The Philosophy of the Self

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TEACHER

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At the end of the lesson, you will be able to:

- Define the Self based on the philosophical perspective
- Recognize the similarities and differences of self-conceptualizations according to the point of view of philosophy
- Examine one's self against the different views of self that were discussed in the class

What is Philosophy?

- The original meaning of the word *philosophy* comes from the Greek roots *philo-* meaning "love" and *-sophos*, or "wisdom."
- **the study of knowledge**, or "thinking about thinking" (Philosophybasics.com)
- the study of the ultimate nature of existence, reality, knowledge and goodness, as discoverable by human reasoning *(Penguin English Dictionary)*
- the search for knowledge and truth, especially about the nature of man and his behavior and beliefs *(Kernerman English Multilingual Dictionary)*



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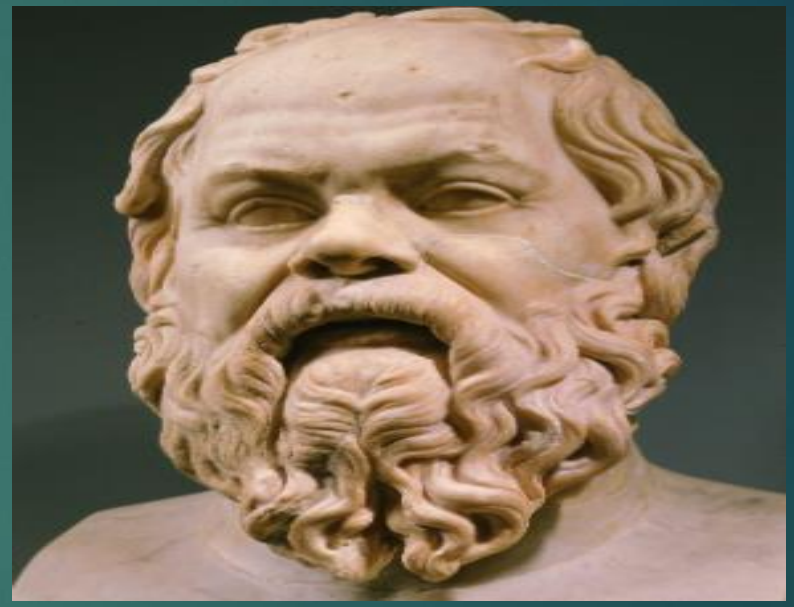
The Philosophers

Let's get to know them!

Socrates

Born: 469 BC; Death: 399 BC

- According to Socrates, the highest form of human existence is to question oneself and others. (Maxwell 2013)
- Man has to look at himself to understand his long-standing mission- that is to "Know Yourself".
- "An unexamined life is not worth living". (Vlastos & Graham, 1971)
- The most horrible thing that can happen to anybody is to **"live but die inside".** (Alata, et.al 2018)

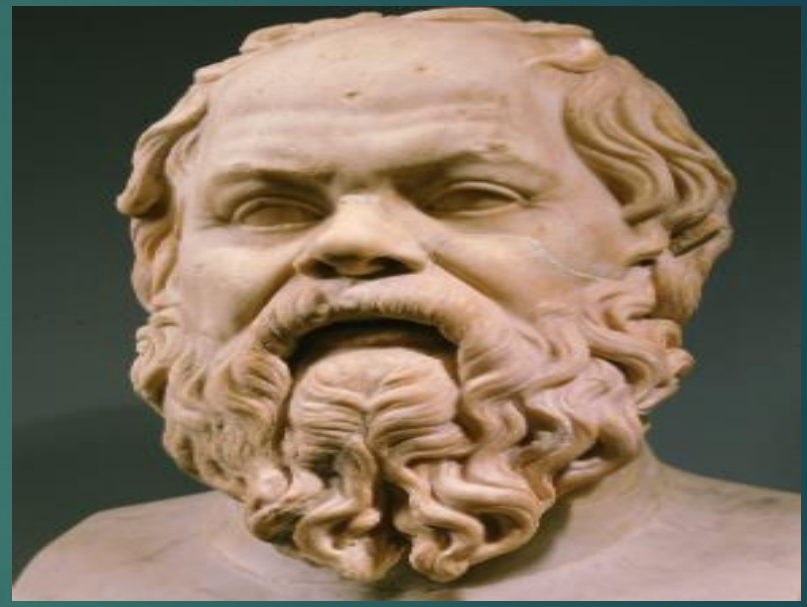


https://www.britannica.com/biography/Socrates

Socrates

Born: 469 BC; Death: 399 BC

- To preserve our souls for the afterlife, we must be fully aware of who we are and the virtues that come with its attainment.
- Individual's personhood is composed of the body and soul.
- The soul is immortal and death is not the end of existence.
- He raised the point that just because something seems true does not mean it is true. (Rowe,2007)

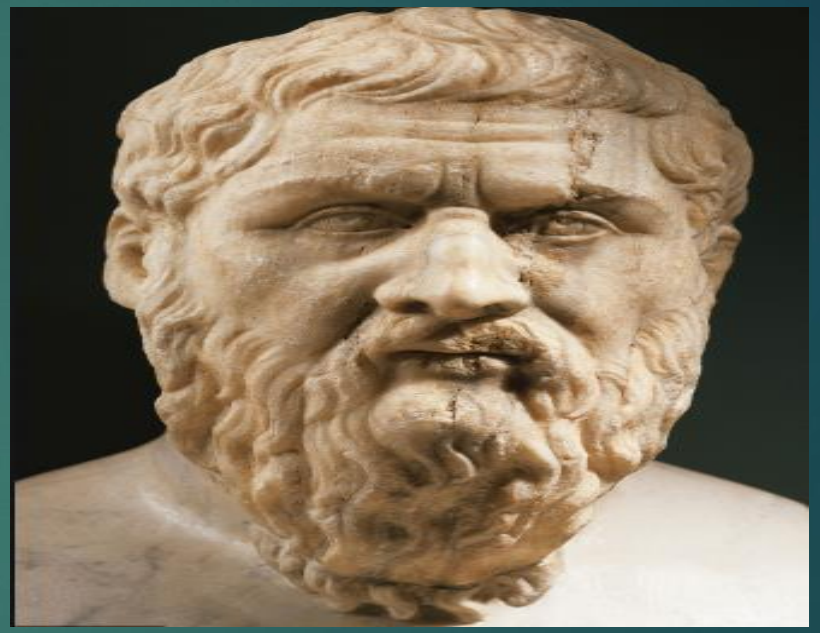


https://www.britannica.com/biography/Socrates

Plato

Born: 428/427 or 424/423 BC; Death: 348/347 BC

- The soul is immortal and separated from the body.
- The soul does not exist with the body. It exists prior to being joined to the body. Resembling the idea of reincarnation.
- The soul lives within a body and upon death, the soul moves onto another body afterwards.
- The human soul or psyche is divided into three parts: **appetitive**, **spirited** and **rational**.

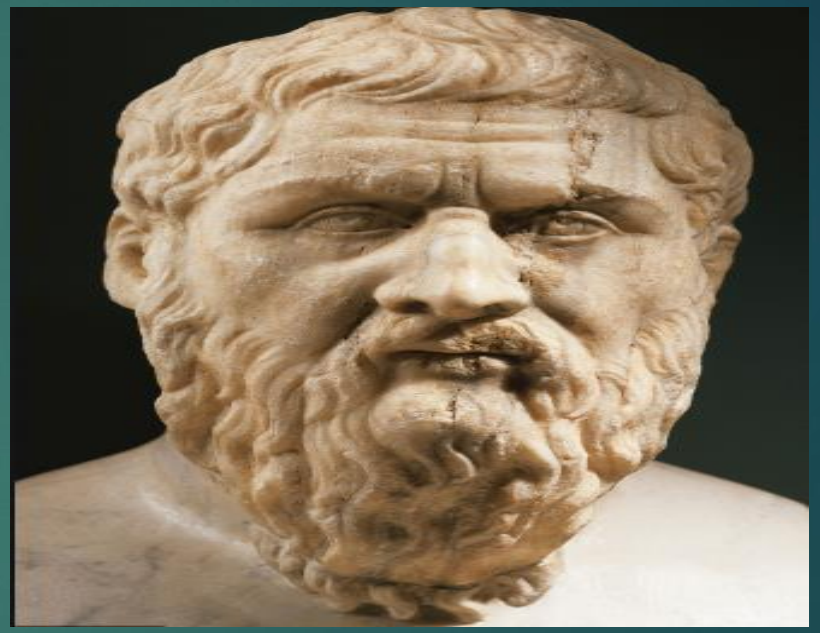


https://www.britannica.com/biography/Plato

Plato

Born: 428/427 or 424/423 BC; Death: 348/347 BC

- He emphasizes that justice in the human person can only be attained if the three parts of the soul are working harmoniously with one another.
- The **RATIONAL SOUL** forged by reason and intellect has to govern the affairs of the human person.
- The **SPIRITED SOUL** which is in charge of emotions should be kept in control at all times.
- The **APPETITIVE SOUL** in charge of base desires like eating, drinking, sleeping and having sex should be controlled as well.



https://www.britannica.com/biography/Plato

Augustine

Born: 13 November 354 AD ; Death: 28 August 430 AD

- Like Plato, he also asserted that the soul is immortal.
- However, he does not believe that the soul jumps from one body to another. Instead, one person is made up of one body and one soul.
- The body is that imperfect aspect of man that is bound to perish on earth, which incessantly longs to be in communion with the spiritual realm of the Divine God. (Mennel,1994)



https://qspirit.net/augustine-hippo-queer-saint/

Augustine

Born: 13 November 354 AD ; Death: 28 August 430 AD

- The soul, on the other hand, is capable of reaching immortality by staying after death in an eternal realm with the all-transcendent God. (Mennel, 1994)

- The purpose, therefore, of every human person is to attain this spiritual union with God by living his life according to virtues.



https://qspirit.net/augustine-hippo-queer-saint/

Thomas Aquinas

Born: 1225 ; Death: 7 March 1274

- In his theory of self-knowledge, he claims that all our experiences about the world around us determine our self-knowledge.
- Our experiences greatly shape our awareness of ourselves- **the more experience we have, the more we get to know ourselves**.
- **Who am I?** can only be unravelled from the inside by **me**, the one asking the question.



https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/e/e3/St-thomas-aquinas.jpg

Thomas Aquinas

Born: 1225 ; Death: 7 March 1274

- **"Who am I?"** can be resolved by reasoning taken from life encounters as evidences.
- Our being is not composed of isolated minds or selves, rather, we are agents interacting with the environment. (Torrel, 2005)
- Answering the **"Who am I?"** question requires becoming more aware of ourselves as we engage with real-life experiences. This is Aquinas' deeper sense of self.



https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/e/e3/St-thomas-aquinas.jpg

Rene Descartes

Born: 31 March 1596; Death: 11 February 1650

- "Father of Modern Philosophy"
- Dualist Thinker; **Dualism** is the concept that reality or existence is divided into two parts: **the mind** and **the physical body**.
- According to Dualism, the mind is somehow separate from the physical attributes of the body. The body is nothing but a machine attached to the mind, while the mind is part of the unseen creation.



https://www.biography.com/scholar/rene-descartes

Rene Descartes

Born: 31 March 1596; Death: 11 February 1650

- The mind is the seat of our consciousness because it houses our drives, intellect, passion and understanding. It gives us our identity and our sense of self.
- In short, all that we are comes from the mind.
- Thus, his famous, cogito ergo sum, **"I think, therefore I am"**
- *"But what then, am I? A thinking thing. It has been said. But what is a thinking thing? It is a thing that doubts, understands (conceive), affirms, denies, wills, refuses; that imagines also and perceives"*
  (Descartes, 2008)

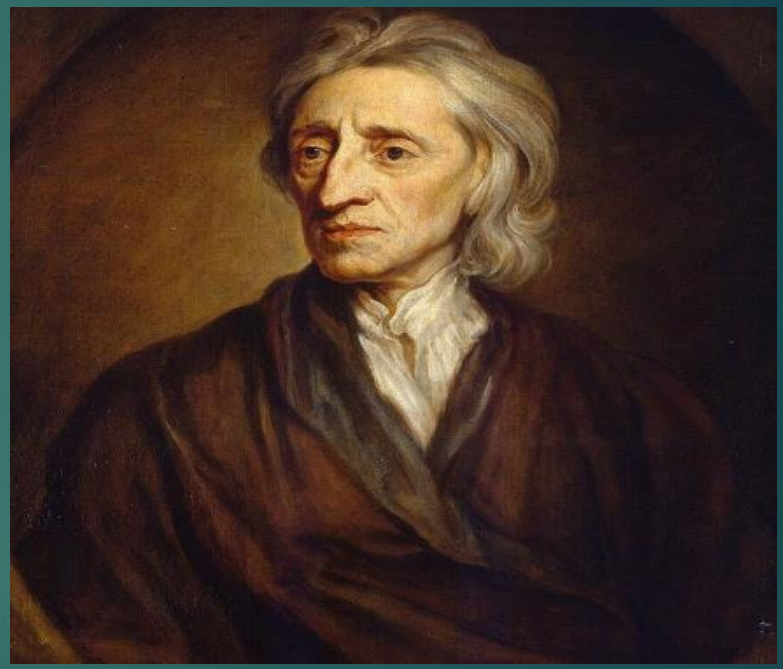


https://www.biography.com/scholar/rene-descartes

John Locke

Born: 29 August 1632; Death: 28 October 1704

- **IDENTITY**.
- To Locke, identity means being one thing and not another.
- It is what makes you "you" and me "me".
- Our identity is tied with our **consciousness**, which to him, is the perception of what passes in a man's own mind. (Anstey, 2011)
- In other words, it comprises our **memories**.



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Locke#/media/File:John_Locke.jpg

John Locke

Born: 29 August 1632; Death: 28 October 1704

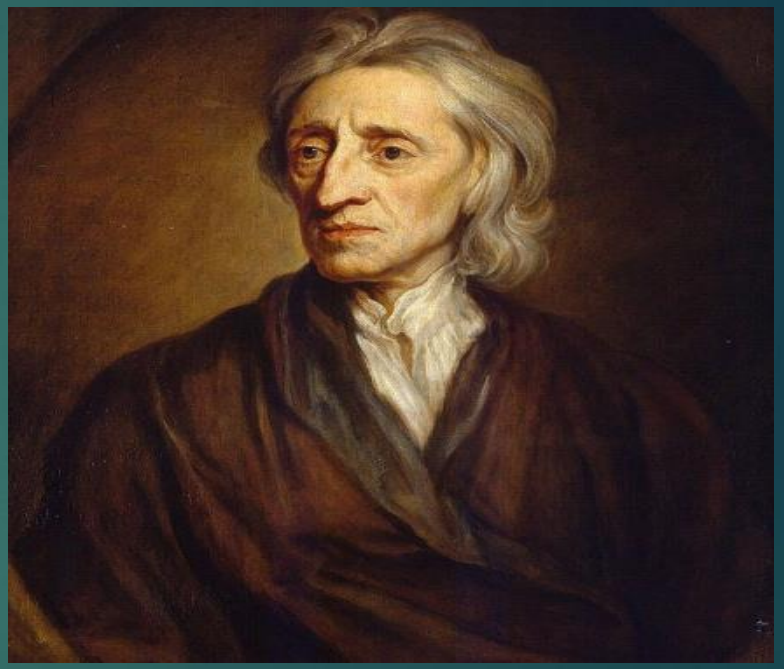
- **Am I still the person I once was?**

To answer this question, he used his principle of individuation, the idea that a person keeps the same identity over time.

For instance, would we be a different person if we lost an arm or a leg?

Locke's answer was simple: of course not! Our identity is not defined by our physical being. Whether we grow taller, loses hair, go blind or get a face lift, our memories are still the same.

Therefore, Locke simply tells us that ***OUR MEMORIES GIVE US OUR IDENTITY***. (Ayers, 1993)



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Locke#/media/File:John_Locke.jpg

David Hume

Born: 07 May 1711; Death: 25 August 1776

- Empiricist
- Only through our physical experiences using our sense of sight, sound, touch, taste and smell that we know what we know.
- Experiences can all be categorized into two: **IMPRESSIONS AND IDEAS**.
- **Impression**s- everything that originate from our senses.
- **Ideas**- which are just faint images of thinking and reasoning based on impressions.



https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/e/ea/Painting_of_David_Hume.jpg

David Hume

Born: 07 May 1711; Death: 25 August 1776

- When one touches an ice cube, the cold sensation is an example of **impression**.
- When one imagines the feeling of being in love for the first time, that is still an **idea**.
- We perceive a sense of self depending on how our mind put impressions together and makes sense of them as "me".



https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/e/ea/Painting_of_David_Hume.jpg

Immanuel Kant

Born: 22 April 1724; Death: 12 February 1804

- Thinking of the "self" as a mere combination of impressions was problematic for him.
- He recognizes the veracity of Hume's account that everything starts with perception and sensation of impressions.
- BUT he thinks that the things that men perceive around them are not just randomly infused into the human person without an organizing principle that regulates the relationship of all of these impressions.
- For him, there is a necessarily a mind that organizes the impressions that men get from the external world.



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Immanuel_Kant#/media/File:Kant_gemaelde_3.jpg

Immanuel Kant

Born: 22 April 1724; Death: 12 February 1804

- Kant's supporters advocated **RATIONALISM**. **Rationalism is** theory which states that REASON is the foundation of all knowledge rather than experience.
- **INNER & OUTER SELF**
- Inner Self- is comprised of our psychological state and our rational intellect. (Carver & Scheier, 2014)
- Outer Self- includes our sense and the physical world.(Carver & Scheier,2014)
- Inner and Outer Self combine to give us our consciousness instead of self being one or the other.



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Immanuel_Kant#/media/File:Kant_gemaelde_3.jpg

Gilbert Ryle

Born: 19 August 1900 ; Death: 6 October 1976

- While many philosopher support, **"I think, therefore I am".** Ryle in a way said, **"I act, therefore I am"**.
- It is our **behaviors** and **actions** that give us our sense of self.
- Mind does not exist separately from the body. He claims that this is a **category mistake**.



https://movingonfrombowlby.files.wordpress.com/2014/03/ryle.png

Gilbert Ryle

Born: 19 August 1900 ; Death: 6 October 1976

- The idea that *"there is something called MIND over and above a person's behavioral dispositions"* is questionable.
- Mind does not exist and therefore cannot be the seat of self.
- We do **neither** get our sense of self from the **mind** nor from the **body**, but from our behavior in our day-to-day activities.



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Paul Churchland

Born: October 21, 1942

- Instead of DUALISM, he holds the belief that the PHYSICAL BRAIN is where we get our sense of self.
- This is known as ELIMINATIVE MATERIALISM, the belief that nothing but MATTER exists. (Churchland, 1981)
- In short, if it cannot be recognized by our senses, then it is simply a fairy tale.
- Therefore, since the mind cannot be experienced by our senses, then it does not really exists.



https://open-mind.net/om-contributors/Paul_M_Churchland

Paul Churchland

Born: October 21, 1942

- It is the **PHYSICAL BRAIN** and not the **IMAGINARY MIND** that gives us our sense of self.

- To prove this, Churchland points out that if the mind is the seat of the self:

How can personalities be altered by physical injuries or brain trauma?



https://open-mind.net/om-contributors/Paul_M_Churchland

Maurice Merleau-Ponty

Born: 14 March 1908; Death: 3 May 1961

- Asserts that the MIND and BODY division that has been going on for a long time is a futile endeavor and an INVALID problem.
- Instead, he said that the MIND and BODY are so intertwined that they cannot be separated from one another.
- He believed that the physical body to be an important part of what makes up the subjective self. (Carbone, 2004)



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Maurice Merleau-Ponty

Born: 14 March 1908; Death: 3 May 1961

- His concept contradicts EMPIRICISM and RATIONALISM.
- Both MIND and BODY are our seat of knowledge, and they both give us our sense of self.
- Like LOVE and MARRIAGE, you cannot have one without the other.
- The self and perception are encompassed in a physical body. The physical body is part of the self.
- The body is NOT the prison house of self, rather, it is the subject that embodies self.



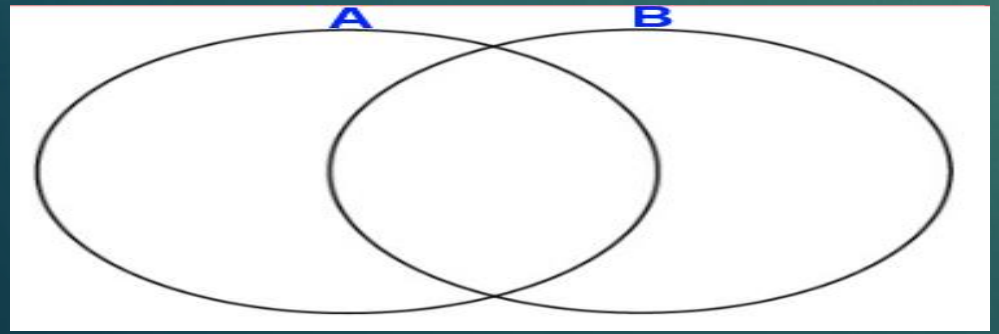
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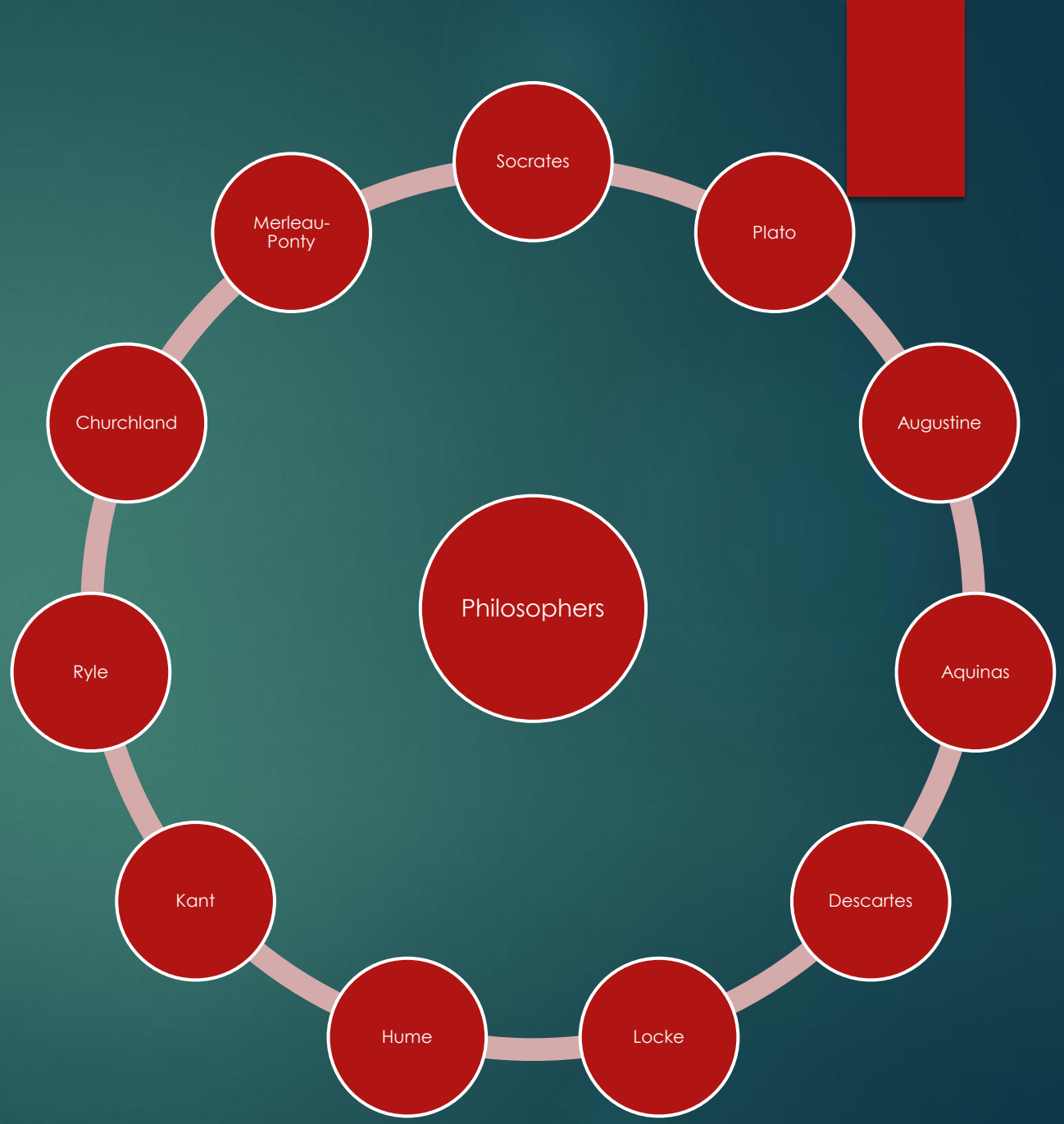
PETA 1

1. Among the philosophers specified on the image on the left (or even those who were not part of our discussion), to whom do you agree the most?

2. To whom you disagree the most? Defend your answer.

3. Choose two philosophers. Specify the similarities and differences by constructing a Venn Diagram.





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