
UNIT 1 PRE-SOCRATIC PHILOSOPHERS

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1.0 OBJECTIVES

In this unit, we shall familiarize ourselves with the Pre-Socrates philosophers. You are expected to know the pre-Socratic schools and their philosophical ideas and differences among them. At times you might think that their philosophical ideas are simple to our complex mind but then, you must not forget that they were pioneers, venturing into a new territory. They did not possess the centuries of experience that we have today. You might also be struck by the very freshness and simplicity of their vision and it might teach us a lesson or two: to us who are so accustomed to intricate systems of thought and culture that we tend to lose that fresh, youthful, sense of wonderment when viewing the world which is the foundation of all true philosophy.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The thinkers who are called 'pre-Socrates' is not just for reasons of convenient chronology. On the whole, their views ran in another direction than that of Socrates. They were mainly concerned with outer, external world and the problems and issues raised from such an interest except the sophists who focused their attention to the internal world. Aristotle called the pre-socratics the "physicists" because they reflected so very much on nature. The major issues that drew their attention was: (a) the search for the *archē* –the primordial substance out of which the universe was fashioned; (b) The ever fascinating controversy: being versus becoming or, to use a more precise philosophical vocabulary, the question of the One and the Many. Since they viewed the universe as an organic whole, and as a living whole, they are also called hylozoists. We begin our study with the Ionian School who offered 'sensual' response to the universe. The Eleatic School attempted to give a rational response to the existence of the universe. The Atomic School is an effort to synthesize both the Ionians and Eleatics, though it might not be a perfect synthesis. We shall also briefly note the philosophical ideas of Pythagorean brotherhood and Sophists who, generally speaking, turn our attention to the 'internal world.' This study unveils different philosophical ideas of different pre-socratic schools and their attempt to understand themselves and the world.

1.2 THE SENSUALIST RESPONSE: THE IONIAN SCHOOL

Ionians are a district on the west coast of present-day Turkey. It was colonized by Greek in the 11th century BCE and it was one of the important commercial and literary centres of Ephesus and Miletus. All the eminent Ionian thinkers came from Miletus, except of course Heraclitus who is more celebrated among them. The School is called 'sensualist' because in its attempt to respond to the being versus becoming question as well as in its effort to discover the primary substance of the universe, they relied rather on the sense knowledge and sense observation and not the reason. Generally speaking, the Ionians tend to hold that becoming alone is real and that being is an illusion. We shall briefly note the ideas of four Ionians: Thales, Anaximander, Anaximenes and Heraclitus.

Thales of Miletus

Thales was born in Miletus. The exact date of his birth is unknown. Probably, he must have flourished in the early part of sixth century BCE. He is said to have predicted the eclipse of the sun mentioned by Herodotus. Since, that eclipse occurred on May 28th, 585 BCE, it is one of the reasons to believe that he must have begun his philosophical career in the early part of 6th Century BCE. He is traditionally regarded as the first philosopher. He is said to have played an important role in public and academic life and excelled in politics, mathematics and astronomy. Some other scientific activities are ascribed to Thales such as, the construction of an almanac and the introduction of the Phoenician practice of steering a ship's course by the Little Bear. However, there is little information about his philosophical doctrine since he did not commit his thoughts to writing. Thanks to Aristotle, whatever little we know comes mainly from him. According to Aristotle, Thales taught two fundamental philosophical ideas. They are, one, the water is the first absolute principle and, second, the soul is the principal motor. How did Thales arrive at the conclusion that the water is first absolute principle? Besides the mere fact that he lived in a place virtually surrounded by water, Aristotle supplies the following reason: "Thales got this notion perhaps from seeing that the nutriment of all things is moist, and that heat itself is generated from the moist and kept alive by it (and that from which they come to be is a principle of all things). He got his notion from this fact, and from the fact that the seeds of all things have a moist nature, and that water is the origin of the nature moist things." Though the explanation might look simple to our intellectual minds, his attempt was to give a rational account of the principle of things. Thus, he broke away from myths and poet-theologians. The second philosophical idea of Thales according to Aristotle is the soul as the principle of movement. According to Aristotle, "Thales, too, to judge from what is recorded about him, seems to have held the soul to be a motive force, since he said that the magnet has a soul in it because it moves the iron.... Certain thinkers say that the soul is intermingled in the whole universe, and it is perhaps for this reason that Thales came to the opinion that all things are full of gods." Perhaps, the best way to understand "all things are full of gods" is to say that everything is fundamentally alive. Not only magnetic stones are endowed with souls but everything else, the whole universe is impregnated with life. How does Thales earn his place as the first Greek philosopher? It is from the fact that he conceives the notion of unity in difference. While holding firm the idea of unity, he philosophically accounted for diversity.

Anaximander

Anaximander was born in Miletus around the year 611 BCE and was a disciple of Thales. He was concerned about the scientific pursuits and he is credited with having constructed a map – most probably for the Milesian sailors on the Black Sea. He wrote a book entitled *On Nature*. Like Thales, he showed keen interest in cosmology. However, he differed with his master in his choice of the first principle. For Anaximander, the *archē* is *ápeiron* – ‘the infinite’ or ‘the unlimited.’ What does Anaximander refer to by the *ápeiron*? *Ápeiron* means that which is devoid of limit. In other words, it refers to infinite. Probably it would be a herculean task to figure out what exactly Anaximander meant by infinite, Aristotle understood it to mean unlimited extension in space and qualitative indetermination. For Anaximander, *ápeiron* is not only a material cause of infinite extension but also it is a principle characterized by the absence of any formal determination. It has no positive identity. It is neither water, nor air, nor any one of the known elements. *Ápeiron* can function in two ways: as a material cause and as a divine principle. *Ápeiron* as a material cause is an important discovery of Anaximander, which Aristotle would fully develop later. Unlike the principle of Thales, the *ápeiron* is not one of the elements (in Aristotelian terms, it is not a substance). It is of an indeterminate nature, and therefore, is different from and prior to all other existing substances. *Ápeiron* as divine causes encompasses and governs all things. It is an immortal and indestructible principle. These qualities must be inherent in it as it is unlimited and unaffected by the limiting factors of earthly realities such as birth and death, growth and decay. Besides this, Anaximander also explains the genesis of all things. For the questions how does the *ápeiron* encompass and govern all things and how it is related to finite things, Anaximander would reply saying that all things proceed necessarily from the *ápeiron* by means of separation of contraries, and return to it in a necessary manner as well. All the same, Anaximander does not explain the process of separation of contraries but one might say that it is caused by the eternal movement of the *ápeiron*. All things are subject to this law of generation and corruption as a punishment. It is the retribution they pay for the commission of an injustice. The injustice is the contraries committed by the *ápeiron* which separate from and oppose one another, each one trying to prevail over the rest. This punishment restores the equality of the different parts with the passing of time. This is achieved by virtue of the imposition of a limit to each contrary that brings to an end the dominion of one over the other. This is the way Anaximander explains the continuity and stability of material changes, the formation of the world and the governing role of the *ápeiron*. To conclude, Anaximander’s *archē* is not confined to one thing but to indeterminate infinite out of which all things come. He also attempts in some way to answer the question how the world developed out of this ultimate element.

Anaximenes

Anaximenes was born at the beginning of the 6th century and was an “associate” of Anaximander. He authored a book, of which a small fragment has survived. At first sight, the doctrine of Anaximenes appears one step back from the stage reached by Anaximander. He summarily abandons the theory of *ápeiron* and assigns a determinate element as the ultimate principle. And that principle, according to Anaximenes, is air. Anaximenes was probably led to this conclusion because all living beings need air for breathing. And since he thought that the entire universe was composed of living beings, it appears logical to choose air as the ultimate principle. Besides this, he observes, “Air undergoes substantial changes through rarefaction and condensation. By rarefaction, it is transformed into fire and wind. On the other hand, if it

thickens, it forms the clouds; and through further condensation, it becomes water, then earth, then the stones. All other things come these substances.” In other words, “All things originate through a certain condensation and rarefaction of air.” When analyzed closely, Anaximenes actually takes a step forward in clarifying the problem of the first principle of all things. The importance of Anaximenes’ contribution is confirmed by Aristotle himself, who says that all later thinkers who thought of some material cause as the *archē*, are indebted somehow to Anaximenes.

Heraclitus

Heraclitus was born in the middle of 6th Century BCE and died around 480 BCE. He came from Ephesus and belonged to an aristocratic family. He was known as a conceited, proud person who looked down upon the rest of humanity because of its blindness to the truth of his teachings. His philosophy is found in a book entitled *On Nature*, quite a few fragments of which have been preserved. Since it was not easy to determine the exact nature of his thought on account of the cryptic and occult nature of his writings, he was also known as “the obscure one” even during his lifetime. This may be reason perhaps why Plato and Aristotle made no special efforts to penetrate his thought but just described it as an exaggerated relativism. Following are a few important philosophical ideas of Heraclitus. First, Heraclitus affirmed that everything is in constant flux, or, “everything changes.” He explains this with an analogy of the river saying, “It is certainly not possible to enter twice into the same river.” This has been also attested by Plato: “Heraclitus says somewhere that all things change and that nothing is at rest.” This is the original contribution of Heraclitus to the history of pre-Socratic thought. For Heraclitus, movement is the central theme and point of departure of his philosophy. All the Miletian philosophers attempted to account for the multiplicity of things and explained that multiplicity by affirming different solutions to the question of the *archē*. Whereas, Heraclitus singled out change as the very essence of what is real. “Everything changes, only becoming remains constant throughout.” This is the widely known thought of Heraclitus. Second, Heraclitus explains the universal process of becoming as a never-ending alternation of contraries. The opposites not only account for the transformation of one substance to another but they constitute the very essence of all things. The permanent opposition of contraries lies at the root of reality and its stability. In other words, for Heraclitus, the only real world is the world of opposites, opposites which are in mutual need of one another. Third, Heraclitus considered fire as the *archē*: “This world, as well as all other worlds, was not made by the gods or by men. It always was, is, and will be, an ever living fire, which is enkindled according to a certain measure and extinguished according to a certain measure.” According to Heraclitus, fire, more than any other *archē*, reflects the constant change and harmony that lies at the root of reality. “The transformations undergone by fire are as follows: first it becomes the sea; then half of the sea becomes land, while the other half becomes burning wind.” Most interpreters of Heraclitus understand fire in the metaphorical sense rather as a material cause. Taking fire metaphorically might cause many difficulties as Heraclitus himself uses the term *logos* to refer to the first principle. Understood as such, it means the principle that governs every transformation; it is the law that is inherent in everything. And for Heraclitus, to know the *logos* means to know the truth. Fourth, Heraclitus identifies the nature of the soul with that of the first principle and the soul is infinite part of human being: “No matter how much you journey, though you travel every road, you will never be able to discern the soul’s limits, so deep as its *logos*.” He also believed in the immortality of the soul. “After death, there are things which await man which he neither hopes for, nor imagines.”

It is indeed interesting to note the gradual maturing and refinement of philosophical speculation and concepts from Thales to Heraclitus. Heraclitus probably is the most accomplished thinker of this school. He has a defining influence on Stoics, especially as regards his doctrine of the logos. Hegel saw in him a predecessor. Hegel says, "If we wish to consider fate so just as always to preserve to posterity what is best, we must at least say of what we have of Heraclitus, that it is worthy of this preservation."

1.3 THE RATIONALISTIC RESPONSE: THE ELEATIC SCHOOL

Elea, a town in Southern Italy, had been founded by Ionian refugees, running away from the Persian invaders in the middle of 6th Century BCE. The philosophers of this school preferred to make use of their reason to respond to the intriguing questions of their time rather than merely rely on the data of their sense. In this sense, they can be called rationalists. They tend to assert that Being alone is real and becoming is illusory. Xenophanes (530 BCE) is said to be the founder of this school. He was known for his attacks on the anthropomorphic Greek deities. He called for a purification and deepening of religious language. We shall briefly note the philosophical ideas of three Eleatics, namely Parmenides, Zeno and Melissus.

Parmenides

Parmenides was born in Elea, probably in the second half of the 6th century BCE. He devoted himself not only to philosophy but also to politics. He wrote a poem in hexameter verse entitled *On Nature*, extensive fragments of which have been still preserved. Parmenides seems to have been a Pythagorean, but later he abandoned that philosophy in favour of his own. We shall briefly note the important philosophical ideas of Parmenides. First, the Being, the One, *is* and that Becoming or change is illusion. Two questions need to be answered to understand the mind of Parmenides: What does he mean by being? Why did he see being as the unifying principle of everything else? Parmenides' concept of being is univocal. It does not refer to any concrete perceptible reality but only to being as such, to the being which everything possesses since all of them exist. This is the being which encompasses everything –the whole reality. Being is apprehended by the intellect alone. The senses grasp the multiplicity of the sensible; but the intelligence sees beyond appearances, and knows what lies behind them, only one reality: being. "Thought and that by which thought is made possible are the same thing; for thought is expressed in being, and hence, without being, there would be no thought." In other words, for Parmenides, being and thought are correlative terms since being only reveals itself to thought and it is this revelation that constitutes the truth. He also describes the characteristics of being in his poem: unbegotten and incorruptible; it cannot come from non-being, because non-being is nothing, and from nothing nothing comes; it cannot come from being because being exists, and what already exists need not be brought into existence. This means that the being has no beginning and no end; it is immutable, perfect, complete, with no need for anything. Things may come to pass but being itself remains one and the same. One can easily notice an obvious difference between Parmenides and other preceding philosophers. The being of Parmenides cannot be the ultimate principle as nothing can proceed from it. For all Ionian philosophers, the *archē* is the origin of all things through the many changes it undergoes. Then how does Parmenides account for the multiplicity of things? To answer this question we must know what Parmenides says about the way of opinion. Second, one can notice in Parmenides' desire in his

poem to uphold the reality of movement which his notion of being seemed to deny. He makes a radical distinction between the way of truth and the way of opinion. To explain the reality of movement he brings in the concept of the way of opinion. "With this I bring to a close the explanation about truth which is worthy of all credence. Now learn for yourself the opinions of mortal men by listening to the deceptive account of my words." In other words, Parmenides places the opinions of human beings, who allow themselves to be guided by their sense and not by their intelligence. While the intelligence (or reason) apprehends the reality as unified reality, the senses perceive them as fleeting and changeable. To be fair to Parmenides, what he says that one reality actually exists, but it can be viewed from different perspectives; of these only one lead to true knowledge and others, give opinion. Therefore, for Parmenides, the perceptible reality is not a product of fantasy; it is something real. What happens is that human being only grasp the external side of reality and take that to be true. This is not absolutely false but can be misleading. This interpretation really does not solve the problem of one and many but it brings the problem to the centre of philosophical inquiry. From now on, the big challenge to philosophy is to vindicate the reality of the many and the reality of change which the 'being' of Parmenides undermined.

Zeno

Zeno of Elea was probably born at the beginning of 5th century BCE. He was an ardent disciple of Parmenides and wrote a book in defense of his master's teachings but surprisingly in a new manner. Zeno adopted a method, which Aristotle would later call it a dialectical method, which consisted in demonstrating a thesis by showing the absurdity of the contradictory propositions. He used many ingenious arguments to prove the impossibility of motion such as the riddle of Achilles and the tortoise, which Aristotle would offer a critique of these arguments in his book *Physics*. Zeno also sought to defend the unicity of being by demonstrating (albeit wrongly) that multiplicity ended up in as many absurdities as the contradicting thesis. Moreover, the philosophical ideas of Zeno transferred the centre of Eleatic speculation from the problem of being and non-being to the problem of one and the many. This approach deflected the ontological character that philosophy had taken with Parmenides. To prove his master right, Zeno had to push Parmenides' thought to its last consequences: he had to summarily deny the reality of the phenomena which Parmenides had tried to explain it through the way of opinion. With Parmenides and Zeno, the Eleatic philosophy was brought to its ultimate conclusion: only being existed, and multiplicity was an illusion.

Check Your Progress I

Note: Use the space provided for your answers.

1) Give the account of Ancient Greek thinkers' understanding of 'arche'.

2) Briefly explain the understanding of Parmenides on Being.

1.4 AN ATTEMPT AT SYNTHESIS: THE ATOMISTS

Human being, rather than admit defeat, rather than let him/herself remain confounded and despairing over the apparent contradiction, tries to find a way to reconcile conflicting opinions and harmonize with the all the possible data. Such was the case with Atomists. They noted the clash of view between the first two great schools of Greek philosophy, concerning even so elementary a datum of experience as movement and change. In their response, they seem to have saved the Being so beloved of the Eleatics as well as becoming rigorously championed by Ionians. Reality, according to Atomists, is composed of atoms moving in a void. The individualistic atom, itself unchanging, is the element of permanence whereas its incessant motion provides the element of change. We shall briefly note the important philosophical ideas of a few atomists such as Leucippus, Democritus, Empedocles and Anaxagoras.

Leucippus and Democritus

Little is known about Leucippus of Miletus except that he founded the atomist school of philosophy. Probably, he was born around the year 480 BCE and established his school in Abdero, the same place where Democritus was born. He had been a member of the school of Parmenides and was a disciple of Zeno. The absence of information about Leucippus' life and works is due in large measure to the great renown enjoyed by Democritus who compiled all the works of the school, including those of his master, into one single *corpus*. Therefore, it is rather difficult to distinguish between what is due to Leucippus and what is due to Democritus. Therefore, we shall briefly delineate the ideas of both Leucippus and Democritus.

According to Leucippus and Democritus, there are an infinite number of indivisible units called atoms. These are imperceptible; they differ in size and shape and have no quality except that of solidity or impenetrability. They are infinite in number and move in a void, and thereby give rise to the movement and multiplicity of the world of senses. "For some of the older philosophers (the Eleatics) thought that 'what is' must of necessity be 'one' and immovable. The void, they argue, 'is not': but unless there is a void with a separate being of its own, 'what is' cannot be moved –nor again can it be 'many,' since there is nothing to keep things apart.....Leucippus, however, thought he had a theory which harmonized with sense-perception and would not abolish either coming-to-be and passing-away or motion and the multiplicity of things." In other words, the diversity of things is caused by the movements of atoms in a void. This void is a reality which exists. When the atoms come together, they bring about generation; when they separate from one another, they bring about corruption. For Leucippus and Democritus, atoms constitute the positive element of reality. This movement, as we have already noted, requires the existence of an empty space or vacuum. The empty space is just real as the atoms are. Every corporeal thing is composed of several atoms separated from one another by an empty space. Moreover, the cause of the movement of atoms is nothing but the very instability of their nature: they are, by nature, in constant motion. Atoms have always been and will forever remain in motion. Aristotle called Leucippus and Democritus as the philosophers of chance since their philosophy implies that the world has come to its present state only by accident. They were called so not because they denied causality because they ignored the final cause: atoms move necessarily but without any finality. But to be fair to Leucippus and Democritus, it must be noted

that more than denying the final cause, they were simply ignorant of it, for no one had as yet discovered it. This defect provided a useful clue to the subsequent philosophers, who realized that a mechanical explanation of the world was insufficient.

Empedocles

Empedocles was born in Agrigento, Sicily, in the beginning of the 5th century BCE. He was the first philosopher to harmonize the being of Parmenides with the testimony of the senses. His ideas are found in two of his works: *On Nature* and *The Purifications*. *On Nature* explains Empedocles' cosmology while the other work contains his ethico-religious teachings. His religious teachings are heavily influenced by the Pythagorean belief in the transmigration of souls. But as a philosopher, he subscribes to the Eleatic principle of the immutability of the real without denying the existence of sensible reality. We shall briefly study his basic ideas. First, Empedocles says that a certain number of substances, ungenerated, incorruptible and always remaining the same, constitute the origin of all things. These four elements are fire, water, air and earth. "From these elements all other beings have proceeded –those that existed in the past, those that exist at present, and those that will exist in the future –trees, men and women, animals, birds, the fish that live in water, and also the gods who live long lives and who enjoy special prerogatives. For only these elements exist; and by combining themselves in different ways, they take on a variety of forms, each particular combination giving rise to a particular kind of change." As we have already noted, the Ionians explained the origin of all things through the qualitative changes undergone by the first principle. But for Empedocles, the four elements never change; they remain always the same, and it is through their different combinations that other beings are brought into existence. We can say that Empedocles is the origin of the notion of an unchangeable material cause, irreducible to no other thing, and capable of uniting and separating itself from other elements. Second, it is love and hate principle which makes four elements unite with or separate themselves from one another. Love brings things together, and therefore, it is at the origin of the generation of things. Hate is divisive and brings about corruption. Love and hate are two principal forces constantly at odds with each other. There is an alternation of the predominance of one force with the predominance of the other, and this gives rise to the cycles of generation and corruption present in the world. Third, the principle of knowledge lies in a material likeness between the sensible object and our senses. Sensible knowledge is the result of the contact between the elements of things and the elements of the senses. According to Empedocles when there is a continuous effusion of elements from things, and when this comes in contact with the sense, sensible knowledge is produced. The intellectual knowledge too, is brought about in a similar way. Leaving aside Empedocles' materialistic understanding of knowledge, his theory contains an important intuition which is later picked up by Aristotle: that the knowing process should be understood as an assimilation.

Anaxagoras

Anaxagoras was born in Clazomenae, near Miletus, around the year 500 BCE. Probably, he was the first one to transfer the center of philosophy to Athens. He remained in Athens teaching for about thirty years, until a charge of impiety forced him to transfer to Lampsacus, where he died around the year 428 BCE. He wrote a book titled *On Nature* and his philosophy closely resembles the philosophy of Empedocles. One might say that Anaxagoras too makes an attempt to reconcile the Eleatic principle with the evidence of multiplicity. The following are the basic

philosophical ideas of Anaxagoras. First, beings are immutable, indestructible and indivisible. They bring about multiplicity of things according to the way they mix and combine with one another. Hence, the first principle of Anaxagoras, according to Aristotle, is a great mixture: an indeterminate mixture composed of an infinite number of substances, each one of them infinitely small in size. Second, to explain the multiplicity of substances, Anaxagoras concludes that the first principle must, in a way, embody all things in itself. He believed that everything must come from something that already exists. Therefore, he affirmed that the first principle was a confused mixture of infinitesimally small elements which are inert, unchangeable, eternal and qualitatively different from one another. They are seeds of all things. Aristotle called them “*homeomeries*,” which means things which remain qualitatively the same even if they are divided into smaller parts. All things are composed of a mixture of *homeomeries*; different mixtures bring about different beings. Since all things come from the first principle, whatever nature things may have, “everything is found in everything:” the qualitative differences of all things are found in everything though some elements may be minimally represented in nature. Third, alongside the *homeomeries*, Anaxagoras adds another principle: the *Nous* or intelligence. He describes it in the following way: “While all other things are composed of a mixture of all things, the intelligence is infinite and independent, not mixed with other things, but is by itself alone.” The *Nous* is the most subtle and pure of beings. It knows everything completely and has maximum power. “The intelligence ordains everything that is brought into being –those things that existed in the past and exist no longer, those that exist at present and those that will exist in the future.” In other words, for Anaxagoras, the *Nous* functions only as the origin of movement. Since the seeds of all things are eternal, the *Nous* merely starts the cosmic movement whereby things begin to differentiate themselves from one another, and take on their particular characteristics. This observation is criticized by Aristotle, who says that Anaxagoras “uses reason as a *dues ex machina* for making of the world, and when he is at a loss to them from what cause something necessarily is, then he drags reason in, but in all other cases ascribes events to anything rather than to reason.” However, Anaxagoras first introduces a spiritual and intellectual principle, though he might have failed to grasp the full import of that difference between that principle and the matter which it forms or sets in motion. Nevertheless, Anaxagoras must be credited with the introduction in the Greek philosophy such a principle that would have defining influence in the future.

1.5 THE PYTHAGOREAN BROTHERHOOD

One must note that Pythagoras did not found a philosophical school, but a kind of religious community. This was nothing unusual in the later half the 6th century BCE. There was a general “two way drift” then, in the Ionian civilization towards skepticism or towards the “mystery religions.” This does happen when a civilization is felt to be on the decline. It happened with the Romans, it was happening with the Greeks and it does happen in our own times. Little is certain about Pythagoras, the founder of the Pythagorean brotherhood. He was born in Samos, in Apollodorus and reached the high point of career in the years 532-531 BCE. The obscurity which envelops the life of Pythagoras is not due to paradoxically to a dearth of information about him, but to the abundance of testimonies that altogether have succeeded in blurring the historical and have converted his life and person into a legend. One must also note that it is rather difficult to separate the views taught by Pythagoras himself from those of others of the brotherhood. They

were a community and it is to this community as a whole that one should ascribe the teachings. We shall briefly focus on the philosophical ideas of the Pythagorean brotherhood and mention just in passing that Pythagoreans taught transmigrations of souls and they were the first one hold, long before Copernicus, the theory of heliocentrism.

The following are the fundamental philosophical ideas of Pythagoreans. First, the *archē* is number, and that things, ultimately, are numbers. Probably, it was their interest in mathematics and music which led them to this conclusion. It was their study of mathematics that made them to reduce all of reality to a series of numerical numbers. They observed different characteristics of phenomena and they saw that these characteristics followed clear mathematical patterns. Musical harmony, for instance, could be reduced to a set of numerical relations. Natural phenomena observed an order which could be measured numerically –the duration of the year, the seasons, the length of the day etc. Hence they were of the opinion that numbers and its elements constituted the principle of all things. In other words, number constituted the essence and substance of all that was real. Moreover, they also observed that the number itself is further divisible into a number of categories: “the elements of number are the even and the odd and of these the latter is limited, and the former unlimited.” This meant that every number can always be divided into even and odd elements. It also does mean that even and odd elements constitute the universal elements of number, and hence, of all things as well. Since the even is identified with the unlimited and the odd with the limited, everything must be composed of this pair of contrasts. The Pythagoreans concluded that the unlimited and the limited constitute the first principles of all numbers, and, therefore, of all things. Prior to Pythagoreans, none had observed that the core of reality is composed of two contrary principles –the unlimited and the limited. This is the original contribution of Pythagoreans. Second, although the *archē* is composed of contrary elements, they do not show externally –either individually or taken as whole. On the contrary, what they show is inner harmony. The Pythagoreans claimed that each thing has its own harmony, and that the universe as a whole is governed by a law that unified all its elements. One can observe the interest of Pythagoreans’ desire to subject all phenomena to the categories of reason (mathematical laws). The world is not ruled by dark or unknown forces: it comprises an order, a harmonious order, which, like the musical scale, can be reduced to numerical relations and rational laws. Probably the greatest tribute we can pay to Pythagoreans, as Fredrick Copleston remarks, is to point out that they were one of the determining influences in the formation of the thought of Plato.

1.6 THE SOPHISTS

The beginning of 5th century saw a change of focus in Greek philosophy. The Greek philosophical speculation began to shift from the world to the human beings; from the macrocosm to the microcosm, or, in the precise philosophical language, from the object to the subject. Probably, the conflicts and contradictions inherent in the philosophical thoughts of Ionians and Eleatics on ultimate nature of reality, might have discouraged further work on that theme. Besides, democracy was introduced into Athens, which was also at the time (492-429 BCE) the commercial, cultural and political centre of Greece. With democracy, the ‘common man’ began to realize that s/he could play an important role in the affairs of the city-state, s/he wanted to equip her/himself with knowledge in practical affairs, especially in rhetoric and the art of persuading. In this, h/she was ably (?) aided by a band of self-appointed itinerant teachers who

were willing to offer him/her the fruit of their expertise, of course for a fee! This practice of dispensing knowledge for a rate was something wholly out of keeping with the Greek wisdom and earned the “Sophists,” as they were called the epithet, “shopkeepers with spiritual wares” from Socrates. As the demand increased for the services of Sophists, not a few charlatans saw in the profession an opportunity to make “a fast buck.” To out-smart other rival teachers, they did not hesitate to clad their speeches with all manner of obscurisms to appear more profound. Moreover, in order to appear more original, they worked out various fine-sounding and specious arguments to attack established norms, which draw enthusiastic support of younger generation and the irk of the elders. Sooner than later, whatever their initial motives and ideals were, sophistry had acquired that connotation of quackery and fraud that it has today. It was the opposition and attacks of Socrates and Plato that gained them this reputation. And the terms still has this implication today. However, one must not forget that no less than Socrates himself could be, historically speaking, classed in this “school,” but with a difference, of course. For in Socrates we can see the nobility and grandeur of what must have been the pristine sophist ideal. Both Socrates and Sophists gave importance to virtue. But the Sophists came to mean gradually the art of acquiring the practical know-how, -worse, are art of convincing and forging ahead at all costs. For Socrates, it concerned the formation and development of the whole person. Be that it may, properly speaking, sophism was more of a philosophical movement than a school of philosophy. There were difference of opinion among sophists themselves and later, between the first sophists and their disciples. The first sophists were respected personages and were esteemed or the new forms of culture they ushered in, the latter were known to have cared little for content and were more for external form. With them, sophism became barren form of debate and empty rhetoric. The unscrupulous men used it to further their political ambitions and undermine duly established laws. We shall briefly note the philosophical ideas of earlier sophists: Protagoras and Gorgias.

Protagoras

Protagoras was born in Abdera around 484 BCE. He taught in several cities, including Athens and he was well received by the people. His most famous books were *On the Truth*, *On the Gods* and *Anthologies* (or *Contradictions*). Philosophically speaking, Protagoras continued the tradition of the pluralists. He rejected the univocity of Parmenides’ being; subscribed to Heraclitean doctrine of continual change. But his doctrine is more than just a new description of the principles of multiplicity like the philosophies of Anaximander and the atomists; it was a philosophy of knowledge, truth and error. If contrary things are present simultaneously in things, it is impossible to have certain scientific knowledge about things as nothing can be known with certainty. Therefore, he argued, that the only alternative left is relativism: human being determines the truth of the object, and s/he determines it according to his/her own knowledge. Knowledge for Protagoras is based squarely on senses which are constantly subject to change like everything else. The famous quote of Protagoras summarized his position well: “Man is the measure of all things –things which exist insofar as they exist, and things which do not exist insofar as they do not exist.” Because of relativism, he taught his students the art of antilogy –to single out the different contradictory sides of a particular argument, gauge which among them was the weakest and present it in such a way that it appears more convincing than the opposite view. Obviously, Protagoras’ philosophy was bereft of truth. Because of this, one might conclude, and rightly, that Protagoras did not believe in wisdom of any kind, and that to speak of wise people was absolutely out of the question in such a context. Wisdom for him meant skillful

rhetoric and identified it with utility and convenience. The relativism and skepticism of Protagoras did undermine objective moral standards and led to agnosticism: “As for the gods, it is impossible for me to affirm whether they exist or not.”

Gorgias

Gorgias, a disciple of Empedocles, was born in Sicily around the year 483 BCE. He too taught in many cities, especially in Athens until his death in 375 BCE. His main philosophical work entitled, *On Nature and Non-Being*. Briefly, the philosophy of Gorgian was the exact opposite of Eleaticism which can be summarized in the following way: “First, nothing exists. Second, if anything existed, it cannot be known by man. Third, if it can be known, it cannot be transmitted and explained to others.” Gorgias proved these three propositions employing the “dialectical” method of Zeno. He rejects both the reality of being and that of non-being on account of contradictory affirmations among the philosophers. In this sense, Gorgias appears more radical than Protagoras. Protagoras at least accepted the notion of a truth relative of each human being. Gorgias does not subscribe to this: truth and falsehood mean nothing to him. Because, we cannot speak of being, neither can we speak of any correspondence between being and thought, or being and truth. In other words, Gorgias not only divorces thought from being, he also severs the link between words and the realities our words are meant to express. For Gorgias, words are independent and autonomous, without any reference to what is real. It is logical, then, for Gorgias to give exclusive importance to rhetoric. Although the words have no meaning or truth content, it can be used to control minds and manipulate people: it is “a great tool for domination; being so small and invisible, it is yet capable of accomplishing feats only the gods can do.” While undermining ethical values, rhetoric was exclusively used to further their political ambitions more by the disciples of Gorgias than he himself.

Though Sophists brought into philosophy certain regrettable attitudes and practices, we must admit that they initiated some other praiseworthy trends in the discipline. First, there was welcome shift of attention from the object to the subject. Second, as regards to method, there was a shift from the deductive to the empirico-deductive approach. Third, the “virtue” they were interested in was of the cheapest pragmatic variety, it was a beginning, all the same. Socrates would do full justice to this and thus would save and immortalize the best and noblest that there ever could have been in the early sophist spirit.

Check Your Progress II

Note: Use the space provided for your answers.

1) Analyse the concerns of Atomists.

2) What are the philosophical insights of Pythagoras?

1.7 LET US SUM UP

The pre-socratic philosophers looked in amazement the world around them and attempted to describe it in their own way. Through their observations they brought to light the perennial problems of philosophy such as, the fundamental principle of all things and its nature and the problem of the One and the many. Their answers may appear unsatisfactory or, at times unintelligent to our complex mind but they laid foundation for a true philosophy. After studying pre-socratic philosophy, one might wonder and echo the words of Blaise Pascal: “These whom we call ancient were really new in all things.” Or, the words of Francis Bacon: “The antiquity of history is the youth of the world. It is we who are the ancients.” If we look at the world, as did the pre-socratic philosophers, with a sense of wonderment and awe, we too might begin to contribute something to enrich true philosophy.

1.8 KEY WORDS

Ápeiron: That which is devoid of limit; in other words, the infinite. For Anaximander, this is the fundamental principle of all things. It is not only a material principle of infinite extension; it is also a principle characterized by the absence of any formal determination. It has no positive identity; it has no known elements.

Dialectical Method: A method of argument or exposition that systematically weighs contradictory facts or ideas with a view to the resolution of their real or apparent contradictions. Zeno employed this method to defend the philosophical ideas of Parmenides, *his master*.

Homeomeries: It is the “seeds” of all things. *Homeomeries* remains qualitatively the same even if they are divided into smaller and smaller parts. This term was used by Anaxagoras (christened by Aristotle) to explain the reality of change.

Sophism/sophistry: A deliberate and conscious invalid argument demonstrating ingenuity in reasoning, usually to mislead someone. It is also tendency “to deny the absolute and objective character of truth easily leads to the consequences that, instead of trying to *convince* anyone, the sophist/[sophistry] will try to *persuade* him or talk him over.”

Rhetoric: An art of persuading others by undermining logical arguments and emphasizing mere words in the arguments. It is a presentation of a subject than to the subject itself. The later sophists used this method of communication to advance their political ambitions.

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UNIT 2 SOCRATES

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2.0 OBJECTIVES

- To get to know in depth the Socratic Dialectical Method of thinking.
 - To learn how the logical, epistemological, ethical, educational and political teachings of Socrates stand out as the beginnings of Western philosophy.
 - To view the ideas of Socrates critically, with its merits and demerits.
 - To learn from personal application the fact that philosophy requires also ethical commitment to the advancement of wisdom and a life of commitment to the good of others – both of which will make the thinker more useful for the humanity than a professional thinker who gets paid.
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2.1 INTRODUCTION

Socrates (469-399 B.C.E.) is generally acclaimed as the father of Western philosophy, although, as we know, there have been many thinkers in the Greek world before him. This is mainly because he was the teacher of Plato, who was a very influential thinker, whose many works are extant, and who mentions Socrates' teachings in many of his works and compares his own with those of his teacher. Still another reason for his fame as father of Western philosophy may be that he exhibited the philosophical attitude of distanced and unaffected intellectual reflection, moral courage, spirit of an educationist, etc. His courage before death by drinking poison is the clearest proof.

Secondly, as he was a street thinker not interested in remuneration for his teaching (unlike the Sophists who taught for money), he was recognized by all as someone different. So he could identify the best of minds and the most committed of persons, and attract them to his group of students. Through his students we know that he developed a philosophy of clarity. It won the attention and respect of thinking men everywhere through his own teachings and the teachings of his immediate followers, especially Plato and Aristotle. This clarity attracted the whole of the West through his followers. As the Arabic philosopher Avicenna translated the works of Aristotle into Latin in the middle ages, the Church took notice of the three great Socratic

philosophers (Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle). Again, these three were rediscovered during the Renaissance, and their rational, practical, and scientific ideas influenced the thinking and the governmental, religious, and educational institutions of the entire western world. From this historical point of view, Socrates remains even today the father of Western philosophy.

Thirdly, his Philosophy finds resonances even today. The whole trend of the Medieval and Modern thinkers, and of today's Analytical and Pragmatic philosophies, of seeking clarity in thought, language and morals, is prefigured in the Socratic rudiments. His penchant for logical arguments from experience gave rise to the inductive method. These add to his importance as the father of Western philosophy even today.

Life of Socrates

Almost nothing is known of the childhood or parentage of Socrates but it can be assumed from his later display of learning that he attended the schools of Athens. If so, he should have been from an aristocratic, or at least from a middle class, family. As a pupil of Archelaus during his youth, Socrates showed a great deal of interest in the scientific theories of Anaxagoras. But later he abandoned inquiries into the physical world for a dedicated investigation of the development of moral character.

a. **Military Hero.** Until at the age of eighteen he entered military service, he must have continued studying in the schools. It can be gathered from various sources that he served Athens in the warfare with Sparta, and also participated in the battles of Petidaea, Delium, and Amphipolis. During the battle of Petidaea he is supposed to have saved the life of the Athenian General, Alcibiades. Socrates dabbled in the political turmoil that consumed Athens after the War, then retired from active life to work as a stonemason and to raise his children with his wife, Xanthippe.

b. **Stonecutter.** Socrates worked from time to time as a stonecutter.

c. **Sculptor.** He completed two works of sculpture, "Hermes," the god, and "The Three Graces."

d. **Marriage.** Socrates married Xanthippe. She is said to have resented the fact that he charged no fees for his teaching. Later, in 415 B.C., Craco's Law authorized polygamy for the purpose of increasing the male population of the state. Socrates is believed to have taken a second wife at this time (Socrates 2010).

e. **Philosophical Career.** After inheriting a modest fortune from his father, the sculptor Sophroniscus, Socrates used his marginal financial independence as an opportunity to give full-time attention to inventing the practice of philosophical dialogue.

Trial and Death: The parents of his some of his students were displeased with his influence on their offspring, and his earlier association with opponents of the democratic regime had already made him a controversial political figure. Although the amnesty of 405 forestalled direct prosecution for his political activities, an Athenian jury found other charges: corrupting the youth and interfering with the religion of the city. Upon these was Socrates sentenced to death in 399

B.C.E. Accepting this outcome with remarkable grace, at the age of 70, he drank hemlock and died in the company of his friends and disciples. The trial and the last days and death of Socrates are described by Plato in his dialogues *Apology*, *Crito*, and *Phaedo*.

His Students: Some of the famous men who studied with Socrates were: 1) Plato, considered one of the greatest philosophers in the history of civilization. 2) Alcibiades, a military genius. 3) Aristippus, founder of the Cyrenaic school of hedonism. 4) Antisthenes, founder of the Cynic school of philosophy. 5) Xenophon, a military leader and historian. 6) Crito, one of the wealthiest men in Athens.

2.2 THE SOCRATIC DIALECTICAL METHOD

As self-styled teacher of the people in the streets and the inquisitive who came in search of him, Socrates devoted most of his adult life to the development of a philosophy teach those followers who attached themselves to his dialogue discussion groups. Socrates was distinctive for:

Ethic of Knowledge: Linking Knowledge to Happiness (From Epistemology to Ethics). This was an attitude which influenced all later Greek philosophers. For Socrates, truthfulness is already based on truth as an ethical virtue. This was an improvement beyond the pre-Socratic thinkers. Socrates' core thesis was that humans do not knowingly act evil. We do what we believe is the best. Improper conduct is the product of ignorance. Lessen ignorance, improve society. He believed therefore that knowledge, or insight, was the foundation of virtue and happiness. In his use of critical reasoning, he showed his unwavering commitment to truth. Commitment to truth is the major virtue humans can have. This virtue, finally, tends us to happiness. The later insistence on morals as leading to happiness is based in Socratic thinking.

Contrast: An opposing view is that a better society must be maintained by punishments. This line of reasoning rests on the assumption that God gave us the free will to choose between good and evil. To restrain the evil; freedom has to be taken away from the guilty by incarceration or by the termination of life. To prevent the evil, freedom must be curtailed by pressures toward the moral rectitude by an elaborate system of rewards and punishments. The core postulates of this system are in the belief in God and in the belief of an afterlife. Thus, this system of rewards and punishments can include promises which fulfillment does not require tangible expenditures and cannot be verified, extended into eternity and intensified by fantasies of bliss in heaven and of suffering in hell. Within this cognitive framework, there is no escape, not even by suicide, which lands you in Hell. However, inflicting death upon others, earns you into paradise plus the seventy one maidens bonus.

Merit and Demerit: In comparison to this view offered for contrast, the Socratic ethic of knowledge has merits and demerits. The merit is that it is free of possible misconceptions in terms of tradition and theology. The demerit is that it has no theoretical foundations, except in the acceptance of dialogue as an effective methodology for eliciting knowledge from pupils.

Paradoxes: Many of the beliefs traditionally attributed to the historical Socrates have been characterized as "paradoxal" because they seem to conflict with common sense. The following

are among the so-called Socratic Paradoxes: (1) No one desires evil. (2) No one errs or does wrong willingly or knowingly. (3) Virtue is knowledge, and all virtue is knowledge. (4) Virtue is sufficient for happiness (Socrates Wiki 2011).

Development of the Inductive Method of Argument in Philosophy: Even today this is the method of scientific reasoning. In Socrates we have the beginning of an epistemology of empirically based thinking in the Western world. He practiced this method insistently, which helped Plato and Aristotle to further develop it from the way he practiced it.

The Dialectical (*Elenchos*) Method - a Method of Interrogation: Free-wheeling interrogation of and discussion with the aristocratic young citizens of Athens, insistently questioning their unwarranted confidence in the truth of popular opinions, led Socrates into his founding the method of dialogue as a method of thinking. It is cross-examination (*elenchos*) with the purpose of refutation. Induction is the exact methodology applied in dialogues. In Greek, *dia* means “between”, and *legein* means “collect, read, speak, etc.” Thus, the dialectical method is an inter-subjective methodology of knowing. Plato turned this method into the universal method of his Academy, for philosophical training and disputation. Aristotle followed him, improved this methodology into “walking dialogues” and found it most useful to reach the premises of any deductive argument. Jaakko Hintikka, one of the most successful logicians of the 20th and 21st centuries, makes use of the method of dialogue and constructs a method of interrogation for epistemology and logic. In his *Socratic Epistemology: Explorations of Knowledge Seeking by Questioning* (p. 35), he comments on the dialectical method of Socrates:

Socrates did not claim that he knew anything. In the manner of a practitioner of my interrogative method, what he did was to ask questions. I suspect that it is only in Plato’s dialogues that he was looking for a definition of knowledge. And Plato put this question (and other questions of definition) into Socrates’s mouth because Plato shared the widespread Greek assumption that the definition of X gives us the “blueprint” that enables us to bring about X. (See Hintikka 1974, ch. 1–2.) This applies both to the generic search for knowledge and to the quest of particular items of knowledge. Thus, insofar as Plato contemplated knowledge-seeking (information-seeking) by questioning in our sense, he would have had to say that we must know what we are looking for there and that it is this knowledge alone that can guide our search. (No wonder he was worried about Meno’s problem.) By the same token, all search for knowledge would have had to be guided by our knowledge of what knowledge is. This shows the importance and applicability of the dialectical method even today.

Rationalism: Socrates believed that man was capable of arriving at truth through the use of reason. He criticized anyone who used rhetoric to convince people. This went against the politicians of the day. This insistence on reason was thus also a contribution to politics.

Notions in the Practice of the Dialectical Method

a. Interrogation: Athens became the classroom of Socrates. He went about asking questions of authorities and of the man in the street in order to arrive at political and ethical truths. He questioned groups of his students as a means of instruction, to compel them to think a problem

through to a logical conclusion. His dialectic method, or method of investigating problems through dialogue discussions, came to be known as the Socratic method. It involved:

b. The Socratic Irony, the Method of Ignorance: Socrates pretended that he knew no answers. He assumed that ignorance and willingness to learn from others were the background for adroit questioning to reveal the truth or expose the error of the answers he received. He is supposed to have said, I know only that I do not know anything!

c. The Concept of Definition: The initial question usually required the definition of the concept. This gives clarity to thinking. Whatever one thinks must be defined as best as one can. The others have always a place to play in the clarity thus achieved.

d. Analysis: Subsequent questions elicited an analysis of the definition in all its implications.

e. Generalizations: After examining all of the particular applications and consequences of the concept, Socrates reasoned, or persuaded his students to reason, from the particular to the general, or by the process of induction, to reach a general conclusion.

According to one general characterization by Vlastos, the practice of the dialectical method has the following steps (Vlastos 1991):

1. Socrates' interlocutor asserts a thesis, for example 'Courage is endurance of the soul', which Socrates considers false and targets for refutation.
2. Socrates secures his interlocutor's agreement to further premises, for example 'Courage is a fine thing' and 'Ignorant endurance is not a fine thing'.
3. Socrates then argues, and the interlocutor agrees, that these further premises imply the contrary of the original thesis, in this case it leads to: 'courage is not endurance of the soul'.
4. Socrates then claims that he has shown that his interlocutor's thesis is false and that its contrary is true.

As with any method, this method too has defects. But as the first full-fledged method of knowledge in the West, the Socratic dialectical method has always its importance.

2.3 SYSTEMATIC DIVISIONS OF SOCRATES' PHILOSOPHY

Since Socrates left no literary legacy of his own, we are dependent upon writers contemporary to him, like Aristophanes and Xenophon, upon the writings of historians and of his students, and especially upon the writings of Plato, for our information about his life and thought. Major ideas in the Socratic philosophy are:

1. Philosophical Anthropology: The Proper Object of Study of Philosophy is Man. Socrates was not concerned with metaphysical questions as such. He believed that philosophy should achieve practical results in the form of greater well-being for man the individual and for mankind as a society. Hence, the proper study of philosophy is man. In pursuit of this study, Socrates' interests were centered in ethics and politics (Socrates 2011).

2. Natural Ethics: Socrates attempted to establish an ethical system based upon human reason rather than upon theological directives of the priests and rulers. He also insisted that knowledge is not for political power. Unlike the professional Sophists of the time, who acted everywhere as teachers, Socrates pointedly declined to accept payment for his work with students. Because of this lofty disdain for material success and the highest moral value of knowledge as virtue, many of his students were fanatically loyal to him. In the Socratic dialogues, his extended conversations with students, statesmen, and friends invariably aim at understanding and achieving virtue (Greek *aretê*) through the careful application of a dialectical method that employs critical inquiry to undermine the plausibility of widely-held doctrines.

3. Knowledge, Self-knowledge and Wisdom: Socrates asserted that the highest good for any human being is happiness. Whatever action a man chooses is motivated by his desire for happiness. Knowledge, virtue, and wisdom are all the same, since man chooses an action according to what he thinks will bring him the greatest happiness. Therefore the more a man knows, the greater his ability to reason out the correct choice and to choose those actions which truly bring happiness to him. The highest knowledge is possessed by that individual who truly knows himself. This knowledge constitutes ultimate wisdom. It enables man to act in a virtuous manner at all times, because he knows what will bring him true happiness (Socrates 2011).

4. Political Philosophy: Socrates did not approve of tyranny or of democracy. He believed that the best form of government was one ruled by an individual possessing the greatest ability, knowledge, and virtue.

Check Your Progress I

Note: Use the space provided for your answers.

1) Why is Socrates important for philosophy?

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2) Describe the dialectical method of Socrates.

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3) What is the importance of self-knowledge, according to Socrates?

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2.4 THE EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY OF SOCRATES

Socrates has tremendously influenced the education of the whole Western culture. The contributions of Socrates to education are as follows:

1. Qualities of the Socratic Teaching Method

The Socratic method offers the following advantages to teaching act:

- a. Problem-centered: The dialectic begins with a problem which must be analyzed, e.g. "What is your opinion about the nature of justice?"
- b. Based on Student Experience: The student or dialogue participant responds on the basis of his own knowledge and experience.
- c. Based on Critical Thinking: The student is held responsible for his statements. The teacher analyzes some of the possible consequences of the student's remarks. The emphasis is upon the thinking processes of the student, who must think for himself and accept the consequences of his logic (Socrates 2011).
- d. Teaching as a Drawing forth rather than a Telling: In the Socratic method the teacher does not tell the student the proper answer. He draws from the student's probable answer. Socrates brings in the following analogy. Knowledge / wisdom is the end result and aim of dialogue. It is the child. The nurse (Greek, *maia*) has a special function at the birth of a child. She helps the mother to bring the child out in a healthy manner. She pulls out the child. The student is the mother of the knowledge. The teacher acts as a *maia*. Hence the Socratic dialogical method of deriving knowledge is called the Maieutic Method. Thus Socrates, for the first time, gave great importance to the student and almost cast the teacher away from the central stage of knowing. A consequence of this is the following. If a teacher remains a student all through one's life, the teacher has some importance in the process of attainment of knowledge / wisdom.
- e. Learning Treated as Discovery: The student learns when he discovers the true generalization through his reasoning processes. Socrates believed that (1) destroying the illusion that we already comprehend the world perfectly and (2) honestly accepting the fact of our own ignorance, vital steps toward our acquisition of genuine knowledge, by discovering universal definitions of the key concepts governing human life. Thus, discovery never ends (SGP 2011).

2. The Purpose of Education

The aims of education as derived from Socratic thought are:

- a. Self-knowledge: The educated man is wise when he knows himself.
- b. Individual Moral Good: The acquisition of knowledge is valuable for man because it makes him virtuous and happy. Socrates repudiated any ornamental theory of knowledge. In similar fashion Socrates deplores also the use of knowledge merely for material success in life. Knowledge is ethically and morally important for all men. Only someone who has been earnest to achieve truth through continuous inquiry and dialogue is virtuous (Socrates 2011).
- c. Skill in Thinking: Each man must develop his skill in critically appraising propositions through the reasoning process.

2.5 LEARNING ABOUT SOCRATES FROM HIS FOLLOWERS

Interacting with an arrogantly confident young man in Euthyphro, for example, Socrates systematically refutes the superficial notion of piety (moral rectitude) as doing whatever is pleasing to the gods. He argued, efforts to define morality by reference to any external authority is inevitably founded in a logical dilemma about the origin of the good (SGP 2011).

Plato's *Apology* is an account of Socrates's (unsuccessful) speech in his own defense before the Athenian jury before his death; it includes a detailed description of the motives of philosophical activity as he practiced it, together with a passionate declaration of its value for life. The *Crito* reports that during Socrates's imprisonment he responded to friendly efforts to secure his escape by seriously debating whether or not it would be right for him to do so. He used even this opportunity to exercise the Maieutic Method. He concludes that an individual citizen, even when the victim of unjust treatment, can never be justified in refusing to obey the laws of the state.

The Socrates in the *Meno* tries to determine whether or not virtue can be taught, and this naturally leads to a careful investigation of the nature of virtue itself. Although his direct answer is that virtue is unteachable, Socrates does propose the doctrine of recollection to explain why we nevertheless are in possession of significant knowledge about such matters. Probably this doctrine is originally from Socrates, or Plato's own, put in the mouth of Socrates, or, ideally, both. Most remarkably, Socrates argues here that knowledge and virtue are so closely related that no human agent ever knowingly does evil. We all invariably do what we believe to be best. Improper conduct, then, can only be a product of our ignorance rather than a symptom of weakness of the will (Greek, *akrasia*). The same view is also defended in the *Protagoras*, along with the belief that all of the virtues must be cultivated together.

2.6 A CRITIQUE OF THE SOCRATIC DIALECTICAL METHOD

According to Jaakko Hintikka (2007 p. 74), the following may be considered to be some of the drawbacks of the dialectical method in general. (Quoting directly, we number the paragraphs.)

It is not clear in general what answers to more complex questions will look like logically, nor is it clear what their presuppositions might be. And even if answers to these questions were available, there apparently are no rules of logical inference that could parallel the relevant complex question–answer steps. This might seem to jeopardize the entire strategic analogy deduction and interrogative inquiry.

Other limitations are likewise conspicuous. Perhaps the most important shortcoming of first-generation epistemic logic confronts us when we begin to emulate Socrates and Aristotle and model all inquiry as a questioning process. Such a model is straightforward to implement as long as the inquirer is given a fixed conclusion that it be established through an interrogative process starting from given initial premises. This may be enough to answer *why*-questions through a questioning process. However, there does not seem to be any way of analyzing similarly the all-important method of answering questions—that is, initial “big” or principal questions, by means of a number of “small” or operative questions. This would be a serious limitation to any application of the logic of questions and answers to epistemology. In view of such applicational shortcomings of first-generation epistemic logic, it might in fact look as if the philosophical

community could be excused when it has so far turned a deaf ear to the interesting and important philosophical vistas suggested by the observations so far described.

Check Your Progress II

Note: Use the space provided for your answers.

1) What are the qualities of Socrates's teaching method?

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2) Give your criticism of Socratic dialectic method.

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2.7 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, we have studied the importance of Socrates to Western Philosophy. Then we have seen his life and his philosophical method. This was followed by an analysis of his philosophy and finally a critique of his method. The application of the Socratic dialectical method is to be found most famously in the class room, in legal courts and in psychotherapy. As an epistemology, it is the first of its kind in the history of Western philosophy. This is also the first philosophically formulated ethics in the West. His political and educational ideas had great influence during and after his life. The Socratic method has been made famous by the schools and works of Plato and Aristotle. Thus, Socrates remains the father of philosophy in the serious and life-involving meaning of the word.

2.8 KEY WORDS

Arête: (Greek, the goodness or excellence of a thing) The goodness or virtue of a person. In the thought of Plato and Aristotle virtue is connected with goodness.

Dialectical Method: It is the Socratic method (also known as method of elenchus, Socratic irony, or Socratic debate), named after the classical Greek philosopher Socrates, is a form of inquiry and debate between individuals with opposing viewpoints based on asking and answering questions to stimulate critical thinking and to illuminate ideas.

Paradox: A statement or proposition that, despite sound (or apparently sound) reasoning from acceptable premises, leads to a conclusion that seems senseless, logically unacceptable, or self-contradictory.

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UNIT 3 PLATO

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3.0 OBJECTIVES

- To study briefly the great contribution Plato has made to Philosophy and Western thought.
- To appreciate Plato as one of the greatest thinkers of all times.
- To acknowledge some of the mistakes in his vision and still to appreciate Plato's grand ideal.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Plato (429–347 BCE) is one of the most dazzling thinkers in the Western philosophical tradition and one of the most penetrating, wide-ranging, and influential authors in the history of philosophy. An Athenian citizen of high status, he displays in his works his absorption in the political events and intellectual movements of his time. The questions he raises are so profound. The strategies he uses for solving them are suggestive and provocative that educated readers of nearly every period. Most of the Western philosophers have in some way been influenced by him, and in practically every age there have been philosophers who regard themselves Platonists. He was not the first thinker or writer to whom the word “philosopher” should be applied. But he was so self-conscious about how philosophy should be conceived, and what its scope and ambitions properly are, and he so transformed the intellectual currents with which he grappled, that the subject of philosophy (as a rigorous and systematic examination of ethical, political, metaphysical, and epistemological issues, armed with a distinctive method) can be called his invention. Few other authors in the history of philosophy approximate him in depth and range: perhaps only Aristotle (who studied with him), Aquinas, and Kant would be generally agreed to be of the same rank (Kraut 2009).

3.2 INTRODUCTION TO HIS THOUGHTS

After the death of Socrates, Plato, the most famous of his pupils, carried on much of his former teacher's work and eventually founded his own school, the Academy, in 385 BCE. The Academy

would become in its time the most famous school in the classical world. The Academy lasted over nine hundred years and is often thought of as the first university. Its most famous pupil was Aristotle (Hooker 1996).

We know quite a lot about Plato's teachings, because he wrote dialogues between Socrates and others that would explore philosophical issues. These dialogues would be used in his school as starting points for discussion; these discussions and Plato's final word on the dialogues have all been lost to us. The Platonic dialogues consist of Socrates asking questions of another and proving, through these questions, that the other person has the wrong idea on the subject. Initially, Plato seems to have carried on the philosophy of Socrates, concentrating on the dialectical examination of basic ethical issues: What is friendship? What is virtue? Can virtue be taught? In these early Platonic dialogues, Socrates questions another person and proves, through these questions, that the other person has the wrong idea on the subject. These dialogues never answer the questions they begin with.

In the course of time, Plato later began to develop his own philosophy and the Socrates of the later dialogues does more teaching than questioning. The fundamental aspect of Plato's thought is the theory of "ideas" or "forms." Plato, like so many other Greek philosophers, was puzzled by the question of change in the physical world. Earlier Heraclitus had said that there is nothing certain or stable except the fact that things change, and Parmenides and the Eleatic philosophers claimed that all change, motion, and time was an illusion. Where was the truth? How can these two opposite positions be reconciled? Plato ingeniously combined the two; a discussion of Plato's theory of forms is below (Hooker 1996).

The most famous of Plato's dialogues is an immense dialogue called *The Republic*, is one of the single most influential works in Western philosophy (besides his account of Socrates's trial, *The Apology*). Essentially *The Republic* deals with the central problem of how to live a good life; this inquiry is shaped into the parallel questions (a) what is justice in the State, or what would an ideal State be like, and (b) what is a just individual? Naturally these questions also encompass many others, such as how the citizens of a state should be educated, what kinds of arts should be encouraged, what form its government should take, who should do the governing and for what rewards, what is the nature of the soul, and finally what (if any) divine sanctions and afterlife should be thought to exist. The dialogue, then, covers just about every aspect of Plato's thought. There are several central aspects to the dialogue that sum up Platonic thought extremely well: a.) what the nature of justice is; b.) the nature of an ideal republic; and c.) the allegory of the cave and the divided line, both of which explain Plato's theory of forms (Hooker 1996).

Plato wrote more than twenty dialogues covering a number of philosophical topics. Plato's writings are divided into three periods.

Early Period: *Apology*, *Charmides*, *Crito*, *Euthydemus*, *Euthyphro*, *Gorgias*, *Hippias Minor*, *Hippias Major*, *Ion*, *Laches*, *Lysis*, *Menexenus*, and *Protagoras*

Middle Period: *Cratylus*, *Meno*, *Phaedo*, *Phaedrus*, *Republic*, *Symposium* and *Theatetus*

Late Period: *Parmenides*, *Critias*, *Law*, *Philebus*, *Politicus*, *Timaeus* and *Sophist*

3.3 MAIN THOUGHTS

Following Richard Hooker (1996) we give the main notions of Plato which have influenced the whole Western philosophical world significantly.

The Nature of Justice: The question which opens this immense dialogue is: what is justice? Several inadequate definitions are put forward, but the most emphatically presented definition is given by a young Sophist, Thrasymachus. He defines justice as whatever the strongest decide it is, and that the strong decide that whatever is in their best interest is just. Socrates dismisses this argument by proving that the strong rarely figure out what is in their best interest, and this can't be just since justice is a good thing.

The Analogy of the Ideal Republic: After Thrasymachus leaves in a royal huff, Socrates starts the question all over again. If one could decide what a just state is like, one could use that as an analogy for a just person. Plato then embarks on a long exposition about how a state might embody the four great virtues: courage, wisdom, temperance, and justice. The remainder of the dialogue is a long exposition of what justice in a state is; this section is considered one of the first major, systematic expositions of abstract political theory. This type of thinking, that is, speculating about an ideal state or republic, is called "utopian" thinking (utopia is a Greek word which means "no-place").

Plato (speaking on behalf of Socrates) divides human beings up based on their innate intelligence, strength, and courage. Those who are not overly bright, or strong, or brave, are suited to various productive professions: farming, smithing, building, etc. Those who are somewhat bright, strong, and especially courageous are suited to defensive and policing professions. Those who are extraordinarily intelligent, virtuous, and brave, are suited to run the state itself; that is, Plato's ideal state is an aristocracy, a Greek word which means "rule by the best." The lower end of human society, which, as far as Plato is concerned, consists of an overwhelming majority of people in a state, he calls the "producers," since they are most suited for productive work. The middle section of society, a smaller but still large number of people, make up the army and the police and are called "Auxiliaries." The best and the brightest, a very small and rarefied group, are those who are in complete control of the state permanently; Plato calls these people "Guardians." In the ideal state, "courage" characterizes the Auxiliaries; "wisdom" displays itself in the lives and government of the Guardians. A state may be said to have "temperance" if the Auxiliaries obey the Guardians in all things and the Producers obey the Auxiliaries and Guardians in all things. A state may be said to be intemperate if any of the lower groups do not obey one of the higher groups. A state may be said to be just if the Auxiliaries do not simply obey the Guardians, but enjoy doing so, that is, they don't grumble about the authority being exercised over them; a just state would require that the Producers not only obey the Auxiliaries and Guardians, but that they do so willingly (Hooker 1996).

When the analogy is extended to the individual human being, Plato identifies the intellect with the Guardians, the spirit or emotions with the Auxiliaries, and the bodily appetites with the Producers, something similar to the caste-system in India. Therefore, an individual is courageous if his or her spirit is courageous and an individual is wise if his or her intellect is wise. Temperance occurs when the emotions are ruled over by the intellect, and the bodily appetites are ruled over by the emotions and especially the intellect. An individual may be said to be just when the bodily appetites and emotions are not only ruled over by the intellect, but do so willingly and without coercion.

The Allegory of the Cave: Far and away the most influential passage in Western philosophy ever written is Plato's discussion of the prisoners of the cave and his abstract presentation of the divided line. For Plato, human beings live in a world of visible and intelligible things. The visible world is what surrounds us: what we see, what we hear, what we experience; this visible world is a world of change and uncertainty. The intelligible world is made up of the unchanging

products of human reason: anything arising from reason alone, such as abstract definitions or mathematics, makes up this intelligible world, which is the world of reality. The intelligible world contains the eternal "Forms" (in Greek, idea) of things; the visible world is the imperfect and changing manifestation in this world of these unchanging forms. For example, the "Form" or "Idea" of a horse is intelligible, abstract, and applies to all horses; this Form never changes, even though horses vary wildly among themselves—the Form of a horse would never change even if every horse in the world were to vanish. An individual horse is a physical, changing object that can easily cease to be a horse (if, for instance, it's dropped out of a fifty story building); the Form of a horse, or "horseness," never changes. As a physical object, a horse only makes sense in that it can be referred to the "Form" or "Idea" of horseness (Hooker 1996).

Plato imagines these two worlds, the sensible world and the intelligible world, as existing on a line that can be divided in the middle: the lower part of the line consists of the visible world and the upper part of the line makes up the intelligible world. Each half of the line relates to a certain type of knowledge: of the visible world, we can only have opinion (in Greek: doxa); of the intelligible world we achieve "knowledge" (in Greek, episteme). Each of these divisions can also be divided in two. The visible or changing world can be divided into a lower region, "illusion," which is made up of shadows, reflections, paintings, poetry, etc., and an upper region, "belief," which refers to any kind of knowledge of things that change, such as individual horses. "Belief" may be true some or most of the time but occasionally is wrong (since things in the visible world change); belief is practical and may serve as a relatively reliable guide to life but doesn't really involve thinking things out to the point of certainty. The upper region can be divided into, on the lower end, "reason," which is knowledge of things like mathematics but which require that some postulates be accepted without question, and "intelligence," which is the knowledge of the highest and most abstract categories of things, an understanding of the ultimate good (Hooker 1996).

Plato's creative story combines nicely his metaphysics, epistemology and some of his ethical ideas. The story's setting involves human beings living in a cave that have been bound in chains since childhood. As the story develops, we find that one person is released from the chains by another. This story is very rich in symbolism. Plato uses the cave as a symbol for the realm of existence of the senses. When the person that is released comes out of the cave and into the world above the cave, he or she has moved symbolically into another realm of existence. Above the cave is symbolic for the world of the Forms. This is a drastic oversimplifying of the allegory of the cave to focus our attention on the metaphysical implications. The more important issues of enlightenment will be discussed in the presentation on epistemology. When the person that is chained finally escapes from the cave and becomes enlightened he realizes that he must go back and try to help the others. This responsibility focuses on the correct use of wisdom from an ethical standpoint.

Check Your Progress I

Note: Use the space provided for your answers.

1) What do the Platonic dialogues consist of?

.....

2) Briefly describe Plato's understanding on the Nature of Justice.

.....

3.4 PLATO'S DUALISM

Things and Forms: To understand Plato's worldview, we can think of two different realms of existence: the world of the senses and the world of forms. The physical world, the world of the senses, is always changing, while the world of the forms remains constant.

It is important for us to understand the distinction that he makes between sensible "things" and "forms." Sensible things are those aspects of reality which we perceive through our senses: a tree, a car, a table, chair, a beautiful model, etc. Everything that we experience in the world of sensation is constantly changing (the table will start to get worn down, the beautiful model will age with time), imperfect and often fleeting. This is the realm of appearances, and we all know that appearances can be deceptive (Russo 2000).

Whereas things change, decay, and ultimately fade away, the Forms (the Greek term is Eidos which is sometimes translated as Ideas) are eternal and unchanging. This is the realm of perfect concepts and is grasped, not by the senses, but by the reason.

The Two World Theory: The realm of the senses and the realm of the forms are two most fundamental levels of reality. These two realms can be contrasted in the following way:

Sensible World	World of the Forms
appearance (seems real)	reality (is real)
immanent (within space and time)	transcendent (beyond space and time)
becoming (ever changing)	being (eternal and unchanging)
particular and imperfect	absolute and perfect
many instances (copy; imitation)	one essence (archetype)
perceived by senses	known by reason
subjective (dependent upon my perception)	objective (exist independently of my mind)
e.g., a table, a just act, a beautiful model, a circle	e.g., Table, Justice, Beauty, Circle, Human Being.

For Plato it is the world of the Forms (the realm of being) that is "really real" world; the world that we perceive with our senses (the realm of becoming) is little more than an imitation of this ultimate reality. He believes that for particular and imperfect thing that exists in the sensible realm (a table, a just act, a beautiful model, a circle) there is a corresponding absolute and perfect Form (Table, Justice, Beauty, a Circle).

In order to explain how sensible things come into being, Plato relies on the idea of participation. A table comes into being, he believes, because it participates in the form of Tableness. In the *Phaedo* Plato uses the metaphor of participation to explain the existence of particular beautiful things: "It seems to me that whatever else is beautiful apart from absolute beauty is beautiful because it partakes of that absolute beauty, and for no other reason. Do you accept this kind of causality? Yes, I do.

Well, now, that is as far as my mind goes; I cannot understand these other ingenious theories of causation. If someone tells me that the reason why a given object is beautiful is that it has a gorgeous color or shape or any other such attribute, I disregard all these other explanations---I find them all confusing---and I cling simply and straightforwardly and no doubt foolishly to the explanation that the one thing that makes the object beautiful is the presence in it or association

with it, in whatever way the relation comes about, of absolute beauty. I do not go so far as to insist upon the precise details---only upon the fact that it is by beauty that beautiful things are beautiful. This, I feel, is the safest answer for me or anyone else to give, and I believe that while I hold fast to this I cannot fall; it is safe for me or for anyone else to answer that it is by beauty that beautiful things are beautiful. Don't you agree?" (Plato, *Phaedo* 100CE)

Significance of the Two World Theory

But why did Plato need to devise such an elaborate metaphysical system to ground his ethics? The answer seems to be that he was trying to respond to the relativism of the Sophists, who were persuasively arguing that true and false, good and bad, were simply matters of opinion. Plato clearly recognized that if this kind of relativism was accepted that it would lead to the death of philosophy and all legitimate attempts at moral discourse. To save the philosophical enterprise, Plato had to devise an idea of truth and goodness that was independent of individual perceptions of truth and goodness. Thus he needed to anchor these concepts in a transcendent realm---the world of the forms. While the Sophists, then, would maintain that there potentially could be as many legitimate ideas of justice or beauty as there are individuals, for Plato there is Justice and Beauty---objective and transcendent realities that have nothing to do with my individual perceptions or opinions (Russo 2000).

3.5 SEEKING GOODNESS AND TRUTH

Many people associate Plato with a few central doctrines that are advocated in his writings: The world that appears to our senses is in some way defective and filled with error, but there is a more real and perfect realm, populated by entities (called "forms" or "ideas") that are eternal, changeless, and in some sense paradigmatic for the structure and character of our world. Among the most important of these abstract objects (as they are now called, because they are not located in space or time) are goodness, beauty, equality, bigness, likeness, unity, being, sameness, difference, change, and changelessness. (These terms — "goodness", "beauty", and so on — are often capitalized by those who write about Plato, in order to call attention to their exalted status; similarly for "Forms" and "Ideas.") The most fundamental distinction in Plato's philosophy is between the many observable objects that appear beautiful (good, just, unified, equal, big) and the one object that is what beauty (goodness, justice, unity) really is, from which those many beautiful (good, just, unified, equal, big) things receive their names and their corresponding characteristics. Nearly every major work of Plato is, in some way, devoted to or dependent on this distinction. Many of them explore the ethical and practical consequences of conceiving of reality in this dualistic way.

Plato invites us to transform our values by taking to heart the greater reality of the forms and the defectiveness of the corporeal world. We must recognize that the soul is a different sort of object from the body — so much so that it does not depend on the existence of the body for its functioning, and can in fact grasp the nature of the forms far more easily when it is not encumbered by its attachment to anything corporeal. In a few of Plato's works, we are told that the soul always retains the ability to recollect what it once grasped of the forms, when it was disembodied (see especially *Meno*), and that the lives we lead are to some extent a punishment or reward for choices we made in a previous existence (see especially the final pages of *Republic*). But in many of Plato's writings, it is asserted or assumed that true philosophers — those who recognize how important it is to distinguish the one (the one thing that goodness is, or virtue is, or courage is) from the many (the many things that are called good or virtuous or

courageous) — are in a position to become ethically superior to unenlightened human beings, because of the greater degree of insight they can acquire. To understand which things are good and why they are good (and if we are not interested in such questions, how can we become good?), we must investigate the form of Goodness (Kraut 2009) and that of Truth. Thus Plato urges us not to get stuck with the mundane and ordinary, but to lift our eyes to the eternal, to the absolute Truth and Goodness.

Check Your Progress II

Note: Use the space provided for your answers.

1) Briefly state the two world theory of Plato.

.....

.....

2) How is Plato's Philosophy related to our search for Goodness and Truth?

.....

.....

.....

3.6 PLATO ON THE IMPORTANCE OF PHILOSOPHY

For Plato “the man who is ready to taste every form of knowledge, is glad to learn and never satisfied - he's the man who deserves to be called a philosopher”. In other words, philosophers are “Those whose passion is to see the truth.”

Plato, as it is to be expected, thinks highly of the philosophers. They are best suited to rule the world and to solve its problems. “The society we have described can never grow into a reality or see the light of day, and there will be no end to the troubles of states, or indeed, my dear Glaucon, of humanity itself, till philosophers are kings in this world, or till those we now call kings and rulers really and truly become philosophers, and political power and philosophy thus come into the same hands, while the many natures now content to follow either to the exclusion of the other are forcibly debarred from doing so. This is what I have hesitated to say so long, knowing what a paradox it would sound; for it is not easy to see that there is no other road to happiness, either for society or the individual.” He adds further: “there are some who are naturally fitted for philosophy and political leadership, while the rest should follow their lead and let philosophy alone.”

He criticises the society that does not give due respect to philosophers. Let us follow Plato with his long quote: 'Suppose the following to be the state of affairs on board a ship or ships. The captain is larger and stronger than any of the crew, but a bit deaf and short-sighted, and doesn't know much about navigation. The crew are quarrelling with each other about how to navigate the ship, each thinking he ought to be at the helm; they know no navigation and cannot say that anyone ever taught it them, or that they spent any time studying it; indeed they say it can't be taught and are ready to murder any one who says it can. They spend all their time milling around the captain and trying to get him to give them the wheel. If one faction is more successful than another, their rivals may kill them and throw them overboard, lay out the honest captain with drugs and drink, take control of the ship, help themselves to what's on board, and behave as if they were on a drunken pleasure-cruise. Finally, they reserve their admiration for the man who knows how to lend a hand in controlling the captain by force or fraud; they praise his seamanship

and navigation and knowledge of the sea and condemn everyone else as useless. They have no idea that the true navigator must study the seasons of the year, the sky, the stars, the winds and other professional subjects, if he is really fit to control a ship; and they think that it's quite impossible to acquire professional skill in navigation (quite apart from whether they want it exercised) and that there is no such thing as an art of navigation. In these circumstances aren't the sailors on any ship bound to regard the true navigator as a gossip and a star-gazer, of no use to them at all?'

'Yes, they are,' Adeimantus agreed

'I think you probably understand, without any explanation, that my illustration is intended to show the present attitude of society towards the true philosopher'

He holds clearly that philosophers are necessary for the society. "And tell him it's quite true that the best of the philosophers are of no use to their fellows; but that he should blame, not the philosophers, but those who fail to make use of them." (Plato)

3.7 CRITICISM AND COMMENT

There are several ideas of Pythagoras that can be seen to have a marked influence on Plato's Middle and Later period writings:

- The Dualism of Body and Soul
- Women would be allowed in this body
- The division of human kind being divided into three basic types: Tradesman –lowest type; Persons that have an ambitious and/or Competitive spirit –next highest type; Persons who prefer Contemplation –Highest type
- Knowledge and a philosophic life are necessary for salvation of the soul
- The organization of a political body that would be a salvation for its members
- This society would hold all possessions in common
- The Transmigration of Souls

In short we can say that Plato has brought in the dualism of body and soul, world and spirit or material and spiritual. In this way, he has exalted the spiritual and demeaned the material. So even today many of us see the body as evil, the world as bad and the material as illusory. From this it follows that women are inferior and contemplation is better. Every system today has been influenced by Plato. That is why Paul Ricoeur holds that Christianity has moved away from its original vision and has become today "Platonism for the masses." This is a negative contribution of Plato.

On the positive side, we must acknowledge the tremendous philosophical contribution he has made to Western thought. He has influenced every intellectual field of the Western civilization. In fact the great British Mathematician and Philosopher, Alfred North Whitehead, has said it simply: "All Western Philosophy consists of footnotes to Plato."

Check Your Progress III

Note: Use the space provided for your answers.

1) Who are philosophers, according to Plato?

.....

2) What is "Platonism for the masses?"

3.8 LET US SUM UP

We have taken up, in this unit, some of the key notions of Plato and its impact on us. Plato has been one of the greatest thinkers of Western Philosophy.

3.9 KEY WORDS

Dualism: The division of dualism into two opposed or contrasted aspects, the spiritual and the material. There is no relationship between the two.

Forms: Forms (*Eidos*) is the philosophical concept of Plato regarding the perfect and imperfect objects of this world. The perfect belongs to the World of Forms and the Imperfect belongs to our world. The Imperfect are simply copies of the perfect that exists in the World of *Eidos*. As we see in the Allegory of the cave, the Perfect world belongs to the world with sunlight where the free man (Socrates of Athens) is blinded by the highest luminosity of the sun which is the truth. The Imperfect world is in the cave where the prisoners see the shadows as the reality of their lives.

Utopia: An ideally perfect place, especially in its social, political, and moral aspects.

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UNIT 4 ARISTOTLE

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-

4.0 OBJECTIVES

The main objective of this unit is to analyse the philosophy of the great Greek philosopher Aristotle. It is worth saying a word about Aristotle's approach to philosophy. His very name suggests to some people the idea of a dogmatic system of rigid doctrines. This is a misleading idea. Aristotle's manner is far from dogmatic: he is always reopening questions and admitting difficulties. Nor is his method dogmatic. He does not argue arrogantly from premises laid down by him as self-evident. He considers carefully what his predecessors have said and what ordinary men say, he assumes that their divergent views will all have some element of truth in them, and he seeks to elicit reasonable solutions to problems by clarifying the issues and qualifying or refining the various inconsistent solutions that have been offered. This unit introduces basic ideas of Aristotle. Throughout this unit we are to analyse the universality of his ideas, which were later taken up and grown up by so many great philosophers in the Western tradition.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Among the pioneers of human knowledge Aristotle was undoubtedly, the greatest. Aristotle was a master of dialectic. He was a great observer, a various reader and specialist both in natural sciences as well as in philosophy. His philosophy included almost all the sciences and humanities such as logic, mathematics, physics, biology and psychology, metaphysics and ethics, politics and aesthetics. His range was encyclopaedic, original as well as creative. His position in the history of Philosophy is unique. From the criteria of breadth, originality and influence Aristotle was undoubtedly, "master of those who know."

Life

Aristotle, (384-322 B.C.) was the son of a doctor of Stagira in northern Greece. For twenty years, from 367, he was a member of Plato's Academy. When Plato died and Speusippus became head of the Academy, Aristotle left Athens and went first to Assos (on the coast of Asia Minor) and then to Lesbos. About 342 he was invited by King Philip of Macedonia to go there to supervise the education of the King's son, Alexander. A few years later he returned to Athens to found a new school, which became known as the Lyceum or Peripatos. The school flourished; but in 323 Aristotle left Athens for political reasons and retired to Euboea. There he died in 322.

Works

It has been said that Aristotle wrote as many as 400 books. The important works are as follows:-

Logic: Aristotle's views concerning logic are available in his work *Organon*. This work includes categories, rules of interpretations, analytic and fallacies etc. This great work is divided into different books on these different topics.

Metaphysics: '*On Metaphysics*' includes as many as 14 books of Aristotle.

Ethics: Aristotle's famous work *Nicomachean ethics* consists of 10 books on different topics concerning ethics. Another important work on ethics is *Eudemian Ethics*.

Politics: Aristotle's famous book *Politics* consists of 8 books. Besides this important work he also wrote another book entitled '*On the Constitution of Athens*.'

Psychology: Aristotle's famous work '*On the Soul*' consists of 8 books different topics concerning human psychology. Besides, he also wrote small independent treatises on memory, dream etc.

Natural Sciences: *Physics* (eight books of which book VII is an interpolation); *Astronomy* (four books); *Origin and Decay* (two books); *Meteorology* (four books); *Cosmology* (spurious); *Botany* (spurious); *History of Animals* (ten books, Book X spurious); *On the parts of Animals* (four books); *On the Progression of Animals* (not genuine, according to some); *On the Origin of Animal* (five books); *On the Locomotion of Animals* (spurious).

4.2 CATEGORIES

The initial book in Aristotle's collected logical works is *The Categories*, an analysis of predication generally. It begins with a distinction among three ways in which the meaning of different uses of a predicate may be related to each other: *homonymy*, *synonymy*, and *paronymy* (in some translations, "equivocal," "univocal," and "derivative"). *Homonymous* uses of a predicate have entirely different explanations, as in "With all that money, she's really loaded," and "After all she had to drink, she's really loaded." *Synonymous* uses have exactly the same account, as in "Cows are mammals," and "Dolphins are mammals." *Paronymous* attributions have distinct but related senses, as in "He is healthy," and "His complexion is healthy." It is important in every case to understand how this use of a predicate compares with its other uses.

So long as we are clear about the sort of use we are making in each instance, Aristotle proposed that we develop descriptions of individual things that attribute to each predicates (or categories) of ten different sorts. Substance is the most crucial among these ten, since it describes the thing in terms of what it most truly is. For Aristotle, primary substance is just the individual thing itself, which cannot be predicated of anything else. But secondary substances are predicable, since they include the species and genera to which the individual thing belongs. Thus, the attribution of substance in this secondary sense establishes the essence of each particular thing.

The other nine categories—quantity, quality, relative, where, when, being in a position, having, acting on, and being affected by—describe the features which distinguish this individual

substance from others of the same kind; they admit of degrees and their contraries may belong to the same thing. Used in combination, the ten kinds of predicate can provide a comprehensive account of what any individual thing is.

4.3 METAPHYSICS

Aristotle expresses two views about "first philosophy" (the name "metaphysics" was given by an editor to the treatise on first philosophy because it came after - *meta* - the Physics in his edition). One view, already mentioned, is that it is the study of changeless, separable substance, that is, theology. The other is that it is not a departmental science dealing with a particular kind of being, but that it studies being as such, together with concepts (for example, unity, identity) and principles (for example, the law of contradiction) which are common to all departmental sciences. Aristotle is not very successful in reconciling these two views.

Form and Matter

A table is wood and glue put together in a certain way. Aristotle distinguishes as separate aspects of the table its matter (the wood and glue) and its form (how it is put together, its structure). Many of his central ideas - and of his puzzles - are connected with this distinction. **(a) Form is immanent:** the form of table exists only as the form of this table or that table, that is, as the form of certain matter. **(b) Form or structure** is normally determined by function. It is because of what it has to do that a table has a flat top and four legs. **(c) Matter** is "for the sake of" form, not vice versa. If you want an axe - something for cutting down trees - you must of course use iron to make it; but there can be iron without there being an axe. So to state the form or function of something explains it far more than stating what it is made of; the form implies the appropriate matter in a way in which the matter does not imply the form. **(d) Wood and glue**, the matter of a table, are not matter in an absolute sense. In a piece of wood we can again draw a distinction between form and matter, since wood, like everything else, is made of earth, air, fire and water (or of some of these) combined in a certain way. Nor are these four elements pure matter. They can change into one another. This implies a persistent underlying stuff capable of receiving the form of earth, air, etc. but in itself without any form or definite character. This is what Aristotle calls first (or "prime") matter, a characterless substrate which never actually exists on its own but only in the form of earth, air etc. **(e) Besides** pressing the distinction of matter and form to the extreme concept of prime matter, Aristotle also uses it by analogy in quite different problems. Thus in the definition of a species he treats the genus as the matter and the differentia as the form: the genus is relatively indeterminate, the differentia gives its definite character to the species. This is typical of Aristotle's way of extending the application of key concepts, - which adds a certain unity to his thought at the cost of some obscurity. **(f) So far** form has been the correlative of matter, the form of some matter. Aristotle raises the question whether there can be form without matter and says that there can. But his form without-matter is very different from a Platonic Form. God is form without matter.

Actuality and Potentiality

Referring to 'Potentiality,' this is what a thing is capable of doing or being acted upon, if the conditions are right and it is not prevented by something else. For example, the seed of a plant in the soil is potentially (*dynamei*) plant, and if is not prevented by something, it will become a plant. Potentially beings can either 'act' (*poiein*) or 'be acted upon' (*paschein*), which can be either innate or learned. For example, the eyes possess the potentiality of sight (innate – being

acted upon), while the capability of playing the flute can be possessed by learning (exercise – acting).

Actuality is the fulfilment of the end of the potentiality. Because the end (telos) is the principle of every change and for the sake of the end exists potentiality, therefore actuality is the end. Referring then to our previous example, we could say that an actuality is when a plant does one of the activities that plants do.

In summary, the matter used to make a house has potentiality to be a house and both the activity of building and the form of the final house are actualities, which is also a final cause or end. Then Aristotle proceeds and concludes that the actuality is prior to potentiality in formula, in time and in substantiality.

The Four ‘Causes’

Aristotle proposed in Physics II, 3 that we employ four very different kinds of explanatory principle to the question of why a thing is, the four causes:

- **The material cause** is the basic stuff out of which the thing is made. The material cause of a house, for example, would include the wood, metal, glass, and other building materials used in its construction. All of these things belong in an explanation of the house because it could not exist unless they were present in its composition.
- **The formal cause** is the pattern or essence in conformity with which these materials are assembled. Thus, the formal cause of our exemplary house would be the sort of thing that is represented on a blueprint of its design. This, too, is part of the explanation of the house, since its materials would be only a pile of rubble (or a different house) if they were not put together in this way.
- **The efficient cause** is the agent or force immediately responsible for bringing this matter and that form together in the production of the thing. Thus, the efficient cause of the house would include the carpenters, masons, plumbers, and other workers who used these materials to build the house in accordance with the blueprint for its construction. Clearly the house would not be what it is without their contribution.
- Lastly, **the final cause** is the end or purpose for which a thing exists, so the final cause of our house would be to provide shelter for human beings. This is part of the explanation of the house's existence because it would never have been built unless someone needed it as a place to live.

Causes of all four sorts are necessary elements in any adequate account of the existence and nature of the thing, Aristotle believed, since the absence or modification of any one of them would result in the existence of a thing of some different sort. Moreover, an explanation that includes all four causes completely captures the significance and reality of the thing itself.

4.4 CLASSIFICATION OF SCIENCES

A survey of Aristotle's work in special fields can conveniently be prefaced by an account of how he classifies the various branches of inquiry, a classification of considerable historical importance. His basic division is into **theoretical**, **practical** and **productive** sciences. Theoretical science studies "what cannot be otherwise" and aims simply at truth. The Theoretical sciences, which are concerned with pure, abstract knowledge. The Theoretical sciences enumerated by Aristotle are: mathematics, physics, biology and psychology, and first philosophy

or what is known as metaphysics. Practical sciences are to do with "what can be otherwise" and are ultimately aimed at action; the most important practical sciences are ethics and politics. Productive sciences, in which knowledge is subordinated to the creation of beauty. Productive sciences are concerned with making things.

4.5 LOGIC

Logic is regarded by Aristotle not as a substantive part of philosophy but as ancillary to all parts. For it studies forms of reasoning and expression common to various subject-matters, and a grasp of it is pre-requisite for the student of any topic. This view of logic is reflected in the traditional name of Aristotle's logical works - the "*Organon*" (that is, tool or instrument).

The *Prior Analytics* contains Aristotle's great contribution to formal logic, his theory of the syllogism. This is a purely formal system of remarkable rigour but limited scope. The limitations are that it handles only certain kinds of statement and that the inferences it studies are all inferences from two such statements to a third. The statements in a categorical syllogism all have one of the following forms: all A is B, no A is B, some A is not B. Modal syllogisms bring in such forms as "all A may be B" and all A must be B". Aristotle works out all possible combinations of premises and conclusions, determines which syllogisms are valid, and investigates some of the logical relations between different syllogisms.

The *Posterior Analytics* contains Aristotle's "logic of science." His account of the form a completed science should take is much influenced by the model of geometry and rests on the view that there are in nature "real kinds" whose essence we can know. A given branch of science is about some limited - objects. It starts from principles and axioms common to all sciences, some peculiar to this one - and from definitions of the objects being studied. It then demonstrates by syllogisms that properties necessarily belong to the objects in question. This seems remote from what scientists do, and indeed from what Aristotle does in his scientific works; but it must be remembered that it expresses an ideal for the exposition of a completed science rather than a programme for investigators.

Check Your Progress I

Note: Use the space provided for your answers.

1) What are the categories in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*?

2) Explain Aristotle's understanding of causality.

4.6 THEOLOGY - NATURE OF GOD

Aristotle's metaphysics culminates in theology. God according to him, is an eternal unmoved mover, that which causes all motion but which is not moved himself. Thus, He is the first cause

of motion in the world. He is pure form, unadulterated by matter. He is complete actuality. He is substance per excellence. It is thought-thinking-thought. In the words of Aristotle "He must be itself that thought thinks; and its thinking is thinking on thinking". Thus God's thought is intuitive. It is reflective thought.

Following are the features of God according to Aristotle:

- **God is the Prime mover** - The actualization of the world becomes possible through the dynamism and motion released in the matter. Matter in motion takes on various forms and the diversity of objects of the world is due to different ratio proportion of matter and form in various objects. However, the initial push or motion provided to matter is by Pure Form, that is, God. Accordingly, God is the prime mover of this world.
- **God is the Apex of World process**- This world is a becoming and evolution in which the lower forms are superseded the higher. Now God comes at the pinnacle of this process. Therefore, God is the highest manifestation of the world processes.
- **God is the Formal Cause of the World**-Since matter is indefinite and undifferentiated which is made definite and particular: by imposition of forms, God which is Form of all forms is the formal cause of the world.
- **God is the Efficient Cause of the World**-Since it is through the agency of God that the process of world is initiated and maintained. God is also the efficient cause of the world.
- **God is the Final Cause of the World**-Since God is the apex of world evolution and since God is the Highest manifestation of world process, God is also the final cause or the aim of the world.
- **God is not a person**-Aristotle denies personality to God, because, according to him, God is pure form and is lacking in particularity. Therefore, it cannot be a person. Secondly, in order to be a person God must admit in itself the materialness and this will contradict Aristotle's conception of God.

4.7 PHYSICS

The study of physics, or nature, includes the study of living things, but it will be convenient to treat Aristotle's biology and psychology separately from his more general physical works. The Physics and connected works contain discussion and analysis of such concepts as nature, change, chance, time, place, continuity, infinity, growth; proofs that movement is eternal and that there is an eternal Prime Mover; and much doctrine as to the actual constitution and workings of the universe. Physics, according to Aristotle, is the science of Nature. He rejects the old concept of matter formed out of Atoms. He was against both Atomism and mechanism. Matter, according to him, is more dynamic. Motion includes all kinds of change. Matter is the vehicle of motion. Motion is, "the realisation of the possible." Motion is of four kinds:

- Substantial motion or the motion of origin and decay.
- Quantitative motion or the motion involved in change by addition and subtraction.
- Qualitative motion or the motion involved in transformation of one thing into another.
- Locomotion or change of place.

Qualities of thing, according to Aristotle, are not merely subjective; they are real qualities of the things in themselves. Change, therefore, cannot be explained mechanically, there are absolute qualitative changes in matter. Nature is dynamic rather than static, teleological and not mechanical, qualitative rather than quantitative. The universe is eternal, without origin or destruction. Earth is the centre of universe. Then come, the celestial spheres which are followed

by sphere of stars. God encompasses the outermost sphere of fixed stars and causes them to move.

4.8 BIOLOGY - BODY AND SOUL

Aristotle is known as the founder of systematic and comparative zoology. His biology is opposed to quantitative and mechanical conception of nature. According to him it is qualitative, dynamic and teleological. The body is an Organon or instrument of the soul. It is meant for the use of the soul. Soul moves body and determines the principle of life. Thus, Aristotle's biology has been termed as vitalism. Body and soul form an indivisible unity. In this unity the soul is the controlling guiding principle. The whole is prior to the parts and the parts realised the purpose of the whole.

Thus the body is the instrument for the realization of the purposes of the soul. Where there is life, there is soul. Thus, corresponding to different forms of life, there are different grades or degrees of soul. As soul and body constitute one unit, neither there can be a body without soul nor a soul without body. Again, since every being has a different body and therefore a different soul, a human soul cannot enter the body of a horse. In this series of souls there is a gradual ascending order from lowest to the highest. This series starts from the plant soul and rises to the human soul. In man the plant soul governs the functions of nutrition, growth and reproduction while the human soul governs higher powers.

4.9 PSYCHOLOGY

The word "*psyche*", commonly translated "soul", really has a wider meaning; plants as well as animals have psyche, they are living. Living things can be ordered according to complexity of their powers. Some (plants) have only the power of nutrition and reproduction others have also the power of perception, desire and movement; men have in addition the power of thought. Aristotle's main discussion of these various psychical functions is in the *De Anima*, which also contains his general account Mind-Body Dualism

In the field of psychology Aristotle has discovered ideas concerning sensations, perception, imagination, feelings, memory, emotions, thinking and almost all other psychological processes. The soul of man, according to him, resembles the plant soul so far as it controls the lower vital functions. The animal soul in man works through the faculties of perception. Sense perception is change produced in the soul by the perceived thing. The soul is informed about the qualities of things through the sense organs. Heart is the organ of common sense. It is the meeting place of all the sensations which are then combined to form total picture of an object. Heart again, gives an idea concerning number, size, shape, motion and rest etc. The feelings of pleasure and pain are connected with perception. When functions are furthered we feel pleasure and we feel pain. Feelings again, arouse desire and Desire is the result of perception of desirable object. It is accompanied by deliberation or rational will. Reason, again, is the characteristic of human soul. It is the faculty of conceptual thought. It is initially potential and is actualised in thinking. Aristotle has distinguished between active and passive reason. Active reason is creative, pure actuality like the pure soul of Plato.

While, Passive reason is the matter, active reason is the form of thought and concepts are the result of the combination of both. Thus, Aristotle's dualism of form and matter continues in his psychology. The same dualism is found in body mind relationship. Perception, imagination and

memory are connected with the body. The Active or Creative reason, however, is connected with the soul. It is immaterial, imperishable and therefore, immortal. It is the spark of divine in human soul. It does not arise with man nor perish with him. It is not individual reason but the universal in man.

4.10 ETHICS

The *Nicomachean Ethics* is certainly one of the best books ever written on the subject. It is rich in analysis of moral and psychological concepts, and in ingenious arguments. The following account will indicate the main lines of the work:

(i) **The good life.** "Good" is not, Aristotle argues, the name of a single quality. Different kinds of thing are called good for different reasons: an axe is a good one if it cuts efficiently; eyes are good if they see well. To decide what is the best life for man one must ask what are the proper functions of a man (as cutting is the function of an axe); a good man will be one who performs those functions excellently, and his will be the good life. Man is distinguished from other animals by his power of thought. So the functions of a man - the effective performance of which will make him a good man - are those of his activities which involve thought and which therefore he does not share with other animals. Man's possession of reason shows itself not only in his ability to think, but also in his ability to control by thought and principle his desires and conduct; so the virtues of the good man will be not only intellectual but also moral or ethical (that is, virtues of character, ethos).

(ii) **Moral virtue.** Moral virtues, like skills, are acquired by practice. A man becomes generous by being trained or habituated to do the things a generous man would do. He has himself become generous when he has acquired a settled disposition of character so that he now does such things regularly, gladly and without ulterior motive. The "gladly" is important; it helps Aristotle to argue that the virtuous life is pleasant. His ideal is the man who always does what he ought because he wants to; "the presence of a moral struggle, the need to conquer desires - these are signs of imperfection

Moral virtue is concerned with feelings and actions, and in these there can be too much, too little, or the right amount, "the mean". Virtue is a matter of striking the mean between opposite vices: generosity lies between meanness and prodigality. The mean involved is not an arithmetical average, it is the mean "relative to us", that is, it is what is appropriate to a man. There are no simple rules for deciding what is appropriate; it is the possession of phronesis ("practical wisdom") which enables a man to hit the mean. This doctrine of the mean is more famous than it deserves to be. Aristotle admits to difficulty in bringing all virtues and vices into his scheme. The doctrine of the mean, in fact, contains little positive moral teaching and is inadequate if considered as simply analysis of vice-virtue concepts.

(iii) **Intellectual virtue:** It is a practical wisdom. This intellectual virtue enables a man to get the right answers to practical questions of conduct. It involves skill in deliberation but also presupposes the possession of moral virtue. For to have the right aims is a matter of moral virtue - character determines ends. Moral goodness and practical wisdom are in fact inseparable, each involving the other in its definition.

(iv) **Intellectual virtue:** it is a theoretical wisdom. This intellectual virtue is wisdom about "what cannot be otherwise". It involves intuitive knowledge of unprovable starting-points (concepts and truth and demonstrative knowledge of what follows from them. This virtue, Aristotle argues, is the highest that man can have: it is to do with the highest objects and it is the

virtue of the divine part of man's soul (for no activity but that of pure thought can be attributed to God). The life of theoretical philosophy is the best and happiest a man can lead. Few men are capable of it (and they only intermittently). For the rest there is a second best way of life, that of moral virtue and practical wisdom.

It is striking how Aristotle, starting from the question what is man's nature and his function as a man, ends by finding his highest and most proper activity in the imitation of God through the exercise of pure reason, the spark of divinity in him.

4.11 POLITICS

In addition to his works on ethics, which address the individual, Aristotle addressed the city in his work titled Politics. Aristotle considered the city to be a natural community. Moreover, he considered the city to be prior in importance to the family which in turn is prior to the individual, "for the whole must of necessity be prior to the part". He is also famous for his statement that "man is by nature a political animal." Aristotle conceived of politics as being like an organism rather than like a machine, and as a collection of parts none of which can exist without the others. Aristotle's conception of the city is organic, and he is considered one of the first to conceive of the city in this manner.

The common modern understanding of a political community as a modern state is quite different to Aristotle's understanding. Although he was aware of the existence and potential of larger empires, the natural community according to Aristotle was the city (*polis*) which functions as a political "community" or "partnership" (*koinōnia*). The aim of the city is not just to avoid injustice or for economic stability, but rather to allow at least some citizens the possibility to live a good life and to perform beautiful acts: "The political partnership must be regarded, therefore, as being for the sake of noble actions, not for the sake of living together." This is distinguished from modern approaches, beginning with social contract theory; according to which individuals leave the state of nature because of "fear of violent death" or its "inconveniences."

4.12 POETICS

Aristotle considered epic poetry, tragedy, comedy, dithyrambic poetry and music to be imitative, each varying in imitation by medium, object, and manner. For example, music imitates with the media of rhythm and harmony, whereas dance imitates with rhythm alone, and poetry with language. The forms also differ in their object of imitation. Comedy, for instance, is a dramatic imitation of men worse than average; whereas tragedy imitates men slightly better than average. Lastly, the forms differ in their manner of imitation – through narrative or character, through change or no change, and through drama or no drama. Aristotle believed that imitation is natural to mankind and constitutes one of mankind's advantages over animals.

While it is believed that Aristotle's Poetics comprised two books – one on comedy and one on tragedy – only the portion that focuses on tragedy has survived. Aristotle taught that tragedy is composed of six elements: plot-structure, character, style, spectacle, and lyric poetry. The characters in a tragedy are merely a means of driving the story; and the plot, not the characters, is the chief focus of tragedy. Tragedy is the imitation of action arousing pity and fear, and is meant to effect the catharsis of those same emotions. Aristotle concludes Poetics with a discussion on which, if either, is superior: epic or tragic mimesis. He suggests that because tragedy possesses all the attributes of an epic, possibly possesses additional attributes such as spectacle and music,

is more unified, and achieves the aim of its mimesis in shorter scope; it can be considered superior to epic.

Check Your Progress II

Note: Use the space provided for your answers.

1) Give the account of Aristotle on question of God.

2) What are the ethical teachings of Aristotle?

4.13 LET US SUM UP

Aristotle speaks about the following twelve categories in which the first three are very important: equivocal, univocal, derivative, quantity, quality, relative, where, when, being in a position, having, acting on, and being affected by. Aristotle expresses two views about his "first philosophy"(metaphysics): 1. Theology (the study of changeless, separable substance). 2. The study of being as such together with concepts and principles that includes Form and Matter, Actuality and Potentiality, and The Four "Causes". Aristotle classifies his science into three kinds - theoretical, practical and productive sciences. Aristotle's Logic is not as a substantive part of philosophy but as ancillary to all parts, which studies forms of reasoning and expression common to various subject-matters, and a grasp of it is pre-requisite for the student of any topic. It includes two kinds of analytical methods - The Prior Analytics and The Posterior Analytics. Aristotle's idea of God consists the following features: 1. God is the Prime mover, 2. God is the Apex of World process, 3. God is the Formal Cause of the World, 4. God is the Efficient Cause of the World, 5. God is the Final Cause of the World, 6. God is not a person. Physics, according to Aristotle, is the science of Nature. His biology is qualitative, dynamic and teleological and it is called "vitalism". According to him Body and soul form an indivisible unity. In the field of psychology Aristotle has discovered ideas concerning sensations, perception, imagination, feelings, and memory, emotions, thinking and almost all other psychological processes. In his idea of ethics he deals about - The good life, Moral virtue, Intellectual virtue (Practical Wisdom), and Intellectual virtue (Theoretical Wisdom). The natural community according to Aristotle was the city (polis) which functions as a political "community" or "partnership" (*koinōnia*). Aristotle's Poetics comprised of two books comedy and tragedy.

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