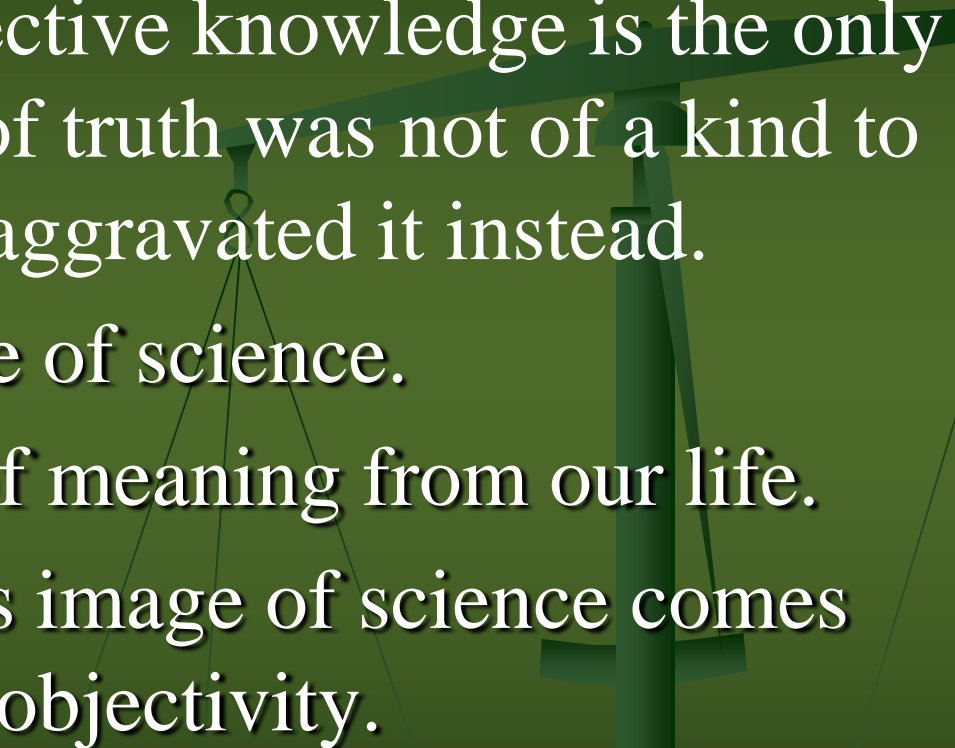


The Tyranny of Science: On the Rise of Rationalism



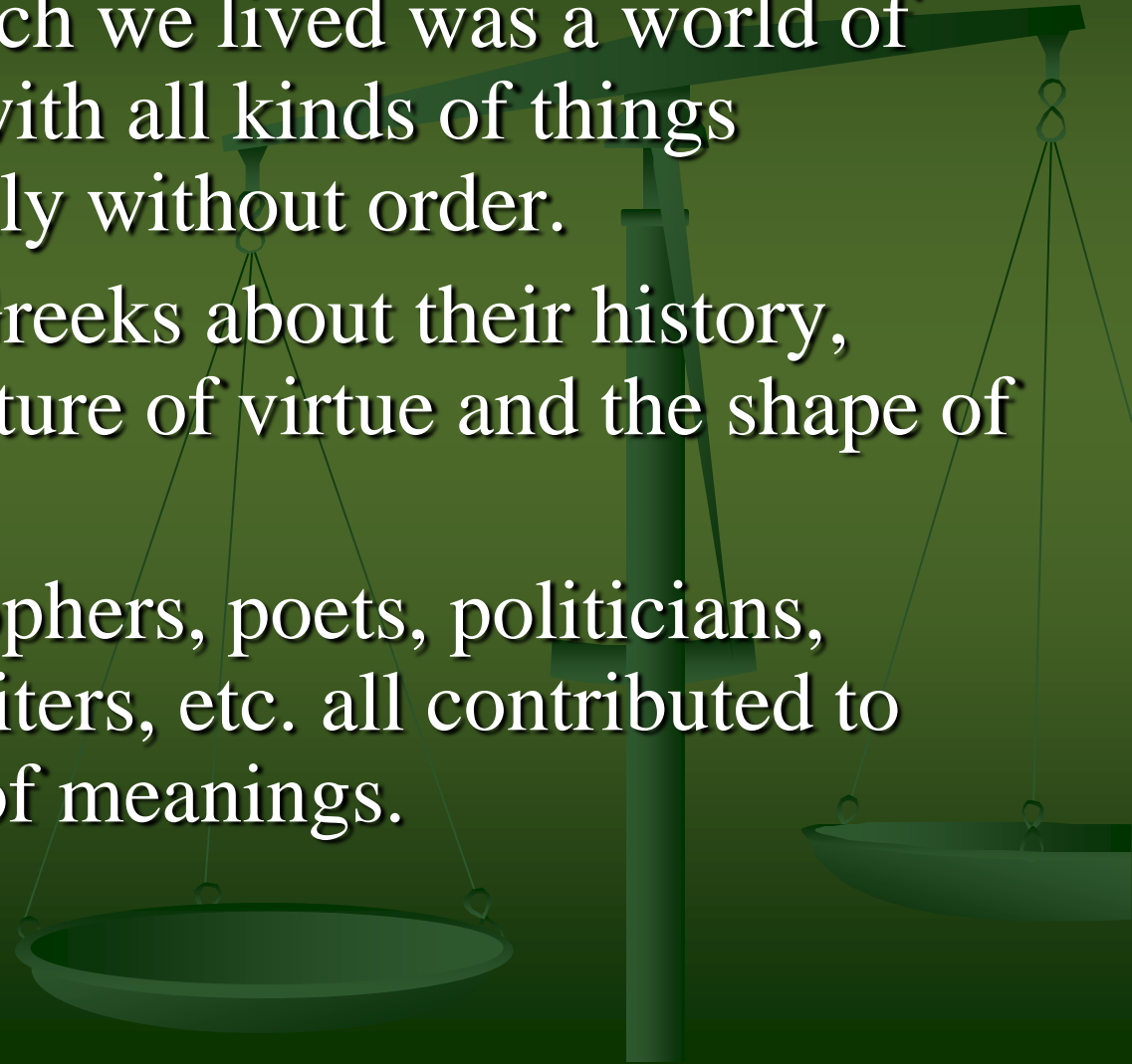
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Recapitulations of Two weeks ago:

- The idea that objective knowledge is the only authentic source of truth was not of a kind to allay anxiety but aggravated it instead.
 - The austere nature of science.
 - The elimination of meaning from our life.
 - The self-righteous image of science comes from its apparent objectivity.
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Feyerabend will answer them historically

- The world in which we lived was a world of meanings filled with all kinds of things together practically without order.
- Homer told the Greeks about their history, their gods, the nature of virtue and the shape of the world.
- There are philosophers, poets, politicians, generals, play writers, etc. all contributed to build this world of meanings.



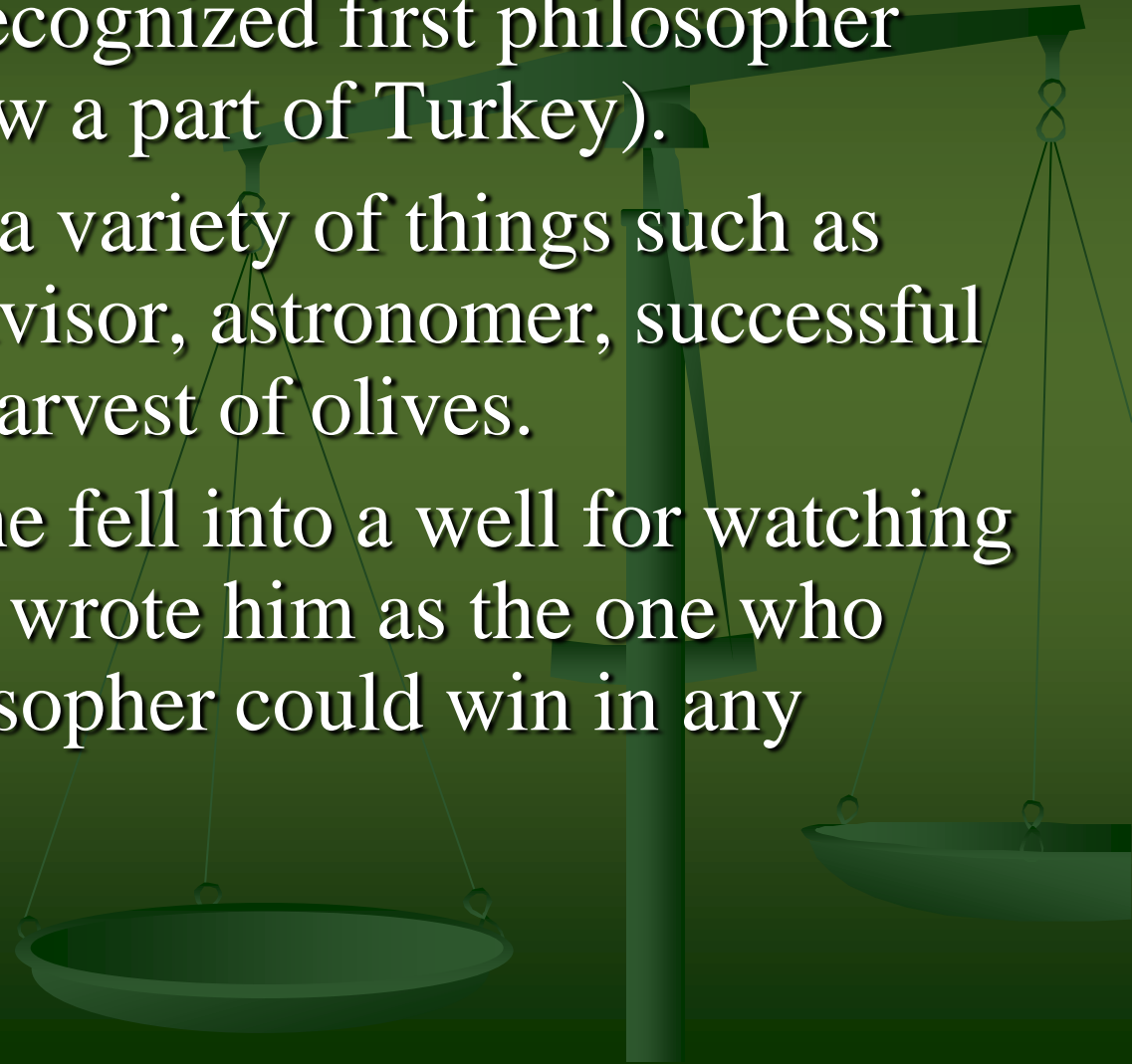
Let's take philosophers first

- The two philosophers Feyrerabend wants to contrast are Thales and Xenophanes.



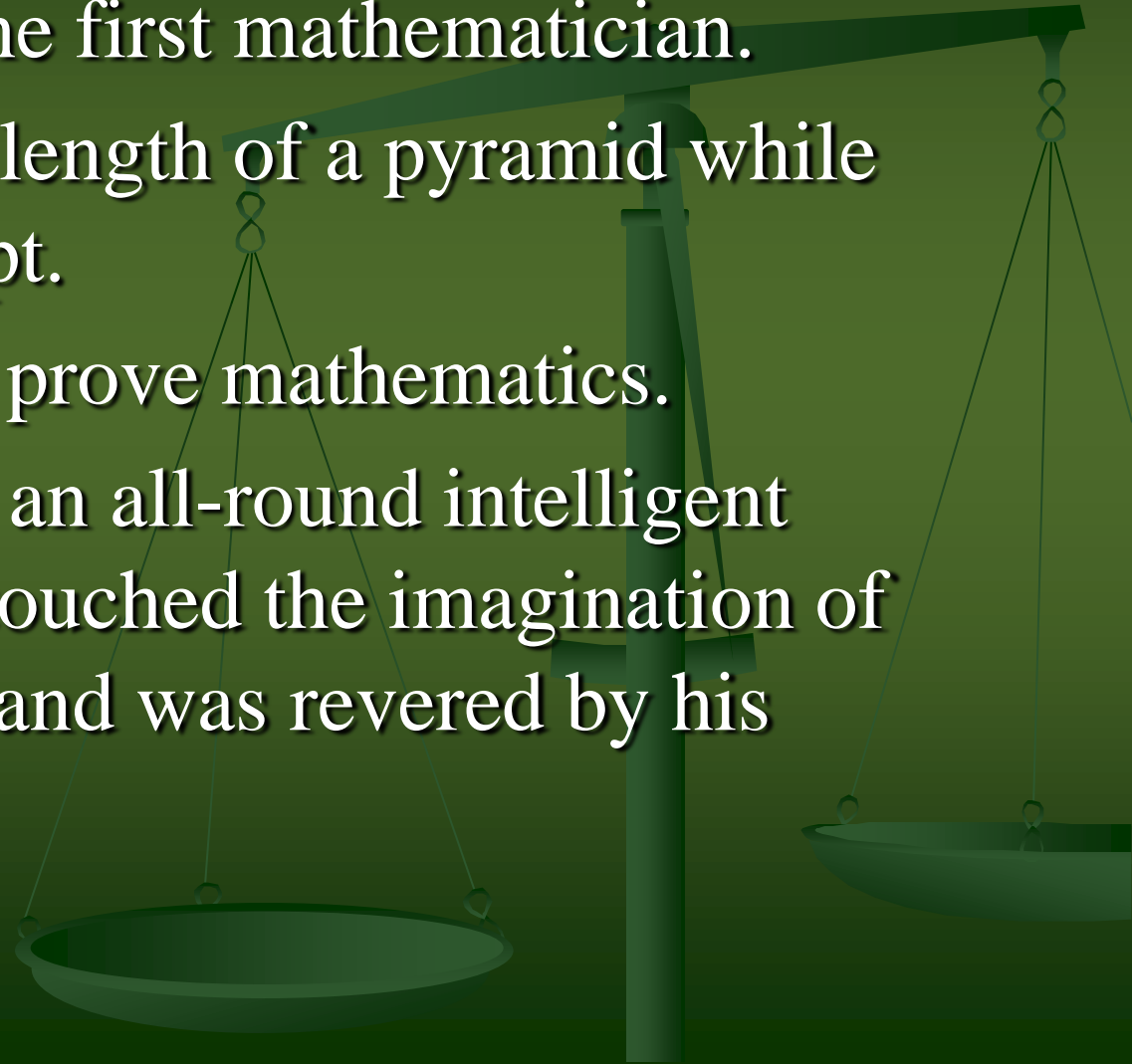
Thales:

- The commonly recognized first philosopher from Miletus (now a part of Turkey).
- He is famous for a variety of things such as being political advisor, astronomer, successful predictor of the harvest of olives.
- Plato wrote that he fell into a well for watching sky and Aristotle wrote him as the one who proved that philosopher could win in any professions.



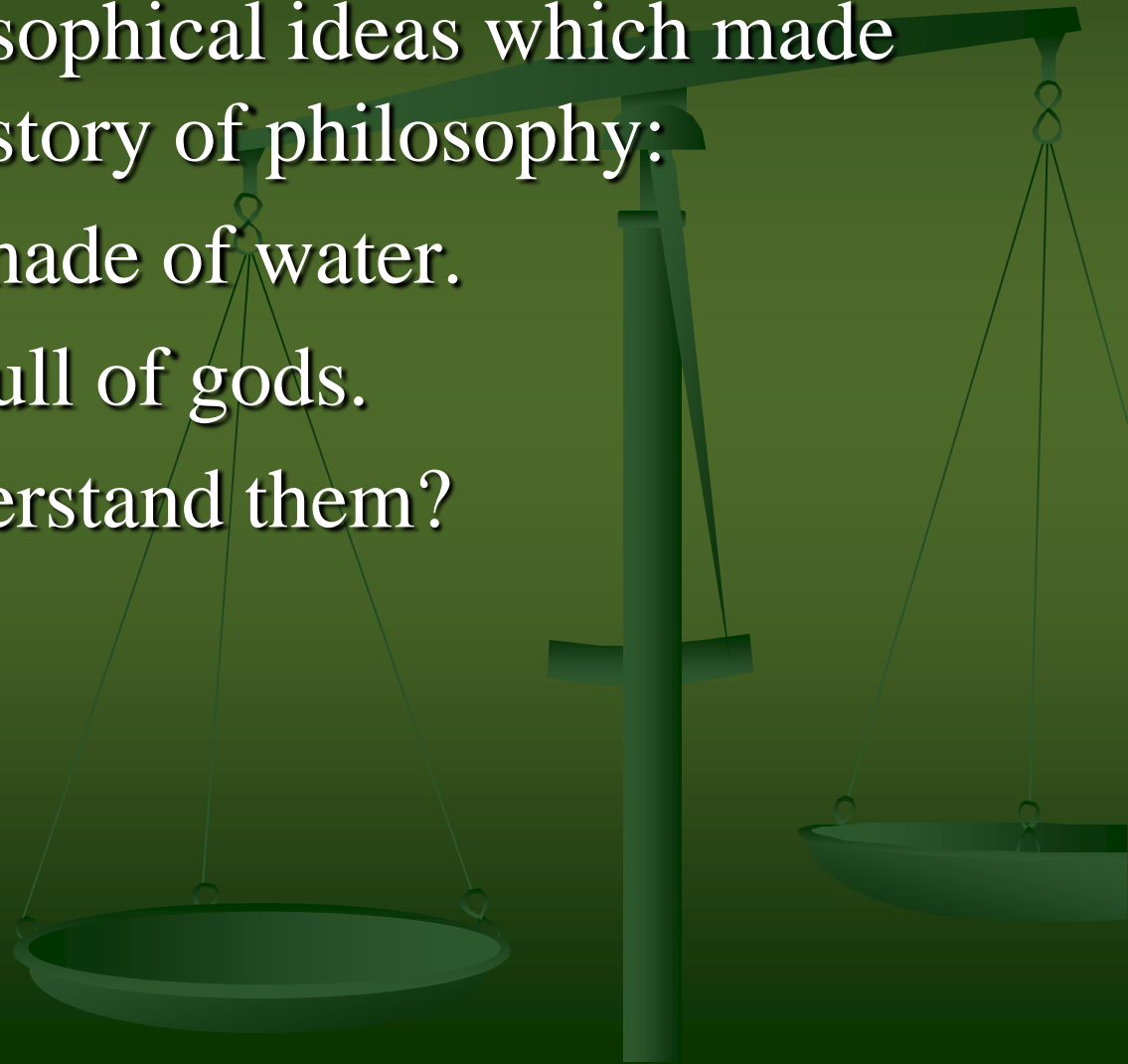
Thales:

- He is known as the first mathematician.
- He measured the length of a pyramid while travelling in Egypt.
- He use figures to prove mathematics.
- In sum, Thales is an all-round intelligent intellectual who touched the imagination of later generations and was revered by his achievements.



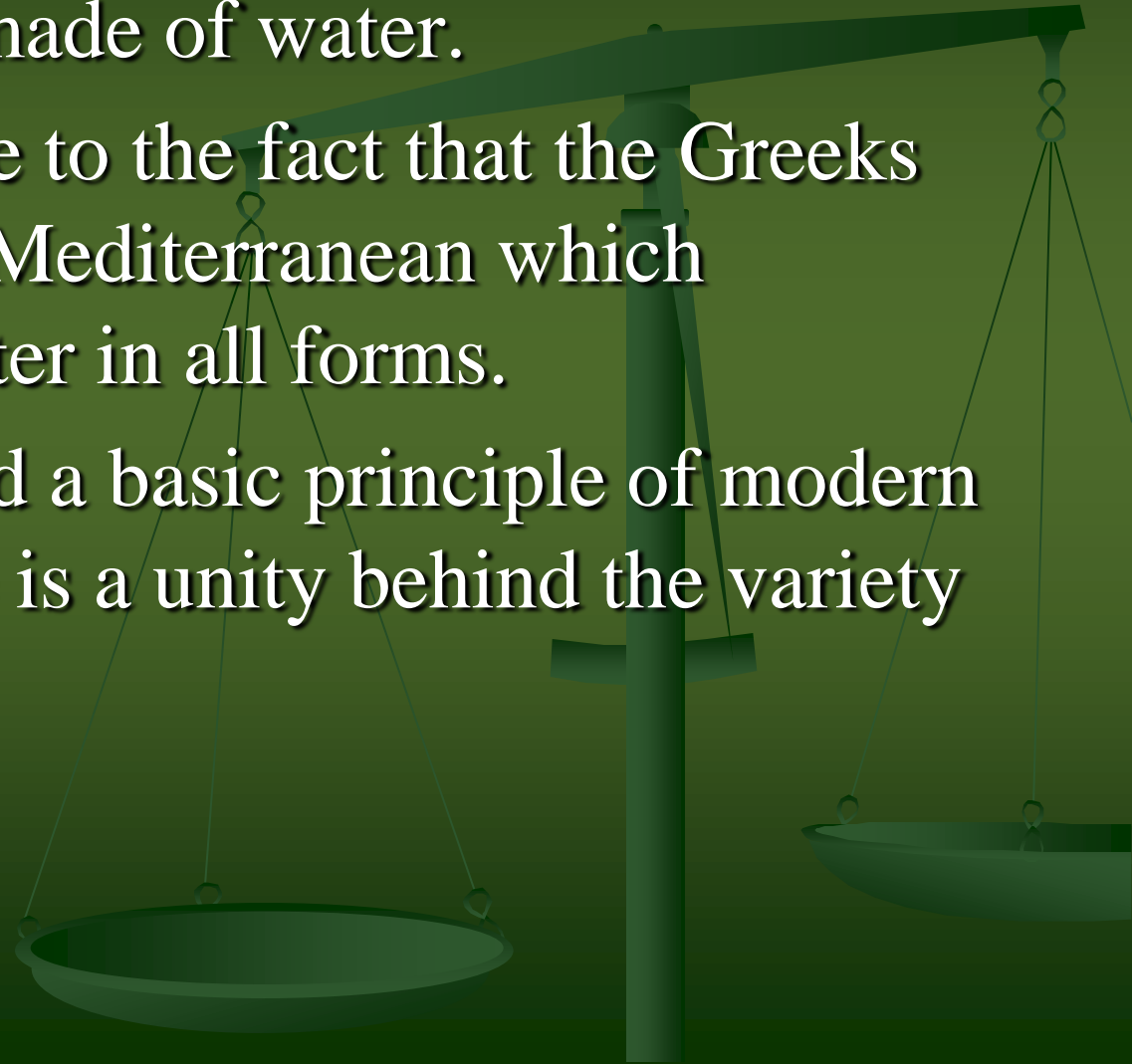
Thales:

- He has two philosophical ideas which made him famous in history of philosophy:
- Everything was made of water.
- Everything was full of gods.
- How can we understand them?



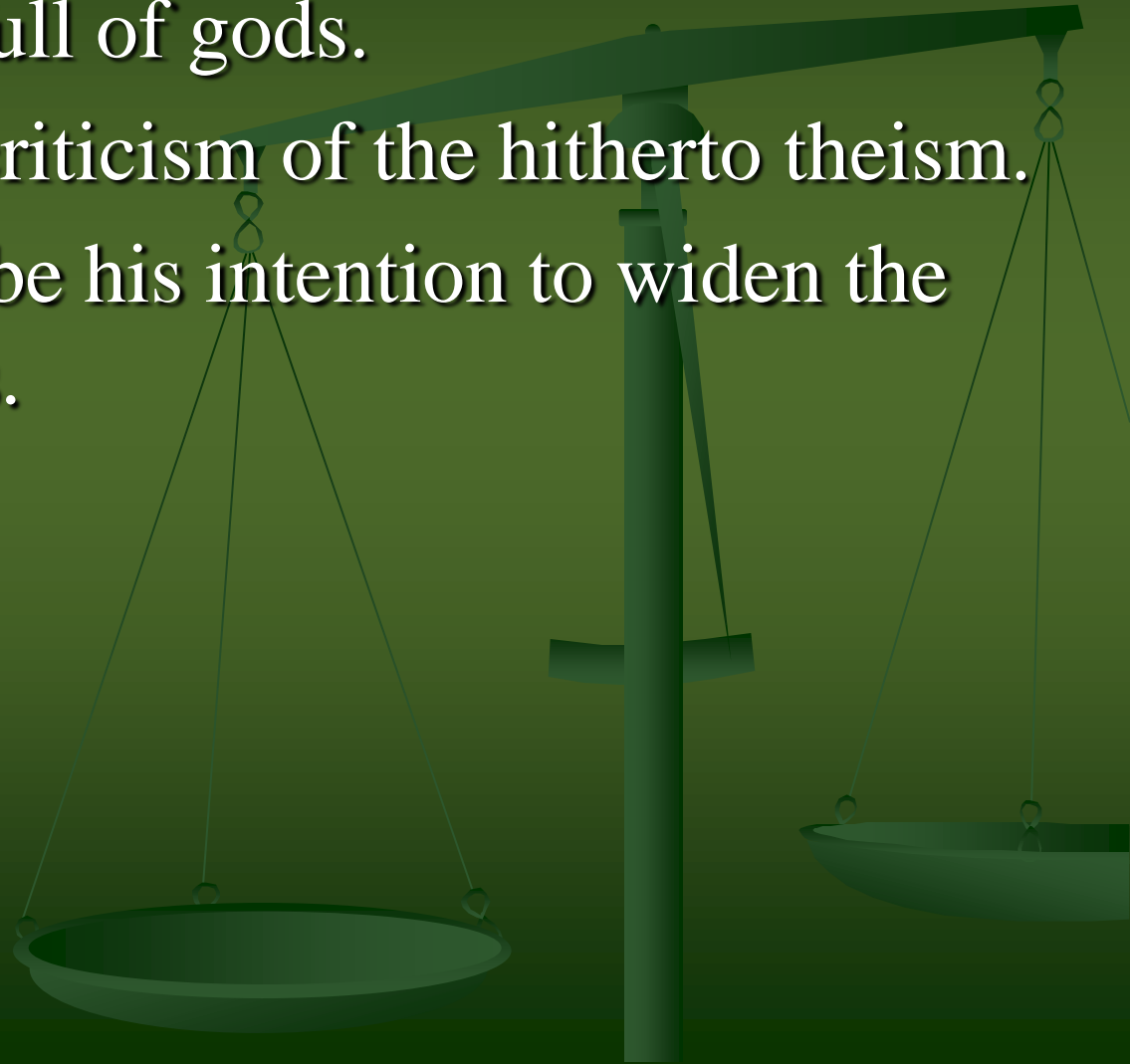
Thales:

- Everything was made of water.
- This might be due to the fact that the Greeks were living near Mediterranean which demonstrated water in all forms.
- Thales anticipated a basic principle of modern science, i.e. there is a unity behind the variety of appearances.



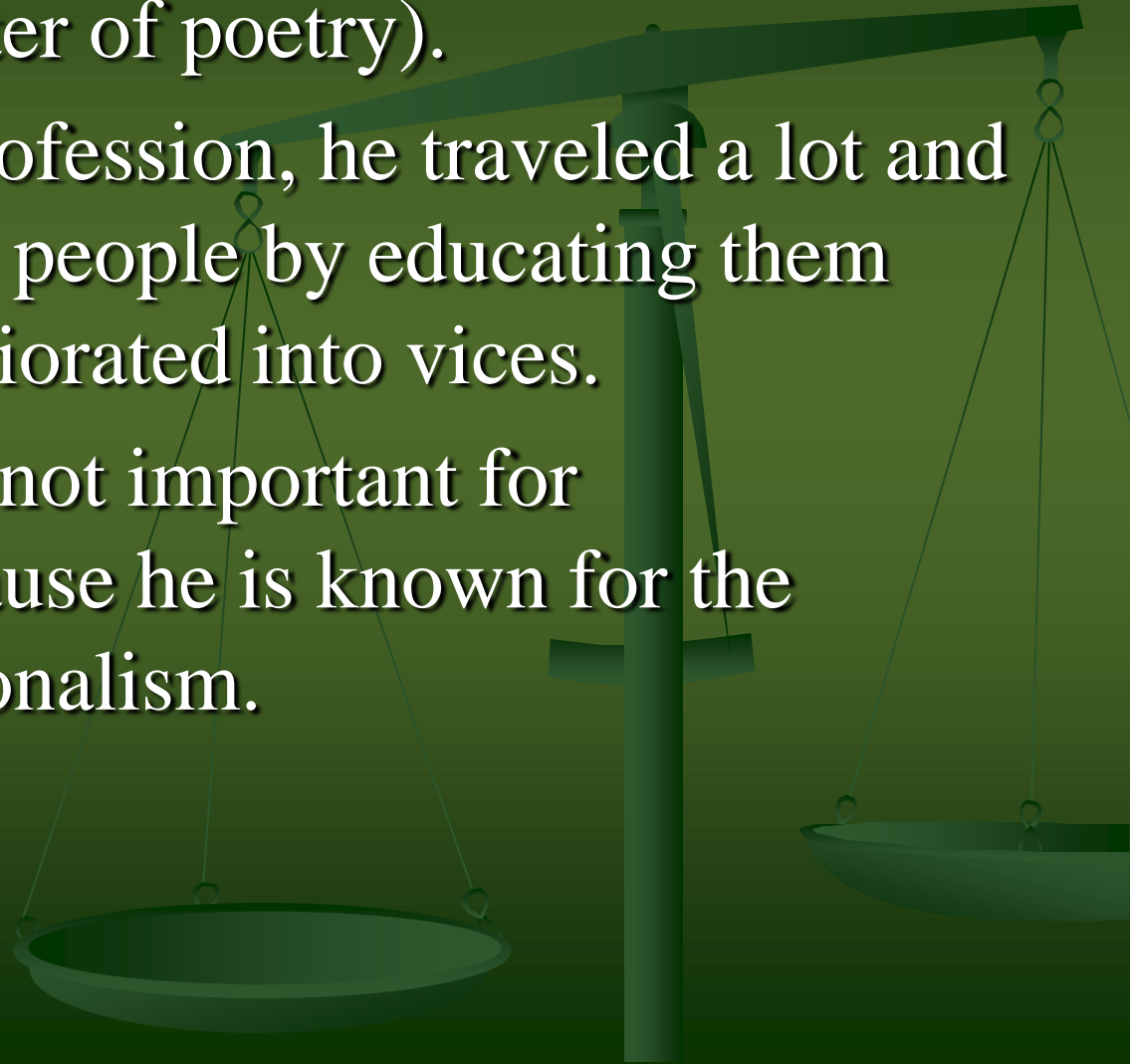
Thales:

- Everything was full of gods.
- This maybe is a criticism of the hitherto theism.
- This maybe also be his intention to widen the view of divinities.



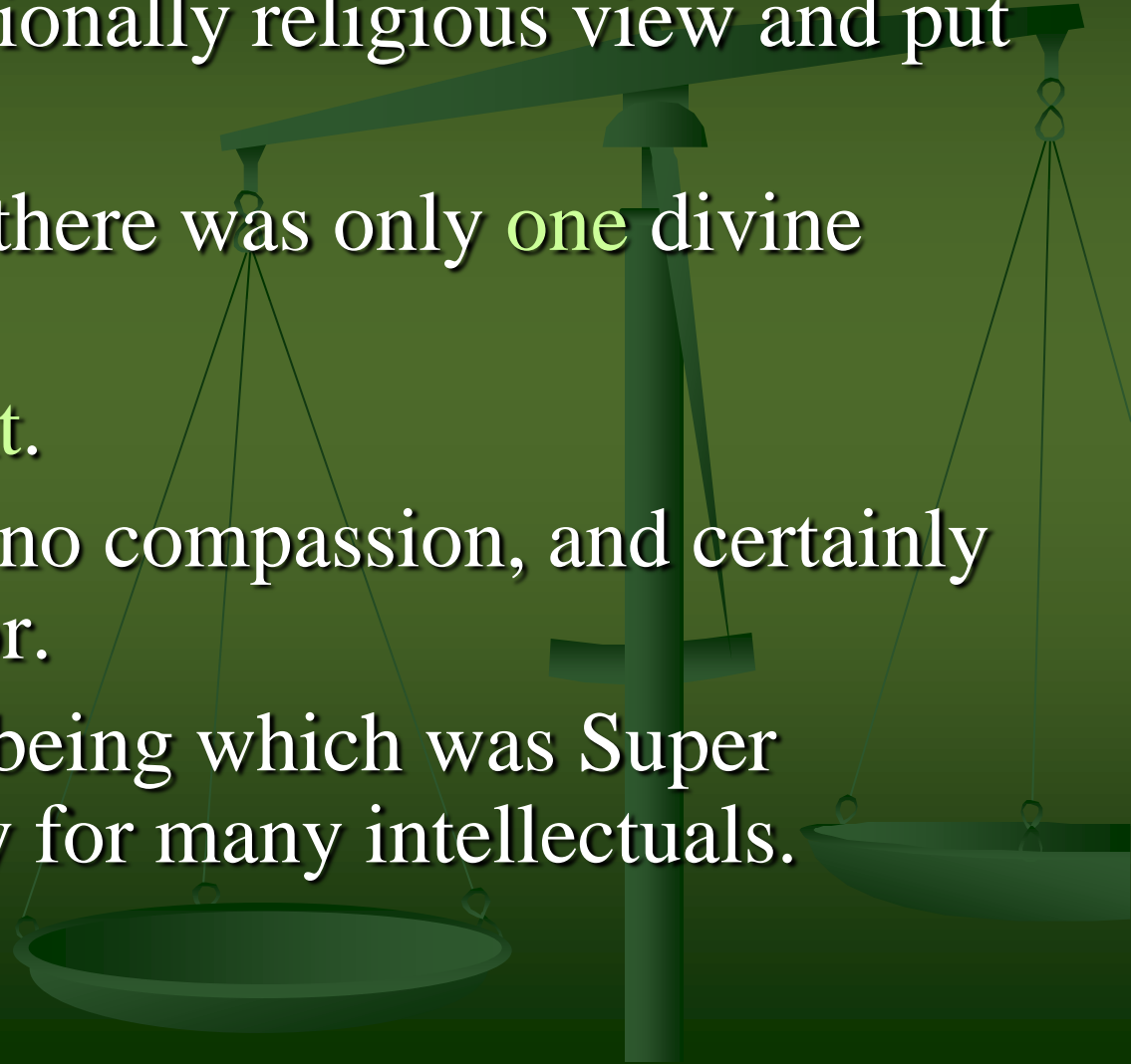
Xenophanes:

- An expert (a reciter of poetry).
- Because of his profession, he traveled a lot and entertained many people by educating them how virtues deteriorated into vices.
- But, all these are not important for Xenophanes because he is known for the beginning of rationalism.
- Why?



Xenophanes

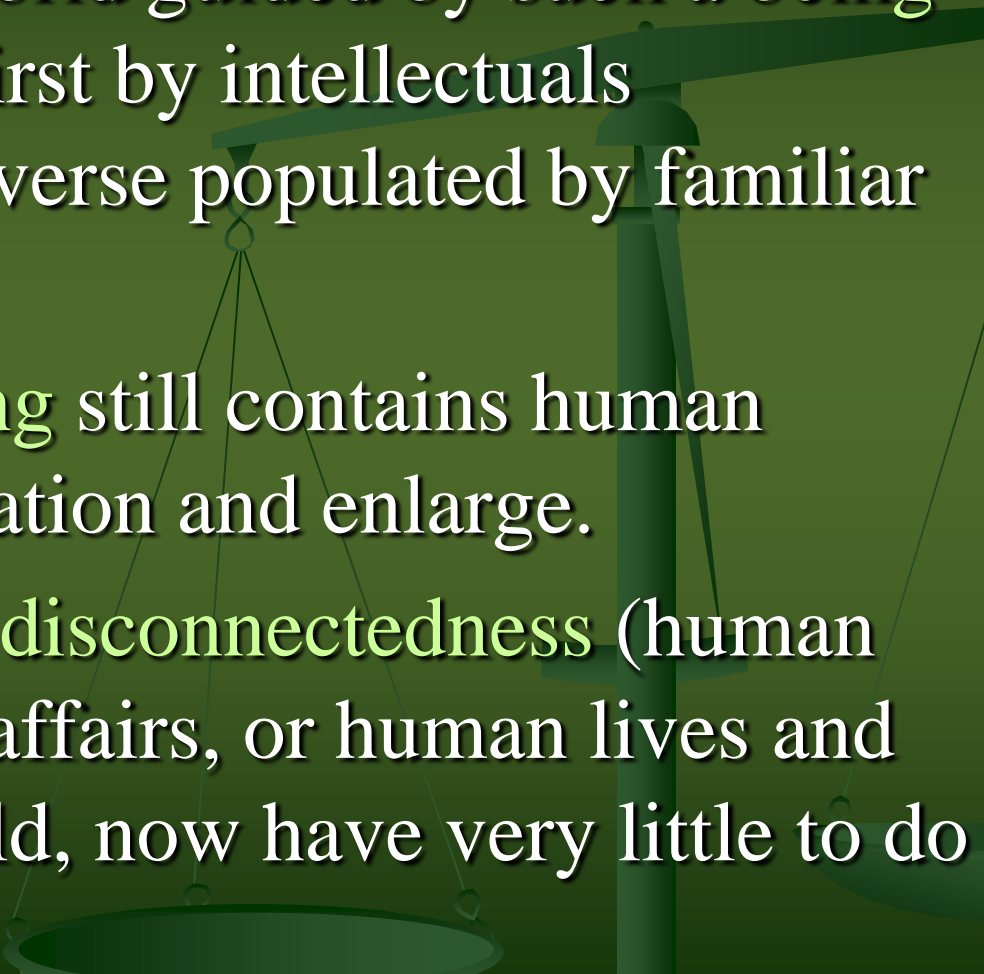
- He mocked traditionally religious view and put forward his own.
- He assumed that there was only **one** divine beings.
- **It is Pure Thought.**
- It has no feeling, no compassion, and certainly no sense of humor.
- It is an impartial being which was Super Powerful, notably for many intellectuals.



Xenophanes

- Many intellectuals praised the Super Being he proposed “a sublime conception of divinity”.
- The being is not anthropomorphic because it does not contain human features.
- It is inhuman as it is purely rational (Xenophanes: *If animals had hands to draw, then their God would certainly look like animal rather than anything else*).
- Why should the world be guided by such a being?

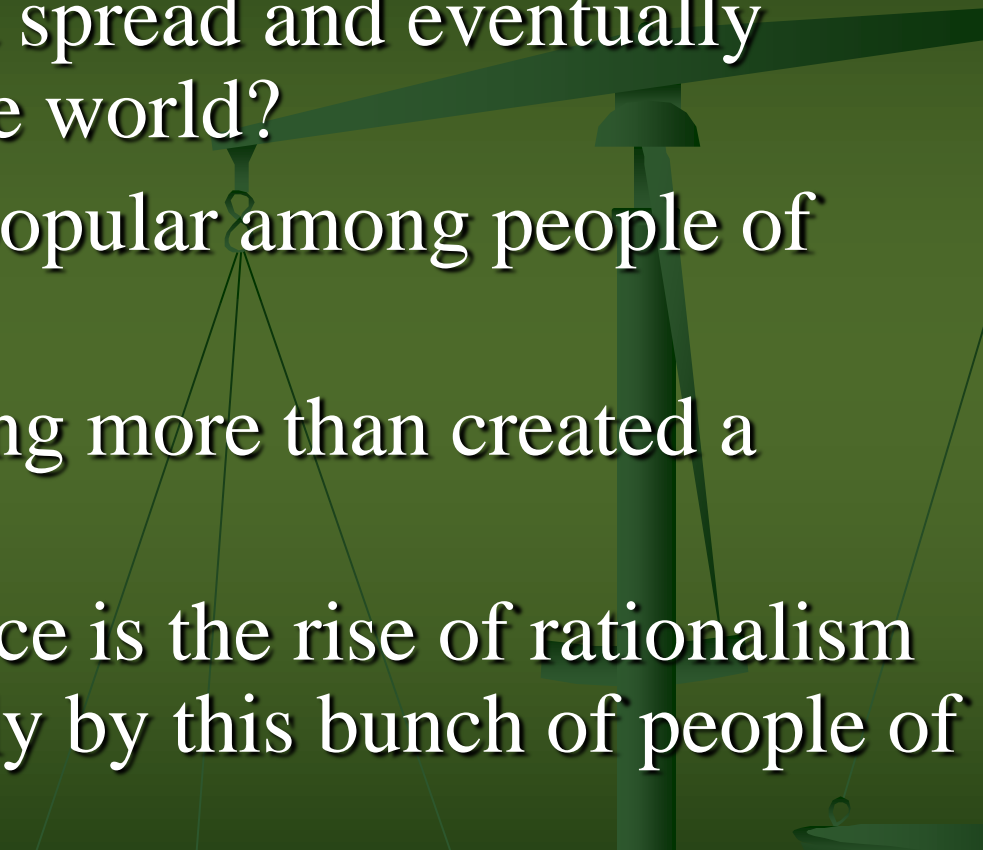
Xenophanes

- Why should the world be guided by such a **being** which is thought first by intellectuals preferable to a universe populated by familiar figures?
 - However, this **being** still contains human features, but in isolation and enlargement.
 - The consequence: **disconnectedness** (human affairs and divine affairs, or human lives and the rest of the world, now have very little to do with each other).
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Xenophanes

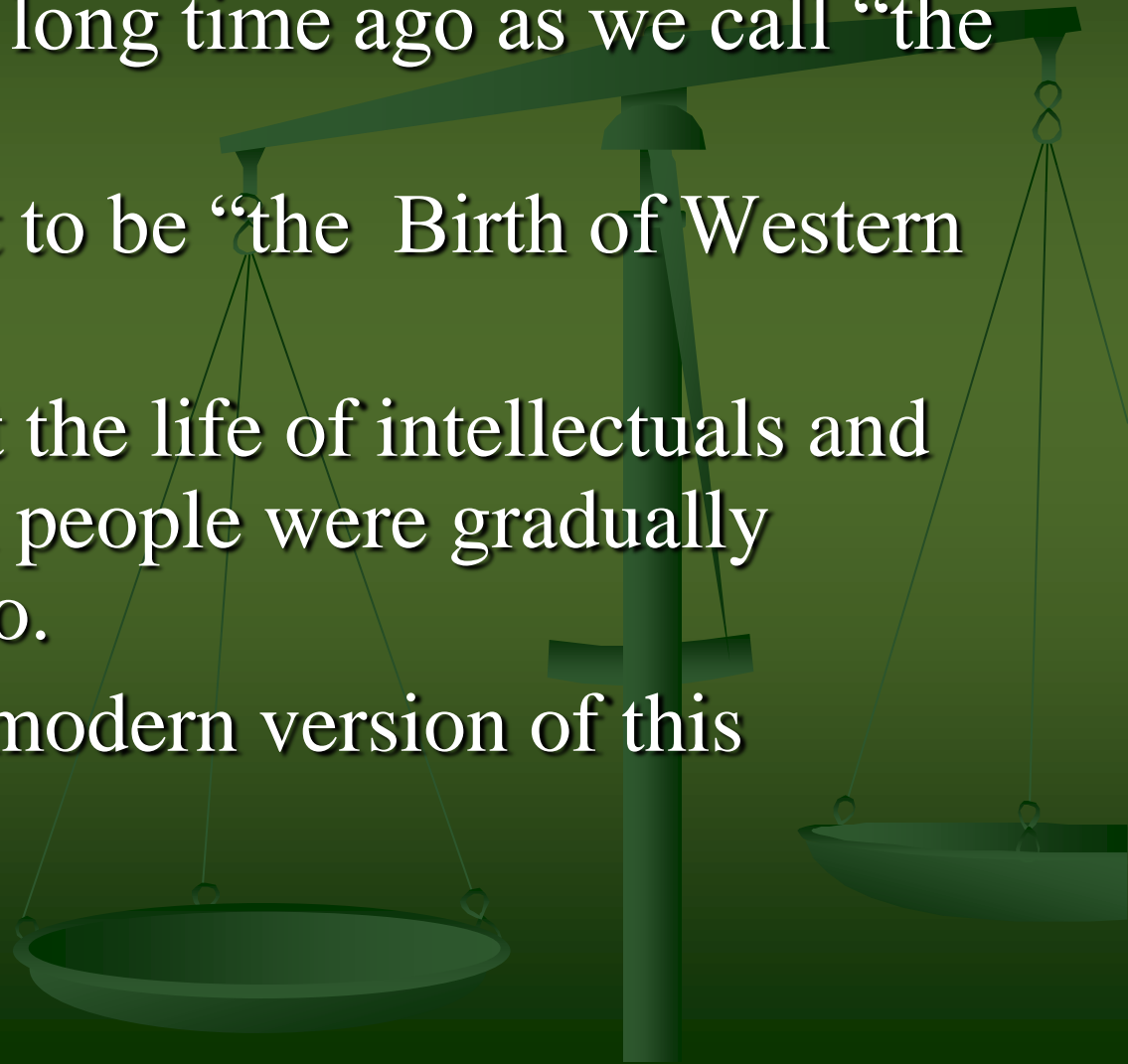
- The consequence: **Disconnectedness**.
- Later philosophers, such as Parmenides from the Eleatic school (from southern Italy) went further by telling us “what being is, is and what being is not, is not”).
- Parmenides replaced Xenophanes’ **Thought** with **Being**.
- Human existence is denied by an idea.

How did it happen?

- How did this idea spread and eventually infected the whole world?
 - 1. They became popular among people of influence.
 - 2. They did nothing more than created a tradition.
 - 3. The consequence is the rise of rationalism represented mainly by this bunch of people of influence.
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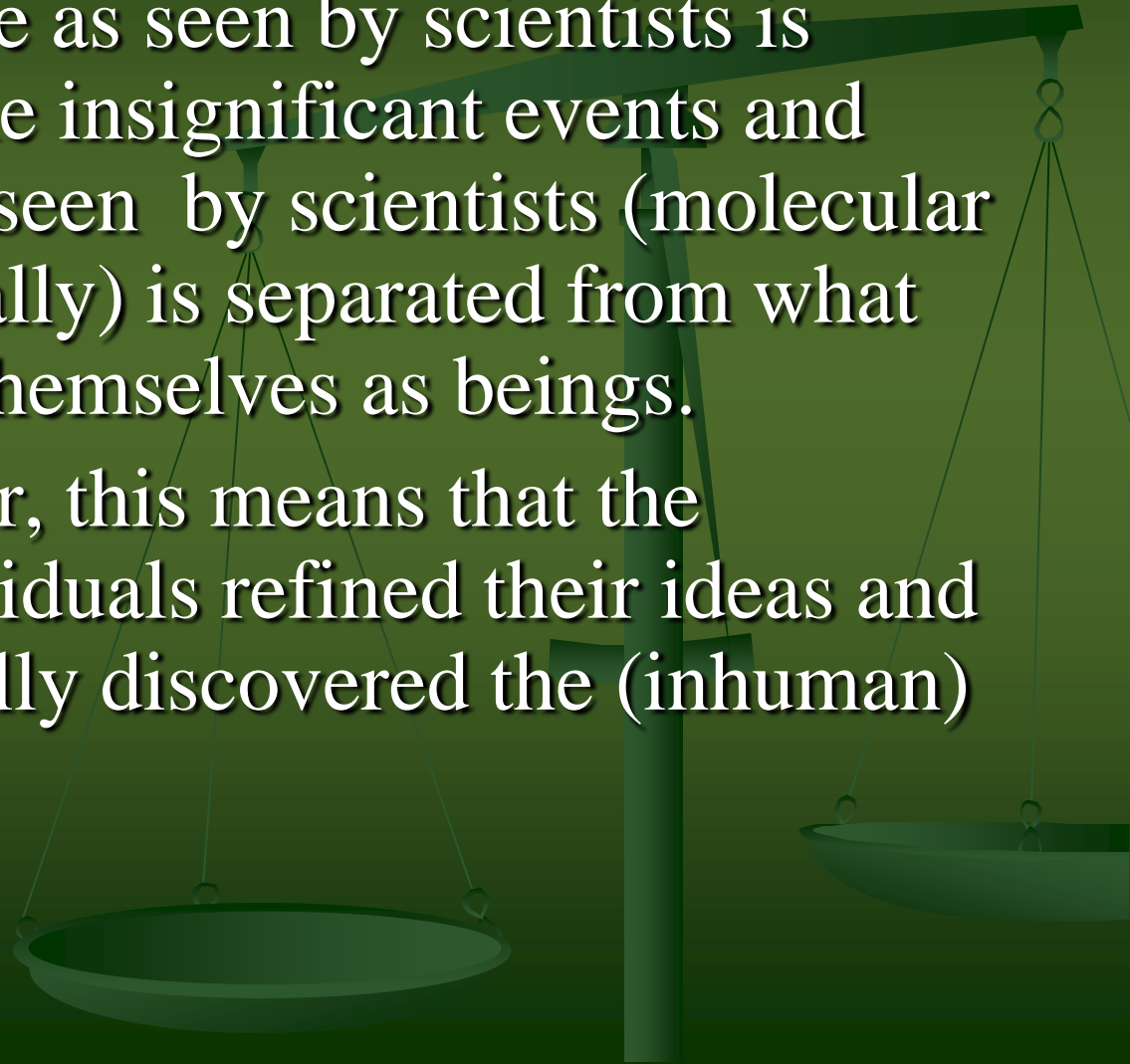
How did it happen?

- 4. This happened long time ago as we call “the Greek Miracle”.
- 5. This is thought to be “the Birth of Western Civilization”.
- 6. It changed first the life of intellectuals and then the common people were gradually dragged into it too.
- 7. Science is the modern version of this “miracle”.



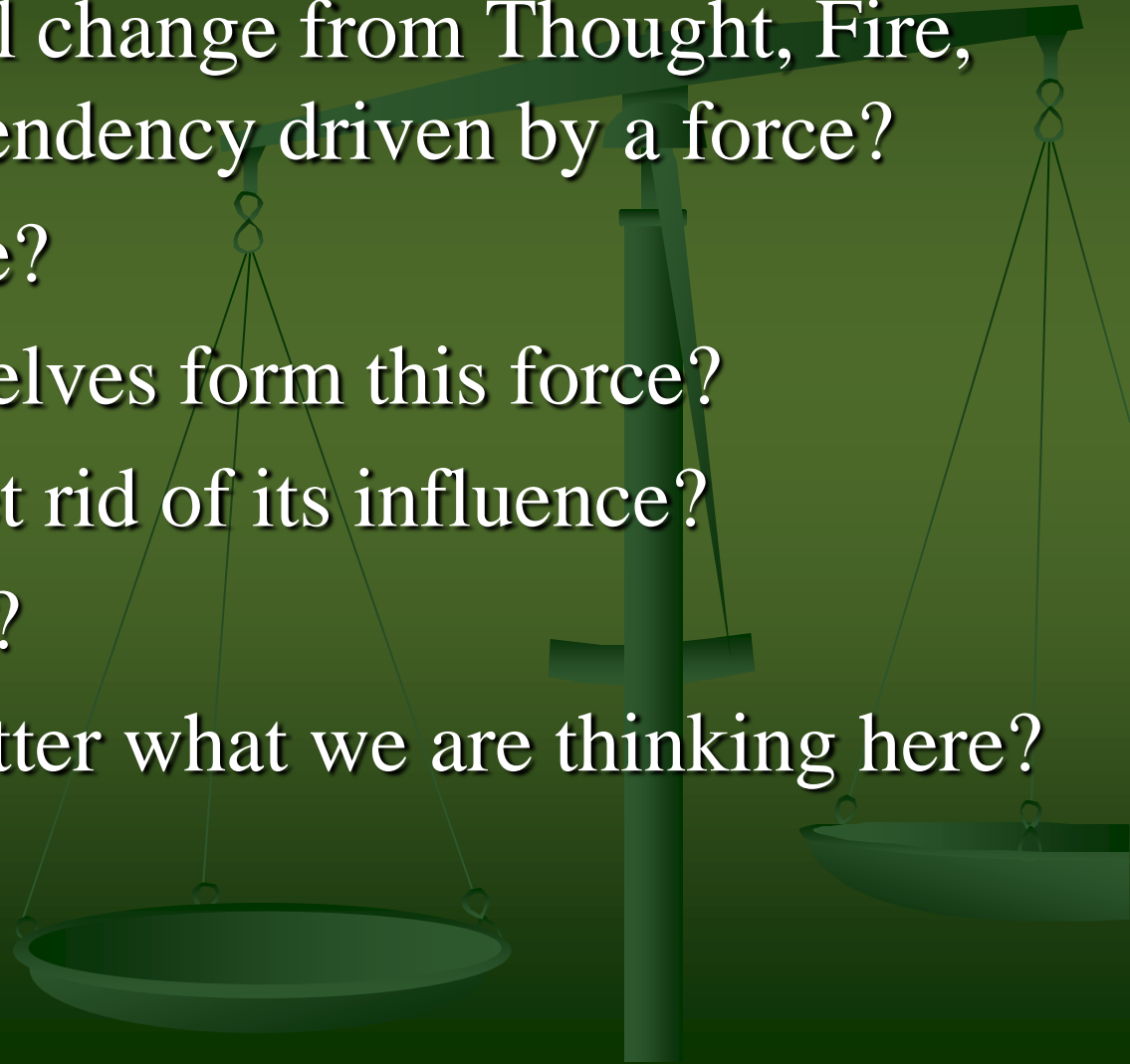
Science in this tradition

- The world at large as seen by scientists is separated from the insignificant events and even humans; as seen by scientists (molecular biologists especially) is separated from what they experience themselves as beings.
- To many however, this means that the outstanding individuals refined their ideas and methods and finally discovered the (inhuman) nature of reality.

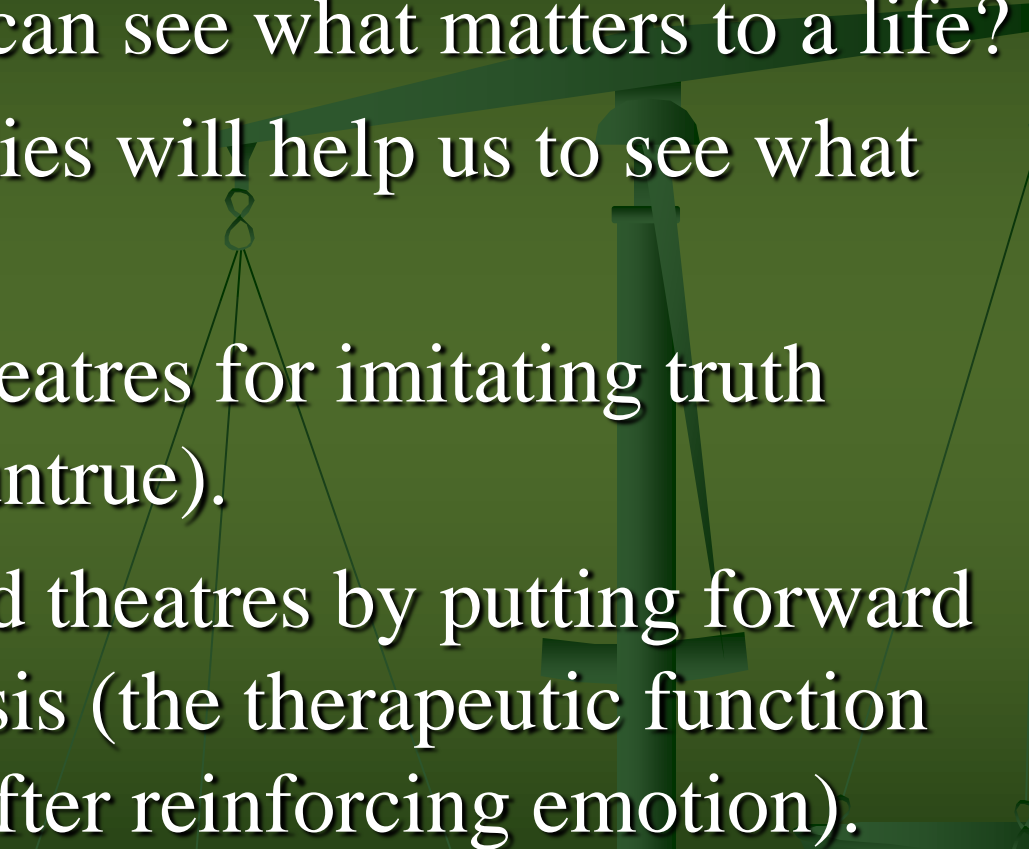


Is this good?

- The philosophical change from Thought, Fire, to Being, was a tendency driven by a force?
- What is that force?
- Can we free ourselves from this force?
- Do we wish to get rid of its influence?
- What is our wish?
- Does it really matter what we are thinking here?

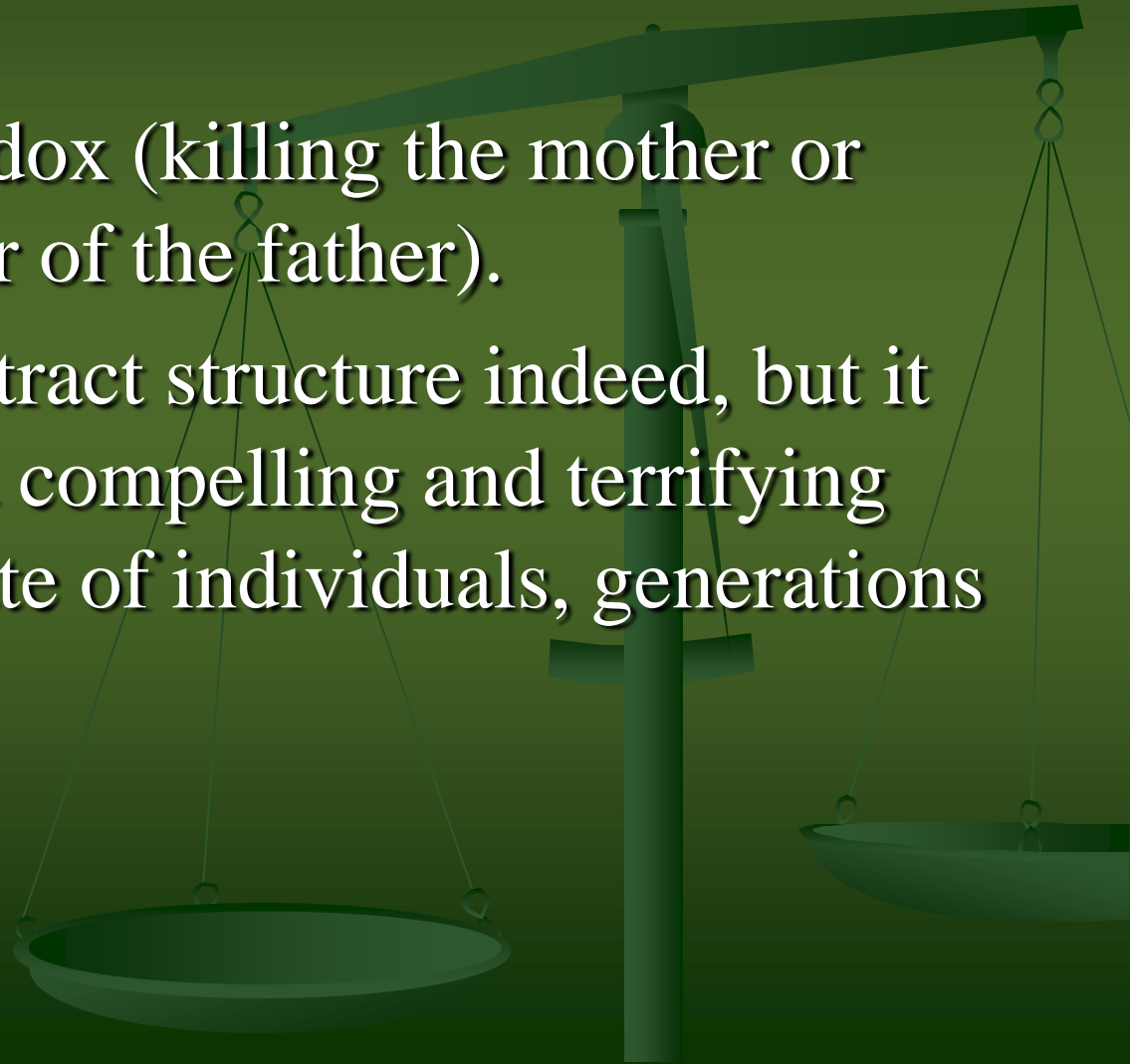


Can we answer these questions?

- Yes, because we can see what matters to a life?
 - Looking at tragedies will help us to see what was going on?
 - Plato criticized theatres for imitating truth (therefore being untrue).
 - Aristotle defended theatres by putting forward his idea of catharsis (the therapeutic function of being release after reinforcing emotion).
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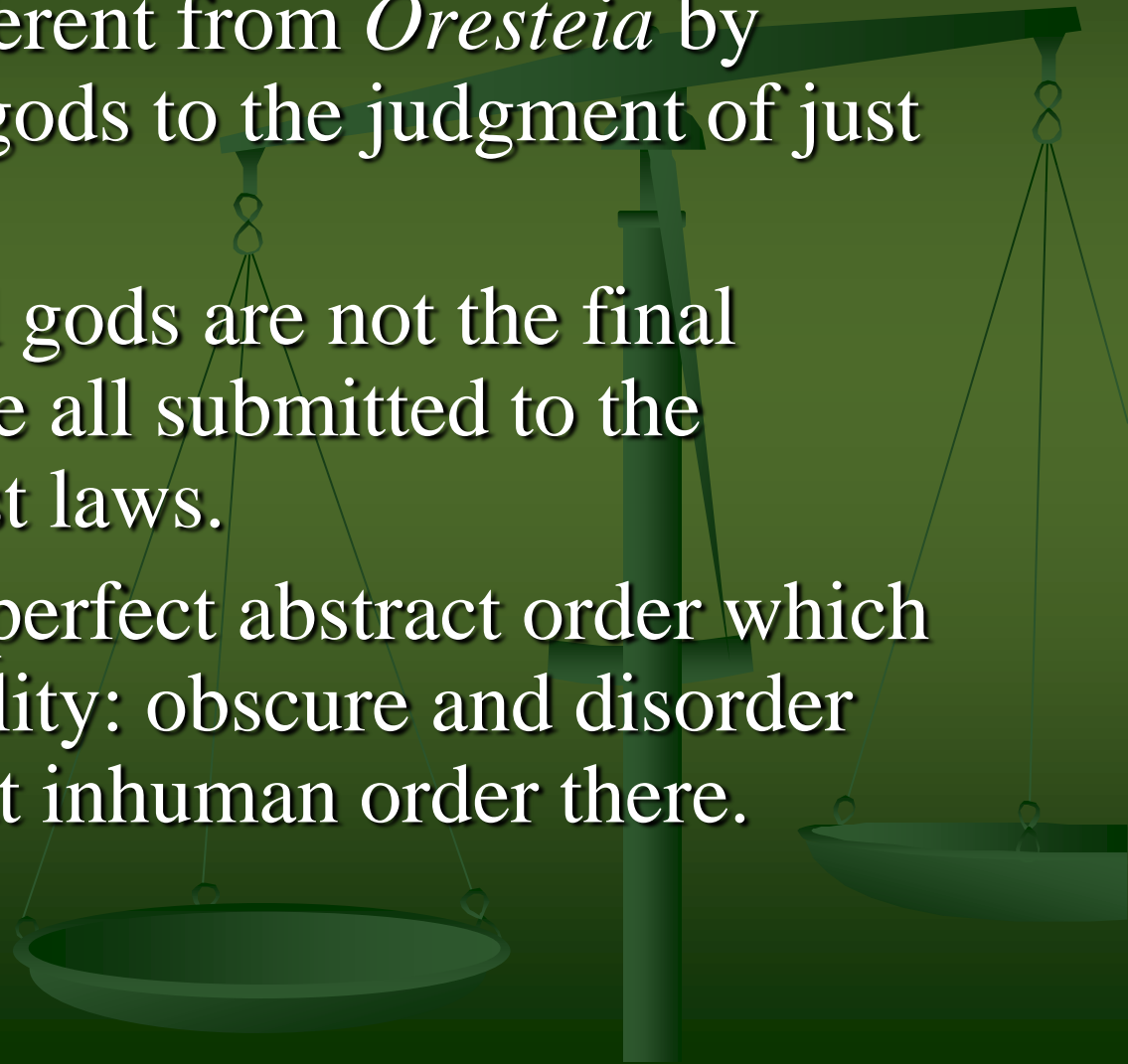
The tragedy

- *Oresteia*
- There was a paradox (killing the mother or killing the murder of the father).
- There was an abstract structure indeed, but it was woven into a compelling and terrifying story about the fate of individuals, generations and entire cities.



Plato's *Euthyphro*

- *Euthyphro* is different from *Oresteia* by submitting even gods to the judgment of just laws.
- Both humans and gods are not the final authority; they are all submitted to the jurisdiction of just laws.
- The laws from a perfect abstract order which splits life and reality: obscure and disorder here; a perfect but inhuman order there.



Plato's *initiation of rationalism*

- *Euthyphro* symbolized the idea that not only the limited humans, but even gods need to be submitted to the judgment of just laws.
- Just laws have the authority because they derive their power from the idea of justice.
- Why should we praise the products of pure thought rather than that of daily life?
- What is the power of pure thought?

