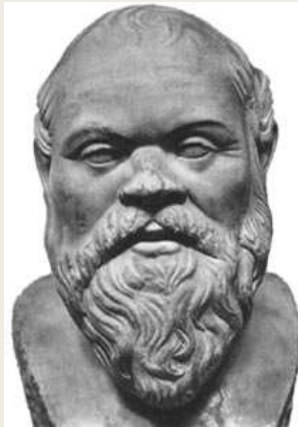


# Philosophy for Beginners



**Week 1. 19<sup>th</sup> Sept 2018**

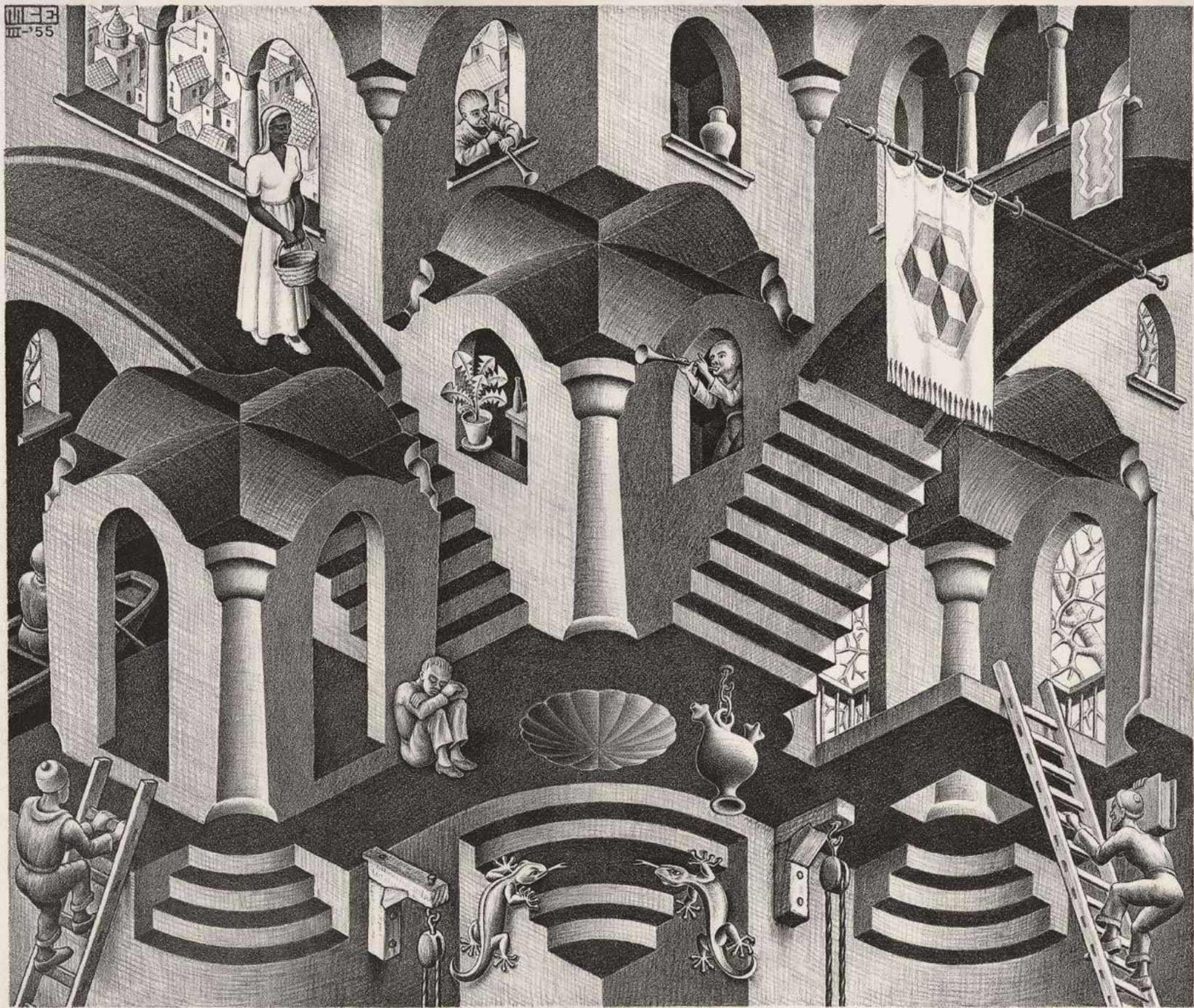


‘The unexamined life is  
not worth living’

– Socrates

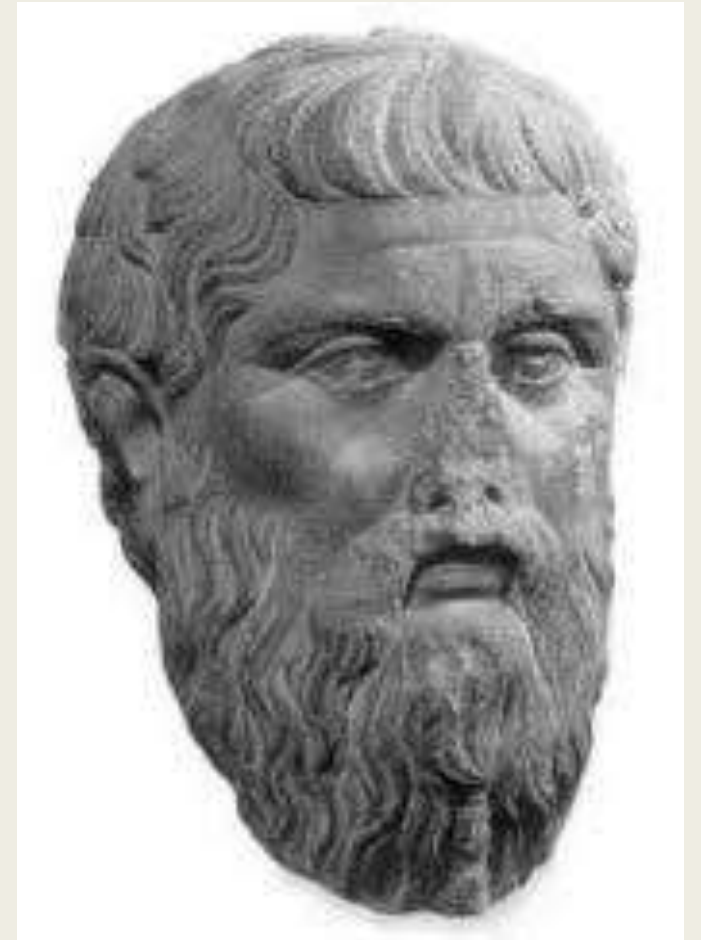








‘Man is the measure of all things’  
- Protagoras







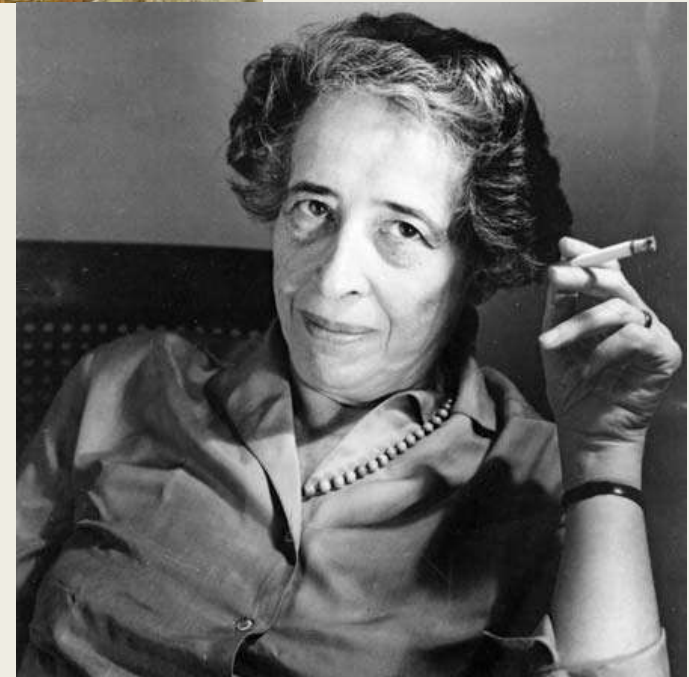
‘Reserve your right to think, for even to think wrongly is better than not to think at all’

- Hypatia



‘There are no dangerous thoughts; thinking itself is dangerous’

- Hannah Arendt









‘Two things fill me with  
wonder: the starry skies above  
and the moral law within’

– Immanuel Kant









# What is philosophy?

- Derived from the Greek words *philia* (love) and *sophia* (wisdom)
- But philosophy is more than just a love of wisdom...
- Introduce yourself to your neighbour, and tell them
  - *what preconceptions you have about philosophy*
  - *What you'd like to get out of our course*



# Defining Philosophy

- The study of the ultimate nature of life...
- ... Including existence, reality, knowledge, God, and goodness, as discoverable by human reasoning
- This broad subject branches into many areas: how one should live (*ethics*), what is beauty (*aesthetics*), the nature of human knowledge (*epistemology*), the rules of reasoning (*logic*), the fundamental nature of being (*metaphysics*), the role of government and individual freedom (*politics*), and more



# What philosophy is not...

- Myth – traditional stories, often supernatural
- Religion – a particular faith or codified system of belief
- Science – explanation of the world through observation, experimentation and deduction of natural laws
- Random opinions, without any evidence given (it's all relative...)
- An impractical, armchair pursuit divorced from the real world...
- *Instead philosophy sets out to question the fundamental presumptions and prejudices about every aspect of our lives*

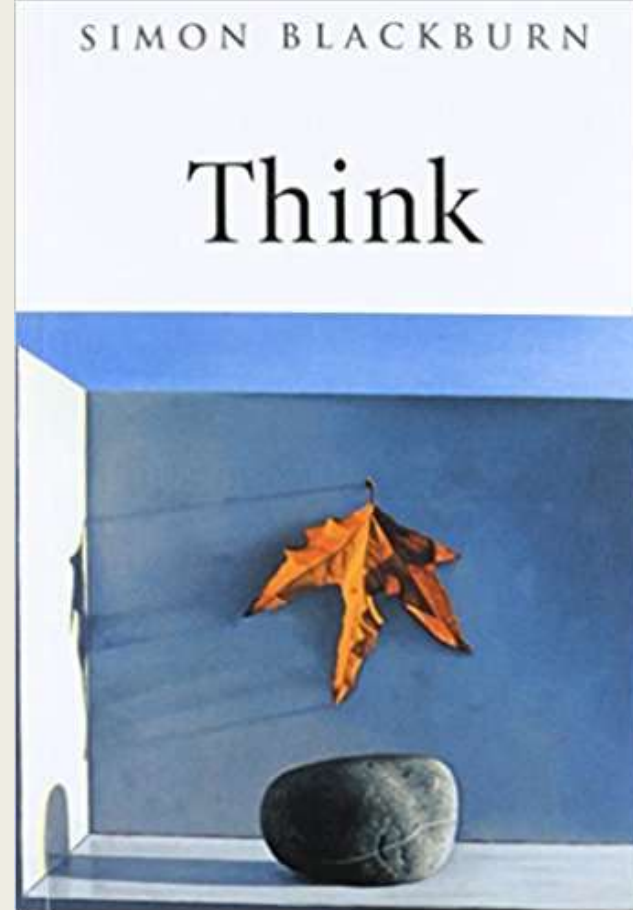
# What we'll cover on our course

- Buddha, Laozi, Confucius, Heraclitus, and Parmenides
- Socrates and Plato on knowledge and politics
- Aristotle on the golden mean
- The Stoics on how to live and die well
- Descartes on scepticism, I think therefore I am, and the relation between mind and body
- David Hume on custom, causality, empiricism, and whether the self is one great illusion



# Good study resources

- School of Life on YouTube
- In Our Time on BBC Radio 4
- *The Philosophy Book* by Dorling Kindersley
- *What does it all mean?* By Thomas Nagel
- *Think: A Compelling Introduction to Philosophy* by Simon Blackburn
- *Philosophy: Basic Readings* by Nigel Warburton, a recommended author



# Moodle

Learn.marywardcentre.ac.uk

Username: firstnamelastname

Password: FirstNameInitial (capitals)

E.g. Donald Trump

Username: donaldtrump

Password: DONALDT









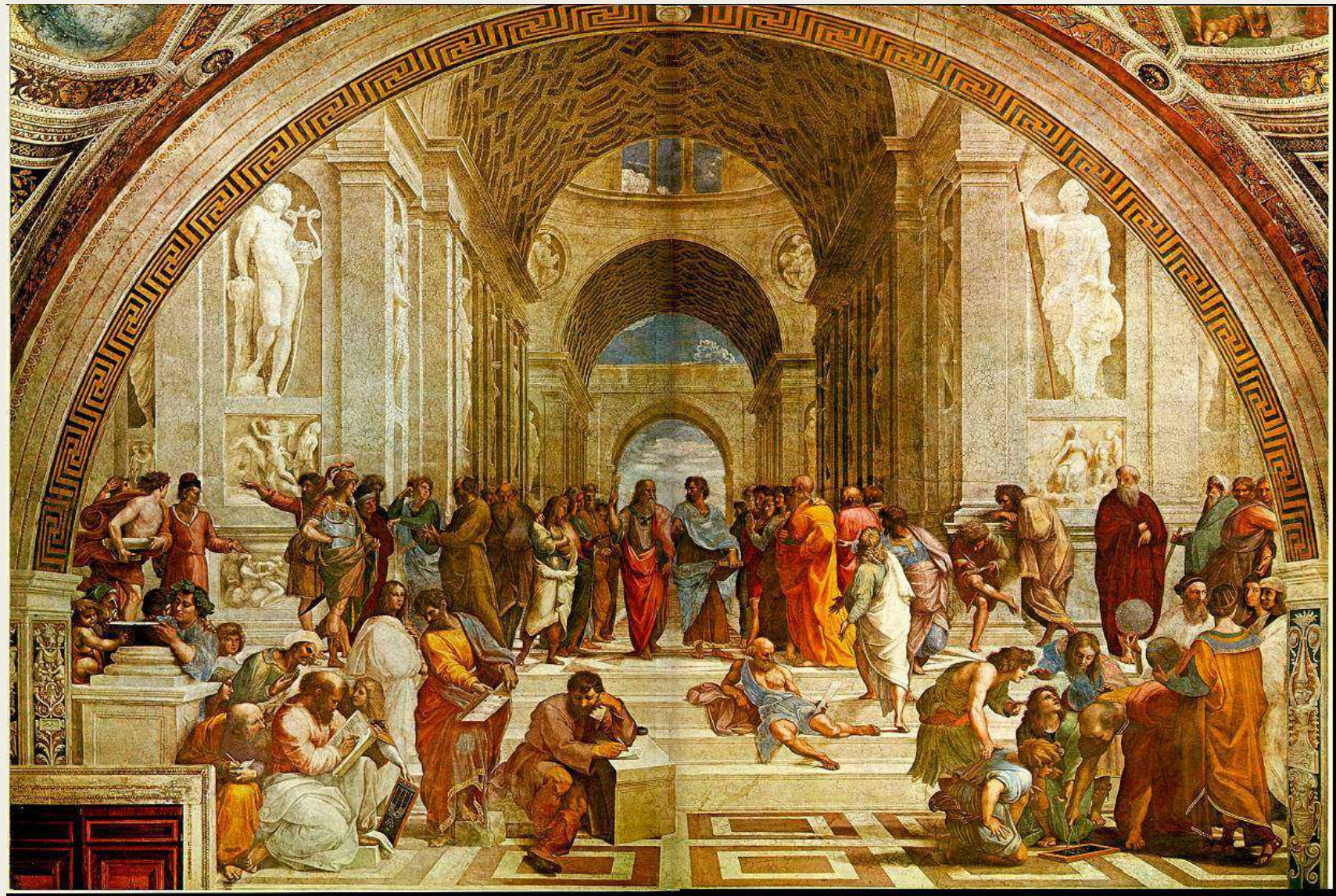






- 3100 BCE – first known writing emerges in Sumer, Mesopotamia, and Egypt
- 2100 BCE – *Epic of Gilgamesh*, earliest surviving work of literature
- 1200 – 165 BCE – composition of the Old Testament and Rig Veda
- 700 BCE – Hesiod's *Theogony*; Homer's *Iliad* and *The Odyssey*
- 624 BCE – birth of Thales of Miletus
- 6<sup>th</sup> C BCE – birth of Lao Tzu (Laozi)
- 551 BCE – birth of Confucius (Kong Fuzi)
- 563 or 480 BCE – birth of Gautama Buddha
- 469 BCE – birth of Socrates





**Q: why does philosophy 'begin' in ancient Greece?**





# Ancient Greece

- Culture whose myths were beginning to be written down: Hesiod's *Work and Days*, Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*
- Gods who were human-like, emotional and often flawed
- A sea-trading people, in close contact with other cultures like the Babylonians and Egypt...
- Where the earliest developments in mathematics were occurring – particularly in port towns like Miletus
- A world defined by change, conflict and flux











# Pre-Socratics

- Western philosophy is considered to begin with the Pre-Socratics, a diverse group of thinkers from ancient Greece, 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE
- Writings only exist in fragments or later summaries by others
- They were not the *first philosophers*, but they were among the first to write their philosophy down in a way that survives to the modern day
- The earliest systematic attempt to explain the nature of the world without dependence on myth or religion



# Pre-Socratics



They ask: reality is composed of one single unchanging substance – but what?

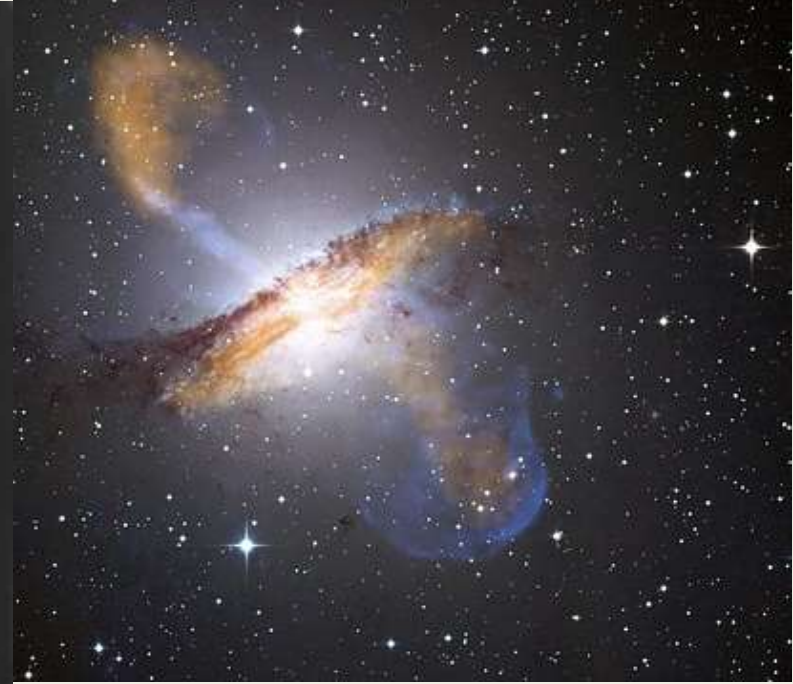
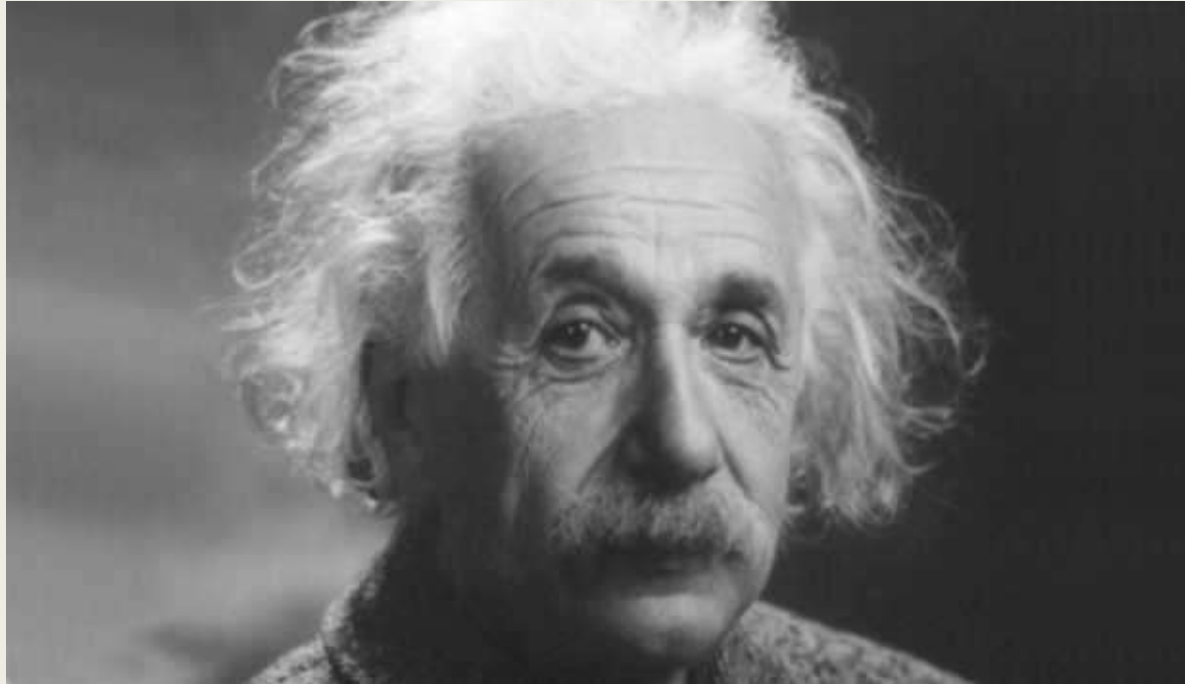
*Over to you... how do we approach a question as broad yet basic as this?*











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11 <b>Na</b> 22.990	12 <b>Mg</b> 24.305	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13 <b>Al</b> 26.982	14 <b>Si</b> 28.085	15 <b>P</b> 30.974	16 <b>S</b> 32.06	17 <b>Cl</b> 35.45	18 <b>Ar</b> 39.948
19 <b>K</b> 39.098	20 <b>Ca</b> 40.078	21 <b>Sc</b> 44.956	22 <b>Ti</b> 47.867	23 <b>V</b> 50.942	24 <b>Cr</b> 51.996	25 <b>Mn</b> 54.938	26 <b>Fe</b> 55.845	27 <b>Co</b> 58.933	28 <b>Ni</b> 58.693	29 <b>Cu</b> 63.546	30 <b>Zn</b> 65.38	31 <b>Ga</b> 69.723	32 <b>Ge</b> 72.630	33 <b>As</b> 74.922	34 <b>Se</b> 78.97	35 <b>Br</b> 79.904	36 <b>Kr</b> 83.798
37 <b>Rb</b> 85.468	38 <b>Sr</b> 87.62	39 <b>Y</b> 88.906	40 <b>Zr</b> 91.224	41 <b>Nb</b> 92.906	42 <b>Mo</b> 95.95	43 <b>Tc</b> (98)	44 <b>Ru</b> 101.07	45 <b>Rh</b> 102.91	46 <b>Pd</b> 106.42	47 <b>Ag</b> 107.87	48 <b>Cd</b> 112.41	49 <b>In</b> 114.82	50 <b>Sn</b> 118.71	51 <b>Sb</b> 121.76	52 <b>Te</b> 127.60	53 <b>I</b> 126.90	54 <b>Xe</b> 131.29
55 <b>Cs</b> 132.91	56 <b>Ba</b> 137.33	57-71 *	72 <b>Hf</b> 178.49	73 <b>Ta</b> 180.95	74 <b>W</b> 183.84	75 <b>Re</b> 186.21	76 <b>Os</b> 190.23	77 <b>Ir</b> 192.22	78 <b>Pt</b> 195.08	79 <b>Au</b> 196.97	80 <b>Hg</b> 200.59	81 <b>Tl</b> 204.38	82 <b>Pb</b> 207.2	83 <b>Bi</b> 208.98	84 <b>Po</b> (209)	85 <b>At</b> (210)	86 <b>Rn</b> (222)
87 <b>Fr</b> (223)	88 <b>Ra</b> (226)	89-103 #	104 <b>Rf</b> (265)	105 <b>Db</b> (268)	106 <b>Sg</b> (271)	107 <b>Bh</b> (270)	108 <b>Hs</b> (277)	109 <b>Mt</b> (276)	110 <b>Ds</b> (281)	111 <b>Rg</b> (280)	112 <b>Cn</b> (285)	113 <b>Nh</b> (286)	114 <b>Fl</b> (289)	115 <b>Mc</b> (289)	116 <b>Lv</b> (293)	117 <b>Ts</b> (294)	118 <b>Og</b> (294)

\* Lanthanide series

57 <b>La</b> 138.91	58 <b>Ce</b> 140.12	59 <b>Pr</b> 140.91	60 <b>Nd</b> 144.24	61 <b>Pm</b> (145)	62 <b>Sm</b> 150.36	63 <b>Eu</b> 151.96	64 <b>Gd</b> 157.25	65 <b>Tb</b> 158.93	66 <b>Dy</b> 162.50	67 <b>Ho</b> 164.93	68 <b>Er</b> 167.26	69 <b>Tm</b> 168.93	70 <b>Yb</b> 173.05	71 <b>Lu</b> 174.97
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# Actinide series

89 <b>Ac</b> (227)	90 <b>Th</b> 232.04	91 <b>Pa</b> 231.04	92 <b>U</b> 238.03	93 <b>Np</b> (237)	94 <b>Pu</b> (244)	95 <b>Am</b> (243)	96 <b>Cm</b> (247)	97 <b>Bk</b> (247)	98 <b>Cf</b> (251)	99 <b>Es</b> (252)	100 <b>Fm</b> (257)	101 <b>Md</b> (258)	102 <b>No</b> (259)	103 <b>Lr</b> (262)
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# Pre-Socratics

- Question: what is the world made of?
- We might say *matter*, or *atoms*, but we have the benefit of centuries of scientific experimentation, aided by microscopes, telescopes, and millennia of learning transcribed and passed down to us
- See what you make of the Pre-Socratics' efforts...



## Philosopher

## Arche

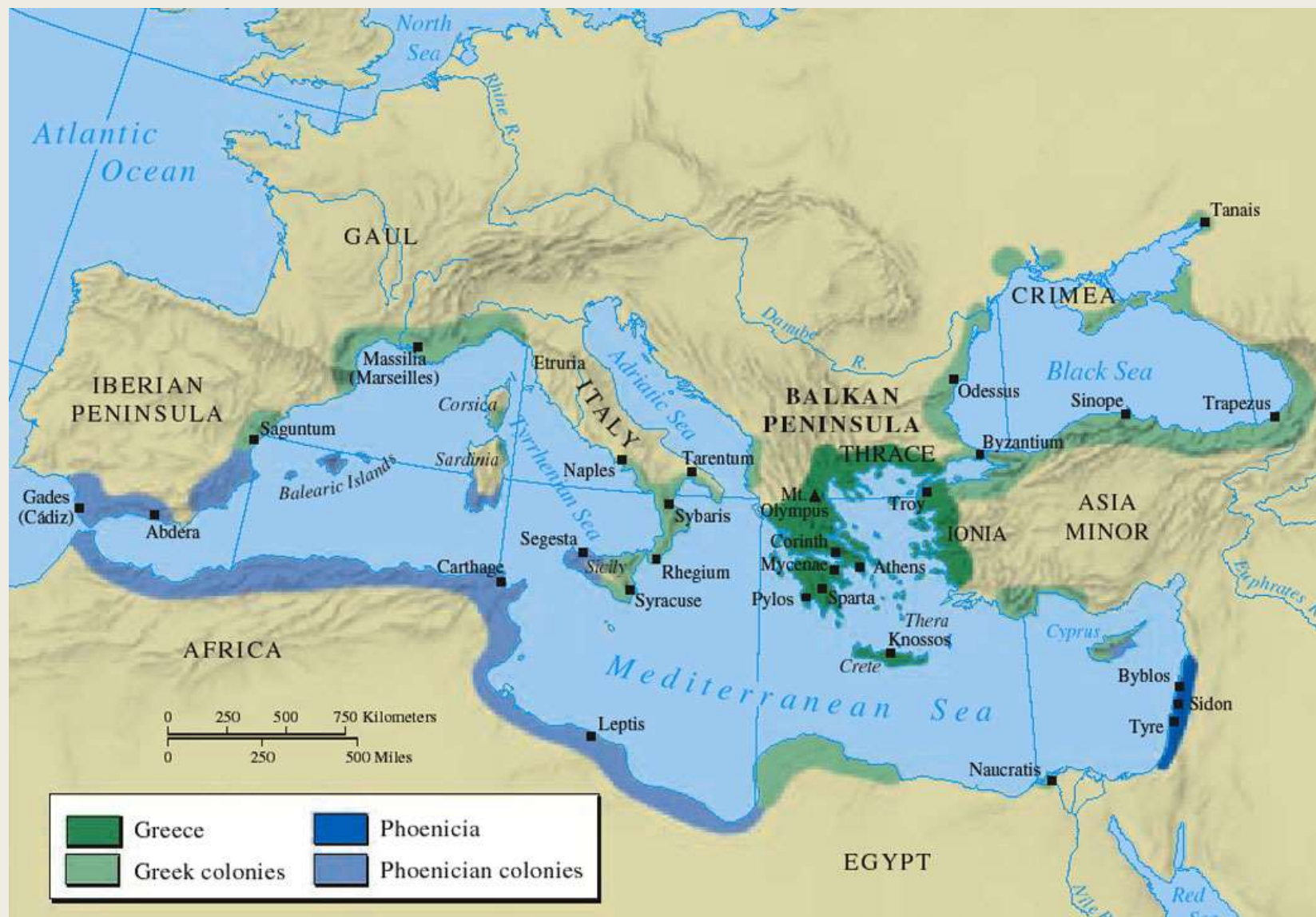
## City

■ Thales	Water	Miletus
■ Anaximander	Boundless matter	Miletus
■ Anaximenes	Air	Miletus
■ Heraclitus	Change (fire)	Ephesus
■ Parmenides	Being	Elea
■ Pythagoras	Number	Samos
■ Empedocles	Earth, air, fire, water	Agrigentum
■ Democritus	Atoms	Abdera
■ Anaxagoras	Cosmic mind (nous)	Athens

# A different world...

- During the Archaic Period (8<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> BCE), human beings began settling in permanent communities, based on agriculture
- New systems of writing and numeracy were developed across the world
- *Theogony* by the Greek poet Hesiod relates how the gods created the universe (7<sup>th</sup> BCE)
- A century later, Homer writes down the myths of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*
- Why might some question relying on myth?



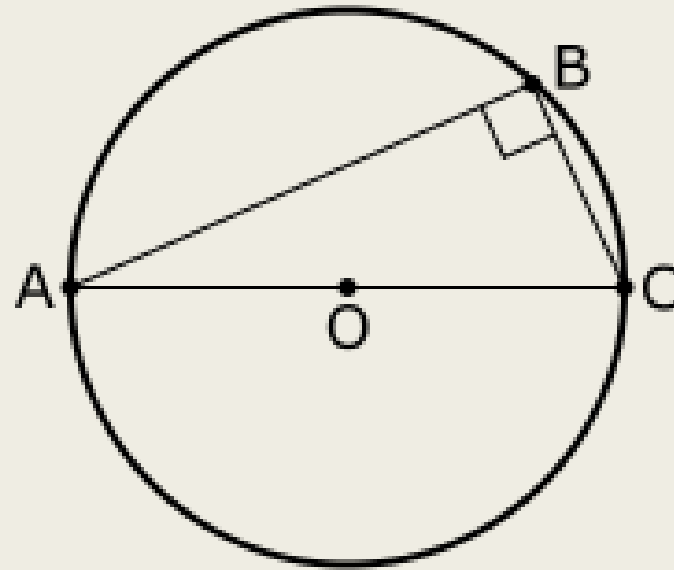
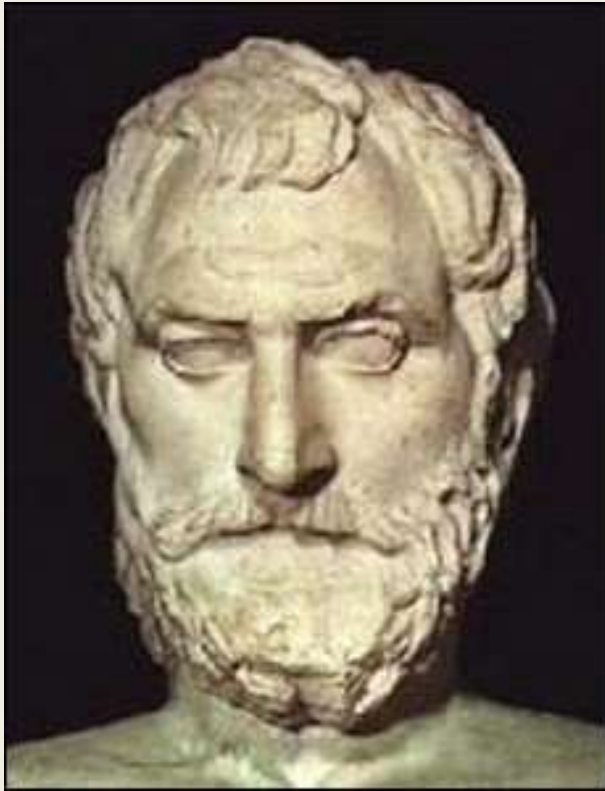


# The Pre-Socratics

- Q: What questions might Greeks ask about their world?



# Thales of Miletus (624-546 BCE)



# Thales

- Mathematician and engineer
- Predicted a bumper olive harvest and the eclipse of 585BC
- Developed Thales' Theorem and the first attributed discoveries in mathematics
- Used rational hypotheses to speculate about a single ultimate substance underlying everything





# Thales

*What is the basic material of the cosmos?*

It must be...

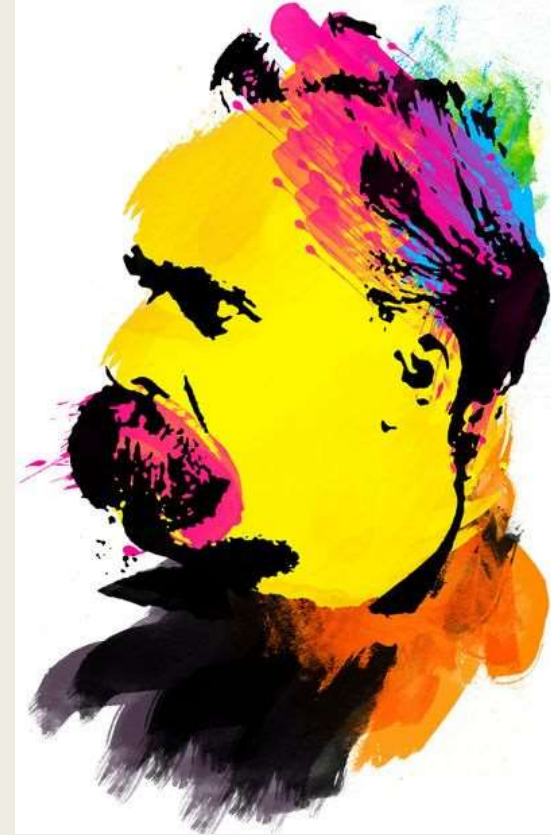
- Something from which everything can be formed...
- Essential to life...
- Capable of motion...
- Capable of change...
- Therefore: everything is made of water



# Thales

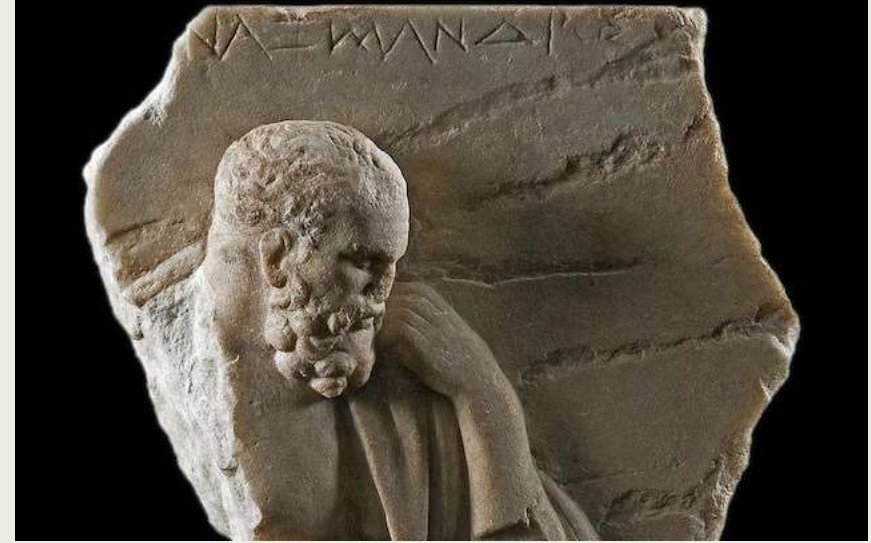
- The Babylonian creation myth, *Enuma Elish*, described the primal state of the world as a watery mass
- Thales identifies all 'things' as variations of this one primary and ultimate element
- Proposed that nature could be understood by observable, demonstrable laws
- A common unity underlying difference
- One of the first known organised attempts to understand the world using observation and deduction

- 'Greek philosophy seems to begin with an absurd notion, with the proposition that *water* is the primal origin and the womb of all things. Is it really necessary for us to take serious notice of this proposition?'
- 'It is, and for three reasons. First, because it tells us something about the primal origin of all things; second, because it does so in language devoid of image or fable, and finally, because contained in it, if only embryonically, is the thought, 'all things are one.'  
- Nietzsche, *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*





# Anaximander (610-546 BCE)



- Succeeded Thales in his school
- Scientific achievements attributed include drawing the first world map, introducing the sundial gnomon to Greece, and astronomy
- First known philosopher to write his ideas
- Argued that there is no single underlying element (earth, air, fire or water) – rather each continually change into the other
- Birth, death, decay and growth are all products of the conflict between opposites



# The *apeiron*

- Take a look at the second excerpt, and discuss in pairs:
- *What is Anaximander's view of what the world is made up of?*
- *How does it differ from Thales?*



# The *apeiron*

- Not any kind of matter we know of: boundless, infinite, beneath the continual changing of the elements
- Must be infinite, ageless and eternal, the source through which generation and destruction continue
- Encompasses everything – all the worlds
- Universe governed by a kind of cosmic equilibrium that was necessary and unchanging, not belonging to the Gods

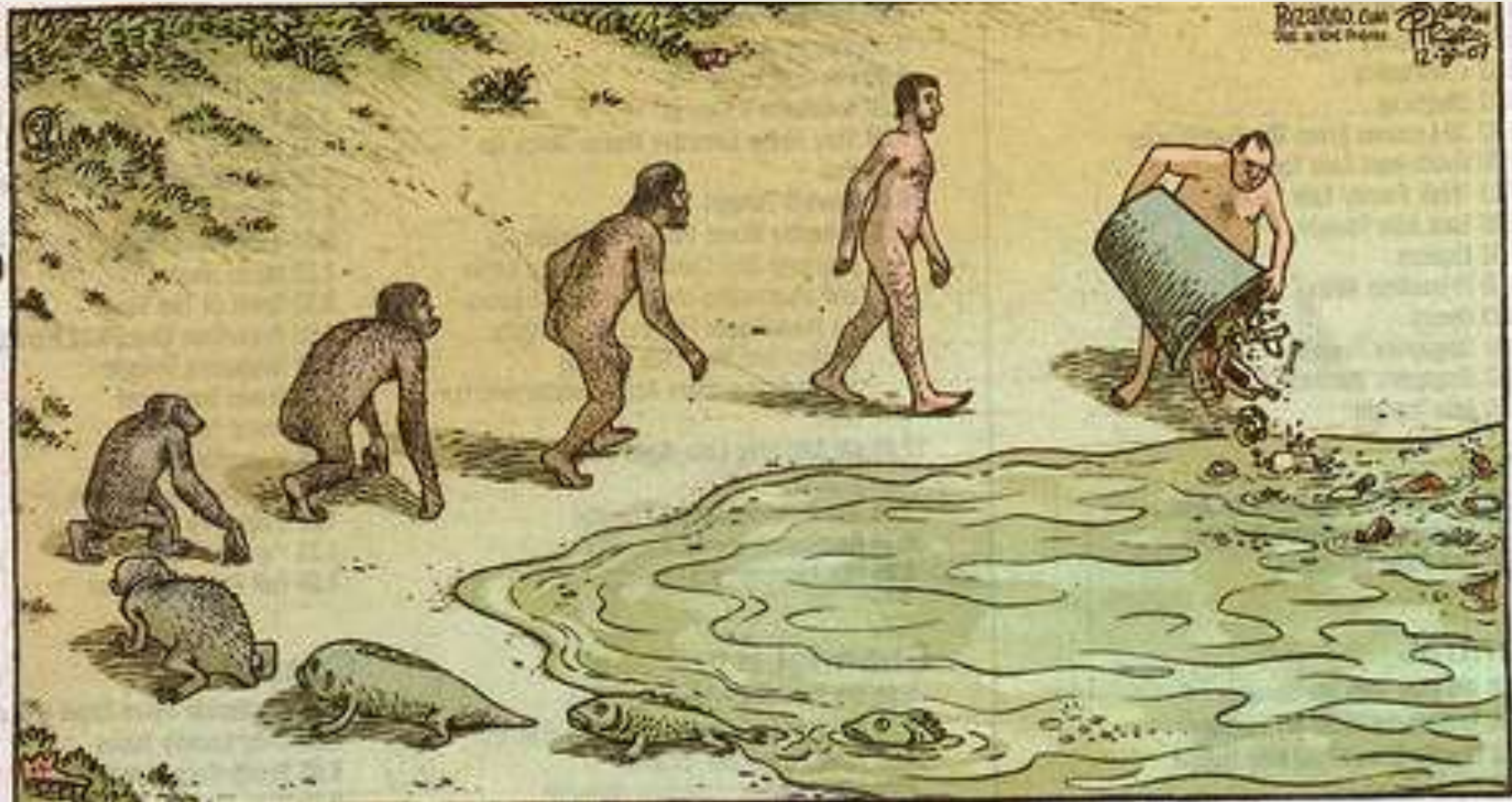


# Cosmology

- There is a plurality of co-existing worlds.
- Each is perishable but there is an innumerable number existing at the same time.
- There is an eternal motion from which these worlds come into being, a cosmic force or breath.
- With this eternal motion there is a separating off and the world as we know it is formed by a vortex movement.
- Earth and water are at the centre of the vortex and fire is at the circumference.



- Anaximander also believed that life comes from the sea.
- Animals adapted to their environment, with humans evolving out of earlier species of fish.



# Thales and Anaximander

- One and the many
- Continuity in Change
- Search for *arche*
- Interest in nature
- What strengths do you recognise in their approach?
- What problems are there?

# Pre-Socratics

- They raised the question as to the ultimate nature of things.
- They all assume the eternity of matter.
- The idea of an absolute beginning is not considered by them.
- They tried to explain the origin of all things from some material element (monism)



# Next week

- Please complete and hand back the record of progress form
- We're going to delve deeper, thinking about some of the key ideas in Laozi, Buddha, Confucius, as well as two more Pre-Socratics – Heraclitus and Parmenides
- We'll ask: *what kinds of questions were they asking about the world? And how relevant are their answers today?*
- Over the week, take a look at Moodle, and if you want to read further, Simon Blackburn's *Think* is recommended...

# Moodle

Learn.marywardcentre.ac.uk

Username: firstnamelastname

Password: FirstNameInitial (capitals)

E.g. Donald Trump

Username: donaldtrump

Password: DONALDT

