

Parmenide

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Parmenides of Elea (/pərˈmənidiːz ... ˈpɜːli/; Ancient Greek: παρμενίδης ὁ ἐλεῖος; fl. late sixth or early fifth century BC) was a pre-Socratic Greek

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Parmenides was born in the Greek colony of Elea to a wealthy and illustrious family. The exact date of his birth is not known with certainty; on the one hand, according to the doxographer Diogenes Laërtius, Parmenides flourished in the period immediately preceding 500 BC, which would place his year of birth around 540 BC; on the other hand, in the dialogue *Parmenides* Plato portrays him as visiting Athens at the age of 65, when Socrates was a young man, c. 450 BC, which, if true, suggests a potential year of birth of c. 515 BC. Parmenides is thought to have been in his prime (or "floruit") around 475 BC.

The single known work by Parmenides is a philosophical poem in dactylic hexameter verse whose original title is unknown but which is often referred to as *On Nature*. Only fragments of it survive, but the integrity of the poem is remarkably higher than what has come down to us from the works of almost all other pre-Socratic philosophers, and therefore classicists can reconstruct the philosophical doctrines with greater precision. In his poem, Parmenides prescribes two views of reality. The first, the way of "Aletheia" or truth, describes how all reality is one, change is impossible, and existence is timeless and uniform. The second view, the way of "Doxa" or opinion, describes the world of appearances, in which one's sensory faculties lead to conceptions which are false and deceitful.

Parmenides has been considered the founder of ontology and has, through his influence on Plato, influenced the whole history of Western philosophy. He is also considered to be the founder of the Eleatic school of philosophy, which also included Zeno of Elea and Melissus of Samos. Zeno's paradoxes of motion were developed to defend Parmenides's views. In contemporary philosophy, Parmenides's work has remained relevant in debates about the philosophy of time.

Parmenides (dialogue)

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The *Parmenides* purports to be an account of a meeting between the two great philosophers of the Eleatic school, Parmenides and Zeno of Elea, and a young Socrates. The occasion of the meeting was the reading by Zeno of his treatise defending Parmenidean monism against those partisans of plurality who asserted that Parmenides' supposition that there is a one gives rise to intolerable absurdities and contradictions. The dialogue is set during a supposed meeting between Parmenides and Zeno of Elea in Socrates' hometown of Athens. This dialogue is chronologically the earliest of all as Socrates is only nineteen years old here. It is also notable that he takes the position of the student here while Parmenides serves as the lecturer.

Most scholars agree that the dialogue does not record historic conversations, and is most likely an invention by Plato.

Parmenides (disambiguation)

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Parmenides was an ancient Greek philosopher born in Elea.

Parmenides may also refer to:

6039 Parmenides, an outer main-belt asteroid

Parmenides (dialogue), one of the dialogues of Plato

Parmenides Foundation, a psychology organization

Eleatics

that Parmenides lived in the early 5th century BC, based on the date and setting of the fictionalized events in Plato's Parmenides where Parmenides and

The Eleatics were a group of pre-Socratic philosophers and school of thought in the 5th century BC centered around the ancient Greek colony of Elea (Ancient Greek: Ἠλεα), located around 80 miles south-east of Naples in southern Italy, then known as Magna Graecia.

The primary philosophers who are associated with the Eleatic doctrines are Parmenides, Zeno of Elea, and Melissus of Samos, although other Italian philosophers such as Xenophanes of Colophon and Empedocles have also sometimes been classified as members of this movement. The Eleatics have traditionally been seen as advocating a strict metaphysical view of monism in response to the materialist monism advocated by their predecessors, the Ionian school.

Plato

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Plato (PLAY-toe; Greek: Πλάτων, Plátōn; born c. 428–423 BC, died 348/347 BC) was an ancient Greek philosopher of the Classical period who is considered a foundational thinker in Western philosophy and an innovator of the written dialogue and dialectic forms. He influenced all the major areas of theoretical philosophy and practical philosophy, and was the founder of the Platonic Academy, a philosophical school in Athens where Plato taught the doctrines that would later become known as Platonism.

Plato's most famous contribution is the theory of forms (or ideas), which aims to solve what is now known as the problem of universals. He was influenced by the pre-Socratic thinkers Pythagoras, Heraclitus, and Parmenides, although much of what is known about them is derived from Plato himself.

Along with his teacher Socrates, and his student Aristotle, Plato is a central figure in the history of Western philosophy. Plato's complete works are believed to have survived for over 2,400 years—unlike that of nearly all of his contemporaries. Although their popularity has fluctuated, they have consistently been read and studied through the ages. Through Neoplatonism, he also influenced both Christian and Islamic philosophy. In modern times, Alfred North Whitehead said: "the safest general characterization of the European philosophical tradition is that it consists of a series of footnotes to Plato."

Peter Kingsley

of Life. He has written extensively on the pre-Socratic philosophers Parmenides and Empedocles and the world they lived in. Kingsley's books have been

Peter Kingsley (born 1953) is a mystic, philosopher, and scholar. He is the author of six books and numerous articles, including *Ancient Philosophy, Mystery and Magic*; *In the Dark Places of Wisdom*; *Reality*; *A Story Waiting to Pierce You: Mongolia, Tibet and the Destiny of the Western World*; *Catafalque: Carl Jung and the End of Humanity*; and *A Book of Life*. He has written extensively on the pre-Socratic philosophers Parmenides and Empedocles and the world they lived in.

Kingsley's books have been translated into over a dozen languages including simplified Chinese (Beijing) and traditional Chinese (Taipei), Dutch, Farsi, French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Italian, Russian, Slovakian, Spanish and Turkish.

Pre-Socratic philosophy

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Pre-Socratic philosophy, also known as early Greek philosophy, is ancient Greek philosophy before Socrates. Pre-Socratic philosophers were mostly interested in cosmology, the beginning and the substance of the universe, but the inquiries of these early philosophers spanned the workings of the natural world as well as human society, ethics, and religion. They sought explanations based on natural law rather than the actions of gods. Their work and writing has been almost entirely lost. Knowledge of their views comes from testimonia, i.e. later authors' discussions of the work of pre-Socratics. Philosophy found fertile ground in the ancient Greek world because of the close ties with neighboring civilizations and the rise of autonomous civil entities, poleis.

Pre-Socratic philosophy began in the 6th century BC with the three Milesians: Thales, Anaximander, and Anaximenes. They all attributed the arche (a word that could take the meaning of "origin", "substance" or "principle") of the world to, respectively, water, apeiron (the unlimited), and air. Another three pre-Socratic philosophers came from nearby Ionian towns: Xenophanes, Heraclitus, and Pythagoras. Xenophanes is known for his critique of the anthropomorphism of gods. Heraclitus, who was notoriously difficult to understand, is known for his maxim on impermanence, *ta panta rhei*, and for attributing fire to be the arche of the world. Pythagoras created a cult-like following that advocated that the universe was made up of numbers. The Eleatic school (Parmenides, Zeno of Elea, and Melissus) followed in the 5th century BC. Parmenides claimed that only one thing exists and nothing can change. Zeno and Melissus mainly defended Parmenides' opinion. Anaxagoras and Empedocles offered a pluralistic account of how the universe was created. Leucippus and Democritus are known for their atomism, and their views that only void and matter exist. The Sophists advanced philosophical relativism. The Pre-Socratics have had significant impact on several concepts of Western philosophy, such as naturalism and rationalism, and paved the way for scientific methodology.

Nothing

Socrates and Plato largely agreed with Parmenides's reasoning on nothing. Aristotle differs with Parmenides's conception of nothing and says, "Although

Nothing, no-thing, or no thing is the complete absence of anything, as the opposite of something and an antithesis of everything. The concept of nothing has been a matter of philosophical debate since at least the 5th century BCE. Early Greek philosophers argued that it was impossible for nothing to "exist". The atomists allowed nothing but only in the spaces between the invisibly small atoms. For them, all space was filled with atoms. Aristotle took the view that there exists matter and there exists space, a receptacle into which matter objects can be placed. This became the paradigm for classical scientists of the modern age like Isaac Newton. Nevertheless, some philosophers, like René Descartes, continued to argue against the existence of empty space until the scientific discovery of a physical vacuum.

Existentialists like Jean-Paul Sartre and Martin Heidegger (as interpreted by Sartre) have associated nothing with consciousness. Some writers have made connections between Heidegger's concept of nothing and the nirvana of Eastern religions.

Modern science does not equate vacuum with nothing. The vacuum in quantum field theory is filled with virtual particles. The quantum vacuum is often viewed as a modern version of an aether theory.

Zeno of Elea

philosopher from Elea, in Southern Italy (Magna Graecia). He was a student of Parmenides and one of the Eleatics. Zeno defended his instructor's belief in monism

Zeno of Elea (; Ancient Greek: ????? ? ????????; c. 490 – c. 430 BC) was a pre-Socratic Greek philosopher from Elea, in Southern Italy (Magna Graecia). He was a student of Parmenides and one of the Eleatics. Zeno defended his instructor's belief in monism, the idea that only one single entity exists that makes up all of reality. He rejected the existence of space, time, and motion. To disprove these concepts, he developed a series of paradoxes to demonstrate why they are impossible. Though his original writings are lost, subsequent descriptions by Plato, Aristotle, Diogenes Laertius, and Simplicius of Cilicia have allowed study of his ideas.

Zeno's arguments are divided into two different types: his arguments against plurality, or the existence of multiple objects, and his arguments against motion. Those against plurality suggest that for anything to exist, it must be divisible infinitely, meaning it would necessarily have both infinite mass and no mass simultaneously. Those against motion invoke the idea that distance must be divisible infinitely, meaning infinite steps would be required to cross any distance.

Zeno's philosophy is still debated in the present day, and no solution to his paradoxes has been agreed upon by philosophers. His paradoxes have influenced philosophy and mathematics, both in ancient and modern times. Many of his ideas have been challenged by modern developments in physics and mathematics, such as atomic theory, mathematical limits, and set theory.

Zeno's paradoxes

Simplicius of Cilicia. Zeno devised these paradoxes to support his teacher Parmenides's philosophy of monism, which posits that despite people's sensory experiences

Zeno's paradoxes are a series of philosophical arguments presented by the ancient Greek philosopher Zeno of Elea (c. 490–430 BC), primarily known through the works of Plato, Aristotle, and later commentators like Simplicius of Cilicia. Zeno devised these paradoxes to support his teacher Parmenides's philosophy of monism, which posits that despite people's sensory experiences, reality is singular and unchanging. The paradoxes famously challenge the notions of plurality (the existence of many things), motion, space, and time by suggesting they lead to logical contradictions.

Zeno's work, primarily known from second-hand accounts since his original texts are lost, comprises forty "paradoxes of plurality," which argue against the coherence of believing in multiple existences, and several arguments against motion and change. Of these, only a few are definitively known today, including the renowned "Achilles Paradox", which illustrates the problematic concept of infinite divisibility in space and time. In this paradox, Zeno argues that a swift runner like Achilles cannot overtake a slower moving tortoise with a head start, because the distance between them can be infinitely subdivided, implying Achilles would require an infinite number of steps to catch the tortoise.

These paradoxes have stirred extensive philosophical and mathematical discussion throughout history, particularly regarding the nature of infinity and the continuity of space and time. Initially, Aristotle's interpretation, suggesting a potential rather than actual infinity, was widely accepted. However, modern solutions leveraging the mathematical framework of calculus have provided a different perspective,

highlighting Zeno's significant early insight into the complexities of infinity and continuous motion. Zeno's paradoxes remain a pivotal reference point in the philosophical and mathematical exploration of reality, motion, and the infinite, influencing both ancient thought and modern scientific understanding.

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