

The term 'metaphysics'

➤ from the Greek

μετά (meta - beyond, after)

φύσις (phusis - physics, nature)

= after the physics or beyond the physical

The term 'metaphysics'

- Aristotle's work *Metaphysics* gave the name to the subject matter contained in the treatise:
 - a. Either because this treatise that Aristotle wrote came after his treatise titled *Physics*
 - b. Or because the subject matter this with which treatise dealt was beyond nature

Why Begin with Metaphysics?

1. Historical reason - the first philosophers dealt with metaphysical issues
2. Philosophical reason - according to some, issues of reality (being) are more fundamental than issues of knowing

Questions in Metaphysics

The problem of permanence and change

1. *What is it about a thing that makes it the "same" thing throughout all the changes it undergoes?*
2. *What is it about kinds of things that make them all the same kind of thing? What makes all trees, trees?*

Questions in Metaphysics

The problem of permanence and change

3. *The problem of appearance and reality - We will visit this notion when we look at Epistemology.*

**There are two great
philosophical traditions
in Western thought that
have endured since the
ancient Greeks.**



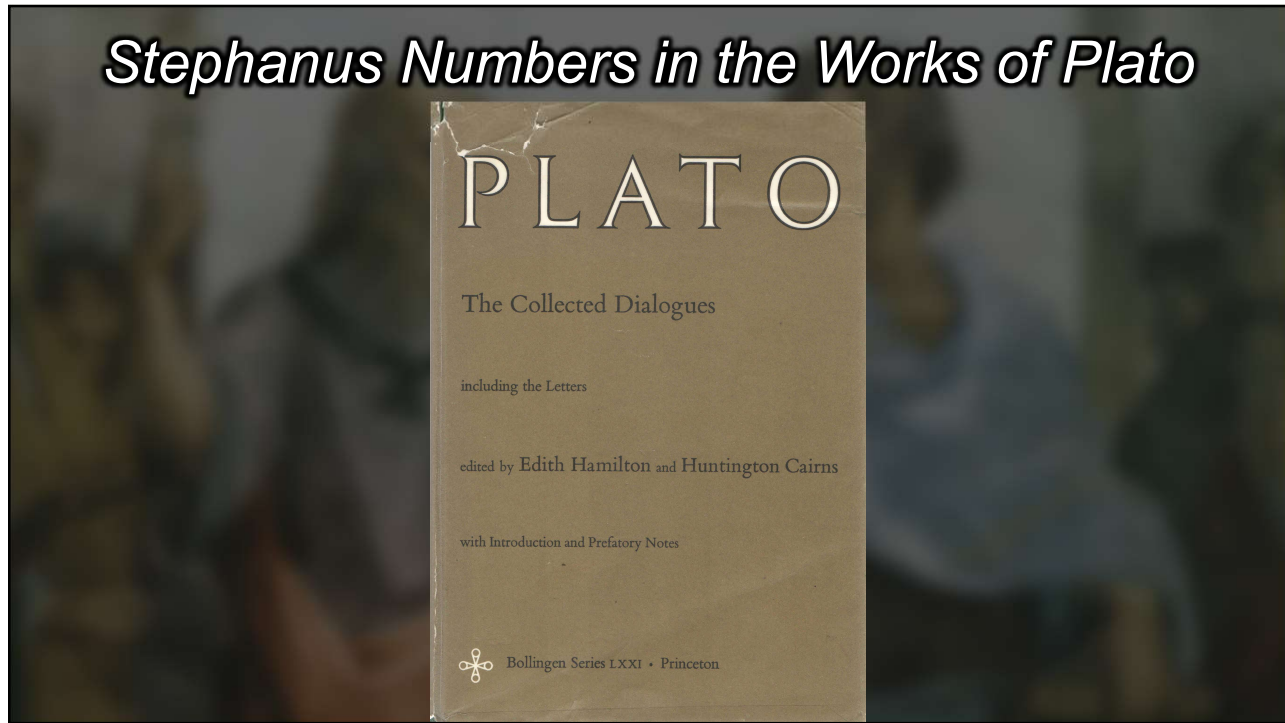
Exploring the contours of how these traditions have answered certain basic questions about the nature of reality will enable us to position many questions and concerns we have as Christians.

Plato is significant and stands out first among philosophers in the flow of Western philosophical thought is because in him we have the first full-fledged philosophical system.

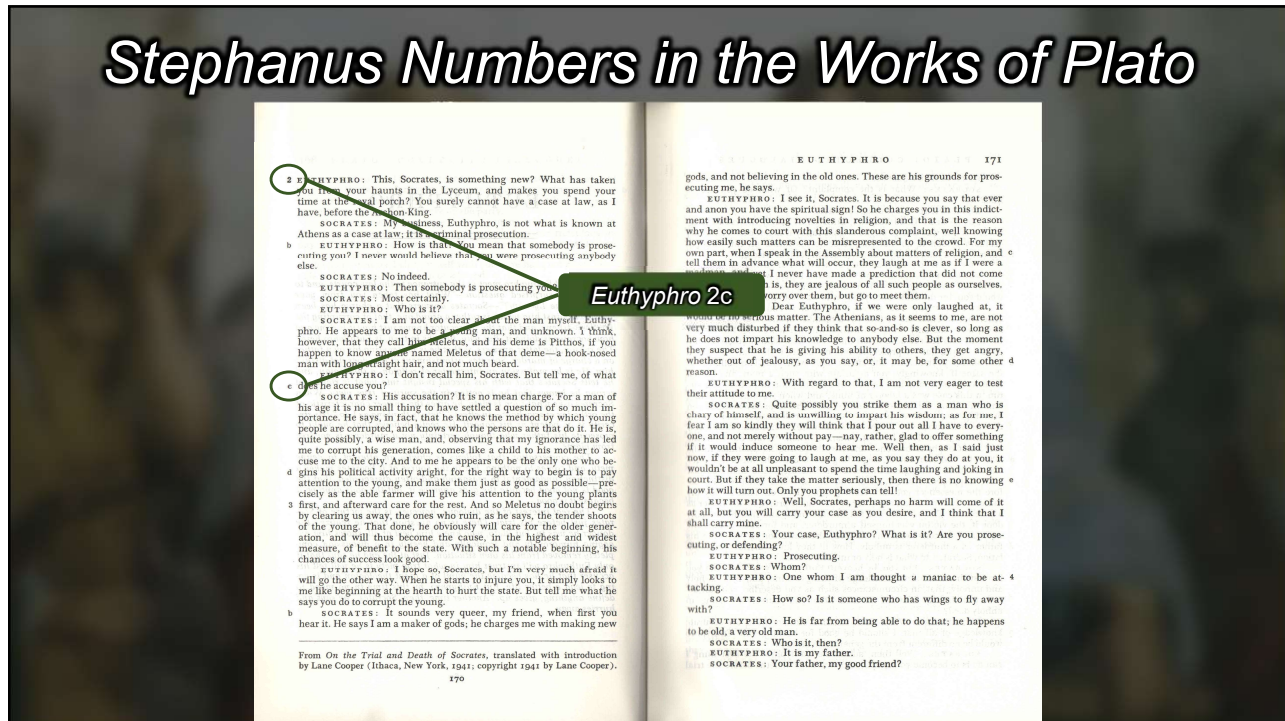
Reality
Knowledge
Ethics
Art
Politics

Citing the
Works of Plato

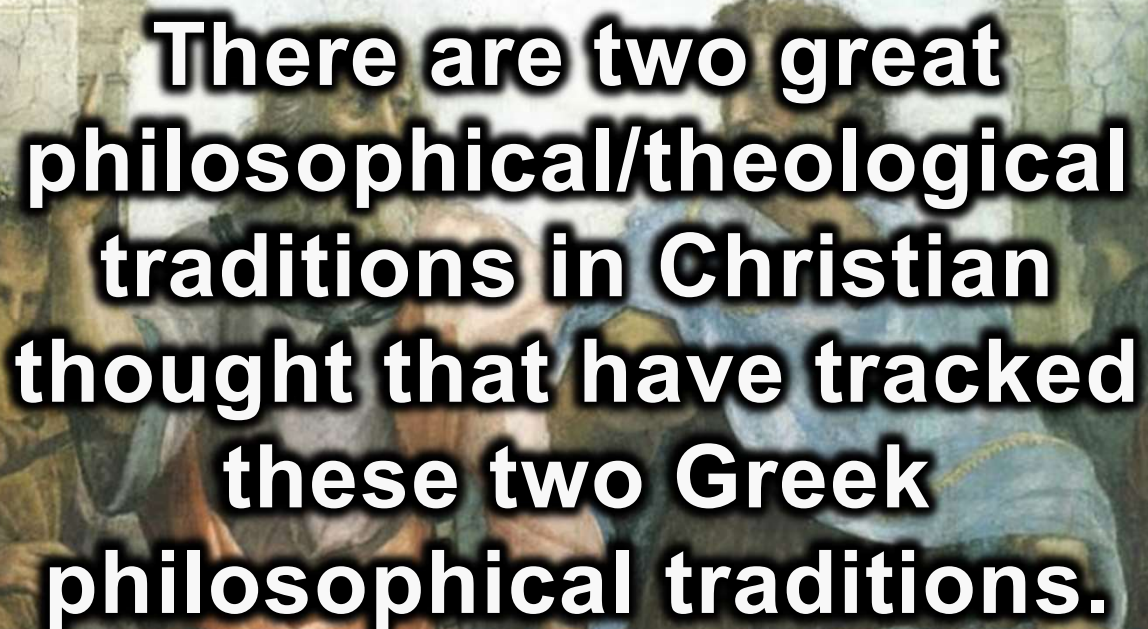
Stephanus Numbers in the Works of Plato



Stephanus Numbers in the Works of Plato



Aristotle is significant because of his reaction to Plato regarding the nature of sensible objects, his intense emphasis on observation of the natural world, and his contributions to logic.

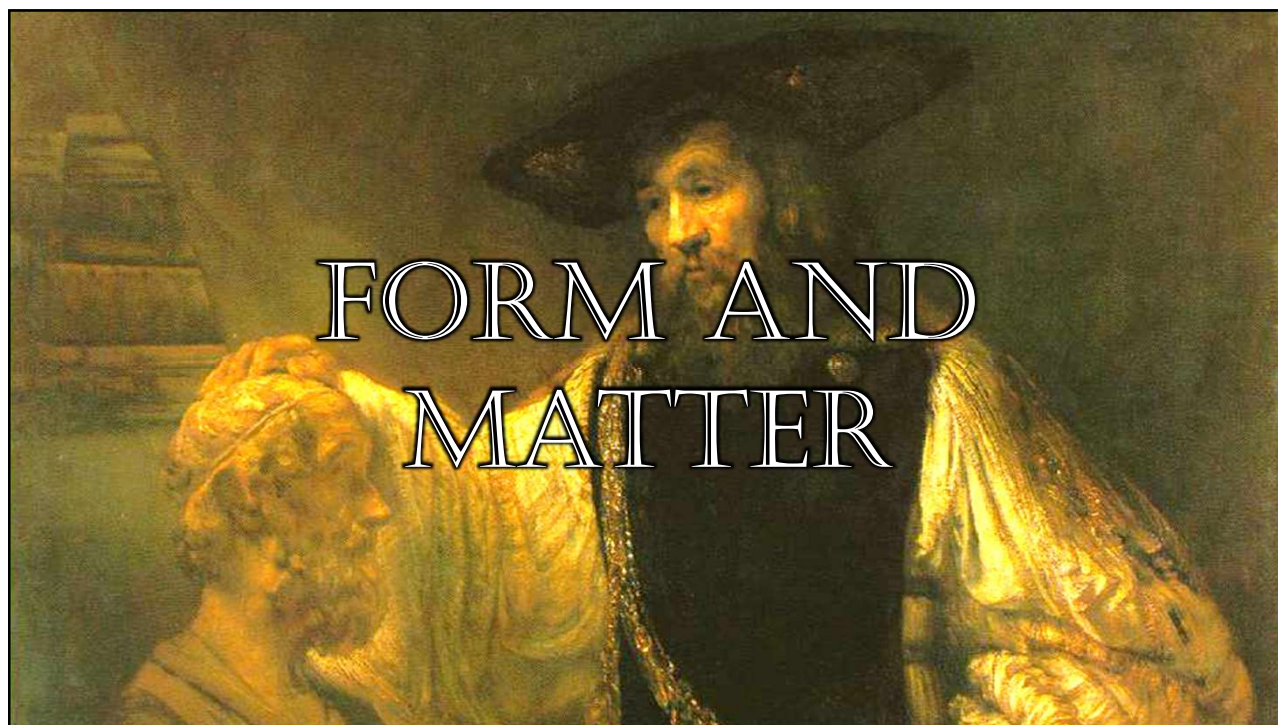


There are two great philosophical/theological traditions in Christian thought that have tracked these two Greek philosophical traditions.

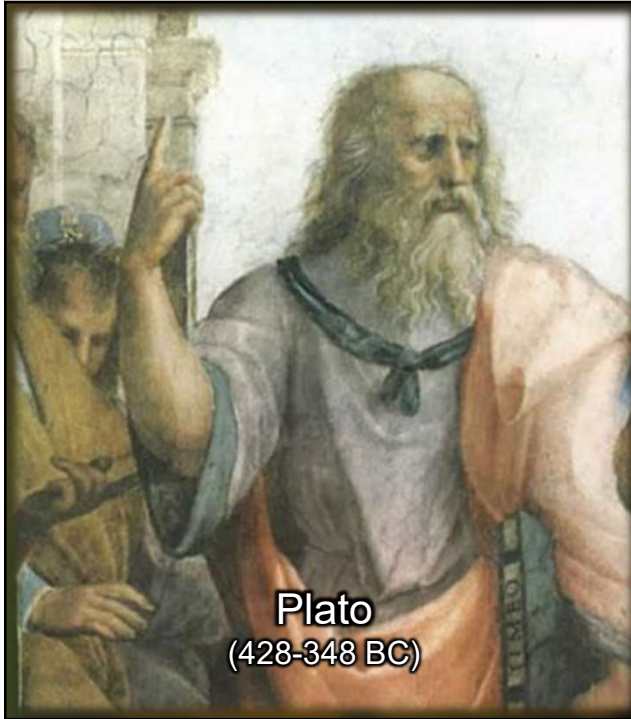


Augustine
(354-430)

Aquinas
(1225-1274)



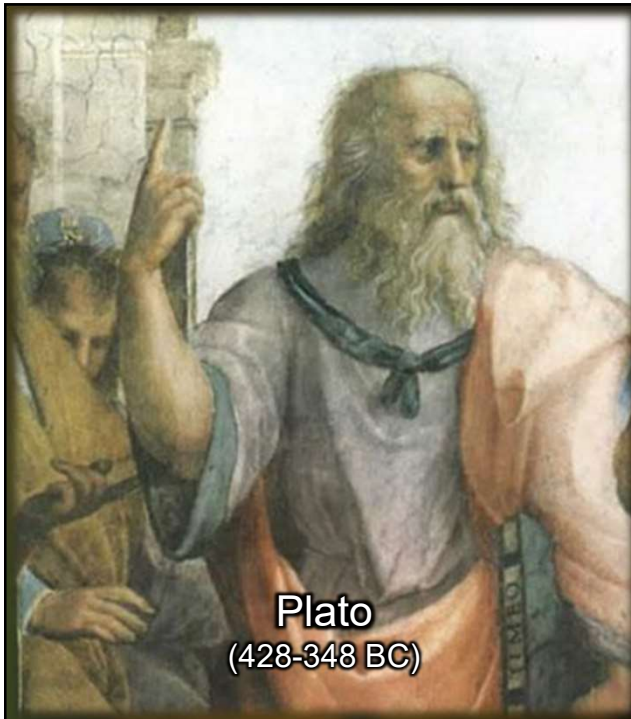
FORM AND
MATTER



Plato
(428-348 BC)

Plato wrote in "dialogues" written in the style of interaction between the various speakers.

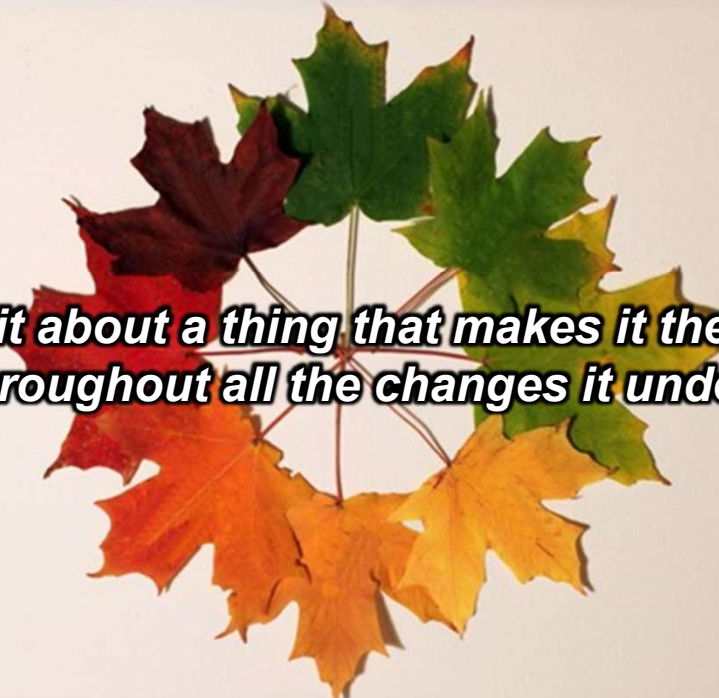
His earlier dialogues have Socrates as the main speaker.



Plato
(428-348 BC)

One of Plato's concerns was trying to find the essence of things.

In Greek thought the metaphysical doctrines of Form and Matter arose out of several compelling questions.

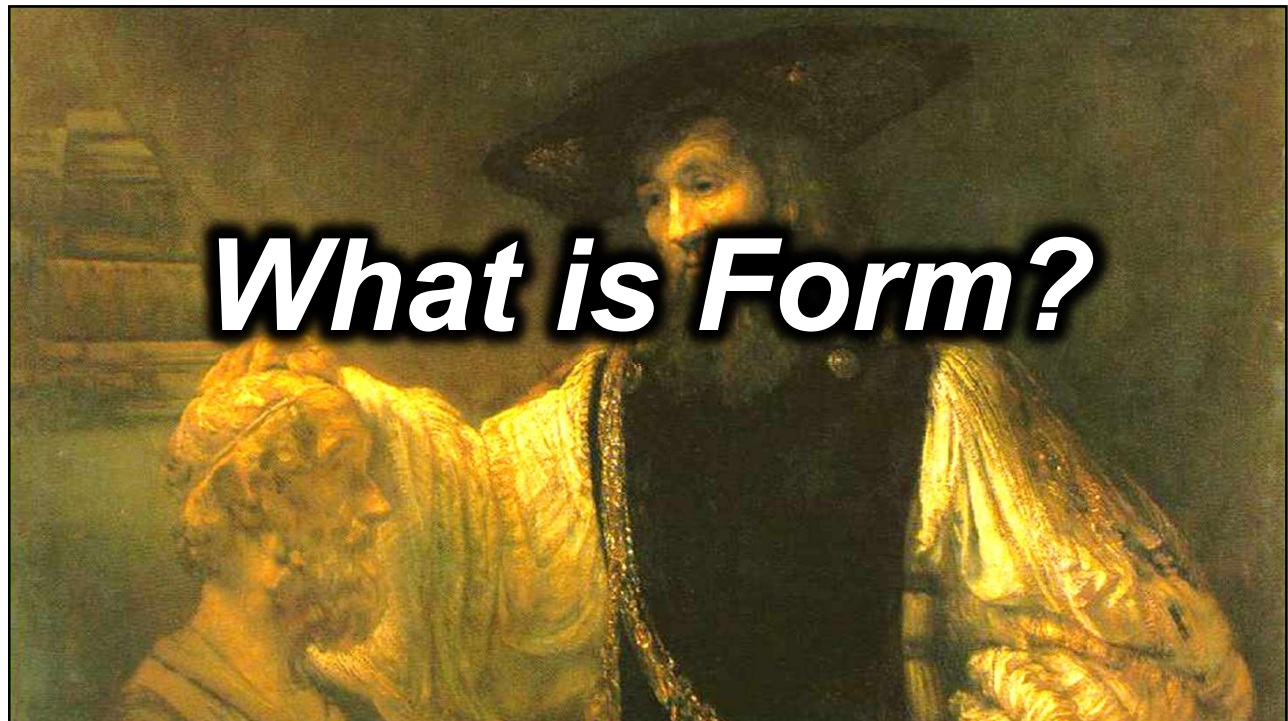


What is it about a thing that makes it the "same" thing throughout all the changes it undergoes?

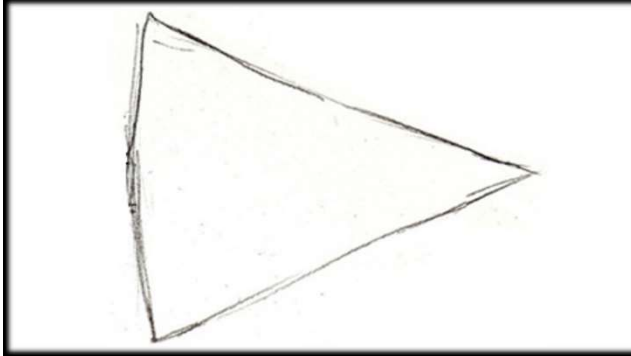
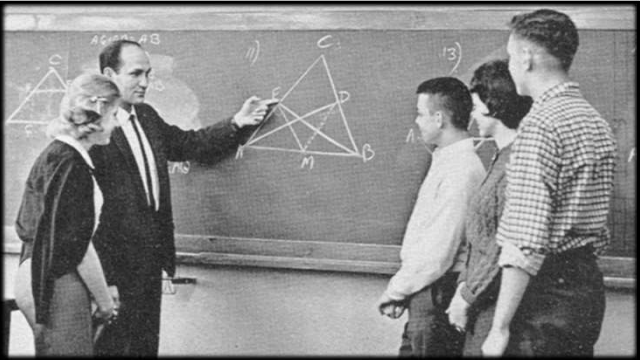


If (since?) things change, how is knowledge of things possible at all?

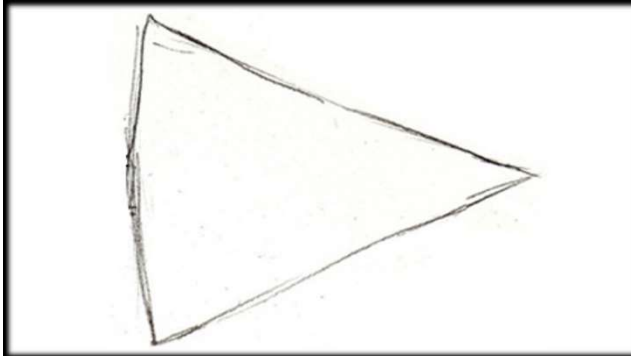
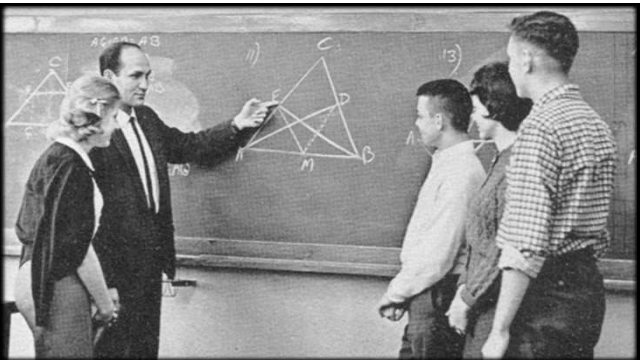




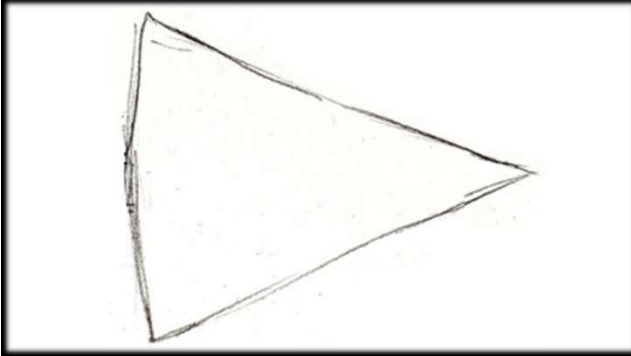
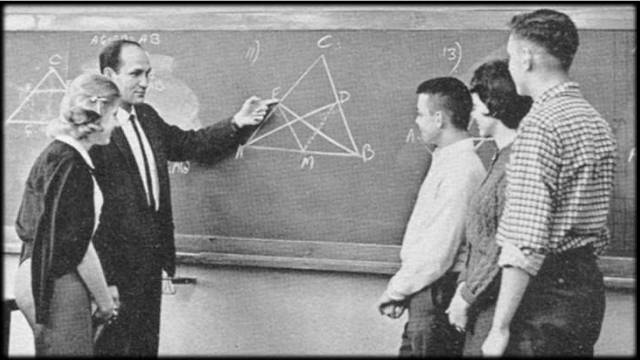
**Consider the
notion of
"triangle."**



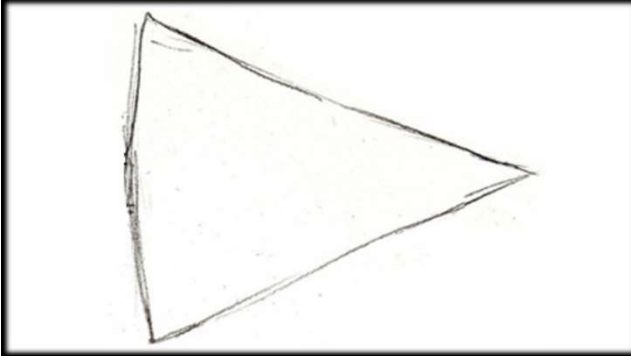
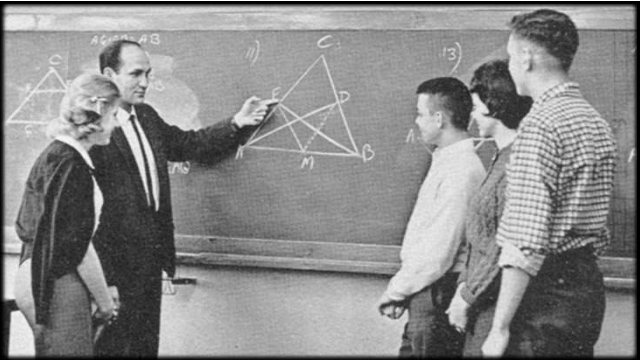
**Each of the triangles
have characteristics
that are not essential to
being a triangle.**



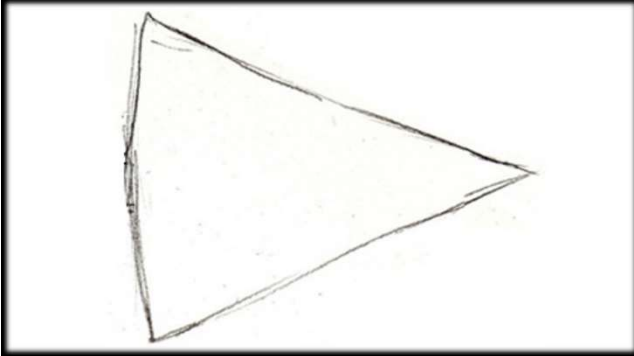
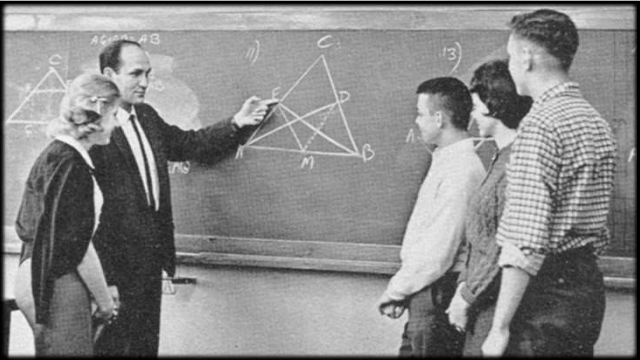
Each triangle falls short of being a perfect triangle, yet we still know them as triangles.



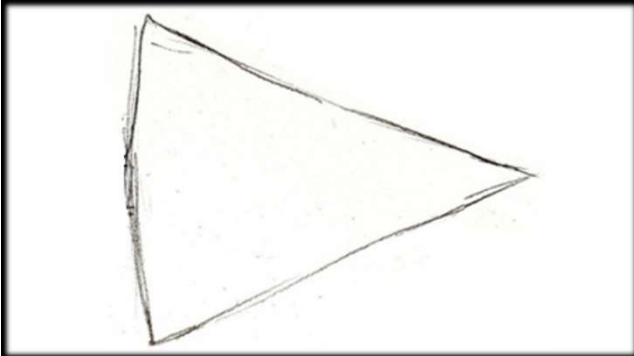
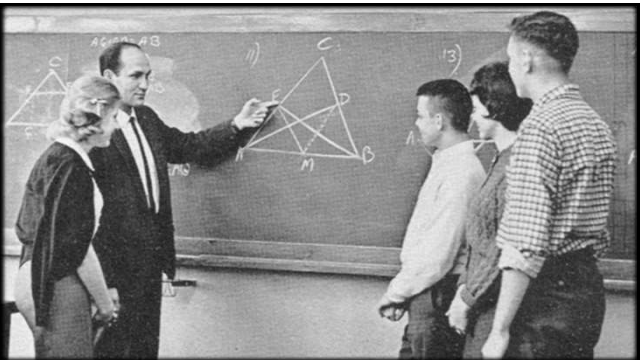
There is something common to them all that makes them all triangles.



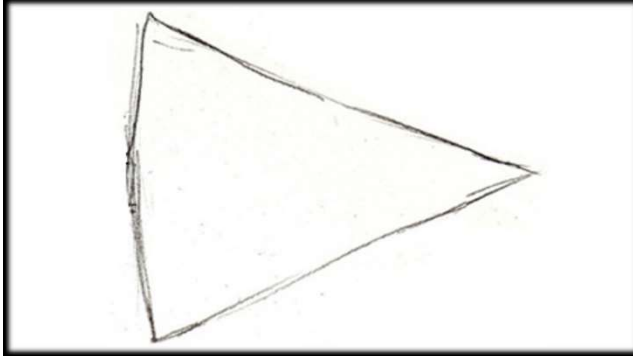
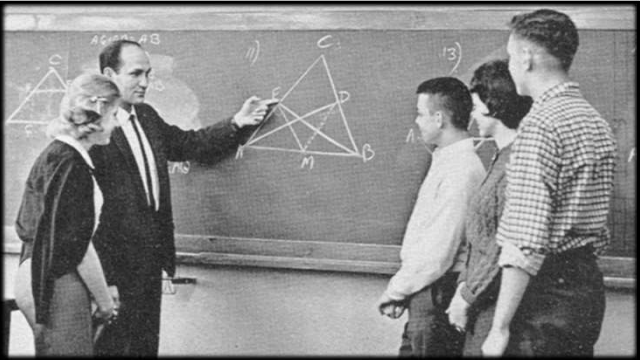
Plato, Aristotle, and Aquinas called this common aspect "Form."



**Plato: εἶδος (eidos).
Aristotle: μορφή (morphē).
Aquinas: forma**



Lest one mistakenly think that Form means "shape," consider various kinds of trees.



In certain philosophical contexts, a Form is sometimes called a nature.

What-ness ...

related to Matter is called Form

related to Operations is called Nature

related to Accidents is called Substance

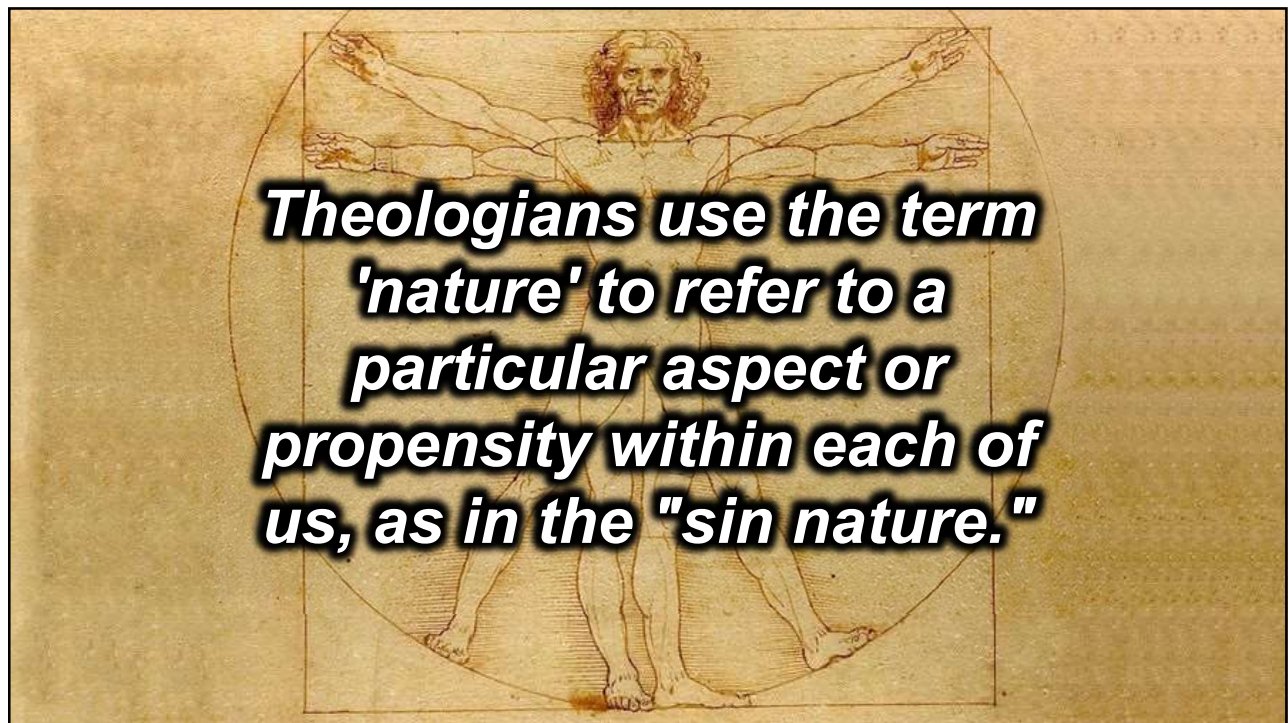
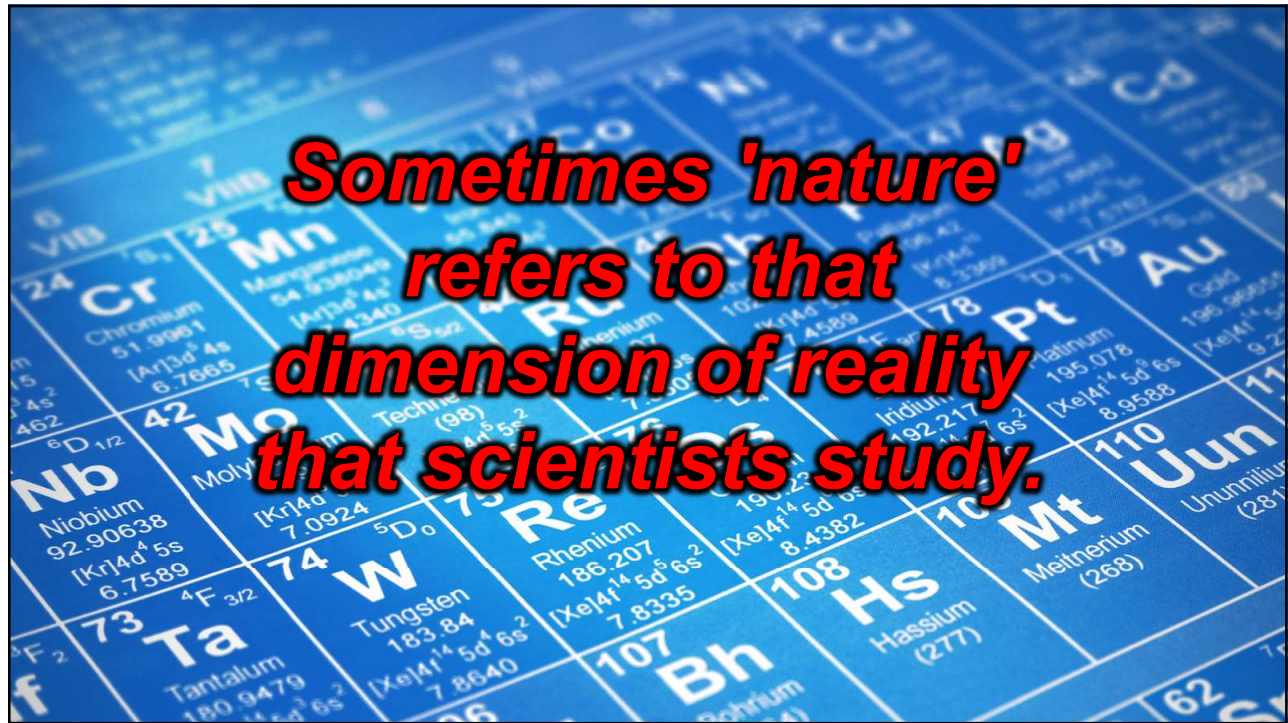
related to Mind is called Quiddity

related to Existence is called Essence

**Other uses of the term
'nature' need to be
clarified.**



***Sometimes 'nature'
is a catchall term
for the greater
outdoors.***



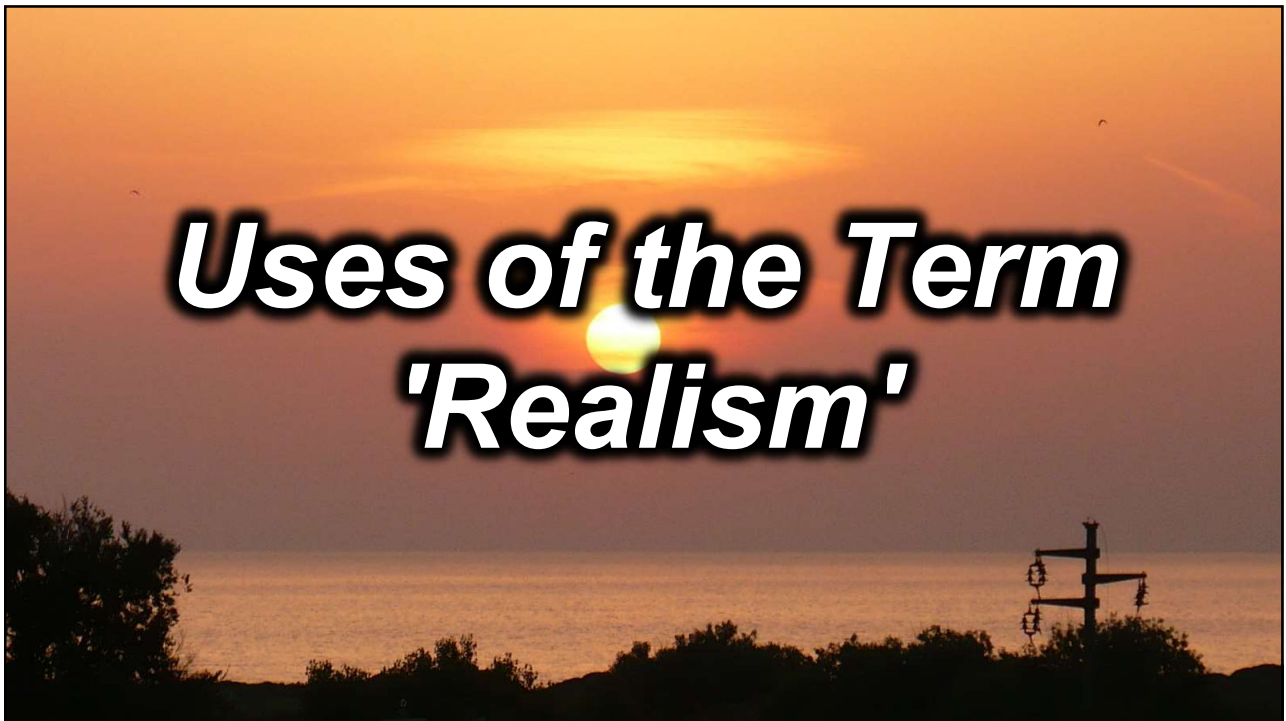
"In addition to the legal guilt that God imputes to us because of Adam's sin, we also inherit a sinful nature because of Adam's sin."

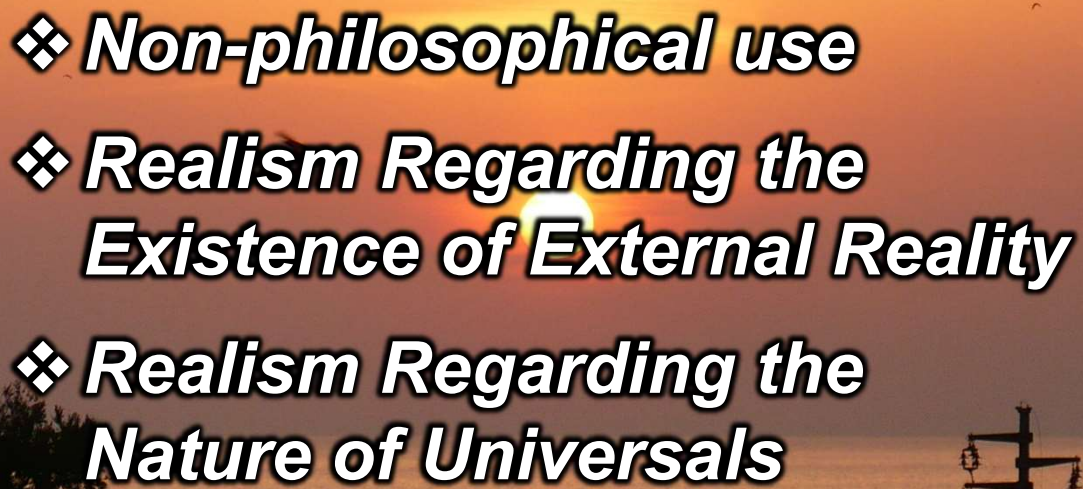
[Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 496]

Wayne Grudem

Philosophers use the term 'nature' to refer to an essence.

It is that about a thing that makes it the kind of thing it is.



- 
- A sunset scene with a bright sun low on the horizon, casting a warm orange glow. The sky is a gradient of orange and yellow. In the foreground, there are dark silhouettes of trees and a utility pole with power lines. The text is overlaid on the upper left portion of the image.
- ❖ ***Non-philosophical use***
 - ❖ ***Realism Regarding the Existence of External Reality***
 - ❖ ***Realism Regarding the Nature of Universals***

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- ❖ ***Non-philosophical use***

A realist in the non-philosophical sense of the term is one who approaches an issue with common sense, usually devoid of sentimentality and naiveté.



❖ *Realism Regarding the Existence of External Reality*

Here realism maintains that there is a material reality external to us as knowers and that this material external reality exists whether we are perceiving it or not.

This notion of realism is contrasted with Idealism. Idealism (George Berkeley) maintains that there is no external material reality.

Any view of knowing that maintains that there is a reality external to us as knowers is a form of realism.

Thus, John Locke is a realist even though Locke's view on how we know external reality is quite different from Plato's, Aristotle's and Aquinas's views.



❖ *Realism Regarding the Nature of Universals*

Here realism maintains that universals (e.g., human-ness) are real entities that have existence apart from particulars. (Plato)

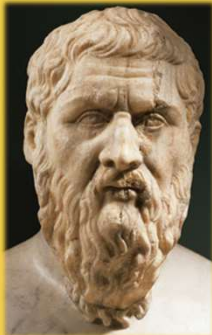
This notion of realism is contrasted with anti-realism like conceptualism (William of Ockham) or nominalism (David Hume).



REALISM

Realism regarding universals holds that universals are real and irreducible to particulars.

Extreme Realism (Plato)

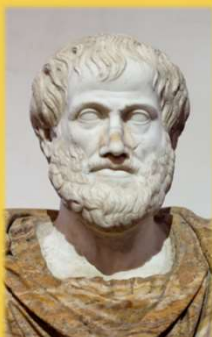


Universals are the only things that are fully real. Particulars are merely "shadows" of their exemplars.

REALISM

Realism regarding universals holds that universals are real and irreducible to particulars.

Moderate Realism (Aristotle)



Universals are real but only exist (as universals) in intellects. They come to exist in the intellect by way of abstraction from something metaphysically real in the particulars (i.e., the Form). Thus, the Form "tree" exists as a universal in the intellect of the knower and as a particular in the tree. The Form is individuated by its Matter.

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Scholastic Realism (Aquinas)



Scholastic Realism is the same as Moderate Realism in that that the universals can come to exist in the intellects of humans by abstraction.

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Scholastic Realism is the same as Moderate Realism in that that the universals can come to exist in the intellects of humans by abstraction.

Scholastic Realism differs from Moderate Realism in that the universals also exist eternally in the mind of God as their Creator.

ANTI-REALISM

Universals either are reducible to particulars or are unreal altogether.

Conceptualism (Ockham)



Universals are nothing but concepts in the mind and have no real grounding in the particulars.

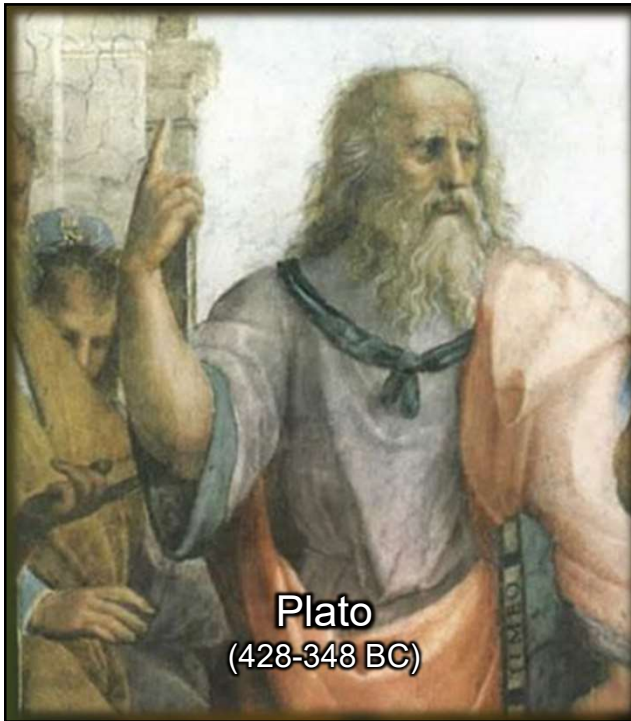
ANTI-REALISM

Universals either are reducible to particulars or are unreal altogether.

Nominalism (Hume)



There is no reality to universals (or even concepts). Instead, what are referred to as universals are only names or labels given to certain things or properties.



Plato
(428-348 BC)

Plato's Theory of Forms and Things

a transcendent world of eternal and absolute beings [things], corresponding to every kind of thing that there is, and causing in particular things their essential natures.

[Ed. L. Miller and Jon Jensen, *Questions that Matter: An Invitation to Philosophy*, 5th ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2004), 78]

FORMS
in the world of
BEING

transcendent
eternal
intelligible
archetypal
perfect

THINGS
in the world of
BECOMING

spatio-temporal
changeable
sensible
copied
imperfect

Characteristics of the Forms

☞ **objective** ☞

*They exist "out there" as objects,
independently of our minds or wills.*

☞ **transcendent** ☞

*Though they exist "out there," they
do not exist in space and time; they lie
above or beyond space and time*

Characteristics of the Forms

∞ eternal ∞

As transcendent realities they are not subject to time and therefore not subject to motion or change.

∞ intelligible ∞

As transcendent realities they cannot be grasped by the senses but only by the intellect.

Characteristics of the Forms

∞ archetypal ∞

They are the models for every kind of thing that does or could exist.

∞ perfect ∞

They include absolutely and perfectly all the features of the things of which they are models.

