## PRESCRATIC PHILOSOPHY

Concerns derived from common observation and nascent science. -the one (unity) and the many (plurality)

- permanence and change

- reality and appearance

- existence (being) and non-existence (non-being)

The universe (kosmos) is ordered and beautiful and in principle capable of explanation.

Earth, water, wind and fire are its constituents.

Pre-Parmenidean philosophy

- Things change but the only factor that does not is the logos: an objective overall controlling force on the processes which determine the nature of the world. the logos can only be known to a limited extent to which our soul is part of the divine logos. (Heraclitus fl. 504 BCE)

Parmenides (fl. 501-492)

- What exists, despite the appearance discontinuity and change of our senses, must have always existed as a continuous, unchanging, timeless, indivisible unity. Change and plurality is an illusion. Coming to be and passing away are impossible for a something cannot become a nothing to become something else.

## GREEK PHILOSOPHY

### Socrates

Argued against the Sophists (e.g Protagoras): who tended to embrace relativism and conventionalism and say that reality is not something independent of the way in which human beings have come to divide things up through their thought and language. Through a questioning process that leads from a *hypotheses* taken from human experience, Socrates seeks the true nature, the *essence,* the unconditional, unqualified definition of the quality or object under consideration.

### Plato

Socrates Pupil. Plato turns Socrates search for definitions into an ontological claim whereby the real meaning of classificatory terms is requires reference in a transcendent object or Form. All knowledge, and knowledge itself, has its absolute, fixed and objective meaning in the world of Forms to which humans have access by an intellectual "seeing". The Forms are like a formulae that known to the intellect of which only imperfect examples exist in the sensible world. The highest standards for knowledge are absolutely universal, certain and necessary and ought to be strived for by the human intellect.

### Aristotle

Knowledge is possible and must be of unchanging universal and necessary truths. However, this is not to be found in the realm of the Forms, as Plato suggests, but in the real or natural world. The grouping of things by kind is not an arbitrary human classification but points the truth of the subject. The subject is predicated to form propositions that call for judgements of truth. Truth is decided on the essence of the subject. For example: there are many individual human persons, each of whom it can be said is a natural kind of human being. Socrates is essentially and in essence of human being. This essence remains constant while at the same time remaining open to the possibility of non-substantial or accidental change. Non-substantial change will never amount to a change of essence. Knowledge, for Aristotle, is of necessary truths about subjects found in this sensible world. The forms exist with us. Thus change is an actualisation of potential within the subject. At any particular stage of the subjects' evolution there - remains potential to be actualised.

## MEDIEVAL PHILOSOPHY

### Augustine

Born Thegaste and died Hippo (both in North Africa) Mother was Monica (Christian). Lived through the decline of the Roman Empire. At 17 entered the University of Carthage, became a teacher and lived extravagantly. Augustine adopted, but profoundly modified, Platonism in the service of Christianity, to which he converted in CE 386 at the age of 32. Impressed by Ambrose bishop of Milan he became determined to renounce his worldly pleasures.

Augustine accepts the Greek view that there are eternal truths independent of the human mind that are discovered through reason. The use of reason for Augustine is really the only possible through divine illumination that follows one's turning toward God. These essences, referred to by Plato as Forms, are identified by Augustine as ideas in the eternal, immutable mind of God - the content of the .

divine mind. It is the human soul that is superior to the body for it is the soul that can know the eternal immutable and necessary truths of God.

Aquinas

Entered the Dominican Order (poverty and evangelisation) much to the distress of his noble Italian family. Moved to Paris and later Cologne where he became well versed in the works of Aristotle. His unfinished Summa Theologiae became the official doctrine of the Dominicans but lay neglected until the 19C when it was recommended by Pius IX. Thomism became the dominant theological motive in the Catholic Church in the 20C.

Aquinas attempts a reconciliation between the central tenets of Aristotelian philosophy and Christian dogma. The form of things does not exist anywhere other than in the existence of things. Our natural understanding of the world is not at odds with a divine reading of the world. The previous reads the universe "from below", the later, "from above". Faith (fides) and scientific knowledge (scientia) are distinguished not by object but by method. Both are cognitive thought processes involving the assent of the intellect to truths but faith requires also the addition of the will. Supernatural truths depend on revelation; natural truths can be known through science alone. Truth is singular; the way of viewing it differs.