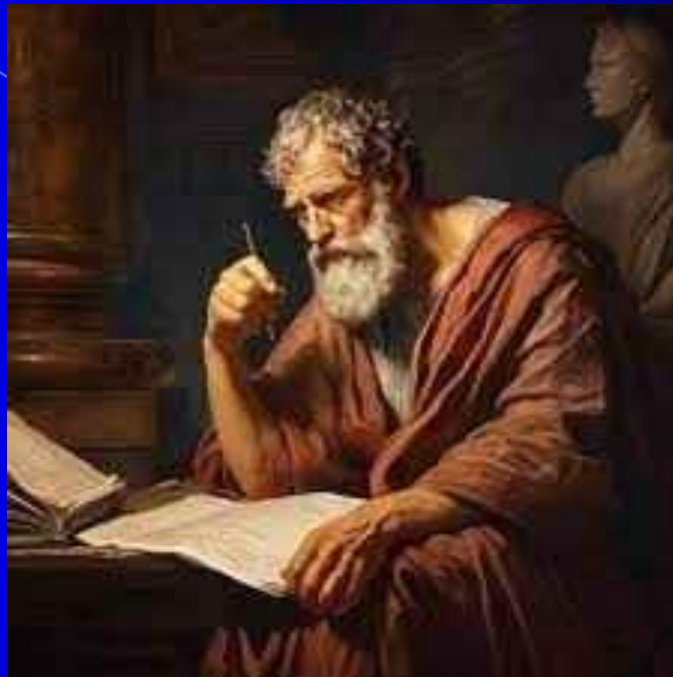


SCHOOLS OF PHILOSOPHY



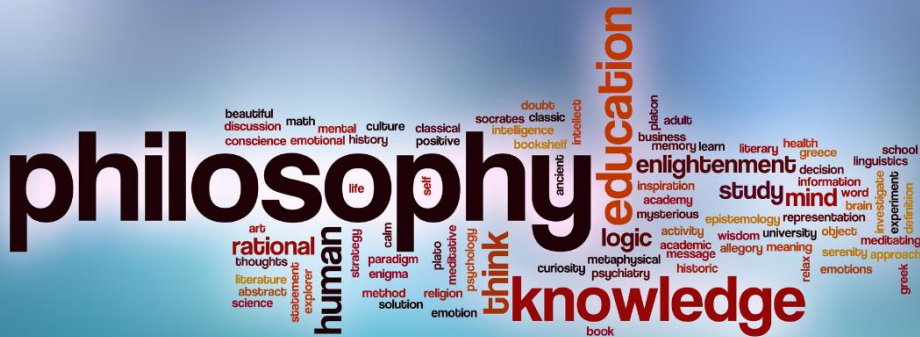
V. V. Raman

OLLI: 20 March 2024

PHILOSOPHY IN HUMAN CULTURE

Philosophy is as ancient as thinking and wondering. Some answers are derived from what one hears or reads.

Others, one constructs oneself. Explicit or implicit they shape our worldview.



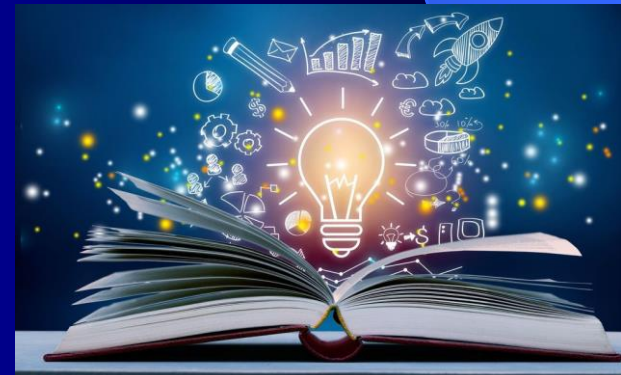
MEANING OF PHILOSOPHY

The etymology of the word in most European languages is from Greek: *Philos*: Love

Sophos: Wisdom, knowledge

Love of wisdom or knowledge.

φίλος φίλος Φιλο-σοφία

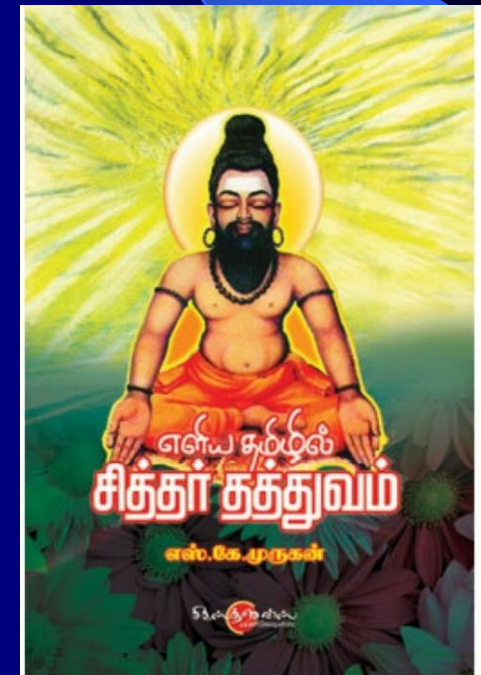
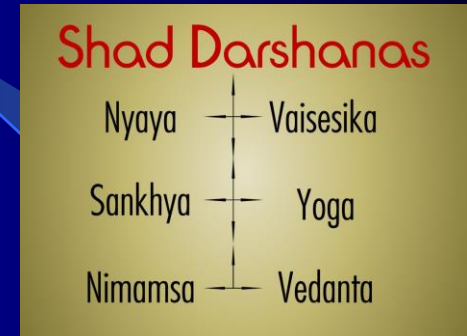


IN OTHER LANGUAGES

Hebrew and Russian use same word. Arabic *falsafah*. Sanskrit: *darshana* view or vision of something significant.

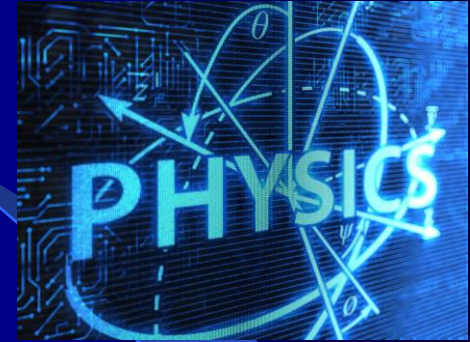
Tamil : *thatthuvam* essence.

Thus, philosophy is *Love* for *Visions* on the *Essence* of things.



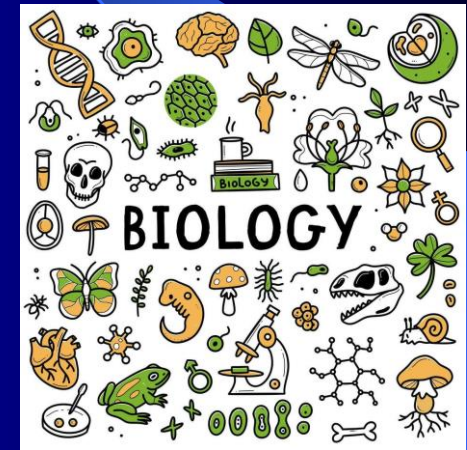
THE WORLD

The world is gross matter,
subtle energy, and throbbing
life-forms.



Physics studies matter and
energy.

Biology studies life-forms.



The mind does extraordinary
things.



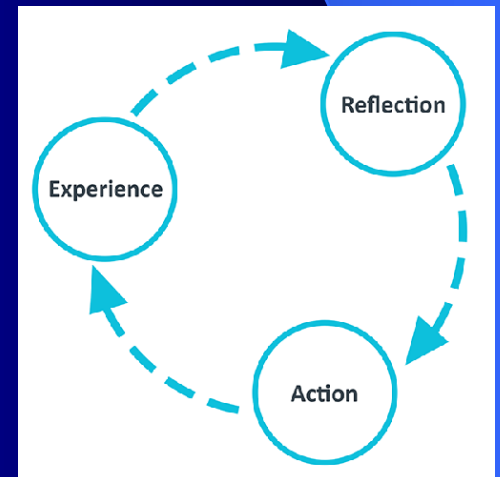
WHT IS PHILOSOPHY?

Mind reflects on experience. Philosophy is reflection on any aspect of life and world. Commenting on an experience, is philosophizing. What is matter? No matter. What is mind? Never mind.

Pascal said : *Se moquer de la philosophie, c'est vraiment philosopher*: Ridiculing philosophy is really philosophizing.

We do not learn from
experience . . . we learn from
reflecting on experience.

John Dewey

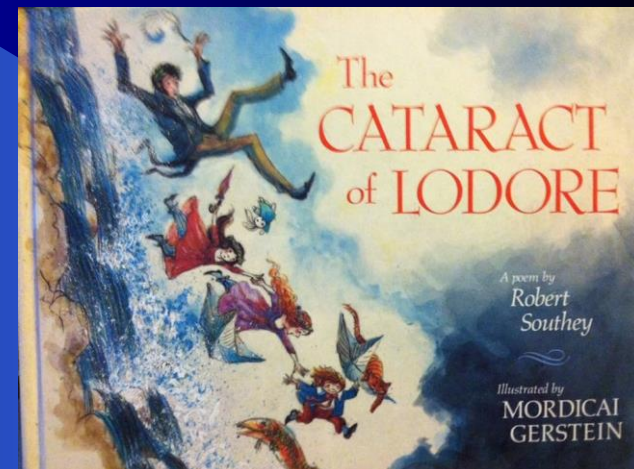


PHILOSOPHIZING IS COMMENTING LOFTILY

We are all philosophers at various levels . On seeing Niagara Falls, “How fantastic!”

But some write poems as Robert Southey did in *The Cataract of Lodore*.

Many witness quarrels, broken love, exploitation. Some write plays, novels, or epics.



SOPHISTICATED REFLECTION

Philosophy is lofty reflection

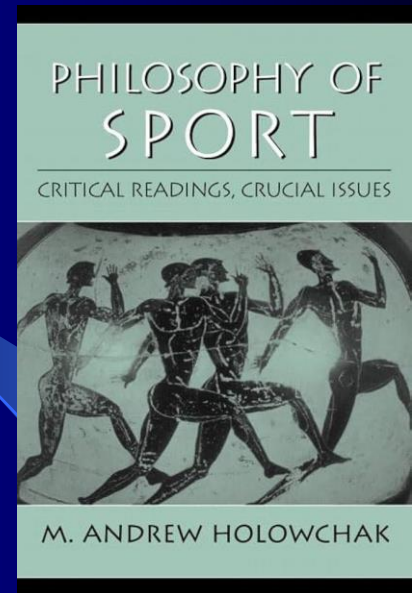
A hamburger is food as is a gourmet banquet.

You may tell a friend, “Come on, don’t say life is worthless!” But the poet says, “Tell me not in mournful numbers life is but an empty dream!”

One may exclaim, “We can’t be sure of anything!” or write a treatise on Agnosticism.

One can philosophize on any subject: on sports or the stock market, on a personal loss or politics, or even on philosophy.

The topics that have inspired philosophers over the ages are the traditional branches of academic philosophy.



ETHICS & AESTHETICS

Some have reflected on human behavior in terms of its merits and demerits: good and bad behavior; virtue and vice. Such reflections are part of ethics, a branch of philosophy.

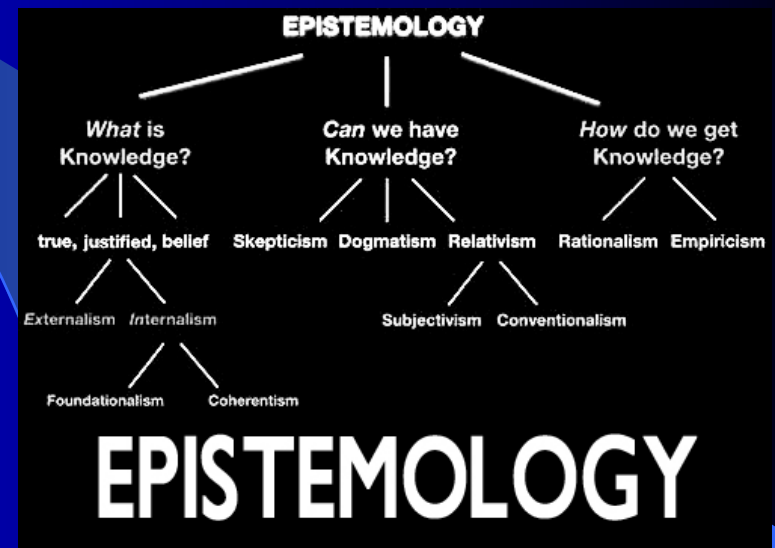
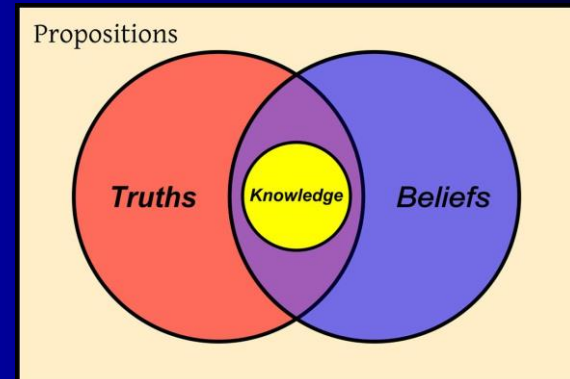
One can argue about what constitutes beauty or ugliness. That would be part of aesthetics, another branch of philosophy.



EPISTEMOLOGY

We get to know many things. Any statement of these is a Proposition.

Careful reflection on the basis and analysis of the sources of human knowledge is a branch of philosophy. It is called Epistemology.



METAPHYSICS

From the moment we wake up from sleep everything seems real. During sleep everything sleeps real also.

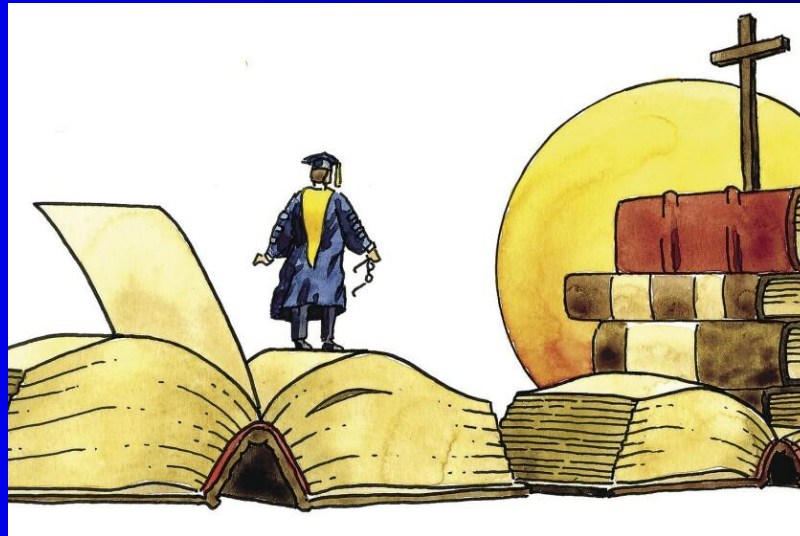


What is *really* real?
The systematic probe into the nature of reality is called METAPHYSICS.



THEOLOGY

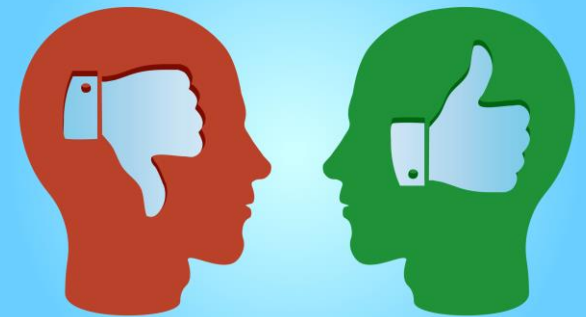
There is the God of religions Who is worshiped, prayed to, and extolled in hymns. One may reflect on the nature of God, Divine attributes. validity of God-belief.



BIASES

Bertrand Russell described philosophy as a No Man's Land between science **with its definite knowledge** and religion **with its dogmas**.

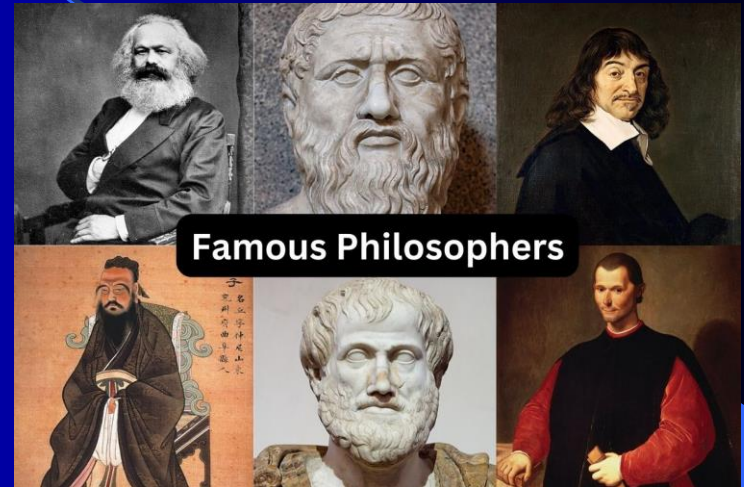
Even philosophers have their biases. He could simply have said science and religion.



NAMES OF PHILISOPHICAL SYSTEMS

The ideas of influential philosophers spread. They acquire special names.

There are scores of them, ranging from AGNOSTICISM to ZENONISM



STOIC

COFFEE BREAK



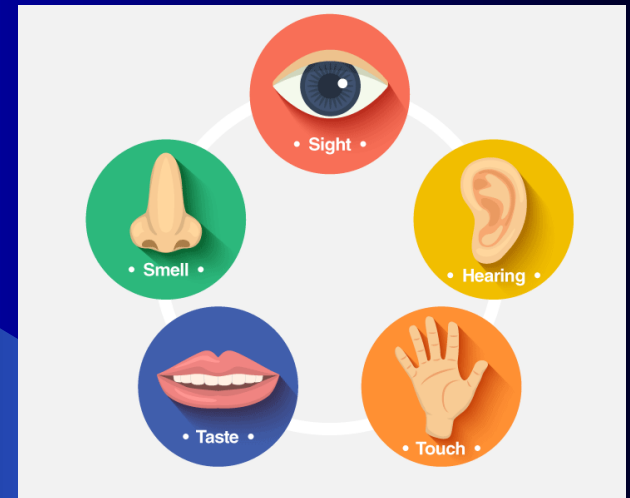
[HTTPS://STOIC.COFFEE](https://stoic.coffee)

THREE KINDS OF KNOWLEDGE

1 SENSORY:

Can be

- (a) Analyzed, verified by others, quantified.
- (b) Can be declared true or false, in the logical frameworks, and peers.

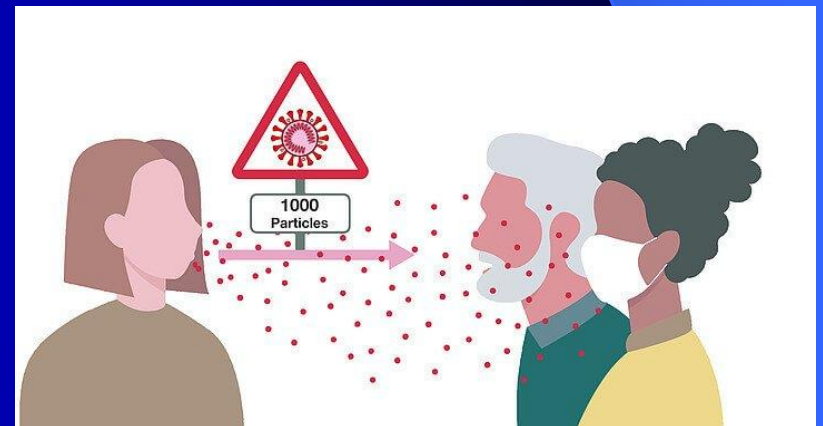
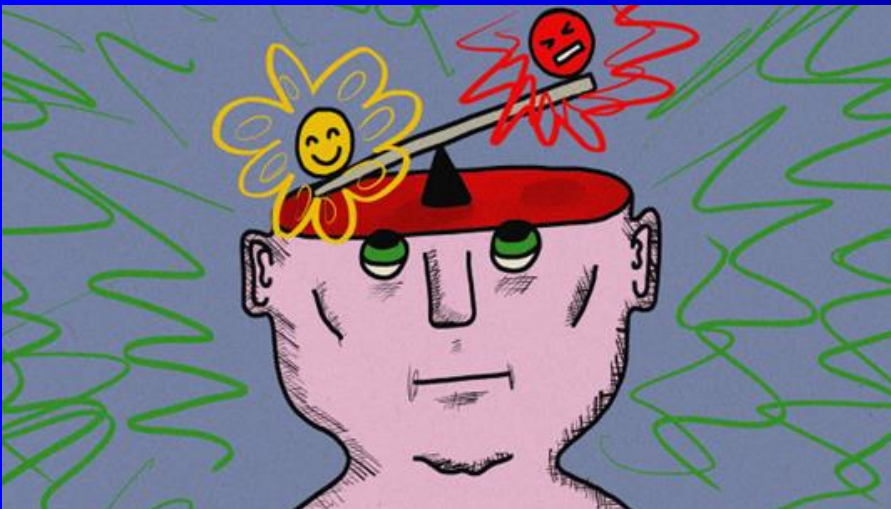


EXPERIENTIAL

Tooth-ache, tummy ache, melancholy and migraine are very private knowledge.

One may exclaim how great the soup was or complain how one is disappointed.

But it can't be transmitted.

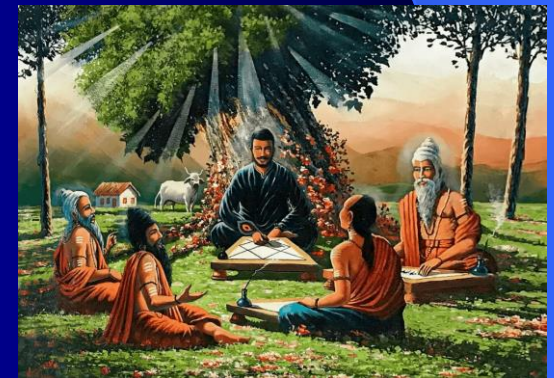


GNOSIS: SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE

Acquired thru meditation, introspection, yoga, etc. Also pilgrimages and epiphany. It God, non-physical etc.



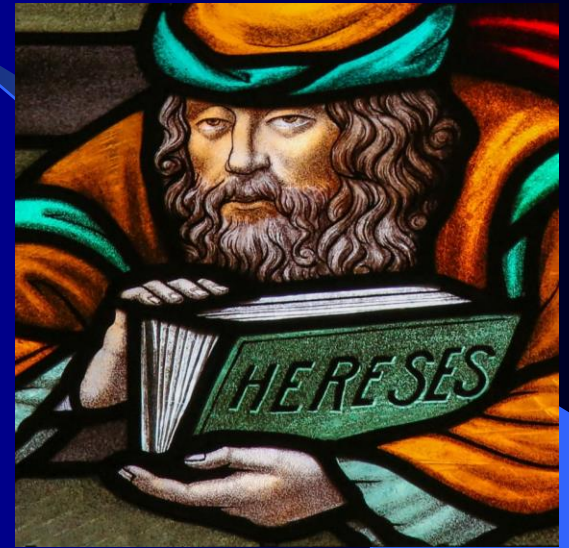
Proclaimed by seers, mystics, visionaries, and prophets. The blessed few who have received such knowledge propagate it.



ONCE UNTENABLE

The tenets of Gnosticism were once anti-Christian heresy.

Every system of thought that affirms truths about the unverified and unverifiable is heresy to some other system which has its own tenets about these matters.



ANOTHER INTERPRETATION

Some claim, rightly or rashly, that Gnosis is accessible by inhaling or imbibing certain botanical items prohibited by law in some countries because while experiencing Gnosis one is not safe driving.



MATERIALISM

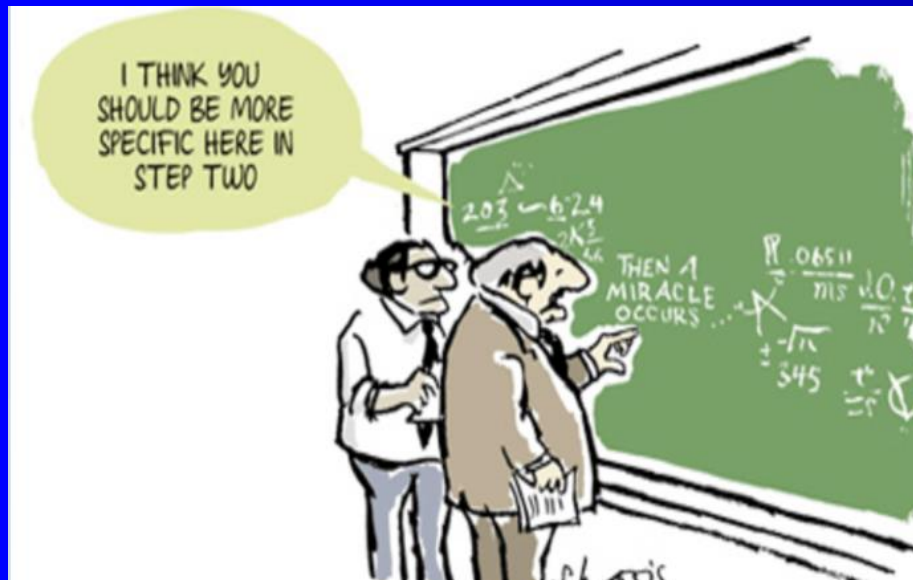
Materialism has nothing to do with love of luxuries or fondness for fineries. It is not about greed and splurging on sports cars.

It says: on final analysis everything can be reduced to matter and cause-effect.



Even mental entities like thought and suffering, cultural elements like religion and ideals, are rooted in matter.

Matter is primary, the only entity ultimately real.



ROOT OF MATERIALISM

The materialist view arises from experiences in where every see, smell, hear, taste, and touch is tied to some *thing*.

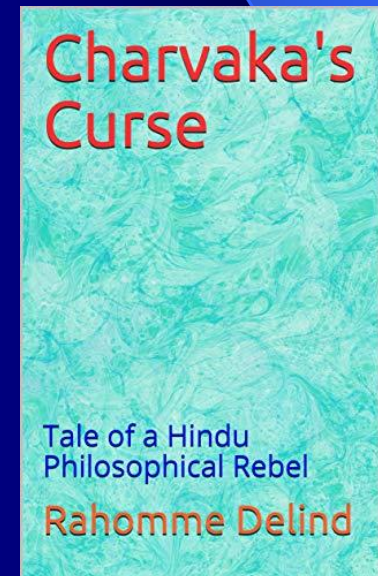
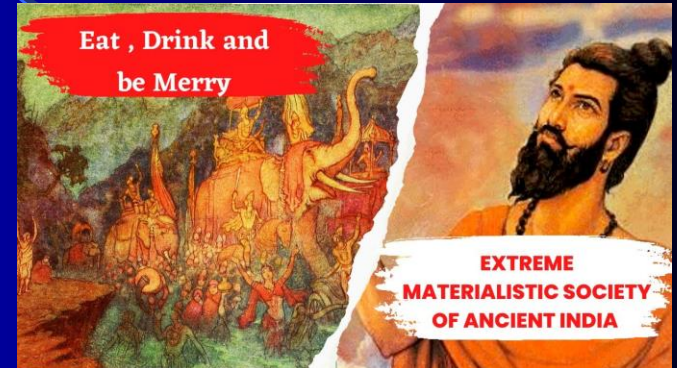


You never see an immaterial *thing*, nor hear sound from immaterial sources. We touch and taste and smell only *things*: all matter.

CHARVAKA

Chárváka preached there is nothing beyond matter. Soul and after-life are fantasies, like gods and demons.

He stressed the role of immediate perception in the acquisition of knowledge. He was always criticized and condemned by traditionalists.



ANAXAGORAS OF GREECE

Anaxagoras declared that "the sun and moon and stars are fiery stones carried round by rotation of the aether," not gods.

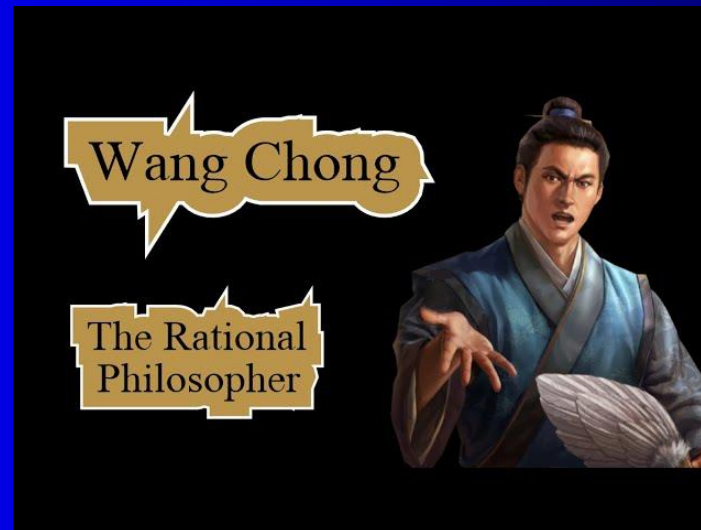
Such views were contrary to popular beliefs. He was charged with impiety and was imprisoned.



WANG CHONG (27 – 100 CE)

He refused to believe in ghosts, asked what sort of clothes spirits were wearing. For him humanity was a fleeting blip in the cosmos.

He refused to take the writings of the ancients as wisdom that cannot be questioned.

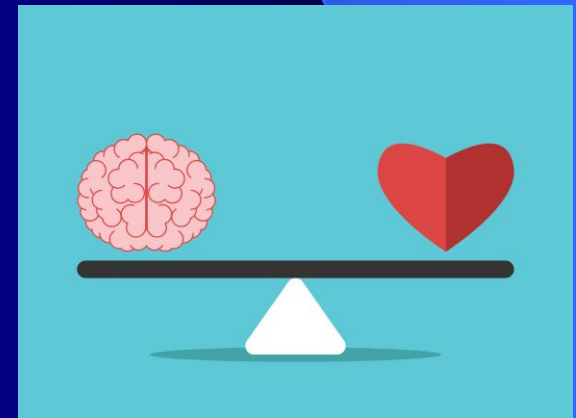


MATERIALISM & SPIRITUALISM

Materialism and spiritualism are the perennial conflict between head and heart.

We have poets and philosophers, artists and scientists. One has impact on our feelings, the other enriches our understanding.

Both are human, both have the potential for enriching life.

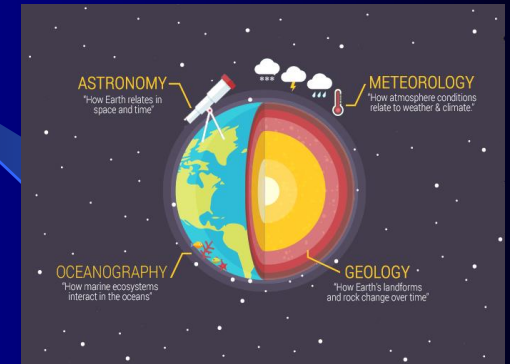


THREE MEANINGFUL ELEMENTS IN CULTURE

Science connects us to the phenomenal world.

Religions enrich the spirit with meaning, purpose, values and community.

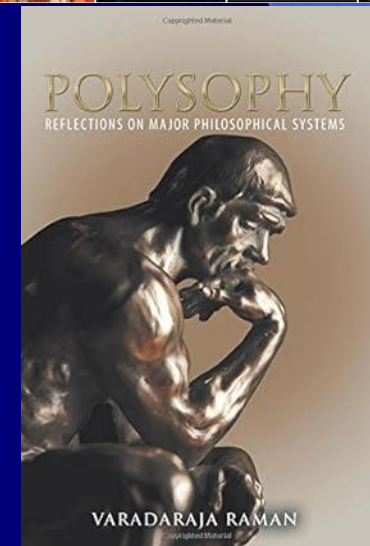
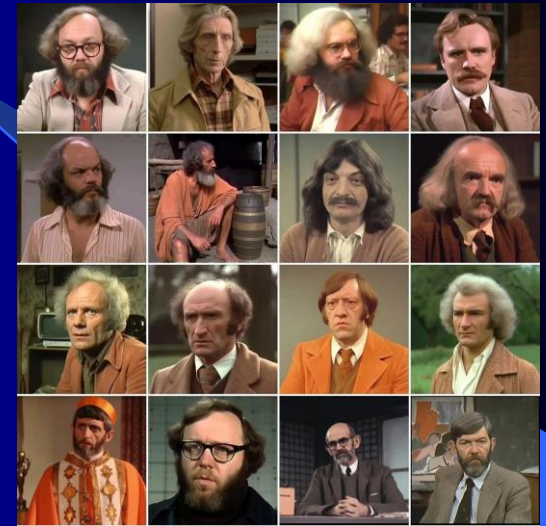
Philosophy could seek a framework for scientific knowledge and religious perspectives



POLYSOPHY

Many human minds, so many philosophies. Like fruits and flowers, philosophies come in a variety of forms and colors. Like poems and music, they come in many meters and melodies.

This range and variety is *polysophy*: Views and visions in multiple splendors.



POLYODOSISM

Every group has its tradition and culture, its own worldview. Often this has led to claims of unique correctness and to conflicts.



POLYODOSISM एकं सद्विप्रा बहुधा
वदन्ति; *Truth (God) is One; the
learned call it differently.*
Rig Veda.

