

AUGUST COMTE

(1798-1857)



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A Biographical Sketch

August Comte was born in Montpellier, France, on January 19, 1798.

His parents were middle class, and his father eventually rose to the position of official local agent for the tax collector.

Although a precocious student, Comte never received a college-level degree.

He and his whole class were dismissed from the Ecole Poly technique for their rebelliousness and their political ideas.

This expulsion had an adverse effect on Comte's academic career. In 1817 he became secretary (and "adopted son" [Manuel, 1962:251]) to Claude Henri Saint-Simon, a philosopher forty years Comte's senior.

They worked closely together for several years, and Comte acknowledged his great debt to Saint-Simon.

In 1826, Comte concocted a scheme by which he would present a series of seventy-two public lectures (to be held in his apartment) on his philosophy.

Although he could not get a regular position at the Ecole Polytechnique, Comte did get a minor position as a teaching assistant there in 1832.

In 1837, Comte was given the additional post of admissions examiner.

Comte worked on the six-volume work for which he is best known, *Cours de Philosophie Positive*, which was finally published in its entirety in 1842 (the first volume had been published in 1830). In that work Comte outlined his view that sociology was the ultimate science.

By 1851 he had completed the four-volume *Systeme de Politique Positive*, which had a more practical intent, offering a grand plan for the reorganization of society.

Contributions of August Comte

1. Coined the term of “Sociology”

2. Divisions of Sociology

3. Classification of Sciences

4. Religion of Humanity

5. The Programme of social Reconstruction

6. Law of Three Stages

1. Divisions of Sociology

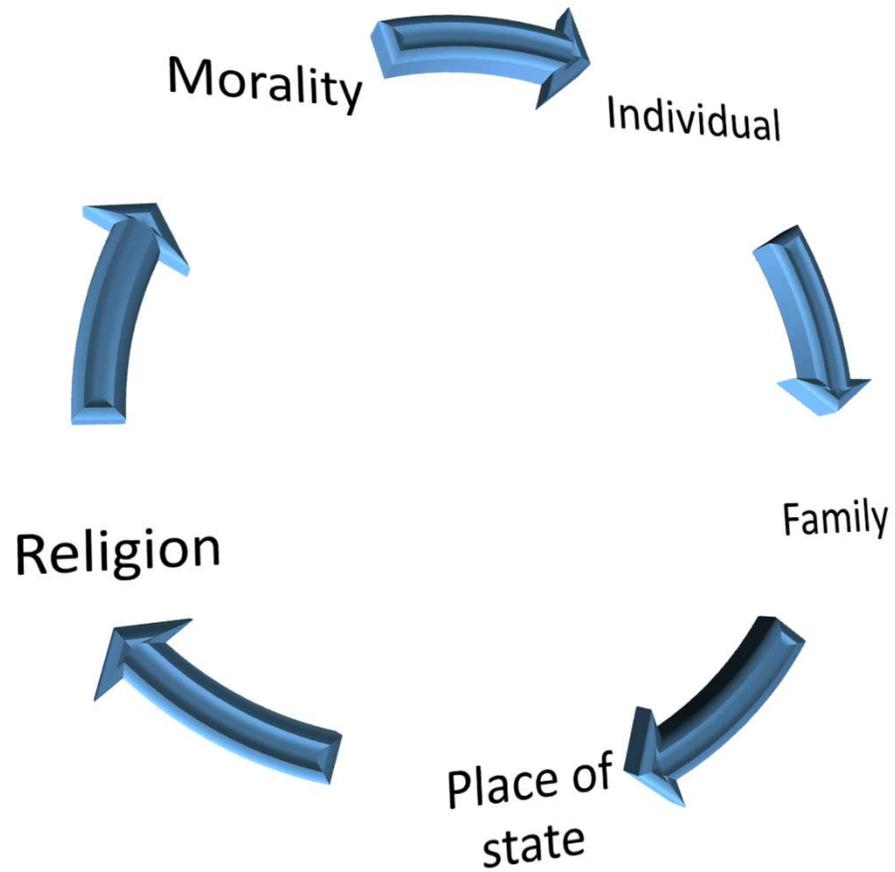
1.1 Social Static

1.2 Social Dynamic

1.1 Social Static or Social Structure

Social static concerned with the present condition of the society. It studies the current laws rules and present condition of the society. In social static it is observed as to how the present social laws and present condition of the society. In social static it is observed as to how the present social laws affect the society. It also studies the correlation between various social facts. In order to understand the Comte view regarding social structure it is important to understand the individual, family, place of state, religion and morality.

social structure



1.2 INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE

According to August Comte individual don't have such importance in the society. According to Comte, individual is not a social unit. Sociology starts to study the unit "Family".

1. 1.3 Family in Social Structure

Family occupies a pivotal position in society and sociology. Family has been accepted as the starting point of society and study of sociology start from here. Family develops the society and sociology. Family is the combination of different members that holds the different positions who web of different relationships.

1.1.4 PLACE OF STATE IN SOCIAL STRUCTURE

In the opinion of Comte, it is the state which occupies the place of importance after family in the scale of social development. A group of people living in closeness to each other and sharing a common language constitute a society. while a group of family residing together constitute a state. Beside the language, the territory is also important. Division of labor and cooperation make it possible constitute a society.

1.1.5 RELIGION AND MORALITY

According to Comte religion and morality occupy an important place in social structure. He said that there are two devices to control the society. The religion and morality. In his view a social control established by law and state is bound to be ineffective. It will be artificial. The state control is based upon fear and there for lacks true spirit of allegiance. Social control is based upon religion and morality.

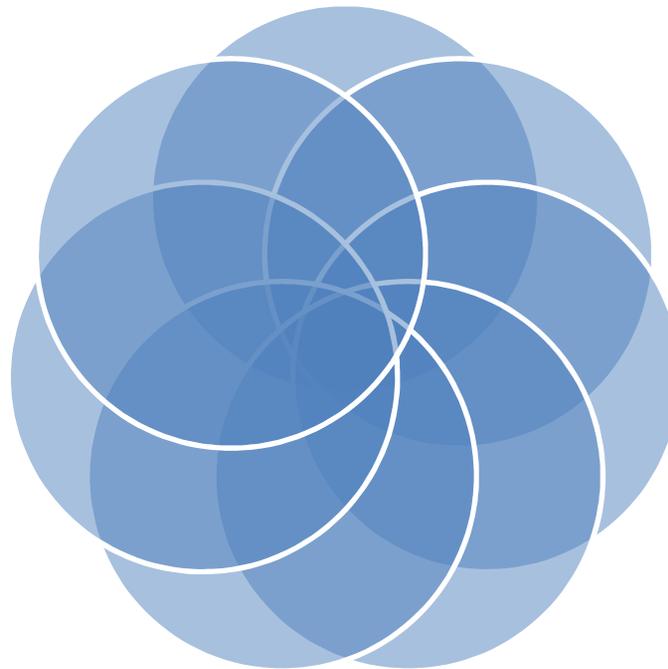
FOCUS OF COMTE

He was conservative

Stress on the systematic character of society

He also urged that we look at both social structure and social change

Focused the larger entities such as the family



Reformist

Scientism

Evolutionist

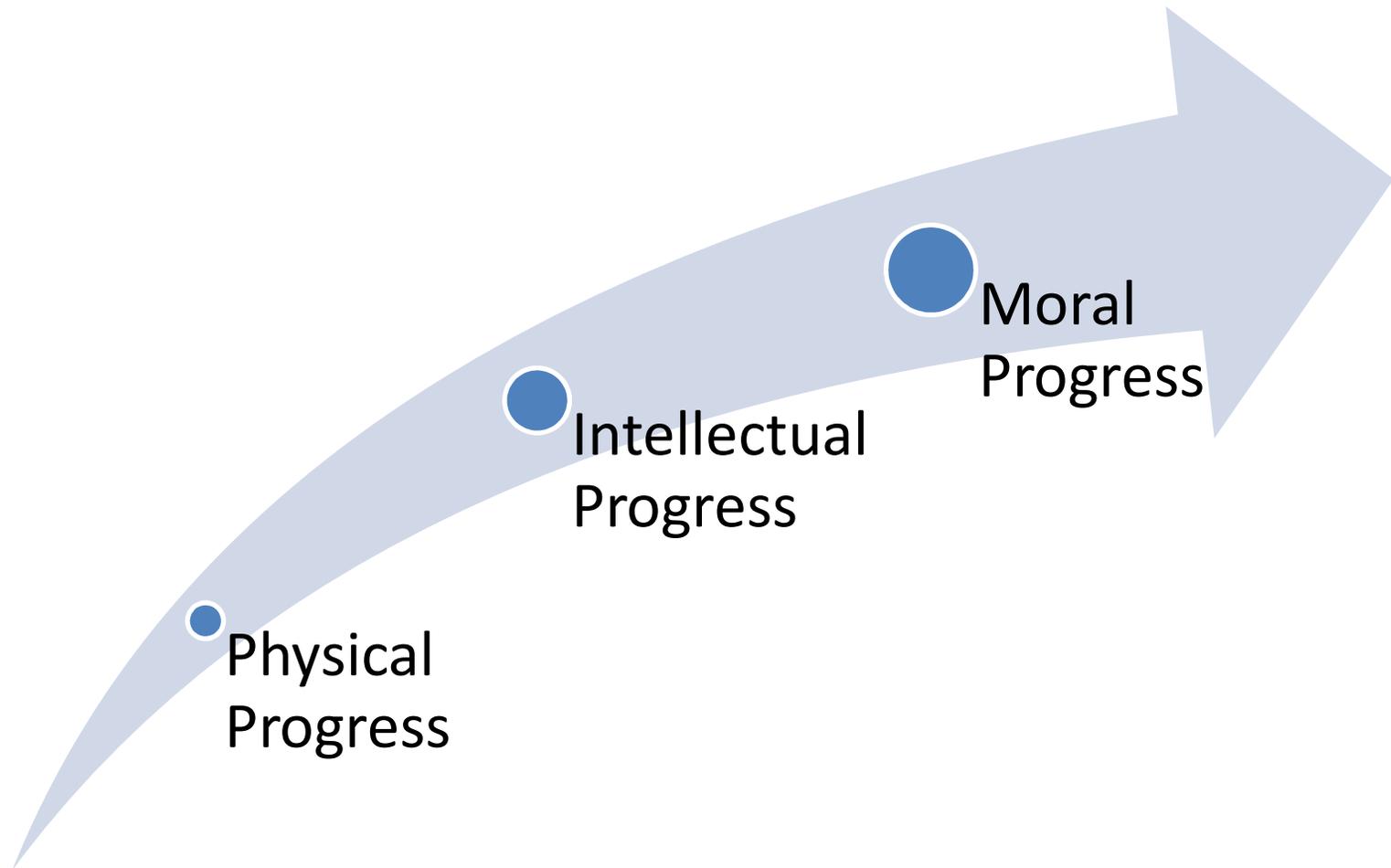
1.2 SOCIAL DYNAMICS OR SOCIAL PROGRESS

According to August Comte Social dynamic is more important as compare to social static.

The social progress has definite goal and direction, which is the attainment of scientific and positive stage of human thinking.

Social dynamics examines the laws and principles underlying social change, and progress social dynamics also tries to find out the conditions necessary to maintain the continuity of social progress

1.2. THREE TYPES OF SOCIAL PROGRESS



1.2.1 PHYSICAL PROGRESS

The fundamental progress of mankind lies in the physical progress. In the absence of physical progress no other kind of progress is possible. It is the gateway of social progress. By physical progress we understand the progress in living conditions, namely, housing, agriculture and industrial development etc. Physical progress provides the base for the social progress. Physical progress is the first running in the ladder of social progress. Thus it is the foot way for social progress.

1.2.2 INTELLECTUAL PROGRESS

In the social progress, the intellectual progress occupies a very important place. By intellectual progress alone can we understand the processes of social cohesion and social disintegration and also the forces which lead to social disruption and disorder. Comte believed that if our intellect can be made to accept the importance of social cohesion our selfish feelings will automatically turn into altruistic desires. The increase in the feeling of altruism would in-turn lead to great strides in social progress.

1.2.3 MORAL PROGRESS

Though Comte generally attached highly importance to intellectual progress, he later on inclined towards moral progress. In his book “Positive Polity”, Comte lays more emphasis on moral progress, which is based on intellect and science.

Deviating from his general philosophy, Comte began to regard morality as the highest aim of life. He named his new outlook and theory “RELIGION OF HUMANITY”

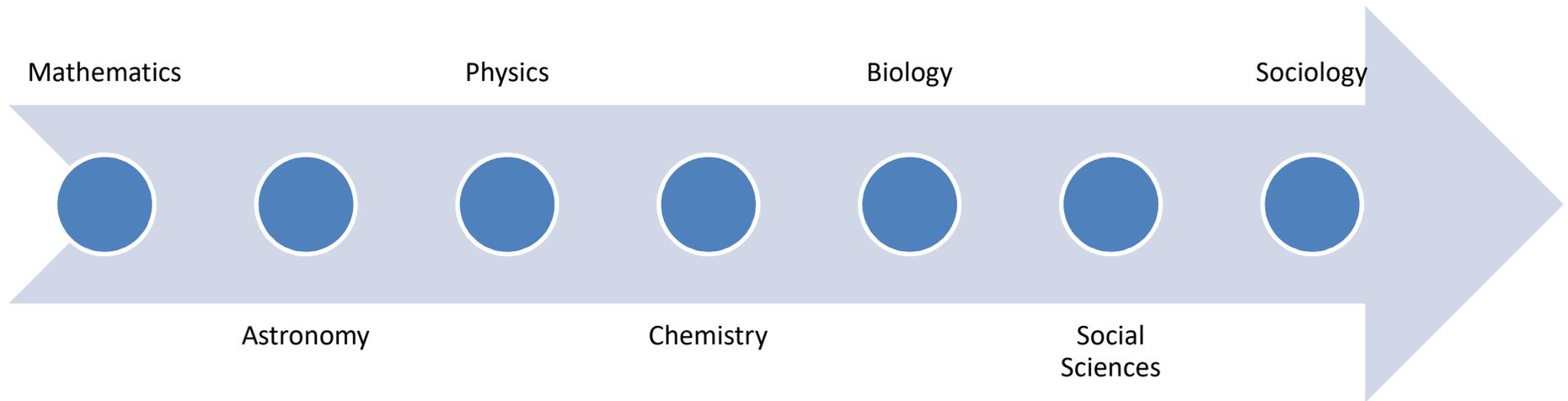
2.5 RELIGION OF HUMANITY

Initially August Comte was interested in reasoning but with the passage of time he felt that morality and religion is more important than positivism. But he did not believe in Divine force but upon morality.

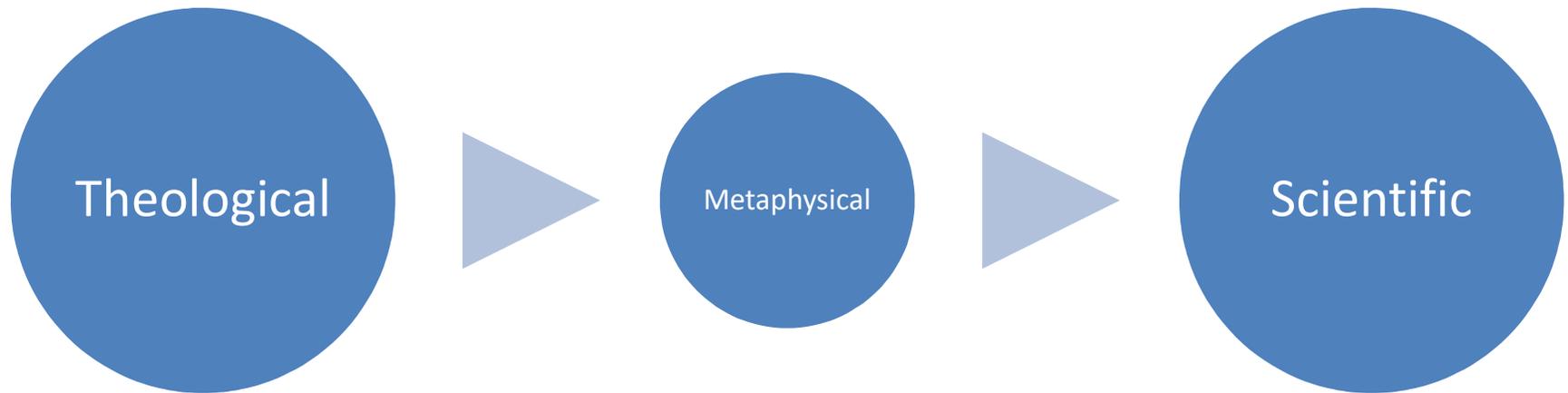
His religion of humanity was the combination of all good religious conducts. He wanted to raise the physical, intellectual, and moral standard of people.

Actually, Comte's religion was primarily a code of morality.

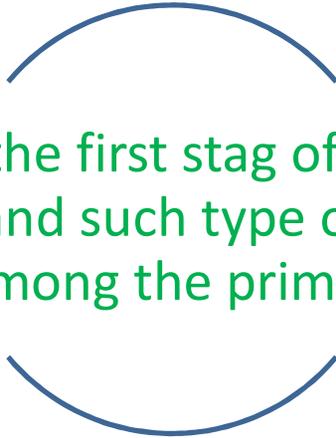
3. COMTE CLASSIFICATION OF SCIENCES



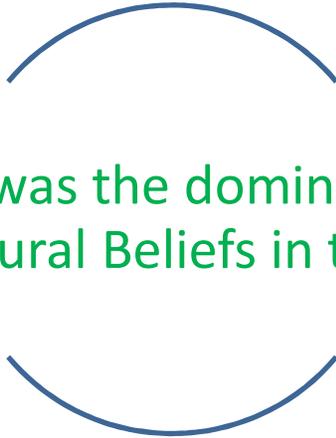
2.6 Three Stages of Human Thinking



2.6.1 THEOLOGICAL

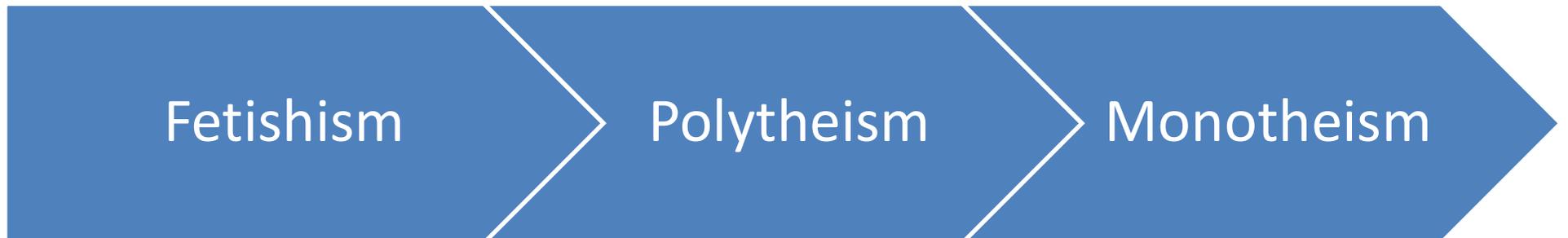


This is the first stage of human thinking and such type of thinking is found among the primitive races.



There was the dominance of Supernatural Beliefs in that stage

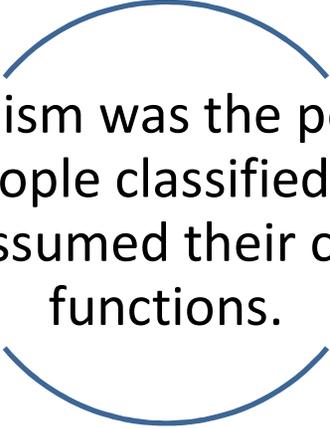
2.6.1 Theological Stage



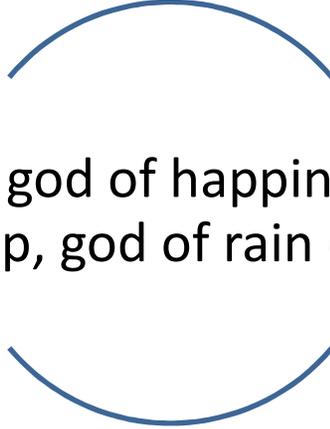
2.6.1.1Fetishism

Fetishism or Animism was the stage in which people believed that there is some living spirit in the non-living objects and started worship to every object from that they were threatened.

2.6.1.2 Polytheism

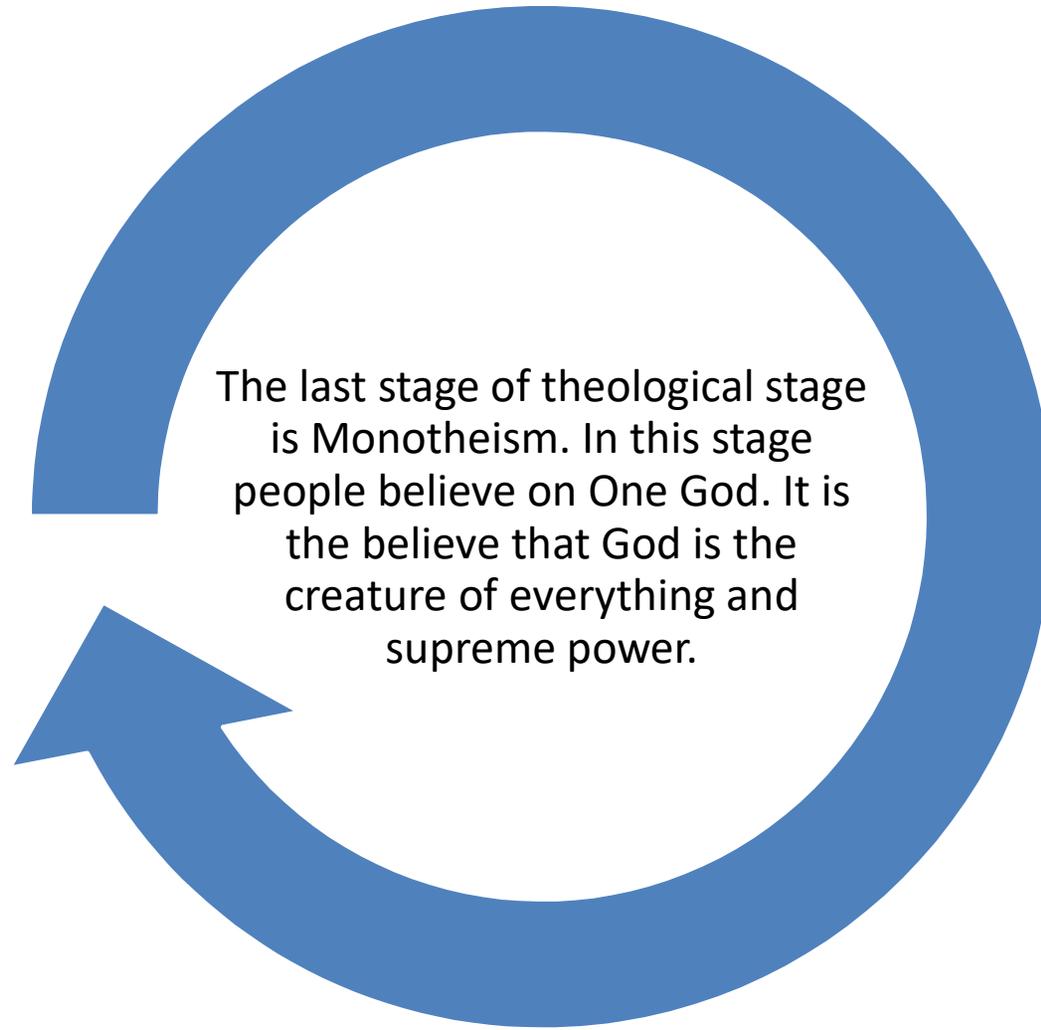


Polytheism was the period in which people classified the gods and assumed their certain functions.



Examples: god of happiness, god of crop, god of rain etc.

2.6.1.3 Monotheism



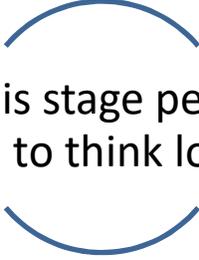
2.6.2 Metaphysical



It is the second stage of human evolution.



Dominancy: Logic



in this stage people started to think logically.

2.6.3 Scientific Stage/Positivism

In this stage people believed on science (observation, experimentation and comparison).

Dominancy: Science, Facts and Figures

Thank You