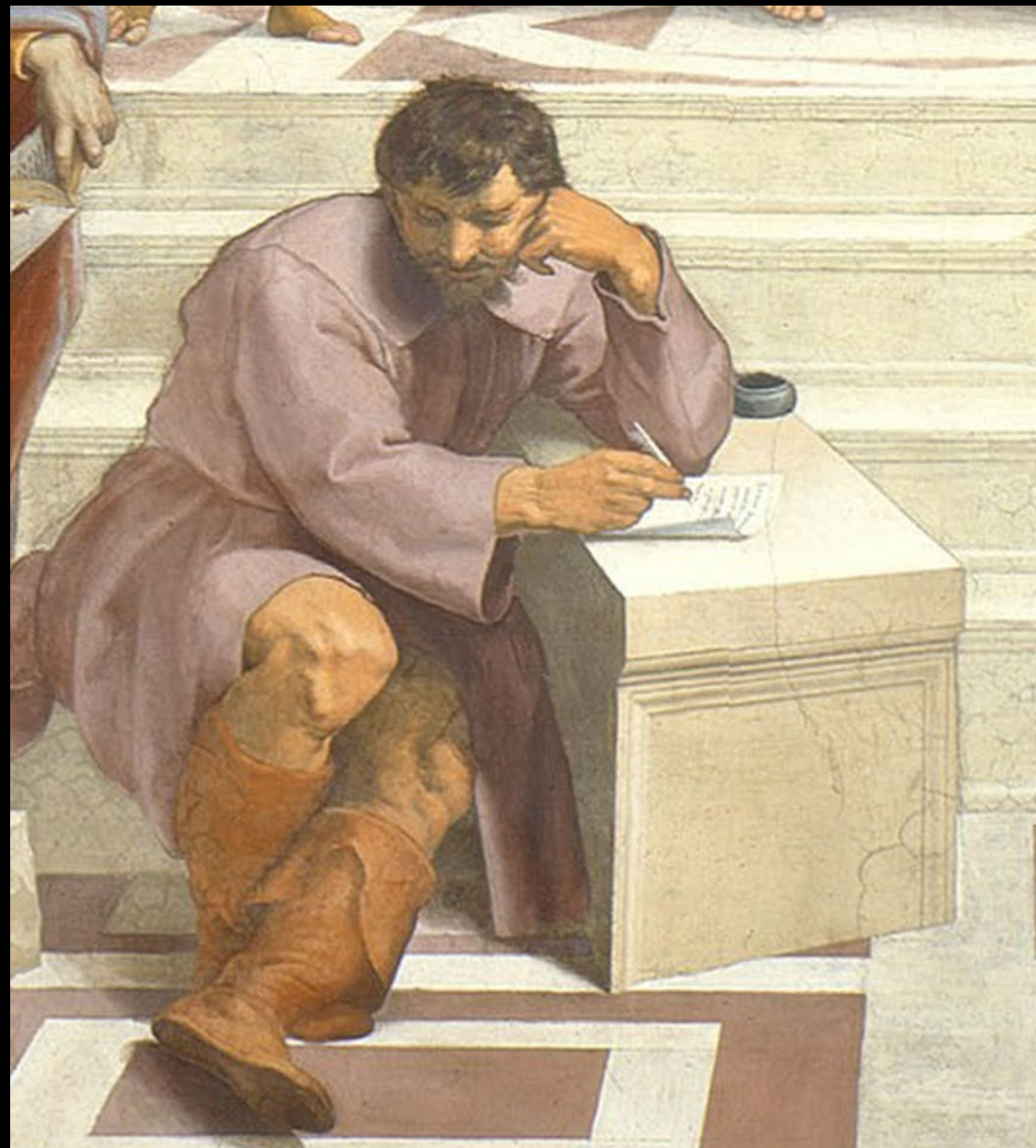


Heraclitus

Raphael
The School of Athens (1509-11)

Plato

Aristotle



Heraclitus

Heraclitus

ca. 535-475 BCE

Logos

1. Language, speech
2. Definition, explanation, reason, measure
3. Systematic knowledge

Heraclitus

The *Logos*

1: “It is wise to hearken, not to me, but to the *logos*, and to confess that all things are one.”

2: “ . . . this *logos* is true evermore . . . all things come to pass in accordance with this *logos*.”

19: “Wisdom is one thing. It is to know the *logos* by which all things are steered through all things.”

71: “You will not find the boundaries of soul by traveling in any direction, so deep is its *logos*.”

Pythagoras
(ca. 582-507 BCE)
Psuche, soul

Traditional concept: *Psuche* is the life-force of anything alive; what gives living things their appearance of life.

New idea of the soul in sixth century BCE. The soul is immortal, divine, a being distinct from the body.

The new idea of the soul promotes a new idea of the kinship of human beings and gods.

And a new ethical problem: How should we take care of our immortal?

Pythagorean answer: Perfect your knowledge, live and think as rationally as possible.

PYTHAGORAS
ca. 582-507 BCE
Greek Sicily



Athens

Ionia

PARMENIDES
b. ca. 515 BCE
Elea (Greek colony, southern Italy)

PARMENIDES

“On Nature”

Fr. 2: “Come now, I will tell thee—and do thou hearken to my saying and carry it away—the only two ways of search that can be thought of.

“The first, namely, that Being is, and that it is impossible for anything not to be. [That] is the way of conviction, for truth is its companion.

“The other, namely, that Being is not, and that something may not be. That, I tell thee, is a wholly untrustworthy path. For you cannot know what is not. That is impossible. It is impossible even to say it.”

Being:

- Changeless
- Indivisible, One (Monism)
- Belongs together with, perhaps even the same as, Thought

MATERIALISM

Empedocles

(early fifth century BCE)

First corpuscular theory of nature

Elements: Earth, Air, Fire, and Water

Elemental forces: Love and Strife

Democritus

(late fifth century BCE)

Atomic hypothesis. Nature is Atoms and Void.

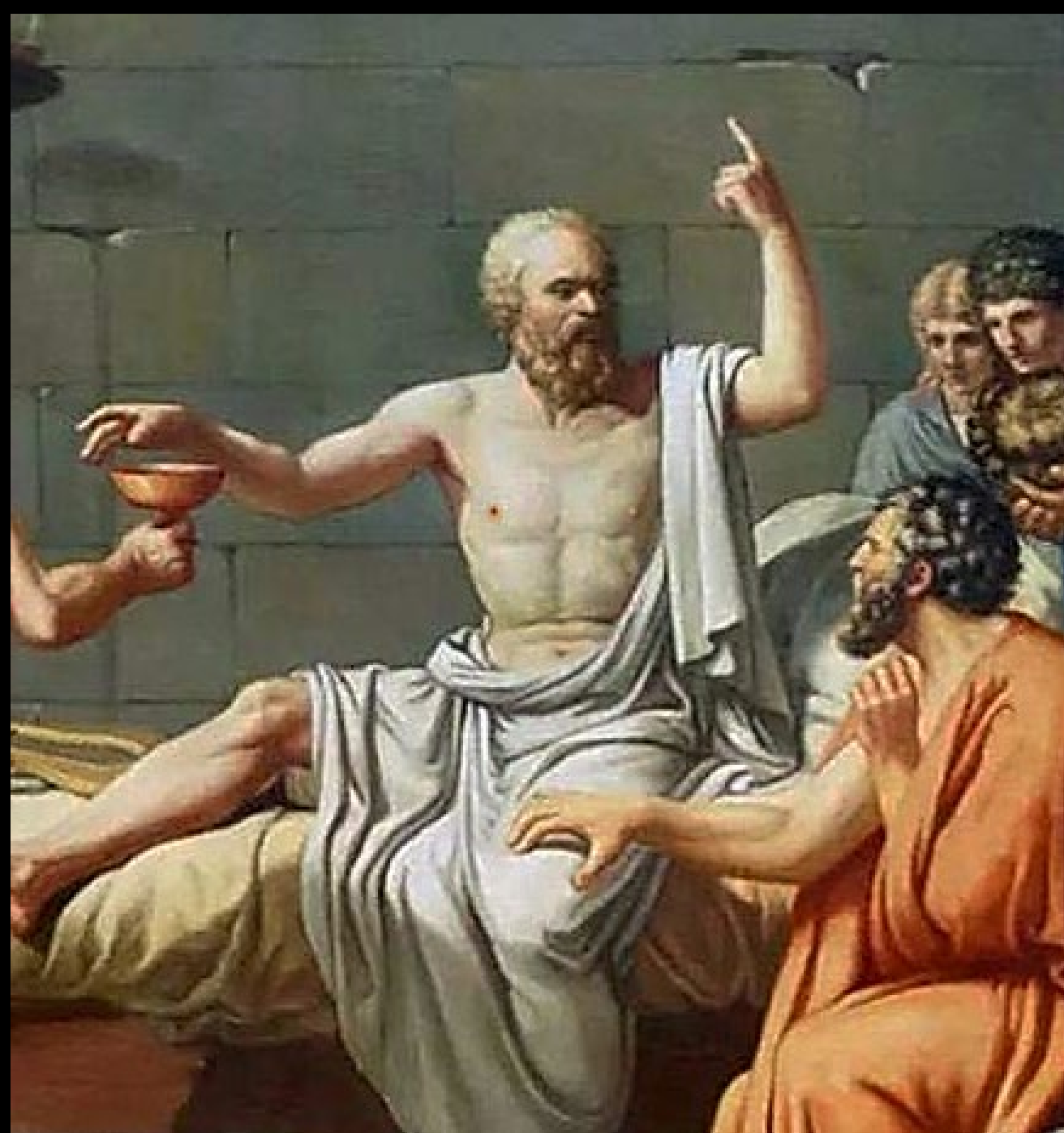
Signature themes of materialism, first in Democritus:

- Nature is body and void, nothing else. No purpose or design.
- The soul is a body.
- Primary and secondary qualities.

Primary qualities of atoms are size, shape, and weight.

Secondary qualities of molecular combinations include hot/cold, moist/dry, color, taste. These qualities exist only by convention.

Fr 9: “Sweet exists by convention, bitter by convention, color by convention. Atoms and void alone exist in reality.”





Delphi

“Know yourself!”

Inscribed on the lintel over the entrance to Apollo’s oracle at Delphi

Socrates: “Is there anything about which a man of even small intelligence would be more serious than this: what is the way we ought to live?” (Gorgias 500c)

Philosophy

philo, love or friendship

sophia, wisdom

Socrates's Question

What is X (piety, love, justice, etc.)?

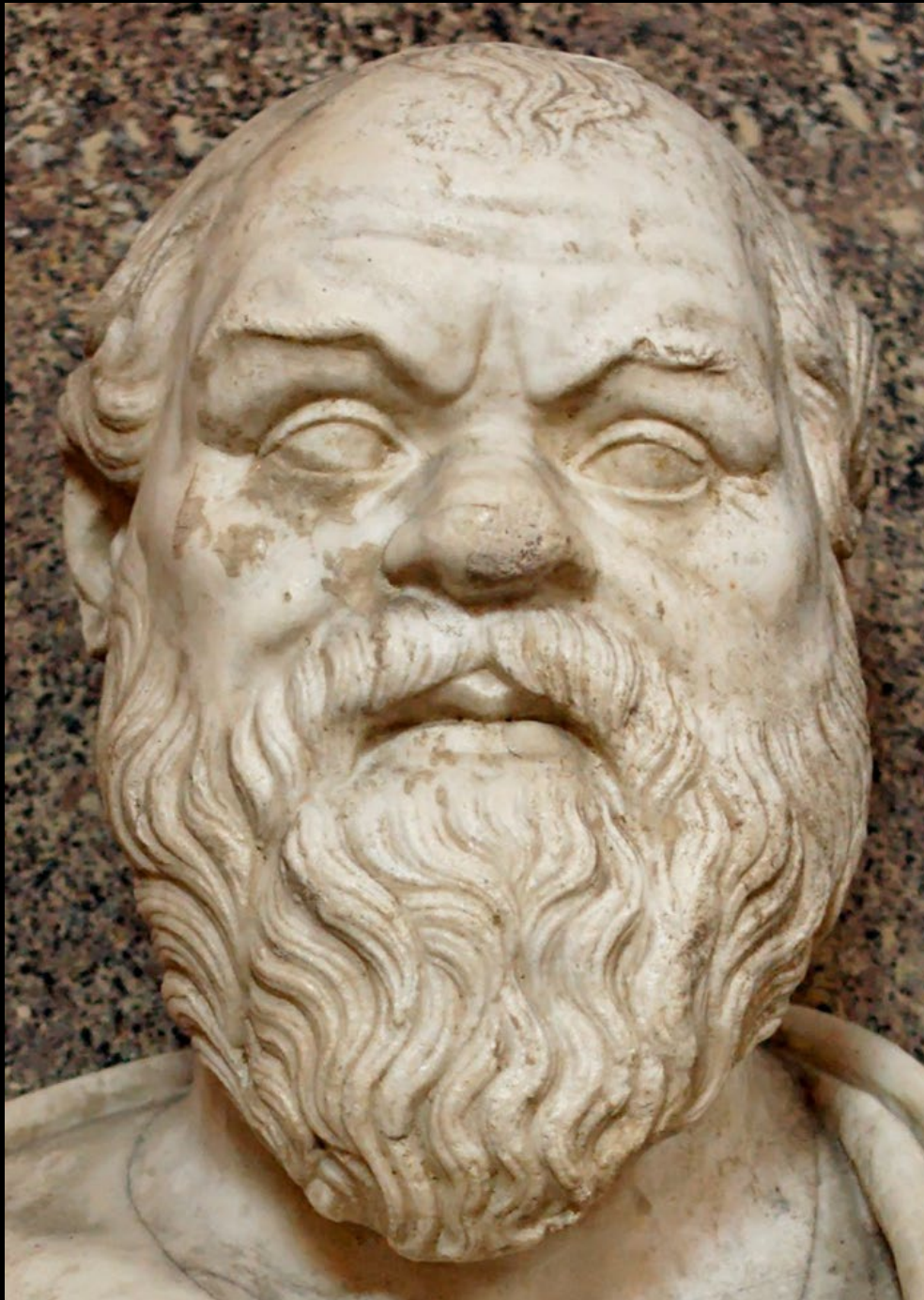
The answer must:

Be true of all particular Xs;

Give the reason why something is an X.

Platonic Idea (or Form)

The Idea of X is the form all particular Xs share,
and which causes them to be X.



Plato, *Apology*

An account of Socrates's trial in Athens, 399 BCE.

Dikasts. The 501 Athenians jurors who hear the case against Socrates and his defense.

Socrates: "My trial will be equivalent to a doctor being prosecuted by a pastry-cook before a jury of children."

Context of the trial

- Athens, a democracy from 508 to 322 BCE.
- Peloponnesian War, 431-04. Sparta defeats Athens.
- Alkibiades: Athenian politician, general, hero, traitor, and infamous friend of Socrates.





Alcibiades and Socrates

Ancient View of the Faults of Democracy

1. The masses are childish, fickle, easily misled.
2. Democracy is unnatural, a tyranny of the weak over the strong. It confuses freedom with a lack of restraint; favors flatterers; governs by whim.
3. It is inefficient, with government officials in constant flux; and makes an ineffective use of expertise, being especially weak in foreign policy.
4. Bad at financial management.

Plato: “We decided that, if as a result of statesmanship, the citizen body was to be benefitted and happy, it was crucial to make them wise and knowledgeable.”

Socratic Idea of Good

Something is good when it contributes to the full flourishing of a human being in all our powers and faculties for the natural duration of life.



Virtue

Greek, *arete*

English “Virtue,” from Latin, *virtu*, from *vir*, manly, masculine

Socratic Wisdom

Knowledge of the good, and the power that comes with it.

Knowing the good universally and philosophically, and from that infallibly knowing in any case what it is good to do.

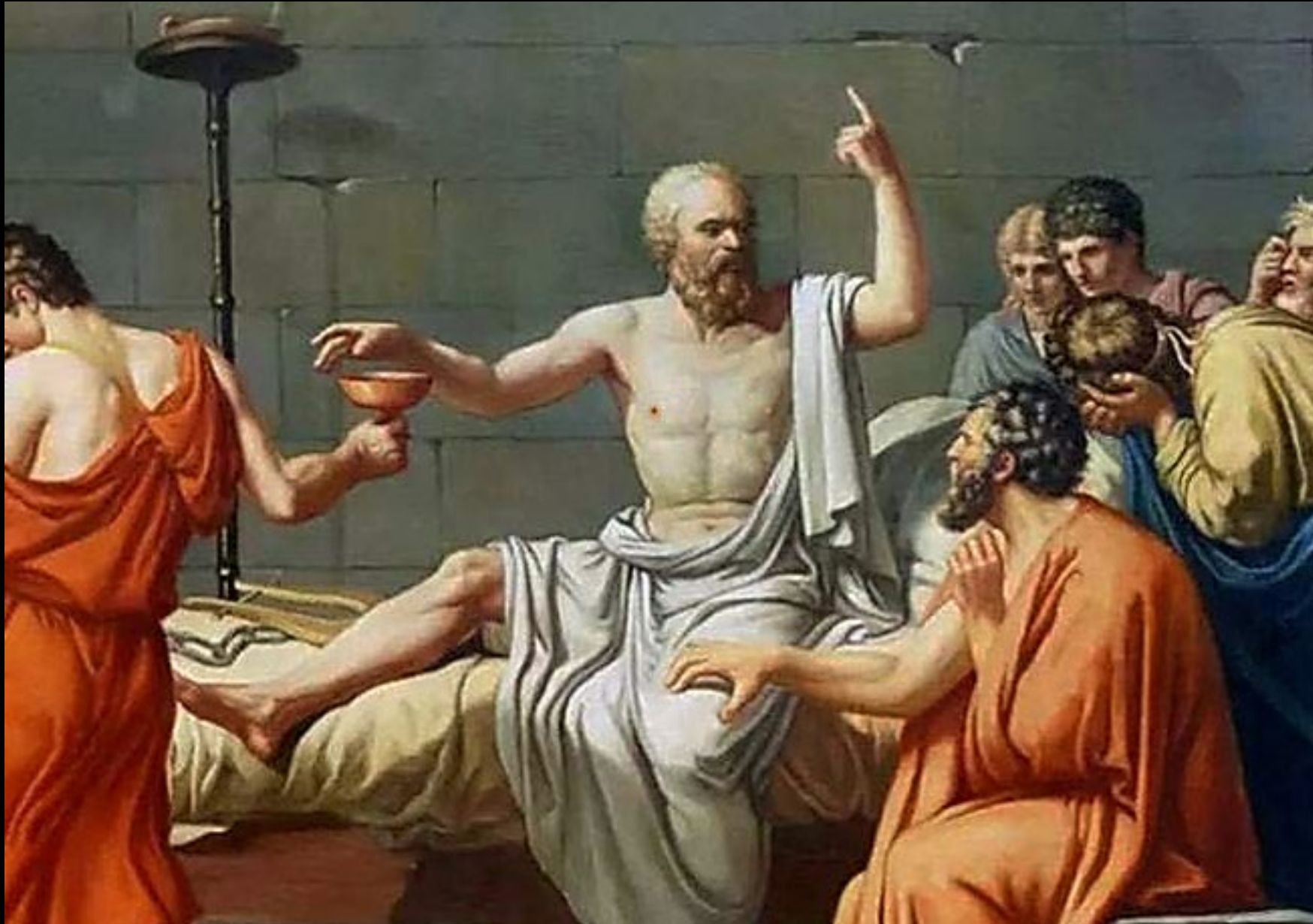
A good person cannot be harmed.

The unexamined life is not worth living.

Doing wrong is worse than suffering wrong.

Riches and power contribute nothing to happiness.
Only wisdom and virtue matter, and wisdom is the
ultimate virtue.

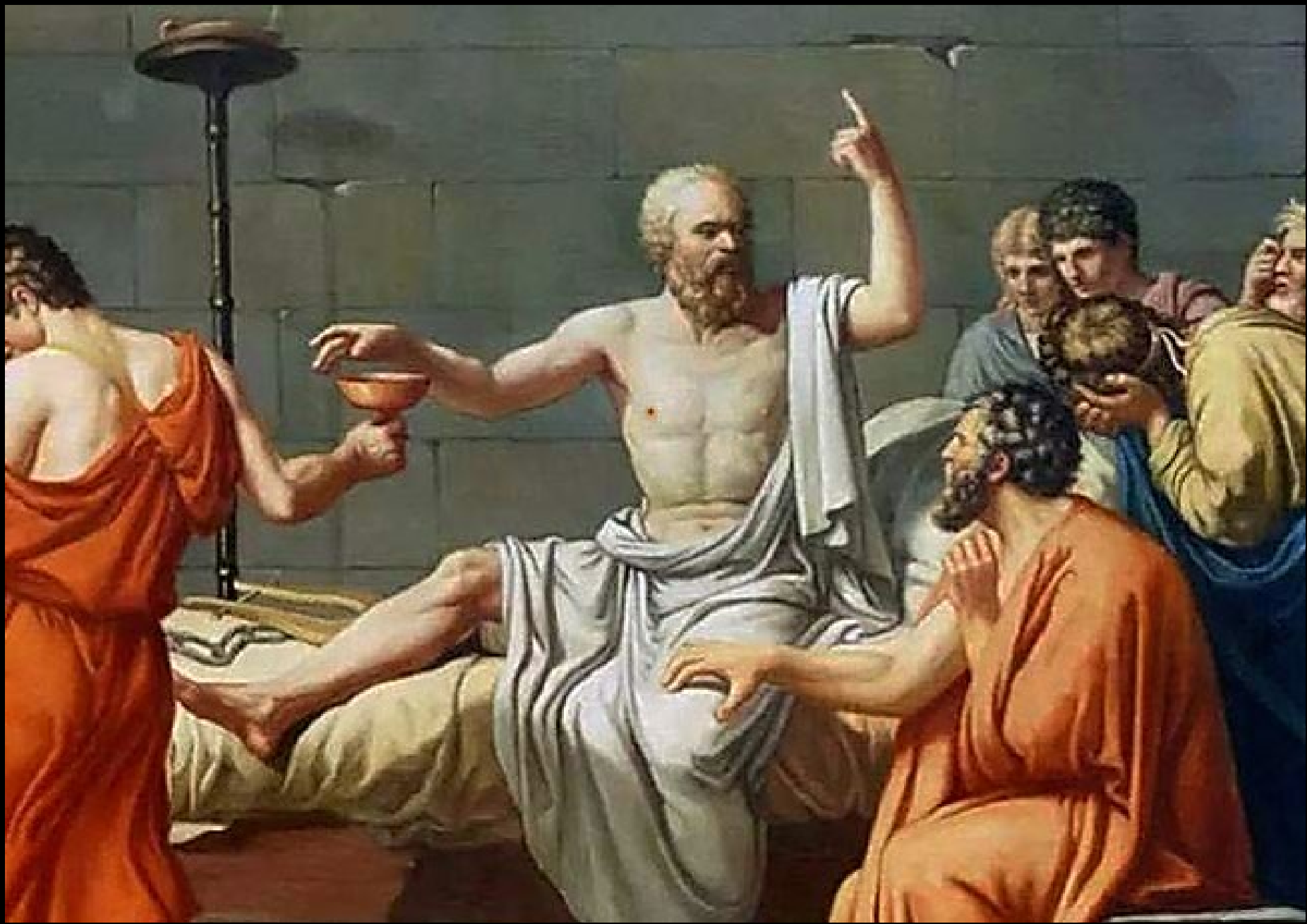
Plato, *Phaedo*
Socrates's last day of life



Socrates, in *Phaedo*

“The body confuses the soul and does not allow it to acquire truth and wisdom. . . . As long as we have a body and our soul is fused with such an evil we shall never adequately attain what we want, which [is] truth.

“. . . If we are ever to have pure knowledge, we must escape from the body and observe things in themselves with the soul by itself. It seems likely that we shall attain . . . wisdom only when we are dead.” (65d-66e)



PLATO
Phaedo

Arguments for Survival

1. All things come into being from their opposite.

So the living come from the dead.

To have come from the dead a soul must exist despite being dead.

2.(a) Our understanding of perfection is independent of sense experience. We never see a perfect triangle yet understand the idea. Closed three-sided figure.

A priori knowledge: independent of experience.

A posterior knowledge: depends on experience.

(b) To have knowledge independently of experience, the soul must have been alive prior to bodily life. But will it survive death?

(c) Yes, because a soul that exists before birth must come from something dead. So, association with a living body is not essential to a soul. We do not require a living body to be a living soul.

3. Against soul scattering

A soul that can dissolve and scatter must be composite.

What is composite changes; what is simple does not change.

Ideas like Equality or Justice do not change. Therefore, ideas are simple, not composite.

Understanding ideas is a pure power of mind and does not depend on the body.

Since ideas are simple, the soul that understands them must also be simple.

So a soul does not consist of parts, is indivisible, and therefore cannot change.

So death cannot change the soul. Death changes the body, not the soul, which goes on as always.

4. (a) The soul brings life to the body; it makes the body alive, in the way that the form of the Even makes six even, and the form of the Hot makes fire hot.

(b) The Idea of the Even cannot become odd; the Idea of the Hot cannot become cold; and a soul, being what makes a body alive, cannot die.



The underworld of Hades as imagined by Socrates



Jacques-Louis David, The Death of Socrates (1787)



Symposium: a Greek drinking party.

Agathon, a poet of tragedies, is the host. There are several guests, including Socrates.

The entertainment: each will give a speech in praise of Eros, the god of (erotic) love.



Symposium: a Greek drinking party.

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The entertainment: each will give a speech in praise of Eros, the god of (erotic) love.

Speeches in praise of Eros (Love) by:

Phaedrus

Pausanias

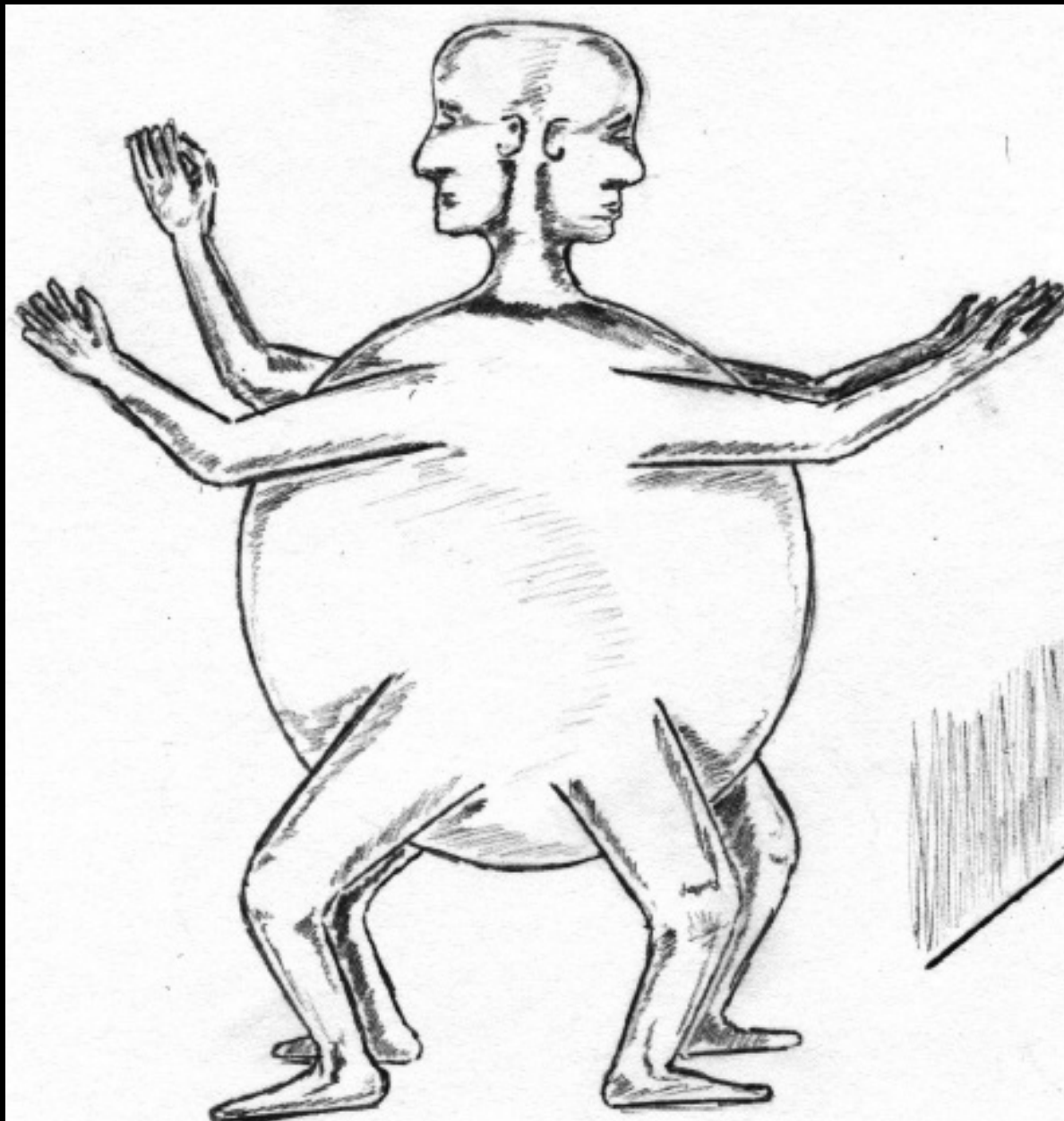
Eryximachus [Er – y – zim – a – kus], a physician

Aristophanes, a comic poet

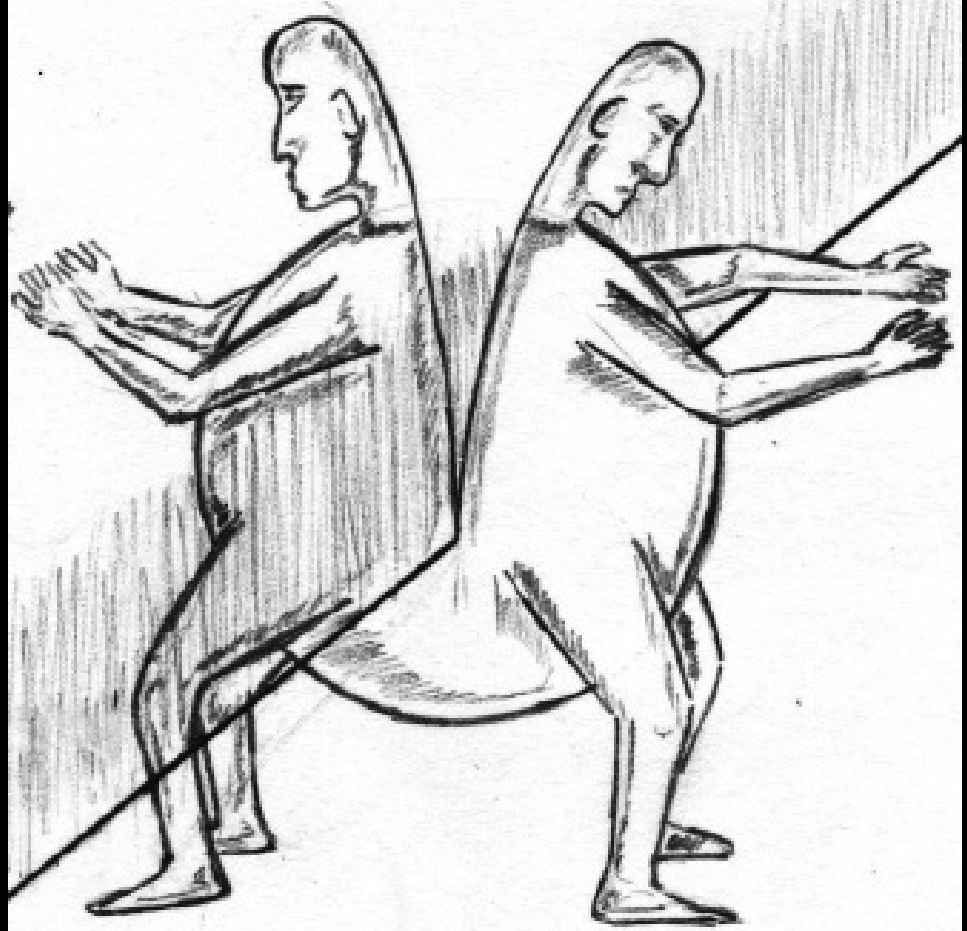
Agathon, the symposium host, and a poet of tragedies.

Socrates

Alkibiades, a later speaker, uninvited, who speaks not about Eros but about *Socrates*



The original human form



Aristophanes: “Love is born into every human being: it calls back the halves of our original human nature together; it tries to make one out of two and heal the wound of human nature.”

(191b; readings, 90)

The Speech of Socrates

Socrates is supposed to be next, but he now refuses to make a speech. Instead, he refutes the previous speech of Agathon

Agathon said that *Eros* is happy and beautiful.

Socrates proves that *Eros* is not happy or beautiful.

Agathon: “It turns out, Socrates, that I didn’t know what I was talking about in that speech.” (201b)

Next, Socrates recounts a speech he heard years ago from Diotima, a priestess. It is her speech. Socrates is only a mouthpiece.

She explains the ancestry of *Eros*:

Father is *Poros*, Resource

Mother is *Penia*, Poverty

Paternal grandmother is *Metis*, Cunning

Diotima questions Socrates

What is good?

Happiness

What is beauty?

The promise of happiness

What is love?

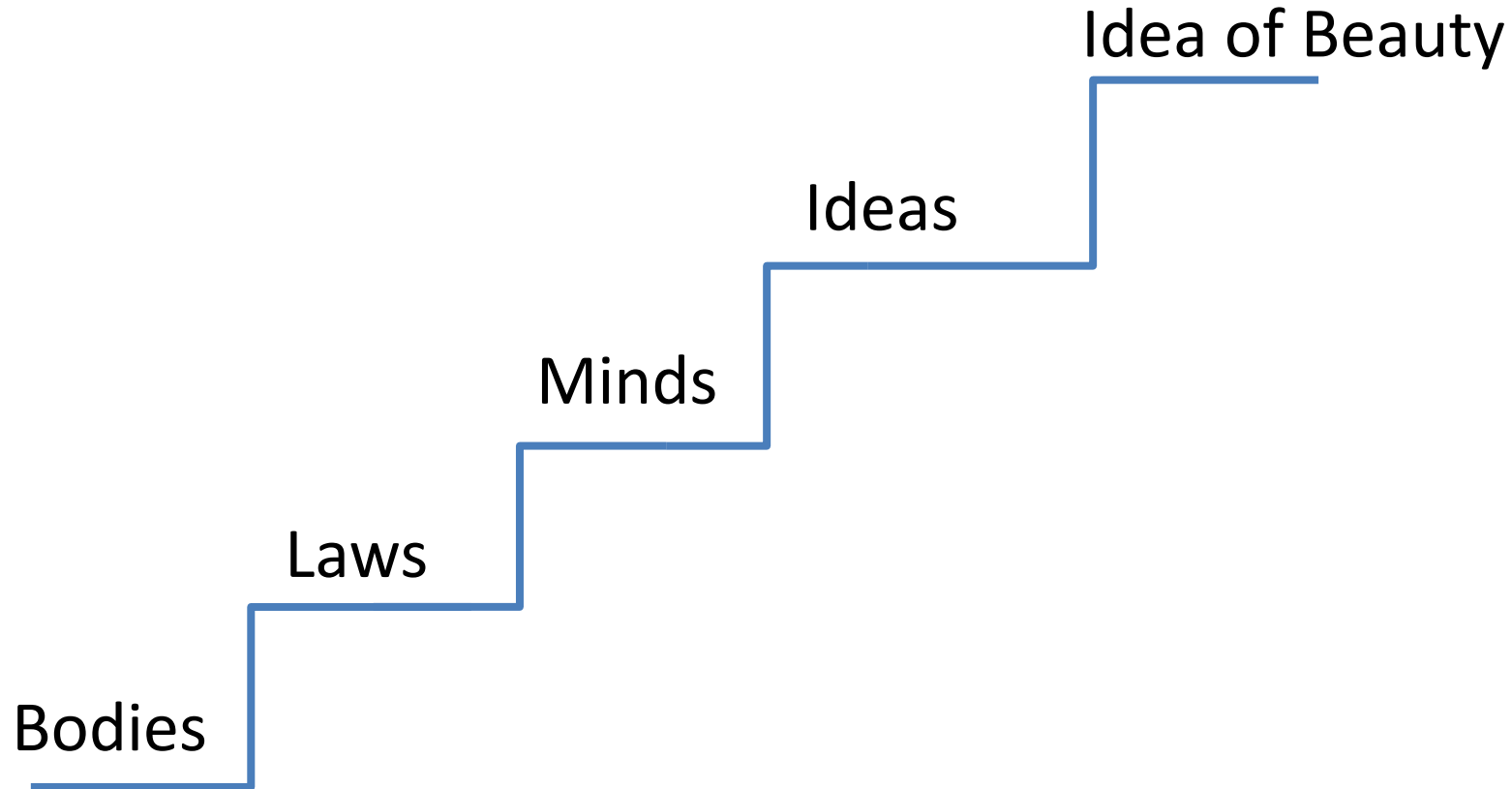
Wanting to possess the good forever

What is the function of Eros?

To assist in pregnancy and birth

ASCENT TO THE IDEA OF THE BEAUTIFUL

The Idea of Beauty: “The Beautiful itself, absolute, pure, unmixed, not polluted by human flesh or colors or any other great nonsense of mortality.”



The Idea of the Beautiful

Diotima to Socrates

First, it always is and neither comes to be nor passes away, neither waxes nor wanes. Second, it is not beautiful this way and ugly that way, nor beautiful at one time and ugly at another, nor beautiful in relation to one thing and ugly in relation to another. . . . Nor will the beautiful appear to him in the guise of a face or hands or anything else that belongs to the body. . . . It is not anywhere in another thing . . . but itself by itself with itself, it is always one form; and all the other beautiful things share in that.



Alkibiades



Socrates



Silenus, a satyr



Alkibiades, of Socrates:

This utterly unnatural, this truly extraordinary man . . . this hopelessly arrogant, this unbelievably insolent man . . . [of] amazing arrogance and pride . . . he is unique; he is like no one else in the past and no one in the present. . . . [He] is so bizarre, his ways and his ideas so unusual, that search as you might, you'll never find anyone else, alive or dead, who's even remotely like him.

Socrates is the only man in the world who has made me feel shame.

Socratic Irony

Simple Irony

Literally false

Means something different, usually opposite, from what is said.

Socratic Irony

Both is and is not seriously meant

True in one way, and false in another

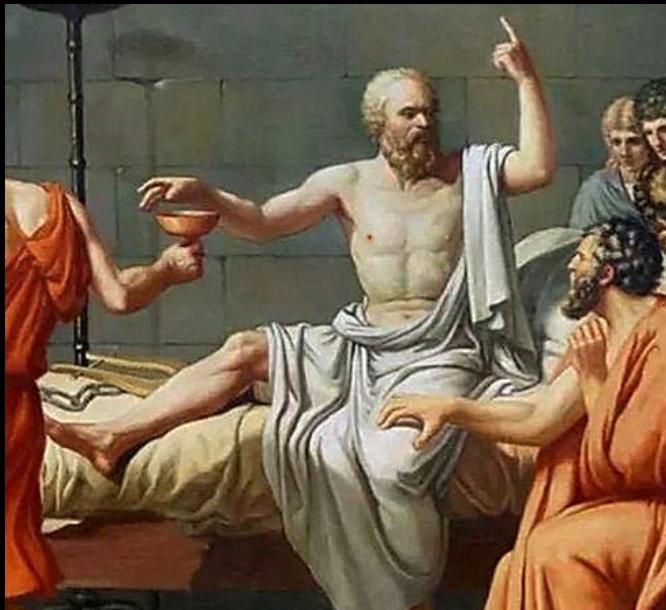
Socrates to Euthyphro

You think that your knowledge of the divine, and of piety and impiety, is so accurate that . . . you have no fear of having acted impiously in bringing your father to trial.



Alcibiades

Socrates



Socrates



Plato



Plato & Aristotle

PLATO
Republic
Book 6

Metaphysics: philosophical theory of being or reality

Dialectic: Philosophical method of knowledge without presuppositions.

Plato's Thesis in Metaphysics: Being = Idea. To be is to be an Idea. Only an Idea has true, unqualified being or reality.

Intelligibles: things grasped by intellect

Sensibles: sense-perceptible things

“Opinions without knowledge are shameful and ugly things.”
Socrates, in *Republic*



Opinion (belief): *doxa*

Knowledge: *episteme*

Understanding: *nous*

- Belief is liable to error, knowledge is not.
- Belief can be changed by persuasion, knowledge cannot be.
- Belief does not bring understanding, knowledge does.
- True belief, right opinion, is still essentially belief or opinion, and cannot be knowledge since its truth is accidental.
- Opinion is shameful because it is not a passive thing that innocently occurs to a person.

“Opinions without knowledge are shameful and ugly things.”
Socrates, in *Republic*

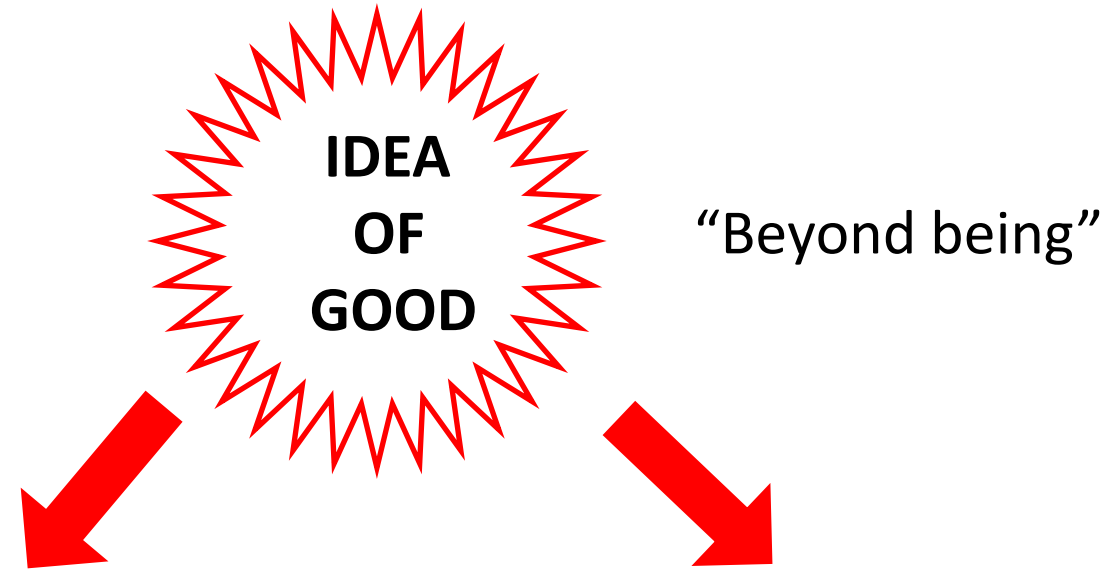


Sun : Visible Things : Sight

Idea of Good : Intelligible Things : Understanding (*nous*)

The sun stands to visible things as visible things stand to sight.

The Idea of the Good stands to intelligible things as intelligible things stand to understanding.



Intellect
Knowledge
Truth

Causes intellect
to understand

Ideas
Beings

Causes beings
to be

Knowledge: understanding why what is is and must be as it is.

Criterion of knowledge: infallibility, the impossibility of error.

Understanding  **Philosophy**
(*nous*)

Thought  **Science**
(*dianoia*)

Perception  **Opinion**
(*aesthesis*)

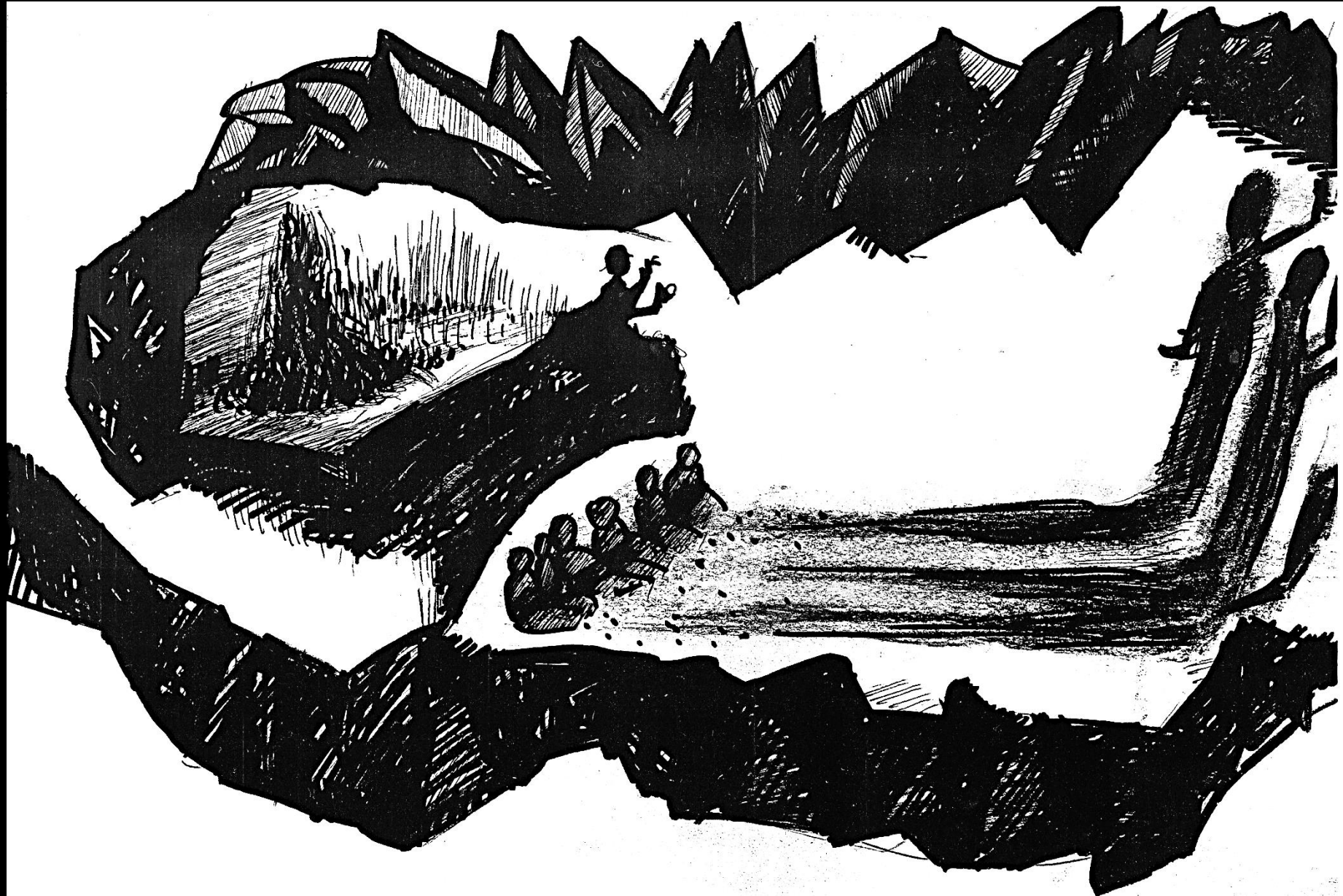
Plato

Dialectic

“Inquiry that systematically attempts to grasp with respect to each thing itself what the being of it is,” that is, the idea.

Dialectic does away with presuppositions. It overcomes everything hypothetical in thought and leads to presuppositionless knowledge.

Republic, Book 7
The Allegory of the Cave



Republic, Book 7

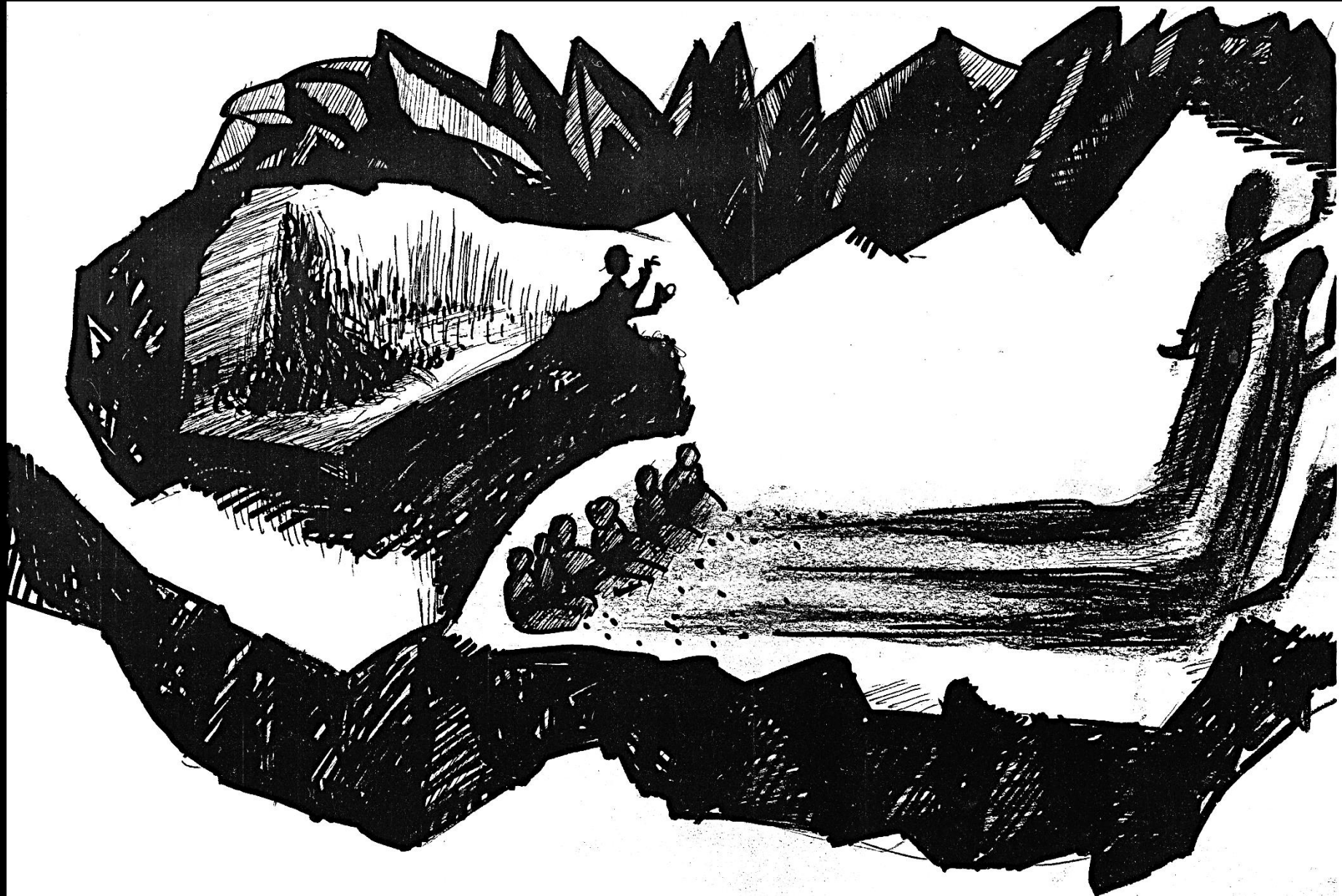
The Allegory of the Cave



An allegory of:

1. The human situation
2. Philosophical enlightenment
3. Democracy

Republic, Book 7
The Allegory of the Cave



Republic, Book 7

The Allegory of the Cave



An allegory of:

1. The human situation
2. Philosophical enlightenment
3. Democracy

Plato's pessimism

We are sunk in error, addicted to opinion, and democracy is hopeless. It is the political expression of minds ruled by opinion, bereft of wise knowledge.

Plato's optimism

The cosmos is organized by goodness. By gasping that we understand the world we live in, and by understanding that we understand how best to live.

And we can understand that, the idea of the good. At least some of us can. They are the philosophers, masters of the dialectic, and they should govern the rest.



Plato

Aristotle

Raphael, The School of Athens

ARISTOTLE

“All human beings desire by nature to know.”

Aristotle, *Metaphysics*

Two types of learning

From perception to habit. Animal association of particulars.

From perception to belief. Rational cognition of particulars. This is the learning of *experience* (*emperia*).

SCIENTIST/
PHILOSOPHER

THEORETICAL
SCIENCE

ENGINEER/
ARCHITECT

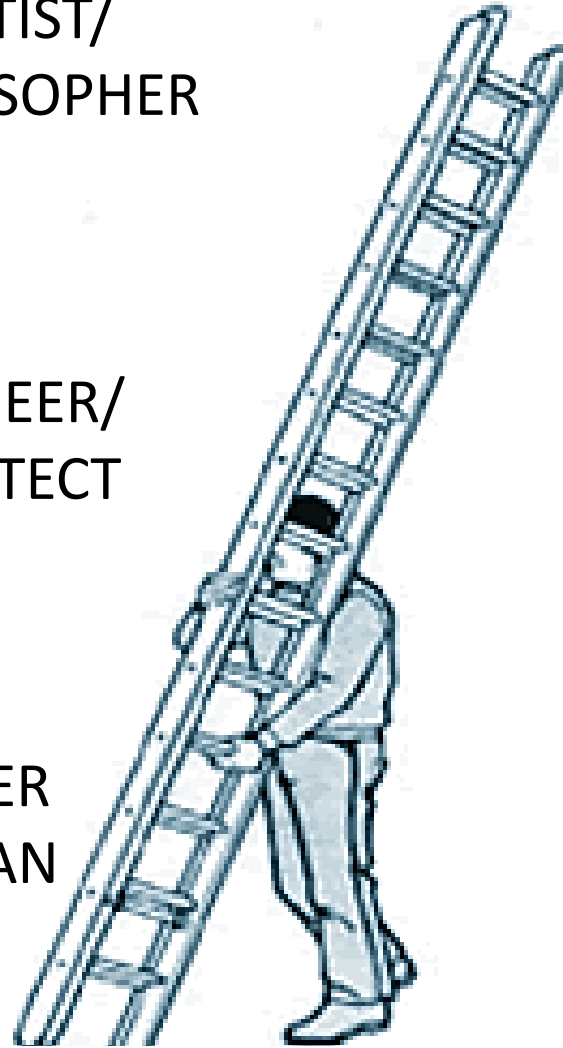
PRODUCTIVE
SCIENCE

MASTER
ARTISAN

REASONS

WORKER

EXPERIENCE



Wisdom is a kind of science

What kind of science is wisdom?

General

Difficult

Exact, teachable knowledge of causes

Purely theoretical

Noble, superior, the knowledge of a noble, superior person

Divine, in a double sense: knowledge about the divine, and such knowledge as divine beings know.

Aristotle

The Idea of Metaphysics

Wisdom is philosophy

Philosophy is science

What science? Science of what?

“Being qua being”; “being as being”

Metaphysics: The philosophical science of being qua being



Plato

Aristotle

Raphael, The School of Athens

Aristotle against Plato

Plato says being = idea

How do ideas cause particulars? Plato has no explanation.

How do ideas cause motion or change? Plato has no answer.

To say that only ideas, immaterial and changeless, are real seems unrealistic.

The McMaster Philosophers' Society



WEEKLY PHILOSOPHY TOPIC DISCUSSIONS
PHILOSOPHY ESSAY WORKSHOPS + LOGIC SEMINARS LED BY TA'S
SOCIAL EVENTS WITH STUDENTS AND FACULTY

LOCATION: WILSON LIBRARY, UNIVERSITY HALL (UH312)

TIME: EVERY TUESDAY FROM 6:30PM TO 8:00PM

SEPT 19TH	SEPT 26TH	OCT 3RD	OCT 10TH	OCT 17TH	OCT 24TH
FALL SOCIAL	WHAT IS PHILOSOPHY	ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE IN THE ANTHROPOCENE	READING WEEK - NO MEETING	TBD	CONSEQUENTIALISM & DEONTOLOGY
OCT 31ST	NOV 7TH	NOV 14TH	NOV 21ST	NOV 28TH	DEC 5TH
IMAGE & TEXT DISCOURSE	TBD	DEFINING "GOOD" AND "EVIL"	GOVERNMENT AND STATE	PROBLEMS IN PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE	CHRISTMAS SOCIAL

University Hall #312

Aristotle, *Metaphysics*

What is being?

The words “is” or “to be” seem simple, but hide a complex meaning, and do not always say the same thing.

“A horse is” means, A horse is a substance.

White is means white is a quality of a substance. Color is an accident of substance.

Five is means five is the quantity of a substance. Quantity is an accident of substance.

Not everything that is, is a substance. Besides substances there are qualities, quantities, places, durations, and other accidents.

But none of these accidents exist or have being apart from relation to substance. Substance is the underlying being, the foundation of reality.

Primary meaning of “*to be*” is “*to be a substance.*”

Substance: Something that exists in itself, not in another thing.

A substance may be:

Material or immaterial

Simple or compound

Perceptible or imperceptible

Mortal or immortal (divine)

Accident: Opposite of substance; exists in another, not in itself.

Accidents include:

Relation (e.g., being a father)

Quality (e.g., color)

Quantity

Location

What primarily is Being?

place

relation

substance

quantity

quality

What primarily is Substance?

perceptible

material

form

imperceptible

immaterial

Form: a thing's organization or disposition to behave.

For Aristotle, substance is essentially form.

Essence: a principle of being or reality. That of a substance which is most real and true and causes it to be.

For Aristotle, essence = form

HORSE
A substance

Legs, mouth
ears

Changing shape
through life



FORM

Color

Potential to run, jump,
eat

Principle of organization or
disposition to behave (= essence)

Form: a thing's organization or disposition to behave.
For Aristotle, substance is essentially form.

Essence: a principle of being or reality.
For Aristotle, essence = form

Matter: The potential of a substance to change.

(1) Are cells—the living cells of an organism—substances?

Single-cell organism, yes

Part of a multi-cellular organism? No.

(2) Are Aristotle's forms the same as Plato's Ideas?

They are similar in what they are expected to do, but they work in different ways.

For Plato, the Idea of horse is different from every particular horse. It is a separate entity, immaterial, changeless, and better, more real than any fleshy animal.

For Aristotle, forms have no existence separate from the individual substances whose form they are. Where there is a form, there is a particular substance.

(3) What is light? Is it a substance? An accident?

Light is the actualization of a potential state of a transparent medium.

It is an accident of a transparent medium.

The medium is a substance: air.

It has accidents.

One of these accidents is to become illuminated in the presence of colored bodies.

Which is what we see as light.

What primarily is Being?

place
relation
substance
quantity
quality

What primarily is Substance?

perceptible
material
form
imperceptible
immaterial

What primarily is Form?

inorganic
lesser
plant
divinities
unmoved mover
animal
human

Substance, Essence, Form

- A substance is a complete individual.
- What makes it to be, what makes it real and truly in being? That is the question of its essence.
- Aristotle's answer: Form. Form makes the substance to be. Form is most veritably real and in being about a substance.
- The rest is accidental, contingent, not essential.
- A substance is characterized by its essence—the form— together with all its many accidents.

ARISTOTLE

What Is Truth?

Definition of truth How do you define the idea of truth?

Criterion of truth How do you tell what is true and what is false?

Aristotle's definition: "To say of what is that it is, and of what is not that it is not, is true."

"There is truth when an affirmation corresponds to a combination in beings and when a denial corresponds to a dissociation among beings; whereas there is error when the opposite relations hold."

The "correspondence theory" of truth. Truth is the correspondence of substance and statement.

ARISTOTLE

THEORY OF CAUSES

To know a thing is to know the cause, the reason for its being as it is.

The complete cause of any change includes:

FORMAL CAUSE: the law of the change

MATERIAL CAUSE: the material persisting through the change

EFFICIENT CAUSE: what starts the change

FINAL CAUSE (*telos*, teleological cause): the purpose of the change

The Unmoved Mover (*Metaphysics*, Book 12, chaps 6-7)

Cosmological Proof of God

Deduce God's existence as the first cause of motion

1. Time is imperishable.
2. Time is the number of motion.
3. So motion is imperishable.
4. Motion is an accident of substance.
5. So there is an eternal substance, and it causes all motion or change.
6. This eternal substance must be completely actual, containing no potential.
7. Potentiality comes from matter.
8. So the unmoving cause of all motion is an immaterial substance, a pure form.

Unmoved Mover

Unmoved Mover causes motion without itself moving.
Even without moving, a thing can cause other things to move toward it by causing love or desire.

Something loved or desired need make no motion of its own to cause things move toward it; it initiates motion without moving.

That is how the Unmoved Mover moves things—by being the object of love and desire

Unmoved Mover

- Necessarily exists (cannot *not* exist)
- The final cause of motion in nature
- The comprehensive reason for everything else
- Divine
- Alive and happy (because imperturbable)

“[Happiness] extends just so far as contemplation does, and those to whom contemplation more fully belongs are more truly happy . . . for this is in itself precious.” (Aristotle)

What is “Metaphysics”?

Wisdom. The purest of pure theory. The supreme science.

Ontology: The science of being qua being. Which includes:

- The theory of substance, the primary being
- Primary substance is form
- Form is the essence
- Truth is the correspondence of names combined in a statement with beings combined in reality.

Theology: Proof of God’s existence

The Unmoved Mover
Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, book 12, chaps. 6-7



ARISTOTLE

THEORY OF CAUSES

To know a thing is to know the cause, the reason for its being as it is.

The complete cause of any change includes:

FORMAL CAUSE: the law of the change

MATERIAL CAUSE: the material persisting through the change

EFFICIENT CAUSE: what starts the change

FINAL CAUSE (*telos*, teleological cause): the purpose of the change

Cosmological Proof of God

Deduce God's existence as the first cause of motion

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ANCIENT PHILOSOPHY

600-500 BCE

First Greek philosophers in Ionia and S. Italy

PRE-SOCRATIC PHILOSOPHY

470-320 BCE

Socrates, Plato, Aristotle in Athens

CLASSICAL PHILOSOPHY

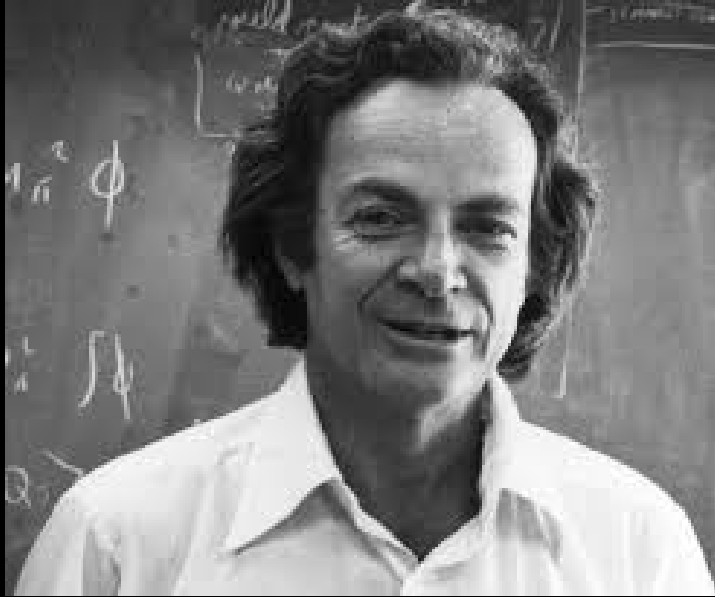
Alexander the Great, 356-323 BCE

Hellenistic Empire

300-100 BCE

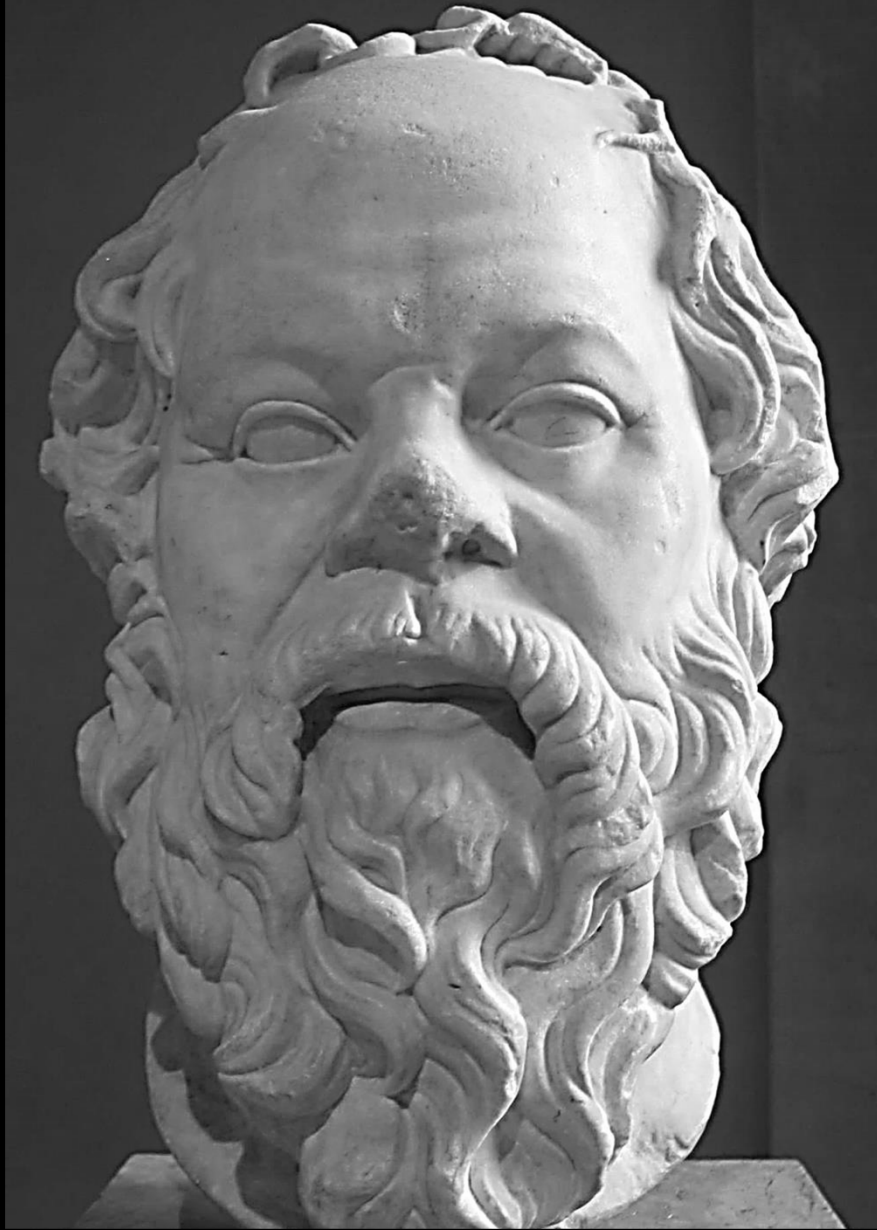
Epicureans, Cynics, Stoics

HELLENISTIC PHILOSOPHY

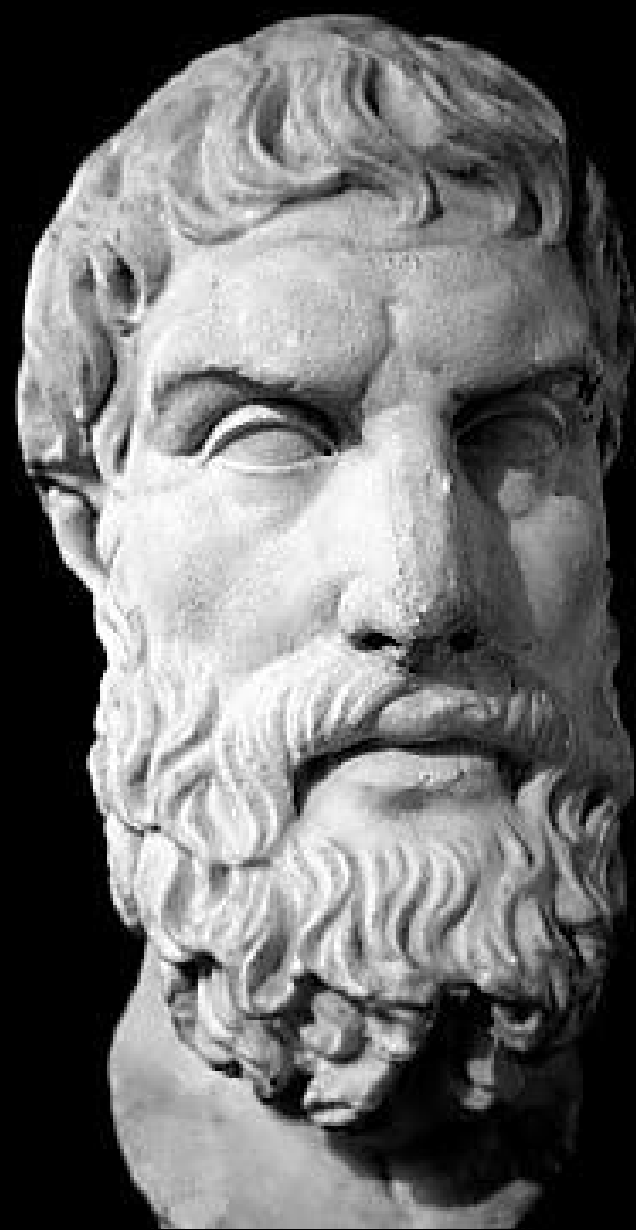


Richard Feynman
US physicist
Nobel Prize 1965

If, in some cataclysm, all of scientific knowledge were to be destroyed, and only one sentence passed on to the next generation . . . the statement that would contain the most information in the fewest words is the atomic hypothesis All things are made of atoms—little particles that move around in perpetual motion, attracting each other when they are a little distance apart, but repelling upon being squeezed into one another. In that one sentence . . . there is an enormous amount of information about the world, if just a little imagination and thinking are applied.



Socrates



Epicurus

EPICURUS (341-271 BCE)

Teaching in Athens (in “The Garden”) from 306 BCE

Obstacles to Happiness

- Fear
- Ignorance
- Harmful beliefs and desires. Especially false beliefs about the gods, death, and the good.
- Happiness reduces to a problem of knowledge, replacing these false beliefs with the truth.

EPICURUS

The Gods

1. Gods exist. Epicurus not an atheist.
2. Gods are unconcerned with human affairs.
3. Gods are nothing to fear. Instead, they are a model for human happiness.

Why are the gods indifferent to humanity?

1. According to the universal belief, gods are immortal and blessed. So, they cannot suffer or inflict suffering or feel anger or favor.
2. Happiness is uninterrupted tranquility. If gods intervene, that could only be from some disturbance of their tranquility. But that is impossible. The gods are immortal; they have no troubles, and never trouble others.
3. The existence of evil proves the indifference of the gods. They have the foresight and power to prevent it, but do not do so. So, they must not care.

Epicurus

Death

“Death, the most frightening of bad things, is nothing to us; since when we exist, death is not yet present, and when death is present, then we do not exist.”

This is a *special* way of being afraid
No trick dispels. Religion used to try,
That vast moth-eaten musical brocade
Created to pretend we never die,
And specious stuff that says *No rational being*
Can fear a thing it will not feel, not seeing
That this is what we fear—no sight, no sound,
No touch or taste or smell, nothing to think with,
Nothing to love or link with,
The anesthetic from which none come round.

Philip Larkin, “Aubade”

Epicurus's Atomism

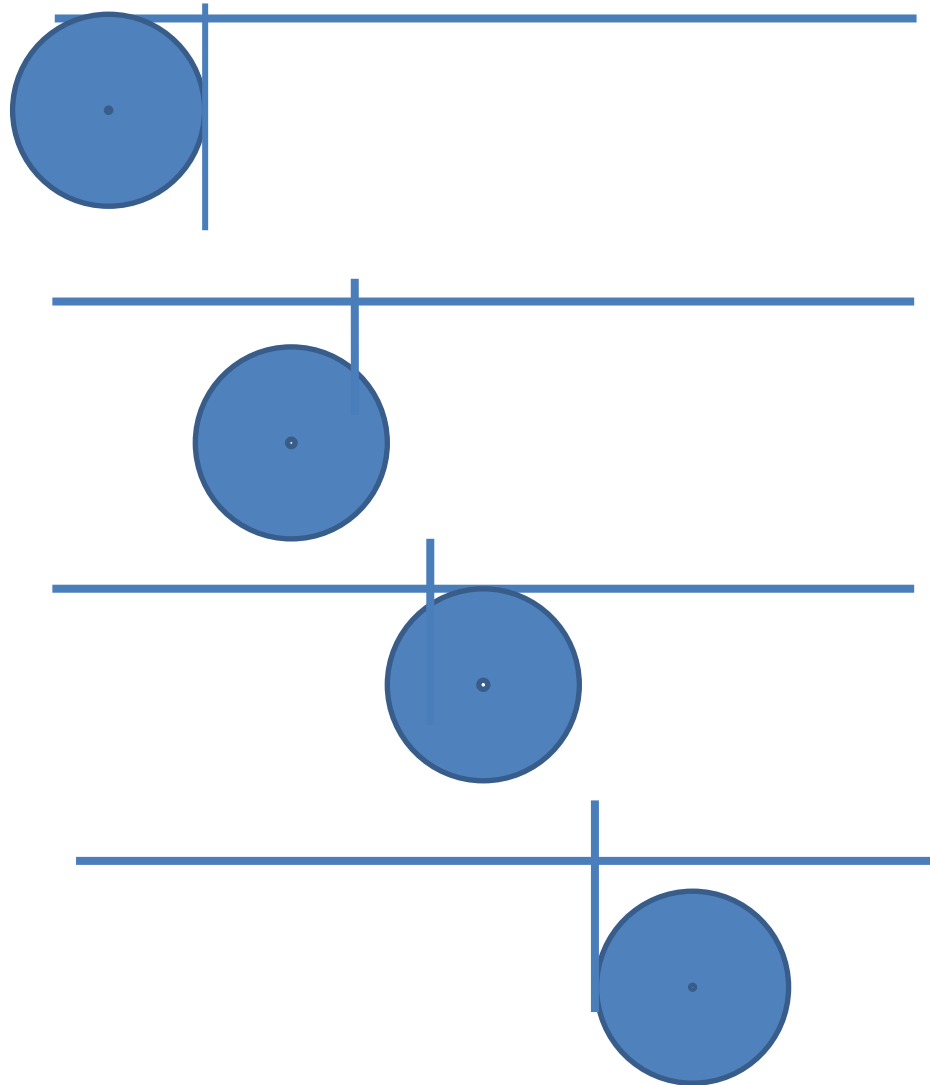
1. All bodies are either atomic or compound
2. Nothing comes from nothing or disappears into nothing
3. Cosmos: bodies + void. Motion is endless—both without purpose, and infinite
4. Extent of void and quantity of atoms is unlimited
5. Inconceivably (not infinitely) many differences of atomic shape

Differences from Democritus

1. Limit to atomic shape
2. Internal atomic structure

Aristotle against Democritus

Anything that moves must have parts. Atoms therefore cannot be homogeneous, or simple and without parts.



Epicurus's Atomism

Differences from Democritus (continued)

3. The swerve

Cicero, Roman philosopher and statesman, against Epicurus and atomism
“That turbulent hurly-burley of atoms will never be able to produce the orderly beauty of this cosmos.”

Joseph Glanville (17th century):

“How absurd [the Epicurean] philosophy is, in supposing things to have been made and ordered by casual hits of Atoms, in a mighty void. . . . The opinion of the world's being made by a fortuitous jumble of Atoms is impious and abominable. . . . Haphazard atomism is an ungodly idea; the observed order of nature is proof of God's hand.”

4. Compounds introduce new properties

EPICURUS

The Soul

- Does not deny the soul's existence, only its immateriality.
- Soul is a body and part of the living human body.
- It is suffused throughout the organism, resembling a hot wind.
- Soul divides into mind and spirit.
 - Mind is power of deliberation, concentrated in the heart.
 - Spirit is the power of vital movement, dispersed throughout the body.
- Soul's composition is delicate, its atoms small and volatile.
- At death it dissolves into constituent atoms that rejoin the universal flow.

EPICURUS

Empiricism

Lucretius (Roman Epicurean)

The concept of the true is begotten first from the senses, and the senses cannot be gainsaid.

Epicurus

We must keep all our investigations in accord with our sensations and in particular with the immediate apprehensions whether of the mind or of any one of the instruments of judgment . . . in order that we may have indications whereby we may judge both the problem of sense-perception and the unseen.



Two ideas from Socrates

- (1) Care of the self. Happiness and virtue are problems of knowledge.
- (2) Idealism: Being is Idea; fundamental reality is immaterial, spiritual, and rational

Epicurus

- (1) Emphasize the value of philosophy as care of the self.
- (2) Deny idealism, affirm materialism in the form of atomism.

DESIRES

May be necessary or not necessary

Necessary. Non-satisfaction brings pain

- Happiness (philosophy, friends)
- Life (food, water)
- An untroubled body (law, leisure)

Not necessary. Non-satisfaction not necessarily painful. Any pain of non-satisfaction relieved by other means; for example, by changing one's opinion about the object

- Natural (sex, immortality)
- Conventional (reputation)

The Notoriety of Epicurus

Notorious for . . .

- materialism, denying the spiritual in nature.
- belief in chance and no final purpose.
- disbelief in afterlife.
- hedonism: pleasure is the highest good.

Epicurus's Idea of Pleasure

- A feeling, not a sensation.
- An evaluation of sensation.
- Pleasure and pain are distinct qualities, like the two poles of a magnet. Neither is merely the lack of the other.

PLEASURE

Kinetic. Depends on an object and is intermittent or discontinuous.

Katastematic. Continuous, independent of external objects.

Types:

Aponia: leisure, physical ease, stressless well-being.

Ataraxia: untroubled, tranquil mind.

Why is pleasure the highest good?

Cradle Argument

The goodness of pleasure is learned in the cradle. The first good, naturally pursued.

Conceptual Argument

Concept of good becomes meaningless when conceived as independent of pleasure

Plato

Against Pleasure as the Good

- Pleasure is the replenishment of lack.
- Life spent in pursuit of pleasure constantly tries to fulfill newly arising lack.
- Any pleasure is made better by adding virtue.
 - Pleasure plus wisdom is better than pleasure without wisdom.
 - Pleasure plus courage is better than pleasure without courage.
- So, pleasure cannot be the highest good.

The answer of Epicurus.

Wisdom, courage, and all the virtues *are* katastematic pleasures.

Virtues

Virtues

Personal qualities that assist us in the pursuit of happiness.

The Virtues According to Epicurus

Prudence, practical wisdom

Self-sufficiency

Frugality

Friendship

Justice

Epicurus

Justice

- Justice is a conventional good contrived to promote pleasure.
- Not eternal. Justice changes as circumstances change.
- Not inherently good. Good as a means to the higher end of pleasure.

Epicurus

Challenge to Religion

- Our world is one of infinite worlds in endless void.
- Nothing spiritual in nature. Human beings not special in nature. They are animals, systems of matter, like everything else. Death is extinction.
- The gods take no interest in human affairs and cannot be moved by sacrifice or prayer.
- Religious ceremonies are superstitious. They are the way a powerful few control the rest. The aim of philosophy is to liberate people from superstition.

EPICURUS
Tetrapharmakos
(The four-fold remedy)

- The gods present no fears
- Death presents no worry
- The good is readily attainable
- The terrible is readily endurable



STOIC SCHOOL

Zeno of Citium, founder, ca. 300 BCE

Chrysippus. Second founder, a generation later.

Epictetus, ca. 50-130 CE. Greek-speaking Stoic in the Roman Empire.



Stoa of Attalos, Athens

THE CYNICS

“Cynic” = dog



Diogenes of Sinope



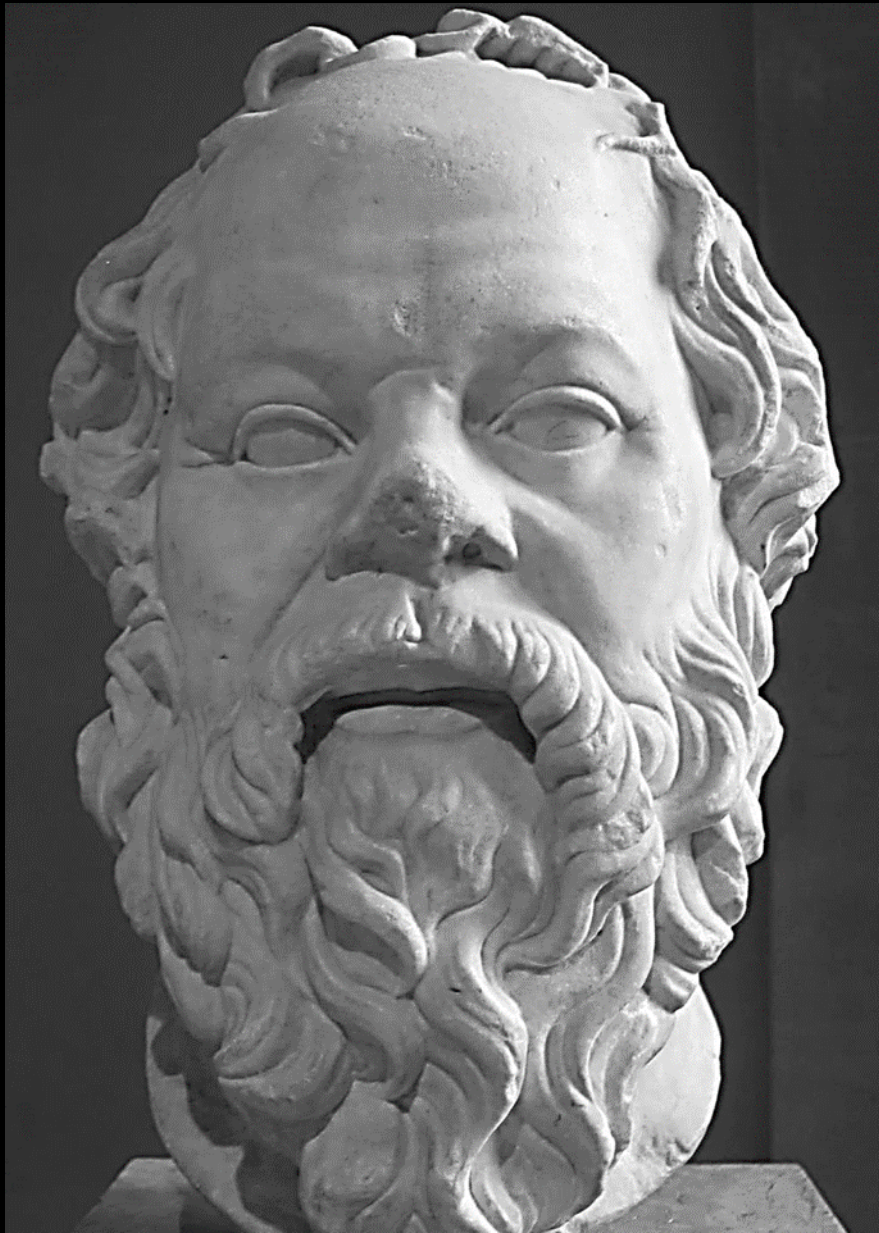
Diogenes of Sinope, "Searching for an honest man"



Diogenes with Alexander the Great: "Tell me what you want." "Please get out of my sunshine."

CYNIC PRINCIPLES

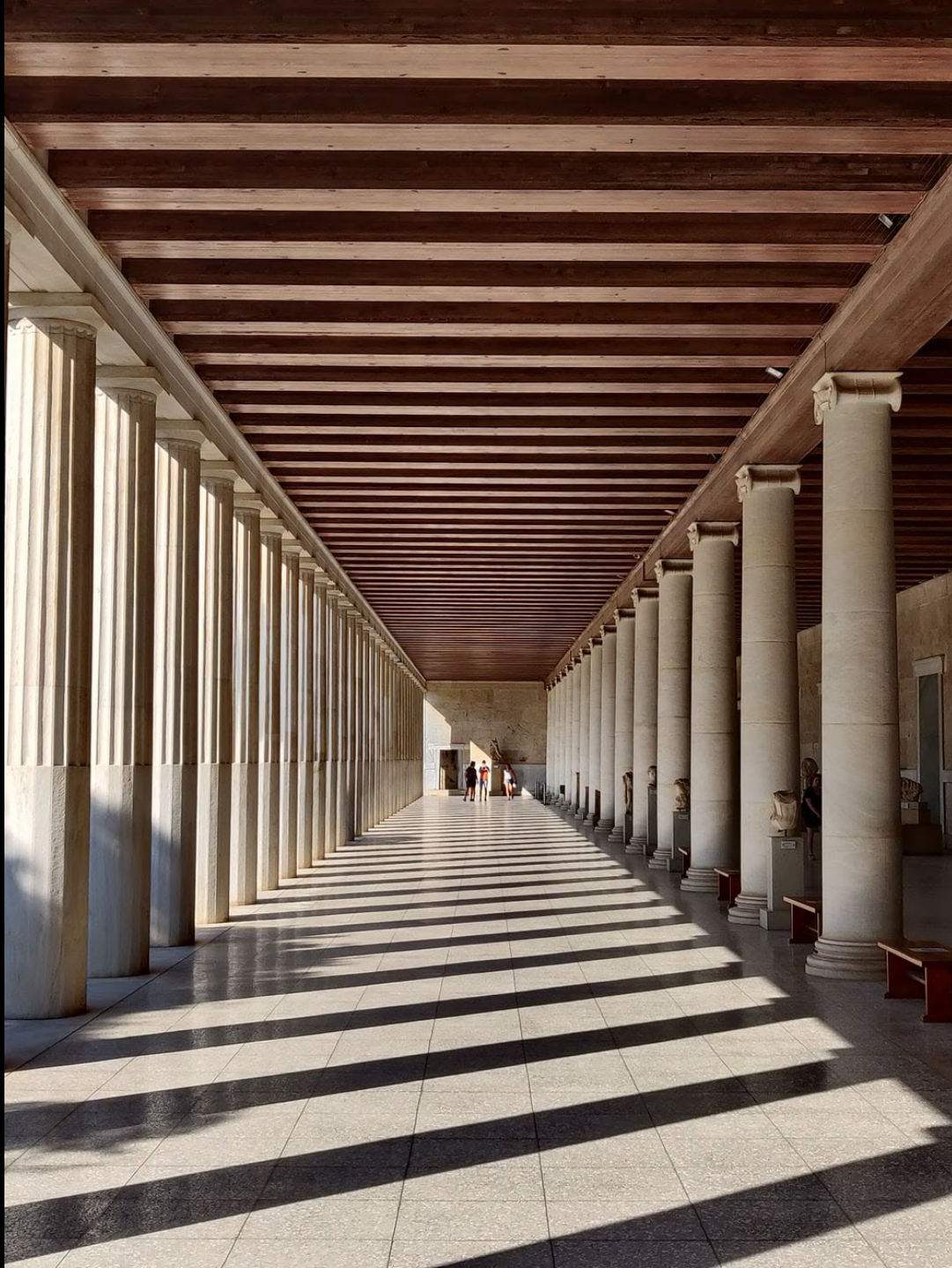
1. Superiority of nature over culture.
Conventions are without value
Commitments and obligations are without value
Live according to nature (like a dog)
2. Ethical orientation. Philosophy is an art of living well.
3. Discipline (*askesis*). Train for endurance. Practice for being happy under adverse conditions.



Socrates



Diogenes



Stoicism

Athenian stoa

STOICS

Virtue

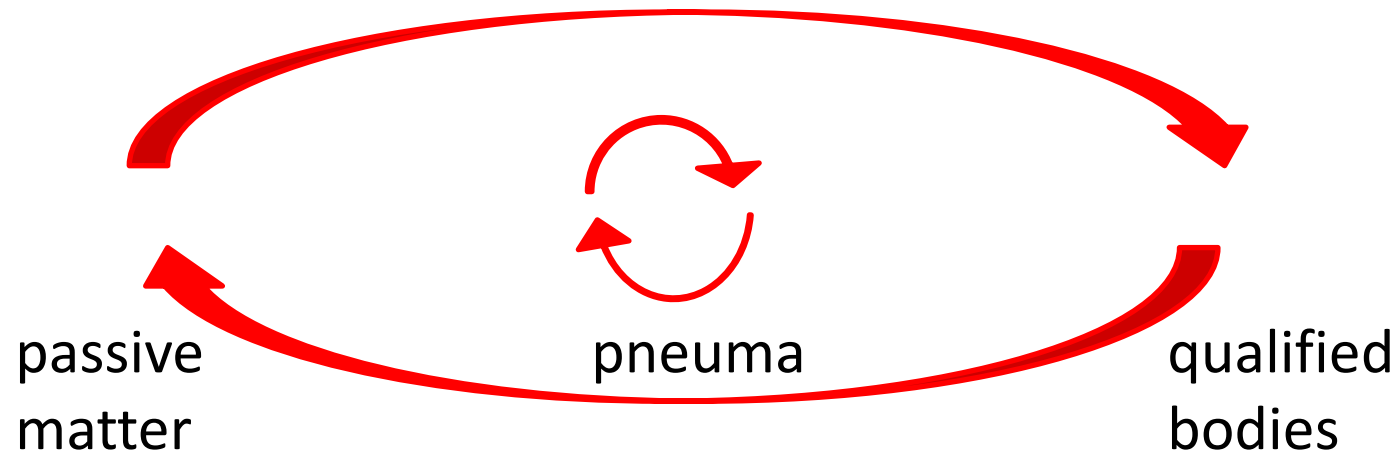
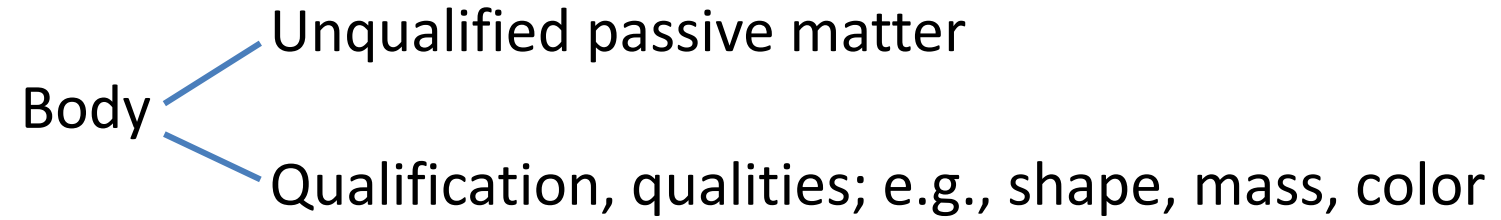
1. Good without qualification. Everything else is indifferent.
2. Life according to nature.
3. Reasonable, complete rationality.

STOICS

Materialism

Materialism without atomism

Matter is continuous and without void. No empty space.



Pneuma: cosmic breath

A body

Mixture of fire + air

Mixes with all other bodies

Source of qualities of bodies

Identified with *Logos*

Eternal return of the same

“There will be nothing different in comparison to what has happened before, but everything will occur in just the same way and indistinguishably, even to the last details.”

STOICS

The Sage

Happy in all circumstances.

Happiness is independent of everything external.

Without passions.

Accepts everything. Acts in harmony with reason and nature.

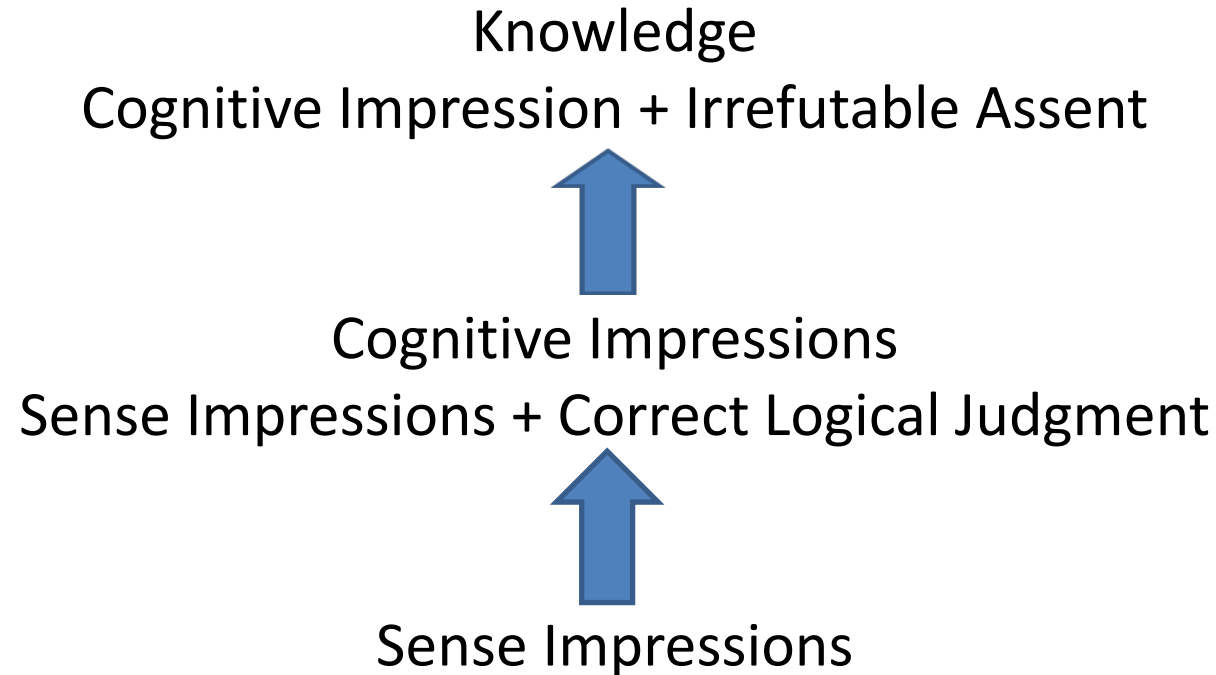
Sees the big picture and always acts for the best.

STOICS

Theory of Knowledge

Epistemology: philosophical theory of knowledge

Ascent to Knowledge



STOICS

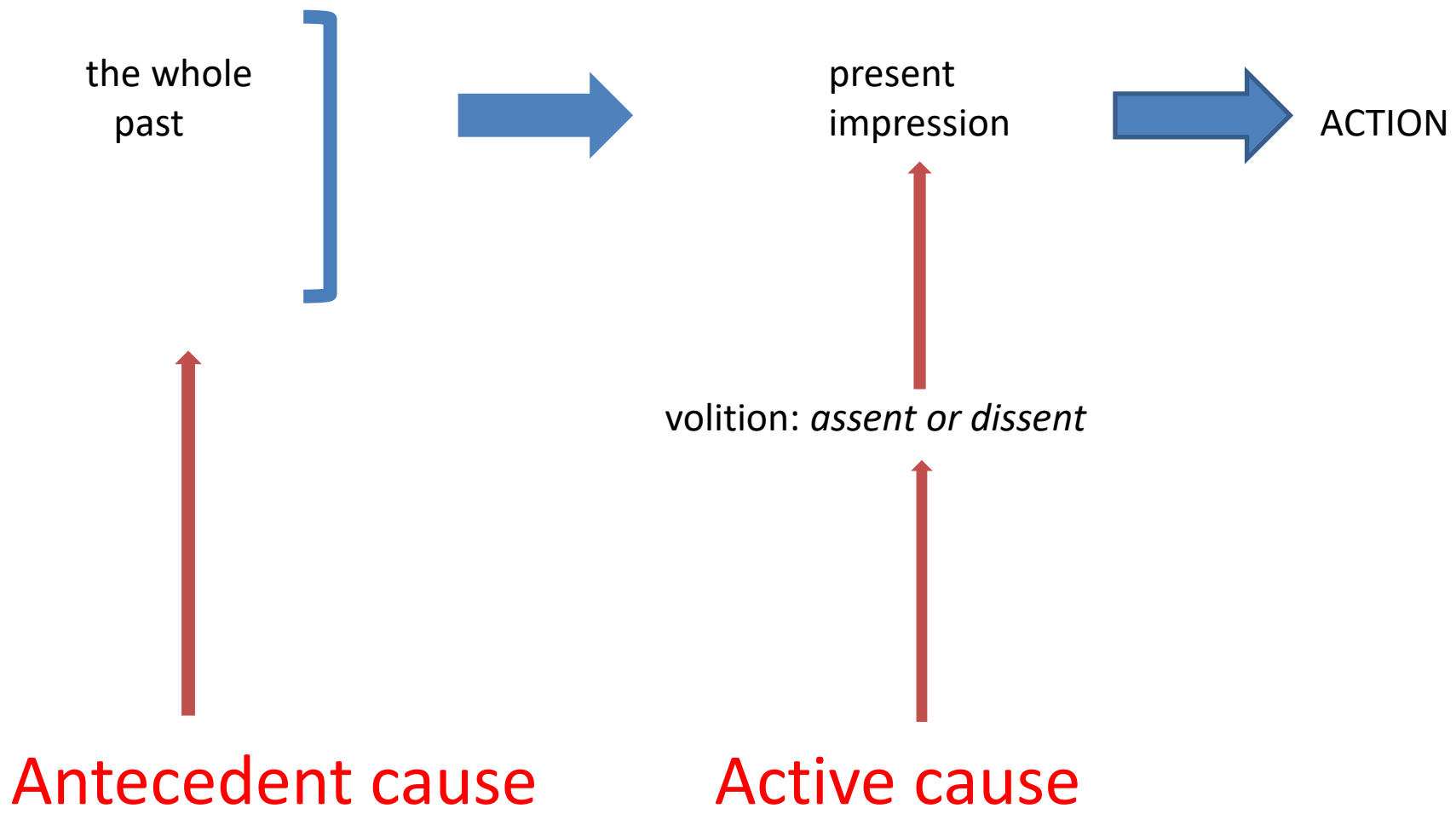
Free Will and Determinism

Epictetus: “If a good man could foresee the future, he would cooperate with sickness, death, and mutilation; for he would be aware that this had been ordained by the universal order of things, and that the whole is more important than the parts.”

Theory of Causes

All causes are either:

- *Antecedent causes*: events leading up to a change.
- *Active, operating causes*: immediately produce the effect.



The Lazy Argument

Made by opponents of the Stoics to refute their determinism.

Why should a person who is ill consult a physician?

One is fated either to recover or to succumb.

Stoic answer:

As rational beings, we have the duty to do all that we can to advance a reasonably preferred course of action.

If you are ill, and do not consult a physician, or even try to do so, then you have not done all that you can do.

STOICS

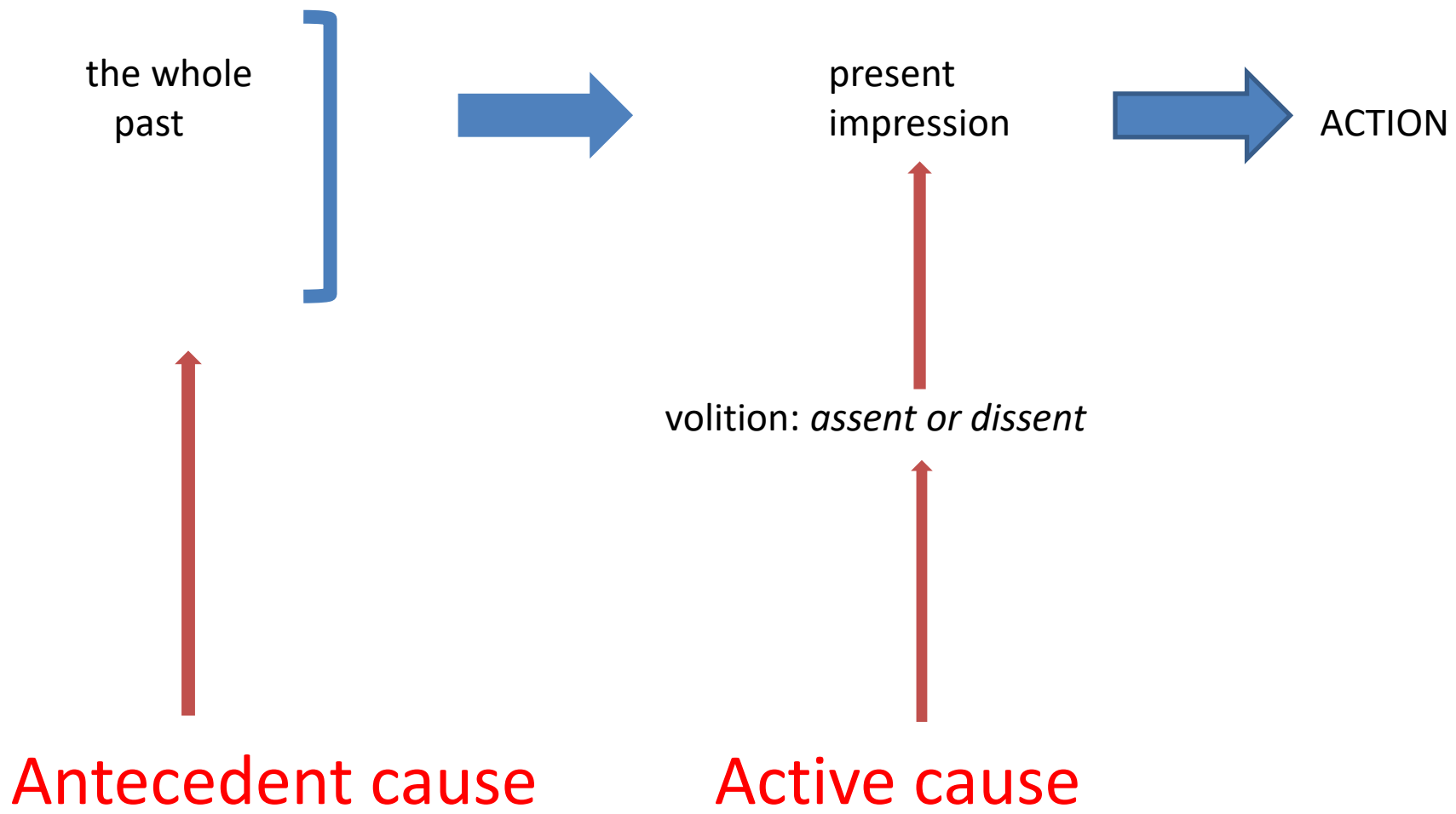
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Epictetus
circa 50-130 CE

Encheiridion (En-chur-ID-ee-on, “Handbook”)



Classrooms of an Ancient School

Epictetus
Encheiridion

Ch. 1: “Some things are up to us, and some are not up to us.”

Ch. 19: “You can be invincible if you do not enter any contest in which victory is not up to you. . . . There is one road to [freedom]: despising what is not up to us.”

“My leg you [may] fetter, but my volition not even Zeus himself has power to overcome.”

EPICETETUS

Stoic Moral Theory

The highest good (= virtue) is right volition.

Every act is chosen, voluntary.

No moral luck. Whether life goes well or ill is completely in our control.

Suffering is a kind of error, a cognitive mistake, due to wrong judgment and false belief.

Ch. 27: “Nothing bad by nature happens in the world.”

Ch. 8: “Do not seek to have events happen as you want them to, but instead want them to happen as they do happen, and your life will go well.”

Ch. 33: “Wish to have happen only what does happen.”

Training For Goodness

1. Training in desire and aversion

“Whenever you grow attached to something, do not act as though it were one of those things that cannot be taken away, but as though it were something [fragile] like a jar or a crystal goblet, so that when it breaks you will remember what it was like, and not be troubled.”

2. Training in control of impulse and appropriate action.

“Never say about anything, ‘I have lost it,’ but only ‘I have given it back.’ Is your child dead? It has been given back.”

Chap. 11

Practice treating everything as a traveler treats an inn.

Practice approaching everything in the world like dishes circulating at a banquet.

Practice imaging yourself as an actor in a play.

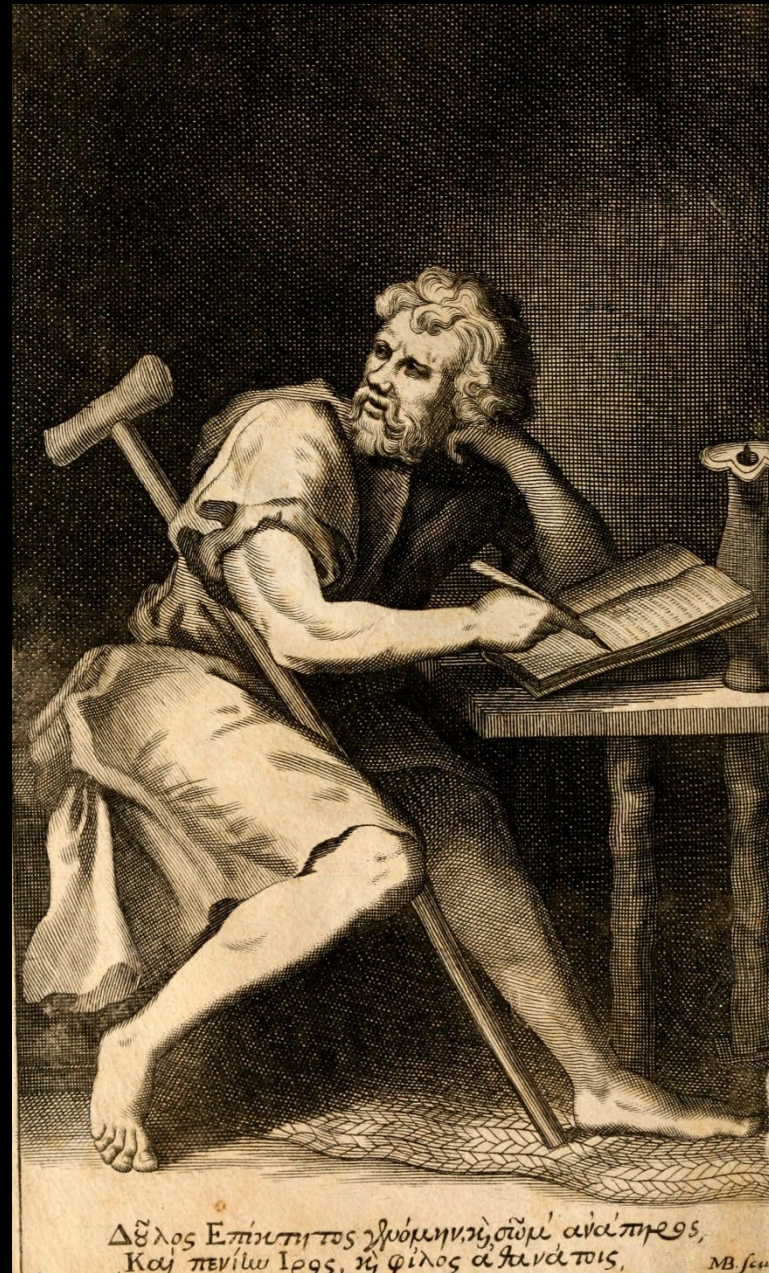
3. Training in assent (logic, good reasoning)

Relationships with Other People

- It is our nature to love nothing so much as our own interest. But care for others is, or can be, in our interest. Altruism is a kind of higher egoism.
- Stoics do not avoid commitments or withdraw from life with others. They want to be virtuous and happy within the inevitable and natural commitments to others.

These relationships are human nature. To deny them is violence against nature and cannot turn out well.

The challenge is to accept them and reshape them in accordance with Stoic philosophy.



Δδλος Επίκτητος γρόμηνι, σὺμ' ἀνάπηρος,
Καὶ πενίῳ Ἴρως, καὶ φίλος ἀθανάτοις, MB. fecit.

Epictetus

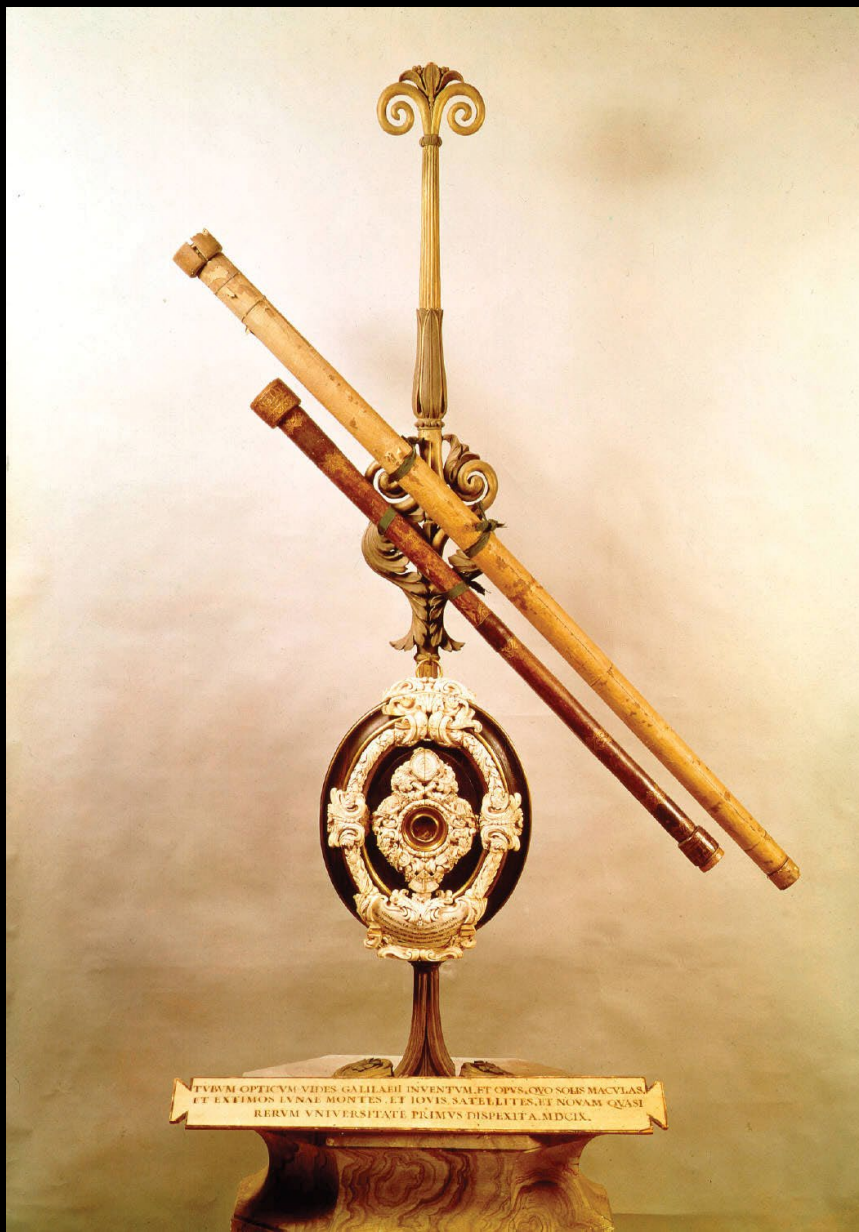
RENE DESCARTES
(1596-1659)

Meditations on First Philosophy
(1641)



From Epictetus (1st century CE) to Descartes (17th century).
What has happened in between:

- Universities now exist in all major European cities.
- Shakespeare has come and gone.
- Protestant Reformation split Europe into warring religious sects.
- Copernicus's new model of the planets—a solar-centered, rather than earth-centered.
- Galileo introduced the telescope and reformulated the basic problems of physics.



Galileo



Copernicus

RENE DESCARTES
(1596-1659)

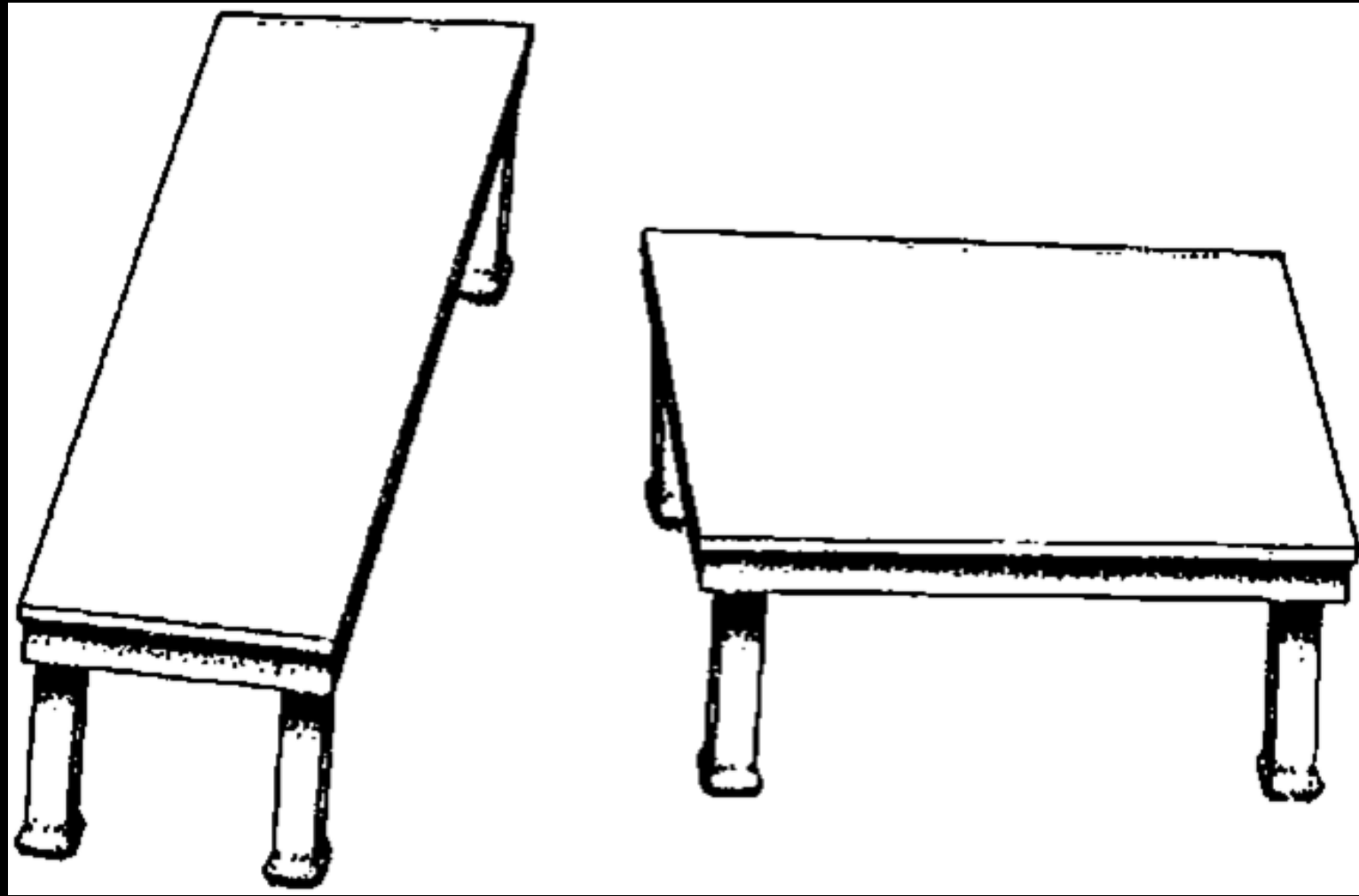
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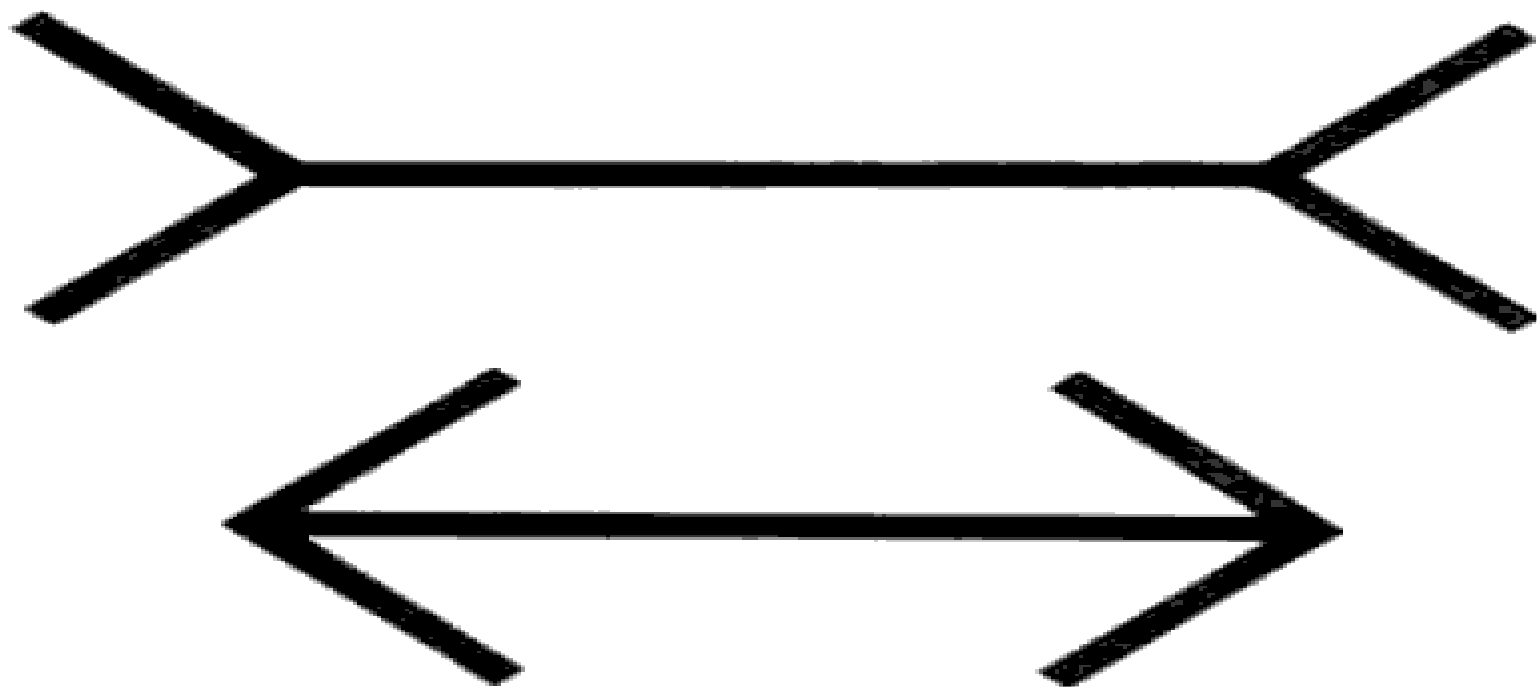
Stoics: To know something is to apprehend it so clearly and distinctly that no argument can refute your conviction.

Also Descartes's ideal

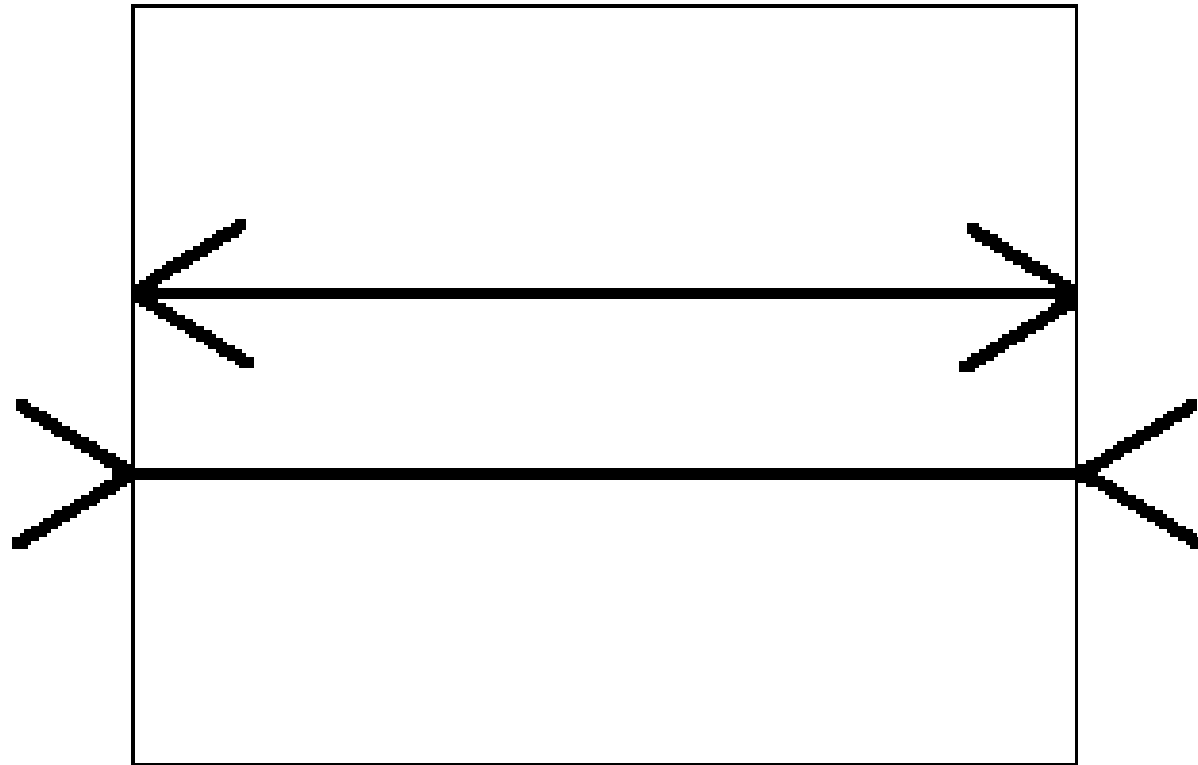
Descartes's Method of Doubt: Press doubt as far as possible in order to find the boundaries of knowledge.







Muller-Lyer Illusion



How do we distinguish between illusion and reality?

We cannot learn the difference from perception, since the possibility of knowledge from perception depends on being able to distinguish illusions.

How do we distinguish waking and dream experience?

Descartes's answer: Rational judgment of continuity

- Spatial continuity
- Causal continuity

In waking perception, continuities of space, time, and cause rule.

In dreams, they fly apart, and that's how we tell the difference.

RENE DESCARTES
(1596-1659)

Meditations on First Philosophy
(1641)



The Meditator remembers his “long-standing opinion” that there is a God.

The idea of God is the idea of a perfect being.

Either a perfect being exists, or not.

- If a perfect being exists
- If a perfect being does not exist

If God exists, then reason is doubtful.

If God does not exist, then reason is doubtful.

But God either exists or does not.

So, reason cannot be trusted.

Descartes Second Meditation

“Cogito ergo sum” “I think, therefore I exist.”

The *“cogito”*: Thinking implies existence.

Why is this *“cogito”* significant?

1. Proves the possibility of knowledge.
2. Provides a test for truth. True ideas are “clear and distinct,” like the *cogito*.

Substance: Something whose existence does not depend on another. Exists in itself, not in another.

Thinking substance: immaterial, incorporeal, non-extended. In Latin, *res cogitans*.

Material substance: Spatially extended, corporeal. In Latin, *res extensa*.

Descartes equates material substance (matter, body) with spatial extension.

The essence of body, what makes a body corporeal or material, is spatial extension.

FOUR IMPLICATIONS

1. Primary and secondary qualities

Primary qualities. Qualities that necessarily accompany spatial existence. There is nothing extended, no material body, that does not have:

Size

Position

Shape

Quantity of rest or motion

Secondary qualities. Arise from interaction between bodies with primary qualities and perception:

Color

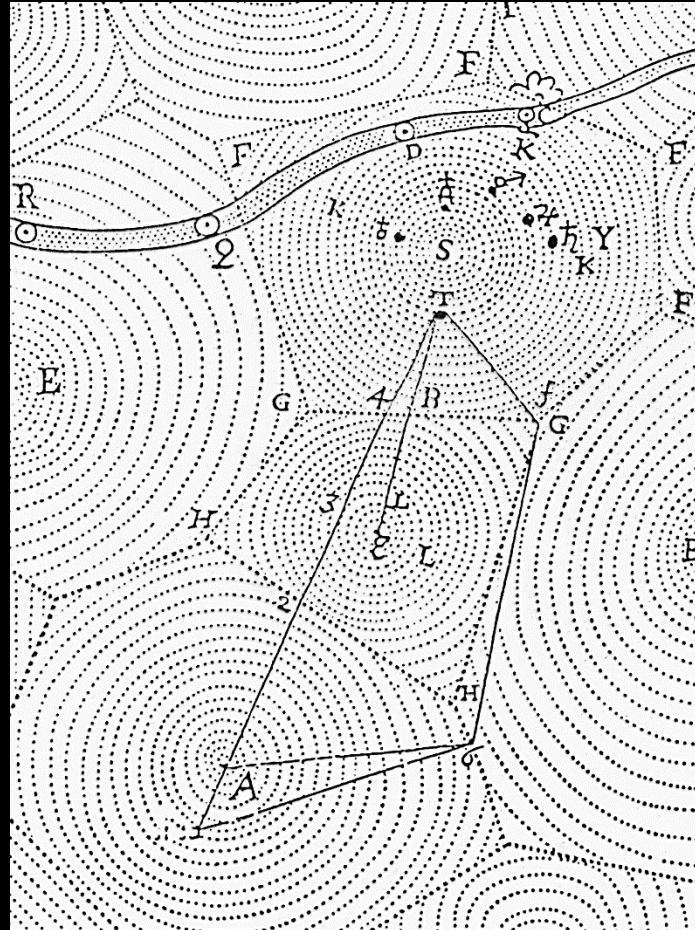
Odor

Taste

Texture, etc.

2. Plenum

When space is identical with matter, then the idea of “empty space” becomes impossible. The physical universe is therefore “filled up,” a plenum, with no empty space. Every region of space however small is a body.



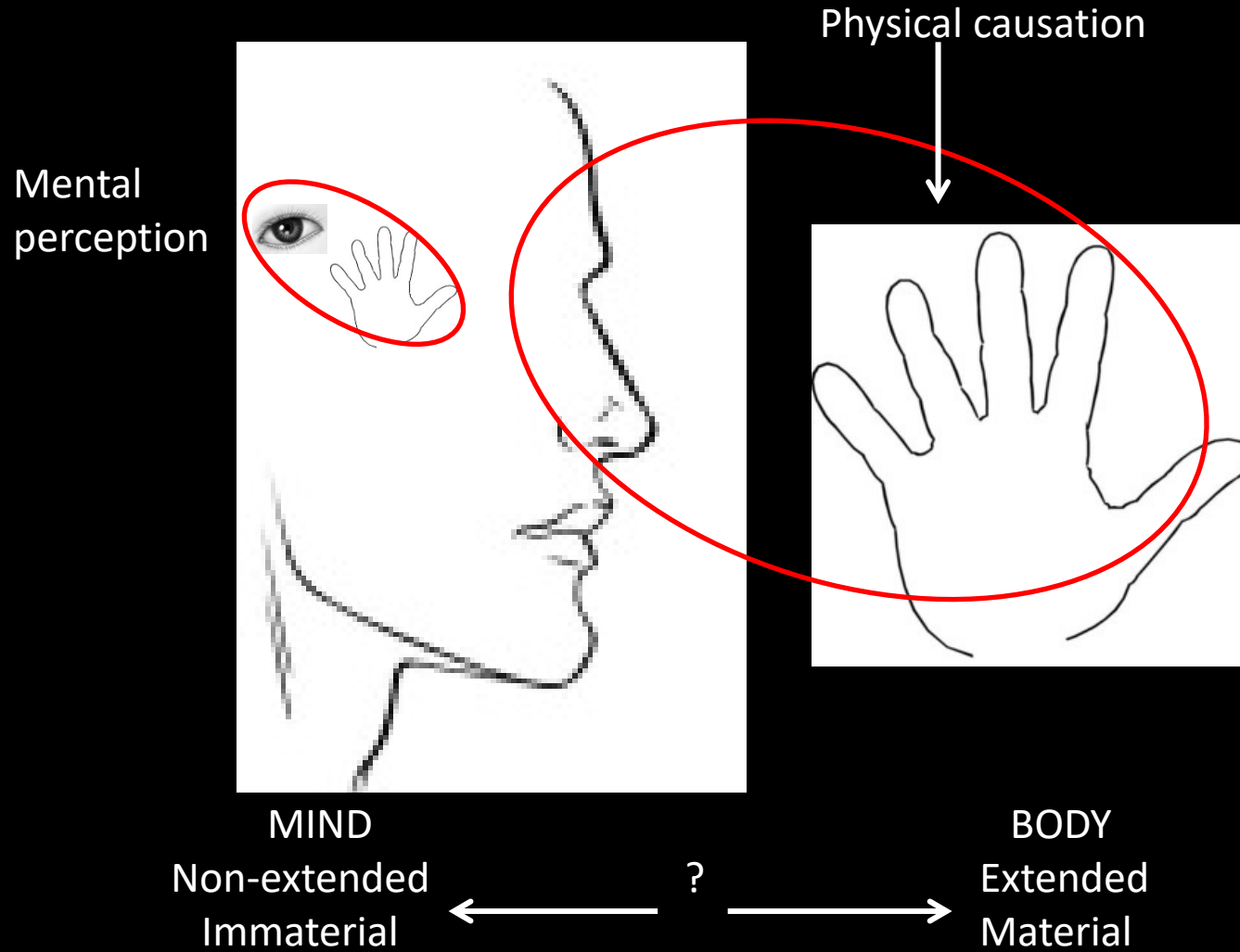
3. Inertness

Spatial extension is the whole essence of matter. No other quality, except those primary qualities that necessarily accompany extension, are essential to matter or being a body.

Motion is not essential to a body. If a body moves, motion was transmitted to it from another moving body.

One body by itself is inert, motionless, a dead lump.

4. MIND – BODY PROBLEM



Descartes

On the relation of mind and body

“that the mind, which is incorporeal, can set the body in motion is something which is shown to us not by any reasoning or comparison with other matters, but by the surest and plainest everyday experience. It is one of those self-evident things that we only make obscure when we try to explain them in terms of other things.”

Spinoza
1632-1677

Ethics (1677)

Deus sive Nature
God or (in other words) Nature
(God = Nature)



The God of the Philosophers

A God who appeals to rational thought, to philosophical thought, and not to the traditions of monotheistic religion or the Bible.

The Unmoved Mover of Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, book 12, is an example.

Or, earlier, this passage from the pre-Socratic Ionian philosopher Xenophanes:

“One god, the greatest among gods and men, neither in form like unto mortals nor in thought. He sees all over, thinks all over, and hears all over. But without toil he moves all things by the thought of his mind. And he abides ever in the self-same place, moving not at all; nor does it befit him to go about now hither now thither.”

Aristotle. Substance is that which exists in itself and not in another.

Many substances in nature. A horse is a substance; a dog or a person is a substance.

Descartes. Two substances, mental and physical (dualism).

Parmenides. “Say and think only this: Being is.” A single substance, numerically one.

Spinoza. Combine the conclusion of Aristotle about what substance is with the argument of Parmenides, that there can be only a single one substance.

Spinoza Substance

“By substance I mean that which is in itself and is conceived through itself; that is, that, the conception of which does not require the conception of another thing from which it has to be formed.” (1D3)

Substance is cause of itself, *causa sui*

Cause of itself (*causa sui*) = necessary existence

Spinoza Monism

Substance is unique. There exists only one substance. Not one *kind* of substance, but *numerically one single substance*.

1. Something exists.
 2. Whatever exists has a sufficient cause
 3. Therefore a *causa sui* substance must exist, and
 4. There is at most one.
-
1. If there were two *causa sui* substances, then there must be a difference between them.
 2. If there is a difference, the difference must have a cause.
 3. One *causa sui* substance cannot cause change in another self-caused being.
 4. So, if a self-caused substance exists at all, it must be unique.
There can be only one.

Aristotle's idea of substance

HORSE
A substance



Legs, mouth
ears

Changing shape
through life

FORM

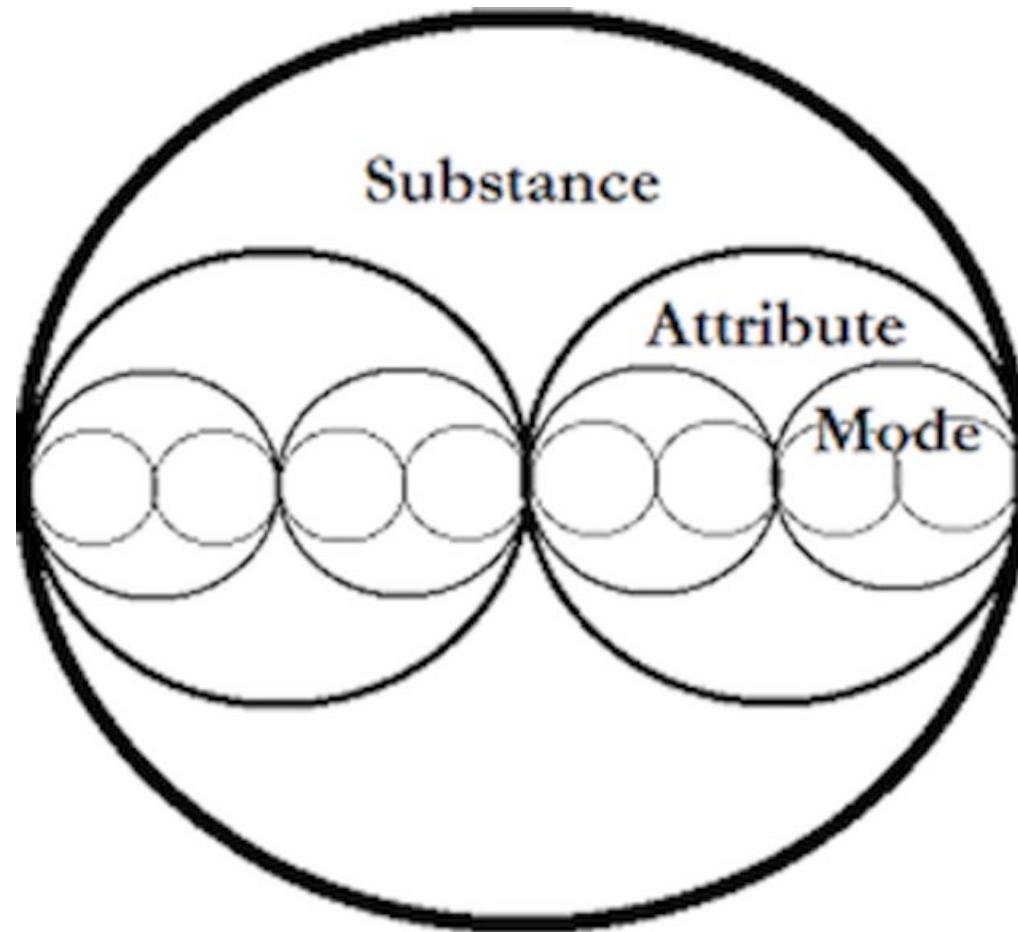
Color

Potential to run, jump,
eat

Principle of organization or
disposition to behave (= essence)

Spinoza's idea of substance (= God)

One single, infinitely complex substance,
Comprising infinitely many modes of infinitely many attributes



SPINOZA

Mode and Attribute

Attribute: that which the intellect perceives of substance as constituting its essence. (1D4)

Mode: the affections of a substance; that is, that which is in something else and conceived through something else. (1D5)

“Mode” = modification, modality, way. A mode of substance is a modification of it, some way in which substance is modified.

“Conceived through” = explained by, made intelligible, reasonable by.

SPINOZA

Substance and God

Definition 6: “By God I mean an absolutely infinite being; that is, substance consisting of infinite attributes.”

Proposition 11: “God . . . necessarily exists.”

[Following this, Spinoza gives three proofs of God’s existence.]

METHODS FOR THE PROOF OF GOD

Ontological Proof. Explain God as a being that cannot **not** exist. God's essence includes existence.

Cosmological Proof. God is the first cause, the ultimate cause of everything else. Without God the chain of cause and effect would recede forever, and the world would be without a rational foundation.

Aristotle's proof of the Unmoved Mover in *Metaphysics* was this type of proof.

Teleological Proof (aka "Design argument"). Nature shows evidence of intelligent design, so a Designer must exist.

Spinoza rejects the Teleological proof. His three arguments in Proposition 11 are versions of the ontological and cosmological proofs.

“Reduction to Absurdity” (*reductio ad absurdum*)

A logical method of proof

Assume the opposite of what you want to prove.

Deduce a contradiction.

That proves the opposite of the opposite, which is what you wanted to prove.

To prove P:

Assume not-P.

Show that if not-P, then Q & not-Q.

Q & not-Q is a contradiction and is impossible.

So **not** not-P.

Therefore P.

Proof that no smallest rational number exists.

Suppose a smallest rational number exists.

Any rational number is divisible by two.

So, a smaller rational number exists.

So, if a *smallest* rational number exists, then a *smaller* one exists.

Contradiction!

Therefore, no smallest rational number exists.

Spinoza's first proof: ontological argument

- (1) Suppose God does not exist.
- (2) Axiom 7: If a thing can be conceived as not existing, its essence does not involve existence.
- (3) Prop. 7: Existence belongs to the nature of substance. — Why?
 - (3a) Prop. 6: Substance cannot be produced by another. Otherwise it would be in that other, or depend on that other, and would not be substance.
 - (3b) So, from Def. 1, substance is self-caused, so its essence involves existence, and it can be conceived only as existing.
- (4) The hypothetical non-existence of God reduces to contradiction.
- (5) Therefore, God exists.

Spinoza's second proof: cosmological argument

- (1) For everything, there must be a cause, either of its existence or its nonexistence.
- (2) The cause, whether of existence or non-existence, is either in the thing or in another.
- (3) A thing necessarily exists if no cause prevents its existence.
- (4) So, if God does not exist, there must be a cause of non-existence; and this cause must be in another (not to suppose God is the cause of God's non-existence).
- (5) Whatever causes God not to exist must absolutely exclude God from being, and can therefore have nothing in common with God.
- (6) If two things have nothing in common, one cannot prevent the other's existence.
- (7) Therefore, no cause prevents God's existence.
- (8) So, God exists.

Third proof: another cosmological argument

(1) “The ability to exist is power.” Contingency, possibly not existing, is a deficiency of power.

(2) Suppose God does not exist.

(3) Then nothing that now exists is necessary, and everything that exists might not exist in the future.

(4) Finite, contingent beings do not have the power to exist on their own. They exist, if at all, because of another.

(5) So, either nothing exists, or an absolutely infinite being exists.

(6) Something exists, I exist, you exist. Descartes’s *cogito* proves that.

(7) So, God exists.

“There is nothing of which we
can be more certain than the
existence of an absolutely
infinite or perfect entity.”

Deus sive Nature

God or (in other words) Nature
(God = Nature)



Spinoza
1632-1677
Ethics (1677)



SPINOZA

Conatus

Conatus: endeavor, striving, tendency

Three basic passions

Desire: a living thing's feeling of its conatus.

Joy: The feeling of passing to a higher power of acting.

Sadness: The feeling of passing to a lower power of acting.

Mind and Body

Descartes: Mind and body are separate substances. A person is a substantial union of thinking substance and extended substance.

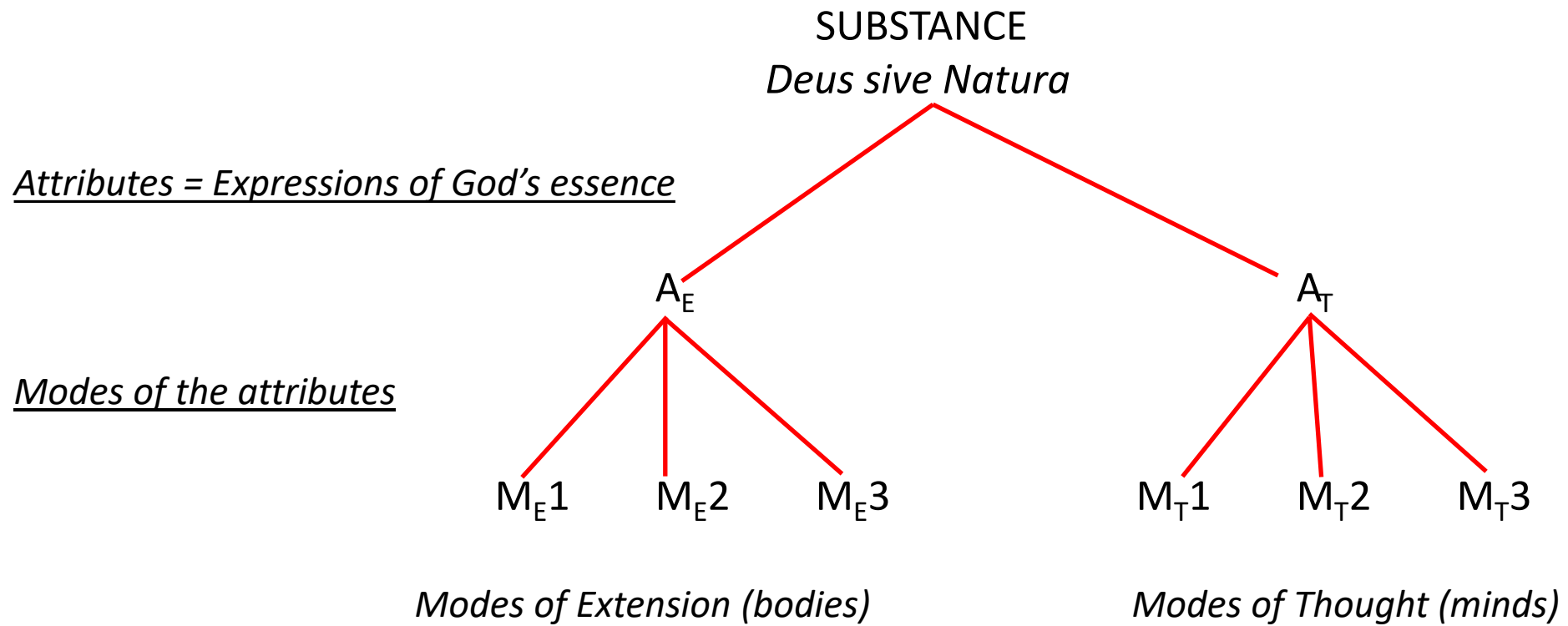
Spinoza: A human being cannot be a substance.

1. Substance cannot **not** exist; it is a necessary, self-caused, *causa sui* being.
2. No human being is a necessary, self-caused being.
3. Therefore no human being is a substance. Even less can a human being be what Descartes said—a composite of two substances.

A state of consciousness is a modification of substance in its attribute of thought.

To modify substance in one attribute automatically modifies substance in all of its attributes.

So, for every state of consciousness, there is an exactly corresponding state of the body.



Attributes

Extension (A_E) expresses the essence of the same substance Thought (A_T) expresses the essence of.

Modes

Any M_E is a mode and expression of substance's attribute of Extension.
 Any M_T is a mode and expression of substance's attribute of Thought.
 For any M_E there is one and only one M_T such that M_E iff M_T ($M_E \equiv M_T$).

Every mode of thought is an idea of a mode of extended body.

So, our thoughts, our ideas, are all thoughts and ideas of our own body. All we ever think of, all our ideas, are ideas of our own body.

What is an idea? A mental representation.

What does an idea represent? One's own body and how it is affected.

Thoughts arise from the way the body is affected by other bodies with which it interacts. We learn nothing from our ideas except how our own body is affected.

We never represent things as they are in themselves, but only as they affect us, mediated by the condition of our body.

2P26: The only way a human mind perceives any external body as actually existing is through the ideas of the states of its own body.

2P16C2: The ideas that we have of external bodies are more informative about the condition of our own body than about the nature of the external bodies.

2P21: What unites a mind to its body is the fact that the body is the object of the mind.

. . . A body and the idea of it [i.e., the mind] are one and the same individual, which can be conceived as a mind under the attribute of thought or as a body under the attribute of extension.

A mind is a body that is complicated enough to form an idea of itself.

Minds are nothing but ideas of bodies, so no mind exists without a body.

But bodies are extended, material things, and do not presuppose the existence of minds.

So, we can have bodies without minds—mountains and rivers, for example, are bodies without minds.

But we cannot have minds without bodies. The reason is because a mind is the idea of a body that is sufficiently complex to form a self-representation at all.

Body determines mind; mind is a determination of the body, an effect of putting matter together in a complicated way.

This is what materialism has always said. Spinoza is a kind of materialist, though his theory is far from what people usually think of as materialism.

Whatever happens in or to a human being is explained by the same laws that explain everything else in nature.

People differ only in degree, not kind, from everything else in nature. Humanity does not disturb but only follows the order of nature.

Spinoza Knowledge

Any knowledge is an idea.

An idea is a mental representation.

All ideas represent the thinker's body.



Bottle of water



Bottle of alcohol



Bottle of gasoline

Spinoza Knowledge

To know a thing is to know its explanation. The more complete the explanation, the more adequate (scientific) the knowledge.

Any idea however scientific remains to some degree a confused representation of the thinker's own body.

Spinoza Knowledge

Three levels of knowledge

1. Imagination (includes sense perception)

- Confused, mixing representations of external bodies and of the thinker's own body
- Passive, not active, not subject to control

2. Scientific knowledge (adequate ideas)

3. Intuitive understanding

LEVELS OF KNOWLEDGE IN SPINOZA

Intuition

Blessedness (intellectual love of God)

Scientific Understanding (= adequate ideas)

Freedom (responding with understanding, acting in accordance with one's nature)

Sense Perception (= imagination)

Bondage (responding to causes we do not understand)



SPINOZA

Freedom and Necessity

Definition 7:

That thing is said to be *free* which exists solely from the necessity of its own nature and is determined to action by itself alone.

A thing is said to be . . . *constrained* if it is determined by another thing to exist and to act in a definite and determinate way.

“Contingent” = could have been otherwise; not inevitable or necessary.

1P33: A thing is termed “contingent” for no other reason than the deficiency of our knowledge . . . the chain of causes is hidden from us.

3P2: “Those who believe that they speak or keep silence or do anything from free mental decision are dreaming with their eyes open.”

Spinoza
1632-1677

Ethics (1677)



David Hume, 1711-76

*Enquiry Concerning Human
Understanding (1748)*



Hume's *Enquiry* divides into Sections, some brief, others extensive

Sections 1-5: Causation, cause and effect

Section 8: Free will

Section 10: Miracles

Section 11: Proofs of God

Section 12: The limits and value of knowledge

Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding

Section I: Different species of philosophy

- Metaphysics, the supposed science of being *qua* being, is a dangerous pseudo-science. Dangerous because it encourages fanaticism and intolerance.
- Replace metaphysics with a science of human nature.

Section II: The origin of ideas

- Epistemology: the philosophical theory of knowledge (*episteme*: Greek, “knowledge”).
- Use epistemology to discredit metaphysics.

Impression and Ideas

Impressions: Immediate content of sensory experience. All perceptions, sensations, and feelings.

Ideas: Copies, memories, traces of impressions.

The difference between impressions and ideas is vivacity, liveliness.

Hume's critical rule: To clarify any idea, trace it back to the sensory impressions it copies and derives from.

Association of Ideas

Three principles

Resemblance

Contiguity in space

Cause and effect (contiguity in time)

Hume
Enquiry Concerning Human Nature
Section 4

First Step in Hume's Argument

All beliefs concern either:

Relations of ideas:

Implications of definitions

Contrary is contradictory and logically impossible

Known with certainty

Matters of fact and existence:

Connect logically different ideas

The contrary is always logically possible, even if false

Never known with certainty

Relation of ideas, or matter of fact?

Bachelors are not married.

Dogs bark.

The moon is not a planet.

Gold is heavier than Hydrogen.

Mice are larger than elephants.

Second Step

Cause and effect is not a relation of ideas.

Cause and effect is a matter of fact. Knowledge of cause and effect depends on experience.

All our reasonings concerning fact are of the same nature. . . .
[T]hey are founded on the relation of cause and effect. (164)

The mind can never possibly find the effect in the supposed cause by the most accurate scrutiny and examination. For the effect is totally different from the cause and consequently can never be discovered in it. (165)

Inductive reasoning about matters of fact

A_1 is B
 A_2 is B
...
So, A is B

The iron we have examined under many conditions has always been an electrical conductor.

So, iron (*all of it*, even the bits we have not sampled) is an electrical conductor.

Experience never shows us this *all*, yet knowledge requires it.

First Step. Distinguish relations of ideas and matters of fact.

Second Step. Matters of fact are not true by definition. They go beyond definitions, representing discoveries about nature.

Third Step. A missing assumption:

Similar effects have similar causes.

Similar causes produce similar effects.

The future resembles the past.

Is this assumption a true relation of ideas?

No. The contrary is logically possible.

Is this assumption a true matter of fact?

No. Justification by experience presupposes this principle and is not an independent reason for it.

Hume's Conclusion

“In vain do you pretend to have learned the nature of bodies from your past experience.” (169)

“It is not reasoning which engages us to suppose the past resembling the future and to expect similar effects from causes which are similar.” (169)

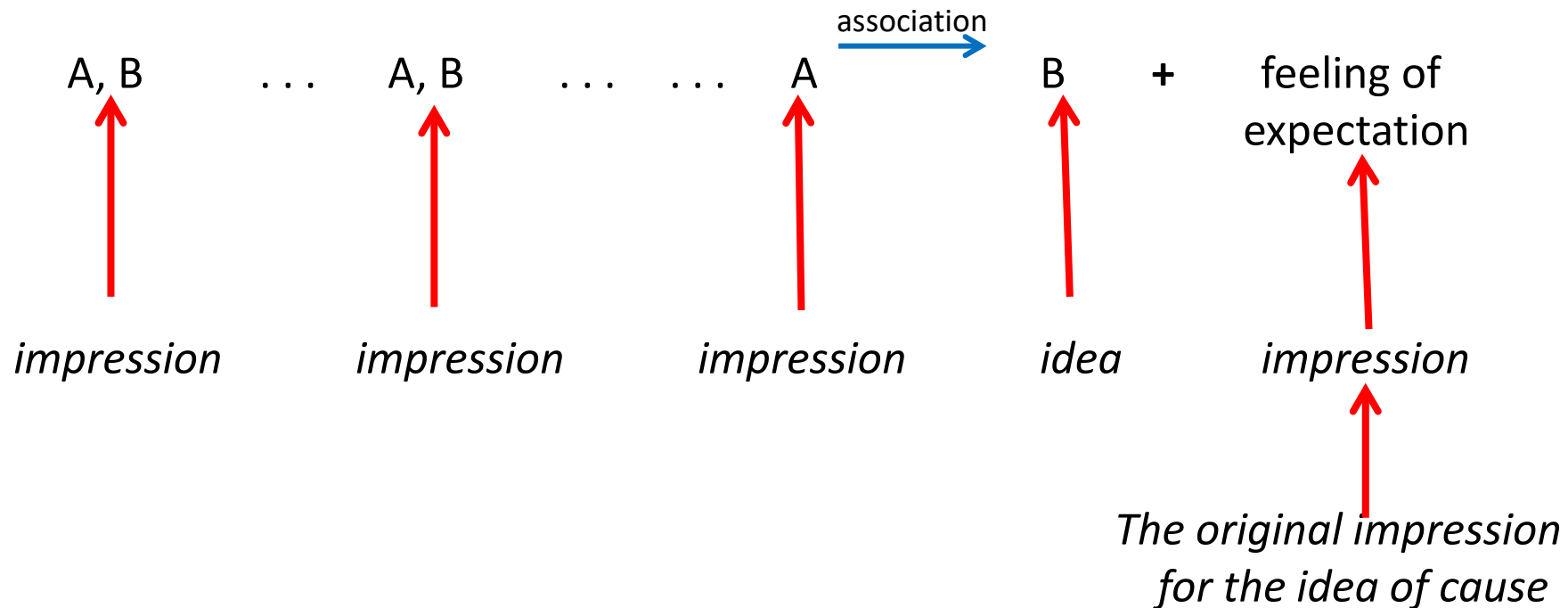
Not reasoning, not logic, merely human nature.
Psychology, not knowledge. Habit, not reason.

Hume
Enquiry Concerning Human Nature
Section 5

Hume's critical rule: To clarify any idea, trace it back to the sensory impressions it copies and derives from.

Apply the rule to the idea of cause:

Genesis of the idea of cause



Summary of Hume's argument in Sections 4-5

Q: What justifies beliefs about matters of fact?

A: Beliefs about cause and effect.

Q: What justifies beliefs about cause and effect?

First Negative Point

Not a relation of ideas. *Why?* The opposite is not a contradiction and is logically possible.

Second Negative Point

Not a matter of fact. *Why?* Because knowledge of fact depends on cause and effect and cannot justify it.

First Conclusion

We have no knowledge of causal powers in nature.

Second Conclusion

We have no knowledge of fact or existence.

Third Conclusion

Beliefs about causation and existence are an instinctive response of human nature to perception and are not reasoned or rationally justified.

Hume: “When we say, therefore, that one object is connected with another, we mean only, that they have acquired a connection in our thought. . . . A conclusion which is somewhat extraordinary.”



Galileo
1564-1642

Section 8 Of Liberty and Necessity

Stoics were determinists. Freedom is mental freedom, a philosophical resignation to the inevitable.

Christian thinkers. Freedom is condition on responsibility for sin. Requires we can do otherwise. We choose to sin. That's what makes it wicked.

How can there be freedom in a world created by an omniscient God? How can Adam have freely chosen to sin when God knew eternally everything Adam would do and arranged for it to happen?

Stoics: freedom and necessity are compatible. Freedom is our power to do what it is in our character to do. "Compatibleism."

Hume: “All mankind has ever agreed in the doctrine of liberty as well as in that of necessity, and . . . the whole dispute . . . has been up to now merely verbal.” (173)

“Merely verbal.” The appearance of a problem about free action is a mistake, a confusion, an argument over words.

No incompatibility between made necessary by causes and free. Necessity and liberty are compatible.

Actions are caused and necessary = follow a regularity and are expected.

Actions are free = we are not compelled, confined, or obstructed from doing what we want.

Hypothetical Freedom

If you want to . . . , then you can

“This hypothetical liberty is universally allowed to belong to everyone who is not a prisoner and in chains. Here then is no subject of dispute.” (173)

Implications for Responsibility and Punishment

A person is responsible for action only when it comes from the person's character or habits.

Responsibility presupposes established character, and that is all it means to call action determined: The act accords with a person's established character, and is not an accident, the result of illness, and so on.

Praise and blame presuppose that action is regular, predictable, and in that sense necessary.

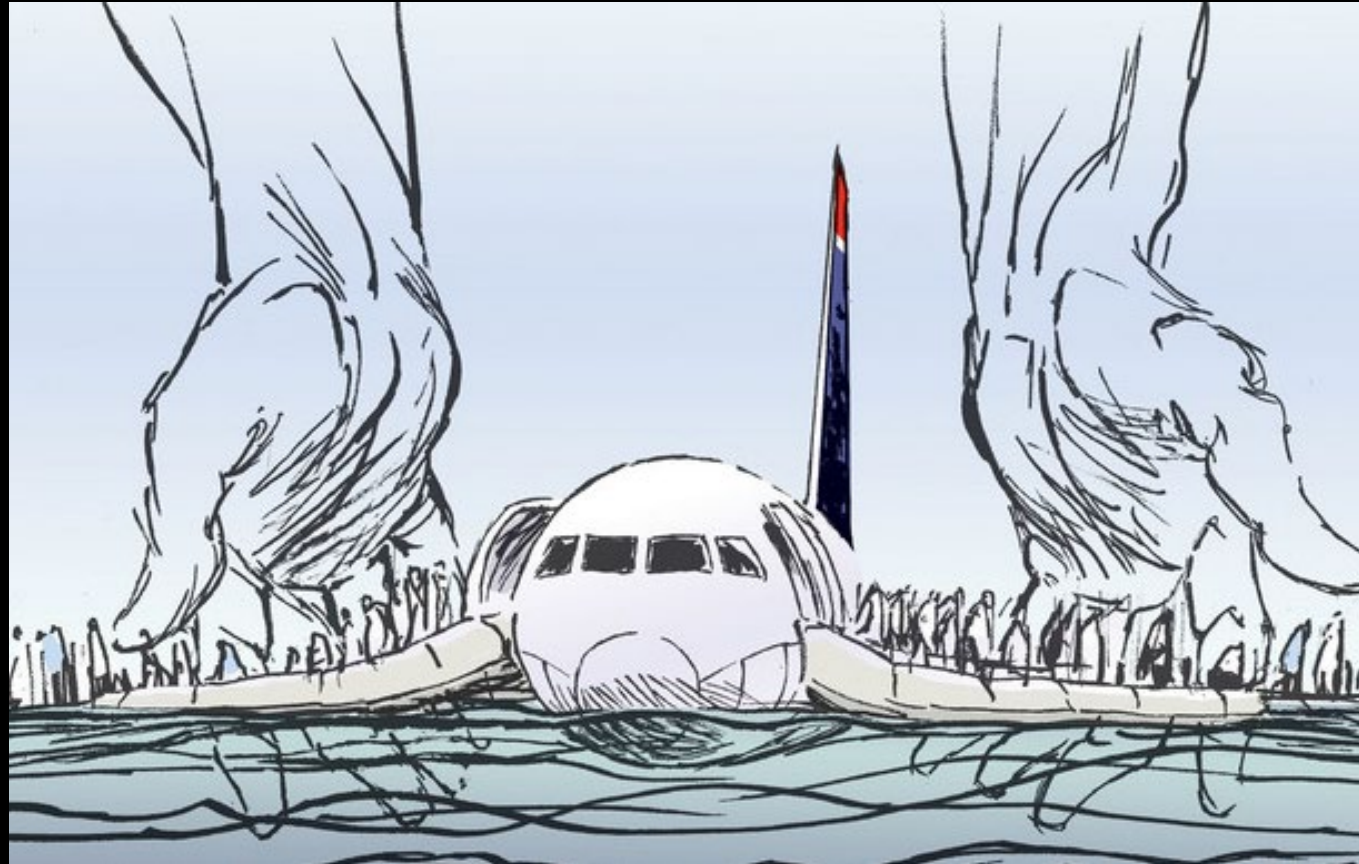
So, responsibility and punishment are compatible with the causal determination of action.

Section 10

Miracles

Sources of evidence for religious belief:

- Deductive proofs of God: ontological and cosmological arguments.
- Empirical evidence of intelligent design in nature.
- Historical reports of miracles.



What makes testimony reliable evidence?

Reliability of memory within limits.

Motivation, shame of being caught in a lie.

Independent confirmation.

A miracle is by definition an unusual event.

It upsets an established regularity.

If it were not unusual, it would not be a miracle.

Which is more likely—

That the event occurred as reported?

That the testimony is not credible, the witnesses mistaken or lying?

To accept the evidence of testimony it must be *more likely* that the event really happened than that the report is wrong.

It would have to be *a greater miracle*—more unlikely—for the testimony to be wrong than for the thing not to have happened.

That is possible! Hume's example:

Suppose all authors in all languages agree that from the first of January 1600 [that is, for Hume about 150 years ago] there was a total darkness over the whole earth for eight days: Suppose that the tradition of this extra-ordinary event is still strong and lively among the people: that all travelers who return from foreign countries bring us accounts of the same tradition without the least variation or contradiction: It is evident that our present philosophers instead of doubting the fact ought to receive it as certain and ought to search for the [explanation]. (178)

Hume's conclusion

Not that miracles are impossible. Exceptions to natural regularity are possible.

What Hume denies: That a possible exception to natural regularity might lend credibility to one over another religion.

Religion that remains religion, that knows itself to be faith and not knowledge, has nothing to fear from Hume's skepticism.

David Hume, 1711-76

*Enquiry Concerning Human
Understanding (1748)*

Section 11
Of a Special Providence and a
Future State



The argument from design (teleological argument)

First, refer to the evidence of purposiveness or intelligent design in nature.

Then infer that nature is probably the work of intelligent design

Conclude that God exists.

William Paley, *Natural Theology* (1802)

“It is only by the display of contrivance, that the existence, the agency, the wisdom of the Deity could be testified to his rational creatures. . . . The marks of design are too strong to be gotten over. Design must have had a designer. That designer must have been a person. That person is God.”

This idea is what Hume calls “the religious hypothesis”: nature is a divine artifact, a divine purpose.

The design argument reasons from effects back to probable causes:

Effect: order in nature

Inferred probable cause: intelligent design

Rule for such reasoning: the hypothetical cause must be proportionate to the effect. For example:

Effect: a watch on an island beach

Inferred cause (A): past visitors

Inferred cause (B): Literate, Christian men with good eyesight

(A) is proportional to the observed effect.

(B) is disproportional to the observed effect and is not a reasonable inference.

The Design Argument for Divine Existence

Effect: Order in nature

What is the probable cause?

1. A divine power
2. An omnipotent, omniscient power
3. A power of good, a loving power
4. A power with a plan
5. A unique power, and not a group or series of agents

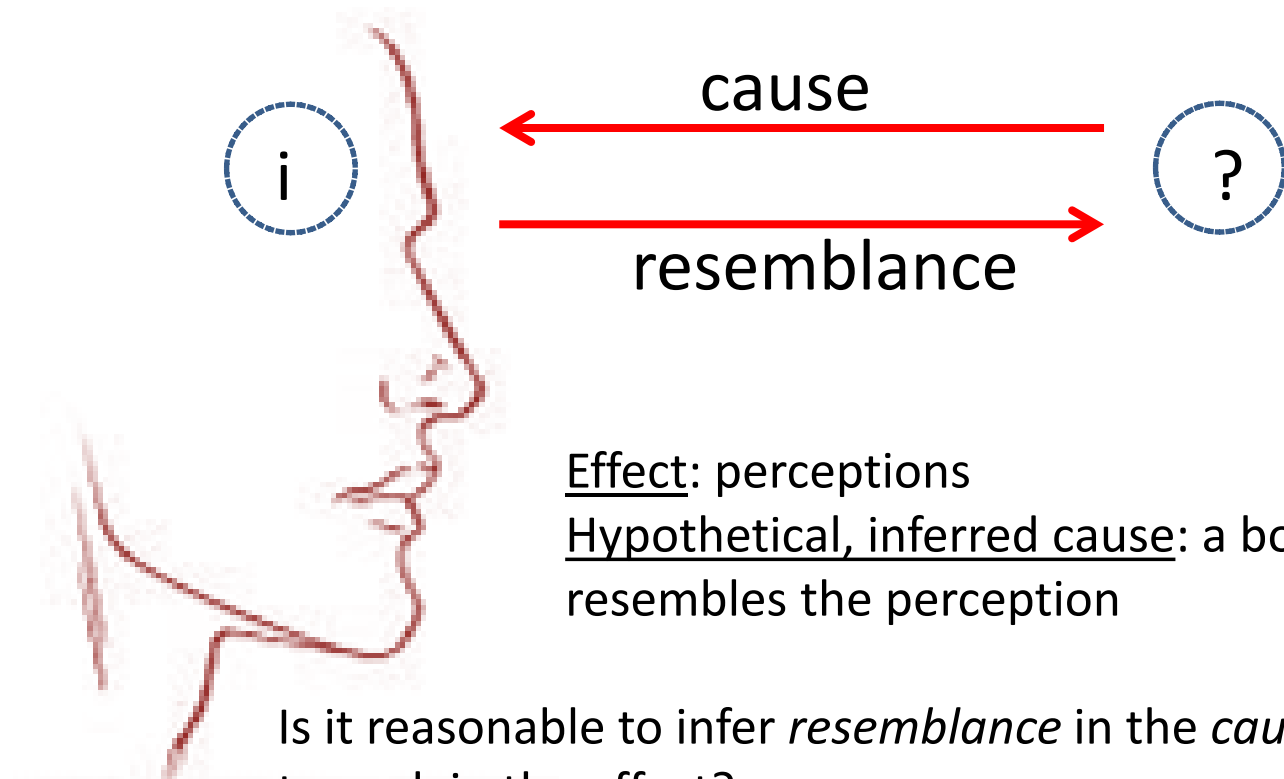
Only 1 is proportional to the effect.

2-5 are disproportional and cannot be validly inferred.

The only warranted conclusion: nature is the effect of a power adequate to the whole of nature as its effect.

“God” is a name for such a cause, and that is all we can know about it.

Hume
Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding
Section 12



Effect: perceptions

Hypothetical, inferred cause: a body that resembles the perception

Is it reasonable to infer *resemblance* in the *cause* of impressions to explain the effect?

Hume's Objections

- 1 We could have the same perceptions with no resembling body as the cause. That is what happens in dreams
- 2 The causes of perceptions are a matter of fact.
Matters of fact can be proved only by experience.
Experience cannot determine that the cause of perceptions is a body resembling the perceptions.

We cannot perceive the relation between our perceptions and hypothetical bodies. All that we ever perceive is another perception.

“[We] can never find any convincing argument from experience to prove that the perceptions are connected with any external objects.” (226)

“We cannot give a satisfactory reason why we believe, after a thousand experiments, that a stone will fall or fire burn.” (228)

“When we run over libraries, persuaded of these principles, what havoc must we make? If we take in our hand any volume; of divinity or school metaphysics, for instance; let us ask, Does it contain any abstract reasoning concerning quantity or number [that is, relations of ideas]? No. Does it contain any experimental reasoning concerning matter of fact and existence? No. Commit it then to the flames: for it can contain nothing but sophistry and illusion.” (229)

“Strange infirmities” beset our thinking. We should never forget the “universal perplexity and confusion which is inherent in human nature.” (227)

“All the philosophy . . . in the world will never be able to carry us beyond the usual course of experience or give us measures of conduct and behavior different from those which are furnished by reflections on common life.” (223)

JOHN STUART MILL
1806-73

On Liberty, 1859

“European Liberalism.” Mill’s word for modern constitutional democracy.



Hume

A skeptic

Exposes the “strange infirmities” of human nature

- No knowledge of bodies, their qualities, powers, or even their objective existence.
- No knowledge of cause and effect. Our beliefs about what causes what are animal habits, not demonstrable knowledge.
- No proof of God.
- Freewill compatible with determinism.

Tyranny

- The old problem of tyranny.
The tyranny of rulers over classes (e.g., artisans, landowners)
For protection, constitutional checks on state power.
- The new problem of tyranny.
The tyranny of the democratic majority over minorities.
Not well addressed by constitutional checks.

Mill's problem

Find the limit of reasonable interference with individual independence.

One absolute principle

“The sole end for which mankind are warranted, individually or collectively, in interfering with the liberty of action of any of their number is self-protection . . . to prevent harm to others.” (236)

Action can be . . .

- Other-regarding. Actions that others depend on.
- Self-regarding. Personal choices, how people choose to live their lives.

Mill: The rule for self-regarding action is absolute immunity to interference.

Government interference for the benefit of the individual is not legitimate.

- Governments are not good at knowing what benefits individuals.
- When something is done for us, we lose the opportunity to learn and exercise judgment. Limits people's growth as individuals.
- Adds unnecessarily to state power.

“The only freedom which deserves the name, is that of pursuing our own good in our own way, so long as we do not attempt to deprive others of theirs or impede their efforts to obtain it.”
(238)

“Despotism is a legitimate mode of government in dealing with barbarians, provided the end be their improvement.” (236)

Utilitarianism

Utility is the ultimate appeal in ethical questions. No standard of right apart from happiness. Maximize happiness!

Maximize what, exactly? — Mill:

- Not simple pleasure
- Not general happiness
- Maximize the progress of civilization

Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767-1835): The end of humanity is “the highest and most harmonious development of [our] powers to a complete and consistent whole.” (248)

Freedom of Thought and Expression

“If the opinion is right, [we] are deprived of the opportunity of exchanging error for truth;

“if wrong, [we] lose, what is almost as great a benefit, the clearer perception and livelier impression of truth, produced by its collision with error.” (240)

1. Not possible to be certain that an opinion we stifle is false. Our capacity to correct mistakes through experience and discussion is “the source of everything respectable in man either as an intellectual or a moral being.” (201)
2. Even if we knew it was false, stifling it is bad. The belief that truth always triumphs over persecution is a “pleasant falsehood.” Truth has no power to win an unfair fight

Individuality

“Whatever crushes individuality is despotism.” (251)

“The general tendency of things throughout the world is to render mediocrity the ascendant power among mankind.” (253)

“No government by a democracy . . . ever did or could rise above mediocrity except insofar as the sovereign Many have let themselves be guided . . . by the counsels and influence of a more highly gifted and instructed One or Few.” (253)

Reasonable Authority

(1) Individuals are not accountable to society for their actions insofar as they do no harm to others.

(2) Acts that harm the interests of others are justly punished.

No experts in morality. No expert knowledge of life's proper ends.

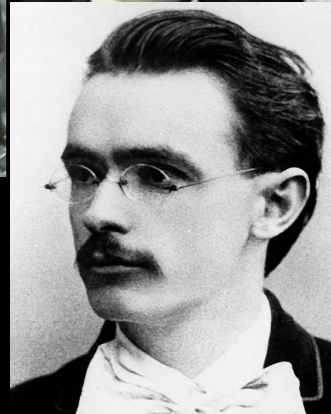
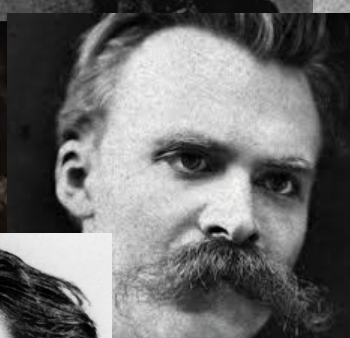
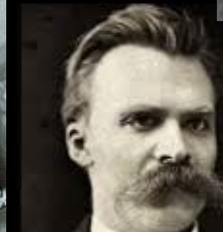
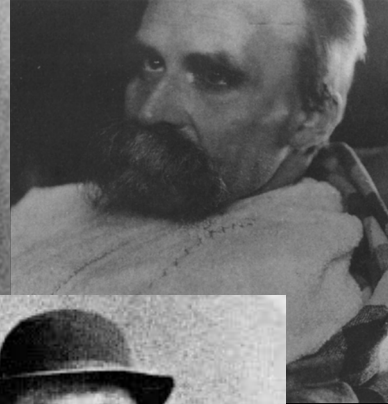
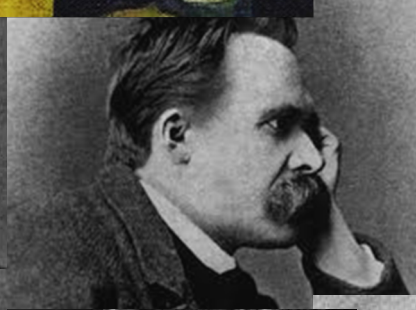
Accept the diversity of people's choices as a legitimate expression of life's richness, not an unfortunate sign of disorder.

Not that all opinions are equally valid.

Rather, everyone should have their opinion listened to and their interests respected.

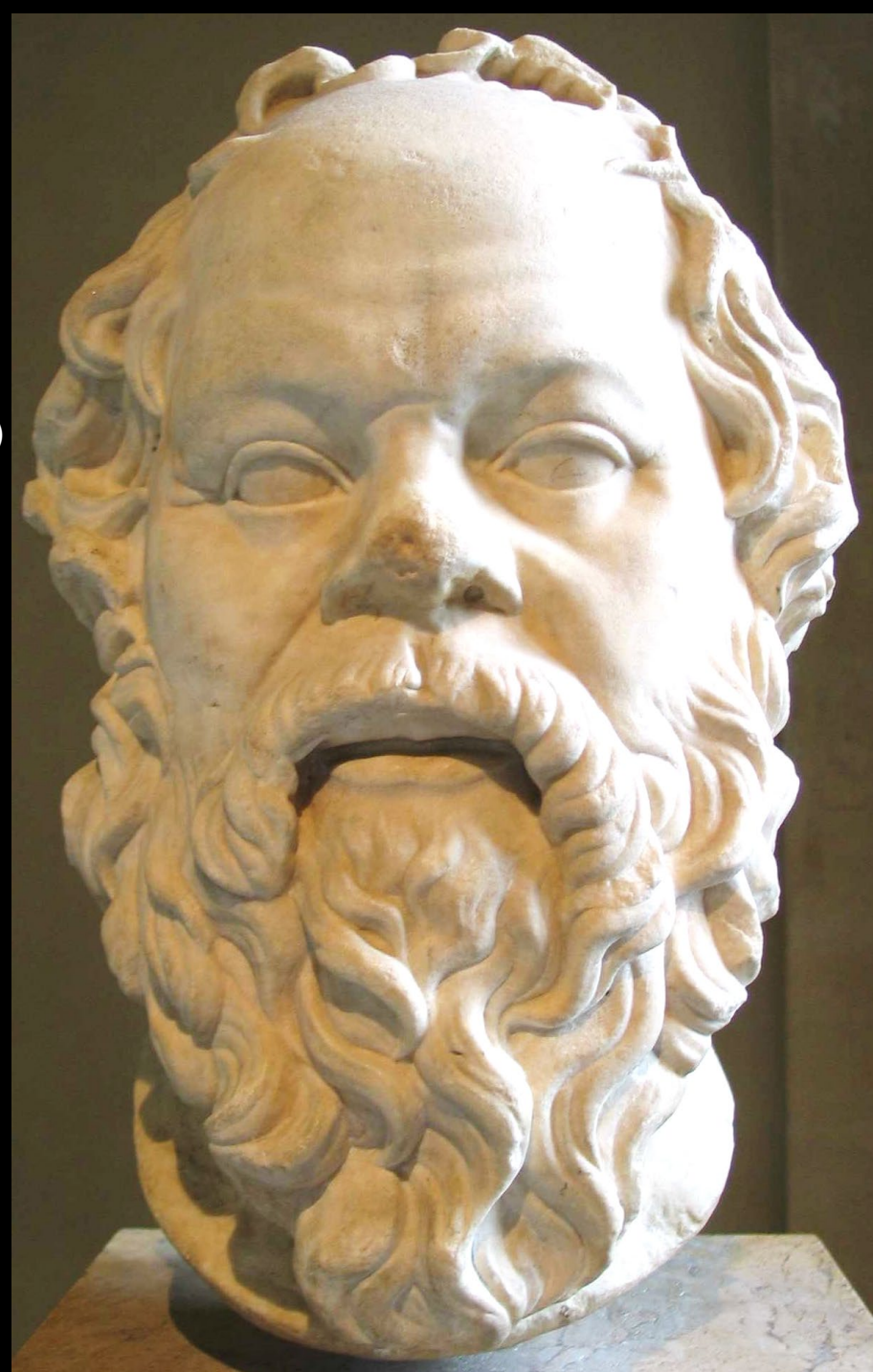
Friedrich Nietzsche
1844-1900

Twilight of the Idols, 1889



Nietzsche
Twilight of the Idols
“The Problem of Socrates”

Decadent: in decline, decay.
“Doing a bad thing carefully” (G. K. Chesterton)



“One must by all means stretch out one’s fingers and make the attempt to grasp this amazing finesse, that the value of life cannot be estimated.” (269)



“God is Dead”

Denis Diderot: “It is . . . very important not to mistake hemlock for parsley; but to believe or not to believe in god, is not important at all.”

Nietzsche: “God is dead.” Means optimism, faith in science, the redemptive power of knowledge is “dead,” that is, unconvincing, hard to take seriously.

Nihilism: The highest values are devaluing themselves.

Nietzsche
Thus Spoke Zarathustra

“I beseech you, my brothers, remain faithful to the earth, and do not believe those who speak to you of otherworldly hopes!”

[A churl: churlish, misanthropic, a hater of humanity]

“The noble person wants to create new things and a new virtue. The good person wants old things, and for old things to be preserved. But it is not the danger of the noble one that he will become a good person, but [rather that he becomes] a churl, a mocker, an annihilator. Oh, I knew noble people who lost their highest hope. And then they slandered all high hopes. Then they lived churlishly in brief pleasures, scarcely casting their goals beyond the day. . . . By my love and hope I beseech you: do not throw away the hero in your soul! Hold holy your highest hope!”

Nietzsche
Twilight of the Idols
Morality as Anti-Nature

“Morality”

- A word for a people’s ideas about right and wrong (Chinese morality, Roman morality, etc.).
- The name of a peculiar European idea and institution.

The peculiarity of morality lies in its claim to universality.

If something is immoral, it is categorically, universally wrong—wrong for anyone. Morality binds everyone, one law for all.

Nietzsche calls morality “anti-nature.”

- Anti-nature because anti-difference, when nature is all difference.
- Anti-nature because it values people all the same, when in nature, by nature, we are amazingly different.



Nietzsche
Twilight of the Idols
Morality as Anti-Nature

Herd Morality

- Don't be dangerous, don't be independent, don't be obviously intelligent, don't stand alone, don't be unpredictable.
- Supreme value of security.





John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*

“There are but few persons . . . whose experiments, if adopted by others, would be likely to be of any improvement on established practice. But these few are the salt of the earth; without them, human life would become a stagnant pool. Not only is it they who introduce good things which did not before exist; it is they who keep the life in those which already exist.” (252)

“The general tendency of things throughout the world is to render mediocrity the ascendant power among mankind.” (253)

“The initiation of all wise or noble things comes and must come from individuals.” (253)

“Whatever crushes individuality is despotism.” (251)



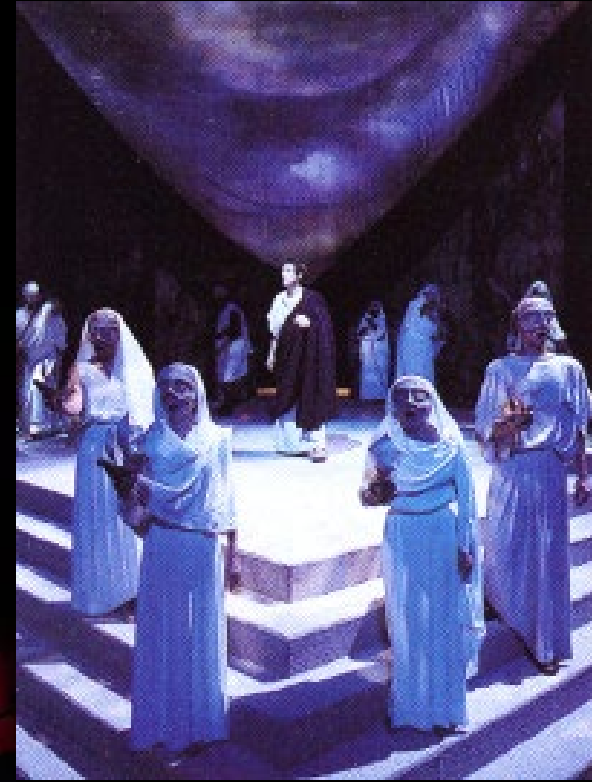
Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872)
“What I Owe the Ancients”

Greek tragic drama; for example:

Aeschylus, *Oresteia*

Sophocles, *Oedipus the King*

Euripides, *Bacchae*



Nietzsche

“All becoming and growing—all that guarantees a future—involves pain.” (282)

“Art is worth more than truth.”

