

SEMESTER-I
MAJOR DSC COURSE
PAPER-II: WESTERN PHILOSOPHY – I
PAPER CODE: PHILMAJ 102

[GREEK PERIOD: PRE-SOCRATIC, SOCRATES, PLATO AND ARISTOTLE]

UNIT-I

1. Nature and Characteristics of Ancient Greek Philosophy
2. **Pre-Socratic thinkers–**
Thales, Anaximenes, Anaximander: Origin of the World
Heraclitus: Theory of Change
Pythagoras: Number Theory
3. **Socrates:** Socratic Method, Virtue Ethics

UNIT-II

1. **Plato:** Theory of Knowledge, Theory of Ideas and its Characteristics, Concept of Soul

UNIT-III

1. **Aristotle:** Causation, Doctrine of Form and Matter, Concept of God, Theory of Universal

Suggested Readings:

1. Stace, W.T: *A Critical History of Greek Philosophy*, Macmillan, New York.
2. Copleston, Friedrich. *A History of Philosophy*. Vol. 1. Image Books.
3. Thilly, Frank: *A History of Philosophy*, Central Book Depot, Allahabad.
4. Armstrong, A.H: *An Introduction to Ancient Philosophy* (3rd Edition), Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
5. Falckenberg, R: *History of Modern Philosophy*, Notion Press, 2020.
6. Arthur Kenyon Rodgers. *A Student's History of Philosophy*. The Macmillan Company.

Bengali Version:

1. Nirod Baron Chakraborty: *Paschatya Darsaner Itihas* (Plato, Aristotle).
2. Chandrodayo Bhattacharya: *Paschatya Darsaner Itihas*.
3. R.P. Das & S.P. Chakraborty: *Paschatya Darsaner Ruprekha*.
4. Swapna Sarkar: *Paschatya Darshan Samiksha*
5. Promod Bandhu Sengupta: *Paschatya Darsaner Itihas*

The Nature of Greek Philosophy

What is philosophy?

According to Aristotle, philosophy arises from wonder. Man experiences rains and drought, storms, clouds, lightning. At times, he is greatly terrified. Then the events of life and death mystify him. He begins to reflect over the events. The sun, moon and the stars appear to him wonderful and beautiful. As a result of his reflections, he thinks that the events can be explained by powers akin to man. He proposes to control them by means of magical spells. This magic gives way to science, philosophy and religion in due course.

Magic gives way to science when natural events begin to be explained and controlled with the help of *natural causes*. Magic, again, becomes religion when the *powers* are taken to be *supernatural beings*. Manaism, animism and polytheism are so many kinds of early religions of man. The same magic flowers into philosophy when man makes an attempt to *explain the world as a whole*. Thales, Anaximenes and many others are both philosophers and scientists. They are philosophers inasmuch as they want to explain the world as a whole. They are scientists inasmuch as they try to explain the world with the help of natural stuffs. But religion too remains there. At times, the early Greek philosophers are sceptical about religion, and, at another times, they offer sublime view of religion.

Greek thinkers are praised for their scientific enquiry, but their philosophy, religion and morality too are important. Here we find that early vague concepts become precise and refined through their progress for about a thousand years. Western philosophy owes much of their development to the free Greek enquiry. In Greek thinking there is much which echoes in Indian thought. They are parallel and independent developments.

The earliest Greek religion is said to be Homeric. Homeric gods were anthropomorphic. In relation to man they were taken to be very powerful and immortal. Homeric religion was polytheistic and Zeus was taken to be the chief God. On the whole Homeric gods were not moral. They were also said to be bound by *fate* e.g., the Rigvedic gods were fully controlled by *rita*. Early Greek thinkers very often protested against this kind of polytheistic worship. But there was also another kind of religion known as Orphic religion.

Orphic Religion

Very little is known about Orpheus, but Orphism greatly influenced Socrates,

Plato and Christianity too. It has much in common with Indian religious thought. However, the two, the Greek Orphism and Indian thought are regarded as two independent and parallel development of religious consciousness. In any case it requires very brief treatment.

Orpheus is said to be a reformer of the religion of Dionysus. Later Pythagoras adopted some elements of Orphism in his philosophy. And Pythagoreanism greatly influenced Socrates and Plato.

1. Orphism relied on the doctrine of revelation which had been written in sacred books.

2. Secondly, this religion was *universal* for it was open to any member, irrespective of any tribe or race, provided he chose to be initiated into it and promised to obey the laws of Orphism.

Orphism assumed that men are in a fallen state, but in their pristined glory they are akin to gods. Man can attain to his original state by a system of purification. He might win redemption from sin and death and become immortal thereby. Orphic saints are stated to have pre-existed their birth and would exist after death.¹ They are immortal. Body is the tomb of the soul and imprisons the soul in the 'wheel of birth'.² Hence, Orphism subscribed to the doctrine of the transmigration of the soul.

Life for an Orphic is essentially suffering. Only by a method of purification and renunciation, an ascetic can escape from the wheel of endless rebirths.³

Most Orpheans abstained from animal meat, but on ritualistic occasions they used meat sacramentally. The Orpeans sought union with the god by means of mystic knowledge, which is quite different from ordinary knowledge. This mystic union means release from the wheel of rebirths.⁴

Characteristics of early Greek thought

1. We find that early Greek philosophers were *free* thinkers and indulged in free enquiry, untrammelled by any supernatural reference. Xenophanes (570-480 B.C.) denied polytheism in favour of monotheism. He rejected also the theory of the transmigration of souls. Heraclitus (525-475 B.C.) rejected the worship of gods current in his time. Democritus (460-360 B.C.) traced the worship of gods to fear. Again, Anaxagoras (500-428 B.C.), Protagoras (480-410 B.C.), Socrates (469-399 B.C.) and Aristotle (384-322 B.C.) were deemed anti-religious.

2. Freed from religious bias, the Greek thinkers supported science and are called as the founders of science in the west.

3. What is the meaning of science in early Greek contexts? Nobody can think that early thinkers could have fully understood the nature of science as the modern

1. Compare, *Gita* 2.20.

2. *Greek Philosophy*, John Burnet, London, 1968 (Print), pp. 24-25

scientists understand. For the early Greek thought science means an independent and free enquiry into natural events, systematically and methodologically without being burdened with religious requirement. The early Greek thinkers gave rational explanation of natural phenomena by taking recourse to hypothesis which according to them must harmonise with facts. The Greeks invented mathematics, wrote history (e.g., Aristotle), not annals and thought freely without being hampered by religious orthodoxy.

Man's first response is to the outer world and only afterwards he becomes reflective about his inner life of epistemology, morality and the nature of political conditions of life. The beginning of the Greek speculation is essentially cosmogonic. Here the principle was, 'Nature has to be explained according to natural stuff'. According to Thales (624-550 B.C.) the world arises from water and returns again into water. The next cosmogonist, Anaximander (611-547 B.C.) hazarded that the ultimate stuff of the universe is boundless *something*, an *undifferentiated mass*. Anaximenes (588-524 B.C.) held that *Air* is the fundamental thing underlying the whole universe; Pythagoras (588-500 B.C.) explained through number. For Heraclitus (535 -475 B.C.) everything is flux and everchanging and fire is the ultimate symbol. Again, Empedocles stated that (495-435 B.C.) fire, earth, water and air are the basic elements which can explain the universe and for Democritus (460-360 B.C.) the material atoms alone can account for the whole universe.

The early Greek cosmogonists laid down the basic structure of scientific explanation, namely, the universe has to be explained through natural causes, without reference to supernatural agencies and religion. The intellectual pursuits of the Greek were exceptional. They invented mathematics, science and philosophy. They were the first to write *history* in the place of annals.

4. We have stated that philosophy is the interplay of science and religion. Gone were the anthropomorphic and largely immoral gods, but religion refuses to be thrown out of human life. Throw it through the doors and it comes again through the windows. Socrates was guided by a voice (*daimon*) and was subject to ecstasy or trance akin to what Sri Ramakrishna experienced frequently. Then both Plato and Plotinus speak of meditation through which man can rise to great heights in his spiritual attainments. But the religion of mysticism was coupled with the idealism of Plato and advaitic kind of philosophy in Plotinus. However, Aristotle kept largely to science, and, Aristotelianism remained the most important philosophy for sustaining science both in the world of Arabs and Europe.

Later on both Plato and Aristotle were Christianised by Church fathers. St. Augustine and Anselm were Platonic, but St. Thomas Aquinas was Aristotelian. In medieval philosophy, religion dominated and science was largely kept in abeyance. When science began to rise, religion tried to oppose its advance. Even when science triumphed religion continued its conservative function. Only in the 20th century science and religion have made truce and both of them are working

independently of each other.

Divisions of Western Philosophy

Historians of philosophy have divided Western Philosophy according to their convenience. In this book we shall deal with only a few thinkers who have largely moulded the thought in the west. We shall divide the Western philosophy into Greek, Medieval, Modern, Post-Kantian, Metaphysicians and the 20th Century philosophy.

I. *Greek Philosophy*

It covers a period between 600-400 A.D. This period has three sections.

Section I. Pre-Socratic Philosophy.

Section II. Socrates, Plato and Aristotle.

Section III. Greco-Roman Philosophy.

II. *Medieval Philosophy 400-1500 A.D.*

III. *Modern Philosophy (Bacon to Kant) Post-Kantian Philosophy*

IV. *20th Century Philosophy.*

GREEK PHILOSOPHY (PRE-SOCRATIC)

Thales

The first Greek thinker is said to be Thales who belonged to Miletus in Asia Minor. This Miletus was an important trading centre. He is said to have flourished about 624-550 B.C.

The chief aim of Thales was to account for the fundamental stuff of which the universe is made. Hence according to him the universe is fundamentally water, because water admits of being vaporous, liquid and solid. When water is heated it assumes the form of vapour; when chilled it becomes solid and when it is allowed in its natural course then it is a flowing stream. Hence water succeeds in explaining all the possible states of being solid, liquid and vaporous. For this reason water can be said to be the fundamental stuff of the universe. Even the earth, according to Thales, is a disc floating on the water.

Aristotle the biologist conjectured that Thales chose water to be the ultimate stuff, for food is always wet and this liquid food nourishes the body. Even the generating seeds are wet.

The most important thing about Thales is that he gave birth to scientific way of thinking. It is said that he predicted the eclipse which took place in 585 B.C. According to Russell,¹ Thales discovered how to calculate the distance of a ship at sea with the help of observations taken at two points and how to calculate the height of a tree or pyramid from the length of its shadow.

No doubt the philosophy and science of Thales will appear to us to be very crude, but he laid down the foundation of scientific worldview in the sense that

1. B. Russell, *Ibid.*, p. 44.

his speculation was wholly naturalistic. It was neither anthropomorphic nor theocentric.

However, he regarded magnet as something living for it attracts things towards itself. Again Thales is said to have said that all things are full of gods. Hence Windelband holds that the philosophy of Thales and of other Milesians to be hylozoistic.

Anaximander (611-547 B.C.)

Anaximander also belonged to Miletus. He was a man of daring venture of thought. He was a cosmologist like Thales. However for him the primary matter was 'boundless something',—a formless, infinite and eternal mass not yet parted into particular kinds of matter. In positing 'boundless mass' as the fundamental stuff of which the world is constituted, he indirectly lays down an important principle, namely, a formless general principle can account for the particulars, but not *vice-versa*. For example, formless earth mass can be converted into particularised things like pitchers, bricks, tiles etc. But the earthen pitchers cannot be directly shaped into tiles or goblets. In order to give rise to tiles or bricks, the earthen pitcher has to be reduced again to the formless mass of earth. This distinction of formless matters and particulars will be found again in the theory of Aristotle known as the doctrine of *matter and form*. Anaximander appears to have stated that the world is governed by the opposites like hot and cold, wet and dry. It is by the working of the opposites that the world goes on. In this context it can be said that the earth, air, water and fire cannot be the ultimate stuff of the universe, for they have opposite characters. For example, fire burns and water dampens. If any one of them be allowed to work unfetteredly then the world would become either dry or watery and the world as such would cease to be.

According to Anaximander the world has *evolved* in due course. At one time there was water everywhere. There were only watery creatures. By drying up of water, land appeared and creatures of the sea were left on the dry land. Those creatures from the sea which could adapt themselves to the dry land alone have survived. One can easily see the germ of the organic evolution in the speculative adventure of Anaximander.

Anaximander held that the earth is cylindrical in shape and moves freely in space. This positing of the earth moving freely in the space is once again a foreshadow of the theory of gravitation.

Anaximander calls his infinite, boundless matter 'God'. This is the first philosophical concept of God. This God no doubt is matter. But is not mythological or anthropomorphic. Clearly it remains monotheistic. Besides, the doctrine of *creation* of the universe by God has been completely ignored.

Anaximenes (588-524 B.C.)

Like Thales and Anaximander, Anaximenes belonged to Miletus. Like Thales, Anaximenes regards 'air' as the primary stuff of the universe. Why air,

and, not water? It is only a matter of conjecture. Most probably Anaximenes paid more attention to the living than to any other things. Here breath, i.e., air is the predominant thing. Therefore for Anaximenes air is the fundamental stuff of which the world is composed.

Anaximenes chose air as the first thing because of its mobility, changeability, and inner vitality. As a matter of fact air was considered to be the breath of the universe. Hence this breathing universe was considered to be a living organism. For this reason Anaximenes is really a hylozoist.

For Anaximenes, this primary air is regulated by the opposed principles of *condensation* and *rarefaction*. Condensation simply means compression of the air in a narrow space and rarefaction means expansion of the air in the greater space. By rarefaction air assumes the form of fire, and, by successive condensation it gives rise to water, earth and stone.

Anaximenes accounts for all the important elements and states of material things through his fundamental stuff of air. And more. He tells us, *how* air accounts for the formation of water, fire and earth. It is the knowing-how which alone constitutes scientific explanation. Hence the two principles of condensation and rarefaction are important steps in developing the scientific thinking about the universe. There is also another point which must be noted.

The world is not only vaporous, liquid and solid, but is also sound, colour, rough-smooth etc. Now to explain this world of quality? The principles of condensation and rarefaction admit of quantitative differences. Hence, here is involved the principle that quantity can explain the quality. Later on Pythagoras laid down his famous statement 'what exists, exists in number'. In the modern times no scientific explanation is considered reliable unless it is put into quantitative formulae. Hence, the thinking of Anaximenes is a step forward towards the scientific world-view.

Pythagoras (580-500 B.C.)

Religion : Pythagoras is said to have travelled widely. He had been to Egypt, where he must have learnt the value of geometry which was used there for measuring the land. He is also credited to have travelled in the east. He was better known as the founder of a religious order which was the reformed kind of Orphic religion. As Orphism has much in common with Indian thought, so Pythagoreanism too is an echo of Indian thought.

For Pythagoras the soul is immortal. He believed in rebirths and even the transmigration of the soul. The whole wheel of rebirths is essentially painful and it is the duty of man that he should put an end to this wheel of rebirths.

The body is the tomb of the soul and the visible world in which man lives is false and illusive. How to get one's release from the round of endless reincarnations in this false world? By means of mystic meditation. This meditation is intellectual and not emotional. No doubt the Pythagoreans had

ceremonies and rituals and a recommendation for an ascetic life. But the most important thing was the disinterested pursuit of science and the *contemplation* of the ultimate things of the universe. This sort of contemplation was considered most conducive towards release from the chain of endless rebirths.

Pythagoras had laid great stress on mathematics which was also the greatest science of the period. Hence the most devoted pursuit was also the greatest means of attaining the religious 'release'. Hence, scientific pursuit was also the religious duty of man.

Pythagoras founded an order in which men and women were regarded as equal. They led a common way of life. Even the mathematical discoveries were regarded as collective achievement.

Plato was greatly influenced by Pythagoras and he too regarded this world as mere appearance and a world of *becoming*, and, taught men to contemplate the realm of eternal ideas. He too emphasized the communistic state of affairs in the rulers of his ideal Republic. Something of Pythagoreanism lingered on in the Essene Sect in the times of Jesus Christ. The Essene Sect not only held all things in common, but also practised vegetarianism which was one of the tenets of Orphic religion. The mystical aspect of Pythagoreanism was fully practised by Plotinus who was certainly influenced by Indian thought.

Ethics : Pythagoras laid emphasis on asceticism and the purity of conduct. In later pythagoreanism vegetarianism was also accepted. Though life was deemed essentially full of miseries and the soul immortal, yet suicide was not deemed desirable. The reason is that suicide instead of putting an end to the wheel of transmigration, really strengthens it.¹

The most important belief of Pythagoreanism lays stress on the doctrine of transmigration of the soul, and, the main prohibition on taboo was not to eat beans. Along with asceticism, Pythagoras mentioned some taboo-restrictions² :

1. To abstain from beans.
2. Not to touch a white cock.
3. Not to stir the fire with iron.
4. Not to eat the heart.
5. And many other such prohibitions.

Mathematics and Pythagoras

Like his previous cosmogonists, Pythagoras declared that whatever exists, exists in number. This is not a wild statement. Mathematics means proportion, order and harmony. For example, a woman is said to be beautiful when she has the right proportion of her legs, thighs, waist etc. And this proportion can be expressed in quantitative terms. Similarly, a colony is physically built of certain number of lanes with some definite number. Its streets and roads also can be

1. This is what is held in Buddhism.

2. B. Russell, *A History of Western Philosophy*, p. 50.

History of Western philosophy.
Heraclitus (Heracleitus, 535 to 475 B.C.)

Heraclitus of Ephesus was a contemporary of Parmenides. But their philosophies were opposed. According to Parmenides reality is one, eternal and unchangeable being. For Heraclitus, reality is change, flux and *Becoming*. How has Heraclitus reached at this conclusion?

Well, Heraclitus was not a scientist. He was a religious thinker who indulged in aphorism. Fragments of his writing have been largely presented by B. Russell in *The History of Western Philosophy*. Socrates stated that he admired the writings of Heraclitus as much of it as he could understand, and perhaps, what he could not understand was equally admirable. This means that Heraclitus indulged in obscure aphorisms.

Further, Heraclitus speaks ill of his predecessors, except of one Hermodorus. He holds that Homer should be whipped. Hesiod was considered to be an ignorant man and Pythagoras was taken to be a mischief-maker.

The main teaching of Heraclitus is that everything is in constant flux. Rivers and mountains and all seemingly permanent things are in constant flux. All is flow and becoming. No one can step into the same river twice, for when a man enters into a river, then he meets one stream of water and the next moment the first stream passes away, yielding to a newer stream of water. One can easily see that no man can ever remain the same for even two moments. Blood-stream changes and also the mental stream. Man keeps on changing form moment to moment. The doctrine

of *flux* will remind the teaching of Lord Buddha relating to momentariness. How has Heraclitus reached this conclusion?

According to Heraclitus, every existent-thing is a *harmony of opposites*. The opposites of hot and cold, day and night. Thus war or strife of the opposites is the father of all things

"We must know that war is common to all and strife is justice, and that all things come into being and pass away through strife."

Thus the world is becoming and Becoming is the unity of opposites.

For Heraclitus, not water or air is the primordial stuff. Process alone is reality and is best symbolized by fire. Hence, fire is the ever-changing entity which constitutes reality. Fire keeps on changing every moment, burning fuel into ash and that ash too changes. Ever the sun is not the same and with Xenophanes, Heraclitus maintains that everyday it is fed with vapour to be renewed. Then is there nothing abiding?

Yes, there is an abiding *order* in the everchanging fire. All things come from fire and return to fire. There is the *downward* way and also the *upward* way. According to the downward way, through *condensation* fire changes into water and earth. And again according to the upward way, through *rarefaction*, water and earth give way to fire. This order of succession produces the illusion of permanence. Here the reader is reminded of Hume who also accounted for permanence as an illusion, born of quick succession of resembling impressions.

There is fire in man too. The more of fire is in a man, the more intellectual he is, and, as this fire decreases there is darkness in man and sickness. This point again will remind one of *Sattva* and *Tamas* elements in man, according to Samkhya.

Comments

Is there then nothing abiding? Though there is no *permanent substance* which is abiding, yet there are abiding entities in the philosophy of Heraclitus.

1. The process of becoming is certainly abiding.
2. The harmony of opposites is also an abiding principle.
3. There is the abiding *Order* of downward and upward ways of fire.
4. Then again there is the permanent law of change which gives us the appearance of permanent things.

The influence of Heraclitus is noticeable even in the modern thinkers. Though Parmenides and Heraclitus differ with what is to be regarded as real, yet both of them appeal to reason. For Parmenides senses yield illusory knowledge and this lies in taking plurality and movement as real. For Heraclitus, senses give us wrong information about what is permanent. Men wrongly sense the mountain and river as abiding. Reason will convince them that all is *flux*. This distinction of sense and reason remains influential in Plato and other subsequent thinkers.

In the same manner, the distinction of change and permanence remains throughout Western philosophy. For Fichte action is considered to be *original* and Being is conceived to be secondary. Even God is conceived as 'the universal Ego or Self', who is always a free, world-creating entity. But Henri Bergson (1858-1941) has really revived the metaphysics of Heraclitus, inasmuch as he posits the ever-changing vital process as the supreme reality.

Again, Sigmund Freud (1856-1940) maintained that human life is the dance between death and love instincts. Present life is just an equilibrium between *Eros* and *Thanatos*. Does he not teach that life is a strife between two principles?

Again, what can we say about the abiding *order* of downward and upward ways of things. Of course, Heraclitus was not a scientist, nor had science become self-conscious amongst its devotees then. But it teaches the *uniformity of nature* which is at the basis of every scientific pursuit.

Even the morality of austerity not only was by the Stoics and Epicureans, but was preached by the Christian fathers.

It is important to note the comments of Aristotle.¹ The doctrine of Heraclitus is that everything is and is not. If everything is, then it means that all judgments are true, and, if everything is not, then all judgments are false. Therefore, to say that everything is and is not, simply means that all judgments are true and not true. And this is manifest contradiction in the statements of Heraclitus.

Again, if A says that everything is true, then he also implies that his opponent's view, B's is true. Hence, A's view is false because it is opposed to that of B. Here one is reminded of 'Liar's paradox' which plays an important part in Russell's philosophy.

Besides, for Heraclitus everything is in motion. But the very meaning of motion is that which changes must itself be something, for change is of something from some of its states to another.

Much of Heraclitean metaphysics was taken up by the Stoics.

the man said to have been charged for his impiety because of his scepticism about the existence of gods.

Socrates (ABOUT 469-399 B.C.)

Socrates is a great Athenian figure who completely gave himself to philosophical enquiry, and, as a result of this embraced martyrdom heroically. Socrates has not written anything, yet three accounts have been left about him. Plato is the chief exponent of the life and teachings of Socrates. Plato's dialogues form a masterpiece of philosophical literature. The condemnation and defence of Socrates have been most beautifully portrayed in *Apology*. Xenophon was also a follower of Socrates, but he has rather emphasized the coarser aspect of Socratic teaching in his work *Memorabilia*. The third writer Aristophanes caricatured Socrates in *The Clouds*. The works of Plato and Xenophon together give a better account of the Master.

The Man Socrates

We must know the man, Socrates, if we want to understand his teaching properly. First, Socrates was a religious man. He believed in the immortality of the soul, after-life, in rebirth and the doctrine of reminiscence (Phaedo 72). To some extent he also accepted some of the tenets of Orphism, for he regarded the body as the tomb in which the soul lies buried.

Socrates used to hear voices from what he called his 'Daemon'. Jesus is also said to hear 'voices' and so did Joan of Arc. Socrates called this voice divine, which counselled him in difficult situations. Very often it served as premonition and dissuaded him from doing wrong (*Apology* 31d, 40a). It is also mentioned that Socrates experienced deep trance for hours together. Are the hearing of voices and cataleptic-like trance symptoms of insanity? Adjustment to social demands, loyalty to friends and consistency of the highest order with regard to philosophical thinking give lie to his being regarded as an insane person. It was a case of supernormality and divine restlessness (Phaedrus 249d, as Plato termed it) as was the similar case with Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda. Gandhiji is also reported to be hearing divine voice. The *voice* of Socrates is at times taken to be the voice of one's conscience and also at times the voice of one's guardian angel. In any case the 'voice' and trance of Socrates shows that he was a mystic.

Divine Mission: One day Socrates paid a visit to the temple of god Delphi. There the oracle came that Socrates was the wisest man (*Apology*, 21). Socrates on hearing this oracle was greatly surprised and wanted to test the truth of this oracle. He questioned many people who claimed to know, but on careful

↳ **The Method of Socrates**

The Method of enquiry of Socrates was *conversational*. Conversation invariably was limited to ethical subject-matter, for Socrates was trying to know his ownself. This self for him was essentially ethical. Naturally the subject-matter of conversation included the nature of justice, virtue, knowledge, temperance etc. By skilful questionings, he drew out the views of others with regard to virtue, justice, and so on. Then Socrates showed the inadequacies of their views. Hence, Socrates came to the conclusion that those who claim to know really do not know. Further, he concluded that he was wiser than others inasmuch as he knew that he did not know. At least he knew his own ignorance, which others did not. So of a truth he was wiser than others. From this irony he laid down the important starting insight into one's ignorance as the beginning of any knowledge.¹ This method of questioning and answering is known as dialectic method. So let us explain this.

The dialectic Method of Socrates

The conversational method of Socrates took the form of what is known as 'dialectic'. The dialectic method is an art of argument by skilful questions and answer (*Meno 85 d*). The answer to the question has to be answered in the fewest possible words which should be precise and to the point. Usually the philosophical

1. One can compare this starting-point of Socrates with the method of doubt of St. Augustine and Descartes.

uprightness, holiness and so on (*Phaedo* 75d). This point will help us in understanding the epistemology of Socrates, and, also what Aristotle said about the method of Socrates. Aristotle said that the method of Socrates was one of definition and induction.

True, Socrates sought the definition of the concept of virtue, justice etc. We also know that definition means the explicit statement of the essence of a thing. And this is what Socrates sought.

... and it seems we must inquire into a single property of something about whose essential nature we are still in the dark. (*Meno* 86a)

But what does 'induction' mean?

It *does not mean* the kind of inductive method which was very roughly described by Francis Bacon and later more elaborately John Stuart Mill. Here John Burnet in his book *Greek Philosophy* has very correctly described the nature of induction as was understood by Socrates.

Socrates makes a sharp distinction between perception and conception. By conception is meant universal idea of a class. Now for Socrates there is an absolute gulf between perception and conception. So the observation of a number of particular things *cannot yield* the conception of cowness or horseness. Then how do we get the concept, for Socrates accepted that knowledge is through concept? And certainly there is true knowledge for Socrates. Then how do we reach concepts? Perceptions of things simply *suggest* concepts which are already sleeping in each man. *The promptings of perceptions simply serve to excite our previous knowledge of eternal varieties by recollection.* This point now will be elaborated in the epistemology of Socrates.

Virtue is Knowledge Through Concept

For Socrates, virtue is the chief business of life (*Laws* 7.807c) and the greatest good (*Laws* 2.661b). But this virtue must be universal consistent and the same for all. And this virtue must be equally binding on all if it were knowledge. How can this be established?

... if there exists any good thing different from, and not associated with knowledge, virtue will not necessarily be any form of knowledge. If on the other hand knowledge embraces everything that is good, we shall be right to suspect that virtue is knowledge. (*Meno* 87d)

Now Socrates grants that health, wealth and good looks are all good, but in the absence of knowledge proper they all can be misused.¹ Courage and temperance are all good and would lead to happiness when they are guided by wisdom, and, evil if they are controlled by folly. (*Meno* 88a, b, c.)

If then virtue is an attribute of the spirit, and one which cannot fail to be beneficial, it must be wisdom, for all spiritual qualities in and by themselves are neither advantageous nor harmful, but become advantageous or harmful by the presence with them of wisdom or folly. If we accept this argument, then virtue, to be something advantageous, must be a sort of wisdom. (*Meno* 88d)

Finally the right knowledge is the *mind* of the wise man, and wrong user is the mind of the foolish (*Meno* 88e). Similarly in *Euthydemus*, it is printed out unless it is guided by wisdom, and, nothing is bad unless it is backed by ignorance (281d, e).

Both Socrates and the Sophists agreed that morality is guided by knowledge. But difference lies in the *kind* of knowledge and the *kind of goodness*. For the Sophists knowledge is perception; for Socrates knowledge is through concept. For the Sophists goodness is a matter of *habit* (*Republic* 7.518d) i.e., by habit and practice, without the help of philosophy and reason (*Phaedrus* 82b). But obviously habit cannot be always reliable specially in novel situations and in predicaments. In such circumstances, customary goodness becomes variable, inconsistent and relative. Similarly, *true opinion* may lead to the good accidentally, but not always.

... the man with knowledge will always be successful, and the man with right opinion only sometimes. (*Meno* 97c)

Further, for the Sophists goodness is a kind of art or skill for managing the affairs of the State and the family (*Republic* I. 332). But if goodness is an art, then it becomes relative, for what is good for the ruling party is not so for the *opposition*. Besides, art is always of the *opposites*. For example, a man who can guard the

1. One is reminded of Kant who held that without good will health, wealth etc., can be used for evil ends. For Socrates however good will is one which has been moulded by the knowledge of the good.

treasury best, is the man who knows all the ways of committing theft. So he is also a kind of thief. This was seen in the case of Gorgias who disclaimed any responsibility of his pupils if they used the art of rhetoric for evil purpose. But what is the kind of knowledge through concept?

We have already seen that concepts are given by reason and is not given by the perceptions of the particulars. Concepts are always in the mind of everyone and they have to be *enkindled* by skilful questionings. But if virtue is knowledge, then certainly it can be taught (*Meno* 89e). But certainly it can be taught by one who knows what is virtue or the good. However, where are the teachers of the concept of the good? (*Meno* 89d, e)

Socrates does not accept that the Sophists are the real teachers of the good, for they believe in customary morality, based on opinion which is based on feeling and tempting desires. Can Socrates claim to be a teacher? No. For he knows that he does not know. Then should we give up theory that knowledge is the concept of the good?

Indirectly by his assumed ignorance, Socrates has guided us towards the direction in which the seeker can have the kind of knowledge of the concept of the good. The real concept is always a matter of recollection of and by meditation on the idea of the good. In this way one can get a glimpse of the good. The process, says Socrates,

... is recollection, as we agreed earlier. Once they (all sorts of good) are tied down, they become knowledge, and are stable. That is why knowledge is something more valuable than right opinion. What distinguishes one (the real seeker) from the other (men of right opinion) is the tether (the idea of the good).
(*Meno* 98a)

The conclusion of Socrates is:

Our present reasoning then, whoever has virtue gets it by divine dispensation. (*Meno* 100b)

In our Indian language the intuition of the good is a matter of enlightenment (*bodhi*) which metaphorically can be said to be the gift of God.

One part of the whole discussion has been left out, i.e., virtue is knowledge and vice is ignorance. No man *knowingly* does wrong. This follows from another tenet of Socrates, namely, virtue is one.

Virtue is One

The kind of knowledge to which Socrates is pointing is not mere intellectual achievement. It is the kind of knowledge which *controls the will* and necessarily issues in action. Some sort of this thing is contained in what is known as Ideo-motor theory. The theory means that if one concentrates on an idea with sufficient intensity and frequency then it issues into an appropriate action. For Socrates, however, the idea of the good controls all other ideas and ultimately guides the whole man, his will and feelings too, and necessarily issues into good acts. Hence,

it lies in the culture of the soul which ultimately leads the soul, in a virtuous man, towards regaining its pure, pristine glory. This is the real interpretation of 'no one does wrong knowingly', and that 'knowledge is virtue, and virtue is true knowledge'. This is the eudaemonistic theory of Socratic ethics, which was taught by Aristotle. But in Plato the knowledge of the good has soteriological end, which one finds in the philosophy of Samkhya and Advaitism.

There is also another sense in which Socrates says that virtue or goodness is one. For example, cowness is one but many cows poorly imitate it. Similarly, wisdom, temperance, courage, justice and holiness are five kinds of virtue, but there is one single reality which underlies them all (*Protagoras* 349a). Again in *Meno* 74a, Socrates was looking for one virtue which permeates all other virtues named above. In the same way, Socrates speaks of one form of excellence only (*Republic* 4.445c). But how to explain this?

In *Gorgias*, Socrates points out that all kinds of bodily excellence follow from one single health of the body. Similarly, all kinds of virtue follow from the *health of the soul*. And what is meant by 'health of the soul'? The health of the soul follows from the order and arrangement between the different functions of the soul (*Gorgias*, 504d). Socrates speaks of reasoning, temper and desires as the three parts of the soul. The function of reasoning is *wisdom*, of temper is courage, and of desire is soberness or temperance. Now the health of the soul follows from the discipline among these parts. Wisdom commands, whilst temper assists in the execution of these commands, and, desire furnishes the material basis of action.¹ This is in harmony with the teachings of modern psychology. Conation (desire of Socrates) drives the individual towards all kinds of action for food, mate etc.; cognition controls these activities. A successful functioning of the harmonious activities under the regulation of reason (cognition) yields happiness. Hence, Socrates means that virtue is one in the sense that the *self of a good man is an organic unity of all its functions*.

Lastly, Socrates, as also Plato is supposed to hold that there is one Idea of the Good which underlies all that is right and beautiful.

... in the region of the known the last thing to be seen and hardly seen is the idea of good, and that when seen must needs point us to the conclusion that this is indeed the cause for all things of all that is right and beautiful, giving birth in the visible world to light, and author of light and itself in the intelligible world being the authentic source of truth and reason, and that anyone who is to act wisely in private or public must have caught sight of this.

Republic 7.517c

1. John Burnet, *Greek Philosophy*, pp. 144-45.

Hence, the Idea of the Good is one single reality which underlies all that is called virtue or good. Once one gets this knowledge of the good or its glimpse, one cannot do wrong. Only in this sense, virtue is knowledge, and, the knowledge of the good is virtue. An Indian reader can note in this interpretation that there is an echo of the advaitic teaching that the knower of Brahman himself becomes Brahman, and goes beyond both good and evil. Aristotle himself was a biologist and for him knowledge meant ordinary knowledge of subject-object type. From his standpoint certainly a *mere knowledge* of what is *conventionally* regarded as good or evil, does not issue into its corresponding action. But for Socrates knowledge meant the glimpse of the Supreme Source of good and this changes, moulds and transforms the total personality of the seeker.

The Importance of Socrates

The most important thing about Socrates is that he gave a new turn to Greek thought. He influenced Plato and Plato in turn influenced Aristotle with the result that European philosophy still hovers around Platonism and Aristotelianism. Thus Socrates wrote nothing but his thought still echoes and re-echoes in Western philosophy.

The most significant enquiry of Socrates was spelled out by him in the oracle of Delphi "Man! know thyself". In one sense, he diverted scientific investigation from physics and Nature to Man. Does this investigation mean the science of psychology? Yes, it was understood as such by the Sophists. But the Sophists reduced knowledge into scepticism and even nihilism. But Socrates believed in truth and knowledge, and, his enquiry turned towards knowing one's own self. In knowing one's own self, Socrates first laid down that knowledge is *through concept*. Now what is a concept?

There are three theories which have resulted in determining the nature of concept. These three are known as *realism*, *conceptualism* and *nominalism*. Plato is supposed to have held realism, Aristotle some sort of conceptualism, but really *nominalism* is the most dominant theory in the modern western thought, though it was most clearly held by *Rescelin* and *Ockham* in the middle ages. All these theories relate to the place of *universals* in relation to particulars. Whatever may be the best view concerning the place of universals in relation to particulars, all the views relate to be problem initiated by Socrates. Therefore, Socrates is very much alive even today.

Secondly, Socrates is said to be primarily an ethical thinker and here it is held that Socrates maintained that morality is through the *concept of the Good*. Negatively, he held that morality is not based on *feeling and desires*. Moral laws are universal, because a concept is universal. Therefore, for Socrates, morality is universal knowledge of the Good. The Good is advantageous for man and contributes to his *happiness*. But what is happiness? Is it that which we call as

pleasure? It is significant that Socrates could never say anything definite about Good. Naturally it led to various interpretations. The doctrine of the Good as happiness led to the theory of cyrenaicism and hedonism of *Aristoppus and Epicureanism* respectively. On the other hand, Antisthenes (444-368 B.C.) who was the disciple of Socrates held that his master taught about attaining virtue. And virtue is one in which a man becomes independent in the midst of the course of nature. This means the doctrine of *cynicism*, according to which man should suppress his desires, and, restricts his wants to the minimum. Hence a man, pursuing virtue becomes independent of the course of life by ridding himself from the wants of life, as far as possible. Thus the ethical theory of Socrates not only influenced Greek-Roman moral theory, but even in the modern times has influenced modern theories of utilitarianism and hedonism.

However, the Good of Socrates and Plato goes even beyond God. A mere glimpse of the Good leads to the transformation of the personality of the seeker. Contemplation of and meditation on the Idea of the Good, finally lead to the release of the soul from the bondage of senses and restore to the seeker his pristine glory. Hence, the concept of the Good is not an ordinary concept, but a concept which *controls the will* of the seeker. The Western man has not learned this aspect of philosophy, but was upheld by Plotinus and has been retained in the Christian doctrine of becoming of *a new Being*, a new creation in Christ. Thus, the mystical aspect of the knowledge of the Good still lingers on in Western thought.

PLATO (428-27—347 B.C.)

Introduction

Plato was a poet at heart and his philosophical writings form a masterpiece of literature. He had to take recourse to myths, allegories, metaphors in order to express what could not be stated in prose with precision. He wrote in delightful dialogues with Socrates at the centre, but the philosophies of the previous period were all taken into account.

Plato has given a system of thought to the Western philosophy. It was through Pythagoras that Plato owned respect for mathematics and also this mathematical thought paved the way, for *Ideal realism* known as the doctrine of ideas. Further, Pythagoras was also a religious thinker. Hence, Plato derived from Pythagoras belief in the immortality of soul, the doctrine of the transmigration of the soul, its pre-existence and the theory of reminiscence and mysticism concerning bondage and release of the soul. From Parmenides, Plato derived the doctrine of the eternity and changelessness of idea. From Heraclitus, Plato accepted the doctrine of the flux of sensible things. This realm was the realm of ceaseless *Becoming*. But the influence of Socrates remained with him as an abiding element of thought. Plato took the thought of Socrates, specially his own doctrine of the idea of the Good

as the crowning of his thought under the influence of the Socratic teaching of virtue as knowledge through the concept of Good.

Plato lived with his Master Socrates in his last eight years of Socrates and was drunk with the thought and life of the Master and his martyrdom on the altar of philosophy. To the end of his life, Plato was stirred up by his philosopher master, friend and guide.

Of course, without Plato, Aristotle could not have arisen whose encyclopaedic genius and the most complete system of Greek thought never ceased to influence Western thought. But the Dialogues of Plato has so many hints about the many fibres of philosophical thought that he has never ceased to influence Western philosophy. Up to the thirteenth century, Plato influenced Christian theology almost exclusively and even in the modern thought Platonic tradition is fully alive. For this reason, J.H. Muirhead has noted that the whole of Western philosophy is nothing more than 'the series of footnotes to Plato'.¹

At this stage we must not ignore the starting-point of Plato's philosophical search. We can now remember that Socrates was dissatisfied with the teaching of the Sophists, and with the difficulties involved in the theory of 'knowledge is perception'. Socrates laid down that 'knowledge is through concept'. Plato also started his investigation with opposition to the Sophists. Plato characterised the nature of reality of the Sophists as belonging to the realm of darkness. His own teaching about the Ideas as the realm of brightness (*The Sophist* 254a). Hence, the first part of the thesis of Plato is negative, namely, knowledge is *not perception*. After demolishing the stand of the Sophists, Plato advances his own theory of Ideas. So let us begin with the negative theory of Plato.

Knowledge is Not Perception

Protagoras is said to be the best exponent of the theory that knowledge is perception. According to him, what appears to me is true for me, and, what appears to you in perception is true for you. Hence, man is the measure of all things. Plato criticizes this doctrine most thoroughly in *Theaetetus* and we shall largely confine ourselves to this dialogue of Plato. For Protagoras sensation is due to continuous motion of the atoms, and, what is in continuous flux cannot be known, for there is nothing which remains the same for two moments. There is no *being*, not something which can be known. The conclusion is

that nothing is one thing just by itself, but is always in process of becoming for someone, and being is to be ruled out altogether

Nay, something more.

(*Theaet.* 157a)

1. J.H. Muirhead, *The Platonic Tradition in Anglo-Saxon Philosophy*, tr. by E. Hamilton/Huntington Cairns.

Perception results from double movements; one from the side of objects and another from the side of the percipient. Take the taste of wine.

The sensation, on the patient's side, makes the tongue percipient, while, on the side of the wine, the sweetness, moving in the region of the wine, causes it both to be and to appear sweet to the healthy tongue. (*Theaet.* 159d)

The result is that perception is a joint product of the perceived object and percipient. So nobody knows what the perceived object is in itself. The conclusion is that in perception there is no object in itself to be known at all. For example, the eye which catches the motion and the motion from the object, but the perceived object is something between the two (*Theaet.* 154). Hence each perception is relative to the percipient. Nobody is sure that what appears to you is the same which appears to another. Nay, even what appears to me is not the same to me in the next moment because I never remain in the same condition in the two moments. (*Theaet.* 154a, 160a)

"Accordingly, whether we speak of something 'being' or its 'becoming', we must speak of it as being or becoming for someone, or of something, or toward something. . . ." (*Theaet.* 160b)

The result? Perception yields self-contradictory conclusion. What appears sour to a sick man is sweet to the healthy. Thus, the same thing becomes sour and sweet, which is opposed to each other. (*Theaet.* 166e, 167b)

Further, if knowledge is perception then there will be no distinction between truth and falsity. If what appears to one is true for him, and, what appears to another is true for him, then when a dreamer dreams that he is flying in the air and that a madman thinks that he is a god, then what appears to them is true for them (*Theaet.* 158b). But quite obviously what a madman imagines and what a dreamer dreams are considered false. Hence the doctrine of *homo mensura* blurs the distinction between truth and falsity. Of what a madman imagines, and, what a new born child sees and what a brute perceives and what a healthy man senses are all equally true, then quite obviously there can be no distinction between truth and falsity (*Theaet.* 161d and 162e). Other more absurd things follow.

If perception is knowledge and memory is not, then see the absurdity. If a man shuts his eyes after seeing something, but remembers it, then he has no knowledge of what he remembers (*Theaet.* 164). Again, suppose a man sees a thing with one eye, but shuts his other eye, then with one eye he knows and with the closed eye he does not know. Thus, a man knows and at the same moment does not know (*Theaet.* 165). Is it not self-contradictory? Hence, knowledge is perception is an absurd doctrine.

Further, if every man is the measure of what appears to be true, then the statement of *Homo Mensura* appears false to me. So it becomes false for me. This is a grand conclusion.

Protagoras, for his part, admitting as he does that everybody's opinion is true, must acknowledge the truth of his opponents' belief, about his (Protagoras's) own belief, where they (opponents) think he is wrong. (*Theaet.* 171a)

Thus Protagoras has to admit that his own theory of *homo mensura* is false as his opponents see it.

The Ideal Theory of Plato

We have already referred to the three theories concerning universals and we have to make them clear for our purpose here.

We meet a large number of objects which we can call as 'particulars' for our convenience. For example, cows, dogs, tables etc., are so many particulars. Each class of particulars has some common qualities. Some of these qualities are called essential and some others as accidental. For instance, the colour, shape and size of cows may be deemed as accidental. The smallness and largeness are not the essential qualities. Similarly some cows may not be black but white, and some others may be black but not white or piebald. Hence, the colour of the cows is its accidental quality. In contrast, cowness is an essential quality of the whole class of cows, for without the quality of cowness, no animal can be called a cow. Hence, cowness is said to be *universal* and cows comprising the class cow are said to be *particulars*. Now what is the status of a universal like cowness, dogness, beauty, justice and so on?

Ordinarily we do not think that universals have their own independent existence as trees or flowers and other particular objects have. *Realism* is the doctrine that universals have their own independent existence in their own rights. This is the view of Plato. Aristotle criticized the realistic theory of universals accepted by Plato. According to Aristotle, universals do exist but only in *individual* things. For example, beauty does exist but only in beautiful things viz., beautiful flowers or birds, butterflies etc. Hence, Aristotle's views are somewhat like Platonic realism, even though he admits that universals do not exist apart from particulars. In other words, according to Aristotle, a universal must be *instantiated*. But what about *unicornness*? It is certainly a universal even though it cannot be instantiated. But let us leave aside this difficulty with the Aristotelian view of universals. But an important view about universals is known as conceptualism. Another

Conceptualism is the doctrine that universals are constructed by the human mind after the observation of particular instances. This is the view largely held by the British empiricists. According to conceptualism, universals have their locus *in*

the mind. We find that Plato rejects the subjectivity of universals. (*Parmenides* 132b)

There is the third theory of *nominalism* concerning the status of universals, which was first propounded by *Roscelin and Ockham* (1290-1350). According to nominalism, universals are mere words to think about the class of objects, and, they have no independent existence, nor even their existence in the mind. But 'dogness' is no quality, then how do we think about dogs as soon as the word 'dog' is uttered? Nominalism was defended by resorting to the principle of *resemblance* exemplified by an eminent member of a class. This obviously is putting the cart before the horse. How do we select an eminent member of the class known as 'Type'? In recent years Wittgenstein has propounded the theory of 'family resemblance'. We need not go into further detail. We are concerned with the realistic theory of universals propounded by Plato called *Ideas or forms*, by contrasting this from conceptualism and nominalism. But how and why Plato has held the theory of Realism?

Parmenides and Heraclitus have made very sharp distinction between the worlds of *Being* and *Becoming*. According to them, reality is to be known through reason and not through the senses. Of course, Parmenides and Heraclitus differed with regard to the nature of reality, but they kept to the absolute distinction of reason and senses. Again, we have already seen that for Socrates knowledge is not perception, but through concepts which again are quite different from sensation (*Phaedrus* 247c). Socrates did not clearly establish the status of concepts, but for him too concepts are not perception and are not to be found in perception. Perceptible objects *imitate* the real ideas just as the many copies of *Mona Lisa* do today. But no copy can be taken for the original. It was Plato who made a sharp distinction between intellect and senses, universals and perceptibles. Ideas as universals are the real originals which can be copied by the perceptible, but no perceptible can even be the original idea. Ideas can be thought but not sensed, and, percepts can be sensed but not thought

And the one class of things (perceptibles) we say can be seen but not thought, while the ideas can be thought but not seen. (*Republic* 507b)

But why should we make such a sharp distinction between Ideas and perceptibles? This point was suggested by the Pythagorean concepts in mathematics.

Take the notion of equality. It is not to be found in objects, given by senses. No two lines, two sticks and two stones are *exactly equal*.

Is it not true that equal stones and sticks sometimes, without changing in themselves, appear equal to one person and unequal to another? (*Phaedo* 74b)

Then from where have we got the idea of equality or beauty? Well, both Socrates and Plato hold that the ideas are hinted at by the perceptibles on account of recollection or the theory of *reminiscence* which we will soon describe.

There is another reason which has to be kept in mind. The Greek mind in general accepted the pure receptivity of mind in receiving the objects of knowledge. Senses reveal becoming or the objects in constant flux (becoming), and Intellect reveals the ideas. Knowledge is always *of something* (*Theaetetus* 167b). But cannot thought be *in the mind* as subjective, of the knower of ideas? Socrates suggests this and yet at once rejects this

No, that is impossible. So it is a thought of something?

Yes.

Of something that is, or of something that is not?

Of something that is. (*Parmenides* 132b)

If ideas cannot be found in *becoming*, then where else it can be? Ideas are to be found in their own being in the realm of reality. In order to explain this realm of reality Plato takes the help of a myth. But from the above account it is quite clear that Plato would reject conceptualism and even nominalism.

The Myth Concerning Ideas

Ideas are not to be found in empirical things. Then how are they to be found? What is their origin? Here Plato takes the help of a myth, which once again was greatly influenced by Socrates, Pythagoras and which ultimately has to be traced to Orphism.

According to Plato, the soul is immortal (*Phaedo* 85e sq, 92 sq) and in its pristine existence it enjoyed the pure experience (*Phaedo* 75c, d). But at present the soul is in bondage to senses, and continues in bondage till it regains its pristine glorious existence through proper philosophical knowledge through meditation on the Idea of the Good. As long as the soul does not regain its release it passes through endless cycle of rebirths. Thus learning of ideas is really *recollection*.

Thus the soul, since it is immortal and has been born many times, and has seen all things both here and in the other world, has learned everything that is. So we need not be surprised if it can recall the knowledge of virtue or any thing else which, as we see, it once possessed. (*Meno* 81c)

Therefore, learning of ideas is really recollection. (*Phaedo* 72e, 76a, 81c)
Myths are not precise concepts and no logical conclusion can really be drawn from them. Hence, Plato could not really explain the real relation between eternal ideas and the percepts. But it is the world of seeming things or perceptibles that a philosopher has to explain. So what does Plato do?

Plato takes the help of metaphors to explain percepts through his theory of ideas or forms. According to him, ideas are the patterns, and things simply imitate them, or, the ideas are the original entities, and, things are their copies. At times, he tells us, that sensible things simply *partake* or *participate* in their corresponding ideas.

On other occasions, Plato tells us that things *remind* us of ideas by being similar or dissimilar of ideas (*Phaedo* 74a). One can see that the relationship between the Ideas and perceptible things is merely metaphorical. Hence, this relationship has been subject to just criticism by Aristotle. Nonetheless Plato himself was aware of the difficulties concerning his ideal theory and he clearly states them in *Parmenides*.

Parmenides asks Socrates, 'Does an Idea participate in the perceptibles in whole or parts?' If one and the same idea as a whole covers (e.g., sail over a number of passengers) a number of separate things, then the idea itself will get divided. Again, if the same idea is found in parts in number of sensible things then again the idea is divided. Thus one and the same idea gets divided. Then how can an idea be called one, as Plato maintains? (*Parmenides* 131)

Further, if the sensible is like an idea, then the idea too will be like the sensible. In that case, another idea of likeness will be required to explain the first idea of likeness with the likeness in *like* things, participating in the idea. In other words, there is a third standard likeness with which to judge the two likenesses. Further, this second pattern of likeness, will be required to explain the likeness of the second order. This will land us into *regressus ad infinitum*.

Besides, the *participation-theory* is open to the fallacy of the *third man*. An idea is the common element which is found in many particulars e.g., the idea of man is found in many men. But there is an element which is common to the individual men and to the Idea of man. This may be called a 'third man'. Again, between this third man and the Ideas of man will require another idea to explain the common element. This will finally lead to infinite *regress*. (*Parm.* 132)

There is another interesting point. Perfect knowledge is not to be found in our sensible world of things. It is to be in the ideal realm, say, gods' heaven. But gods cannot know the world of sensible things, for their knowledge is of heavenly realm of alone.

Just as we do not rule over them by virtue of rule as it exists in our world and we know nothing that is divine by our knowledge, so they, on the same principle, being gods, are not masters nor do they know anything of human concerns. But surely, said Socrates, an argument which would deprive the gods of knowledge would be too strong. (*Parm* 134d, e)

When Plato was aware of the difficulties of his Ideal Theory, then why did he still continue it? Well, the reason appears to be this. No person can jump over his own shadow, and, hardly anybody over the intellectual climate of one's age. In order to revise his Ideal Theory, Plato would have to give up the absolute dualism of sense and reason, the universal and the percept. Mind again would have to be taken as an active and creative principle for explaining knowledge, as people believe now

ever since the time of Kant. But, perhaps Plato was not in a position to revise his theory wholesale.

The Characteristics of Ideas

We have followed John Burnet in the interpretation of Socratic view of concepts and Platonic theory of Ideas. The view of John Burnet given in *Greek Philosophy* is very different from that of W.T. Stace. Everywhere documentary evidence has been given to justify the Socratic theory of *concepts* and Platonic Ideas. Both in Socrates and Plato, concepts and ideas are quite *separate* and *distinct* from percepts. Naturally the most important point is to establish a real relation between Ideas and Percepts in the Ideal theory of Plato. As for Plato, the realm of Ideas is the region of reality, of *Being* and that of percepts is the region of *Becoming*. Therefore, keeping this view of Ideas, we can outline the characteristics of Ideas.

1. Ideas are said to be *substances*. A substance is that which is in itself and for itself and does not require the existence of anything else for its reality. For Plato the Idea is *in and of itself* (*Rep. X. 597c*).
2. Ideas are *universal*. For example, cowness or beauty. The beautiful things only imitate and copy the idea of beauty. But beauty is not to be found in beautiful flowers, beautiful birds, beautiful forms of women. These beautiful sensible things simply remind one of the idea of beauty. No doubt a concept is formed by comparing and contrasting the beautiful things and by *abstracting* the common features found in them. But this is not the Idea. The Idea of beauty and all other Ideas are already there in the intellect of men in their dormant stage. Sensible things simply *remind* men of these dormant Ideas. In this sense a concept of beauty is not the Idea of Beauty. The Ideas are said to be universal in the sense that all their corresponding sensible things *participate* in Ideas and serve as provocative agencies for evoking the reminiscence of Ideas which men once experienced them in their pristine glorious existence before their fall in this earthly bondage. Concepts are in our common usage in sensible things and are drawn or *abstracted* from them by the knower and are *in his mind*. Platonic Ideas, on the other hand, are *not* in the mind either of human beings or God. They exist in their own rights as objective entities.
3. Hence Ideas are *eternal*. Now eternity may mean that which *endures* throughout the whole duration of time, past, present and the future. But Plato's Ideas are said to be eternal in the sense that they are *timeless*. According to Plato time was created by God along with the world, but Ideas pre-exist the creation of the world and would remain even when the world is destroyed.
4. If Ideas are eternal in the sense that they are timeless, then they are *not* perishable or mutable. They are *immutable*. Again, if sensible things as mutable are corporeal, then Ideas may be called incorporeal. Plato advises

us to reflect on the Ideas without the distractions of hearing, seeing or bodily pleasures, in search of reality with unaided intellect and unadulterated thought (*Phaedo* 65c, 66a). Hence, the Ideas are nonsensible and incorporeal. They can be only thought and not sensed. (*Rep.* VI.507b)

5. Each Idea is *one* and *unique* (*Rep.* X.597c, d). In his mythic way, Plato declares that God has created each Idea as one and yet again each in its unique nature. Of course, the Idea of beauty is *one*, but it is imitated or copied by many beautiful things.
6. Ideas are absolute, for they are eternal verities and form the *very standard* of knowledge (*Phaedo* 76d). Plato speaks through Socrates, I am assuming the existence of absolute beauty and goodness and magnitude and all the rest of them (Ideas). (*Phaedo* 100 b; also see *Phaedo* 75d)
7. As the Ideas are absolute, so they are *invariable and constant*. Does absolute equality or beauty or any other independent entity which really exists ever admit change of any kind? Or does each one of these uniform and independent entities remain always constant and invariable . . . ? They must be constant and invariable. (*Phaedo*, 78d)
8. Ideas are the *essence* of things, not in the sense in which the common and important qualities abstracted from the observed things are said to be the essential qualities of things e.g., animality and rationality form the essential qualities of man. Ideas are the essence of things in the sense that Ideas are real and sensible things are their poor imitation.
9. In a way Ideas are the causes in the sense that they attract things towards them, just as Sita attracted the princes in her *Svayambara*. They are the *unmoved and unmoving* causes of things. This is best illustrated in the case of the Idea of Good (*Rep.* VI.509b), for it causes an upward urge in men and in all things. (*Rep.* VII.517c)

The System of Ideas

One of the objections of Aristotle against Plato is that Ideas are just the duplication of percepts or objects of sense-experience. Yes, in many respects it appears that Ideas form a plurality without any principle of co-ordinating arrangement. This would mean chaos and no system. However, Plato was quite conscious of introducing co-ordination and arrangement of Ideas in a system. For example, Plato does not favour the confusing plurality of Ideas, but wants to combine them in a system. He first attempts to combine the five ideas of existence, motion, rest, sameness and difference with the help of an Idea of greater generality (*Sophist* 254 ff). However, he does not mention any principle of combination.

However, Plato aims at organic unity and harmony in the working of various faculties of the soul as rational, high spirit (temper, will) and appetites. The health

things belonging to the realm of becoming? Aristotle is concerned with the explanation of change and movement.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF ARISTOTLE

For Aristotle philosophy has its source in the sense of wonder and it is the function of philosophy to satisfy that wonder or curiosity. The problem of wonder was felt in relation to the contrasted worldviews of Heraclitus and Eleatics, of Becoming and the static reality of Plato's Ideas. Aristotle's fundamental problem was to solve this problem of Being and Becoming. Again, Democritus had developed the theory of atoms and through their mechanical impact, he tried to solve the world process and becoming. Plato on the other hand advanced the doctrine of Ideas which the becoming in the form of particulars kept on striving to realise the perfecting of stationary ideas. In both cases we have to know the real relation between Being and Becoming. But what is the nature of knowing?

To know a thing is to know its cause. But what kind of cause will put an end to our human wonder finally?

1. First, knowing means knowing through causes. Science is considered to be the highest knowledge, which is the highest achievement of human civilization. It is called the highest knowledge because it is the purest knowledge of causes, for its own sake, without any ulterior end.

2. But metaphysical knowledge is much more than scientific knowledge. It is called 'wisdom'. It is concerned with the first and most universal cause. It wants to know the *final* cause of all things. A final cause is the end and purpose for which a thing is. Hence, Aristotle from the very beginning aimed at the teleological explanation of the universe. In contrast is the mechanical view taught by science which deals with the world of facts and becoming. But Aristotle reconciles mechanism and teleology. In its own way this also was the problem of Plato; only the view expressed by Plato was mythological, metaphorical and poetic. For Plato, there is the Idea of Good which draws all things towards itself, and, all things too 'imitate', 'copy' or participate in the Idea. Hence, the end of all things is to become as perfect as Ideas are. For Aristotle, the whole cosmos realises a supreme end, embodied in it. This is best seen in the working of an organism, and, also in the producing of a work of art. Hence, the end is *in the universe* and is not outside of the universe or even any existing fact. Here too this final teleology in the form of *actus purus* as the object of supreme love works in all things and the world as a whole. Here Aristotle reconciles mechanism and teleology through his conception of matter and form, and, this concept of matter and form has been deduced from the analysis of causation. So let us try to explain the meaning of 'cause', according to Aristotle.

Four Kinds of Causes : Aristotle starts with facts and never loses his sight from them. He takes his cue from human production of a building or a chair, and, analyses the factors constituting a cause. Here his assumption is that human and cosmic production is of the same nature, and, human causation at work is an exemplar of the cosmic becoming. Aristotle finds that in human production, e.g., of a chair there are four kinds of causes at work simultaneously, namely, *material, efficient, formal* and *final* causes. For example, in making a chair there is the wood which may be called the *material* cause. Again, there is the skill and instruments through which a carpenter builds a chair. This may be called the *efficient* cause. Here energy, skill, instrument and the power are all included. Then comes the *formal* cause which means the shape, the design and the kind of chair which has to be made. Lastly, there is *final* purpose for which the chair has to be made. For example, the chair has to be made either to serve the purpose of office, or dinner or an arm-chair.

Here one or two remarks will be helpful. All that can be said here is that this concept of causation is not scientific in the modern sense. The very meaning of 'material' cause is not the same as physical matter. We shall explain the nature of 'matter' a little later. Secondly, scientific causation refers to the succession of events, and, a cause is said to be an invariable *antecedent* of the effect. But for Aristotle all the four kinds of causes are *simultaneously* present together. Thirdly, the *efficient cause* really means for scientific purpose, the how of working out into effect. This part of science is said to be the nature of scientific explanation. The 'how' really means the mechanical view of causation. This bars out *formal and final* causation. Hence, science does not admit the *teleological* explanation of factual events. Thus, Aristotle's view of causation is metaphysical, for he is in search of the first and final cause of the universe. Lastly, modern science does not seek explanation of the world as a whole, but only of particular kinds of events. The point is that Aristotle was a philosopher and his wonderment referred to the world as a whole. He is trying to solve the problem raised by Heraclitus, Eleatics and Plato. And only in that context his philosophy has to be adjudged.

Philosophers previous to Aristotle had accepted material cause of the universe. The Ionics has admitted one or the other kind of matter as the cosmic reality e.g., water, air etc. Even Heraclitus had accepted fire as the world-ground, Empedocles admitted four elements and Anaxagoras some indefinite kind of matter. Efficient cause was admitted by Empedocles in the form of *love and hate* as the moving force in all things. Anaxagoras called *nous* as the moving force. Plato had admitted Ideas as the moving force in the world of becoming. Further, Plato accepted not only *formal* cause in the form of Ideas, but also *final* cause in the form of the *Idea of the Good*. Of course, Anaxagoras too had called *nous* as the world-forming force. But it was Aristotle who combined all the four kinds of cause into a consistent form of philosophical explanation of the world. Not only this, but he reduced the four kinds into *Form and Matter* for conveniently explaining the whole world.

Matter and Form : First, formal and final causes are really identical. Formal cause means what a thing is in its essence, it is what it is, or, what Plato called its real Idea. The final cause is the becoming of what it is, or, the end of what it is after the essence of the thing has been actualised or realised. For example, what a dining chair is in its essence is the formal cause of the dining chair, and, when it has been actually made, then this was the very end towards which the wood was being shaped. Again, the *efficient* cause means movement, or, becoming by means of the skill and energy put into it. But why is the wood cut and chiselled in a skilful way? Because the final end of a dining chair has to be realised. Hence, it is the final cause or end which guides and regulates the efficient cause. Hence, it is the end or final cause which is the real cause behind the efficient cause. Hence, the final cause is the real cause of becoming and movement in the world. Therefore, we can say that final cause is really the efficient and formal cause too. Thus, the end is the real beginning. The first act in a play is really the beginning of the drama and last scene is the real cause towards which all Acts are driven. Thus, the real cause is the *end* or teleology for which mechanism is used. This point is clearly seen in the human production of an art, as in painting or sculpture or carpentry. But this is also seen in the functioning of an organism or Nature. An egg has to become a chick. Hence, chick is the end towards which the egg-movement is directed. In the same way, there is the end of becoming an oak by virtue of which all the movement in an acorn is directed. Of course in an organism the *end is in* the organism and this teleology is unconscious. However, the end in the production of a work of art is more or less conscious. Again, this teleology is also found in Nature. Both Plato and Aristotle hold that the perfection of Nature is directed. The Final End is the Idea of the Good for Plato and *Actus Purus* or the Prime Mover for Aristotle. Hence in the final analysis both Plato and Aristotle agree that the world is guided by some Supreme End, and, this is the real message of Idealism. But what is the final upshot of reducing efficient, formal causes into final causes?

The conclusion of Aristotle is that all the three causes, efficient, formal and final, are really one, and, Aristotle calls this as the *Form* of the thing. But the material cause cannot be reduced to any kind of cause. So ultimately there are only two things, namely, *Form and matter* which can explain all movements, becoming and development in the whole world in man, organism and Nature.

By 'matter' is understood ordinarily physical matter like iron, gold, bronze, earth etc. But Aristotle's meaning of matter is much deeper than that. By 'matter', Aristotle understands, that which has no shape, no quality of any type and kind. It is neither red nor green, neither heavy nor light, neither rough nor smooth. Then what is it? It appears to be as good as *Nothing*. But it cannot be nothing nor 'non-Being', for after all it is something which has to be moulded by the *form* into Nature, organism and man, i.e., physical matter, life and Conscious Being. Ordinarily we think that a lump of clay in the hands of a potter is without any form. But it is not so. All that one can say, of this lump of clay is that it has no definite form. But

because it has no definite form, so it can be formed into a plate or a goblet or a cooking pot. Similarly, primal matter has no form, but it gives way to all things by the form. All that we can say here is that matter without form does not exist, even when it is not non-Being. But it has the potentiality of becoming anything. Similarly, form is the most important aspect of any existing thing. For example, we value a chair not because it has wood, but because it has the form either of a dining chair or of an office-chair. Hence, the form is the real thing about anything in the world. But form by itself is nothing or we can say that it does not exist. Hence neither matter nor form by itself exists. What exists is *formed matter*, i.e., matter and form together inseparably. A form is the universal. For example, redness or greenness is a universal. But by itself it does not exist, what exists is a green leaf or green grass or green book. But greenness apart from the green things does not exist. Hence neither matter by itself without the form exists, nor the form without matter exists. What exists is an individual thing e.g., a green book or green grass. Greenness is no doubt a universal because it is a common quality in green grass or green things like a green book, or green leaf or green flag. A universal is the 'Idea' of Plato. But Plato failed to see that a universal or an Idea by itself does not exist. Only individuals exist, like green grass or green leaves in which universal greenness resides. Hence, matter and form are *inseparable*. No doubt we can *distinguish* them in our thought, but we *cannot separate* them in any actual state of affairs. This is a very important truth one has to grasp, according to Aristotle.

The second reason why 'matter' cannot mean physical matter is that matter is *relative* to form. A physical matter remains the same e.g., iron remains iron no matter in whichever, shape or size into which it is put. The same thing is true of gold, silver or bronze. Again, by 'form' is not meant mere physical shape. For example, a rectangle remains the same shape, no matter in how many things it is found. But form means much more than shape or size. The reason is that form and matter are relative terms. What is matter in one relation becomes form in another relation. For instance, wood is matter in relation to a chair which may be said to be its form. But the same chair becomes matter, in relation to furniture. Thus the terms 'matter' and 'form' are fluid, just as illustrated in the case of chair. What changes or operates is the form, and, that which is made to change is matter. Matter is what becomes, and, that towards which the movement is made is its form. In the language of W.T. Stace,

What becomes is matter, and, what it becomes is form.

What is form in one aspect is matter in a changed situation. For example, wood is matter in relation to the chair, which is its form. But 'wood' is again form in relation to a growing tree. From another stand one can say that matter is bare possibility of becoming its 'various form'. For example, 'wood' is the possibility which can be actualised into chair, table, doors or windows. In the same manner,

actualized from the lower order to higher order, till it reaches the highest order.

Theology of Aristotle

For Aristotle, theology is the highest science which deals with substantial, self-dependent Being, which moves everything without itself being moved, i.e., *Unmoved Prime Mover*. Why is Aristotle so much thrilled about this unmoved mover?

Aristotle believed that the Universe is eternal with its hierarchical order, and each rung of the ladder is characterized by its own form actualizing itself in its individuals. Hence, all the rungs of this ladder-like order are in movement. Hence, the teleological movement of each rung and again the whole hierarchical order is caught up by an all-pervasive movement by this unmoved mover. We have already seen that at all rungs of the ladder, forms are actualizing themselves. Some rungs are higher than others. Higher rungs have lower rungs as their matter or potentiality. At the top of this hierarchical order, there is actuality, but no potentiality. At the base of the graded scale; there is potentiality, there is no actuality, but potentiality waits for being actualized into individual objects belonging to higher and lower levels. But even bare potentiality is not non-Being, but is a substratum and support and stuff of all things in the process of being from the lowest to the highest. At the top there is actualized *matterless form* and at the bottom of this graded system is pure matter without form.

The second thing is that the Unmoved Prime Mover, called matterless form is pure *activity (actus purus)*. Why? Because the whole universe exists because it is characterized by never ending activity and is sustained by activity. As the universe is eternal, so unmoved mover, called God is also eternal.

Here Aristotle is concerned to hold that what is eternal is prior logically to what is perishable. Further, no potentiality can ever be maintained to be eternal and actual, for, whatever is potential may not become actual. For example, a potential artist may not paint a picture of *Urvasi*. Again, eternal is that which by its own nature cannot fail to be. Hence, God is by His own nature an actual Being, for there is nothing of potentiality in Him. He is all perfect and nothing is lacking in Him.

As God is eternal, and exists of His own necessity, so He alone sustains Himself and the whole universe without anything outside of Him to sustain Him. All other things are moved by Him, but He alone remains unmoved. A is moved by B, and A in its turn moves C, and C moves D and so on. But if this series continues *ad infinitum*, then no moving thing will contain the cause of itself. Everything moved by another comes to an end. But the universe is eternal. It must have a mover which keeps on moving by itself without being by anything else.

Ordinarily form by itself does not exist. It exists in something individual. God is form of forms; its own thought of thought. Because God thinks its own thought, so God is said to be self-conscious. Therefore God is mind,

God also must have life; for the actuality of thought is life, and God is that actuality. His essential actuality is life most good and eternal. God therefore is a living being, eternal, and most good; to Him belong—rather He is—life and duration, continuous and eternal. (Warrington, *Metaphysics*, p. 346)

Aristotle also maintains that God thinking His own thought and goodness enjoys perfect blessedness. It is difficult to imagine God's mind, life, blessedness literally as we human beings are said to experience and know them. These terms appear to us figuratively used. So Aristotle appears to be as metaphorical, even mythical as Plato was. Indeed the pure form or the prime mover in Aristotle is the same as the Idea of the Good in Plato. Aristotle uses all the words of Platonic Idea of the Good for the unmoved mover. It is eternal, unchangeable, immovable, incorporeal, at the same time the final cause of generation.

As God is without matter, potentiality and body, so He is wholly immaterial. Nay, God's thought is without body, without senses, so He is said to be pure Spirit. He is again stated to be spiritual because He is pure rationality and the rational end for the whole universe. Aristotle's thought has provided the idea of spiritual monotheism to the West.¹ A question crops up at this stage. True, God is transcendent to the whole universe, for He is at the top of the hierarchical order in which this universe is found. As a transcendent God, He does not respond to the prayers of His worshippers, for He is absorbed in His own thought.² But God is also said to be the final cause of the world. Does the world love God without being loved? Is there also an inner teleology in the universe which sustains the graded order or hierarchical system of the universe? David Ross, a great authority on Aristotle thinks that Aristotle does imply some sort of God's immanence.

Yet he (Aristotle) speaks of the order as due to God, so that his God may truly be said to be at work in the world, and in *this* sense immanent.³

However, it will be too much to state that God works in the world immanently, or, even on the world providentially. So far we human beings are concerned, we become self-conscious by knowing an object external to us. For example, when we perceive a tree, we become aware of ourselves as 'I am perceiving the tree'. But it has been suggested by some Christian scholars that this self-consciousness on the part of God is reversed. He knows Himself *directly* and the world *indirectly*. The reason for this is that God alone has direct knowledge of Himself, but all things depend on Him. So by knowing Himself, He knows all things indirectly, by knowing Himself as a Being on which all other things depend. Against this interpretation

1. God is spirit and those who worship Him must worship Him in spirit, St. John 4.24.
 2. He is absorbed in Himself. He is loved, but He

Ross states that Aristotle denies any relation of God with evil, and, so his God cannot have knowledge of the world which is infected with evil. Therefore, Ross concludes,

God, as conceived by Aristotle, has a knowledge which is not knowledge of the universe, and an influence on the universe which does not flow from His knowledge: ...¹

Further, Ross adds that God's influence on the world is of the same sort which a statue has on its admirers. Certainly, Aristotle will not hold any theory of divine creativity and His providential care for the world.²

God's creativity and providential care are not allowed by Aristotle on the ground that Aristotle maintains that God is not moved by desire, but by thought. Aristotle grants the primacy of thought over desire, even when he thinks that both desire and thought can move without themselves being moved.

Now desire depends on thought rather than thought on desire, for thought is the starting-point³

But this is against Aristotle's criticism of Socrates, and, is against the findings of modern philosophy. How does the world move by God then?

The final cause (God), then, moves by being loved, while all other things that move do so by being moved.⁴

Hence, man has to be attracted by God who is good and pure spirit, but he cannot expect any responsive love of God. Like Platonism, one can meditate on God and by meditating on Him can be slowly and gradually transformed, or, as Aristotle himself has observed that one can be influenced by a statue, so God can influence the world by being loved. It is a case of unrequited love, which Spinoza and Goethe understood to be the highest kind of love.

Ross asks, 'Is this concept of final cause defensible?'

Of course, the doctrine that the whole universe is being drawn towards the unmoved mover or God means that the grand End called God is moving the world, as its culminating end. The whole world is realising God, but it can do so only unconsciously. Hence, there is the doctrine of unconscious teleology. Is it a defensible doctrine?

The term 'teleology' implies purpose, and, purpose means some *conscious* purpose in the mind of a person. However, we have seen that for Aristotle, God

is not a person who responds to the prayers of His devotee. He remains absorbed in His own thought and enjoys His own blessedness. In other words, 'purpose' means *conscious end*. Therefore, unconscious purpose or teleology will be deemed self-contradictory phrase. Besides, Aristotle denies God's providential activity, for it would mean that God lacks something which he would like to attain through this universe. But God is perfect and has no potentiality in Him. He is complete *actus purus* lacking nothing. Again, there is a tricky question. God is said to be unmoved Mover. How does He move all things?

Of course, God is matterless form; He is form of form, or, thought. Hence, He is wholly incorporeal and acts non-physically. He is said to act like desire and as an object of supreme love, or as a statue on its admirers. But God is the final cause which moves the world by also becoming its efficient cause. Aristotle maintains that God moves the first heaven *directly* and all other things through it indirectly. Here 'the first heaven' is said to be a god, living and eternally moving in a circle. Of course, the heavens are regarded as near-perfect gods who exercise their influence on things lower than what they are as their objects of desire and love. Can the inanimate worldly objects have desire and love? The truth is that the final incorporeal God cannot initiate material and physical movement.

In conclusion, it can be said that God moves the first heaven *directly*. What does it mean? It is obscure and we have already seen that unconscious teleology is only an *analogical* expression. The very concept of God as thought thinking its own thought cannot explain the universe. God as life, mind and even self-conscious spirit remains obscure and the whole description is figurative. Hence, St. Thomas and Duns Scotus have tried to give a more theistic interpretation of Unmoved Mover. St. Thomas has been said to be Aristotelian and his 'five ways of knowing God' has its roots in Aristotle's proofs of God. So let us briefly mention *proofs* of God's existence.

Proofs for God's Existence : Some sort of Cosmological argument has been thus presented by Aristotle. All existing things are perishable substances. But there are two imperishable existing things, namely *time* and *change*. Time is actually experienced thing. If it is not eternal, then it will have either beginning or end. But if we say that time began. It means it began at *some point of time*, which means that to think of time as having a beginning means that time was already there in which it had a beginning. In the same way if we say that time ceased to be, then it means once again at some point of time it ceased to be. Hence there must be time when it ceases to be. Hence, time cannot have any beginning or ending without presupposing time at both ends. Hence, time is eternal. Again, either time and change are identical, or, change is one continuous change as heavenly bodies have. Both Plato and Aristotle supposed that planets have been moving in their circular movement since eternity.

Therefore, to account for eternal time and change there must be an eternal self-moved mover. This self-moved mover not only must have the potential power to

move, but must be necessarily everlastingly actual. Mere potentiality for eternal actuality will not do, for potentiality may possibly not be.

Again, Aristotle suggests that men beholding the beauty of earth and sea and the majesty of starry heavens cannot but conclude that these wonderful things are works of gods. This may be called teleological argument for the existence of God.

Of course, the contention that matterless form is of its very nature must exist if necessity speaks of ontological argument. But apart from this Aristotle proves the existence of God, from graded things in nature. His argument is:

Where there is better, there is the best. Now among existing things one is better than another; therefore, there is the best, which must be divine.

This proof has been called argument from gradation of things in nature by St. Thomas. But it has been used by Descartes in relation to his ontological argument. According to Descartes, *God in mere thought* is inferior to God who is both in thought and existence. Similarly, Anselm proves the existence of God by the idea of God than which greater and higher cannot be thought.

Hence, Aristotle has advanced certain proofs for God which have proved important later in Christian and Western philosophy.

Aristotle's Philosophy of Nature

Aristotle along with Plato regarded the sun and moon and stars as divine with superior Intelligences. They were supposed to have been created by God and were regarded as eternal. Being perfect they moved in the sky with perfect circular motion. The earth was the centre of this universe. They were also supposed to influence the life and conduct of men. This belief of Aristotle appears to be quite popular in his time, but quite apparently does not have any rational basis. The only effect it had was to encourage astrology. But why did Aristotle think that the heavenly entities moved by the Will of superior Intelligences?

The moderners find that animals, plants and men move in a way quite differently from the lifeless, inanimate things of the world. The movement of inanimate things can be best styled as mechanistic like motor cars, aeroplanes and hosts of things in daily life of the moderners. Whereas the movements of men and animals are supposed to be guided by some ends or purpose. These movements are known as teleology.

In modern science, every effort is made to assimilate teleological explanation to mechanical one. Much of human education is supposed to be explained by conditioning and by mathematical statistical laws which at bottom are mechanistic. In contrast, the Greeks tended to assimilate mechanical movement to teleological explanation. For this reason Aristotle tried to explain the movement of the heavenly entities by the will of superior intelligences. Nay more. This explains as to why Aristotle tries to give a teleological explanation of Natural movements. For example, for Aristotle there is the form of an Oak which is at work in the acorn