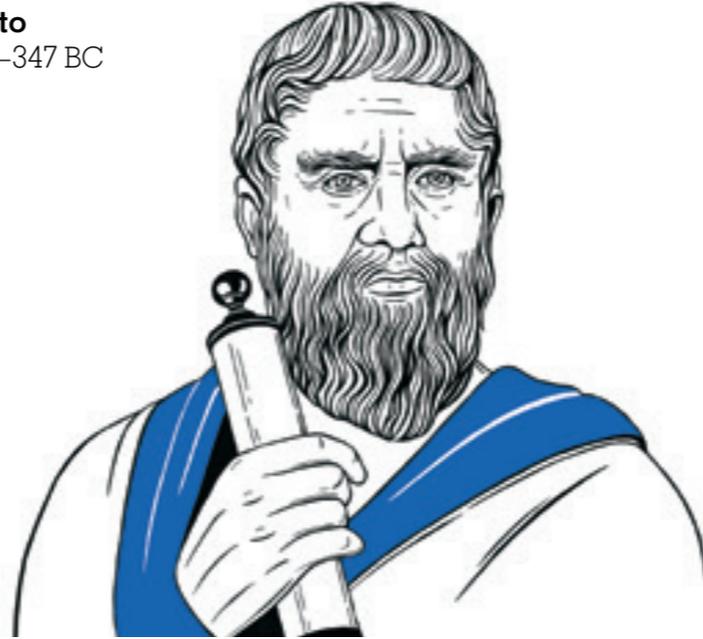


Plato
428–347 BC



Nationality: Greek
Discipline: Philosophy
Major work: *The Republic*
Key words: doxa, eudaimonia

.....
Wrote forty-one beautifully crafted dialogues featuring his mentor and teacher, Socrates. Believed that humans are capable of great things when we use reason, and appalling things when we don't. Argued against democracy on the basis that most people don't think hard enough to deserve the vote.
.....

QUOTE 'The first and the best victory is to conquer oneself.'

**Michel de
Montaigne**
1533–1592



Nationality: French

Discipline: Philosophy

Major work: *The Essays*

Key words: humanism, essays

.....
Spent much of his life alone in the library in a tower of his castle, writing essays on human nature. He was keen to point out the limits of human reason, mocking academia and snobbery of all kinds. He even humanised his own efforts by discussing his bodily functions and pet peeves.
.....

QUOTE 'On the highest throne in the world, we are seated still upon our arses.'

Friedrich Nietzsche
1844–1940



Nationality: German

Discipline: Philosophy

Major works: *The Birth of Tragedy, Thus Spoke Zarathustra, On the Genealogy of Morals*

Key words: *Übermensch*, slave morality, master morality, eternal recurrence, *amor fati*

.....
He spent much of his life alone writing his strange, seductive books full of aphorisms. He focused on how self-serving and hypocritical a lot of morality is, and had a particular hatred of Christianity and socialism, both of which he saw as stemming from the disguised envy of the successful by the poor and the weak.
.....

QUOTE 'God is dead... And we have killed him.'

**Simone
de Beauvoir**
1908–1986



Nationality: French

Discipline: Philosophy

Major work: *The Second Sex*

Key words: the other, the second sex, feminism

.....
First made famous by her troubled lifelong relationship with Jean-Paul Sartre, she is now accepted as an important philosopher in her own right. Often considered the mother of modern feminism, she described the challenges that women face in being recognised as active, capable, important subjects instead of objects to be acted upon.
.....

QUOTE 'One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman.'

**Niccolò
Machiavelli**
1469–1527



Nationality: Italian

Discipline: Political Theory

Major works: *The Prince*, *The Discourses*

Key words: Medici family, *virtù*

.....
A byword for political machinations, his writings were designed to advise the Medici dukes on how to be effective rulers. It wasn't that he didn't believe in right and wrong, but he believed that the highest good was the survival of an effective and strong state.
.....

QUOTE 'It is better to be feared than loved, if you cannot be both.'

Hannah Arendt
1906–1975



Nationality: German

Discipline: Political Theory

Major works: *The Origins of Totalitarianism*,
The Human Condition, *On Violence*

Key words: violence, totalitarianism, fascism

.....
A German Jew, she fled to the United States during the Second World War. She wrote about the nature of violence and oppression, and the 'banality of evil' when people disengage morally and philosophically from their actions.
.....

QUOTE 'The sad truth is that most evil is done by people who never make up their minds to be good or evil.'

**Jean-Jacques
Rousseau**
1712–1778



Nationality: Swiss

Discipline: Philosophy

Major works: *Confessions, Discourse on Inequality, The Social Contract*

Key words: the state of nature, the social contract, *amour propre, amour de soi*

.....
His own life was full of scandalous affairs and intellectual rivalry. But he wanted to avoid these social dramas, and wrote about the corruptive influence of society on people's morals. He argued that people should resist pride and vanity and return to their better natural instincts.
.....

QUOTE 'I may not be better than other people, but at least I am different.'

The Buddha
6th–5th century BC



Nationality: Nepalese

Discipline: Eastern Philosophy

Major work: *Sutra* ('sayings')

Key words: *nirvana*, the middle way

.....
Born a prince, he first ventured outside his palace at the age of twenty-nine and saw suffering, poverty, illness, and death. This inspired him to go on a spiritual journey of fasting and meditation that led him towards nirvana, a state where one would escape suffering.
.....

QUOTE 'Attachment is the root of all suffering.'

Sen no Rikyū
1522–1591



Nationality: Japanese

Discipline: Eastern Philosophy

Major work: the *chanoyu* tea ceremony

Key words: *wabi-sabi*, Zen

.....
A 16th-century Zen tea master who popularised the love of rough and unpolished things – an aesthetic known as ‘wabi-sabi’. He taught his followers to drink tea from simple ceramic cups in small wooden teahouses, a ritual which has become known as the tea ceremony, or *chanoyu* in Japanese.
.....

QUOTE ‘Though you wipe your hands and brush off the dust and dirt from the vessels, what is the use of all this fuss if the heart is still impure?’

Rachel Carson
1907–1964



Nationality: American

Discipline: Science

Major work: *Silent Spring*

Key words: DDT (pesticide), environmentalism

.....
Her most famous work, *Silent Spring*, made a generation of Americans aware of the dangers of pesticides and helped launch the environmental movement. But she was also a brilliant writer, alive to the beauty of the planet and its mysterious, almost alien creatures.
.....

QUOTE '...man is part of nature, and his war against nature is inevitably a war against himself.'