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The course of lectures on discipline

**history of PHILOSOPHY**

**PART 1**

for students of Training Directions 6.060101 Construction, 6.050102 Computer engineering, 6.050502 Mechanical engineering, 6.030601 Management

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**Introduction**

The course «Philosophy» will enable students to: gain knowledge and understanding of Philosophy through, consideration of some important philosophical issues and approaches to problems; develop a rigorous approach, both critical and constructive, to the study of Philosophy and the nature of arguments; practise and enhance their abilities to construct, develop and maintain clear and coherent argument; acquire skills in comprehension, interpretation, analysis and evaluation that facilitate the development of independent thinking, based on a critical examination of the evidence and rational argumentation. These skills are applicable in the study of other academic subjects and in reflection on other important aspects of human experience.

Students should be able to:

* define/describe the main problems raised by the philosophers presented and their tentative answers.
* deal confidently with structured questions concerning logic.
* identify the philosophical, existential and ethical concerns of the topics presented and their continued relevance.
* present well-structured and logically sound arguments in essay form.
* show a thorough knowledge of the content covered and take a critical stance where necessary.

## Introduction to Philosophy

Philosophy is one of the most challenging undertakings a human can enter into.  It is one of the most powerful mental disciplines humans have developed in their time on this planet.  It has changed the course of human events around the world in manners that are both subtle and in some that are quite obvious.  Philosophy has evolved or arisen in every major human civilization.  It is a natural development for minds that are inquiring and critical.

People come to the reading and studying of Philosophy through different paths.  Many, perhaps most, do so because they have entered some formal educational program that has the study of Philosophy as part of a curriculum of studies.  Some, a few, come to Philosophy because they have a mind that is questioning and they want to learn more about the issue or problem that is on their minds and so they are led through this common but less traveled path to the door of Philosophy.

Most people who take a college course in Philosophy  are only interested in finishing the course in order to get their credits and those credits are to satisfy a degree requirement. Be that as it may, this course is designed to stimulate your mind.  Whether you here because it is required or whether you are really interested in the subject matter, there will be plenty in this study of Philosophy to interest you, entertain your mind, challenge you and frustrate you as well.

But don’t be afraid, philosophy, in the first place, is a journey. A journey of inquiry, into the whole world. You world. In an effort to figure out: what gives it meaning, what makes it beautiful, where its evils come from, and ultimately, what is the very nature of reality itself. And along the way, we’re going to question every aspect of your personal life – why you do what you do, why you think what you think, why you feel what you feel.

Now, if you are think a little, you might say, we’ve learned about all that stuff before – in psychology, and biology, and anatomy and physiology. And its true: Science can definitely help us understand our thoughts, feelings, and actions. But on this particular journey, we’re going to be exploring aspects of the human condition that cant be explained only by hormones or neurotransmitters, by personal experiences or hereditary conditions. Because, all of those chemicals and experiences that make us who we are, can actually raise as many questions as they answer. Like, if all of my decisions really are just the result of, say, how I was raised, and what chemicals I have flowing in my brain, then are any of my choices actually free? And if I’m not truly free to make my own decisions, or choose my own actions, then how can I can be held accountable for them?

Yes. It’s going to be that kind of journey. Rather than just looking at the world and describing what we see, we’ll be evaluating it. We will take nothing as a given, set our assumptions aside – or at least, try really hard to – and do our best to see the world as if we’ve never seen it before.

And for what it’s worth, we’ll be talking about Batman, and what Dick Grayson can teach us about the concept of identity. And we’ll learn how The Matrix can help us understand the life and writing of Rene Descartes. Also we’ll try to answer unanswerable questions, and puzzle over paradoxes that have plagued geniuses for thousands of years. It’s going to be hard, and enlightening, and frustrating, and I do my job properly, it’ll stick with  you long after you and I have parted ways. Because: We are going to do … philosophy!

**Lecture 1.**

**PHILOSOPHY AS WORLDVIEW**

**Plan**

1.What is WORLDVIEW? The meaning of the term.

2. The Worldview in the context of the world and the self

3.The types of worldview

4.The classificationof worldview

**Main issue:** Worldview, w*eltanschauung,*ontology; epistemology; metaphysics; cosmology; teleology; theology; anthropology; axiology.

**1.What is WORLDVIEW?The meaning of the term.**

The meaning of the term **Worldview** (also world-view, world view, and German *Weltanschauung*) seems self-evident: an intellectual perspective on the world or Universe.

The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines world-view as a "contemplation of the world, a view of life" It also defines *Weltanschauung* (literally, a perception of the world) as «particular philosophy of life; a concept of the world held by an individual or a group».

**Hunter Mead** defines *Weltanschauung* as an all-inclusive world-view or outlook. A somewhat poetic term to indicate either an articulated system of philosophy or a more or less unconscious attitude toward life and the world.

 H.P. Rickman writes: There is in mankind a persistent tendency to achieve a comprehensive interpretation, a *Weltanschauung*, or philosophy, in which a picture of reality is combined with a sense of its meaning and value and with principles of action.

In "The Question of a *Weltanschauung*" from his *New Introductory Lectures in Psycho-Analysis*, **Sigmund Freud describes** *Weltanschauung* as «an intellectual construction which solves all the problems of our existence uniformly on the basis of one overriding hypothesis, which, accordingly, leaves no question unanswered and in which everything that interests us finds its fixed place».

**James W. Sire** defines world view as «a set of presuppositions which we hold about the makeup of our world».

These definitions, though essentially in accord with one another and seemingly not at all inconsistent with current usage, are somewhat superficial.

**2. The Worldview in the context of the world and the self**

The sensing, thinking, knowing, acting self exists in the milieu of a world (more accurately, a Universe) of matter, energy, information and other sensing, thinking, knowing, acting selves (Figure 1). At the heart of one's knowledge is one's worldview or *Weltanschauung*.

**To sense is** to see, hear, taste, and feel stimuli from the world and from the self (Figure 2). **To act is** to orient sensory organs (including eyes and ears), to move body parts, to manipulate external objects, and to communicate by speaking, writing, and other actions. Although we humans are not unique in our ability to sense and to act on our environment, it is in us, so far as we know, that thought as the basis for action is most highly developed.

**Thought** is a process, a sequence of mental states or events, in which sensed stimuli and existing knowledge are transformed to new or modified knowledge, some instances of which are intents that trigger motor control signals that command our muscles to action. While some actions are merely the result of sensorimotor reflexes, responses to emotions like fear or anger, or automatized patterns developed through habit, we at least like to believe that most of our actions are more reflective, being based on "higher" forms of thought.

**Reasoning is** focused, goal-directed thought that starts from perceptions and existing knowledge and works toward new and valued knowledge. Reasoning therefore begins with knowledge and ends with knowledge, the opinions, beliefs, and certainties that one holds.

By inductive reasoning (which is idealized in empirical science), one works from perceptions and other particular knowledge to more general knowledge.

By deduction (exemplified by mathematical logic) further generalizations and, more practically, particular knowledge, is produced. Over a lifetime, reason builds up not only particular opinions and beliefs, but also a body of more and more basic, general, and fundamental knowledge on which the particular beliefs, and the intents for external acts, are based. This core of fundamental knowledge, the worldview, is not only the basis for the deductive reasoning that ultimately leads to action, but also is the foundation for all reasoning, providing the standards of value to establish the cognitive goals towards which reason works and to select the rules by which reason operates.

**A worldview is the set of beliefs about fundamental aspects of Reality that ground and influence all one's perceiving, thinking, knowing, and doing.**

One's worldview is also referred to as one's philosophy, philosophy of life, mindset, outlook on life, formula for life, ideology, faith, or even religion.

I must acknowledge some assumptions that underlie or constrain what I say.

**First**, your worldview may not be explicit. In fact few people take the time to thoroughly think out, much less articulate their worldview; nevertheless your worldview is implicit in and can be at least partially inferred from your behavior.

**Second**, the elements of your worldview are highly interrelated; it is almost impossible to speak of one element independently of the others.

**Third**, the questions I pose to you are not comprehensive: there are many more, related questions that could be asked.

**Fourth**, the example answers that will be given to the questions -- that is, worldview beliefs -- are not comprehensive: many other perspectives are possible and you may not find your answers among those that I suggest.

**Fifth**, the assertion that your worldview influences your action is based on the assumption that thought is the basis for action and knowledge is the basis for thought. Of course, as  was written above, some actions are reflexive or automatic in nature: conscious thought, much less knowledge and, especially, worldview, probably have little *direct* influence on them. Nevertheless, even highly automatized or impulsive actions often follow patterns of behavior that originated in considered acts.

**Finally**, my exposition of worldview is based on my own worldview and the questions that I choose to pose to you, the possible answers that I give as examples, and even the way I present those example answers are colored by my worldview.

**Thus, to sum up the foregoing:**

**3.The types of worldview**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| by Identity | by level of awareness | by historical epochs | by the moral and value orientations |
| - individual  - collective  - group  - national | - conscious  - unconscious  or  - practical  - theoretical | - Archaic  - Antique  - Medieval  -Renaissance  -Worldview of modern times  -Worldview of the ХХ century. | -selfish  - altruistic  - humanistic  - inhuman  - cynical  - chauvinistic |

**4. Classification of the worldview**

**оntology** - the study of being

**epistemology**: beliefs about the nature and sources of knowledge;

**metaphysics**: beliefs about the ultimate nature of Reality;

**cosmology**: beliefs about the origins and nature of the universe, life, and especially Man;

**teleology**: beliefs about the meaning and purpose of the universe, its inanimate elements, and its inhabitants;

**theology**: beliefs about the existence and nature of God;

**anthropology**: beliefs about the nature and purpose of Man in general and, oneself in particular;

**axiology**: beliefs about the nature of value, what is good and bad, what is right and wrong.

**Ontology - the study of being.**

What is Ontology?  Lets have a general introduction to the word and the concept.

The word itself comes from two Greek words namely: "Onto," which means existence or being real, and "Logia" which means science, or study.

The word Ontology is used both in a philosophical context and a non-philosophical context.

Let's start with the former.

**Ontology** in a philosophical context, it's basically the study of what exists, what is being real, what is real.

And examples of Philosophical Ontology questions could be - What are the fundamental parts of the world and how are they related to each other?  Are physical parts more real than immaterial concepts; for example, are physical objects such as shoes more real than the concept of walking?

And in terms of what exists, what is the relationship between shoes and walking?

And why is Ontology important in philosophy?

Well, philosophers use this concept of Ontology to discuss questions, to build theories and models, and to consequently better understand the Ontological status of the world.

And over time there has been two major branches:

**Ontological Materialism**and**Ontological Idealism.**

**Materialism** from a philosophical perspective is the belief that material things are just particles, chemical processes, and energy are more real than, for example, the human mind.  So, the overall belief within Ontological Materialism is that reality of exists regardless of a human observer.

In Ontological **Idealism**, on the other hand, the belief is that immaterial phenomenon, such as the human mind and the consciousness are more real than the material things.  And the belief here is that the reality is constructed in the mind of the observer.

*Please, remember, this is just a general introduction to the concept.*

In a non- philosophical context, Ontology is used in a different, more narrow meaning.  Here Ontology is the description of what exists specifically within a determined field.

For example, every part that exists within a specific information system and this includes the relationship and hierarchy between these parts.

And, unlike the philosophers, these researchers are not primarily interested in discussing if these things are the true essence or core of the system.  And, nor are they discussing if the parts within the system are more real, compared to the processes that take place within the system.  Rather, they are focused on naming parts and processes and  grouping similar ones together within categories.

So, here are some more examples of the use of Ontology outside philosophy.

 It's also used in Social Ontology; here the idea is to describe society and the difference parts and processes within society.  And the purpose of Social Ontology then could be to simply understand and describe the underlying structures that affect individuals and groups.

**What is Epistemology?**

**Epistemology is the study of knowledge. In particular, epistemology is the study of the nature, scope, and limits of human knowledge**

The word itself comes from two Greek words: "Episteme" which means knowledge or understanding, and "Logia" which means science or study.

So, in a philosophical context Epistemology is the study of knowledge in general.  Examples of philosophical epistemology questions are - What does knowledge mean and how does a person get to know something and what is the basis for true knowledge?

What is knowledge?  Some say it's justified true belief.  It means that a person must be able to justify the claim, and the claim itself must be true, and the person must also actually believe in it.

Let's assume that a person says - I know that people have walked on the Moon.  For this to be true knowledge, it must be possible to justify that claim, it must also be a fact, and finally the person must also actually believe that people have walked on the Moon.

So, how do you justify a belief?  Well, it's done by using evidence. This evidence must be of good quality and it should also be a logical and reasonable piece of evidence.

Over time there's been two major branches of philosophy called epistemology, namely **Empiricism**and**Rationalism.**

**Empiricism**: True knowledge is primarily founded on input from our senses; the empirical world around us.  And it's important to refer to experience and observations when beliefs and claims are justified and proven.  So, ideas or traditions, although they might be important, but they are not the primary, most important sources for new knowledge.

**Rationalism**, on the other hand, emphasizes reason, rather than experience and observations, as the primary basis for justifying beliefs and claims.  Thus, the rational (hence rationalism) and logical human mind is the source for new knowledge, not the material world around us.  So, according to rationalism, research results are verified primarily by reasoning.

In a non-philosophical context, we've seen the use of the concept of epistemology and, this is because the task of producing new knowledge  is a major part of the everyday work of academics.

So, epistemology has a significant impact on the scientific endeavors of most scholars given the importance of this concept for discussing the limits and possibilities of creating and reporting new knowledge.

Further, scholars in certain academic departments and disciplines such as, for example, curriculum and instruction, educational science, and pedagogy have, more or less, an inherent interest in issues related to knowledge.

Formal Epistemology, what is that?  Well, it is the study of questions such as - what is knowledge, how may a belief be justified, how do we know something, and how do we know something is true?

However, the theories, concepts, and arguments used here are used in a non-philosophical context, for example, in mathematical logic, statistics, linguistics, computing, and other academic fields.

Genetic Epistemology, well, it's used to understand the cognitive development among children and how children interact, understand, learn, and acquire new knowledge about the world.  So, in short, the theory implies that symbolic systems, i.e. the individual's thoughts and knowledge are based on sensory-motor schemes, i.e. the individual's impressions and experiences in the world.  And this concept of genetic epistemology comes  from the Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget.

Social epistemology is about the social context for creating new knowledge. Social epistemology is studied in academic fields such as sociology, psychology, and education.  In focus are human and social aspects of knowledge production.  For example, historical and cultural factors, the access to and the use of learning tools, and so on.

**Axiology**

**Axiology**: the study of value; the investigation of its nature, criteria, and metaphysical status. More often than not, the term "value theory" is used instead of "axiology" in contemporary discussions even though the term “theory of value” is used with respect to the value or price of goods and services in economics.

Some significant questions in axiology include the following:

*Nature of value*: is value a fulfillment of desire, a pleasure, a preference, a behavioral disposition, or simply a human interest of some kind?

Axiology is usually divided into two main parts.

Ethics: the study of values in human behavior or the study of moral problems:

1) the rightness and wrongness of actions,

2) the kinds of things which are good or desirable, and

3) whether actions are blameworthy or praiseworthy.

Consider this example analyzed by J. O. Urmson in his well-known essay, "Saints and Heroes":   
  
"We may imagine a squad of soldiers to be practicing the throwig of live hand grenades; a grenade slips from the hand of one of them and rolls on the ground near the squad; one of them sacrifices his life by throwing himself on the grenade and protecting his comrades with his own body. It is quite unreasonable to suppose that such a man must be impelled by the sort of emotion that he might be impelled by if his best friend were in the squad."

Did the soldier who threw himself on the grenade do the right thing? If he did not cover the grenade, several soldiers might be injured or be killed. His action probably saved lives; certainly an action which saves lives is a morally correct action. One might even be inclined to conclude that saving lives is a duty. But if this were so, wouldn't each of the soldiers have the moral obligation or duty to save his comrades? Would we thereby expect each of the soldiers to vie for the opportunity to cover the grenade?

Aesthetics: the study of value in the arts or the inquiry into feelings, judgments, or standards of beauty and related concepts. Philosophy of art is concerned with judgments of sense, taste, and emotion.

*E.g.*, Is art an intellectual or representational activity? What would the realistic representations in pop art represent? Does art represent sensible objects or ideal objects?

Is artistic value objective? Is it merely coincidental that many forms in architecture and painting seem to illustrate mathematical principles? Are there standards of taste?

Is there a clear distinction between art and reality?

**Metaphysics**

Your metaphysics are the beliefs you hold about the ultimate nature of Reality.

**Metaphysical Beliefs**

**What is the ultimate nature of Reality?** If you are a philosophical naturalist (sometimes called a materialist), you believe that the universe consists solely of matter, energy, and information and that there is nothing outside that material universe. The universe is mechanistic and uncaring and there is no Mind or God or Spirit that created it, guides it, or even considers it. On the other hand, if you are a philosophical idealist, you believe that Reality is ultimately noumenal (of the Mind) or spiritual in nature. There is a supernatural Something outside and above nature that created it, and perhaps even now has a part in guiding it. There is a moral order to the universe: good is not only desirable but possible, achievable, perhaps even inevitable.

**What is Truth?** There are three major theories with respect to truth. If you subscribe to the correspondance theory of truth, you believe that truth corresponds to what really is, that there is a direct relationship between true knowledge in your mind or brain and what actually exists outside yourself. If you believe that such a strict definition of truth is unrealistic, you may believe that truth is merely that knowledge which is internally consistent. That is the consistency theory of truth, whose archetype is mathematical logic, where consistency is a necessary condition for any proposition to be considered valid. If you are a pragmatist, you hold to the pragmatic theory of truth: truth is what works. Whether or not knowledge corresponds to external reality and whether or not it is consistent with other knowledge is immaterial. What counts is that what you *believe* to be true leads to valued ends. If it works for you, it is true for you, though it might not be true for someone else.

**What is the ultimate test for truth?** This question and its possible answers parallel the epistemological question concerning valid bases for knowledge. You may hold that some authority -- some book or person or organization -- holds the keys to truth: whatever he/she/it says is true. As an empiricist, you may hold that truth is discovered only by empirical inquiry. If you are a rationalist you would say that truth is found through valid inductive and deductive reasoning. On the other hand, you may believe that you know the truth directly through intuition or even revelation.

**Metaphysical Implications**

If you are a philosophical naturalist (equivalently, a materialist) and believe that nothing exists outside of the physical universe, then you can believe in no spiritual realm, no God. There can be no absolute, externally valid standards of value and morality; any standards are simply (collective) choices or norms, simple artifacts of human biology, human inventions with no broader significance. In the end, the individual person is free to choose his or her morality and act as he or she sees fit, without fear of violating any absolute, objective, universal rules. Life itself being material, there is no afterlife and no reward or punishment for "good" or "bad" behavior. There are no absolute personal responsibilities, no obligations, and since there is no One or Thing to reward or punish "good" or "bad" behavior, in the end there are no significant consequences of it.

On the other hand, if you believe that Reality is ultimately spiritual in nature, there is room for a God or gods and just possibly an absolute and eternal moral order to which you may be responsible. You may have an accountability for your acts that goes beyond just yourself, your family, your friends, your community, or your government. You may have a moral obligation to believe, think, and act in conformance with that supernatural reality and you will probably try to do so, at least part of the time.

With regard to truth, if you subscribe to the correspondence theory of truth, then you are more likely to seek truth, by thought and act, outside yourself. If you hold to the consistency theory of truth you may be content to rely on reason as a primary means for discovering truth. If you are a pure pragmatist, you will discount the notion of absolute truth as irrelevant and will search for truth only as far as is needed to realize practical ends, whatever you determine them to be.

**Cosmology**

Your cosmology consists of your beliefs about the origin of the universe, of life, and particularly, of Man.

Cosmological Beliefs

**What is the origin of the universe?** One possible answer to this question is *chance*: the universe as it exists now is simply the mechanical response of matter and energy to random events and the laws of physics over a very long time. Standing in direct opposition to this is the notion that the universe is the result of the acts of a supernatural Creator that formed the universe *ex nihilo* (out of nothing).

**What is the origin of life? What is the origin of Man?** Here again, you may believe that life, and even the human race, is the result of chance, random events, and natural selection. At the opposite end of the cosmological spectrum is the belief that Something outside of nature instantaneously created life pretty much as we see it today. Some hold an intermediate position, that of a gradual rise of plant, animal, and even human life from non-living matter, not by mere chance and natural selection, but through guidance by a divine shepherd or helmsman, towards a desired end, according to a plan or purpose.

Cosmological Implications

If you believe that things came to be primarily by chance, then the universe, the laws of physics, life in general, and even human life have no universal significance. This in turn implies that human thought and action themselves have limited significance: in the Big Picture, one thought or act is equivalent to any other.

On the other hand, if the universe was created by a Designer, presumably that Designer had a plan or purpose and what you are or do can, and perhaps therefore should, be consistent with that plan.

**Teleology**

And that is the substance of your teleology, your beliefs about purpose.

**Teleological Beliefs**

**Does the universe have a purpose?** Obviously, one possible answer is *No*. You may believe that the universe has no goal or desired end other than what its inhabitants choose to establish and pursue. The alternative is to believe that there is some purpose: some purposive Agent has either created the universe according to a plan or has "adopted" the universe, but in either case wishes for it some process or end state.

**If the universe has a purpose, whose purpose is it?** If you believe that the universe has no purpose, then of course this question is meaningless. On the contrary, given a purpose, there must be a purposive Agent. You probably believe that this is God or a god or gods, but perhaps you consider its personification only anthropomorphism, that Agent transcending personhood.

**What is the purpose of the universe?** Here there are many possible answers, the simplest one being that this purpose is unknown, even unknowable. Perhaps you believe that the purpose of the universe is an ever-increasing complexity and interdependence of its elements. Maybe it is a growing consciousness of its inhabitants and ultimately a self-consciousness on the part of the universe itself. You may believe that there is no more purpose to the universe than simply the happiness of its conscious occupants. If you believe in God (see below), knowledge of or communion with God by its conscious inhabitants may be the Grand Purpose.

**Teleological Implications**

 If the universe has no purpose, then we have no obligation to fulfill other than what we, perhaps collectively, choose. There is no accountability to Something higher than ourselves and no meaning to life other than what we choose. In the end, our acts cannot be judged according to a universal purpose, so there is no real fear of "missing the mark." Our acts are neither justified nor not justified by conformance or lack of conformance to a Plan. There can be no direct link between *is* and *ought*; in fact, *ought* may be a meaningless term.

But if there is a Plan or Purpose to the universe we may have an obligation to think and act consistently with it, and therefore life may have meaning in its context. There can be a link between *is* and *ought* and this may (or at least should) make us try to act as in certain ways. Of course, obligation may not be the right term to use in regard to this Purpose: if free will is an illusion, we may have no choice but to behave in a manner consistently with the Purpose, being mere automata whose actions were pre-programmed before time.

**Theology**

Your theology is comprised of your beliefs about God.

Theological Beliefs

**Is there a God?** If you are a theist you say *yes*, if an atheist *no*, and if an agnostic you say *maybe*. Theists differ as to the number of gods: traditional western belief (that is, post-classical) is monotheistic, but many people believe in multiple gods.

**What is God's nature?** Assuming that you believe in a God or gods, there are many possible beliefs about His/Her/Its/Their nature. For the sake of simplicity, I will give monotheistic, masculine examples, but they can be generalized. Most likely you believe that God exists outside of and above nature. You may believe that He is a localized Person or that God transcends personhood. He may be benevolent or tyrannical, loving or indifferent, omnipotent or limited in power, omniscient or only partly knowledgeable of what is going on in the universe.

**What is the relationship of God to the material universe?** He may be the creator or just a chance companion to it. If He is the Creator, he may have made it and left, being now sort of an absentee landlord (the position of deism), or He may still be interested in and intimately involved in perhaps all of its doings. If you are a pantheist, you probably hold that God and the universe are One.

**What is the relationship of God to Man?** God may be a loving parent or a childish tyrant. He may be lawgiver, policeman, judge, and executioner or a caring but just disciplinarian. You may believe that God is indifferent to the activities of us humans or that He desires an intimate relationship with each individual person. Perhaps God speaks to us or perhaps he has left us to work things out on our own.

Theological Implications

If there is no God, then you must look elsewhere for a source of and purpose for the universe. With regard to your behavior, there is no One to be accountable to, no One to obey, no One to talk to, no One to love, and no One to look to for help in time of need -- nor are any of these necessary. But if you believe in God, then perhaps you believe that you do have an obligation, that you ought to think and act so as to please Him, that you have the privilege to communicate with Him, and that you ought to be in proper relationship with Him.

**Anthropology**

The term *anthropology* usually refers to the study of human culture and human artifacts, but in the context of worldview, I take it to mean your beliefs about Man. I do not wish to be sexist, but to avoid cumbersome prose as much as possible, by *Man* I mean all humans, of both genders and all ages.

Anthropological Beliefs

**What is Man?** Man may be merely a cosmic accident or just one step in the directionless chain of evolution. Maybe you believe that though Man is an evolutionary step, that step is nevertheless a very important one on the path to some valued end. If you are a theist you may see Man as the gem of God's creation or even a creature created in His own image. At the extreme, you may consider Man a part of God or even a god himself.

**What is Man's place in the universe?** Man may be an infinitesimally, insignificant part of the universe or a key step in the progress of evolution towards new and better beings. He may be merely a part of earth's global ecosystem or a steward responsible for the well-being of the lower organisms and the inanimate elements. Perhaps you would go so far as to say that Man's unique place in the universe is as a moral agent, to think and act in such a way as to realize the good.

**Does Man have free will?** Perhaps not: perhaps we are mechanisms, slaves to our instincts and/or conditions and events beyond our control. Perhaps we are puppets of God, acting out a script that we had no part in writing. But maybe you believe that we do have the ability to think and act with at least partial freedom. Though there may be constraints, imposed by the laws of physics and biology or the guidance of God, we do have choices, for which we may be responsible.

**What ought Man to do?** Maybe you believe that you have no obligation to anyone or anything beyond yourself (if you so choose). Or maybe you do have a responsibility for the well-being of the universe in general and Man in particular. Perhaps you have a responsibility to believe in, love, obey, even enter into communion with God.

**Is Man basically good or evil?** Perhaps beliefs about good and evil belong more properly in your axiology (see below), but this question is fundamental to your view of Man. Although western thought, grounded in principles of Christianity, held fallen Man to be fundamentally sinful and continually striving against his evil nature, and although that belief is still held by some today, it is more likely that you believe that people are basically good and only wanting the environment and the opportunity to express that goodness. Maybe even more common is the belief that Man is basically neither good nor evil, but morally neutral from birth, and whether one follows a path of good or evil depends on external influences and strength of will.

**Anthropological Implications**

If we are mere mechanistic elements of the universe, then we are free to think and act on impulse and we and our behavior have no special significance or value. If we are stewards of the creation of God, then we have a responsibility to take care of our part of the universe. If we are created in God's image, then we have great intrinsic value and we should see to our own and, especially, to others' well-being. If we are moral agents, then we have an obligation to know what is good and to do well what is right. If we are basically good, then that obligation should be a light one and we merely need to be sensitive to and to follow our own natural inclinations -- and help others do the same. If we are born morally neutral, then things are only a little more difficult: moral goodness must be cultivated and rewarded and evil must be discouraged and, fortunately, there is nothing working in us to resist such moral training. But if Man is basically wicked, then we should resist certain natural inclinations to evil, and seeing that evil is so intrinsic to our nature and such resistance is ultimately futile, we must look to Someone or Something higher than ourselves for forgiveness, redemption, and moral strength to behave as we ought.

**Lecture 2**

# Myth and archetype

* **1. Myth in psychoanalysis**
* **2. Jung’s archetypes**
* **3. Archetypes in advertising**

# What is a myth?

The Greek word μῦθος originally meant a story, speech, or message. Later it came to be restricted to the stories of the gods, heroes, and men. Ancient authors freely adapted and interpreted myths, but they usually claimed that the stories were based on very old sources. Different Greek cities had their own legends, stories, gods, and heroes, so it was almost impossible to say that a story was not ancient. Even though the Greeks messed with their myths and creatively reinterpreted them, the sense one gets from Greek literature is that they considered them important.

It is important to note that myths are not "religion". The gods and goddesses in the myth stories are worshiped in Greek and Roman religions, and myths offer some of the same explanations and comforts that religion offer, but mythology can be considered separate from the religious practices or as only a component of the practices.

**A myth is a type of traditional story applied towards some purpose.**

Carl Gustav Jung  [ˈkarl ˈɡʊstaf ˈjʊŋ];1875 – 1961, was a Swiss psychiatrist and psychoanalyst who founded **analytical psychology**.

Psychoanalyst Sigmund **Freud** discovered **a personal unconscious**, which contains an individual's personal memories and ideas

Carl Gustav **Jung**  discovered  a  **collective unconscious**, a set of memories and ideas that is shared amongst all of humanity.

**Jung** believed that myths and dreams were expressions of the collective unconscious, in that they express core ideas that are part of the human species as a whole. In other words, myths express wisdom that has been encoded in all humans, perhaps by means of evolution or through some spiritual process. For Jungians, this common origin in the collective unconscious explains why myths from societies at the opposite ends of the earth can be strikingly similar. A Jungian analysis of classical mythology would claim that the main gods and goddesses express archetypes that are common to human thinking everywhere. The main Olympian gods can be seen as expressions of archetypes of different stages of life within the archetypical family. Zeus is the patriarch, Apollo the young man on the cusp of manhood and independence. Hermes expresses the archetypes of the Trickster. Zeus shares some of the features of the archetype of the "wise old man".

**Jung**  argued that story patterns are also encoded in the human brain, and that is why similar patterns called **archetypes** are found in mythologies around the world. For example, the myth of the Egyptian god Osiris involves his death, mourning, and seasonal rebirth every year. Similar patterns have been seen in the Babylonian god Tammuz, Greek Adonis, Heracles, Persephone, Jesus, Attis, and others.. An etiological explanation for these similarities would point to the phenomenon of the annual cycle of the seasons. Nature has a cycle of death and rebirth, and these myths explain this natural phenomenon. For Jungians, these stories express the death-rebirth archetype, encoded in human minds before birth. Different Jungian scholars might apply different understandings of these archetypes, for example they may claim that this archetype is a “symbolic expression of a process taking place not in the world but in the mind. That process is the return of the ego to the unconscious—a kind of temporary death of the ego—and its re-emergence, or rebirth, from the unconscious.

**Myths express characters and stories that are encoded into the human species in prehistory, and therefore express universal concerns.**

**Jung**  recognized that there were universal patterns in all stories and mythologies regardless of culture or historical period and hypothesized that part of the human mind contained a collective unconscious shared by all members of the human species, a sort of universal, primal memory.

 Joseph Campbell took Jung’s ideas and applied them to world mythologies. In A Hero with a Thousand Faces, among other works, he refined the concept of hero and the hero’s journey— George Lucas used Campbell’s writings to formulate the Star Wars saga.

 Recognizing archetypal patterns in literature brings patterns we all unconsciously respond to in similar ways to a conscious level. The term archetype can be applied to:

 • An image

• A theme

• A symbol

 • An idea

• A character type

• A plot pattern

**Archetypes can be expressed in**

• Myths

• Dreams

• Literature

• Religions

 • Fantasies

• Folklore

**Jung’s archetypes**

•  **The hero**, who pursues a great quest to realize his destiny.

•  **The self**, the personality striving towards its own complete realization.

•  **The shadow**, the amoral remnant of our instinctual animal past.

•  **The persona**, the mask and pretense we show others.

•  **The anima and animus**, our female and male roles and urges.

•  **The mother**, primarily in the sense of our need of her.

•  **The father**, primarily an authority figure often inducing fear.

•  **The child**, our innocent beginning with all our potential in front of us.

•  **The sage**, or wise old man, one who has the profound knowledge.

•  **The god**, the perfect image of the Self.

•  **The goddess**, the great mother, or Mother Earth.

•  **The trickster**, a rascal agent pushing us towards change.

•  **The hermaphrodite**, the joiner of opposites.

•  **The beast**, a representation of the primitive past of man.

•  **The scapegoat**, suffering the shortcomings of others.

•  **The fool**, wandering off in confusion and faulty directions.

•  **The artist**, the visionary and inspired way of approaching truth.

•  **Mana** and other concepts of spiritual energy.

•  **The journey**, a representation of the quest towards self-realization.

•  **Life**, death and rebirth, the cyclic nature of existence.

•  **Light and dark**, images of the conscious and the unconscious.

•  **The tree**, the growth towards self-fulfillment.

•  **Water**, the unconscious and the emotions.

•  **The wizard**, knowledgeable of the hidden and of transformation needed.

The foremost of the Jungian archetypes is the hero, a person who bravely overcomes great difficulty in order to realize his destiny. He could be described as a role-model, urging each of us to go ahead and pursue our own quest.

**Heroic Archetypes:**

1. Hero as warrior (Odysseus): A near god-like hero faces physical challenges and external enemies

2. Hero as lover (Prince Charming): A pure love motivate hero to complete his quest

3. Hero as a victim (Jesus): Hero suffers for the sake of others

4. Transcendent Hero: The hero of tragedy whose fatal flaw brings about his downfall, but not without achieving some kind of transforming realization or wisdom (Greek and Shakespearean tragedies—Oedipus, Hamlet, Macbeth, etc.)

5. Romantic/Gothic Hero: Hero/lover with a decidedly dark side (Mr. Rochester in Jane Eyre)

6. Proto-Feminist Hero: Female heroes (The Awakening by Kate Chopin)

7. Apocalyptic Hero: Hero who faces the possible destruction of society

8. Anti-Hero: A non-hero, given the vocation of failure, frequently humorous (Homer Simpson or Deadpool)

9. Defiant Anti-hero: Opposer of society’s definition of heroism/goodness. (Heart of Darkness)

10. Unbalanced Hero: The Protagonist who has (or must pretend to have) mental or emotional deficiencies (Hamlet, One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest)

11. The Other—the Denied Hero: The protagonist whose status or essential otherness makes heroism possible (Invisible Man by Ralph Ellison, The Joy Luck Club by Amy Tan)

12. The Superheroic: Exaggerates the normal proportions of humanity; frequently has divine or supernatural origins. In some sense, the superhero is one apart, someone who does not quite belong, but who is nonetheless needed by society. (Mythological heroes, Superman)

**Types of Archetypal Journeys**

1. The quest for identity

2. The epic journey to find the promised land/to found the good city

3. The quest for vengeance

4. The warrior’s journey to save his people

 5. The search for love (to rescue the princess/damsel in distress)

6. The journey in search of knowledge

7. The tragic quest: penance or self-denial

8. The fool’s errand

 9. The quest to rid the land of danger

10. The grail quest (the quest for human perfection)

**Stages of a Hero’s Journey**

Stage 1: Departure: The hero is called to adventure, although he is reluctant to accept. Stage 2: Initiation: The hero crosses a threshold into a new, more dangerous world, gaining a more mature perspective.

Stage 3: The Road of Trials: The hero is given supernatural aid, endures tests of strength, resourcefulness, and endurance.

 Stage 4: The Innermost Cave: The hero descends into the innermost cave, an underworld, or some other place of great trial. Sometimes this place can be within the hero’s own mind. Because of this trial, the hero is reborn in some way—physically, emotionally, or spiritually. Through this experience, the hero changes internally.

Stage 5: Return and Reintegration with Society: The hero uses his new wisdom to restore fertility and order to the land

The key parts of this definition note that a myth

is considered to be ancient ("traditional")

is considered important and valuable to society ("applied")

is passed down ("traditional")

**Ideological consciousness of ancient society is reflected in numerous myths:**

**cosmogonic** (interpreting the origin of the world),

**antropological** (pointing to the origin of man),

**life** (considering birth and death, the destiny of man and his destiny),

**eschatological** (focused on the prophecy and the future).

Many myths explain the appearance of a vital cultural goods, such as fire, agriculture, crafts. They also respond to issues as among people has established social rules, there are certain ceremonies and customs.

**Lecture3**

**Greek philosophy**

**1.        Presocratic period. Philosophy of Thales**, **Anaximander, Anaximenes, Pythagoras,** **Democritus, Heraclitus, Parmenides**

**2.        Classical period.** **Sophists, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle**.

From the beginning of human history, people have asked questions about the world and their place within it. For early societies, the answers to the most fundamental questions were found in religion: the actions of the gods explained the workings of the universe, and provided a framework for human civilizations. Some people, however, found the traditional religious explanations inadequate, and they began to search for answers based on reason rather than convention or religion. This shift marked the birth of philosophy, and the ﬁrst of the great thinkers were the Greeks.

Ancient Greek philosophy emerged in Ionia in the beginning of the 6th century B.C. Following Aristotle (Metaphysics I), we presume the first philosopher to be Thales of Miletus (c. 585 B.C.). The end of ancient philosophy is usually placed in the 6th century A.D., when Justinian closed down the School of Athens (529 A.D.).

**The history of ancient philosophy is divided into the following periods:**

• **Presocratic period** (6th and 5th centuries B.C.). From Thales to Democritus.

• **Classical period** (from the end of the 5th c. to the end of the 4th century. B.C.). Sophists, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle.

• **Hellenistic period** (3rd century B.C. - end of 2nd century A.D.). Epicurean philosophy, Stoic philosophy, Sceptics.

• **Philosophy in late antiquity** (3rd - 6th century A.D.). Neoplatonism, Schools of Eclectics, Commentators, Beginnings of Christian philosophy.

**PRESOCRATIC PERIOD** (6th and 5th centuries B.C.).

What is characteristic about Presocratic thinkers that followed is their concern to deploy reason in search of naturalistic explanations for observable phenomena. A central theme in their speculations concerned **the substance from which the universe is made**.

The **first** philosopher **Thales**, for example, thought that all comes from **water**. Although we have no record of the reasoning that led Thales to this conclusion, it isn't hard to imagine what it might have been. If we suppose that the ultimate stuff of the world must be chosen from among things familiar to us, **water isn't a bad choice: most of the earth is covered with it, it appears in solid, liquid, and gaseous forms, and it is clearly essential to the existence of life. Everything is moist.**

Thales's student **ANAXIMANDER**, however, found this answer far too simple. Proper attention to the changing face of the universe, he supposed, requires us to consider the cyclical interaction of things of at least four sorts: the hot, the cold, the dry, and the wet. Anaximander held that **all of these elements originally arise from a primal, turbulent mass, the Boundless or Infinite** {Gk. απειρων [apeirôn]}. It is only by a gradual process of distillation that everything else emerges—earth, air, fire, water, of course—and even living things evolve.

The next Milesian, **ANAXIMENES**, returned to the conviction that there must be a single kind of stuff at the heart of everything, and he proposed vapor or mist as the most likely candidate.  Not only does this warm, wet air combine two of the four elements together, but it also provides a familiar pair of processes for changes in its state: condensation and evaporation. Thus, in its most rarified form of breath or spirit, Anaximenes's air constitutes the highest representation of life.

**PYTHAGORAS (C.570–495 BCE)**

Pythagoras learnt the rudiments of geometry during a trip to Egypt. **The Pythagorean academy**Pythagoras was also, however, a deeply religious and superstitious man. He believed in reincarnation and the transmigration of souls, and he established a religious cult, with himself cast as a virtual messiah, in Croton, southern Italy. His disciples lived in a collective commune, following strict behavioral and dietary rules, while studying his religious and philosophical theories. The two sides of Pythagoras’s beliefs—the mystical and the scientiﬁc—seem to be irreconcilable, but Pythagoras himself does not see them as contradictory. For him, the goal  of life is freedom from the cycle  of reincarnation, which can be gained by adhering to a strict  set of behavioral rules, and by contemplation, or what we would call objective scientiﬁc thinking.

Pythagoras concludes that the whole cosmos must be governed  by mathematical rules. He says that number (numerical ratios and mathematical axioms) can be used to explain the very structure of the cosmos. Pythagoras and his disciples giving numbers a mystical signiﬁcance. They also attributed characteristics to numbers, such as “good” to the even numbers and “evil” to the odd ones, and even speciﬁcs such as “justice” to the number four, and so on.

One of Pythagoras’s most important contributions to the development of philosophy was  the idea that abstract thinking  is superior to the evidence of the senses. This was taken up by Plato in his theory of Forms, and resurfaced in the philosophical method of the rationalists in the 17th century.

Everything in the universe conforms to **mathematical rules and ratios**.

**Number is the  ruler of forms.**

so if we understand number and mathematical **relationships** we come to understand the **structure of the cosmos**.

Mathematics is the key model for **philosophical thought**.

**Number is the  ruler of ideas.**

**HERACLITUS (C.535–475 BCE)**

Heraclitus’s belief that every object in the universe is in a state of constant ﬂux runs counter to the thinking of the philosophers of the Milesian school, such as Thales and Anaximenes, who deﬁne all things by their quintessentially unchanging essence.

Heraclitus offers the example  of a river to illustrate his theory: “You can never step into the same river twice.” By this, he means that at the very moment you step into a river, fresh waters will immediately replace those into which you initially placed your foot.

Heraclitus' theory of flux may be **summarized** as follows:

• The ongoing division of unified things into a multiplicity of opposing phenomena is 'the way downwards' and is the consequence of war and strife.

• Harmony and peace lead back to 'the way upwards' and unity.

• Nature is constantly dividing and uniting herself so that the multiplicity of opposites does not destroy the unity of the whole.

• The existence of these opposites depends only on the difference of the two opposing motions, that of 'the way upwards' from that of 'the way downwards'.

• All things, therefore, are at once identical and not identical.

• The principle of the universe is becoming which implies that everything is and, at the same time, is not, so far as the same relation is concerned.

• The way up and the way down are one and the same.

Heraclitus regarded the soul as a mixture of fire and water. He maintained that stability is an illusion and that only change and the law of change, or logos, are real. His logos doctrine identified the laws of nature with a divine mind and later developed into the pantheistic theology of Stoicism.

**PARMENIDES** (C.515–445 BCE)

The ideas put forward by Parmenides mark a key turning point in Greek philosophy. Inﬂuenced by the logical, scientiﬁc thinking of Pythagoras, Parmenides employs deductive reasoning in an attempt to uncover the true physical nature of the world. His investigations lead him to take the opposite view to that of Heraclitus. From the premise that something exists (“It is”), Parmenides deduces that it cannot also not exist (“It is not”), as this would involve a logical contradiction. It follows therefore that a state of nothing existing is impossible—there can be no void. Something cannot then come from nothing, and so must always have existed in some form. This permanent form cannot change, because something that is permanent cannot change into something else without it ceasing to be permanent. Fundamental change is therefore impossible.

Parmenides shows by his process of reasoning that our perception of the world is faulty and full of contradictions.

Change does seem to occur, so we must distinguish sharply between the many mere appearances that are part of our experience and the one true reality that is discernible only by intellect.

Parmenides concludes from this pattern of thought that everything that is real must be eternal and unchanging, and must have an indivisible unity—“all is one.”

**Zeno of Elea** in particular fashioned four **paradoxes** about motion, covering every possible combination of continuous or discrete intervals and the direct motion of single bodies or the relative motion of several:

**Achilles and the Tortoise:** Similarly, given a ten meter head-start, a tortoise can never be overtaken by Achilles in a race, since Achilles must catch up to where the tortoise began. But by then the tortoise has moved ahead, and Achilles must catch up to that new point, and so on.

**Resume**

**Main Representatives of Pre-Socratic period:** Thales, Pythagoras, Heraclitus, Parmenides

**Subject of Reflections** – the Universe, Nature

**The main idea** - the search for a substance-the base of the Universe

**The primary beginning of being:**

THALES - water

PYTHAGORAS - Number

HERACLITUS - Fire

PARMENIDES – Being

**CLASSICAL PERIOD(from the end of the 5th c. to the end of the 4th century. B.C.)**

Fifth-century Athens was a politically troubled city-state: it underwent a sequence of external attacks and internal rebellions that no social entity could envy. During several decades, however, the Athenians maintained a nominally democratic government in which (at least some) citizens had the opportunity to participate directly in important social decisions.

Athens evolved into an important and prosperous city-state, and under the leadership of Pericles (445–429 BCE) it entered a “Golden Age” of scholarship and culture. This attracted people from all parts of Greece, and for those who knew and could interpret the law, there were rich pickings to be had. The city was run on broadly democratic principles, with an established legal system. Anyone  taken to court was required to plead his own case; there were no advocates, but a recognized class of advisors soon evolved. Skill in debate and argument was prized in Athens’s direct democracy, where political success was won by swaying the crowd. In this atmosphere, users of effective argumentation ﬂourished. This contributed to a renewed interest in practical philosophy. After the Atomists, philosophy turned toward human nature and ethics, especially in Athens in Greece. Itinerate teachers known as the **sophist** offered to provide their students with training in the effective exercise of citizenship.

**THE SOPHISTS**(from the Greek *sophia*, meaning wisdom), a group of traveling teachers famous throughout Greece toward the end of the 5th century BC, played an important role in developing the Greek city-states from agrarian monarchies into commercial democracies. Specializing in **rhetoric**, the Sophists were more professional educators than philosophers. As Greek industry and commerce expanded, a class of newly rich, economically powerful merchants began to wield political power. Lacking the education of the aristocrats, they sought to prepare themselves for politics and commerce by paying the Sophists for instruction in public speaking, legal argument, and general culture. Although the best of the Sophists made valuable contributions to Greek thought, the group as a whole acquired a reputation for deceit, insincerity, and demagoguery. Thus the word sophistry has come to signify these moral faults. Sophists held that individuals have the right to judge all matters for themselves. They denied the existence of any objective knowledge. They doubted that humanity would ever be able to reach objective truth through reason.

**PROTAGORAS** (c. 490-420 BC), a leading Sophist, is famous for the maxim “**Man is the measure of all things.**", «**Everything is relative»**

**Everything is relative**

Protagoras lectured in law and rhetoric to anybody who could afford him. His teachings were essentially about practical matters, arguing to win a civil case rather than to prove a point, but he could see the philosophical implications of what he taught. For Protagoras, every argument has two sides,  and both may be equally valid.  He claims that he can “make the worse case the better”, proving not the worth of the argument, but the persuasiveness of its proponent. In this way, he recognizes that belief is subjective, and it is the man holding the view or opinion that is the measure of its worth. This style of reasoning, common in law and politics at that time, was new to philosophy. By placing human beings at its center, it continued  a tradition of taking religion out  of philosophical argument, and it also shifted the focus of philosophy away from an understanding of  the nature of the universe to an examination of human behavior. Protagoras is mainly interested in practical questions. Philosophical speculations on the substance of the cosmos or about the existence of the gods seem pointless to him, as he considers such things to be ultimately unknowable.

**Man  is the measure of all things**

The main implication of this is that belief is subjective and relative. This leads Protagoras to reject the existence of absolute deﬁnitions of truth, justice, or virtue. What is true for one person may be false for another, he claims. This **relativism** also applies to moral values, such as what is right and what is wrong. To Protagoras, **nothing is inherently good in itself**. Something is ethical, or right, only because a person or **society judges it to be so.**

Sophistic thought identified knowledge with sense-perception and ignored the rational element. ***Since sense- impressions differ in different people the object as it is in itself cannot be known.***

Socrates and Plato derided the Sophists as mere rhetoricians,  but with Protagoras there was a signiﬁcant step in ethics toward the view that there are no absolutes and that all judgements, including  moral judgements, are **subjective**.

**SOCRATES** (469–399 BCE)

Socrates is often referred to as one of the founders of Western philosophy, and yet he wrote nothing, established no school, and held no particular theories of his own. What he did do, however, was persistently **ask the questions** that interested him, and in doing so evolved a new way of thinking, or a new way of examining what we think. This has been called the **Socratic, or dialectical, method** - “dialectical” because it proceeds as a dialogue between opposing views.

He was viliﬁed as a Sophist and was sentenced to death on charges of corrupting the young with ideas that undermined tradition. But he also had many followers, and among them was Plato, who recorded Socrates’ ideas in a series of written works, called dialogues, in which Socrates sets about examining various ideas. It is largely thanks to these dialogues— which include the *Apology*, *Phaedo,*and the *Symposium*—that Socrates’ thought survived at all, and that it went on to guide the course of Western philosophy.

Socrates rejected the notion  that concepts such as virtue were relative, insisting instead that they were absolutes, applicable not just to citizens of Athens, or Greece, but to all people in the world. He believed that virtue (***areté*** in Greek, which at the time implied **excellence** and **fulﬁlment**) was “the most valuable of possessions”, and that no-one actually desires to do evil. Anyone performing evil actions would be acting against their conscience and would therefore feel uncomfortable; and as we all strive for peace of mind it is not something we would do willingly. Evil, he thought, was done because of lack of wisdom and knowledge. From this he concluded that “**there is only one good: knowledge; and one evil: ignorance.**” **Knowledge is inextricably bound to morality**.

**Socrates was put to death**in 399 BCE, ultimately for questioning the basis of Athenian morality. Here he accepts the bowl of hemlock that will kill him, and gestures deﬁantly at the heavens.

***The most famous pupil of Socrates was Plato***

**PLATO (c. 427 – 347 BCE)**

Despite the large proportion of writings attributed to Plato that have survived, little is known about his life. He was born into a noble family in Athens in around 427 BCE and named **Aristocles**, but acquired the nickname “Plato” (meaning “broad”). Although probably destined for a life in politics, he became a pupil of Socrates. When Socrates was condemned to death, Plato is said to have become disillusioned with Athens, and left the city. He travelled widely, spending some time in southern Italy and Sicily, before returning to Athens around 385 BCE. Here he founded a school known as the **Academy** (from which the word “academic” comes), remaining its head until his death in 347 BCE.

**Perhaps the most famous of Plato’s metaphysical concepts is his notion of the so-called “forms” or “ideas.”**

**Seeking the Ideal**

So, Socrates posing questions about the **virtues, or moral concepts**, in order to establish clear and precise deﬁnitions of them. Socrates had famously said that “**virtue is knowledge**”, and that to act justly, for example, you must ﬁrst ask what justice is.

Plato decides that before referring to any moral concept in our thinking or reasoning, we must ﬁrst explore both what we mean by that concept and what makes it precisely the kind of thing that it is. He raises the question of how we would recognize the correct, or perfect, form of anything—a form that is true for all societies and for all time. By doing so, Plato is implying that he thinks some kind of ideal form of things in the world we inhabit—whether those things are moral concepts or physical objects—must actually exist, of which we are in some way aware.

Plato talks about objects in the world around us, such as beds. When we see a bed, he states, we know that it is a bed and we can recognize all beds, even though they may differ in numerous ways. Dogs in their many species are even more varied, yet all dogs share the characteristic of “dogginess”, which is something we can recognize, and that allows us to  say we know what a dog is. Plato argues that it is not just that a shared “dogginess” or “bedness” exists, but that we all have in our minds **an idea of an ideal bed or dog**, which we use to recognize any particular instance.

**World of Ideas**Reasoning brings Plato to only one conclusion—that there must be a world of Ideas, or Forms, which is totally separate from the material world. It is there that the Idea of the perfect “triangle”, along with the Idea of the perfect “bed” and “dog” exists. He concludes that human senses cannot perceive this place directly—it is only perceptible to us through reason. Plato even goes on to state that this realm of Ideas is “reality”, and that the world around us is merely modelled upon it. To illustrate his theory, Plato presents what has become known as the “Allegory of the Cave.” He asks us to imagine a cave in which people have been imprisoned since birth, tied up facing the back wall in the darkness. They can only face straight ahead. Behind the prisoners is a bright ﬁre, which casts shadows onto the wall they are facing. There is also a rampart between the ﬁre and the prisoners along which people walk and hold up various objects from time to time, so that the shadows of these objects are cast on the wall. These shadows are all the prisoners know of the «World»; they have no concept of the actual objects themselves. If one  of the prisoners manages to untie himself and turn around, he will see the objects themselves. But after a lifetime of entrapment, he  is likely to be confused, as well as dazzled by the ﬁre, and will most likely turn back toward the wall and the only reality he knows.

Plato believes that everything that our senses perceive in the material world is like the images  on the cave wall, merely shadows  of reality. This belief is the basis  of his theory of Forms, which is that for every earthly thing that we have the power to perceive with our senses, there is a corresponding “**Form**” (or “Idea”)—an eternal and perfect reality of that thing—in the world of Ideas. Because what we perceive via our senses is based  on an experience of imperfect or incomplete “shadows” of reality,  we can have no real knowledge of those things. At best, we may have opinions, but genuine knowledge can only come from study of the Ideas, and that can only ever be achieved through reason, rather than through our deceptive senses.

This separation of two distinct worlds, one of appearance, the other of what Plato considers to be reality, also solves the problem of ﬁnding constants in an apparently changing world. The material world may be subject to change, but Plato’s world of Ideas is eternal and immutable. Plato applies his theory not just to concrete things, such as beds and dogs, but also to abstract concepts. In Plato’s world of Ideas, there is an Idea of justice, which is true justice, and all the instances of justice in the material world around us are models, or lesser variants, of it. The same is true of the concept of goodness, which Plato considers to be the ultimate Idea—and the goal of all philosophical enquiry.

**Innate knowledge**The problem remains of how we can come to know these Ideas, so that we have the ability to recognize the imperfect instances of them in the world we inhabit. Plato argues that our conception of Ideal Forms must be innate, even if we are not aware of this. He believes that human beings are divided into two parts: the body and the soul. Our bodies possess the senses, through which we are able to perceive the material world, while the soul possesses the reason with which we can perceive the realm of Ideas. Plato concludes that our soul, which is immortal and eternal, must have inhabited the world of Ideas before our birth, and still yearns to return to that realm after our death. So when we see variations of the Ideas in the world with our senses, we recognize them as a sort of recollection. Recalling the innate memories of these Ideas requires reason—an attribute of the soul. For Plato, the philosopher’s job  is to use reason to discover the Ideal Forms or Ideas. In the *Republic*, he also argues that it is philosophers, or rather those who are true to the philosopher’s calling, who should be the ruling class. This is because only the true philosopher can understand the exact nature of the world and the truth of moral values. However, just like a prisoner in the “Allegory of the Cave” who sees the real objects rather than their shadows, many will just turn back to the only world they feel comfortable with. Plato often found it difﬁcult to convince his fellow philosophers of the true nature of their calling.

**Unsurpassed legacy**Plato himself was the embodiment of his ideal, or true, philosopher. He argued on questions of ethics that had been raised previously by the followers of Protagoras and Socrates, but in the process, he explored for the ﬁrst time the path to knowledge itself. He was a profound inﬂuence on his pupil Aristotle—even if they fundamentally disagreed about thetheory of Forms. Plato’s ideas later found their way into the philosophy of medieval Islamic and Christian thinkers, including St. Augustine of Hippo, who combined Plato’s ideas with those of the Church. By proposing that the use of reason, rather than observation, is the only way to acquire knowledge, Plato also laid the foundations of 17th-century rationalism. Plato’s inﬂuence can still be felt today— the broad range of subjects he wrote about led the 20th-century British logician Alfred North Whitehead to say that subsequent Western philosophy “consists of a set of footnotes to Plato.”

**ARISTOTLE (384–322 BCE)**

**Aristotle**Born in Stagira, Chalcidice, in  the northeast region of modern Greece, Aristotle was the son of  a physician to the royal family  of Macedon, and was educated as a member of the aristocracy. He  was sent to Plato’s Academy in Athens at the age of 17, and spent almost 20 years there both as a student and a teacher. When  Plato died, Aristotle left Athens for Ionia, and spent several years studying the wildlife of the area. He was then appointed tutor at the Macedonian court, where he taught the young Alexander the Great and continued his studies.

In 335 BCE he returned to Athens, encouraged by Alexander, and set up the **Lyceum**, a school to rival Plato’s. It was here that  he did most of his writing, and formalized his ideas. After Alexander died in 323 BCE, anti-Macedonian feeling ﬂared up in Athens, and Aristotle  ﬂed to Chalcis, on the island  of Euboea, where he died  the following year.

**Aristotle** was the most illustrious pupil of Plato and ranks with his teacher among the most profound and influential thinkers of the Western world. Aristotle defined the basic concepts and principles of many of the theoretical sciences, such as **logic, biology, physics, and psychology.** Philosophy to him meant science and recognition of the purpose in all things. Unlike Plato, Aristotle preferred to establish the ultimate basis of things inductively—by a posteriori conclusions—from particular facts to a universal conclusion, or from effects to causes. In founding the science of logic Aristotle developed the theory of deductive inference, represented by the syllogism, a deductive argument having two premises and a conclusion.

**In his metaphysical theory,** Aristotle criticized Plato's separation of **form from matter** and maintained that the Forms are contained within the concrete objects that exemplify them. For Aristotle **form and matter**were inherent in all things, and **inseparable**. He believed that **everything real is a combination of potentiality and actuality**, a combination of that which a thing may become, but is not yet, and that which it already is. The one exception: human and divine intellect are pure forms.

For Aristotle, **forms without matter do not exist**. **Form** is thus both the physical **shape**, but also the **idea** by which we best know particular beings. Form is the actuality of matter, which is pure potentiality. “Actuality” and “potentiality” are two important terms for Aristotle. A thing is in potentiality when it is not yet what it can inherently or naturally become. An acorn is potentially an oak tree, but insofar as it is an acorn, it is not yet actually an oak tree. When it is an oak tree, it will have reached its actuality—its continuing activity of being a tree. The form of oak tree, in this case, en-forms the wood, and gives it shape—makes it actuality a tree, and not just a heap of matter.

**Psychology**. Aristotle’s ***On The Soul*** (*Peri Psyche*, often translated in the Latin, *De Anima*) gives us insight into Aristotle’s conception of the composition of the soul. The soul is the actuality of a body. Alternatively, since matter is in potentiality, and form is actuality, the soul as form is the actuality of the body. Form and matter are never found separately from one another, although we can make a logical distinction between them. For Aristotle, all living things are en-souled beings. Soul is the animating principle (arche) of any living being (a self-nourishing, growing and decaying being). Thus, even plants are en-souled. Without soul, a body would not be alive, and a plant, for instance, would be a plant in name only.

There are three types of soul: **nutritive, sensitive, and intellectual**. Some beings have only one of these, or some mixture of them. If, however, a soul has the capacity for sensation, as animals do, then they also have a nutritive faculty. Likewise, for beings who have minds, they must also have the sensitive and nutritive faculties of soul. A plant has only the nutritive faculty of soul, which is responsible for nourishment and reproduction. Animals have sense perception in varying degrees, and must also have the nutritive faculty, which allows them to survive. Human beings have intellect or mind (nous) in addition to the other faculties of the soul.

**Ethics.**The most famous and thorough of Aristotle’s ethical works is his **Nicomachean Ethics**. This work is an inquiry into the best life for human beings to live. The life of human flourishing or **happiness** (eudaimonia) is the best life. It is important to note that what we translate as “happiness” is quite different for Aristotle than it is for us. We often consider happiness to be a mood or an emotion, but Aristotle considers it to be an activity—a way of living one’s life. Thus, it is possible for one to have an overall happy life, even if that life has its moments of sadness and pain.

**Happiness** is the practice of virtue or excellence (arete), and so it is important to know the two types of virtue: character virtue, the discussion of which makes up the bulk of the Ethics, and intellectual virtue. Character excellence comes about through habit—one habituates oneself to character excellence by knowingly practicing virtues. To be clear, it is possible to perform an excellent action accidentally or without knowledge, but doing so would not make for an excellent person, just as accidentally writing in a grammatically correct way does not make for a grammarian. One must be aware that one is practicing the life of virtue.

Aristotle arrives at the idea that “**the activity of the soul in accordance with virtue**” is the best life for human beings through the “human function” argument. The work or function of an eye is to see and to see well. Just as each part of the body has a function, says Aristotle, so too must the human being as a whole have a function. This is an argument by analogy. The function of the human being is logos or reason, and the more thoroughly one lives the life of reason, the happier one’s life will be.

**Politics.**The last chapter of Nicomachean Ethics is dedicated to politics. Aristotle emphasizes that the goal of learning about the good life is not knowledge, but to become good, and he reiterates this in the final chapter (1179b3-4). Since the practice of virtue is the goal for the individual, then ultimately we must turn our eyes to the arena in which this practice plays out—the polis.

A good individual makes for a good citizen, and a good polis helps to engender good individuals. Laws must be instituted in such a way as to make its citizens good, but the lawmakers must themselves be good in order to do this. Human beings are so naturally political that the relationship between the state and the individual is to some degree reciprocal, but without the state, the individual cannot be good.

Aristotle categorizes **six different political constitutions**, naming three as good and three as bad. The three good constitutions are **monarchy** (rule by one), **aristocracy** (rule by the best, aristos), and **polity** (rule by the many). These are good because each has the common good as its goal. The **worst** constitutions, which parallel the best, are **tyranny**, **oligarchy**, and **democracy**, with democracy being the best of the three evils. These constitutions are bad because they have private interests in mind rather than the common good or the best interest of everyone. **The tyrant** has only his own good in mind; **the oligarchs**, who happen to be rich, have their own interest in mind; and the people (**demos**), who happen not to be rich, have only their own interest in mind.

Yet, Aristotle grants that there is a difference between an ideal and a practically plausible constitution, which depends upon how people actually are. Aristotle seems to favor **democracy**, and after that **oligarchy**, but he spends the bulk of his time explaining that each of these constitutions actually takes many shapes. For example, there are farmer-based democracies, democracies based upon birth status, democracies wherein all free men can participate in government, and so forth.

**Aristotle’s legacy**

With the emergence of Islam in the 7th century CE, Aristotle’s works were translated into Arabic and spread throughout the Islamic world, becoming essential reading for Middle Eastern scholars such as Avicenna and Averroes. In Western Europe, however, Boethius’s Latin translation of Aristotle’s treatise on logic (made in the 6th century CE) remained the only work of Aristotle’s available until the 9th century CE, when all of Aristotle’s works began to be translated from Arabic into Latin. It was also at this time that  his ideas were collected into the the books we know today—such as *Physics, The Nicomachean Ethics,* and the *Organon*. In the 13th century, Thomas Aquinas braved  a ban on Aristotle’s work and integrated it into Christian philosophy, in the same way that  St. Augustine had adopted Plato, and Plato and Aristotle came to lock horns again.

Aristotle’s notes on logic (laid out in the *Organon*) remained the standard text on logic until the emergence of mathematical logic  in the 19th century. Likewise,  his classiﬁcation of living things dominated Western thinking throughout the Middle Ages, becoming the Christian *scala naturae*(the “ladder of nature”), or the Great Chain of Being. This depicted the whole of creation dominated by man, who stood second only to God. And during the Renaissance, Aristotle’s empirical method of enquiry held sway.

In the 17th century, the debate between empiricists and rationalists reached its zenith after René Descartes published his *Discourse on the Method*. Descartes, and Leibniz and Kant after him, chose the rationalist route; in response, Locke, Berkeley, and Hume lined up as the empiricist opposition.

## Lecture 4

## Hellenistic Philosophy

1. **Epicurean philosophy**
2. **Philosophy of Stoicism**
3. **Philosophy of Skeptics**

**The Hellenistic World**

From Ancient Greek Ἑλληνικός (Hellēnikós, “of or relating to Greece or Greeks”), from Ancient Greek Ἑλλάς (Hellás, “Greece”), equivalent to Hellen +‎ -ic.

The great golden age of Athenian philosophy, encompassing Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle only lasted for about a hundred years. In the centuries that followed, changes in the political and cultural climate of the ancient world tended to discourage many varieties of philosophical thinking. The Macedonians under Philip and Alexander founded a Greek empire, which was later conquered by the Romans. Although the general culture of this "Hellenistic" period remained Greek in spirit, political power was vested in a highly centralized state, established and maintained primarily through extensive applications of military force. The (sometime) Athenian tradition of participatory government disappeared as individual citizens were excluded from significantly shaping the social structure of their lives.

Athens loses its dominant role by 325 BC. Conquests of Alexander the Great political upheavals new epoch in history of mankind Hellenism refers to both the period of time and the Greek-dominated culture that prevailed in the Hellenistic kingdoms of Macedonia, Syria, and Egypt. Borders between countries and cultures became erased.

**Hellenistic philosophers**, therefore, devoted less attention than had Plato and Aristotle to the speculative construction of an ideal state that would facilitate the achievement of a happy life. Instead, the ethical thinkers of this later period focussed upon the life of the individual, independently of the society as a whole, describing in detail the kinds of character and action that might enable a person to live well despite the prevailing political realities. In general, we might say, such philosophers tried to show how we should live when circumstances beyond our control seem to render pointless everything we try to accomplish. The Hellenistic schools of philosophy, then, exhibit less confidence and propose solutions less radical than their Athenian predecessors had in the golden era.

**Epicurus and the Epicureans**

The ancient atomists (Leucippus and Democritus) had already worked out a systematic description of the natural world comprising many particular material particles, whose mechanical interactions account for everything that happens. In the Hellenistic period, attention turned to the consequences of such a view for the conduct of human life.

Epicurus and his followers pointed out (in the Principle Doctrines, for example) that since the indestructible atoms that constitute the material world move, swerve, and collide entirely by chance, everything that happens in the universe lies outside the reach of direct human control. (Notice how this position projects Hellenistic political impotence onto the natural world.) Human life is, therefore, essentially passive: all we can do is to experience what goes on, without supposing ourselves capable of changing it. Even so, Epicurus held that this sort of life may be a good one, if the experiences are mostly pleasant ones.

Thus, in the Letter to Menoeceus, Epicurus held that the proper goal of human life is to achieve mental ease {Gk. αταραξια [ataraxia]} and freedom from pain. All of our sensual desires are natural and their satisfaction is to be desired, since satiation is always a pleasure but frustrated desire is a mild pain. Material goods are worthwhile only to the extent that possessing them contributes to the achievement of peace. What is more, Epicurus held that we have no reason to complain of the fact that human life must come to an end. Since death results in the annihilation of the personality, he argued, it cannot be experienced and is thus nothing to be feared. Thus, Epicureanism was long ago summarized as the view recommending that we "relax, eat, drink, be merry." (Luke 12:19-20)

The parody is accurate as far as it goes: Epicurus did suppose that a successful life is one of personal fulfillment and the attainment of happiness within this life. But the philosophical Epicureans were less confident than many of their later imitators about the prospects for achieving very much pleasure in ordinary life. They emphasized instead the mental peace that comes from accepting whatever happens without complaint or struggle. Notice again that this is a reasonable response to a natural world and social environment that do not provide for effective individual action.

The Roman philosopher Lucretius defended a similar set of theses, including both atomism in general and an Epicurean devotion to tranquillity in his philosophical poem De Rerum Naturae (On the Nature of Things).

**Epictetus and the Stoics**

A rival school of philosophy in Athens was that of the Stoics. As originally developed by Zeno of Citium and Chrysippus, stoicism offered a comprehensive collection of human knowledge encompassing formal logic, physical study of the natural world, and a thoroughly naturalistic explanation of human nature and conduct. Since each human being is a microcosm of the universe as a whole, they supposed, it is possible to employ the same methods of study to both life and nature equally.

In the Hellenistic period, Epictetus tersely noted the central features of a life thusly lived according to nature in his Encheiridion (Manual). Once again, the key is to understand how little of what happens is within our control, and stoicism earns its reputation as a stern way of life with recommendations that we accept whatever fate brings us without complaint, concern, or feeling of any kind. Since family, friends, and material goods are all perishable, Epictetus held, we ought never to become attached to them. Instead, we treat everything and everyone we encounter in life as a temporary blessing (or curse), knowing that they will all pass away from us naturally.

This seems cold and harsh advice indeed, but it works! If, indeed, we form no attachments and care about nothing, then loss will never disturb the tranquillity and peace of our lives. This way of life can be happy even for a slave like Epictetus. But later Roman Stoics like Seneca and Marcus Aurelius made clear in their lives and writings that it has merits even for those who are better-off.

**The Ancient Skeptics**

Another school of Hellenistic philosophy illustrates yet again the prevailing lack of confidence that life in this era inspired. The skeptics supposed that the possibility of human knowledge is severely limited in scope and application.

Skepticism began with Pyrrho of Elis, who taught that apart from the sketchy information provided by the senses, we have no genuine knowledge of the nature of things. Unable to achieve certainty about the general structure of the world, human beings should often practice suspension of judgment, which is the only rational response to situations in which they are ignorant. This course naturally results in a nearly total lack of activity, which Pyrrho took to be equivalent to peace of mind. Although he wrote nothing, Pyrrho exerted a powerful influence on succeeding generations through his disciple, Timon of Philius and members of the later Academy.

Centuries later, Sextus Empiricus wrote a history of skeptical philosophy, the Outlines of Pyrrhonism, and used the Pyrrhonian approach to criticize the pretensions of other schools of thought. He made it clear that the skeptical challenge to traditional theories of knowledge arises from an unusually strict definition of knowledge itself. If we can only be said properly to know what is absolutely certain or beyond doubt, then very little indeed will be known. Although it was widely ignored in his own time, the work of Sextus was instrumental in the modern revival of interest in skeptical philosophy.

**Religion and Philosophy**

Despite (or because of) the gloomy prospects held forward by these schools of philosophy, the later Hellenistic period also produced significant movement toward the consolidation of the older Greek philosophical tradition with the middle-eastern religions of Judaism and Christianity.

**Plotinus**

The version of Platonic philosophy that came to be incorporated into the theology of the middle ages, however, had rather little to do with the thought of Plato himself. It was, instead, derived from the quasi-mystical writings of Plotinus. In an aphoristic book called the Enneads, Plotinus used Plato's fascination with the abstract forms of things as the starting-point for a comprehensive metaphysical view of the cosmos.

According to Plotinus, the form of the Good is the transcendent source of everything in the universe: from its central core other forms emanate outward, like the ripples in a pond, losing measures of reality along the way. Thus, although the early emanations retain much of the abstract beauty of their source, those out on the fringes of the cosmos have very little good left in them. Nevertheless, Plotinus supposed that careful examination of anything in the world could be used to lead us toward the central reality, if we use the information it provides as the basis for our reasoning about its origins in something more significant. In principle, progressive applications of this technique will eventually bring us to contemplation of the Good itself and knowledge of the nature of the universe.

But since the Good is both the cause of the universe and the source of its moral quality for Plotinus, philosophical study is a redemptive activity. Achievement of mystical union with the cause of the universe promises to provide us not only with knowledge but also with the true elements of virtue as well. It was this neoplatonic philosophy that the Christians found so well-suited to their own theological purposes. Once the Good is identified with the god of scripture, the details work themselves out fairly naturally. Thus, we'll find notions of this sort to be a popular feature of medieval philosophy.

**Lecture 5**

**Medieval Philosophy (250-1500)**

**1) St. Augustine - «God is not the parent of evils»**

**2) St. Thomas Aquinas «the soul is distinct from the body»**

**3) Averroes «Philosophy and religion are not incompatible»**

**4) Avicenna «The universe has not always existed»**

Philosophy did not play a large part in Roman culture, other than Stoicism, which was admired by the Romans for its emphasis on virtuous conduct and doing one’s duty. The broader philosophical tradition that had been established by the Classical Greeks was therefore effectively marginalized under the Roman Empire. Philosophy continued to be taught in Athens, but its inﬂuence dwindled, and no signiﬁcant philosophers emerged until Plotinus in the 3rd century CE, who founded an important Neo-Platonist school.

During the ﬁrst millennium of the Common Era, Roman inﬂuence also waned, both politically and culturally. Christianity became assimilated into the Roman culture, and after the fall of the empire in the 5th century, the Church became the dominant authority in Western Europe, remaining so for almost 1,000 years. The Greek idea of philosophy as rational examination independent of religious doctrine sat uncomfortably with the rise of Christianity. Questions about the nature of the universe and what constitutes a virtuous life were held to be answered in the scriptures; they were not considered subjects for philosophical discussion. Early Christian philosophers such as St. Augustine of Hippo sought to integrate Greek philosophy into the Christian religion.

This process was the main task of scholasticism, a philosophical approach that stemmed from the monastic schools and was renowned for its rigorous dialectical reasoning. The work of scholastic philosophers such as Augustine was not so much an exploration of questions such as  “Is there a God?” or “Does man have an immortal soul?” as a search for a rational justiﬁcation for the belief in God and an immortal soul.

**The Dark Ages**As the Roman Empire shrank and eventually fell, Europe sank into the “Dark Ages” and most of the culture it had inherited from Greece and Rome disappeared. The Church held the monopoly on learning,  and the only true philosophy that survived was a form of Platonism deemed compatible with Christianity, and Boethius’s translation of Aristotle’s *Logic*. Elsewhere, however, culture thrived. China and Japan in particular enjoyed a “Golden Age” of poetry and art, while traditional eastern philosophies coexisted happily with their religions. In the lands that had been part of Alexander the Great’s empire, the Greek legacy commanded more respect than in Europe. Arabic and Persian scholars preserved and translated the works of the Classical Greek philosophers, incorporating their ideas into Islamic culture from the 6th century onward.

As Islam spread eastward into Asia and across north Africa and into Spain, its inﬂuence began to be felt in Europe. By the 12th century, news of ideas and inventions from the Islamic world were reaching as far north as Britain, and European scholars started to rediscover Greek mathematics and philosophy through Islamic sources. The works of Aristotle in particular came as something of a revelation, and they sparked a resurgence of philosophical thinking within the medieval Christian Church.

But whereas Plato’s philosophy had been comparatively easy to assimilate into Christian thought, because it provided rational justiﬁcation for belief in God and the immortal human soul, Aristotle was treated with suspicion by the Church authorities. Nevertheless, Christian philosophers including Roger Bacon, Thomas Aquinas, Duns Scotus, and William of Ockham enthusiastically embraced the new Aristotelianism and eventually convinced the Church of its compatibility with Christian faith.

**A new rationality**Along with the philosophy that revitalized the Church, the Islamic world also introduced a wealth of technological and scientiﬁc knowledge to medieval Europe. Aristotle’s scientiﬁc methods had been reﬁned to sophisticated levels in Persia, and advances in chemistry, physics, medicine, and particularly astronomy undermined the authority of the Church when they arrived  in Europe. The re-introduction of Greek thinking and the new ideas that led to Europe’s Renaissance in the late 15th century sparked a change of mood as people began to look more toward reason rather than faith to provide them with answers. There was dissent even within the Church, as humanists such as Erasmus provoked the Reformation. Philosophers themselves turned their attention away from questions of God and the immortal soul toward the problems posed by science and the natural world.

In the Middle Ages, the basic science that developed was **theology** - beliefs about the existence and nature of God. Philosophy also speaks of God. This branch of philosophy is called the **philosophy of religion.**

The philosophy of religion is often confused with theology, which makes sense, because they both take God and religion as their subjects. But theology starts by assuming that God exists, and then figures out what follows. Or **theology** might try to solve philosophical problems that might arise from a belief in God. But one thing that’s never on the table in theology is simply not believing in God. Atheism is not an option.  
This is what separates the philosophical study of religion from the theological. Philosophers take nothing as a given – and that includes religious belief. Everything is on the table, and **everything needs an argument**.  
So, no area of belief is sacred, and that means even your sacred beliefs are going to need to be examined, and evidence will need to be given.  
Some people say religion is the one area where you don’t need arguments – that faith alone is enough. But philosophers don’t take faith for an answer.  
  
Philosophy of religion is also not the study of the Bible, because you can’t use what’s written in a book to prove the truth of the book.

You need outside evidence.

There’s a whole area of scholarship devoted to understanding the Bible, by considering the time and place in which it was written.

And such study can be very helpful in understanding certain things about religion.

But it doesn’t help us here.

Philosophy of religion is also not religious anthropology, or religious sociology, or a psychological understanding of our reasons for religious belief.

Here are the main problems of the philosophy of religion:

**Is there a God?**

**What is God's nature?**

**What is the relationship of God to the material universe?**

**What is the relationship of God to Man?**

How does theology of the Middle Ages answer these questions?

**ST. AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO (354–430 CE)**

**Aurelius Augustine** was born in 354 CE in Thagaste, a small provincial town in North Africa, to a Christian mother and a pagan father. He was educated to be a rhetorician, and he went on to teach rhetoric in his home town,  and at Carthage, Rome, and Milan, where he occupied  a prestigious position.

For a while Augustine followed Manichaeism—a religion that sees good and evil as dual forces that rule  the universe—but under the inﬂuence of Archbishop Ambrose of Milan, he became attracted to Christianity.  In 386, he suffered a spiritual crisis and underwent a conversion. He abandoned his career and devoted himself to writing Christian works, many of a highly philosophical nature. In 395 he became Bishop of Hippo, in North Africa, and he held this post for the rest of his life. He died in Hippo, aged 75, when the town was beseiged and sacked by the Vandals.

**Theodicy** **by Augustine** (from Greek *theos,* "god"; *dike,* "justice") is *the reasonable justification* of the nature, structure & goal of evil in an order of things considered to be created by God, considered as the author of righteousness and all good things.

**A**ugustine was especially interested in the problem of evil. If God is entirely good and all-powerful, why is there evil in the world? For Christians such as Augustine, as well as for adherents of Judaism and Islam, this was, and remains, a central question. This is because it makes an obvious fact about the world—that it contains evil—into an argument against the existence of God. Augustine is able to answer one aspect of the problem quite easily.

***The first argument:*evilisa lack of something**.

He believes that although **God** created everything that exists, he **did not create evil**, because **evil is not a thing, but a lack or deﬁciency of something**.

For example, the evil suffered by a blind man is that he is without sight; the evil in a thief is that he lacks honesty. Augustine borrowed this way of thinking from Plato and his followers.

***The second argument:*An essential freedom**

But Augustine still needs to explain why God should have created the world in such a way as to allow there to be these natural and moral evils, or deﬁciencies.

His answer revolves around the idea that **humans are rational beings**. He argues that in order for God to create rational creatures, such as human beings, he had to give them **freedom of will**. Having freedom of will means being able to choose, including choosing between good and evil. For this reason God had  to leave open the possibility that the ﬁrst man, Adam, would choose evil rather than good. According  to the Bible this is exactly what happened, as Adam broke God’s command not to eat fruit from the Tree of Knowledge. In fact, Augustine’s argument holds even without referring to the Bible. Rationality is the ability to evaluate choices through the process of reasoning. The process is only possible where there is freedom of choice, including the freedom to choose to do wrong.

***The third argument:*natural evils**

Augustine also suggests a third solution to the problem, asking us to see the world as a thing of beauty. He says that although there is evil in the universe, it contributes to an overall good that is greater than it could be without evil—just as discords in music can make a harmony more lovely, or dark patches add to the beauty of a picture.

Since Augustine’s time, most Christian philosophers have tackled the problem of evil using one of his approaches, while their opponents, such as David Hume, have pointed to their weaknesses as arguments against Christianity.  Calling sickness, for instance, an absence of health seems to be just playing with words: illness may be due to a deﬁciency of something, but the suffering of the sick person is real enough. And how are natural evils, such as earthquakes and plagues, explained?  Someone without a prior belief in God might still argue that the presence of evil in the world proves that there is no all-powerful and benevolent God. But for those who do already believe in God, Augustine’s arguments might hold the answer.

**AVICENNA (980–1037)**

**Avicenna**Ibn Sînâ, or Avicenna as the Europeans called him, was born in 980 in a village near Bukhara, now in Uzbekhistan. Although he wrote mainly in Arabic, the language of learning throughout the Islamic world, he was a native Persian speaker. Avicenna was a child prodigy, rapidly surpassing his teachers not only in logic and philosophy, but also in medicine. While still in his teens, he became known to the Samanid ruler Nuh ibn Mansur as a brilliant physician, and was given the use of his magniﬁcent library.

Avicenna’s life was spent in the service of various princes, both as physician and political adviser. He started writing at the age of 21, and went on to write more than 200 texts, on subjects as diverse as metaphysics, animal physiology, mechanics of solids, and Arabic syntax. He died when his medications for colic were altered, possibly maliciously, while on campaign with his patron Alâ al-Dawla.

**A**vicenna, also known as Ibn Sînâ, is the most important philosopher in the Arabic tradition, and one of the world’s greatest thinkers. Like his predecessors, al-Kindî and al-Fârâbî, and his successor, Averroes, Avicenna self-consciously marked himself out as a philosopher rather than an Islamic theologian, choosing to follow Greek wisdom and the path of reasoning and proof. In particular, he saw himself as a follower of Aristotle, and his main writings are encyclopedias of Aristotelian philosophy. However, these works explain Aristotle’s philosophy as re-thought and synthesized by Avicenna.

One striking example is his explanation of the relationship between mind (self or soul) and body.

**Mind and body are distinct**

Aristotle claims that the body and mind of humans (and other animals) are not two different things (or “substances”), but one unit, and that the mind is the “form” of the human body. As such, it is responsible for all the activities a human being can perform, including thinking.

By contrast, Avicenna is one of the most famous “dualists” in the history of philosophy—he thinks that the body and the mind are two distinct substances. His great predecessor in this view was Plato, who thought of the mind as a distinct thing that was imprisoned in the body. Plato believed that at the point of death, the mind would be released from its prison, to be later reincarnated in another body.

In seeking to prove the divided nature of mind and body, Avicenna devised a thought-experiment known as the “**Flying Man**”. This appears as a treatise, *On the Soul*, within his *Book of Healing*, and it aims to strip away any knowledge that can possibly be disproved, and leave us only with absolute truths. It remarkably anticipates the much later work of Descartes, the famous dualist of the 17th century, who also decided to believe nothing at all except that which he himself could know ***for certain***. Both Avicenna and Descartes want to demonstrate that the mind or self exists because it knows it exists; and that it is distinct from the human body.

**The Flying Man**

In the Flying Man experiment, Avicenna wants to examine what  we can know if we are effectively robbed of our senses, and cannot  depend on them for information.  He asks us each to imagine this: suppose I have just come into existence, but I have all my normal intelligence. Suppose, too, that I am blindfolded and that I am ﬂoating in the air, and my limbs are separated from each other, so I can touch nothing. Suppose I am entirely without any sensations. None the less, I will be sure that I myself exist. But what is this self, which is me?  It cannot be any of the parts of my body, because I do not know that I have any. The self that I afﬁrm as existing does not have length or breadth or depth. It has no extension, or physicality. And, if I were able to imagine, for instance, a hand,  I would not think that it belonged  to this self which I know exists. It follows from this that the human self—what I am—is distinct from my body, or anything physical. The Flying Man experiment, says Avicenna, is a way of alerting and reminding oneself of the existence of the mind as something other than, and distinct from, the body.

**The immortal soul.**

Avicenna goes on to draw the conclusion that the mind is not destroyed when the body dies, and that it is immortal. This did not help to make his thinking more palatable to orthodox Muslims, who believe that the whole person, body and mind, is resurrected and enjoys the afterlife. Consequently, Avicenna was attacked in the 12th century by the great Islamic theologian al-Ghazâlî, who called him a heretic for abandoning the central Islamic tenet of the resurrection of the dead. But in the same century Avicenna’s work was also translated into Latin, and his dualism became popular among Christian philosophers and theologians. They liked the way his interpretations of Aristotle’s texts made them easily compatible with the idea of an immortal soul.

**The ghost in the machine.**

One very strong objection to the dualism of Avicenna or Descartes is the argument used by Aquinas. He says that the self which thinks is the same as the self which feels sensations in the body. For instance, I do not just observe that there is  a pain in my leg, in the way that a sailor might notice a hole in his ship. The pain belongs to me as much as my thoughts about philosophy, or what I might have for lunch.

Most contemporary philosophers reject mind-body dualism, largely because of the increasing scientiﬁc knowledge of the brain. Avicenna and Descartes were both very interested in physiology and they produced scientiﬁc accounts of activities such as movement and sensation. But the process of rational thinking was inexplicable with the scientiﬁc tools of their times. We are now able to explain quite precisely how thinking goes on in different areas of the brain— though whether this means that we can explain thinking without reference to a self is not so clear.  An inﬂuential 20th-century British philosopher, Gilbert Ryle, caricatured the dualists’ self as “a ghost in the machine”, and tried to show that we can explain how human beings perceive and function within the world without resorting to this “ghost” of a self.

Today philosophers are divided between a small number of dualists, a larger number of thinkers who say that the mind is simply a brain, and the majority, who agree that thinking is the result of the physical activity of the brain, but still insist there is a distinction between the physical states of the brain (the gray matter, the neurons, and so on), and the thinking which derives from them. Many philosophers, especially continental European thinkers, still accept the results of Avicenna’s thought experiment in one central way. It shows, they say, that we each have a self with a ﬁrst-person view of the world (the “I”) that cannot be accommodated by the objective view of scientiﬁc theories.

**AVERROES (1126–1198)**

Ibn Rushd, known in Europe as Averroes, was born in 1126 in Cordoba, then part of Islamic Spain. He belonged to a family of distinguished lawyers and trained in law, science, and philosophy.  His friendship with another doctor and philosopher, Ibn Tufayl, led  to an introduction to the Caliph Abû Yacqûb Yûsuf, who appointed Averroes chief judge and later court physician. Abû Yacqûb  also shared Averroes’ interest in Aristotle, and commissioned him to write a series of paraphrases of all Aristotle’s works, designed for non-specialists such as himself.

Despite the increasingly liberal views of the Almohads, the public disapproved of Averroes’ unorthodox philosophy, and public pressure led to a banning of his books and personal exile in 1195. Reprieved two years later, Averroes returned to Cordoba but died the following year.

**A**verroes worked in the legal profession; he was a *qâdî*(an Islamic judge) who worked under the Almohads, one of the strictest Islamic regimes in the Middle Ages. Yet he spent his nights writing commentaries on the work of an ancient pagan philosopher, Aristotle—and one of Averroes’ avid readers was none other than the Almohad ruler, Abû Yacqûb Yûsuf. Averroes reconciles religion and philosophy through a hierarchical theory of society. He thinks that only the educated elite are capable of thinking philosophically, and everyone else should be obliged to accept the teaching of the Qur’an literally. Averroes does not think that the Qur’an provides a completely accurate account of the universe if read in this literal way, but says that it is a poetic approximation of the truth, and this is the most that the uneducated can grasp. However, Averroes believes that educated people have a religious obligation to use philosophical reasoning. Whenever reasoning shows the literal meaning of the Qur’an to be false, Averroes says that the text must be “interpreted”; that is to say the obvious meaning of the words should be disregarded and the scientiﬁc theory demonstrated by Aristotelian philosophy accepted in its place.

**The immortal intellect.**

Averroes is willing to sacriﬁce some widely-held Islamic doctrines in order to maintain the compatibility of philosophy and religion. For instance, almost all Muslims believe that the universe has a beginning, but Averroes agrees with Aristotle that it has always existed, and says that there is nothing in the Qur’an to contradict this view. However, the resurrection of the dead, a basic tenet of Islam, is harder to include within an Aristotelian universe. Averroes accepts that we must believe in personal immortality,  and that anyone who denies this is  a heretic who should be executed.  But he takes a different position from his predecessors by saying that Aristotle’s treatise *On the Soul* does not state that individual humans have immortal souls. According to Averroes’ interpretation, Aristotle claims that humanity is immortal only through a shared intellect. Averroes seems to be saying that there are truths discoverable by humans that hold good for ever, but that you and I as individuals will perish when our bodies die.

**Later Averroists.**

Averroes’ advocacy of Aristotelian philosophy (if only for the elite) was shunned by his fellow Muslims. But his works, translated into Hebrew and Latin, had enormous inﬂuence in the 13th and 14th centuries. Scholars who supported the opinions of Aristotle and Averroes became known as Averroists, and they included Jewish scholars such  as Moses of Narbonne, and Latin scholars such as Anicius Boethius and Siger of Brabant. The Latin Averroists acccepted Aristotle as interpreted by Averroes as the truth according to reason—despite also afﬁrming an apparently conﬂicting set of Christian “truths.” They have been described as advocating a “double truth” theory, but their view is rather that truth is relative to the context of enquiry.

**THOMAS AQUINAS  (С1225-1247)**

Thomas Aquinas was born in 1225 at Roccasecca in Italy. He studied at the University of Naples and then joined the Dominican order (a new, highly intellectual order of friars) against the wishes of his family. As a novitiate he studied in Paris and then in Cologne under the German Aristotelian theologian, Albert the Great. Returning to Paris, he became Master (professor) of theology, before leaving to travel around Italy teaching for 10 years. Unusually, Aquinas was then offered a second period of tenure as Master at Paris. In 1273 he experienced something that has been considered both some sort of vision and a possible stroke; after it, he said that all he had done was “mere straw”, and he never wrote again. He died at the age of 49, and was recognized as a saint by the Catholic Church in 1323.

**T**he opinions of people today are still divided into those that hold that the universe had a beginning, and those that hold that it has always existed. Today we tend to look to physics and astronomy for an answer, but  in the past this was a question for philosophers and theologians. The answer given by the Catholic priest and philosopher Thomas Aquinas, the most famous of all medieval Christian philosophers, is especially interesting. It is still a plausible way of thinking about the problem, and it also tells us a great deal about how Aquinas combined his faith with his philosophical reasoning, despite their apparent contradictions.

**Aristotle’s inﬂuence.**The central ﬁgure in Aquinas’s thinking is Aristotle, the ancient Greek philosopher whose work was intensively studied by medieval thinkers. Aristotle was certain that the universe has always existed, and that it has always been home to different things, from inanimate objects like rocks, to living species, such as humans, dogs, and horses. He argued that the universe is changing and moving, and this  can only be caused by change and motion. So there could never have been a ﬁrst change or motion: the universe must have been moving and changing for ever.

The great Arabic philosophers, Avicenna and Averroes, were willing to accept Aristotle’s view, even though it put them at odds with Islamic orthodoxy. Medieval Jewish and Christian thinkers, however, struggled to do so. They held that, according to the Bible, the universe has a beginning, so Aristotle must be wrong: the universe has not always existed. But was this view something that had to be accepted on faith, or could it be refuted by reasoning? John Philoponus, a Greek Christian writer of the 6th century, believed that he had found an argument to show that Aristotle must be wrong, and that the universe had not always existed. His reasoning was copied and developed by a number of thinkers in the 13th century, who needed to ﬁnd a ﬂaw in Aristotle’s reasoning in order to protect the teachings of the Church. Their line of argument was especially clever, because it took Aristotle’s own ideas about inﬁnity as a point of departure, but turned them against his view of  the universe as eternal. ‘

**An inﬁnity of humans.**

According to Aristotle, the inﬁnite is what has no limit. For instance, the sequence of numbers is inﬁnite, because for each number, there is another higher number that follows. Similarly, the universe has existed for an inﬁnite time, because for each day, there is a preceding day. In Aristotle’s opinion, however, this is a “potential” inﬁnity, as these days do not coexist at the same time;  an “actual” inﬁnity—in which an inﬁnite number of things all exist  at the same time—is impossible.

Philoponus and his 13th-century followers, however, think that this argument presents problems that Aristotle had not noticed. They point to the fact that he believes that all the types of living beings in the universe have always existed. If this were true, they say, it would mean that there were already an inﬁnite number of human beings by the time Socrates was born—because if they have always existed, they existed then. But since Socrates’ time, many more humans have been born, and so the number of humans born up until now must be greater than inﬁnity. But no number can  be greater than inﬁnity. In addition, these writers add, Christian thinkers believe that human souls are immortal. If this  is so, and an inﬁnite number of humans has already existed, there must be an inﬁnite number of human souls in existence now. So there is an actual inﬁnity of souls, not a potential inﬁnity; and Aristotle has said actual inﬁnity is impossible. With these two arguments, using Aristotle’s own principles as a starting point, Philoponus and his followers were conﬁdent they had demonstrated that the universe cannot always have existed.

Aristotle was therefore wrong; the universe is not eternal, and this ﬁts perfectly with the Christian doctrine that God created the world.

Aquinas has little time for this line of reasoning. He points out that the universe could have existed for ever but that species such as humans and other animals might have had a beginning. Despite his defence of Aristotle’s reasoning, Aquinas does not accept Aristotle’s assertion that the universe is eternal, because the Christian faith says otherwise; but he doesn’t think that Aristotle’s position is illogical. Aquinas wants  to show that the universe had a beginning—but he also wants  to show that there is no ﬂaw in Aristotle’s reasoning. He claims that his Christian contemporaries have confused two different points: the ﬁrst is that God created the universe, and the second is that the universe had a beginning. Aquinas set out to prove that in fact Aristotle’s position—that the universe has always existed— *could* be true, even if it is also true that God created the universe.

**Creating the eternal**

Aquinas steps away from Philoponus and his followers by insisting that although it is true, as the Bible says, that the universe had a beginning, this is not a necessary (undeniable) truth on logical grounds. As they all agree, God created the universe with a beginning, but he could just as easily have created an eternal one. If something is created by God, then it owes its whole existence to God, but that does not mean that there must have been a time when it did not exist at all. It is therefore quite possible to believe in an eternal universe that had been created by God.

**The role of philosophy**Today, we do not look to philosophy to tell us whether or not the universe has always existed, and most of us do not turn to the Bible, as Aquinas and other medieval philosophers did. Instead we look to physics,  in particular to the theory of the “Big Bang” proposed by modern scientists, including the British physicist and cosmologist Stephen Hawking. This theory states that the universe expanded from a state of extremely high temperature and density at a particular point in time. Though most of us now turn to science for an explanation of how the universe began, the arguments of Aquinas show that philosophy is still relevant to how we think about the subject. He demonstrates how philosophy can provide the tools for intelligent enquiry, allowing us to investigate not what happens to be the case, but what is possible and what is impossible, and what are intelligible questions to ask. Is it or is it not coherent to believe that the universe had a beginning? This is still a question for philosophers, and no amount of theoretical physics will be able to answer it.

**Summary**

1. Medieval philosophy is theocentric in its character.

2. During the decline of Greco-Roman civilization, Western philosophers turned their attention from the scientific investigation of nature and the search for happiness in this world, to the problem of salvation and life in another, better world.

3. By the 3rd century AD, Christianity had spread throughout the Roman Empire. The religious teachings of the Gospels were combined by the Fathers of the Church with many of the philosophical concepts of the Greeks and Roman schools.

4. The tendency of the philosophers during this period was to seek orthodoxy as well as truth. Nearly all medieval thinkers—Jewish, Christian, and Muslim—were determined to merge or synthesize philosophy with religion.

5. Islamic civilization performed the function of preserving the culture of classical antiquity, particularly the philosophy of Aristotle.

6. Their thoughts were more imposing than informative due to the prevalence and dominance of paganism and barbarianism.

7. Much of what we now regard as Christian doctrine had its origin in Greek and Hellenistic philosophy.

**Lecture 6.**

**Philosophy of the Renaissance**

**1. Premises of the Renaissance Philosophy**

**2. The New Idea of the Social Order: Machiavelli**

**3. Reformation and Renaissance**

**Main concepts:**anthropology, pantheism, theism, scholasticism, humanism, rhetoric, Reformation, indulgences.

In the two preceding lectures, we reviewed two significant periods of philosophy:

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| **Ancient philosophy** | **Medieval philosophy** |
| Cognition of nature (**philosophy of nature**) | Cognition of God (**theology**) |
| Human as a reasonable independent entity, (**anthropology**) | Human is created by God and depends on him (**theological anthropology**) |
| The nature and the gods are the one (**pantheism**) | God is the highest essence \\ He created the Earth  Nature is primitive (**theism**) |

For several centuries medieval philosophy reflected on God. These were dark ages for critical, scientific thinking. What was the reason for the emergence of a new worldview, which we call the Renaissance?

The **Medieval** worldview was drastically different from that of the **Renaissance** era.

In the Medieval period, feudalism was a way of life: there was no middle class. Instead, feudal Lords controlled the land, which was worked by peasants that were kept in poverty with no nope of owning anything or slipping away from the oppressive control of the nobility.

This was also a time of several plagues, which began in the fourteenth century. The Black Death, otherwise known as the Bubonic Plague, ravaged Europe several times. Perhaps this was the most devastating catastrophe that afflicted medieval society. In the span of three years, the Black Death killed one third of all the people in Europe.

This traumatic population change coming into the Late Medieval Ages caused great changes in European culture and lifestyle.

It can be argued that the most important element of the time was the Roman Catholic Church, which dominated everyday facet of life in medieval times. It was all things to all people. Tine Church provided care for the sick and the poor. In a time when education was limited to the wealthy, the Church was responsible for educating the peasant class. This education consisted of mostly information about religious themes, which were presented in the form of miracle and morality plays. The monks were also the keepers of history', and monasteries often housed libraries. Chaucer’s The Canterbury Tate’s tells on fictional characters going on a pilgrimage to a holy place, a common occurrence of the time. These trips allowed many (especially those with financial wherewithal) to travel to a shrine in order to atone for theirsins. Knights joined the Crusades for the same reason.

Ultimately, the Church became a world power because there was no separation of church and state, its control sketched from Italy to England. The influence of Catholicism shaped how people perceived their world and their place in the universe. The people’s ignorance allowed them led without question by clerics, and the era was dark and hopeless.

During these crises, the Church told the people that the Black Death was a punishment from God—that it was God's vengeance on sinners. This was a belief that servants of the Church perpetuated, creating an omnipresent sense of doom and human destruction.

**Several things took place that closed the door on the Middle Ages and prepared the way for the Renaissance.**

1. The plague's destruction of a third of Europe's population decimated the work force. Without people to work the land, feudalism began to crumble.
2. The presence of the Church diminished, especially as it was challenged Protestantism**.** Attempts to reform the Catholic Church and the development of Protestant Churches in western Europe are known as the Reformation.
3. Ultimately, Henry VIII, the King of England would cripple the power of the Roman Catholic Church in England, creating the Anglican Church over which he presided because he wanted a divorce that Rome would not grant him. His daughter Elizabeth I, would eventualy strongly encourage and support the Renaissance in England.

**The Renaissance** (meaning "renewa ") ushered in a new era of prosperity; education became more widely available, and interest in and production of new forms of the arts (drama, poetry, music, painting, and so on) were reborn and flourished. It began Italy, taking approximately a hundred years to spread to England.

Philosophers and writers challenged the ideas of the Church and presented new theories of the world and man's place in it. With toe passing of feudalism, a middle class was born, which consisted of merchants who made a great deal of money and changed the face of Europe. A poor man could now make a small profit and turn it into a fortune.

Having put the plagues and the Church's messages of doom and destruction behind them, those living during the Renaissance found hope in the transformation from the limited and controlled world they had once known, to a new age that promised opportunities and lifestyles never seen or experienced before.

At the beginning of the Renaissance, European scholars became more aware of the classical writings of the Greeks and Romans that Islamic cultures and isolated Jewish and European scholars had preserved. Many scholars considered these writings and philosophies superior to the current European literature. Classical writings suggested that life on Earth, during people’s lifetimes, had value. Before this, most people believed that preparing for the afterlife was more important than worrying about daily life in this world. Their studies of the ancient texts and their contacts with other cultures led academics to believe that humans had the potential to do great things as individuals and not be limited by the strict social roles of the Middle Ages. These new attitudes about individuals and their lives became the foundation of a philosophy called humanism. As the name suggests, humanism is all about the human. It focuses on human beings, their values, abilities, and individual worth, and human society as something valuable that could be improved.

Renaissance humanism challenged the worldview of the Middle Ages. Although humanists still maintained their faith and believed in an afterlife, they also felt their lives on Earth should be rich and fulfilled; those who could afford it surrounded themselves with beautiful art and architecture. They enjoyed discussing ideas and sharing philosophies. People began to see the possibilities of what they could achieve in life. Humanism led to new attitudes towards art, philosophy, and government. An important part of being a humanist was learning the ancient languages — Greek, Latin, and Hebrew. Scholars wanted to read the original classical documents to find out the truth for themselves and not just read the interpretations of translators.

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| **Medieval Philosophy** | **Renaissance Philosophy** |
| During the Middle Ages in Western and Central Europe, nature was seen as a purgatory or even a snare by the devil.  The heroes were monks who turned their eyes and souls toward heaven. | Renaissance Humanists and artists treated nature as a gift from God. |

The Renaissance—a cultural “rebirth” of extraordinary creativity in Europe—**began in 14th-century Florence**. It was to spread across Europe, lasting until the 17th century, and it is now viewed as the bridge between the medieval and modern periods. Marked by a renewed interest in the whole of Greek and Latin Classical culture—not just the philosophical and mathematical texts assimilated by medieval Scholasticism (**Scholasticism** was a theological methodology that focused primarily on the application of dialectic (logic) in order to weigh and judge the veracity of competing theological viewpoints, specifically those inherited by the Patristics or “Church Fathers”) — it was  a ***movement that viewed humans, not God, at its center***. This new **humanism** was reﬂected ﬁrst in the art and then the political and social structure of **Italian society**; republics such as Florence and Venice soon abandoned medieval feudalism in favor of plutocracies where commerce ﬂourished alongside the new scientiﬁc discoveries.

**There are three main reasons why the Renaissance was kick started in Italy.**

**Geographical Location:**

The city-states of Italy were situated upon peninsulas and islands which made trade very easy. It was spurred by the Crusades and led to the growth of large city-states in northern Europe. This meant that northern Italy was quite urban as compared to the rest of Europe which was still rural. Cities served as platforms to exchange ideas and proved to be a facilitator for an intellectual revolution. When the bubonic plague hit in the 1300s, economic changes were brought about. Because of the decreased amount of  laborers, survivors were in demand and could therefore demand higher wages. Merchants then began to pursue other interests (art) with fewer opportunities to expand.

**Greek & Roman Scholars:**

Scholars looked down upon the art and literature of the Middle Ages. They wanted to return to the learning of the Greeks and Romans. The artists and scholars of Italy drew inspiration from the ruins of Rome that surrounded them. The Western scholars also studied ancient Latin manuscripts that had been preserved in monasteries. Christian scholars in Constantinople also fled to Rome with Greek manuscripts when the Turks conquered Constantinople in 1453.

**Merchants and the Medici family:**

In each city-state, a wealthy merchant class developed. City-states such as Milan and Florence were quite small which meant more citizens could be involved in political life. Merchants did not inherit social rank like nobles did and had to use their wits and knowledge to succeed in business. They were extremely successful at politics too and as a result, successful merchants believed they deserved this power and wealth. They began to value individual achievement. With Florence in particular, the city-state had a republican form of government in the late 1200s. But during the beginnings of the Renaissance, Florence came to be under the rule of the powerful banking family - the Medici family. The family bank of Medici had offices throughout Italy and major cities of Europe. Cosimo de Medici was incredibly wealthy, not only as an Italian, but as a European. He won over Florence's government and influenced members of the ruling council by giving them loans. He served as the dictator for Florence for 30 years. After he died, his family continued to control Florence. The Medici family supported artists such as Michelangelo by sponsoring them.

**All in all, Italy was had the economic and political power to allow new ideas to sprout and trade to spur, this igniting the Renaissance as a movement.**

Many consider da Vinci to be the epitome of the “Renaissance man”—a Renaissance polymath, someone whose intellectual achievements and interests span a wide variety of fields in art, science, and literature. Along with Leonardo da Vinci other Renaissance figures such as Michelangelo, Galileo Galilei, and Copernicus are considered to embody the qualities and characteristics of a classic Renaissance man. Many of these men, including da Vinci, are also considered humanists, humanism having emerged as a significant intellectual movement during the Renaissance. Humanism developed as a reaction to the rigid and narrow teachings of medieval Scholasticism, which promoted the education of a small portion of the population in preparation for becoming doctors, lawyers, or theologians. The humanist movement emerged as an alternative path of education and civic engagement. It emphasized the benefits of creating a citizenry equipped with the ability to converse intelligently and participate in civic life toward the betterment of humankind. Humanists believed that the path to this could be found through study of the humanities—rhetoric, grammar, poetry, history, and moral philosophy. Humanist education was also deeply grounded in the restoration of classical texts, to be used as guides to moral philosophy.

Unsurprisingly, the ﬁrst truly Renaissance philosopher was a Florentine – **Niccolò Machiavelli** –and his philosophy marked a deﬁnitive movement from the theological to the political.

**The Prince**Machiavelli’s book *The Prince* was witty and cynical, and showed a great understanding of Italy in general and Florence in particular. In it, Machiavelli sets out his argument that the goals of a ruler justify the means used to obtain them. *The Prince* differed markedly from other books of its type in its resolute setting aside of Christian morality. Machiavelli wanted to give ruthlessly practical advice to a prince and, as his experience with extremely successful popes and cardinals had shown him, Christian values should be cast aside if they got in the way. Machiavelli’s approach centers on the notion of *virtù*, but this is not the modern notion of moral virtue. It shares more similarities with the medieval notion of virtues as the powers or functions of things, such as the healing powers of plants or minerals. Machiavelli is writing about the virtues of princes, and these were the powers and functions that concerned rule. The Latin root of *virtù* also relates it to manliness (as in “virile”), and this feeds into what Machiavelli has to say in  its application both to the prince himself and to the state—where sometimes *virtù* is used to mean “success”, and describes a state that is to be admired and imitated. Part of Machiavelli’s point is that a ruler cannot be bound by morality, but must do what it takes to secure his own glory and the success of the state over which he rules. But Machiavelli does not argue that the end justiﬁes the means in all cases. There are certain means that a wise prince must avoid, for though they might achieve the desired ends, they lay him open to future dangers. The main means to be avoided consist of those that would make the people hate their prince. They may love him, they may fear him— preferably both, Machiavelli says, though it is more important for a prince to be feared than to be loved. But the people must not hate him, for this is likely to lead to rebellion. Also, a prince who mistreats his people unnecessarily will be despised—a prince should have a reputation for compassion, not for cruelty. This might involve harsh punishment of a few in order to achieve general social order, which beneﬁts more people in the long run. In cases where Machiavelli does think that the end justiﬁes the means, this rule applies only  to princes. The proper conduct of citizens of the state is not at all the same as that of the prince. But even for ordinary citizens, Machiavelli generally disdains conventional Christian morality as being weak and unsuitable for a strong city.

**Prince or republic**There are reasons to suspect that *The Prince* does not represent Machiavelli’s own views. Perhaps the most important is the disparity between the ideas it contains and those expressed in his other main work, *Discourses on the Ten Books of Titus Livy*. In the *Discourses*Machiavelli argues that a republic is the ideal regime, and that it should be instituted whenever a reasonable degree of equality exists or can be established. A princedom is only suitable when equality does not exist in a state, and cannot be introduced. However, it can be argued that *The Prince*represents Machiavelli’s genuine ideas about how the ruler should rule in such cases; if princedoms are sometimes a necessary evil, it is best that they be ruled as well as possible. Moreover, Machiavelli did believe that Florence was in such political turmoil that it needed a strong ruler to get it into shape.

**Renaissance: From Italy with Love**

So the 14th century is Renaissance in Italy, but by the end of the 15th century, Renaissance ideas had spread across Europe and virtually eclipsed the Church’s monopoly of learning. Although Christian philosophers such as **Erasmus** and **Thomas More** had contributed to the arguments within the Church that had sparked the Reformation, a purely secular philosophy had yet to emerge.

The values of humanism spread from Italy to France, Germany, England, and the Netherlands around the end of the fifteenth century. One of the greatest humanist scholars was the Dutch cleric **Desiderius Erasmus** (1466–1536), who had been trained in a monastery and had taken his orders as a priest. Displeased with the monastery's scholastic approach to education, Erasmus went to Paris to teach. He eventually became a professor of Greek at Cambridge University in England. His best-known writings were about Christianity. Like Petrarch, he believed that scholastics had corrupted the faith, making doctrines too complicated to be useful in everyday life. His book *In Praise of Folly* (1509) is a criticism of the clergy and scholars of his day. In this and many other works he captivated the reading public with his common sense and his practical application of humanist theory to real life. When Martin Luther's (1483–1546) Protestant reforms spread in the 1520s many colleagues thought Erasmus would join the efforts to form a new Christian church. But Erasmus remained a loyal Catholic, believing reforms should be undertaken within the church.

Erasmus's good friend, English writer and statesman **Thomas More** (1478–1535), shared his frustration with the corruption in religion and politics. More's greatest work, *Utopia* (1516), was based on the Greek philosopher Plato's (c. 428–c. 348 bce) classic work *The Republic*, which attempts to determine the traits of a perfect state. ***Utopia*** describes an imaginary land noticeably lacking the greed and violence common to Europe. Contrasting contemporary England to the ideal world of his book, More demonstrates a more reasonable way to live, in which the government functions to increase human happiness. Like Erasmus, More had no trouble reconciling his Catholic faith with the teachings of the ancient Greeks.

**Utopia**       Represent ways of finding the ideal form of government and society. Term originate with Renaissance thinker Sir Thomas More. The term originally meant “no place” or the “place that doesn’t exist. Associated with the term utopia, there is also the concept of negative utopias - Dystopia, that is grim alternative futures or catastrophes that destroy civilization.

**Utopia** contrasts the contentious social life of European states with the perfectly orderly, reasonable social arrangements of Utopia and its environs (Tallstoria, Nolandia, and Aircastle). In Utopia, there are no lawyers because of the laws' simplicity and because social gatherings are in public view (encouraging participants to behave well), communal ownership supplants private property, men and women are educated alike, and there is almost complete religious toleration (except for atheists, who are allowed but despised). More may have used monastic communalism (rather than the biblical communalism in the Acts of the Apostles) as his model, although other concepts such as legalizing euthanasia remain far outside Church doctrine. Hythlodaeus asserts that a man who refuses to believe in a god or an afterlife could never be trusted, because he would not acknowledge any authority or principle outside himself. Some take the novel's principal message to be the social need for order and discipline rather than liberty. Ironically, Hythlodaeus, who believes philosophers should not get involved in politics, addresses More's ultimate conflict between 0his humanistic beliefs and courtly duties as the King's servant, pointing out that one day those morals will come into conflict with the political reality.

The Renaissance produced the Humanists who were a movement of educationalists and scholars, they sought truth and knowledge by re-examining classical texts and the bible. The Humanists ideas, the growth in textual analysis, and the Northern Renaissance changed the intellectual landscape and encouraged many Church reformers, such as Martin Luther and they later broke with Rome and divided Europe into two confessional camps, Protestantism and Catholicism.

**What was the Reformation?**

The Reformation is the schism that divided the Roman Catholic Church and ended the old unity of Christendom. The origins of the Reformation were in an attempt to reform the Church, there had been many attempts in the past to reform the Church but they had all failed. By the early sixteenth century there was a growing crescendo of calls for the reform of the Church and for an end to the immorality and corruption of the clergy. The Reformation was not an attempt to divide the Roman Catholic Church but it was an effort to reform it. The failure of the Catholic Church to reform and its attempts to suppress the Reformers meant that it drove many to establish their own churches. The Reformation was an attempt to return to the original teachings and values of the early or ‘Apostolic’ Church.It claimed that only the bible could teach and instruct men about the Word of God and had little regard for the received wisdom and authority.

Anything that was not in the Bible was not to be regarded as the Word of God and should be rejected. The Reformation placed more emphasis on the individual and in the words of Luther, people could not be saved by good works or sacrament but by ‘faith alone.’ This meant that the reformers rejected much of the traditional teachings of the Church. This resulted in at first a theological dispute between the reformers and the Church, especially in Germany, that later led to a schism in the Catholic Church and the formation of separate Protestant Churches. The causes of the Reformation were manifold but the Renaissance and the Humanist movement were crucial and indeed decisive.

The humanists employed their textual analysis and techniques to the Bible and other works and they made some astonishing discoveries and they provided evidence that undermined the claims of the Catholic Church. Ironically, a humanist employed by the Pope, was one of the first to discredit the traditional authority of the Papacy in the Renaissance. The Pope was not just a spiritual leader but he claimed to have real political power. The Pontiffs were masters of the Papal States in central Italy and many even believed that the monarchs of Europe were subject to their judgment. This was based on the Donation of Constantine, a document from the first Christian Emperor, which purported to show that he had bequeathed his authority to the Popes.

This document was used to justify the Pope’s temporal power. An Italian humanist named Lorenzo Valla began to study this document historically and he found that it was written in a style of Latin that was from the 8th century and long after the death of Constantine. Valla showed that the document was a forgery. This and other revelations, at a time when the Papacy was very corrupt, helped to weaken the authority of the Pope and did much to embolden reformers to challenge the Church. Erasmus did much to discredit the traditional theology of the Church when he discovered that the words in the Catholic bible in relation to the Trinity (that God has three persons) was not in the earliest versions. He argued that the Catholic Church had added the words to support some statements that had been agreed at a Church Council in the Roman era. Once again, by returning to the original sources a medieval corruption was discovered and old assumptions proven to be false and this weakened the position of the Catholic Church.

After the humanists’ revelations, many of the faithful began to wonder if the Pope. ‘as the heir of St Peter’ was actually infallible and should he be rendered unquestioned obedience. The reformers under the influence of the Humanists began to examine the Bible, which they saw as the unquestioned Word of God, in order to find answers. They became less inclined to take the words of the Pope as law and argued that only the Bible was the source of authority. They too like the Humanists decided to go back to the ‘sources’ in this case the Bible. They eventually came to see the Bible as the only source of authority and increasingly began to view the Pope and the Catholic Church as having distorted the message of the Gospels.This belief soon gained widespread currency among many Reformers and those sympathetic to them in Germany and elsewhere.

During his lifetime, the Western Church was raising money to rebuild St. Peter’s Basilica in Rome. That in itself was a pretty well thought out plan. The Roman Church taught that in order to be justified before God, you have to do charitable deeds. That too is a pretty well thought out piece of theology and many Christians believe this today (and many who don’t, do charitable deeds anyways because charitable deeds are just good overall). The problem with this is that the church said that if you donated money to the church, you could buy forgiveness from God in the form of what is called “indulgences”.

Many people today can see the problem here. The pope was one of the richest people in the world at the time and he even controlled a huge section of land in Italy and France, yet instead of paying for the Basilica himself, he got the poor people to give him money for forgiveness.

**The methods by which they collected money were intolerable to Martin Luther.**

**Martin Luther - 1483-1546**

- Monk

- Teacher

- Faith alone was the key to salvation (BIG IDEA)

- Famous work: The 95 Theses

**Luther’s 95 Theses**

- Attack against the “pardon-merchants”

- Outraged against Indulgences ◦ “A pardon releasing a person from punishments due for a sin”

- Posted the 95 Theses on the door of Wittenberg church

**Martin Luther** argued that the pope has no authority to give forgiveness and that the indulgences are a highly corrupt practice. Additionally he argued that forgiveness and justification for sins can only be given by God through faith in Jesus Christ.

Of course the indulgences were only 1 of numerous corrupt practices in the Catholic church that Martin Luther noticed.

Martin Luther being an educated priest not only knew how to write but he also knew how to read Latin and Hebrew, the languages that the Bible was originally written in. Most people at the time couldn’t read for themselves, so instead they just took the priests word for it and assumed that everything the priest said was in the Bible. Martin Luther compared the facts in the Bible to what the church officials at the time were saying and found numerous differences.

Martin Luther then took all of the ideas and wrote them down in a letter we now know as the Ninety-Five Theses. While we cannot be sure, legend has it that Martin Luther went to a major church and nailed a printed copy of his theses on the door.

In addition to his theses, Martin ended up translating the Bible from Latin and Hebrew into German so that everyone could read it for themselves. He then went to numerous towns and handed out copies of his theses and the Bible so that there were many copies.

**Repercussions of Luther’s Actions - Excommunicated by Pope Leo X (1520)**

**Luther’s 3 Main Ideas**

* 1. “People could win salvation only by faith in God’s gift of forgiveness. The Church taught that faith and good works were needed for salvation.”
* 2. “All Church teachings should be clearly based on the word of the Bible. Both the pope and Church traditions were false authorities.”
* 3. “All people with faith were equal. Therefore, people did not need priests to interpret the Bible for them.”

So, what in general became the cause of the **Reformation**

**Secularization and importance of individual challenged the power of the Church**

- Printing press spread secular ideas across Europe (Gutenberg)

- Merchants sick of paying church taxes to Rome

- Church corruption - Lead to reform (changes)

- Clergy was poorly educated (some could barely read)

Many people agreed with him about the problems in the Catholic church and protested against the church. This is why one of the religious denominations of Christianity is called **Protestantism**

**Lecture7**

**The Age of Reason**

**(17th-18th century )**

**1.      The main features of the Age of Reason**

**2.      Rationalism vs. Empiricism - two major theories of thought**

**3.      Philosophy of Francis Bacon**

**4.      Philosophy of Rene Descartes**

**5.      Philosophy of Thomas Hobbes**

**6.      Philosophy of Benedictus Spinoza**

**The Age of Reason**The ﬁnal nail in the cofﬁn of the Church’s authority came from science. First Nicolaus Copernicus, then Johannes Kepler, and ﬁnally Galileo Galilei showed that the Ptolemaic model of the universe with Earth at its center was mistaken, and their demonstrations overturned centuries of Christian teaching. The Church fought back, ultimately imprisoning Galileo for heresy, but advances in all the sciences soon followed those in astronomy, providing alternative explanations for the workings of the universe, and a basis for a new kind of philosophy. The victory of rational, scientiﬁc discovery over Christian dogma epitomized the thinking of the 17th century. British philosophers, notably Francis Bacon and Thomas Hobbes, took the lead in integrating scientiﬁc and philosophical reasoning. It was the beginning of a period that became known as the Age of Reason, which produced the ﬁrst great “modern” philosophers and revived the connection between philosophy and science, especially mathematics, that dated back to pre-Socratic Greece.

The Renaissance was a rediscovery of classical philosophical ideas re-applied and sparked explosive progress in natural philosophy (what would today be science) and consequently the material well being of all people. Driven by the application of reason to three of the five branches of philosophy, The Renaissance was a true ‘rebirth’ of reason. In epistemology, Renaissance thinkers knew that science could determine things about the truth that religions or ancient authority figures like Aristotle and Galen could not. Galileo famously implored his detractors to “close the books they had, and read instead the books of nature” (Galileo - Letters) In metaphysics, Renaissance thinkers applied reason to questions of existence, learning that existence was objective and understandable through logic and rationality. In aesthetics, Renaissance artists realized the practical value of beauty and celebrating a good existence objectively in high art, from courageous soldiers to idealized human forms.

**1.      The main features of the Age of Reason**

**a)      The Age of Reason was the age of the Scientific Revolution**

The term "Scientific Revolution" is a modern one. Most Early Modern scholars called themselves "**natural philosophers**" rather than "scientists." Both science was not the independent practice it is today. Much of what we know as science originally belonged to the study of philosophy and theology, and most often was carried out under Church or court patronage.

The Scientific Revolution was not a revolution in the sense of a sudden eruption ushering in radical change, but a century-long process of discovery in which scientists built on the findings of those who had come before — from the scientific achievements of the ancient Greeks to the scholarly contributions of Islamic thinkers, to the work of certain late-medieval and early-Renaissance Europeans. The expanding economy of the Age of Discovery represented another significant impulse, in that the need for better navigation, time-keeping, and naval engineering pushed Europeans to pose new questions and, in turn, devise new methods to solve them.

**Pre-Scientific Revolution thinking**

The law of hypotheses: human limitations of knowledge led to human inability to know the whole truth. Hypotheses were the best humans could achieve in understanding the world. But what Galileo and others tried to demonstrate was that human observations conveyed truth.

**Mathematics** becomes the Fundamental science. The truth of God could be found in math.

Implied in the Hermetic theory is independent search for truth instead of accepting established truth; mathematics enabled independent thinking beyond a mere reading of the scriptures. Mathematical conclusion can be publicly arrived at and publicly demonstrated, encouraging social consensus.

**The new scientific ways of thinking of the universe**

The main contributions to new scientific ways of thinking of the universe were made by Copernicus, Brahe, Kepler, Galileo, and Newton.

**Copernicus**: changed the view of the universe from geo-centric to helio-centric. Earth moved in perfect circles around sun. Earth’s self-rotation.

**Kepler**: Three laws of planetary motion: challenging the view of a harmonious universe through the perfect circles of the stars’ movements, and through the constant speed of these movements.

**Galileo**: telescope to see the moon; inertia: contradicts the traditional belief that objects are naturally at rest; the state of motion is just as natural as the state of rest.

**Newton**: Universal law of gravity; calculus; nature of light; mathematical rules of the three laws of motion: inertia, acceleration, action and reaction; the universe was infinite and had no center.

The theories of all these scientists define**the Copernican-Newtonian paradigm:**The new universe is Helio-centric, instead of centered around the earth. The earth revolved around the sun in an elliptic circle at different speeds from different distances, which also followed mathematical rules. The stars were made of matter just like the earth and had imperfect surfaces.

**.**

**The Copernican-Newtonian paradigm**

-          Earth & other planets revolved around sun

-          The universe is infinite

-          God created the universe, science defined it;

-          After creation, God retreated to backstage and allowed the laws to run on their own.

-          science is a body of laws created by God to govern the universe

-           Mathematics and observations constituted science many more heavenly bodies than previously assumed.

-          A world of motion, not just a static one.

**Deism**: an influential interpretation of Christianity in the 17th to 18th centuries.

Deists believed in the existence of God, but they usually thought very highly of human beings, who could either share in the power of God, or exercise an active role in the world while God retreated to the backstage.

**Comparative table of basic philosophical concepts**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Medieval philosophy** | **Renaissance** | **The age of Reason** |
| Sources of knowledge | Religion was the only valid sources of knowledge.  Science and reason were not valid ways of finding things out about the world. | Religion and nature were the both valid sources of knowledge | Science and reason and Religion in some waywere valid sources of knowledge |
| The type of religion | Theism - the belief in one God as the creator and ruler of the universe, without rejection of revelation | Pantheism - The belief that God and nature are one and the same. | Deism - The belief in the existence of a God or supreme being but a denial of revealed religion, basing one’s belief on the light of nature and reason.  Deists recognized only a distant God, uninvolved in the daily life of man.  Gradually, highly educated Protestants & Catholics thought more about God’s work as revealed through science, rather than through the Scriptures. |
| Stages of scientific development | Based on theology and Aristotle | Based on Hermetic theory: a divine spirit present in all the material things in the world. And the job of the natural philosopher was to capture these divine messages. | A completely **secular**approach to science, treating the world as consisting of a rational, knowable order.  (Secularity is the state of being separate from religion) |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |

The development of scientific discoveries were justified and facilitated by scientific philosophy or methods.

**2.      Two major theories of thought: Rationalism vs. Empiricism**

**Rationalism**

Rationalism is a school of thought that began with Descartes (1596-1650) whose work began the ‘Age of Reason’ a period that loosely covers the whole of the 17th Century. Other important thinkers of the time include Leibniz (1646-1716) and Spinoza (1632-1677). Essentially, rationalists believe that (some) knowledge can be acquired through reason alone or, to put it another way, you can come to know about the world by thinking about it. Thinking about the world logically allows you to construct a complete system or entire set of rules that explain everything.

Rationalists tended to believe that knowledge is a bit like maths and that, by thinking clearly enough about things, you can come to know everything without ever having to actually look at the world. As a result rationalists believed in a priori knowledge, knowledge that comes before experience. Take the example of 2+2 = 4. Once you know what the terms mean you can figure out that 2+2 = 4 without actually having to do experiments on 2s and 4s and +s … you just know because 2 ‘means’ the thing that, when you add it to another 2, gives you 4. And you will just know that 4-2 = 2, in exactly the same way.

**Empiricism**

Like the rationalists the empiricists believe in the importance of reason and both groups contain scientists but empiricists believe that reason alone is not enough and that you need to provide your reason with material to work on which you can only acquire through your senses. As such, for the empiricists, perception is the source of all knowledge and reason just works on the evidence or perception that perception provides.

Therefore, while rationalists tended to think that all knowledge was like Maths and that it could be known a priori (before experience), empiricists to believe that all knowledge was more like science and that things could only be know a posteriori, i.e. after or through experience. As such, in order to find out about the world you have to conduct a series of experiments on it and then use reason to work out what those results mean. John Locke (1632-1704), the first British empiricist, argued that nothing could be known before experience and that a baby was like a ‘blank slate’ that had to be filled up with information by experience.

Other important empiricists were Berkeley (1685-1753) and Hume (1711-1776). Berkeley in particular took Locke’s idea further and argued that if all knowledge comes from perceptions which in turn create ideas then the only thing that we can really be sure about existing are the sensations or ideas themselves. So, for example, imagine perceiving an apple. Usually we believe that the idea in our head of an apple matches a real apple out there in the world but Berkeley said you that you have no reason to conjure up this mysterious apple ‘out there in the world’. The real apple is the idea, the one in your head and that’s all we can ever really mean by an apple. This position is called idealism (sometimes phenomenalism) because at the end of the day everything is basically just an idea (or collection of phenomena) in our heads. Needless to say there are huge problems with this and many subsequent philosophers have disagreed with Berkeley’s position here.

**3.      The philosophy of Francis Bacon**

One of the main figure of the Age of Reason was Francis Bacon

**FRANCIS BACON (1561–1626)** «Knowledge is power»

Born in London, Francis Bacon was educated privately, before being sent to Trinity College, Cambridge, at the age of 12. After graduation, he started training as a lawyer, but abandoned his studies to take up a diplomatic post in France. His father’s death in 1579 left him impoverished, forcing him to return to the legal profession. Bacon was elected to parliament in 1584, but his friendship with the treasonous Earl of Essex held back his political career until the accession of James I in 1603. In 1618, he was appointed Lord Chancellor, but was dismissed two years later, when he was convicted of accepting bribes.

Bacon spent the rest of his life writing and carrying out his scientiﬁc work. He died from bronchitis, contracted while stufﬁng a chicken with snow, as part of an experiment in food preservation.

**B**acon is often credited with being the ﬁrst in a tradition of thought known as British empiricism, which **is characterized by the view that all knowledge must come ultimately from sensory experience**. He was born at a time when there was a shift from the Renaissance preoccupation with the rediscovered achievements of the ancient world toward a more scientiﬁc approach to knowledge. There had already been some innovative work by Renaissance scientists such as the astronomer Nicolaus Copernicus and the anatomist Andreas Vesalius, but this new period-called the Scientiﬁc Revolution—produced an astonishing number of scientiﬁc thinkers, including Galileo Galilei, William Harvey, Robert Boyle, Robert Hooke, and Isaac Newton. Although the Church had been broadly welcoming to science for much of the medieval period, this was halted by the rise of opposition to the Vatican’s authority during the Renaissance. Several religious reformers, such as Martin Luther, had complained that the Church had been too lax in countering scientiﬁc challenges to accounts of the world based on the Bible.  In response, the Catholic Church, which had already lost adherents to Luther’s new form of Christianity, changed its stance and turned against scientiﬁc endeavor. This opposition, from both sides of the religious divide, hampered the development of the sciences.

Bacon claims to accept the teachings of the Christian Church. But he also argues that science must be separated from religion,  in order to make the acquisition of knowledge quicker and easier, so that it can be used to improve the quality of people’s lives. Bacon stresses this transforming role for science. One of his complaints is that science’s ability to enhance human existence had previously been ignored, in favor of a focus on academic and personal glory. Bacon presents a list of the psychological barriers to pursuing scientiﬁc knowledge in terms that he calls collectively the “**idols of  the mind**.”

These are :

-          the “idols of the tribe” - the tendency of human beings as a species (or “tribe”) to generalize;

-          the “idols of the cave”, the human tendency to impose preconceptions on nature rather than to see what is really there;

-          the “idols of the marketplace”, our tendency to let social conventions distort our experience;

-          the “idols of the theater”, the distorting inﬂuence of prevailing philosophical and scientiﬁc dogma.

The scientist, according to Bacon, must battle against all these handicaps to gain knowledge of the world.

**Scientiﬁc method**

Bacon goes on to argue that the advancement of science depends on formulating laws of ever-increasing generality. He proposes a scientiﬁc method that includes a variation of this approach. Instead of making  a series of observations, such as instances of metals that expand when heated, and then concluding that heat must cause all metals to expand, he stresses the need to test a new theory by going on to look for negative instances—such as metals not expanding when  they are heated. Bacon’s inﬂuence led to a focus on practical experimentation in science. He was, however, criticized for neglecting the importance of the imaginative leaps that drive all scientiﬁc progress

**Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679)**

**Man is a machine**

Orphaned in infancy, Thomas Hobbes was fortunately taken in by a wealthy uncle, who offered him a good education. A degree from the University of Oxford earned him the post of tutor to the sons of the Earl of Devonshire. This job gave Hobbes the opportunity to travel widely throughout Europe, where he met noted scientists and thinkers, such as the Italian astronomer Galileo Galilei as well as the French philosophers Marin Mersenne, Pierre Gassendi, and René Descartes. In 1640, Hobbes ﬂed to France to escape the English Civil War, staying there for 11 years. His ﬁrst book, *De Cive*, was published in Paris in 1642. But it was his ideas on morality, politics, and the functions of society and the state, set out in *Leviathan*, that made him famous.

Also respected as a skilled translator and mathematician, Hobbes continued to write until his death at the age of 91.

Hobbes is best known for his political philosophy, he wrote on a wide range of subjects. Many of his views are controversial, not least his defence of physicalism—the theory that everything in the world is exclusively physical in nature, allowing no room for the existence of other natural entities, such as the mind, or for supernatural beings. According to Hobbes, all animals, including humans, are nothing more than ﬂesh-and-blood machines. The kind of metaphysical theory that Hobbes favors was becoming increasingly popular at the time of his writing, in the mid-17th century. Knowledge in the physical sciences was growing rapidly, bringing clearer explanations of phenomena that had long been obscure or misunderstood. Hobbes had met the Italian astronomer Galileo, frequently regarded as the “father of modern science”, and had been closely associated with Francis Bacon, whose thinking had helped to revolutionize scientiﬁc practice. In science and mathematics, Hobbes saw the perfect counter to the medieval Scholastic philosophy that had sought to reconcile the apparent contradictions between reason and faith. In common with many thinkers of his time, he believed there was no limit to what science could achieve, taking it as a matter of fact that any question about the nature of the world could be answered with a scientiﬁcally formulated explanation.

**Hobbes’ theory**

In *Leviathan*, his major political work, Hobbes proclaims: “The universe—that is, the whole mass of things that are—is corporeal, that is to say, body.” He goes on to say that each of these bodies has “length, breadth, and depth”, and “that which is not body is no part of the universe.” Although Hobbes is stating that the nature of everything is purely physical, he is not claiming that because of this physicality everything can be perceived by us. Some bodies or objects, Hobbes declares, are imperceptible, even though they occupy physical space and have physical dimensions. These, he calls “spirits.” Some of them, labelled “animal spirits” (in line with a common view at the time) are responsible for most animal, and especially human, activity. These animal spirits move around the body, carrying with them and passing on information, in much the same way as we now think of the nervous system doing.

Sometimes, Hobbes seems to apply his concept of physical spirits to God and other entities found in religion, such as angels. However, he does state that God himself, but not other physical spirits, should be described as “incorporeal.” For Hobbes, the divine nature of God’s attributes is not something that the human mind is capable of fully understanding, therefore the term “incorporeal” is the only one that recognizes and also honors the unknowable substance of God. Hobbes does make clear, however, that he believes the existence and nature of all religious entities are matters for faith, not science, and that God, in particular, will remain beyond our comprehension. All it is possible for human beings to know about God is that he exists, and that he is the ﬁrst cause, or creator, of everything in the universe.

**Descartes’ dualism**

Hobbes also had to contend with the very different thinking about mind and body that Descartes set out in his *Meditations*of 1641. Descartes argues for the “Real Distinction” between mind and body—the notion that they are utterly distinct sorts of substance. Hobbes in his book *De Corpore* rejects the conclusion Descartes came to—that mind and body are two distinct substances—on the basis that Descartes’ use of the phrase “incorporeal substance” is an example of insigniﬁcant or empty language. Hobbes takes it to mean “a body without body”, which appears to be nonsense. However, this deﬁnition must be based upon his own view that all substances are bodies; so what Hobbes appears to present as an argument for his position that  there can be no incorporeal minds, in fact depends upon his inaccurate assumption that the only form of substance is body, and that there  is no possibility of incorporeal things existing at all.

**Social Philosophy**

Leviathan - explaining the creation and preservation of an authoritative government. Within Leviathan, Hobbes discusses the nature of man, the state of nature, the social contract, the laws of nature, political power, liberty and law, and the sovereign power. It is the most logical, systematic treatise in British political theory. Concerns the structure of society.

Hobbes rejects free will in favor of **determinism** (**Determinism** is the philosophical proposition that every event, decision and action is causally determined by an unbroken chain of prior occurrences. This does not necessarily mean that humans have no influence on the future and its events (a position more correctly known as **Fatalism**), but that the level to which humans have influence over their future is itself dependent on present and past).

He says that men in a **state of nature**, that is a state without civil government, are in a **war of all against all**in which life is hardly worth living. He believed that humans were basically selfish creatures who would do anything to better their position. People should not be trusted to make their own decisions. The way out of this desperate state is to make a **social contract** and establish the state to keep order and peace. Because of his view of how nasty life is without the state, Hobbes subscribes to a very **authoritarian** version of the social contract. Despite his distrust of democracy, Hobbes believed that a diverse group of representatives presenting the problems of the common person would prevent a king from being cruel and unfair.

**Rene Descartes (1596–1650)**

**I think therefore I am**

René Descartes was born near Tours, France, and was educated at the Jesuit Collège Royale, in La Flèche. Due to ill-health, he was allowed to stay in bed until late in the mornings, and he formed the habit of meditating. From the age of 16 he concentrated on studying mathematics, breaking off his studies for four years to volunteer as a soldier in Europe’s Thirty Years War. During this time he found his philosophical calling, and after leaving the army, he settled ﬁrst in Paris and then in the Netherlands, where he spent most of the rest of his life. In 1649 he was invited to Sweden by Queen Christina to discuss philosophy; he was expected to get up very early, much against his normal practice. He believed that this new regime—and the Swedish climate—caused him  to contract pneumonia, of which he died a year later.

**R**ené Descartes lived in the early 17th century, during a period sometimes called the Scientiﬁc Revolution, an era of rapid advances in the sciences. The British scientist and philosopher Francis Bacon had established a new method for conducting scientiﬁc experiments, based on detailed observations and deductive reasoning, and his methodologies had provided a new framework for investigating the world. Descartes shared his excitement and optimism, but for different reasons. Bacon considered the practical applications of scientiﬁc discoveries to be their whole purpose and point, whereas Descartes was more fascinated by the project of extending knowledge and understanding of the world.

In the *Meditations on First Philosophy*, Descartes’ most accomplished and rigorous work  on **metaphysics** (the study of being and reality) and **epistemology** (the study of the nature and limits of knowledge), he seeks to demonstrate the possibility of knowledge even from the most skeptical of positions, and from this, to establish a ﬁrm foundation for the sciences. The *Meditations* is written in the ﬁrstperson form—“I think…”—because he is not presenting arguments in order to prove or disprove certain statements, but instead wishes to lead the reader along the path that he himself has taken. In this way the reader is forced to adopt the standpoint of the meditator, thinking things through and discovering the truth just as Descartes had done. This approach is reminiscent of  the Socratic method, in which the philosopher gradually draws out a person’s understanding rather than presenting it already packaged and ready to take away.

**The illusory world**

In order to establish that his beliefs have stability and endurance, which Descartes takes to be two important marks of knowledge, he uses what is known as “the method of doubt.” This starts with the meditator setting aside any belief whose truth can be doubted, whether slightly  or completely. Descartes’ aim is  to show that, even if we start from the strongest possible skeptical position, doubting everything, we can still reach knowledge. The doubt is “hyperbolic” (exaggerated), and used only as a philosophical tool; as Descartes points out: “no sane person has ever seriously doubted these things.” Descartes starts by subjecting his beliefs to a series of increasingly rigorous skeptical arguments, questioning how we can be sure  of the existence of anything at all. Could it be that the world we know is just an illusion? We cannot trust our senses, as we have all been “deceived” by them at one time or another, and so we cannot rely on them as a sure footing for knowledge. Perhaps, he says, we are dreaming, and the apparently real world is no more than a dream world. He notes that this is possible, as there are no sure signs between being awake or asleep. But even so, this situation would leave open the possibility that some truths, such as mathematical axioms, could be known, though not through the senses. But even these “truths” might not in fact be true, because God, who is all-powerful, could deceive us even at this level. Even though we believe that God is good, it is possible that he made us in such a way that we are prone to errors in our reasoning. Or perhaps there is no God—in which case we are even more likely to be imperfect beings (having arisen only by chance) that are capable of being deceived all the time. Having reached a position in which there seems to be nothing  at all of which he can be certain, Descartes then devises a vivid tool to help him to avoid slipping back into preconceived opinion: he supposes that there is a powerful and evil demon who can deceive him about anything. When he  ﬁnds himself considering a belief, he can ask: “Could the demon be making me believe this even though it was false?” and if the answer is “yes” he must set aside the belief as open to doubt. At this point, it seems as though Descartes has put himself into an impossible position—nothing seems beyond doubt, so he has no solid ground on which to stand. He describes himself as feeling helplessly tumbled around by a whirlpool of universal doubt, unable to ﬁnd his footing. Skepticism seems to have made it impossible for him even to begin his journey back to knowledge and truth.

**The First Certainty**It is at this point that Descartes realizes that there is one belief that he surely cannot doubt: his belief in his own existence. Each of us can think or say: “I am, I exist”, and while we are thinking or saying it we cannot be wrong about it. When Descartes tries to apply the evil demon test to this belief, he realizes that the demon could only make him believe that he exists if he does in fact exist; how can he doubt his existence unless he exists in order to do the doubting? This axiom—“I am, I exist”— forms Descartes’ First Certainty.  In his earlier work, the *Discourse on the Method*, he presented it as: “I think therefore I am”, but he abandoned this wording when  he wrote the *Meditations*, as the inclusion of “therefore” makes the statement read like a premise and conclusion. Descartes wants the reader—the meditating “I”—to realize that as soon as I consider the fact that I exist, I know it to be true. This truth is instantly grasped. The realization that I exist is a direct intuition, not the conclusion of an argument. Despite Descartes’ move to a clearer expression of his position, the earlier formulation was so catchy that it stuck in people’s minds, and to this day the First Certainty is generally known as “the cogito”, from the Latin *cogito ergo sum*, meaning “I think therefore I am.”

What use, though, is a single belief? The simplest logical argument is a syllogism, which has two premises and a conclusion—such as: all  birds have wings; a robin is a bird; therefore all robins have wings. We surely cannot get anywhere from the starting point of just one true belief. But Descartes was not looking to reach these kinds of conclusions from his First Certainty. As he explained: “Archimedes  used to demand just one ﬁrm and immovable point in order to shift the entire Earth.” For Descartes, the certainty of his own existence gives him the equivalent; it saves him from that whirlpool of doubt, gives him a ﬁrm foothold, and so allows him to start on the journey back from skepticism to knowledge. It is crucial to his project of enquiry, but it is not the foundation of his epistemology.

**What is this “I”?**

Despite the fact that the First Certainty’s main function is to provide a ﬁrm footing for knowledge, Descartes realizes that we might also be able to gain knowledge from the certainty itself. This is because the knowledge that I am thinking is bound up with the knowledge of my existence. So “thinking” is also something that  I cannot rationally doubt, for doubting is a kind of thinking, so  to doubt that I am thinking is to  be thinking. As Descartes now knows that he exists and that he  is thinking, then he—and every other meditator—also knows  that he is a thinking thing.

**Doubting Descartes**

This First Certainty has been the target of criticism from many writers who hold that Descartes’ approach to skepticism is doomed from the start. One of the main arguments against it takes issue with the very use of the term “I” in “I am, I exist.” Although Descartes cannot be wrong in saying that thinking is occurring, how does he know that there is “a thinker”—a single, uniﬁed consciousness doing that thinking? What gives him the right to assert the existence of anything beyond the thoughts? On the other hand, can we make sense of the notion of thoughts ﬂoating around without a thinker? It is difﬁcult to imagine detached, coherent thoughts, and Descartes argues that it is impossible to conceive of such a state of affairs. However, if one were to disagree, and believe that a world of thoughts with no thinkers is genuinely possible, Descartes would not be entitled to the belief that he exists, and would thus fail to reach his First Certainty. The existence of thoughts would not give him the solid ground he needed. The problem with this notion  of thoughts ﬂoating around with  no thinker is that reasoning would be impossible. In order to reason,  it is necessary to relate ideas in  a particular way. For example, if Patrick has the thought “all men  are mortal” and Patricia has the thought “Socrates is a man”,  neither can conclude anything.  But if Paula has both thoughts, she can conclude that “Socrates is mortal.” Merely having the thoughts “all men are mortal” and “Socrates is a man” ﬂoating around is like  two separate people having them; in order for reason to be possible we need to make these thoughts relative to one another, to link them in the right way. It turns out that making thoughts relative to anything other than a thinker  (for example, to a place or to a  time) fails to do the job. And since reasoning is possible, Descartes can conclude that there is a thinker. Some modern philosophers have denied that Descartes’ certainty of his own existence can do the job he requires of it; they argue that “I exist” has no content, as it merely refers to its subject but says nothing meaningful or important about it;  it is simply pointing at the subject. For this reason nothing can follow from it, and Descartes’ project fails at the beginning. This seems to miss Descartes’ point; as we have seen, he does not use the First Certainty as a premise from which to derive further knowledge—all  he needs is that there be a self for him to point to. So even if “I exist” only succeeds in pointing to the meditator, then he has an escape from the whirlpool of doubt.

**An unreal thinker**

For those who have misunderstood Descartes to have been offering  an argument from the fact of his thinking to the fact of his existence, we can point out that the First Certainty is a direct intuition, not  a logical argument. Why, though, would it be a problem if Descartes had been offering an argument? As it stands, the apparent inference “I am thinking, therefore I exist” is missing a major premise; that is, in order for the argument to work it needs another premise, such as “anything that is thinking exists.” Sometimes an obvious premise is not actually stated in an argument, in which case it is known as a suppressed premise. But some of Descartes’ critics complain that this suppressed premise is not at all obvious. For example, Hamlet, in Shakespeare’s play, thought a great deal, but it is

also clearly true that he did not exist; so it is not true that anything that thinks exists. We might say that in so far as Hamlet thought, he thought in the ﬁctional world of a play, but he also existed in that ﬁctional world; in so far as he did not exist, he did not exist in the real world. His “reality” and thinking are linked to the same world. But Descartes’ critics might respond that that is precisely the point: knowing that someone called Hamlet was thinking—and no more than this—does not assure us that this person exists in the real world; for that, we should have to know that he was thinking in the real world. Knowing that something or someone—like Descartes—is thinking, is not enough to prove their reality in this world. The answer to this dilemma lies in the ﬁrst-person nature of the *Meditations*, and the reasons for Descartes’ use of the “I” throughout now becomes clear. Because while I might be unsure whether Hamlet was thinking, and therefore existed, in a ﬁctional world or the real world, I cannot be unsure about myself.

**Modern philosophy**

In the “Preface to the Reader” of the *Meditations*, Descartes accurately predicted that many readers would approach his work in such a way that most would “not bother to grasp the proper order of my arguments and the connection between them, but merely try to carp at individual sentences, as is the fashion.” On the other hand, he also wrote that  “I do not expect any popular approval, or indeed any wide audience”, and in this he was much mistaken. He is often described as the father of modern philosophy. He sought to give philosophy the certainty of mathematics without recourse to any kind of dogma or authority, and to establish a ﬁrm, rational foundation for knowledge. He is also well known for proposing that the mind and the body are two distinct substances—one material (the body) and the other immaterial (the mind)—which are nonetheless capable of interaction. This famous distinction, which he explains in the *Sixth Meditation*, became known as Cartesian dualism. However, it is the rigor of Descartes’ thought and his rejection of any reliance on authority that are perhaps his most important legacy. The centuries after his death were dominated by philosophers who either developed his ideas or those who took as their main task the refutation of his thoughts, such as Thomas Hobbes, Benedictus Spinoza, and Gottfried Leibniz.

**There are the four main principles of his method**

To accept nothing as true unless it was proved.

To divide each difficulty into many parts and search for solution.

To arrange thoughts in order beginning with the simplest to the most difficult.

To make sure nothing is omitted.

**Benedictus Spinoza (1632–1677)**

**God is the cause of all things, which are in him**

Benedictus (or Baruch) Spinoza was born in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, in 1632. At the age  of 23 he was excommunicated  by the synagogue of Portuguese Jews in Amsterdam, who probably wished to distance themselves from Spinoza’s teachings. Spinoza’s *Theological-Political Treatise*was later attacked by Christian theologians and banned in 1674—a fate that had already befallen the work of the French philosopher René Descartes. The furore caused him to withhold publication of his greatest work, the *Ethics*, until after his death. Spinoza was a modest, intensely moral man who turned down numerous lucrative teaching positions for the sake of his intellectual freedom. Instead  he lived a frugal life in various places in the Netherlands, making a living by private philosophy teaching and as  a lens grinder. He died from tuberculosis in 1677.

**L**ike most philosophies of the 17th century, Spinoza’s philosophical system has the notion of “substance” at its heart. This concept can be traced back to Aristotle, who asked “What is it about an object that stays the same when it undergoes change?” Wax, for example, can melt and change  its shape, size, color, smell, and texture, and yet still remain “wax”, prompting the question: what are we referring to when we speak of “the wax”? Since it can change in every way that we can perceive, the wax must also be something beyond its perceptible properties, and for Aristotle this unchanging thing is the wax’s “substance.” More generally, substance is anything  that has properties—or that which underlies the world of appearance.

Spinoza employs “substance” in a similar way, deﬁning it as that which is self-explanatory—or that which can be understood by knowing its nature alone, as opposed to all other things that can be known only by their relationships with other things. For example, the concept “cart” can only be understood with reference to other concepts, such as “motion”, “transport”, and so on. Moreover, for Spinoza, there can only be one such substance, for if there were two, understanding one would entail understanding its relationship with the other, which contradicts the deﬁnition of substance. Furthermore, he argues, since there is only one such substance, there can, in fact, be nothing *but* that substance, and everything else is in some sense a part of it. Spinoza’s position is known as “substance monism”, which claims that all things are ultimately aspects of a single thing, as opposed to “substance dualism”, which claims that there are ultimately two kinds of things in the universe, most commonly deﬁned as “mind” and “matter.”

**Substance as God or nature**For Spinoza, then, substance underlies our experience, but it  can also be known by its various attributes. He does not specify  how many attributes substance has, but he says that human beings, at least, can conceive of two—namely, the attribute of extension (physicality) and the attribute of thought (mentality). For this reason, Spinoza is also known as an “attribute dualist”, and he claims that these two attributes cannot be explained by each other, and so must be included in any complete account of the world. As for substance itself, Spinoza says that we are right to call it “God” or “nature” (*Deus sive natura*)—that self-explaining thing which, in human form, sees itself under the attributes of body and mind At the level of individual things, including human beings, Spinoza’s attribute dualism is intended in part to deal with the question of how minds and bodies interact. The things that we experience as individual bodies or minds are in fact modiﬁcations of the single substance as conceived under  one of the attributes. Each modiﬁcation is both a physical thing (in so far as it is conceived under the attribute of extension)

and a mental thing (in so far as it  is conceived under the attribute  of thought). In particular, a human mind is a modiﬁcation of substance conceived under the attribute of thought, and the human brain is the same modiﬁcation of substance conceived under the attribute of extension. In this way, Spinoza avoids any question about the interaction between mind and body: there is no interaction, only  a one-to-one correspondence. However, Spinoza’s theory commits him to the view that it is not only human beings that are minds as well as bodies, but everything else too. Tables, rocks, trees—all of these are modiﬁcations of the one substance under the attributes of thought and extension.

So, they are all both physical and mental things, although their mentality is very simple and they are not what we should call minds. This aspect of Spinoza’s theory is difﬁcult for many people either to accept or to understand.

**The world is God**Spinoza’s theory, which he explains fully in *Ethics*, is often referred to as a form of pantheism—the belief that God is the world, and that the world is God. Pantheism is often criticized by theists (people who believe in God), who argue that  it is little more than atheism by another name. However, Spinoza’s theory is in fact much closer to panentheism—the view that the world is God, but that God is more than the world. For in Spinoza’s system, the world is not a mass of material and mental stuff—rather, the world of material things is a form of God as conceived under  the attribute of extension, and the world of mental things is that same form of God as conceived under the attribute of thought. Therefore the one substance or God is more than the world, but the world itself is entirely substance or God.

However, Spinoza’s God is clearly different from the God of standard Judaeo-Christian theology. Not  only is it not a person, it cannot be regarded as being the creator of  the world in the sense found in the Book of Genesis. Spinoza’s God does not exist alone before creation, and then bring it into existence.

**God as the cause**What can Spinoza mean, then, when he says that God is the cause of everything? The one substance is “God or nature”—so even if  there is more to God than those modiﬁcations of substance that make up our world, how can the relationship between God and nature be causal?

First, we should note that Spinoza, in common with most philosophers before him, uses  the word “cause”in a much richer sense than we do now—a sense that originates in Aristotle’s deﬁnition of four types of cause. These are (using a statue as an example): a formal cause, or the relationship between a thing’s parts (its shape or form); a material cause, or the matter a thing is made of (the bronze, marble, and so on);

an efﬁcient cause, or that which brings a thing into being (the sculpting process); and a ﬁnal cause, or the purpose for which a thing exists (the creation of a work of art, the desire for money, and so on). For Aristotle and Spinoza,  these together deﬁne “cause”, and provide a complete explanation of a thing—unlike today’s usage, which tends to relate to the “efﬁcient”  or “ﬁnal” causes only. Therefore, when Spinoza speaks of God or substance being “self-caused” he means that it is self-explanatory, rather than that it is simply selfgenerating. When he talks of God being the cause of all things, he means that all things ﬁnd their explanation in God.

God, therefore, is not what Spinoza calls a “transitive” cause of the world—something external that brings the world into being. Rather, God is the “immanent” cause of the world. This means that God is in the world, that the world is in God, and that the existence and essence of the world are explained by God’s existence and essence. For Spinoza, to fully appreciate this fact is to attain the highest state of freedom and salvation possible—a state  he calls “blessedness.

**Lecture 8**

**Philosophy of the Age of Enlightenment**

**1.      The main features of the Age of Enlightenment**

**2.      The Transcendental idealism of Immanuel Kant**

**D**uring the Renaissance, Europe had evolved into a collection of separate nation states, having previously been a continent uniﬁed under the control of the Church. As power devolved to separate countries, distinctive national cultures formed, which were most obvious in arts and literature, but could also be seen in the philosophical styles that emerged during the 17th century. During the Age of Reason there was a very clear difference between the rationalism of continental Europe and the empiricism of British philosophers, and in the 18th century philosophy continued to center on France and Britain, as the Enlightenment period unfolded. Old values and feudal systems crumbled as the new nations founded on trade gave rise to a growing urban middle-class with unprecedented prosperity. The richest nations, such as Britain, France, Spain, Portugal, and the Netherlands, established colonies and empires around the world.

**France and Britain**

Philosophy increasingly focused on social and political issues, also along national lines. In Britain, where a revolution had already come and gone (1640-45), **empiricism** reached a peak in the works of **David Hume**, while the new **utilitarianism** dominated political philosophy

(***Utilitarianism*** is the idea that the moral worth of an action is solely determined by its contribution to overall utility in maximizing happiness or pleasure as summed among all people.).

This evolved alongside the Industrial Revolution that had started in the 1730s, as thinkers such as John Stuart Mill reﬁned the utilitarianism of Jeremy Bentham and helped to establish both a liberal democracy and a framework for modern civil rights.

In the Romantic period, European literature, painting, and music became preoccupied with an idealized view of nature, in marked contrast to the sophisticated urban elegance of the Enlightenment. Perhaps the key difference was the way in which the Romantics valued feeling and intuition above reason. The movement took hold throughout Europe, continuing until the end of the 19th century.

The **enlightenment** is a name popularly used to describe the extraordinary scientific, philosophical, religious, and political developments of 18th-century Europe. Like all historical periods, the Enlightenment had no abrupt beginning or end, and the determination of its temporal limits is considerably arbitrary.

It is undeniable that the scientific developments of 18th-century Europe prompted the wide dissemination of a new spirit, one opposed to a priori solutions and very much given to experimentation. Although the 18th century did not produce any scientific discoveries equaling in importance those of Galileo and Newton, it was a century during which an unusually large number of people began to build their worldview on the scientific foundations. The "scientific method" began to assume preeminence over all other approaches to important problems, even in moral and religious spheres; and scientific societies, journals, and encyclopedias multiplied their influence as means whereby scientists could exchange information and assist one another in their experimentation. The scientific laboratory became so popular, in fact, that it sometimes assumed the role of a status symbol among the socially elite, particularly in France, and accounts of laboratory experiments became more fashionable in some famous salons than court gossip. Moreover, at this time, in Europe's great universities chairs were founded in such sciences as anatomy, astronomy, botany, and chemistry.

The Enlightenment in Germany did much good for education in general and for public instruction in particular.  The cultivation of the humanities and of intellectual tolerance was here served, just as was the battle against biased judgments.

**German Idealism**

German philosophy came to dominate the 19th century, largely due to the work of  Immanuel Kant. His idealist philosophy, which claimed that we can never know anything about things that exist beyond our selves, radically altered the course of philosophical thought. Although only a few years younger than Hume and Rousseau, Kant belonged to the next generation:  his major philosophical works were written after their deaths, and his new explanation of the universe and our knowledge of it managed  to integrate the approaches of rationalism and empiricism in a way more suited both to Romanticism and to Germanic culture. Kant’s followers included Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel, who together became known as the **German Idealists**, but also Schopenhauer, whose idiosyncratic interpretation of Kant’s philosophy incorporated ideas from Eastern philosophy. Among the followers of Hegel’s rigid Idealism was Karl Marx, who brilliantly brought together German philosophical methods, French revolutionary political philosophy, and British economic theory. After writing the *Communist Manifesto*with Friedrich Engels, he wrote *Das Kapital*, arguably one of the most inﬂuential philosophical works of all time. Within decades of his death, countries across the world had set up revolutionary states on the principles that he had proposed. Meanwhile in the US, which had overthrown British colonial rule and established a republic based on Enlightenment values, an American culture independent  of its European roots began to develop. At ﬁrst Romantic, by the end of the 19th century it had produced a homegrown strand of philosophy, pragmatism, which  examines the nature of truth.  This was in keeping with the country’s democratic roots and well suited to the culture of the new century.

**Immanuel Kant  (1724-1804)**

Immanuel Kant is the central figure in modern philosophy. He synthesized early modern rationalism and empiricism, set the terms for much of nineteenth and twentieth century philosophy, and continues to exercise a significant influence today in metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, political philosophy, aesthetics, and other fields. The fundamental idea of Kant’s “critical philosophy” – is human autonomy.

In Kant’s philosophy there are two periods:

1)**Pre-critical**

2)**Critical**.

**During pre-critical period Kant stayed on position of materialism and cosmology.**

In his 1755 work, “The Universal Natural History and Theories of the Heavens,” Kant talks about astronomy and two noteworthy theories about the Heavens. The first is his “Nebular Hypothesis” on star and planetary formations, where he theorized that thin, dim clouds of dust and gas out in the cosmos would collapse in on themselves under the force of gravity, causing them to spin to form a disk. From this spinning disk, stars and planets would form, and from this type of formation, the rotation of Earth and the other planets would be explained.

**Immanuel Kant** wrote three Critiques:

the Critique of Pure Reason (1781, 1787) - epistemology

the Critique of Practical Reason (1788) - ethics

the Critique of the Power of Judgment (1790) – aesthetics

Towards the end of his most influential work, Critique of Pure Reason(1781/1787), Kant argues that all philosophy ultimately aims at answering these three questions:

“What can I know?

What should I do?

What may I hope?”

The book appeared at the beginning of the most productive period of his career, and by the end of his life Kant had worked out systematic, revolutionary, and often profound answers to these questions.

At the foundation of Kant’s system is the doctrine of “**transcendental idealism**,” which emphasizes a distinction between what **we can experience** (the **natural**, **observable** **world**) and what **we cannot** (“**supersensible**” objects such as God and the soul). Kant argued that we can only have knowledge of things we can experience. Accordingly, in answer to the question, “What can I know?” Kant replies that we can know the natural, observable world, but we cannot, however, have answers to many of the deepest questions of metaphysics.

He argues that the **human understanding** is the source of the general laws of nature that structure all our experience; and that human reason gives itself the moral law, which is our basis for belief in God, freedom, and immortality. Therefore, scientific knowledge, morality, and religious belief are mutually consistent and secure because they all rest on the same foundation of human autonomy, which is also the final end of nature according to the teleological worldview of reflecting judgment that Kant introduces to unify the theoretical and practical parts of his philosophical system.

**I**mmanuel Kant thought it was “scandalous” that in more than 2,000 years of philosophical thought, nobody had been able to produce an argument to prove that there really is a world out there, external to us. He particularly had in mind the theories of René Descartes and George Berkeley, who both entertained doubts about the existence of an external world.  At the start of his *Meditations*, Descartes argued that we must doubt all knowledge except that  of our own existence as thinking beings—even the knowledge that there is an external world. Berkeley, on the other hand, argued that knowledge is indeed possible—but that it comes from experiences our consciousness perceives. We have no justiﬁcation for believing that these experiences have any external existence outside our own minds.

**Time and consciousness**

Kant wants to demonstrate that there is an external, material world, and that its existence cannot be doubted. His argument begins as follows: in order for something to exist, it must be determinable in time—that is, we must be able to say when it exists and for how long. But how does this work in the case of my own consciousness? Although consciousness seems to be constantly changing with a continuous ﬂow of sensations and thoughts, we can use the word “now” to refer to what is currently happening in our consciousness. But “now” is not a determinate time or date. Every time I say “now”, consciousness is different. Here lies the problem: what makes it possible to specify the “when” of my own existence? We cannot experience time itself, directly; rather, we experience time through things that move, change, or stay the same. Consider the hands of a clock, constantly moving slowly around. The moving hands are useless for determining time on their own—they need something against which they change, such as the numbers on a clock face. Every resource I have for measuring my constantly changing “now” is found in material objects outside me in space (including my own physical body). Saying that I exist requires  a determinate point in time, and this, in turn, requires an actually existing outside world in which time takes place. My level of certainty about the existence of the external world is thus precisely the same as my level of certainty about the existence of consciousness, which Descartes believed was absolutely certain.

**The problem of science**

Kant also looked at how science understood the exterior world. He admired the awesome progress  that the natural sciences had made over the previous two centuries, compared with the relative stagnation in the subject from ancient times until that point.

Progress in philosophy, according to Kant, requires that we frame the epistemological problem in an entirely different way. **The crucial question is not how we can bring ourselves to understand the world, but how the world comes to be understood by us**. Instead of trying, by reason or experience, to make our concepts match the nature of objects, Kant held, we must allow the structure of our concepts shape our experience of objects. This is the purpose of Kant's Critique of Pure Reason (1781, 1787): to show how reason determines the conditions under which experience and knowledge are possible.

**Varieties of Judgment**

In the Prolegomena to any Future Metaphysic (1783) Kant presented the central themes of the first Critique in a somewhat different manner, starting from instances in which we do appear to have achieved knowledge and asking under what conditions each case becomes possible. So he began by carefully drawing a pair of crucial distinctions among the judgments we do actually make.

The first distinction separates **a priori** from **a posteriori** judgments by reference to the origin of our knowledge of them. A priori judgments are based upon reason alone, independently of all sensory experience, and therefore apply with strict universality. **A posteriori judgments**, on the other hand, must be grounded upon experience and are consequently limited and uncertain in their application to specific cases. Thus, this distinction also marks the difference traditionally noted in logic between necessary and contingent truths.

**Phenomena and Noumena**

Having seen Kant's transcendental deduction of the categories as pure concepts of the understanding applicable a priori to every possible experience, we might naturally wish to ask the further question whether these regulative principles are really true. Are there substances? Does every event have a cause? Do all things interact? Given that we must suppose them in order to have any experience, do they obtain in the world itself? To these further questions, Kant firmly refused to offer any answer.

 According to Kant, it is vital always to distinguish between the distinct realms of **phenomena** and **noumena**. **Phenomena** are the appearances, which constitute the our experience; **noumena** are the (presumed) things themselves, which constitute reality. All of our synthetic a priori judgments apply only to the phenomenal realm, not the **noumenal**. (It is only at this level, with respect to what we can experience, that we are justified in imposing the structure of our concepts onto the objects of our knowledge.) Since the thing in itself  would by definition be entirely independent of our experience of it, we are utterly ignorant of the noumenal realm.

**The limits of knowledge**

A philosophical position that asserts that some state or activity of the mind is prior to and more fundamental than things we experience is called **idealism**,  and Kant calls his own position “**transcendental idealism**.” He insists that space, time, and certain concepts are features of  the world we experience (what  Kant called the **phenomenal world**) rather than features of the world itself considered separately from experience (what Kant called the **noumenal world**). Kant’s claims about *a priori*knowledge have both positive  and negative consequences. The positive consequence is that the  *a priori*nature of space, time, and certain concepts is what makes our experience of the world possible and reliable. Space and time make our experience mathematical in nature; we can measure it against known values. ***A priori*** concepts such as substance make it possible to address questions about nature such as “Is that a substance?” and “What properties does it exhibit and according to what laws?” In other words, Kant’s transcendental idealism is what makes it possible for our experience to be considered useful to science. On the negative side, certain types of thinking call themselves science and even resemble science, but fail utterly. This is because  they apply to things-in-themselves intuitions about space and time,  or concepts such as substance— which according to Kant must be valid for experience, but have no validity with respect to things-inthemselves. Because they resemble science, these types of thinking are a constant temptation to us, and are a trap that many fall into without realizing it. For example, we might wish to claim that God is the cause of the world, but cause and effect is another of the *a priori*concepts, like substance, that Kant believes is entirely valid for our experienced world, but not for things-in-themselves. So the existence of God (considered, as it usually is, as a being independent of the experienced world) is not something that could be known. The negative consequence of Kant's philosophy, then, is to place quite severe restrictions on the limits of knowledge.

**Theoretical and practical autonomy**

The fundamental idea of Kant’s philosophy is **human autonomy**. So far we have seen this in Kant’s constructivist view of experience, according to which our understanding is the source of the general laws of nature. “Autonomy” literally means giving the law to oneself, and on Kant’s view our understanding provides laws that constitute the a priori framework of our experience. Our understanding does not provide the matter or content of our experience, but it does provide the basic formal structure within which we experience any matter received through our senses. Kant’s central argument for this view is the transcendental deduction, according to which it is a condition of self-consciousness that our understanding constructs experience in this way. So we may call self-consciousness the highest principle of Kant’s theoretical philosophy, since it is (at least) the basis for all of our a priori knowledge about the structure of nature.

Kant’s moral philosophy is also based on the idea of autonomy. He holds that there is a single fundamental principle of morality, on which all specific moral duties are based. He calls this moral law (as it is manifested to us) the categorical imperative. **The moral law** is a product of reason, for Kant, while the basic laws of nature are products of our understanding. There are important differences between the senses in which we are autonomous in constructing our experience and in morality. For example, Kant regards understanding and reason as different cognitive faculties, although he sometimes uses “reason” in a wide sense to cover both. The categories and therefore the laws of nature are dependent on our specifically human forms of intuition, while reason is not. The moral law does not depend on any qualities that are peculiar to human nature but only on the nature of reason as such, although its manifestation to us as a **categorical imperative** (as a law of duty) reflects the fact that the human will is not necessarily determined by pure reason but is also influenced by other incentives rooted in our needs and inclinations; and our specific duties deriving from the categorical imperative do reflect human nature and the contingencies of human life. Despite these differences, however, Kant holds that we give the moral law to ourselves, just as we also give the general laws of nature to ourselves, though in a different sense. Moreover, we each necessarily give the same moral law to ourselves, just as we each construct our experience in accordance with the same categories.

To summarize:

**Theoretical philosophy is about how the world is**. Its highest principle is self-consciousness, on which our knowledge of the basic laws of nature is based. Given sensory data, our understanding constructs experience according to these a priori laws.

**Practical philosophy** is about how the world ought to be. Its highest principle is the moral law, from which we derive duties that command how we ought to act in specific situations. Kant also claims that reflection on our moral duties and our need for happiness leads to the thought of an ideal world, which he calls the highest good. Given how the world is **(theoretical philosophy)** and how it ought to be **(practical philosophy),** we aim to make the world better by constructing or realizing the highest good.

After Kant, German philosophy in particular progressed rapidly. The idealists Johann Fichte, Friedrich Schelling, and Georg Hegel all took Kant’s thought in new directions and, in their turn, inﬂuenced the whole of 19th-century thought,  from romanticism to Marxism. Kant's sophisticated critique of metaphysical thought was also important in positivism, which  held that every justiﬁable assertion is capable of being scientiﬁcally  or logically veriﬁed. The fact that Kant locates the  *a priori* even within our intuitions of the world was important for 20th-century phenomenologists such as Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger, who sought to examine objects of experience independently of any assumptions we may have about them. Kant’s work also remains an important reference point for contemporary philosophers today, especially in the branches of metaphysics  and epistemology

**Lecture 9**

**Nonclassical philosophy. The beginning**

**1.     Philosophy of 19th century**

**2.** **Arthur Schopenhauer (1788–1860)**

**3.     Søren Kierkegaard (1813–1855)**

**Basic concepts:  Pessimism, Existentialism, Absurdism** **German**

**Pessimism**

In the early 1800s, the time of Schopenhauer and Kierkegaard, Germany and German thought went through a period of great pessimism.  Just like in ancient Egypt, Greece and China, **human thought often flourishes in periods of tragedy** as people are forced to turn critically to old conceptions and institutions and ask hard questions about what works and does not work for the individual and the community.  In the late 1700s, the American and French revolutions, along with developments in England, had brought new rights to the common people.  At the time, Germany was a loose confederacy of regional principalities, ruled locally by princes.  When the German people rose up to fight for rights similar to their neighbors, several of the powerful princes came together to crush the popular people’s movement.  Hegel’s followers **Marx and Engels** wrote the ***Communist Manifesto*** for this discouraged audience, arguing that the people would one day rise up and overcome oppression with a revolution that would remove the capitalists from society just as the French Revolution had removed the nobility and much of the clergy from power.

German thought likewise turned from the reason of Leibniz and Kant towards the ***will***of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche.  Recall that Hume argued that reason is and ought to be the slave of the passions.  While many would say that emotion distorts reason, **German pessimism saw reason itself as a will and drive to dominate, as the ordering force in a Darwinian world**.

The world is tough, not necessarily reasonable, and ideas must be fought for, even if they are imperfect. **Life, at its best, is romantic and dramatic, not rational or mathematical**.  Kant and Hegel were confident that reason can complete itself as an objective system.  **Pessimism turned away from reason, completion and objectivity, towards passion, incompleteness and subjectivity**.

German pessimism, centrally Schopenhauer and his follower Nietzsche, but also very applicable to the Danish thinker Kierkegaard, fed into the later Existentialism of **Sartre** and Absurdism of **Camus**.  Sartre, who coined the term ‘***Existentialism***’, claimed Kierkegaard and Nietzsche as its founders, even though neither had used the term.  All these thinkers flourished in popularity during two more recent periods of pessimism: WWI for Europe (producing the Dada modern art movement) and post-WWII for America (producing the counter-culture of the beatniks during the Korean war, and then hippies during the Vietnam War, both particularly thriving in the Bay Area).

**Arthur Schopenhauer** (1788 – 1860), was a follower of Kant but took Kant’s philosophy and radically inverted it, making reason a manifestation of will.  Like Nietzsche, Schopenhauer’s father died tragically when he was young, leaving him free to pursue philosophy rather than the family profession.  For Schopenhauer, it was business.  For Nietzsche, it was the ministry.  Schopenhauer, more pessimistic about the use of reason than Kant, saw the gulf and gap between the world and our ideas as a stormy abyss that forever frustrates our idealizations.  He agreed with Kant that the mind works categorically and mathematically, but the gap between our conceptions and the ‘*thing-in-itself*’ turned Schopenhauer from Kant’s Rationalism and mathematical science to Buddhism and the ecstasy of art.

Kant sought objectivity in reason, the most abstract part of the mind, the most removed from immediate sensation.  Schopenhauer argued that sensation and the experience of the will is basic.  Kant’s self-certainty is replaced by Schopenhauer’s ***will of the body***, Schopenhauer argued that **our fundamental experience of ourselves is not in the abstractions of reason, but in the embodied will**.  **We are, at base, a *striving***.  Schopenhauer was critical of other philosophers for focusing on abstractions of reason and ignoring love, friendship, sexuality, and artistic passion, which are central to our existence.  For Kant, freedom comes from reason.  For Schopenhauer, **freedom is only found in the assertion of will**.  For Kant, freedom is a moral decision.  For Schopenhauer, **freedom is found in action**.  Schopenhauer considered the freedom of reason to be an illusion, as the mind is compulsive relative to the body.  Thoughts appear free, but **the purest part of our freedom is not in the channeling of abstractions, but in the self-recognition of *volition***, of will.

In Plato’s *Republic*, Socrates uses the Allegory of the Cave to illustrate how the common people believe in shadows, while the wise few wander outside and see the sun itself.  However, for Plato, the shadows are the desires that keep us bound, and the things outside the cave are eternal ideas.  For Schopenhauer, the shadows are abstract ideas, and the sun outside is the will of the cosmos.  **It is reason that is delusion, and desire the underlying reality**.  Freud would later attempt to systematize this insight as the psychological practice of Psychoanalysis.

For Schopenhauer **thinking is delusional abstraction that separates us from our true self**. **It is *individuation of abstraction*, the abstract idea of separate selves, separate from the world and each other, that causes the cosmic will to be at odds with itself, which causes the selfishness often associated with will**.  **The world is a battleground because of abstractions and ideas, which have misled the will into conflicts with itself**.

**The basis of life is the Will of the World**

A universal Will Schopenhauer uses the word “will” to express a pure energy that has no driving direction, and yet is responsible for everything that manifests itself in the phenomenal world. He believes, like Kant, that space and time belong in the phenomenal world—they are concepts within our minds, not things outside of them—so the  Will of the world does not mark time, or follow causal or spatial laws. This means it must be timeless and indivisible, and so must our individual wills. It follows, then, that the Will of the universe and individual will are one and the same thing, and the phenomenal world is controlled by this vast, timeless, motiveless Will.

**Civilization is not progression**

Schopenhauer also ridiculed Hegel’s conception of history, which presented the West and Germans as the summit of human civilization and world history.  Schopenhauer did not see civilization as a progression, but rather the same old mess it has always been.  **Society is a painful struggle of will.**  Beneath representation, the divisions of abstractions, there is only one will, divided and at war with itself.  The world’s wars and social conflicts, such as the uprisings that contributed to German pessimism, convinced him humanity remained much the same, without the possibility of Hegel’s great ascension.  Schopenhauer believed that time doesn’t progress, and wrote that **the history of a village and the history of an empire teach us the same thing**.  This is a very cyclical and cynical view of humanity.

**Eastern inﬂuence**

At this point in his argument, Schopenhauer’s pessimism shows through. Where contemporaries such as Hegel saw will as a positive force, Schopenhauer sees humanity at the mercy of a mindless, aimless universal Will. It lies behind our most basic urges, he insists, and  is what causes us to live lives of constant disappointment and frustration as we attempt to relieve our cravings. For Schopenhauer, the world is neither good nor bad, but meaningless, and humans who struggle to ﬁnd happiness achieve at best gratiﬁcation and at worst pain and suffering.

 The only escape from this miserable condition, according to Schopenhauer, is nonexistence or at least a loss of will for gratiﬁcation. He proposes that relief can be found through aesthetic contemplation, especially in music, which is the one art that does not attempt to represent the phenomenal world. Schopenhauer’s philosophy here echoes the Buddhist concept of nirvana (a transcendent state free from desire or suffering).

He had studied Eastern thinkers and religions in great detail. From his idea of one universal Will, Schopenhauer develops a moral philosophy that may be somewhat surprising, considering his otherwise misanthropic and pessimistic character. He realizes that if we can recognize that our separateness from the universe is essentially an illusion—**because all our individual wills and the Will of the universe are one and the same thing**—we can learn empathy with everyone and everything else, and moral goodness can arise from a universal compassion. Here, again, Schopenhauer’s thinking reﬂects the ideals of Eastern philosophy.

**The form that embodies pure Will itself is Music**

Schopenhauer argued that**music is the highest form of art**, **the form that embodies pure will itself**, because unlike visual arts it represents no particular things or ideas.  In this way it is similar to American Abstract Minimalist painting and sculpture that became popular in the wake of WWII and with the beatniks, art which goes beyond Cubism, Futurism and Surrealism in representing no particular things but striving to give shape to pure emotion and sensation, a famous example being **Jackson Pollock drizzling paint on a canvas**.  Schopenhauer compared the ‘*should*’ of the will, its purpose and drive, to the melody of music, and compared music to the numbers of the Pythagoreans and the Chinese Yi Jing, a favorite of Leibniz’s, the deep underlying essential form and representation of fundamental existence.  **The greatest art after music is tragedy, as it shows us the unified will divided painfully against itself**.  Consider the works of Shakespeare, and the suffering undergone due to ignorance and passion.

**Lasting legacy**

Schopenhauer was largely ignored by other German philosophers in his lifetime, and his ideas were overshadowed by those of Hegel, though he did have an inﬂuence  on writers and musicians. Toward the end of the 19th century, the primacy he gave to Will became  a theme in philosophy once more. Friedrich Nietzsche in particular acknowledged his inﬂuence, and Henri Bergson and the American pragmatists also owe something  to his analysis of the world as Will. Perhaps Schopenhauer’s greatest inﬂuence, however, was in the ﬁeld of psychology, where his ideas about our basic urges and their frustration inﬂuenced the psychoanalytic theories of both Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung.

**Soren Kierkegaard (1813-1855 CE),**

**was too very pessimistic about the painful struggle of existence, like Schopenhauer.  For later Existentialists, the individual must take responsibility for existence and choose how to give meaning to life and the world, whether this is sought individually or socially.  As Kierkegaard wrote it, we are wonderfully and horribly free.**

The name ‘Kierkegaard‘ means ‘churchyard’ in Danish, which also has the double meaning of graveyard.  Though Kierkegaard was an emphatic Christian, he had a very unorthodox take on Christianity.  Kierkegaard’s works are dominated by theological concerns, wondering on most pages about the individual’s relationship to God and to Jesus as Christ.  However, it is the individual’s choice, in the face of nothing, neither Rationalist deduction nor Empiricist induction, that made commitment and truth meaningful.  Kierkegaard wanted to have his tombstone, in the graveyard, read only, “The Individual”, though his relatives decided otherwise.

For Kierkegaard, the meaning of Christianity was not the achievement of objectivity, as it was for Descartes, Kant and Hegel, but the acceptance of subjectivity, of individually lacking the God’s eye view.  Kierkegaard was brutally critical of the Danish Lutheran Church for presenting itself as the communal objective community, and argued that it is only as an individual, with no community to trust or follow, that one can be a genuine Christian.

Like Nietzsche, Kierkegaard argued that Christianity began as a rebellion against the status quo, but became the entrenched regime.  After healing a blind man, Jesus rebuked the Pharisees, the political and religious establishment of his time, and said that because they think they see they are in fact blind.  Nietzsche said that one should follow the example of Jesus, not the example of Paul, who unlike Jesus started a religion and insisted on dogmatic obedience.

**not the Social institutions but self-knowledge**

With regard to everything that counts in human life, including especially matters of ethical and religious concern, Kierkegaard held that the crowd is always wrong. Any appeal to the opinions of others is inherently false, since it involves an effort to avoid responsibility for the content and justification of my own convictions. Genuine action must always arise from the Individual, without any prospect of support or agreement from others. Thus, on Kierkegaard's view, both self-denial and the self-realization to which it may lead require absolute and uncompromising independence from the group. Social institutions—embodying "the system" of Hegelian idealism—are invariably bad; only the solitary perception of self can be worthwhile.

**Freedom and Dread**

Utter self-reliance, however, is a frightening prospect. Although we are strongly inclined to seek human freedom, Kierkegaard noted, contemplation of such a transcendence of all mental and bodily determinations tends only to produce grave anxiety in the individual person. Genuine innocence entails an inability to forsee all outcomes, which thereby renders one incapable of gaining control over one's own life.

Thus, in "The Concept of Dread" (1844), Kierkegaard examined the only appropriate emotional response to the condition of human freedom. Anxiety is the dizziness produced in any reasonable being who stands at the brink of genuine freedom. Knowing that we can think and do as we will naturally inspires deep fear about what we shall think and do.

Even religious verities, Kierkegaard supposed, offer no lasting relief from the predicament. Christianity (as Paul had pointed out) makes no sense; its genius lies not in any appeal to the dictates of reason but rather in its total reliance on faith. But from our point of view, the content of an authoritative command is entirely irrelevant; all that matters is the claim that the command places upon our lives. There can be no proof of the authority behind the command, since any such demonstration of its value would make it impossible for us to accept it as a matter of faith.

**The father of existentialism**

Kierkegaard’s ideas were largely rejected by his contemporaries, but proved highly inﬂuential to later generations. His insistence on the importance and freedom of our choices, and our continual search for meaning and purpose, was  to provide the framework for existentialism. This philosophy, developed by Friedrich Nietzsche and Martin Heidegger, was later fully deﬁned by Jean-Paul Sartre.  It explores the ways in which we can live meaningfully in a godless universe, where every act is a choice, except the act of our own birth. Unlike these later thinkers, Kierkegaard did not abandon his faith in God, but he was the ﬁrst to acknowledge the realization of selfconsciousness and the “dizziness” or fear of absolute freedom.

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