HISTORY OF WESTERN

PHILOSOPHY

N.V. JOSHI

HISTORY
OF
WESTERN PHILOSOPHY

by

N. V. JOSHI, M. A., D. Litt.

Professor of Philosophy,
Ramnarain Ruia College, Bombay

CURRENT BOOK HOUSE
BOMBAY 1

FIRST PUBLISHED: DECEMBER 1957

Paper Bound : Rs. 5.75
Library Edition : Rs. 7.75

Printed by SHRIWIKETAN DHAWALE at the KARNATAK PRINTING PRESS, Karnatak House, Chira Bazar, Bombay 2 and published by Z. M. KADRI, CURRENT BOOK HOUSE, Maruti Lane, Raghunath Dadaji Street, Fort, Bombay 1.

CONTENTS

historian supposed to *interpret* the views of different philosophical thinkers dealt with by him ? But interpretation presupposes the point of view with reference to which we judge the value and significance of a thing. Does this not lead us to a vicious circle? Some historians of philosophy have been conscious of such a difficulty. They have, therefore, usually restricted themselves to mere chronicling of philosophical views, themselves maintaining throughout a non-committal attitude.

After finishing the student career, when I took up the profession of the teacher of philosophy, my difficulties began to assume alarming proportions. At each step they caused me a lot of confusion and embarrassment. In order to represent the subject before my students properly, I had often no other alternative except pleading ignorance precisely on those points which ought to be the *forte* of a teacher. One can forgive a teacher, if he is not acquainted with some details of his subject here or there. But how can he be excused, if he lacks the very standpoint of his subject ?

In this work I have tried to grapple with these fundamental difficulties of the student of the history of philosophy. I have tried to maintain that the philosophical problems can and do admit of one and only one standpoint, namely, the ontological. Any other standpoint is not only foreign to philosophy, but is detrimental to it, inasmuch as it is the source of much chaos and anarchy in the domain of philosophy. This has made me, negatively, to disentangle philosophy from epistemology and axiology wherever these disciplines have sought to encroach upon the ontological standpoint of philosophy. Positively, I have sought to appraise the implications of such a standpoint wherever I found them.

This has made me undertake the task of a fresh evaluation of the total output of philosophical speculation. The logic of the ontological standpoint which I have adopted has led me to push into the background for the time being all the other achievements of a thinker which have been extraneous to philosophy, howsoever brilliant they might have been otherwise. I did so purposely in order to focus the entire attention of the reader exclusively on the ontologica

problem, which, according to me constitutes the very core of philosophy.

If this is appreciated, then my work, with all its shortcomings, cannot but recommend itself to the reader as something fundamental and original. I do not, however, desire to suggest that whatever is said by me is the last word. My contention is that philosophical knowledge can never be properly organized without a standpoint which is typically and distinctly *philosophical*. In any case, I have taken here a challenging attitude towards those who believe that philosophy can be approached from any and every standpoint whatever. To me nothing is more absurd than this. To have at least expressed such an attitude is the only apology I have to offer for this book .

My thanks are due to Prof. V. T. Yardi, M.A. of the Department of English for showing much interest in my work. I am particularly obliged to Mr. Z. M. Kadri of Current Book House, Bombay 1, for making a prompt and excellent arrangement for the publication of this work.

N. V. JOSHI

Ramnarain Ruia College,
Bombay, 19.
October 3, 1957

INTRODUCTION

TO understand the history of philosophy properly it is necessary, first of all, to have a firm hold on the standpoint of philosophy itself. In this connection one is tempted to ask : What is the primary task and function of philosophy ? In seeking an answer to this question, one may think of taking recourse to the etymological meaning of the word " philosophy ". Everyone knows that literally philosophy means love of wisdom. But what is wisdom ? Frequently it is regarded as equivalent to knowledge. Is this really so ? Let us try to find out.

The Standpoint of Knowledge and Its Major Implications :— Knowledge aims at revealing the form of objective experience. The entire process of knowledge shows a sense of direction. It goes from the object to the subject, or from the particular to the universal. The actual result of knowledge consists in establishing a synthesis of an element of our experience with its relevant intelligible whole.

The synthesis of the particular with the universal in our knowledge, however, displays various degrees of vitality. For example, in that stage of knowledge which is called Perception, we rest content simply by subsuming a certain fact under a class-concept. " This is a table," " Here is a man " might be regarded as the instances of perceptual knowledge.

But as we pass from perception to scientific knowledge, we may not deal with the particular facts directly. Now we are directly concerned with the relations of the concepts themselves. Thus, when I say "All men are mortal," my aim is to make a general statement with regard to the essential relation between the concept of humanity and that of mortality. A general proposition deepens our understanding of an objective fact. This can be illustrated by contrasting the two propositions : " Socrates is a man " and " If Socrates is a man, then Socrates is mortal." The first proposition informs us simply about the relation of a fact

to its class-concept. The second proposition, while it presupposes such a relation, goes beyond it and establishes the essential and universal relation between two concepts. In this way, a general proposition gives more stability and security to the perceptual knowledge. It makes us believe that a piece of perceptual knowledge is not a loose piece of knowledge, but its truth is an essential ingredient of a wider conceptual system, which is built up through the understanding of conceptual relations, which are at once universal and necessary. Scientific knowledge thus stands at a level higher than that of perception.

There is, however, another stage of knowledge higher than that of science. This stage is represented by rational knowledge. In fact, all the sciences presuppose the principle of Reason. This is so, because knowledge at the level of science is still fragmentary. It is never all-comprehensive. This can be seen from the fact that every science deals only with one of the multifarious aspects of our experience. For example, physics deals with matter, biology deals with life, psychology deals with mind, so on and so forth. Again, in spite of the difference in the nature of the facts with which the various sciences are severally occupied, all o them have one thing in common. It is, namely, that eacl one is called upon to know things systematically. In other words, what we expect of a scientist is that no matter what be the aspect of experience with which he is directly concerned, he must give us such a body of knowledge as would be free from contradictions. But the law of contradiction is verily the supreme law of rational knowledge itself. Reason, thus, is the ultimate presupposition of the entire scientific knowledge. It is Reason which is able to unify all the sciences in an all-comprehensive and perfectly, coherent experience.

We thus find that perception and rational knowledge constitute the two poles of our experience. While the one yields such a knowledge as is particular and contingent, the other represents knowledge which is all-comprehensive and perfectly systematic. In passing from the one pole to the other, knowledge encompasses the total sphere of experience.

But while knowledge is capable of exercising complete monopoly over the world of experience, it is also significant

that the cognitive function itself gets restricted in this act. For, the validity of knowledge cannot extend beyond the sphere of experience itself. If it is true to say that all that is known is capable of being experienced, then this also implies that nothing which cannot be experienced is capable of being known.

The Standpoint of Philosophy :— Coming now to the standpoint of philosophy, it may be pointed out that philosophy does not reject the experience as it is analysed into object and subject, or particular and universal in the act of knowledge. In fact, it takes such an experience for granted. But now philosophy raises the question : Are the contents of our experience real as they are, or are they the appearance of something which is more fundamental than the experienced entities ? To answer this question, we shall have to argue thus :

From the standpoint of existence what are the main characteristics of the world of experience ? A little reflection will show that the experienced entities are many and changeful. Can we ascribe similar attributes to reality as well ? No. For, if the reals are many, they will stand by themselves without having any relation to each other. But this would make knowledge of these entities quite impossible. For, as we have just seen, knowledge aims at constituting a perfect system of the objective world. This requires relations to be established in them. But if each and every objective entity is regarded as real, no relations will be possible and hence knowledge itself will be impossible.

The other characteristic of the world of experience is that it is changeful. This, of course, is a fact. But the question is : What is the source of such a change ? It will be absurd to find such a source of change within the world of experience itself. For, everything in such a world is subject to change. To say that anyone of these entities is the source of change would lead to infinite regress, inasmuch as if anything which is itself changing is the source of change, then it will require another thing to change it and so on *ad infinitum*.

These considerations necessarily lead us to the conclusion that the world of experience is neither self-subsistent nor does it contain the principle which is responsible for

its incessant flux. This means that the world cannot be regarded as real. But in spite of this, it is necessary to discover that principle to which the world of experience owes its being or reality. Such a principle must satisfy certain conditions. Negatively, it must not be many and changeful. Positively, it must be self-subsistent and dynamic, that is to say, the source of all change. Philosophy aims at discovering such a principle of reality. It further aims at showing how the world of finite experience is ultimately determined by such an absolute, infinite and creative principle, which is incapable of being given to us through knowledge. In a nutshell, *philosophy aims at explaining the relation of the finite to the Infinite.*

The relation of the finite to the Infinite has nothing to do directly with the relation of the particular to the universal with which knowledge is concerned. The particular and the universal are only the two aspects of the world of experience. Hence, the entire cognitive function works only within the sphere of the finite. When, therefore, there comes in the question of discovering the relation of the finite to the Infinite, knowledge can give us no guidance. It follows from this that the standpoint of knowledge must be kept strictly apart from that of philosophy. Any overlapping of these standpoints is fraught with dangerous consequences. In the course of this work we shall have several occasions to point out that those, who believed that the aim of philosophy is to know, were responsible in putting formidable obstacles in the path of philosophical speculation by diverting it into undesirable channels and more frequently creating the grossest confusion throughout the history of philosophy.

A proper study of the history of philosophy will be immensely helpful in revealing the major implications of the standpoint of philosophy as they are worked out by the great thinkers in different ages. It will also save us from those pitfalls to which philosophy was led on account of not keeping a firm hold on its own point of view and thus surreptitiously allowing extra-philosophical interests to hold sway on its domain.

ANCIENT PHILOSOPHY

Ionic Philosophy

PHILOSOPHICAL speculation in the West of which we have an authentic account began with Thales who flourished in the sixth century B.C. Thales hailed from Ionia in Greece. Anaximander and Anaximenes, who succeeded him, were also Ionians. Ionic philosophy, of which Thales, Anaximander and Anaximenes are the main representatives, is the first school of philosophy.

Thales : His Doctrine :— According to Aristotle, Thales is said to have maintained that every thing is made out of water. No information is available with regard to the way in which Thales himself interpreted his own doctrine.

Criticism :— Thales' doctrine admits of two different interpretations. Firstly, we may regard water as the material substratum underlying the world of physical existence. This interpretation might have possibly suggested itself to Thales who lived on an island where he might have observed sea-water assuming different forms of solid ice, fluid liquid and gaseous vapour under different circumstances.

There is also another interpretation which can be put on Thales' doctrine. This does not do away with the former interpretation. It takes for granted that Thales was quite aware of the different forms assumed by water. But he might be more interested in discovering the *source of change* in the finite forms of water. Due to the immature stage of philosophical speculation of his time, he might not have been able to express adequately what he had desired to suggest. He, therefore, put the whole thing crudely in terms of his knowledge of the supreme force of the physical universe, which, according to him, was water. Such an interpretation, however, does not have any strong support

for itself. But there are certain reasons which compel us to accept it as the only correct interpretation of Thales' doctrine.

To begin with, the first interpretation, which reduces the various forms assumed by sea-water to some material substratum, is not philosophical, but scientific. If water is conceived in this way, then it may at least give us the universal form or the regulative concept of the physical world. But in this capacity it cannot lead us beyond the world of finite objects. It cannot throw any light on the nature of the relation of the finite to the Infinite with which philosophy is directly concerned. In order to explain it, the ultimate principle will have to be conceived as creative and infinite. Does Thales' doctrine satisfy such a condition ? Many historians of philosophy, such as Gomperz, Zeller, Windelband, Burnet and others, have inclined the weight of their opinions in favour of the first interpretation. They agree in believing that Thales has mainly supported the naturalistic view of the world through his doctrine. If this be the only right interpretation of Thales' doctrine, then Thales cannot be considered a philosopher at all.

But looking to the general trend of philosophical thought of his successors, we do get an indirect confirmation of the thesis that Thales must have believed in the second interpretation. If Thales had totally lacked the standpoint of philosophy, none of these successors would have contributed anything to philosophy by expressly claiming their adherence to Thales' doctrine. As we shall see presently, a close study of the doctrines of Thales' successors will convince us that while Thales' own doctrine does admit of both the interpretations, it is really the second interpretation which has exerted a powerful and decisive influence on the minds of his successors.

Anaximander : His Doctrine :— According to Anaximander, the ultimate philosophical principle is " a boundless something " from which all things arise and to which all return again. Anaximander prefers a negative mode of characterizing the Absolute, because he wants us to believe that it is infinite. That is to say, Anaximander wants to suggest that the Absolute cannot be understood in terms

of anything that forms part of the world of finite and concrete experience. Anaximander is said to have argued that if the Absolute had been any kind of matter or substance, such as air, water or fire, it would exhaust itself in the process of incessant productions. The negative characterization of the original ground of things should not be taken to mean that Anaximander had nothing positive in his mind to refer to. The case is just the reverse. In order to bring home to our mind the absolute and self-subsistent character of the philosophical principle in direct contrast with the evanescent and fleeting nature of everything that forms part of the world of finite existence, what other method, except the negative one, would have been more appropriate ?

Besides the abstractness of the Absolute, Anaximander has also tried to emphasize its creativity. According to him, the world of experience is capable of being explained in terms of a series of opposites, such as hot and cold, wet and dry. The world of experience gives us evidence of the fact that some things are hot and some are cold, while the others stand in between these opposites. The same can be said with regard to the other opposites. This is so because things give "satisfaction and reparation to one another for their injustice, as it is appointed according to the ordering of time."

Leaving aside all the adjuncts of the physical analogy through which the notion of justice is sought to be expressed, the important idea that it suggests is that the entire world of experience is the manifestation of a principle which in itself is intensive or one that realizes itself in various degrees. While in some cases the manifestation of such a principle may be less intense, in other cases it may be more and in between these two poles there is a possibility of having several intermediate degrees of intensive gradation. If such is the case, then it would not do for us to say that the world is either hot or cold. On the contrary, such distinctions of hot and cold necessarily lead us beyond themselves and make us postulate something intensive from which the opposites are "separated out;" or whose inward potency is manifested by them in various degrees. This is possible only when the two opposites are not allowed to assume exclusive importance for themselves. Such a

situation leads to injustice, because it prevents a harmonious working of the various things of the finite experience. That is why, according to Anaximander, all things must have their basis in that notion of justice which gives "satisfaction" and "reparation" to them.

This conception of justice is extremely important in understanding the relation between the finite and the Infinite. The Infinite is abstract, but it is also intensive and dynamic. Justice is what keeps the creativity of the Absolute ever active, negatively by preventing all disorder and positively by establishing conditions of harmony in them. The conception of justice as thus understood has been suggested by Anaximander as constituting the only *via media* between the finite and the Infinite. It is this conception, which immediately leads us to find in the Infinite not simply the negation of all that is finite, but to conceive the Absolute as the creative principle of the world.

Criticism :— Anaximander has given a correct lead in so far as the solution of the problem of reality is concerned. His conception of the Absolute as infinite, abstract, creative and tending towards justice and harmony yields the first blue-print, which includes all that is essential for the solution of the philosophical problem.

Anaximenes : His Doctrine :— Anaximenes, who succeeded Anaximander, maintained that air is the ultimate ground of existence. This view, although it shows a reversion to the position of Thales, nevertheless bears the stamp of the influence of Anaximander's thought. The substitution of air for water by Anaximenes has been motivated by the desire to find such a symbolic expression for the Absolute, which would be suggestive of its abstract and infinite character. Anaximenes found such a symbol in air which is certainly more subtle and pervasive than water. As such it is able to represent the Infinite better than any other element within the world of experience.

Moreover, Anaximenes might have been prompted to choose air in order to suggest also the creativity of the Absolute. For air has the power of rarefaction and condensation. It is through such a power that it is believed to engender "all that was, that is, and that shall be."

General Remarks :—A review of the Ionic philosophy as a whole shows that its main aim was to work out the implications of the philosophical point of view. Of the three thinkers, who represented this school, Anaximander was the boldest. It was he, who through his sure philosophical insight, divined the true nature of the Infinite. Considering the earliest stage of philosophical speculation in which these thinkers thought, this was no mean achievement. Anaximander's thoughts were echoed faintly by Thales and Anaximènes. But this is no reason to minimize their importance. As representatives of the same school of philosophy, their thoughts must have paved the way for their best expression in Anaximander's philosophy. Their contributions are the product of the same climate of philosophical speculation. Hence, they must either stand or fall together. The general trend of philosophical thought after the Ionic school gives clear indication of the fact that it has sprung forth from the very seed which was sown by the Ionic philosophers. Pythagorean philosophy deserves to be mentioned first in this connection.

Pythagoras

His Personality :— As far as the eminence of personality is concerned, Pythagoras was highly honoured and respected in the ancient Greece. His attainments in the fields of science, philosophy and religion have been remarkable and his contributions to them have been quite significant. Pythagoras, however, did not leave behind him any writings of his own. Whatever is known to us about this great man is through the traditions and beliefs, which were cherished by his followers and which were later on referred to by the notable Greek thinkers in their writings.

The Theory of Numbers :— The theory of numbers holds an important place in the Pythagorean philosophy. It is put forward by Pythagoras with a view to explaining the world of finite experience. Pythagoras is said to have believed that the world of objects, although it might appear chaotic to our perception, is nevertheless perfectly systematic and orderly, if looked at from the standpoint of mathematics. For example, musical notes derive their harmony entirely from the mathematical relations subsisting in them. The Pythagoreans knew these relations and could demonstrate them with the help of "a string stretched over a resounding board with a moveable bridge, by means of which it was possible to divide the string into different lengths, and thus to produce the various high and low notes on one and the same string."[1] Similarly, the Pythagoreans also believed that the movements of the astronomical bodies could be known precisely through the mathematical calculations. This view generally goes under the name of "the harmony of the spheres." In the sphere of medicine the Pythagoreans maintained that what is called normal health is the result of the proper "blend" of the two opposites of hot and cold, wet and dry.

> "In a well-known passage of Plato's *Phaedo* (86 B) we are told by Simmias that the Pythagoreans held the body to

---

[1] Quoted from Gomperz, *Greek Thinkers*, Vol. I, p. 102

> be strung like an instrument to a certain pitch, hot and cold, wet and dry taking the place of high and low in music. According to this view, health is just being in tune, and disease arises from undue tension or relaxation of the strings. We still speak of the "tonics" in medicine as well as in music."[2]

Thus, the medical theory was completely assimilated to the musical theory and through it ultimately to the theory of numbers.

Indeed, the Pythagoreans look upon the numbers as the original " forms " or patterns, of which all things are copies or imitations. If we desire to understand anything which forms part of our experience, then it is necessary to analyse its dual aspects, namely, particularity and universality, or matter and form. According to the Pythagoreans, numbers constitute the intelligible forms. Through them the whole world of experience can be reduced to a perfect system. Numbers, thus, represent the supreme regulative principle of our knowledge.

The " Unlimited " :— According to some thinkers, the theory of numbers forms the fundamental basis of Pythagorean philosophy. Numbers are supposed to constitute the " stuff " out of which things are made. This, however, is not true. For, according to one of the most profound utterances of Pythagoras, numbers, which are the forms of all things, have themselves developed out of the " Unlimited " by setting a limit to it. We have found it to be so in music, astronomy, medicine and mathematics. The phenomena falling within these domains require us to move within certain limitations as set by the opposites or extremes. Now, although the Pythagoreans do not subscribe to the view that the whole universe is the result of " separating out " or of rarefaction and condensation, they nevertheless speak of the Absolute as the Unlimited. They also believe that the world of finite objects, which is capable of being explained in terms of numbers, has developed out of it. But how ?

" Philosophy is the highest Music ":— We are given a clue to find a solution to the problem as to how a limit is

---

[2] Burnet, *Greek Philosophy*, p. 50

set to the Unlimited through the Pythagorean maxim of great significance, namely, "Philosophy is the highest music." Here "music" should not be taken to mean the harmony of sounds. But it symbolizes that *feeling of harmony itself* which is the source of perfect system and order in the world of experience. We are reminded here of Anaximander's conception of Justice, to which the Pythagorean conception of the "highest music" bears close affinity. We have already seen that the notion of Justice is closely bound up with the conception of the Absolute as the infinite, creative, abstract and intensive principle. The "Unlimited" of the Pythagoreans is definitely conceived after the manner of the "boundless something" of Anaxagoras. It is infinite and creative source from which all things are developed out. In order to have an access to this infinite and creative Absolute, we are required to take recourse to the feeling of harmony. The Unlimited cannot be known, but it can be felt by us. Indeed, the entire religious practice, as advocated by the Pythagoreans, is founded on this belief. Religious devotion, according to the Pythagoreans, requires the devotee to mould his personality in such a way that he might actually feel the music of the Unlimited within himself. It is through such a feeling of harmony that one is capable of attaining the highest beatitude.

In the light of these remarks, it is easy to understand how a limit is set to the Unlimited. In fact, if the Unlimited is regarded as identical with the feeling of harmony, then it can set a limit to itself in the very act of self-manifestation. Feeling admits of gradations. Hence, in accordance with the intensity of feeling we can pass from the lowest to the highest scale of being. According to Pythagoras, such a feeling of reality reaches its zenith in the religious experience. That is why, such an experience is attended with eternal bliss. To the extent in which we fall short of such an experience our being gets degraded. In this way, the world dominated by the opposites, with which the theory of numbers is directly concerned, has its ultimate basis in the nature of that Absolute which sets a limit to itself through the degree of intensity which which it realizes itself.

This will also help us to understand the right meaning

of the word "philosophy." According to Burnet, it was Pythagoras who used the word for the first time. If 'philosophy' means love of wisdom, then wisdom is not the same as scientific or even rational knowledge. For, both Science and Reason, as we have already seen, in spite of the fact that they seek to introduce system and order in our experience are directly concerned with the world of *finite* things only. As such, by themselves they cannot lead us to the Infinite. In order to grasp the Infinite, we have to take recourse to wisdom, which, according to Pythagoras, is the same as the feeling of the inward rhythm, music and harmony in the phenomenal world realized by bringing oneself in direct attunement with the ultimate ground of existence. It is this which seems to have led Pythagoras to say that "Philosophy is the highest music." Through such a characterization Pythagoras has given to philosophy a place of honour and distinction in such a way that as compared to it Science and Reason are degraded to a subordinate rank. Science and Reason are simply a means to prepare our mind to *feel* or *realize* within us that perennial spring of bliss, which philosophy alone can reveal to us.

Heraclitus

His Relation to Parmenides:—Among the earlier Greek thinkers, Heraclitus and Parmenides are much misunderstood. They are introduced to us by the historians of philosophy as philosophers holding antithetical views. If, however, we try to understand them carefully, such an impression will soon vanish and we shall begin to feel that their views, instead of being antithetical, are complementary to each other. The reason why these two thinkers apparently look so radically different is to be found in the fact that although they refer to one and the same philosophical principle, they have nevertheless sought to emphasize different aspects of it. While Heraclitus sets much store by the dynamic and creative character of the Absolute, Parmenides concentrates his attention mainly on the abstractness of the same. In the Absolute creativity and abstractness are not at all opposed to each other. The Absolute can be best characterized as the *dynamism of the abstract*. If so, then from the standpoint of philosophy the emphasis on the one aspect of the Absolute does not mean the negation of the other, but by implication it naturally leads to the other. Heraclitus and Parmenides will be found to reflect the same truth from different aspects of it.

Polarity and Gradation in the World of Experience:—With regard to the world of experience Heraclitus believes that it is dominated throughout by the opposites. Indeed, Heraclitus presents the opposites in a graded scale, such as Earth→Water→Fire. Earth constitutes the lower rung, while Fire is the highest. This immediately leads us to the Heraclitian distinction between the *way up* and the *way down*. The way up leads us from Earth right up to Fire through Water. The reverse movement, that is, from Fire down to Earth is the way down. There is a perpetual and incessant movement from the one pole to its opposite.

> "Fire changes to water, and as water half of it returns directly to heaven as "fire-stream", half of it changes to earth,

> which becomes water again, and thus is finally changed back to fire. Evaporation, melting and freezing may be regarded as the processes which operate in this circular system." [1]

Macrocosm and Microcosm :— Fire, Water and Earth constitute the elements of the wider universe. But inside each one of the finite beings, there is a reflection of a similar cosmic polarity and incessant movement. According to Heraclitus, Life, Sleep and Death correspond to Fire, Water and Earth. This also leads him naturally to look upon Fire as the expression of the Real at its highest degree of manifestation. Heraclitus regarded Fire "as the source of the world's intelligence, as the conscious regulative principle of all existence."[2] In the light of this, the meaning of the following aphorisms becomes sufficiently clear :—

> "The dry soul is the wisest and the best."
> "It is death to souls to become water."

Again, according to Heraclitus, Fire is also the symbol of universal justice.

> "The process of combustion is the key both to human life and to that of the world. It is a process that never rests ; for a flame has always to be fed by fresh exhalations as fuel, and it is always turning into vapour or smoke. The steadiness of the flame depends on the "measures" of fuel kindled and the "measures" of fire extinguished in smoke remaining constant. Now the world is an "an everliving fire" (fr. 20), and there will be unceasing process of "flux". That will apply to the world at large and also to the soul of man. "You cannot step twice into the same river (fr. 41), and it is just as true that "we are and are not" at any moment. "The way up and the way down," which are "one and the same" (fr. 69) are also the same for the microcosm and the macrocosm. Fire, water, earth is the way down, and earth, water, fire is the way up. And these two ways are forever being traversed in opposite directions at once, so that everything really consists of two parts, one part travelling up and the other travelling down." [3]

---

[1] Gomperz, *Greek Thinkers*, Vol. I, p. 64.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] Burnet, *Greek Philosophy*, p. 61.

The Doctrine of Flux and Its Proper Meaning :— The doctrine of flux or becoming, which is frequently ascribed to Heraclitus, has been grossly misunderstood. The flux is taken to mean usually physical movement or displacement. Heraclitus could not have understood universal flux or becoming in this sense. Physical movement or displacement is due to the action and reaction of the material bodies on each other. Such a movement has nothing to do with the incessant movement through which we are carried from Earth to Fire and back from Fire to Earth. That such an interpretation was put on the Heraclitian doctrine of "flux" by his contemporaries is quite evident from the vigorous polemic that was levelled by Parmenides and Zeno against them. Indeed, their whole logical dialectic was aimed at discarding the ascription of any movement or changefulness to the Real. But this should not be taken to mean the rejection of the dynamic character of the Absolute. What is sought to be suggested by them—and here there is a perfect agreement between Heraclitus and Parmenides—is that the fluxional or dynamic character of the Real has absolutely nothing to do with the physical movement which is the result of the impact of one material body on the other. The entire philosophical thought of Heraclitus really suggests an intensive view of the Absolute to which we have already drawn pointed attention in trying to explain Anaximander's doctrine of "separating out" of the opposites from the Infinite. Heraclitus seems to follow exactly the same line of thinking as is given by Anaximander. This becomes quite evident from the way in which the "everliving fire" is regarded as the symbol of an unceasing process of flux, inasmuch as it represents in the best possible manner the notion of justice by establishing an exact equivalence in the "measures" of fuel kindled and the "measures" of fire extinguished in smoke. Does this not remind us strongly of what Anaximander had said concerning the cosmic process of justice, according to which things "give satisfaction and reparation to one another for their injustice, as is appointed according to the ordering of time?" Windelband also supports such a view :—

> "But when Heraclitus declared the world to be everliving fire, and Fire, therefore, to be the essence of all things, he understood by this essence not a material or substance which survived all its transformations, but just the transforming process itself in its everdarting, vibrating activity (Züngelnde), the soaring up and vanishing which correspond to the Becoming and passing away."[4]

It is thus clear that Heraclitus through his doctrine of flux strongly emphasizes the creative and dynamic character of the Absolute.

Heraclitus not oblivious to the Abstractness of the Absolute :— It should, however, not be thought that Heraclitus was totally oblivious to the other character of the Real, namely, its abstractness. Heraclitus has drawn our pointed attention to it particularly in two ways. In the first place, he does so by maintaining the identity of the opposites. Read the following aphorisms :—

> "The way up and the way down are one and the same."
> "The Real is 'beyond good and bad'."
> "The dissonant is in harmony with itself."
> "The invisible harmony which springs from contraries is better than the visible."

What is meant by these expressions ? Do they not imply that the opposites always keep us within the realm of the finite ? What is infinite cannot be explained in terms of them, because the opposites are ultimately the result of the manifestation of the Infinite at the different degrees of intensity or tension. Indeed, this has led Heraclitus to give a subordinate importance to Fire which constitutes one of the poles of the opposites. Fire is only the best form of reality and not the reality itself.

> " If Herakleitos has merely substituted fire for the 'air' of Anaximenes, that would only have been a further advance on the lines of Anaximenes himself, who had substituted 'air' for the water of Thales."[5]

---

[4] *History of Philosophy*, p. 36.
[5] Burnet, *Greek Philosophy*, pp. 58-59.

This leads us to another point through which Heraclitus tried to suggest the abstractness of the Absolute. This attracts our attention when Heraclitus seeks to explain the nature of wisdom with which philosophy is directly concerned. In one of his Fragments Heraclitus declares : "Wisdom is not a knowledge of many things." It is the clear knowledge of one thing only, namely, *Logos* which is "true evermore," though men cannot understand it even when it is told to them. In this connection the following dicta of Heraclitus deserve careful attention :

> "The sun will not transgress his measures ; were he to do so, the Erinyes, abettors of Justice, would overtake him."
>
> "He who speaks with understanding must take his foothold on what is common to all, even more firmly than the city stands on the foothold of law ; for all human laws are nourished by divine law."
>
> "Though this Logos—this fundamental law—existeth from all time, yet mankind are unaware of it, both ere they hear it and in the moment that they hear it."[6]

The main purpose of wisdom is to make us feel the operation of Logos, the fundamental law, which is the source of justice and harmony. Does not Heraclitus put us in mind of the Pythagorean view that "Philosophy is the highest music ?" Logos cannot be known, but it is accessible to our wisdom. In other words, it refers to that *feeling of harmony* which puts us at the very heart of infinite and creative Reality. It is this which makes Burnet say with confidence that " the Word (i.e. Logos) must be something more than the doctrine of Fire as the primary substance, or even the theory of Flux."[7]

---

[6] Quoted from Gomperz, *Greek Thinkers*, Vol. I, pp. 13-14.
[7] *Greek Philosophy*, p. 58.

Parmenides of Elea

Parmenides opposed to the Ascription of Reality to Change :— There is reason why Parmenides is regarded as an opponent of Heraclitus. In fact, it is through his attack on the Heraclitian doctrine of flux that the main tenets of Parmenidean philosophy find their proper justification.

> "For it was the doctrine of flux, first formulated by the sage of Ephesus, which made the deepest impression on the mind of Parmenides. It sounded the bottom of his scepticism, and impelled him, as it impelled his successors, to adopt conclusions of the kind in which the characteristic speculation of the Eleatics found its most powerful expression."[1]

Here it is necessary to ask the question : What are the grounds on which Parmenides assailed the doctrine of flux ? All the available evidence in this connection seems to point out to the conclusion that, according to Parmenides, Heraclitus is said to have believed that changefulness of the world of sensible objects constitutes the very essence of their reality. But the concept of change, in the opinion of Parmenides, immediately involves us into contradictions. When we say that something is changing, does it not imply the two contradictory predicates, namely, It *is* and It *is not* ? This is simply absurd. This is more particularly true of the conception of mechanical motion, that is to say, the movement of things in space and time. When a thing moves, it cannot remain where it is. Moreover, any two moments of such a change cannot be the same. Hence, if we ascribe reality to motion which operates through space and time, there will be nothing stable. We shall be led to say that something comes out of nothing. But *ex nihilo nihil fit*. It is considerations of this kind that might have weighed on the mind of Parmenides in directing his polemical attack on Heraclitus. Gomperz has nicely visualized the circumstances in which Parmenides might have thought :—

---

[1] Gomperz, *Greek Thinkers*, Vol. I, p. 167.

"It was unsatisfactory enough to have to acquiesce in the view that 'the things of the sensible world are involved in incessant transformations,' but sound reason rose in revolt against the further principle that 'things are and they are not,' and the spirit of rebellion was strongest among men of most disciplined minds. No wonder, then, that those who had enjoyed the benefits of a Pythagorean or mathematical training were most strongly affected by this reaction, and it is not surprising that Parmenides, with his Pythagorean traditions, should have stigmatized as 'the twin roads of error' the common philosophy that basked in the reality of the sensible world, and, secondly, the doctrine of Heraclitus. He assailed that doctrine with most poisoned shafts of his invective. Those 'to whom being and non-being are at once the same and not the same' he denounces as 'deaf and blind, helplessly staring, a confused herd,' 'double-headed' he calls them on account of the double aspect of their Janus-like theory of things ; and the fate which his satire reserves for them is to fall into their own stream of flux and be carried away on its flood ; 'know-nothings' he calls them, and retrograde is their path, 'like the metamorphoses of their primary matter'."[2]

Parmenides' Positive Contribution implied in his Negations :— If changefulness is the essential feature of the world of finite things, then Parmenides is perfectly justified in denying it of the Infinite, which is the ultimate ground of existence. We are already familiar with the negative approach to the Infinite. According to Parmenides, the nature of the Absolute is grossly misunderstood and distorted by those, who ascribe reality to motion. In order to discredit such men, Parmenides has put particular stress on the negative approach. Whatever is positive in his philosophy can be best understood in direct contrast with his negative arguments. The chief negations of Parmenides are as follows :—

"How should the thing that is ever be unmade ; how should it ever have come into being? If it came into being, there must have been a time when it was not, and the same holds good if its beginning is still in the future.

---

[2] *Greek Thinkers*, Vol. I, p. 169.

"When wilt thou seek for the origin of the thing that is; how and whence did it grow? I shall not permit thee to say or think that it came forth from the thing that is not, for the not-being is unspeakable and unthinkable. And what need, moreover, would have driven it to existence at one time rather than another?....

"Furthermore, the power of insight will prevent thee from believing that out of the thing that is another can become by its side."[3]

Put next to these negations, the following affirmative utterances. The thing that *is* is not merely "not-become and imperishable," and accordingly "without beginning and end"; not merely are "changes of place and shiftings of hue unknown to it," but it is an "indivisible whole, uniform, continuous, similar in all its parts, not being less here and greater there, but resembling the bulk of a well-rounded and equally weighted ball."[4]

These considerations go to show that the whole concern of Parmenides was to dissociate the Infinite from the finite. Parmenides never questioned the reality of the Absolute. On the contrary, he wanted to save it from being degraded to the level of the finite, particularly at the hands of those (among whom he included even Heraclitus, though wrongly) who believed that the quintessence of reality is change or motion.

Zeno's dialectic again bears ample testimony to this. It is quite well-known that Zeno had directed his famous paradoxes against those who believed that motion is real. All that Zeno wanted to prove was that motion belongs to the world of finite existence and as such to raise it to the rank of the Infinite would lead to insoluble contradictions.

We thus find that in rejecting the doctrine of flux, Parmenides was not thinking of substituting a static notion of reality. What he might have desired to suggest is that the Absolute cannot be changeful, because it is infinite and abstract. The moment we ascribe the predicate of changefulness to it, it at once loses its infinite and abstract character.

Parmenides and Heraclitus are not Antagonists :— If

---

[3] Quoted from Gomperz, *Greek Thinkers*, Vol. I, p. 170.

[4] *Ibid.*

this be the main trend of Parmenidean thought, then does it really come in clash with the fundamental tenets of Heraclitus ? It is true that the doctrine of flux as propounded by Heraclitus admits of being interpreted in the sense that whatever is real is changeful. But, as we have already seen, Heraclitus himself does not lend support to this view. Through his doctrine of flux, he does not desire to maintain that change is real. But Reality, on account of its creative character, is the *source* of that change which is the all-pervasive character of finite existence. Without the dynamic Absolute the change of finite existence is totally inexplicable.

If this is accepted, then Heraclitus could not have been the main target of Parmenidean attack. On the contrary, both of them approach nearer each other. The Being of Parmenides is abstract, inasmuch as it is the "eternal" One, has never come into being, is imperishable. It is "through and through one in kind, one with itself, without any distinction or differences, i.e. completely homogeneous and absolutely unchangeable."[5]

These conclusions of Parmenides are quite valid as far as they go. They do have a direct bearing on the nature of the Absolute. But there remains something more to be said without which the characterization of the Absolute is never complete. It may be quite true that the Absolute in itself may be one and without any differences. But it is also at the same time the creative source of the world of maniness. Indeed, the conception of the Infinite has no other justification unless it serves as the ground of the world of finite existence. Such a character it can have only when the Absolute is looked upon as creative as well as abstract. The entire philosophical speculation of the earlier Greeks has always held these two characteristics of the Absolute together. For the one without the other empties the conception of the Absolute of all significance. If this is so, then both Heraclitus and Parmenides, in spite of their difference in accentuating the characters of the Absolute, cannot be regarded as antagonists at all. For, it is only by synthesizing their substantial contributions that a genuine philosophical system can be evolved.

---

[5] Windelband, *History of Philosophy*, p. 38.

Empedocles

The Four Elements :— It is quite certain that Empedocles, in analysing the nature of objective experience, came to the conclusion that it could be reduced to the four basic "elements" or "roots," namely, earth, water, air and fire. Each of these elements is without beginning, imperishable, homogeneous and unchangeable. But it is divisible into parts. Finite things with all their multifarious qualities arise in consequence of the mixture of these elements. They are destroyed when the elements are separated out from the mixture.

Love as the Cause of Motion :— Empedocles, however, is not satisfied only with this. He raises the question with regard to the *cause of motion*. Here he completely sets aside the four elements and expressly mentions that the creative principle of the entire world of experience is Love and Hate. Love and hate are not independent properties or relations of the elements. Love and hate together are believed to be the creative and sustaining principle of the world of perishable things. Empedocles suggests this by taking recourse to certain analogies.

> "We start with something like the sphere of Parmenides, in which the four elements are mingled in a sort of solution by Love, while Strife surrounds the sphere on the outside. When Strife begins to enter the Sphere, Love is driven towards its centre, and the four elements are gradually separated from one another. That is clearly an adaptation of the old idea of the world breathing. Empedocles also held, however, that respiration depended on the systole and diastole of the heart, and therefore we find that as soon as Strife has penetrated to the lowest (or most central) part of the sphere, and love is confined to the very middle of it, the reverse process begins. Love expands and Strife is driven outwards, passing out of the Sphere once in proportion as Love occupies more and more of it,. . . .In fact, Love and Strife are to the world that blood and air are to the body."[1]

---

[1] Burnet, *Greek Philosophy*, pp. 72-73.

Criticism :— The physical and physiological analogies through which Empedocles has sought to convey the notion of his central philosophical principle of love and hate has led some to believe that it is akin to some kind of physical force. We know that analogies are not to be taken literally. They are simply a means of suggesting what cannot be directly experienced. The analogy of microcosm and macrocosm has been frequently used by the Greek philosophers to subserve this very purpose. How else can that which is abstract, infinite and creative principle of the world be ever suggested ? In using the various analogies, Empedocles has only followed the tradition of his predecessors and there is every reason to believe that his purpose in employing them could not have been different.

By Love Empedocles means that sense of harmony which we feel within ourselves when we enter into profound sympathy with our fellow beings—a force, which forges unity among the most heterogeneous elements. As thus interpreted, the meaning of "love" appears to be quite natural. Moreover, such an interpretation is fully justified by the cumulative effect of the entire philosophical speculation prior to Empedocles. Anaximander had already spoken of justice as the cosmic principle of "satisfaction and reparation." Similarly, Pythagoras had maintained that "Philosophy is the highest music." By "love" Empedocles suggests the same principle through which one's finite existence is completely assimilated and attuned to the Infinite. In the philosophy of Anaxagoras, this point is brought into more prominence.

Anaxagoras

The "Seeds" :—Like Empedocles, Anaxagoras believed that the objective world is capable of being analysed into a plurality of independent elements called "seeds". Seeds are not the same as the "four roots" of Empedocles. According to Anaxagoras, fire, air, earth and water are not elements, but compounds. Everything has the portions of every other thing in itself. But the varying proportions in which these portions are blended give rise to the differences of the world of experience. "Everything is called that of which it has most in it." Snow, for example, is both white and black. But it is called white, because the white is more prominent than the black.

The Nous :— After having analysed the objective experience into its basic constituents called "seeds," Anaxagoras raises the fundamental issue : What is the source of motion in the "seeds" ? To this his answer is : the *Nous*. This principle is described by him as "boundless and self-governing." It is "the finest and purest of all things." It possesses "all knowledge about everything past, present and future." It is endowed with "supreme power." The *Nous* can have "more or less" of itself in things. It is spoken of as "inhabiting some things" by which living beings alone are meant.

Criticism :— The description of the *Nous* leaves us in no doubt with regard to its status as the Absolute. Anaxagoras ascribed to it all those characteristics which the Absolute must have, namely dynamism and abstractness.

There, however, emerges one point of great importance in the philosophy of Anaxagoras. The *Nous* is an intensive principle which can have more or less of itself. Moreover, it manifests itself better in the livings beings than in the inanimate world. Again, in the living beings its best manifestation can be found in the knowledge or intelligence of man. This has led some thinkers to identify the *Nous* with the Mind, Reason or Thought. Following this clue, they have given to Anaxagoras the credit of furnishing for the first time in the history of Greek philosophy

the teleological explanation of nature. This accords fully with what Aristotle has said concerning Anaxagoras. According to him, it was Anaxagoras who recognized for the first time the final cause.

But Aristotle also maintains that in the philosophy of Anaxagoras, besides the final cause, the material and efficient causes have also been recognized. With regard to the material cause, Burnet has made it quite clear that Anaxagoras did believe in the mechanical interpretation of nature. "Like a true Ionian he tried to give a mechanical explanation of everything he could and when once he had got the rotary motion started, he could leave that to order the rest of the world."[1]

What is perhaps more important is that the doctrine of *Nous,* according to Aristotle, at once represents a synthesis of all the three causes. This requires an explanation. Anaxagoras, through his conception of *Nous,* steers clear at once of the idealistic as well as of the materialistic explanation. This is so, not because he denies the validity of such interpretations. We have already seen that he has tried to explain things in terms of both whenever he found it necessary. Now, according to Anaxagoras, both the mechanical and teleological explanations are defective from the standpoint of philosophy. They labour under certain obvious limitations of their own. While the mechanical explanation is valid within the sphere of the inanimate objects, the teleological explanation can have significance only within the domain of living beings. Anaxagoras, nevertheless, believes that both the explanations do not stand on the same level. There is a hierarchical gradation in them. The teleological explanation is higher than the mechanical. This is quite clear from the statement of Anaxagoras, according to which the *Nous* is described as "inhabiting some things" by which all living beings are understood. Along with this, we must also consider another statement that there can be "more or less" of the *Nous*. The world of inanimate things does not give us the manifestation of *Nous* so well as we can find it in the world of living beings, more particularly in their intellectual and spiritual faculties.

---

[1] *Greek Philosophy,* p. 80.

The hierarchical gradation of the mechanical and teleological principles prevents them from assuming the place of the Absolute. Both of them presuppose a principle which would be the common source of both of them. It is exactly with a view to solving this problem that Anaxagoras puts forward the conception of *Nous*. Besides being the abstract and creative principle of the universe, the *Nous* is the source of the order and harmony in the entire world of experience. The *Nous*, therefore, can be grasped adequately through that *feeling* which gives us a sense of harmony in the universe. And since such a harmony is more clearly intelligible in the spiritual life than in the mechanical world, Anaxagoras is quite right in giving to Reason, Thought or Mind a higher place in the hierarchical scale of the manifestations of the Absolute. One can feel profound joy and happiness, provided one can bring one's rational self in direct attunement with the Infinite.

We thus find that Anaxagoras through his doctrine of *Nous* has given a better expression to those philosophical truths which were slowly and steadily maturing in the minds of his predecessors. The *Nous* is neither a mechanical principle nor is it a teleological principle. But it is that absolute principle which at once creates both mechanism and teleology according as it manifests itself in the world of experience in a more or less degree of intensity. As a matter of fact, the philosophy of Anaxagoras makes more explicit the implications of that speculative activity of the earlier Greeks, which reflected the genuine standpoint of philosophy.

Leucippus

Atomism :— Leucippus undertook a thoroughgoing mechanical explanation of the objective experience. According to him, everything is capable of being reduced to *atoms*. Atoms are imperceptibly small particles of matter. They are also "eternal and unchangeable, without beginning, indestructible, homogeneous, limited and indivisible."[1]

[1] Windelband, *History of Philosophy*, p. 43.

Atoms differ from one another in quantity, size, form and situation. The qualitative distinctions of things are reduced to quantitative. They are due to combinations of atoms of various sizes and forms in a certain arrangement and situation. Atoms are also in constant motion.

> "As the atoms are indefinitely varied in size and form, and completely independent of one another, so their original motions are infinite in variety. They fly confusedly about in infinite space, which knows no above and below, no within and without, each for itself, until their accidental meeting leads to the formation of things and world. The separation between the conceptions of matter and moving force which Empedocles and Anaxagoras, each in his way, had attempted was thus in turn abolished by the Atomists. They ascribed to the particles of matter the capacity, not indeed of qualitative change, but of independent motion. . . ."[2]

Criticism :— The explanation of the world furnished by Leucippus in terms of atoms and their motion is purely mechanical. Atoms are the particles of matter. Their motion is due to the constant impact of the atoms on one another. The idea of movement is definitely finite, inasmuch as it is the result of the action and reaction of physical bodies on one another. Such a movement, therefore, has nothing to do with that dynamism of the Absolute as suggested particularly by Empedocles and Anaxagoras.

Zeno

Arguments of Zeno directed against the Atomists :— Zeno was the first to lead an attack aganist the Atomists. His famous paradoxes are meant to confute the pluralistic view of the universe as well as the conception of motion as held by them. As a follower of Parmenides, Zeno finds the mechanical explanation singularly inadequate in giving us an access to the Absolute, which is incapable of being

---

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 43-44.

explained in terms of anything that is concrete and finite. The "unlimited" or, as the Eleatics call it, the continuous, according to Zeno, cannot be composed of units "howsoever small or however many".

> "The celebrated arguments of Zeno concerning motion introduce the element of time, and are directed to showing that it is just as little a sum of moments as a line is a sum of points. (1) If a thing moves from one point to another, it must first traverse half the distance. Before it can do that, it must traverse a half of the half, and so on *ad infinitum.* It must, therefore, pass through an infinite number of points, and that is impossible in a finite time. (2) Achilles can never overtake the tortoise. Before he comes up to the point at which the tortoise started, the tortoise will have got a little way on. The same thing repeats itself with regard to this little way, and so on *ad infinitum.* (3) The flying arrow is at rest. At any given moment it is in a space equal to its own length, and therefore at rest. The sum of an infinite number of positions or rest is not a motion. (4) If we suppose three lines, one (A) at rest, and the other two (B, C) moving in opposite directions, B will pass in the same time twice the number of points in C that it passes in A."[1]

All that these arguments of Zeno prove is that the conception of mechanical motion involves contradictions. Either the movement of atoms in space leads to relativism, which is the purport of argument (4) or it leads to complete negation of movement, which is the purport of arguments (1), (2), and (3). This does not mean that Zeno was confuting the validity of mechanical explanation itself. What he was aiming at was to show the defective character of such an explanation, when it is put forward as the philosophical explanation of the world. The mechanical motion is finite and is not self-explanatory. That is why, it is *prima facie* absurd to seek to apprehend the Infinite with its help. This is the primary motive underlying the paradoxes of Zeno.

---

[1] Burnet, *Greek Philosophy*, p. 84.

Humanism :— Zeno's arguments would have been sufficient to discredit the mechanical explanation of the world put forward by the Atomists. But this time such an explanation evoked a serious opposition against itself from another quarter as well. The standard of revolt was raised against Science and its mechanical explanation by those whose attention was attracted by the growing needs of human civilization and its values. Greece was passing through a political ferment and was fast making headway towards one of the most glorious periods of her history. At such a time it was but natural that people should think more of the fundamental demands of human life in all its various aspects, such as social, political, moral, religious and aesthetic. Human aspirations are necessarily purposive. As such they presuppose a teleological explanation of themselves. Science, which is wedded to the mechanical explanation, is bound to cause annoyance to the supporters of human values. Hence, the Sophists, who ushered in the humanistic trend in the philosophical speculation, had first of all to challenge Science.

Secondly, the emphasis on human life also led them to ask questions concerning the foundations of knowledge and experience itself. Truth, Goodness and Beauty are the ultimate forms of human aspirations. But none of these forms is presented to us in the objective experience. For all of them require the objects to be brought directly in relation to our self. An object is neither good nor bad in itself. It becomes so, when it is held in relation to that human consciousness which judges it to be either good or bad. In every experience of value our attitudes of approval or disapproval are brought to bear upon the object. Now, to discover the basic conditions underlying these attitudes is the main task of the theory of knowledge or epistemology. The logic of humanism inevitably led the Sophists to get themselves engrossed with epistemology.

Disparagement of scientific naturalism and preoccupation with epistemological considerations with a view to

furnishing the teleological explanation of the universe constitute the distinctive features of the predominantly humanistic trend of thought of the Sophists

Protagoras

Homo Mensura :— In his famous doctrine of *Homo mensura,* Protagoras gave a powerful expression to the humanistic outlook of the Sophists. The doctrine is enunciated thus : "Man is the measure of all things, of things that are that they are, and of things that are not that they are not." This statement clearly indicates how Protagoras discredited the Science of his time by pushing the interests of man to the forefront. Usually, science determines the nature of things without taking into consideration the attitudes of man towards them. According to Protagoras, such a procedure is basically wrong. When, for example, it is said that a thing is good or bad, beautiful or ugly, we are required to hold the thing directly in relation to the sentience of such a person who approves or disapproves of it. Apart from such a relation a thing in and by itself cannot be said to exist at all. The consciousness of man thus is the sole determinant of the nature of things. If this is so, then the procedure of science to investigate the nature of things as they exist in and by themselves cannot but be faulty.

Criticism :— Now, the attitudes of man with regard to the nature of things are generally reflected in his opinions. But all know that opinions differ so that no two men need completely agree. Not only this, but we are also aware of the fact that the same man may find a radical change in his opinions according to his age, mood or the country he inhabits. For example, to the normal eye certain thing looks white, but if a person suffers from jaundice, the same thing might look yellow. In social life also the customs and traditions, which represent the opinions of a social group differ from place to place and from time to time.

The volatility of opinions has a serious and adverse effect on their objective validity. If opinions differ radically,

which of them is to be regarded as true ? Even if we accept man as the measure of all things, the problem still remains : Who is the man to serve as the reliable measure of truth ?

Protagoras himself has given no clear answer to this question. If we are to be guided by Plato's explanation, then we are told that the doctrine simply means that things are to me as they appear to me, and to you as they appear to you. But in the *Theaetetus,* Plato suggests that such a sensationalist theory is not propounded by Protagoras himself. Some persons interpret the Protagorean dictum by saying that the "man", who is to serve as the measure, is not a particular person, but he is to be taken in the sense of "man as such" meaning thereby the average man. As Burnet rightly points out, such a view attributes to Protagoras "a distinction he would not have understood, and would not have accepted if he had."[1] Protagoras himself affirms that he kept back the true interpretation of his doctrine from the common men and revealed it to his disciples "in a mystery."

Gorgias

The mysterious character of Protagorean dictum subjected it to serious misunderstandings at the hands of thinkers of later generations. Gorgias particularly drew sceptical conclusions from this doctrine, which, on account of their logical rigour, seriously damaged it. In his treatise *On Nature or the non-existent,* Gorgias maintained that if, according to Protagoras, everything is true, then it definitely implies three things. Firstly, nothing exists. Secondly, we cannot know it. Thirdly, even if it is known, it is not possible for us to communicate our knowledge to anyone else.

These conclusions are undoubtedly sceptical. But they are inevitable as long as the subjectivistic interpretation of the Protagorean dictum is not disallowed. It is quite obvious that the logical implications drawn by Gorgias from the Protagorean dictum would have spelt ruin to the humanism of the Sophists and would have nipped epistemology in the bud, had not Socrates run to their rescue.

---

[1] *Greek Philosophy,* p. 115.

Socrates

Socrates as a Historical Personage :—The supreme charm of intellect and integrity of character of Socrates have been a matter of great admiration throughout the future generations after him. This wisest of men of his time has not left any writings of his own. Whatever is known to us about him is through his distinguished pupil, Plato, who, in his dialogues, has given us what was, according to him, the correct interpretation of his master's teaching. Modern scholarship, however, is sceptical with regard to the authenticity of the Platonic account of Socratic doctrine. It strongly suspects that the original Socratic doctrine has been strongly tinctured by Plato's personal prejudices. We do not enter here into this controversy. For the historical rôle played by Socrates is quite independent of the specific narrations of Socratic teaching in the Platonic dialogues. The greatness of Socrates rests entirely on the famous maxim attributed to him by tradition beyond any dispute,—the doctrine, namely, that Virtue is knowledge. It is also quite certain that Socrates put forward this doctrine with a view to placing epistemology on a secure foundation by overcoming the sceptical conclusions of Gorgias, which affected it adversely. The greatness of Socrates requires no other proof, if so much is understood and fully appreciated by us.

The Doctrine of Forms :— Socrates was in perfect agreement with Sophists in so far as the humanistic trend of their thinking was concerned. His teaching preserved the important contribution made by Protagoras to Epistemology through his doctrine of *Homo Mensura*. Unless things are brought in relation to the consciousness of man, there can be no possibility of any value whatever, whether such a value is logical, moral, religious or aesthetic. Protagoras and Socrates fully agree with each other in recognizing this important presupposition of all humanism.

The parting of their ways lies in the interpretation of the word "man" in the Protagorean doctrine. The doctrine of *Homo Mensura* leads to sensationalism and extreme sub-

jectivism on account of the fact that, according to Socrates, it does not clearly recognize the distinction between opinion and knowledge.

Opinions depend on our sense impressions, while knowledge depends on the intellect. As applied to moral value, Socrates sharply distinguishes between the "popular goodness" and the "philosophic goodness." Popular goodness is "mainly an affair of temperament and happy chance." This is quite obvious from the way in which we pass judgement on persons and their conduct as good or bad, when we are guided mostly by the customs and traditions of a certain group. The influence of these customs and traditions on the mind of an average man is powerful enough. For a major part of his life he unconsciously conforms to them.

But in spite of this, the popular morality suffers from a serious drawback. It is not based on any "rational ground." It is shifting and wavering. Socrates exposed its weakness thoroughly through the religious beliefs cherished by the various States of Greece. These beliefs differed radically from people to people. Hence, Socrates condemned such religions and their moral codes outright by saying that they are baseless and irrational.

In contradistinction from this there is "philosophic goodness." This is not subject to any vagaries of fleeting opinions. For, such a kind of goodness arises in consequence of true knowledge, which consists in our participation in an "intelligible form."

The origin of the doctrine of "intelligible form" can be traced to the Pythagorean philosophy. In trying to explain the mathematical conceptions, such as "just equal," the Pythagoreans were led to distinguish between equal things as they are found in our sensible experience, such as equal sticks, equal lines, etc. and the mathematical conception of equality with reference to which we are able to judge whether certain things in sensible experience are equal. Now, the equal things as they are presented to us in our sensible experience are not absolutely equal. We may find examples of things which might be more or less satisfying in so far as their equality is concerned. But none of them

will be found to be "just equal" or perfectly equal. What can be said at the most with regard to them is that they are "striving" or "tending" to be such as the equal, although they fall far short of it. In other words, the sensible equalities are only the copies or imitations, as it were, of the perfect form of equality, which we intellectually comprehend. The mathematical conception of equality thus is the "intelligible form" which serves as the standard or pattern with reference to which we judge whether the sensible things are more or less equal.

The Pythagoreans further maintained that the sensible objects are *becoming* ; that is to say, they are particular and contingent. The "intelligible forms," on the contrary, are alone said to *be,* because they are universal and necessary. This distinction has an important bearing on the process of knowledge. If we are guided by the senses only, then our knowledge is bound to be chaotic and disorderly as are the changeful and fleeting objects of the sensible world. If the same sensible objects are known by participating in the intelligible forms or the Ideas, our knowledge becomes orderly and rational. Such a knowledge is true, because now it is based on the universal and necessary "forms" or Ideas of Reason.

From such an account of knowledge, it is possible to expose the weakness of Protagorean theory of the empirical knowledge. Protagoras not only failed to make a distinction between opinions and rational knowledge, but he, for all practical purposes, identified knowledge with opinions. That is why, his doctrine fell an easy prey to scepticism and extreme subjectivity, which denied any objective validity to knowledge. Socrates tried to correct the Protagorean theory of knowledge in the light of Pythagorean theory of rational knowledge. True knowledge is possible, only when such a knowledge is obtanied through the participation in the intelligible forms.

Socrates followed the Pythagoreans in so far as the theory of rational knowledge was concerned. But he also went beyond them. The Pythagoreans restricted their epistemology to the mathematical forms. Socrates, however,

brought all the values, especially the moral value, within its sphere. In his famous maxim : Virtue is knowledge, Socrates aims precisely at this. From what has been said so far, it is easy to understand the meaning of this maxim. When Socrates made a distinction between "popular goodness" and "philosophic goodness," he definitely wanted to suggest that moral experience gives evidence of the existence of two different levels. One is the experience purely at the level of sensation in so far as we are guided by the pleasurable or painful effects of the objects. Such experiences are unreliable, inasmuch as they depend on the temperamental and emotional habits of different men who differ radically in these respects. But there is another morality which is based exclusively on the rational self. Reason is based on the principle of contradiction. Whatever is identical and is free from contradictions alone forms part of the rational experience. If so, then such a morality will take us beyond the subjective vagaries of personal opinions and will make us conform to such "intelligible forms," which will be the common aspirations of all humanity. Virtue thus is knowledge, because goodness can be attained only when we show an insight into the nature of rational self and seek to conform to its aspirations.

The Socratic Method:—The true greatness of Socrates does not lie in having discovered the "intelligible forms" or the Ideas, which, as we have already seen, Socrates took ready-made from the Pythagoreans. Through his maxim : Virtue is knowledge, Socrates only carried its extension further so as to include all the forms of human values within its scope. The Pythagoreans, however, lacked the method through which it was possible to demonstrate the weakness of knowledge based on opinions. It goes to the immortal credit of Socrates to have discovered such a method, which is usually called the *inductive* or the *dialectical* method.

This method had its origin in the discussions which Socrates used to have with his interlocutors. He usually caught them unawares whenever they tried to express their opinions on certain questions of human values. Mostly such expressions of opinion were quite superficial and frequently involved contradictions when subjected to the process of

rational analysis. Such a process implies a certain method or procedure by following which Socrates was able to expose the ignorance of his interlocutors.

The procedure is as follows : In the beginning we start with a certain proposition or "hypothesis" which is assumed to be true. We then deduce the consequences of such an assumption in the form of new propositions. If the propositions so deduced are known to be true, then the hypothesis stands. If, however, we come to a proposition which is absurd or false, the hypothesis is "destroyed." Zeno systematized this procedure through his famous dialectical method. Socrates made it the very basis of his philosophical queries.

The inductive or the dialectical method, as applied by Socrates, is subject to strict rules. We start with a statement which is supposed to be true. Those propositions, which agree with it, are true, while those, which do not agree with it, are false. This process goes on until it is found that the consequences of the hypothesis lead to something absurd. The interlocutor is not allowed to raise any question about the truth of the original hypothesis with which the discussion starts. The deduction of the consequences is quite independent of the question concerning the truth of the hypothesis itself. The truth of the hypothesis, if disputed, may be regarded as involved in the truth of some higher hypothesis. The question with regard to the truth of a certain hypothesis depends entirely on the agreement of the two parties to the discussion.

Plato

The Principal Aim of Platonic Philosophy :— The Sophists had departed radically from the earlier philosophical traditions in two ways. Firstly, they had turned their back against the main philosophical problem of the relation of the finite to the Infinite. Secondly, in so far as the analysis of the world of experience is concerned, the Sophists are reluctant to follow the methods of the earlier Greeks who do not seem to comprehend the values of human life. The earlier Greek thinkers confined themselves to the sphere of physical nature alone, although their approach to the physical nature has been definitely from the standpoint of philosophy.

Protagoras, through his doctrine of *Homo Mensura*, had already shifted the centre of gravity of the philosophical outlook from the objective to the subjective side ; that is to say, from the mechanical to the teleological explanation of the universe. Protagoras, however, had only set the ball rolling in this direction. It was left to Socrates to complete and perfect this process by laying down the foundations of the theory of rational knowledge. The Protagorean theory of knowledge was incomplete, because to find the basis of true knowledge in the evidence of senses involves us into contradictions. Such contradictions can be removed only when we refer all our cognitive processes to that rational self of which they are only the outward manifestations. Indeed, the rational self forms the central core, the nucleus of the entire concrete experience. The objects known by us are only the parts of the systematic whole of experience represented by the rational self. Apart from the rational self, the objects are deprived of all their significance. If they are given their proper place in the total system of rational experience, they are found to have an immense wealth of meaning. Such a treasure of meaning is never revealed to us as long as we keep ourselves to that plane of knowledge, which is represented by the natural sciences. Reason requires us to go beyond the scientific or intellectual categories.

which are positive and actual, inasmuch as they can be verified through the empirical experience. The Ideas of Reason, on the contrary, are the ultimate regulative principles of our knowledge. Intellectual or scientific knowledge does introduce some system and order in our experience. But it is never all-comprehensive. It affects only a part of our total experience. Such a partial or fragmentary character is absolutely missing in the rational experience. For it is conditioned by that rational self which comprehends and co-ordinates all the sciences within itself. What is science after all ? Is it not a systematic body of knowledge? But what is it that constitutes a system? The only answer to this is that every piece of systematic knowledge must ultimately conform to that principle of Reason, which does not admit of any kind of contradiction. And in so far as the rational self is a perfect embodiment of such a knowledge which is absolutely free from contradictions, it forms the supreme regulative principle, the highest ideal of our experience.

There is, however, one difficulty with which we are confronted when we deal with the Ideas of Reason. The ordinary Ideas of intelligence are *ideographic*.[1] That is to say, they can be verified and understood directly by taking recourse to the particular experiences with which they are concerned. For example, the idea of "tree" can be immediately understood the moment one sees a particular object denoted by that name. Such a direct verification is not possible in the case of the Ideas of Reason. This is so, because these Ideas represent the *norms* or the *ideals*. Their power is felt in synthesizing the ideas of intellect. Such a synthesis is never given to us in a ready-made form. It passes from unrealized or potential stage to the more and more realized and actual forms of experience. Such concrete forms of experience are met with in the sphere of human values of moral, religious and aesthetic experience. That is why, these values, such as Truth, Goodness, Beauty, etc. are regarded as constituting the supreme ideal conditions of the totality of experience. The teleological explanation finds its *raison d'être* in these ideals of human life. In

---

[1] Read Stewart's *Plato's Theory Of Ideas* in this connection.

direct contradistinction from the mechanical explanation which admits of no purposiveness, the teleological explanation is fully purposive. It consists in the emphatic affirmation of the moral, religious and aesthetic character of the universe.

Indeed, the mechanical and teleological explanations represent the two opposite poles of our experience. While the former is closely attached to the objective aspect of it, the latter takes us to the innermost recesses of the subjective pole of our experience, which is represented by our rational self. This is also the reason why the teleological explanation is also sometimes called the idealistic explanation. In his famous dialogues, Plato has fully worked out these implications of the Socratic theory of rational knowledge. In the *Theaetetus,* Plato shows the weakness of the Protagorean theory of empirical knowledge and points out the desirability of taking recourse to the Socratic theory of rational knowledge. Moreover, in the *Republic,* the *Phaedrus* and the *Symposium,* the teleological explanation has found its classical expression.

Platonic Philosophy :—Side by side with the teleological explanation of the universe, there is found a clear evidence of the operation of another tendency in Plato's mind. He makes a deliberate attempt to solve the philosophical problem of the relation of the finite to the Infinite in terms of the idealistic explanation. This is absolutely a new trend in the philosophical thought having no wider currency in the earlier Greek philosophy. The Socratic theory of rational knowledge had already paved the way for it. Plato had nothing but to convert this theory of knowledge into philosophy. This attempt has given rise to philosophical Idealism. Plato is the first main protagonist of such an outlook. We shall do well to follow the logical steps through which such a conversion of the theory of rational knowledge is effected into philosophical Idealism.

Sharp Distinction between the World of Ideas and the World of Sensible objects :—It has already been pointed out that Socrates is indebted to the Pythagoreans for the logical analysis of our experience into two aspects : (i) the particular ; and (ii) the universal. The particular is given

through the senses. But it cannot be fully understood until it is made to *participate* in the universal Ideas or the intelligible forms. From the standpoint of the theory of knowledge, the distinction between the particular and the universal is of great importance. For, the sole purpose of knowledge is to lead us from the particular experiences to their universal form. Again, in so far as the cognitive process is concerned, there is no unbridgeable gulf yawning between these two aspects. If we go on drawing the logical implications of our particular experiences, it is quite possible to bring them to assume their proper place in the total system of rational experience. Plato has virtually accepted this in the theory of education propounded by him in the *Republic*.

When, however, Plato thinks in terms of philosophy, the particular and the universal are cut off from each other. For, according to Plato, the world of particular or sensible objects is radically opposed to the world of intelligible forms or the Ideas. The world of sensible objects is constantly changing or *becoming*. Such objects are many, perishable, insubstantial, transitory and contingent, like the shadows. On the contrary, the "intelligible forms" or the Ideas are totally different in nature. Let us mark the chief characteristics of the world of Ideas :—

(1) The fundamental characteristic of Ideas, from which all the others can be deduced is that they are substances. Substance is what is self-subsistent and self-contained. The sensible objects are not substances, because they depend on the Ideas in order to be known ; while the Ideas, which are the exemplars or models, do not have to depend on anything else. The Ideas, therefore, are substances, while the sensible objects are only their shadowy imitations.

Plato has tried to explain this point through his famous allegory of cave occurring in Book VII of the *Republic*. In this allegory, Plato imagines a number of persons chained from their birth in a subterranean cavern. Their backs are turned to its entrance. A fire burns behind them. Between the fire and the prisoners runs a road flanked by a wall. The persons, who pass along the road, throw their

shadows upon the wall of the cavern facing the prisoners. To the prisoners these shadows themselves appear to be real.

But suppose that one of the prisoners has been released. Looking back, such a prisoner will immediately know the difference between the substance and its shadows. "What answer should you expect him to make, if some one were to tell him that in those days he was watching foolish phantoms, but that now he is somewhat nearer to reality, and is turned towards things more real, and sees more correctly; above all, if he were to point out to him the several objects that are passing by, and question him, and compel him to answer what they are? Should you not expect him to be puzzled, and to regard his old visions as truer than the object now forced upon his notice?"

(2) The Ideas alone are real. This follows directly from the first point. The sensible objects, on account of their shadowy character, are only superficial appearances of the intelligible forms which alone are substances. Hence they are illusory and unreal. The Ideas alone are truly real, while the sensible objects are phenomenal.

(3) The Ideas are universal and not particular. We come across several 'tables' in the world of sensible experience. The *idea* of table is not any one particular table among such tables. But it *represents* the general or common attributes found in the whole class of tables. This idea of table is not this or that table, but it is the table-in-general. In other words, the idea of table is not a specific thing but a universal concept.

(4) The Ideas are unitary. The sensible objects are many, as, for example, the objects belonging to a certain class, such as tree, table, etc. But the ideas, which represent these classes, are not many. For a whole set of objects, one idea is sufficient.

(5) The Ideas are essential, while the sensible objects are accidental. When we know things, we have to refer them to their idea which represents their essential attributes by excluding their many accidental differences or particularities. For example, the idea of man is what is common and essential to all men. Now, although every man is

different from the other, such a particularity will, nevertheless, not affect the idea of man at all. Such an idea will only represent those attributes like rational animality, which every particular man must essentially possess, in spite of his differences from the other men.

(6) The Ideas are perfect, while the sensible objects are partial and imperfect. The ideas are the models or archetypes. Hence, they contain everything that is essential. This makes them perfect. The sensible objects being only the imitations or copies of these models are only partial views of them and hence they are bound to be imperfect.

(7) The Ideas are eternal and immutable, while the sensible objects are fleeting and changeable. The Ideas are the universal concepts through which the particular sensible objects are known. Now, although the sensible objects change from place to place and from time to time, their concepts, nevertheless, must not be subject to such a vagary of circumstances. As forms of intelligibility they must remain the same throughout without being affected in the least by the conditions of space and time. Otherwise, true knowledge will be impossible. That is why, the Ideas are immutable and eternal.

The Dialectic or the Science of Ideas :— The sharp distinction made by Plato between the world of Ideas and the world of sensible objects is only the first step towards philosophical Idealism. We have already pointed out that originally the distinction between the sensible object and the intelligible forms or the Ideas is meant to subserve the need of epistemology. But gradually the same distinction is made the basis of his philosophy by Plato. The world of sensible objects is condemned and relegated to the region of illusion and unreality ; the world of Ideas alone is conceded reality or true existence.

Plato's next step is to show how the world of Ideas excludes the plurality absolutely. If the Ideas are many, then there will be many realities and the difficulties of pluralism will frustrate all the attempts to solve the philosphical problem of the One and the Many. In order to avoid these difficulties, Plato proceeds to show that the world of Ideas is essentially unitary. Plato undertakes to prove this through his doctrine of the dialectic of Ideas.

It has already been remarked that, according to Plato, the Ideas are the synthetic and regulative principles of knowledge. Being universal essences, they are able to introduce order and unity in the multiplicity of finite experiences. The Ideas are the models or archetypes, of which the sensible objects are nothing but faint imitations.

But such a view does not dispense with the fact that in order to synthesize the many kinds of things, we need many Ideas. In this connection Plato says that the plurality of Ideas is due to our ignorance. If we carefully understand their logical inter-relations, such a plurality in the Ideas will completely disappear. In the *Sophist,* Plato points out that all the Ideas are not co-ordinate ; that is to say, they do not stand on the same level. It is possible to find in them a certain order of subordination and superordination. For example, the idea of "table" can be subordinated to the idea of "piece of furniture"; this idea can be brought under the conception of "material things"; while, again, this idea itself can be subordinated to the idea of "being-in-general." Similarly, the idea of "man" is comprehended by that of "animal"; which is subordinated to "living beings"; but this idea can be brought under that of "being-in-general."

Indeed, according to Plato, by means of the logical processes of division and classification, it is possible to establish a perfect inter-relation as well as a hierarchical gradation of all Ideas. The basic principles underlying the art of Dialectic are set forth in the following passage of the *Sophists* :—

> "In particular, he will be able to distinguish (1) a single form pervading many single and separate things, (2) many forms distinct from one another but comprehended from without by one, (3) a single form pervading in turn many such wholes and binding them together in one, while many other forms are quite separate and a part from it."[2]

By following such a procedure we are led to arrange the Ideas in a pyramidical form.[3] Its base consists of the

---

[2] (253 d).

[3] Vide the *Republic,* Bk. VII 535.

Ideas of those things, which are common-place and ordinary,. such as tree, table, house, etc. Right above them are placed the scientific, categories such as the Ideas of Rest and Motion, Being and Identity.[4] These are higher than the ordinary Ideas, because they are more comprehensive. There are ideas, which are still higher than these, such as the Ideas of Truth, Beauty, Love. These Ideas, as we have already seen, are accessible through our Reason. They are the main regulative principles of our knowledge, the norms or the ideals, in and through which it is possible to have perfect system and order in our experience.

The Idea of the Good as the Supreme Form :—The highest of all Ideas, which stands at the apex of the pyramid, is that of the Good. By the Good is meant that which constitutes the very excellence of a thing. Now, every Idea, in so far as it embodies the essence of the sensible objects, brings out that which is of deeper and abiding interest in it or that which it is good for. For example, looking at an object if I say that it is a table, then the concept of table, or at least the definition of this concept, will give us all that is universal and essential in the particular objects belonging to that class. The proposition "It is a table," therefore, may be taken to mean that "This object is *good* for table."

Whatever is true with regard to one Idea can be applied to all of them. The Good admits of degrees according as one Idea is more comprehensive than the other. As we ascend higher and higher up the scale of Ideas, we are left with the Idea of the Good, which constitutes the quintessence of all Ideas. It is the crowning Idea, inasmuch as all the other Ideas are only the different manifestations of it. Plato compares the Idea of the Good with the sun, which is the source of light and illumines each and everything in the world.[5] Similarly, the mind illuminated by the Idea of the Good is the repository of the highest wisdom. To attain such a frame of mind should be the highest and noblest aspiration of man as a rational animal. In the fol-

---

[4] The *Sophist*, 255 a-d.

[5] The *Republic*, Bk. VII, 532.

lowing passage of the *Republic,* Plato, following the allegory of cave, expresses this point nicely :—

> "On the other hand, the release of the prisoners from their chains and their transition from the shadows of the images to the images themselves and to light, and their ascent from the cavern to the sunshine; and, when there, the fact of their being able to look, not at the animals and vegetables and the sun's light, but still only at their reflections in water, which are indeed divine and shadows of things real instead of being shadows of images thrown by a light which may itself be called an image, when compared with the sun;—these points, I say, find their counterpart in all this pursuit of the above-mentioned arts, which possesses this power of elevating the noblest part of the soul, and advancing it towards the contemplation of that which is most excellent in the things that really exist, just as in other case the clearest organ of the body was furthered to the contemplation of that which is brightest in the corporal and visible region."[6]

Plato's theory of the Dialectic of the Ideas is the answer to the philosophical problem of the One and the Many. The Idea of the Good is the one supreme Form in and through which it is possible to explain the multiplicity of sensible objects in this world. It forms their essential ground and the ultimate presupposition. The Idea of the Good, therefore, is the Absolute.

The Idea of the Good and God :—In order to form a clear conception of the Idea of the Good, it is necessary to distinguish it from God. Plato himself is not very clear about the relation between them. Sometimes he says that the two are identical while in other places he maintains that the Idea of the Good and God are totally different in their nature. Sometimes he even speaks of not one God, but of many Gods.

But if we take into account those passages in which Plato speaks of the relation between the Good and God, we are driven to the conclusion that the logical character of the Idea of the Good is the uppermost in Plato's mind, while the other conceptions are due to his yielding occasionally

---

[6] The *Republic,* 532.

to the influence of popular theology. Let us make this point more clear.

All of us know that God is the supreme ideal of religious experience. Now, religious experience is the highest expression of Reason. It is free from all contradictions and hence perfectly systematic and orderly. From such a standpoint the divine experience is the repository of the highest truth.

But the chief characteristic of religious experience is that it is *concrete,* inasmuch as it is the result of the *actual realization* of the supreme logical principle through the spiritual efforts of our mind. God is the soul itself in its stage of highest perfection. In so far as the attainment of such a perfection is concerned, souls might differ from one another. Hence, it is possible to speak of a plurality of Gods.

Now, if we look to the essential character of divine experiences, we find that their perfection is modelled after the pattern of the highest Idea, namely, the Good. All of them strive more or less to make an approximation to this ideal type. This immediately makes it clear that the relation of divine experiences to the Idea of the Good is exactly similar to the relation, which subsists between the objective experiences and their Ideas. Since the Idea of the Good is the supreme form, the experience which is modelled after its pattern must also be one which has the highest value. To the extent and proportion in which the Good is realized by our mind, the intensity and strength of such a value is enhanced. There is, therefore, a possibility of having one God as well as many Gods according to the difference in the degree of such a realization.

The Idea of the Good, on the contrary, does not admit of such gradations. It is only a form and as such it is the supreme logical condition of the possibility of divine experiences. Hence, it is nothing concrete, but purely formal logical condition. The Good is not confined to the religious experience alone. It is all-pervasive throughout the sphere of experience as the implicit condition of discovering the essential character of the objects of sensible experience. Plato often reverts to this logical conception of the Idea

of the Good as the highest form. Once we grasp this thoroughly, the ambiguities of Plato, where he has identified this Idea with God, might be found to be due to his occasional concessions to popular theology.

Criticism :—Plato's philosophy is the result of exalting the Socratic theory of rational knowledge to the rank of philosophy. The Idea of the Good is the supreme regulative principle of knowledge. It is the highest Form by virtue of which it is possible to furnish a perfect teleological explanation of the world. Human aspirations and values, which were totally neglected and completely excluded from its purview by the mechanical explanation, find their full justification in the idealistic interpretation of Plato.

We can as well grant that the teleological explanation is higher than the mechanical explanation. For, it comprehends within itself the essential principles involved in understanding the physical existence. In the hierarchical gradation of the Ideas, Plato does include those Ideas, which are ideographic, inasmuch as they have a direct bearing on the world of sensible objects. But such Ideas are placed by Plato at the lower rung of the scale of Ideas. Higher than these come the Ideas of Reason, because such Ideas are not directly concerned with the particulars of our experience. They make themselves felt rather in co-ordinating and synthesizing the lower Ideas by bringing them in direct unity with the supreme Idea of the Good. All the normative sciences, such as social philosophy, ethics, philosophy of religion, aesthetics, etc. are determined throughout by this rational function of our mind. In this way, Plato may be said to have perfected the Socratic theory of rational knowledge and to have worked out its inward logical implications. He has fully proved the validity of the teleological view of the world.

Indeed, there is basically no opposition between mechanism and teleology. Both of them have their legitimate place in our total experience. For, while the objective sphere of our experience can have no other explanation except through the principles of mechanism, it is equally true to say that the subjective aspect of the same experience, which is dominated by the human purposive interests and aspira-

tions can have no other explanation than the one which is given by teleology. Hence, just as the objective and subjective aspects are mutually complementary, mechanism and teleology are both correlative and quite indispensable in the analytic understanding of our total finite experience.

If this be true, then it stands to reason that any tendency to exalt the principles of each one of them to the rank of the Absolute is bound to involve us into contradictions. For, if we regard mechanism alone as real, then it will immediately rule the fundamental values of spiritual life out of court. Similarly, if the principle of teleology is transformed into philosophy, it is bound to lead us to similar one-sidedness of excluding the considerations of mechanical necessity and relegating the world governed by it to the region of unreality and illusion. Thus, mechanistic Materialism and rational Idealism are both equally vicious and one sided. The earlier Greek thinkers have already pointed out to such a conclusion. That is why, they never gave any quarter to either machanism or teleology. Especially, in the philosophy of Anaxagoras, both of them have been given their legitimate place in the world of *finite* experience, while philosophy, which deals with the Infinite, is kept quite independent of them.

Leucippus identified philosophy with mechanism and gave us Materialism. In reacting against this, Plato sought to identify philosophy with teleology and gave birth to Idealism. Now, in so far as Idealism deprives philosophy of its independence by subordinating it to teleology, it cannot but be internally disrupted. Its contradictions make themselves felt most prominently in two ways. First, it leads to dualism by creating a sharp cleavage between the two aspects of our experience, namely, the subjective and the objective. Secondly, when such a rift is artificially created, Idealism, according to which the real is rational, must lead us to condemn the objective world as unreal. The logical result of such a situation would be that all attempts to establish a *via media* between the two worlds would be forever frustrated.

If, now, we look at the Platonic philosophy, we shall find our remarks to be fully justified. The first point of

contradiction has appeared in Plato when he conceives the world of sensible objects standing in sharp opposition to the world of Ideas. The second contradiction has also appeared in Plato in his frequent condemnation of the world of objective experience as unreal and illusory, as transitory and insubstantial in direct contrast with the world of Ideas, which alone is truly real.

It is surprising to note that Plato himself has forestalled these criticisms. It redounds to the intellectual honesty and candour of Plato that he should have indulged himself into an absolutely damaging self-criticism of his own philosophy. In the *Parmenides*, Plato has marshalled all such arguments with a remarkable logical rigour and skill. In order to appreciate this, we shall do well to take note of some of the important arguments of Plato's self-criticism.

In this dialogue, Parmenides of Elea is the chief figure. While Parmenides is the old veteran philosopher, Socrates is still young, although his fame has spread far and wide, so much so that even Parmenides is aware of it. In the dialogue, Parmenides subjects the Socratic theory of Ideas to scathing criticism with a view to exposing its inherent weakness.

In the first place, Parmenides attacks the hierarchical gradation of the Ideas by asking Socrates whether along with the mathematical forms, he also believed in forms of the Just, the Beautiful and the Good. To this Socrates answered in the affirmative. The next question was whether he believed in the forms of Man, Fire and Water. Socrates confessed that he was in a difficulty about them. Not leaving Socrates at that Parmenides asked him whether things like mud, hair and dirt had forms too. Socrates answered this question in the negative. Parmenides could only say that Socrates, being still young, was too much influenced by the popular opinion. Philosophy had not laid hold of him completely as it would do some day. Then he would despise none of these things howsoever trifling it might have been.

Parmenides then exposes the weakness of the Socratic doctrine of "participation." We know that through it Socrates tried to explain the relation between the many sensible objects to their Form. The problem is : What is

meant when it is said that the many sensibles "partake in" the one form, or that one form is "present to" or "in" the many sensibles. This means either that the many sensibles contained the whole of the form or only a part of it. If the many sensibles contained the whole of the form, then it will be in more places than one. This will create distinctions and division in the form itself. If we take up the other alternative, namely, that each of the sensibles occupies only a part of the form, the form will not be in a position to explain anything. Socrates, however, suggests that the forms are really thoughts and not things and hence to think that they are divisible or separable would be absurd. To this Parmenides replies that if the forms are thoughts, then the things that partake in them must be thoughts too. This leads to the absurd conclusion that all things think or there are unthought thoughts.

Another suggestion offered by Socrates in this connection is that the forms are the "patterns" of which the sensible objects are only imitations. When, therefore, the sensible objects are said to partake in the forms, we mean thereby nothing but that they are "likenesses" of them. According to Parmenides, this leads to infinite regress, because if things are like the forms, the forms will be like the things and we shall require another pattern to explain their likeness and so on *ad infinitum*.

A further difficulty comes in when we direct our attention to the relations between the Ideas themselves by following the "likenesses" of the relations of the sensible objects to each other. For example, we know that a slave is actually subject to his master. But will it be true to say that the idea of "slavery itself" is subject to the idea of "mastership itself" in the same way ? We know that the ideas may be relative to each other, but there is no possibility of any relation of master and slave in the ideas themselves. But for want of any such relation, how can the relations of the sensible world be known at all ?

There is, again the argument of "third man." If a man is so by virtue of participation in the form of man, there must be a man, who will have his being relatively to the form. This man will neither be the form

of Man nor will he be the particular man who is a sensible object. There must, therefore, be a "third man," who is neither the Man-in-general nor the particular man. The argument of the "third man" virtually denies the possibility of ever bringing the forms directly in relation to the sensible objects themselves.

The *Parmenides* later on gives us the contradictions, which arise if the relation between the One and the Many are treated in accordance with the conditions of the doctrine of participation. We know that the One represents the Infinite, while the Many belong to the world of the finite. But the doctrine of participation requires us to put both of them on the same finite level. How otherwise can the copy be conceived to partake in or resemble its pattern ? Both of them must exist in the world of concrete experience in order to bear the relation of likeness to each other. But if the One and the Many are both finite, how can the philosophical problem be ever solved ?

This is the final result of Plato's *Parmenides*. It is a frank admission of the fact that the problem of the One and the Many is incapable of being solved through the idealistic philosophy at all.

Aristotle

Aristotle's Relation to Plato :— Being a direct pupil of Plato, Aristotle himself was a keen student of his philosophy. But he was not a blind follower of his master. He was a person of independent mind and critical judgment. That is why, he was fully aware of the greatness as well as the short-comings of his master. Aristotle retained whatever was significant in Plato's philosophy and rejected what seemed to him to be not worthy of serious consideration.

Aristotle's Polemic against Plato :— The right way to understand Aristotle is to begin with his general criticism of the Platonic philosophy which is comprehended by the following arguments :—

(1) The first objection is that Plato's world of Ideas is nothing but a reduplication of the world of sensible objects. "But as for those who posit Ideas as causes, firstly, in seeking to grasp the causes of the things around us, they introduced others equal in number to these, as if a man who wanted to count things thought he would not be able to do it while they were few, but tried to count them when he had added to their number."[1]

(2) The conception of the Idea as the pattern upon which things are modelled defeats the very purpose of explaining the world of objects. The Ideas are meant to reduce the multiplicity of the world to unity. But when there is multiplicity in the world of Ideas itself how can we think of finding system and unity by means of it ? "For the Forms are practically equal to—or not fewer than—the things, in trying to explain which these thinkers proceeded from them to the Forms. For to each thing there answers an entity which has the same name and exists apart from the substances. . . ."[2]

(3) Thirdly, the doctrine of Ideas cannot properly explain the relation of the Idea to the sensible objects with

---

[1] *Metaphysics*, 990 b.

[2] *Ibid.*

which it is directly concerned. This is best illustrated by, what has been called by Aristotle, the argument of the "third man." The purport of this argument can be given thus. Consider, for example the Idea of Man and its relation to the various particular men. When the Idea of Man is brought in relation to the particular men, there is a common element in such a relation too. In order to explain such a relation we require a further Idea, which is neither the Idea of Man nor is it the man in particular, but a "third man."

(4) Plato's doctrine of Ideas gives no explanation of the cause of change or movement of the world of sensible objects. "Above all one might discuss the question what on earth the Forms contribute to sensible things, either to those that are eternal or to those that come into being and cease to be. For they cause neither movement nor any change in them."[3]

(5) Again, in order to explain one thing, one Idea does not suffice. For example, we can look at a man from many points of view, such as that of an "animal," of a "two-footed," of a "man himself." This is bound to stultify the function of an Idea as the principle of explanation. Indeed, according to Aristotle, Plato's doctrine of Ideas is "empty talk and mere poetic metaphor ;. . . ."

(6) According to Aristotle, the sharp cleavage between the world of Ideas and the world of sensible things as visualized by Plato is totally unjustified. If the Idea constitutes the *essence* of the sensible objects, how can it exist apart from them ? The essence must be found "*in* the things and never outside them."[4] This objection to "separation" or transcendence of Ideas is regarded as the vital link between the critical and constructive parts of the Aristotelian doctrine, which leads to the immanence of Ideas.

Individual as the Starting-point of Philosophy :— We cannot fully appreciate the positive contribution made by Aristotle unless we follow him in believing that the real starting-point of philosophy or ontology is neither the sensi-

---

[3] *Metaphysics*, 991 a.

[4] *Ibid.*

ble objects nor the Ideas ; that is to say, neither the aspect of particularity nor that of universality. Our experience never gives them separately but they are always found synthesized in the various individuals. "But there is a *brazen sphere,* this we make. For we make it out of brass and the sphere ; we bring the form into this particular matter, and the result is a brazen sphere."[5] Or, if we take another example, then what we really experience is the man as an individual, such as Socrates, Plato, etc. and never a particular man or a universal Man. The particular and the universal are the two *aspects* of one and the same individual being when it is subjected to logical analysis.

In order to distinguish the individual from the Idea, Aristotle calls it the "first substance," which is in and by itself indefinable. Socrates, Plato, etc. as individuals are such indefinable first substances. Such individuals are *directly perceived* by us. But when we try to *know* them, we simply take several individual men together and then fix our attention on their common and general characteristics by avoiding their particularities or differences. Such a process gives us the Idea of Man, which comprises the essential attributes of such particular men. Aristotle calls the Idea the "second substance." Such an Idea of Man is capable of being defined as "a rational animal." But, according to Aristotle, the Man, who is the subject of such predicates as rationality and animality, has lost his character as an existent individual. Now, he is to be looked upon as a member of a class or a part of an intelligible whole or Idea.

> "But when we come to the concrete thing, e.g. *this* circle, whether perceptible or intelligible (I mean by intelligible circles the mathematical, and by perceptible circles those of bronze and of wood) of these there is no definition, but they are known by the aid of intuitive thinking or of perception ; but when they are out of this complete realization it is not clear whether they exist or not ; but they are always stated and recognized by means of the universal formula."[6]

---

[5] *Metaphysics,* Z, 1033 b.

[6] *Metaphysics,* Z, 1036 a.

The distinction between the first and second substances is verily a distinction between two different standpoints, namely, the standpoint of philosophy and that of knowledge. While both of them are valid, from the standpoint of philosophy the first alone is the most important. As students of philosophy, we are interested in the individual alone and never in the particular and universal aspects of it.

The Doctrine of Four Causes :— It is with a view to explaining the nature of the individual that Aristotle has propounded the doctrine of four causes. It has already been pointed out that it is possible to look at the individual from the standpoint of knowledge, which requires us to distinguish the two main aspects of it, namely, the particular and the universal. But Aristotle is particularly anxious to point out that the individual is not fully apprehended even if it is known. For example, Socrates as an individual may be known to be a man or a philosopher. But that does not exhaust his being, which is a creative synthesis of infinite number of attributes. Some of them may be manifest and as such they may be known. But there are many other attributes which the individual manifests, when he is subjected to different conditions. Such attributes depend on the inner potency of individual to maintain and preserve itself as a substance. This inner infinite potency or capability of the individual through which it assumed various finite forms cannot be grasped through knowledge. Hence, according to Aristotle, in order to explain the individual, we have to postulate two more causes, namely, the final and efficient causes, besides those two with which knowledge invariably operates. In all, we have four causes, which, according to Aristotle's nomenclature, are : (1) material ; (2) formal ; (3) final ; and (4) efficient causes.

Some explanation of these four causes is necessary here. In the first place, the word 'cause' has a special meaning in the Aristotelian philosophy. For Aristotle, "cause" has no such meaning associated with it as we, following Mill, ascribe to it, namely, the invariable and unconditional antecedent of the effect. Indeed, cause is used by Aristotle in a wider sense to connote the *constitutive* conditions of existence or all those aspects through which the being of an

individual can be explained. In order to drive home such a meaning of cause to our mind, Aristotle constantly warns us against the tendency to hold them separately. According to him, all of them operate simultaneously in the explanation of any existent entity.

(1) *Material Cause* :— It is necessary here to guard ourselves against a possible misunderstanding. By "matter" Aristotle does not mean what the text-books on Physics inform us. Physics, as we know, deals with matter. But, according to Aristotle, the physical world is an existence and as such it requires for its explanation all the four causes. It cannot be fully explained only through the material cause.

What, then, is the special meaning ascribed by Aristotle to the material cause ? This can be best understood by contrasting "matter" with "form". As thus understood, matter and form are correlative concepts and can never be understood independently. Indeed, they represent the two poles of the knowable world, namely, the particular and the universal. The material cause, according to Aristotle, is always particular, while the formal cause is always universal. Now, from such a point of view, anything is material which is capable of becoming a part of an intelligible form. Looking at a particular thing, I might say "This is a table." Here "this" represents the particular or material aspect to be understood by subsuming it under the intelligible form "table." The matter of a thing or its particularity is never completely determined, unless we refer it to its proper universal form. This can be illustrated thus. Looking at one and the same object, I may make several statements, such as, "This is a table," "This is a piece of wood," "This is a piece of furniture," and so on. Now in each of these propositions the subject "this," which represents the aspect of particularity, gets a new signification according to the different point of view from which it is looked at, such as, "table", "piece of wood," "piece of furniture." It is this which leads Aristotle to say that matter is nothing definite. *Matter is only an indeterminate possibility of becoming anything*. Aristotle illustrates this point through various examples. We shall take one such instance. A sculptor may think of carving a statue of Hermes, say from out of a block of marble.

Before he starts his work, the block of marble is only matter, namely, a vague or indeterminate possibility of the statue. As the sculptor proceeds with his work, the block of marble gradually begins to assume the form of Hermes. The vague and indeterminate possibility now bears the impress of the sculptor's point of view. Hence, it is completely determined as the statue of Hermes. The same block of marble would have assumed a different form, had there been a different point of view from which it would have been looked at.

(2) *Formal Cause* :—Form can be defined as that which gives a determinate meaning to the indeterminate matter. Form is the principle of unity and organization. Every organization presupposes a unity in difference. When we apply these considerations to our knowledge, we find that the matter supplied by our senses gets meaning only when it is properly synthesized by the conceptual system of our thought. Taking Aristotle's example, we shall be able to find a justification for this. The block of marble when properly chiselled by the sculptor in accordance with the conditions of his ideal form of Hermes gets properly organized. Those parts of it, which are irrelevant are rejected and the other parts of it are brought in proper relation to each other so as to impress on our mind the idea of Hermes. In the same way, when the sensible objects are properly organized through the conceptual system of ideas as represented by the various sciences, the chaotic material of our senses is reduced to system and order. The defference is reduced to a unity; the particulars are made to take their proper place in the intelligible whole ; the matter is made to bear the impress of form.

(3) *Final Cause* :—We have tried to explain so far the nature of the material and formal causes. We have seen that they represent the two opposite poles of the knowable world. Again, it has been pointed out that both of them are inseparable, inasmuch as knowledge requires a synthesis of both of them all at once. They are treated separately only when we begin to analyse the cognitive function with a view to understanding its nature. But in a concrete process of knowledge both of them are operative simultaneously.

Matter and Form are essentially correlative. But does this mean that both of them stand on the same level ? According to Aristotle, such is not the case. In the process of knowing the world of objects, the material cause or particularity stands at a lower level than the formal cause or universality. Let us explain this.

In the first place, the relation of the particular to the universal admits of various degrees. This is quite evident from the way in which we establish a hierarchical gradation in the various ideas or concepts through the logical processes of classifications and division. One concept is higher than the other, inasmuch as it is more comprehensive and general than the other. Indeed, throughout the process of knowledge the particular and the universal are related to each other as means and end. For example, a piece of wood may serve as a means to manufacture a table; a table may be brought under the class of the pieces of furniture; the latter may subserve the purpose of being useful to man; and again that which is useful to man may be subservient to the ultimate ends of rational humanity. We can thus have a chain of means and ends. Both of them again are relative. For, that which is an end in one case may become a means to another end and so on. There is, however, a possibility of having such a means which cannot be an end at all and also there can be some end which can never be a means to any other end at all. These constitute the two poles of our experience which have been called by Aristotle pure matter and pure form. In between these two extremes it is possible to have several gradations where means and ends change their places.

This leads us to the famous doctrine of evolution in the philosophy of Aristotle. Evolution is a dynamic process which passes from the lowest matter or bare potentiality to the highest form or actuality. To illustrate, an acorn, when it is sown and fertilized gradually develops into a full-grown oak tree. Now the stage of acorn with which we start is the lowest, while the full-grown oak tree is the highest, inasmuch as all the other stages are simply a means to this end in the process of the growth of an individual oak tree. Now, the first stage contains the last stage,

but only *potentially*. The final stage is so called not because it comes last in the process of time. It is the final stage from the standpoint of logical evolution, since it comprehends all the previous stages to the extent in which it actualizes or realizes whatever was dormant or potential in the previous stages.

We thus find that the process of evolution shows a sense of direction. It tends towards the *highest form*, which is also called by Aristotle the final cause. There are various implications contained in the notion of final cause. In the first place, it requires us to hold matter and form together as inseparable and necessary aspects of one and the same process of knowledge. Secondly, matter and form admit of hierarchical gradation. Pure matter is the lowest stage, while pure form is the highest. We have already seen that the lowest stage is that which serves only as a means and never as an end. Hence, it has the least significance in and by itself. This is suggested by Aristotle by characterizing pure matter as something unknowable. But as the means are organised into their respective intelligible wholes, they come to possess more and more meaning and significance. This means that the higher the stage of knowledge, it comprehends all the previous stages within itself as the several elements of an organic and systematic experience. We reach the final stage in such a process only when our experience is so organized that it comprehends all parts consistently, that is to say, without involving any contradiction among themselves. Such an experience is an ideal. It is, in Aristotle's terminology, the final cause of our experience. He characterizes it sometimes as the "form of forms" or the "thought of thoughts" to suggest that the final cause represents the supreme stage of our experience.

(4) *Efficient Cause* :— So far we considered the three causes of our experience, namely, the material, formal and final causes. By means of these causes, it is possible to introduce a perfect system and order in our experience. We can also determine and assess through them the proper value of the various stages of our experience, until we come to such an experience which is perfectly rational. But all these three causes keep us within the sphere of logical

relations. In and by themselves they are not sufficient to explain completely the nature of being. This can be seen from the fact that none of these causes is in a position to show what exactly is that which is responsible in creating the gradations in our experience from the lowest to the highest. No doubt, the final cause is the highest stage of our experience. But it is only one of the evolutes and it can be conceived in direct relation to the lower stages. It is, therefore, relative and finite. Hence, it cannot be the creative principle of the world. Moreover, the final cause, being the product of synthesis of matter and form although at the highest level, cannot be infinite and absolute. For unless we answer the fundamental question : How is the synthesis of matter and form effected at all ?, even the existence of the final cause will forever remain a mystery. It is with a view to answering such a fundamental question that Aristotle is required to posit another cause, namely, the efficient cause. By efficient cause Aristotle means the source of movement. The movement here does not mean the mechanical motion, which is produced by the action and reaction of one physical entity on the other. The movement here refers to that creative force without which nothing can come into being. Such a creative force has been called by Aristotle the "Unmoved mover." In such a characterization of the efficient cause, Aristotle harks back to the earlier Greek philosophers, who maintained that the real is abstract and creative. The efficient cause is *creative*, inasmuch as it is the source of movement. But it is also "unmoved", because the source of movement is nothing actually or concretely existing. In fact, it is abstract. For it cannot be known. It is accessible through immediate experience or love. For example, in the process of carving a statue from out of a block of marble, the block of marble itself is the material cause, the idea of Hermes is the formal cause, the process tending from the block of marble to the completed statue gives us the final cause. But the question still remains : Who is to start and sustain the process ? To this Aristotle replies : The Sculptor himself. In other words, it is the intuitive and immediate feeling (*perception*) of the sculptor himself, which moulds the matter and form

or the particular and universal into an organic synthesis of experience and creates from out of itself the individual being, namely, the statue itself. Without the efficient cause, neither the matter nor the form nor the final form of the statue can be said to *be* at all. The efficient cause is thus the creative source of all being. It is also infinite and abstract, because it is unmoved, having nothing in common with those finite things which are concrete and hence are subject to change.

With regard to efficient cause, Aristotle is further of opinion that it is the very "principle of individuation." The various individual existences of the finite world are nothing but the creations of the efficient cause in its various degrees of intensity. This is quite evident from the Aristotelian conception of evolution, which is not a cosmic process, as it is understood by the naturalists today. Evolution, according to Aristotle, is a process which operates within an individual. For example, in the case of man, when he grows from the embryonic stage, infancy, childhood, adolescence, youth to old age, he is said to be evolving. Underlying all these stages, there runs the unity of one and the same force of individuality, which manifests itself at various degrees of intensity. The entire sub-human creation in the inorganic and organic world is nothing but the result of the retardation of the force of individuality at the various degrees of its intensity. In man, the same force reaches a higher level. There is, however, another level beyond the human experience, which is the highest of all. This is found given to us in the Divine Experience. God is the realization of the highest form of experience through the inward force of individualtion. In other words, unless the highest form is actually realized, God's existence is purely imaginary. He is brought into being only when the highest form is actually evolved or realized through the process of individuation.

God as the Meeing-Ground of the Formal, Final and Efficient Causes :—In the explanation of existence, material cause has the least significance. It represents the lowest degree of experience, which as yet has not attained any degree of self-consciousness. In order to have any value,

it is required to be synthesized with the formal cause which fully actualizes the inward potentiality of matter. But a mere conjunction of matter with form does not give a complete understanding of the world of objects. In order to attain a perfectly systematic and orderly view of the universe, the entire material of our experience will have to be subjected to the supreme organic synthesis of the final cause or the form of forms. The formal cause in so far as it is also the final cause represents, in contradistinction from the material cause, the highest stage in the hierarchical scale of experience.

It is, however, necessary to note that according to Aristotle, the formal cause, even if it is exalted to the rank of the final cause, is *not* the constitutive condition of our experience. It represents only the ideal of experience, which serves only as the supreme *regulative* principle with reference to which it is possible to judge and assign proper value to anything. Such a process is purely logical. It may explain the system and order of the universe. But it is not in a position to explain the cause of the universe, the *raison d'être* of the finite world. In order to explain this, the efficient cause or the unmoved mover is what is needed. This cause is so fundamental that no other cause can come into operation without it. The creative and abstract real must first of all individuate itself so as to bring into existence the world of finite objects by passing through the various degrees of its intensity from the material to the final cause. The entire created world, including the inorganic, organic, human and divine existence, ultimately owes its being to the efficient cause. As we pass from the lower to the highest stages, we come across experiences representing the synthesis of matter and form in higher and higher degrees of individualities. When, however, we come to the human and divine existences, the individuality becomes more and more inwardly conscious and rational. This finds its culmination in the personality of God, where the experience becomes perfectly rational and systematic. All pain and misery are due to the operation of contradictions in our experience. But when once our experience is completely freed from them, as it is at the level of Divine Experience,

it goes beyond all touch of misery and pain and becomes positively the source of eternal bliss and happiness.

The personality of God thus is the meeting-ground of the formal, final and efficient causes. It is because of this that God has been called by Aristotle at once the Form of forms as well as the Person enjoying eternal blessedness. Such a characterization has given rise to several controversial interpretations of the Aristotelian doctrine of God. According to some thinkers, it involves contradictions. For, Form is a logical condition. It cannot exist as a Person.

But really speaking, from the standpoint of Aristotle, there is no contradiction involved in characterizing God in the way he does. For, God as a concrete being is brought into existence when the supreme Form is *realized* through the efficient cause.

Aristotelian Philosophy is not Diluted Platonism :— The interpretation of the doctrine of God, as given above, has another merit as well. It shields Aristotle from the criticism that his philosophy is nothing but a diluted form of Platonism. Gomperz is one of those thinkers, who hold such an opinion.

> "The more deeply we study the 'Metaphysics, the more surely we recognize that the author retains the premisses out of which Plato's doctrine of Ideas grew, and his struggles against accepting the conclusions which flow from those premisses are vain though violent."[7]

The main reason why such a misunderstanding has arisen is to be traced to the so-called inconsistent characterization of God by Aristotle. As we have already seen, Aristotle started by criticizing Plato. He accused Plato of having created an incurable dualism between matter and form by conceding reality to the form alone and depriving the sensible world of any substantiality at all. When, therefore, Aristotle maintains that God, who is the Form of forms, is also the most real being, it is felt that Aristotle has lapsed into Platonic dualism.

Such, however, is not the case. In fact, Aristotle wants us to look at the Divine existence from two different points

---

[7] *Greek Thinkers*, Vol. IV. p. 78.

of view. The one is the point of view *of logical understanding,* which is interested in finding the proper relation of one form of experience to another. And here God is found to represent the highest form of experience.

But, besides the logical point of view, there is also the standpoint of philosophy, which seeks to explain the *being* of the various forms of experiences. When Aristotle approaches God from such a point of view, he finds in Him the supreme realization of the highest form as a perfectly rational and concretely existing individual. And since God represents the highest form, the realization of such a form is bound to impress us as the best embodiment of the infinite and abstract Reality. In the lower experiences, the feeling of reality is not so clearly and consciously operative as it is in the religious experience. That is why, the mystic, when he finds himself in the intimate communion with God, feels his heart filled with eternal joy and bliss. This does not mean that Aristotle denies any reality to matter. What Aristotle wants us to understand is that in so far as they are the conditions of logical understanding, neither matter nor form has any claim to reality at all. They come to have reality through the efficient cause. But this efficient cause individuates itself at a lower degree of intensity in matter. When the same realizes itself at the level of Form of forms or final cause, it attains the highest significance and value.

In the light of these remarks, it would be wrong to say that the Aristotelian philosophy is Platonism in another garb. Although Aristotle opposed form to matter, he did not create an absolute cleavage in them. They are the two opposite poles in the intensive evolution of the real. As such both of them are real, but in different degrees.

Aristotle's Philosophy as the Cumulative Synthesis of the entire Greek Philosophy prior to Him :— The claim made by Aristotle that he has improved upon Platonism is further justified by the opening book of his *Metaphysics,* where he has critically passed in review the entire development of Greek philosophy from Thales right up to his own time. He claims to have effected an all comprehensive synthesis of all those views, which have been put forward

by his predecessors. The philosophical thinkers prior to him have taken one-sided and partial views of reality. In his own philosophy, Aristotle has preserved all that is valuable in them and has constructed such a system of thought that may be regarded as the cumulative synthesis of all that was the best in the thoughts of his predecessors.

Aristotle's main thesis in the first book of *Metaphysics* is that all the four causes, of which he has spoken, have been wrongly understood by his predecessors. None of them has ever felt that in the explanation of being, all of them are necessarily involved. For example, the Ionic philosophers, according to Aristotle, have recognized one cause only, namely, the material cause. There is not much evidence of their having taken into account the other causes. Empedocles and Anaxagoras went beyond them. Besides the material cause, they have introduced the notion of efficient cause. In his conception of *Nous,* Anaxagoras has recognized the final cause as well. The formal cause was vaguely recognized by the Pythagoreans. But it assumed more importance in the philosophy of Plato. According to Aristotle, Plato recognized only two causes explicitly, namely, the material and the formal. ' He does not believe in the efficient cause at all. As for the final cause, Plato had only an indistinct idea of it. This is precisely the reason why, according to Aristotle, Plato's philosophy is threatened by the dualism between the world of sensible objects and the world of Ideas.

Aristotle believes that he alone was able to assign proper importance and value to all the four causes for the first time in his philosophical system. He has ignored none of them. For, everyone of them contributes to our understanding of some aspect of the Real. Matter is essential to explain the world of mechanism. Similarly, the formal and final causes are necessary to explain the teleological aspect of the world and to show that teleology is higher than mechanism. But neither mechanism nor teleology can ever come into operation unless the source of movement, of which mechanism and teleology are simply the expressions at different degrees of intensity, is posited in the form of efficient cause. Thus, in the explanation of reality, none of four causes mentioned by Aristotle can be dispensed with.

Aristotle thus leaves no room for any accusation that he has lapsed into Platonism. In our opinion, Aristotle's claim that his philosophy is the culminating phase of the entire philosophical speculation of the Greeks is fully justified by a dispassionate understanding of his doctrine of four causes and their synthesis as effected by him.

MODERN PHILOSOPHY

The Rationalistic School

RIGHT from Aristotle we shall come down to Descartes. This means that we are going to skip over a period of more than twelve centuries. Let us briefly note the reasons for this.

To begin with, Greek philosophy after Aristotle was dominated primarily by moral and religious interests. We know that in order to vindicate the claims of morality and religion, the only alternative is to take recourse to the teleological explanation of the universe or the idealistic philosophy. In pursuance of this the post-Aristotelian schools of philosophy believed that Nature, which was the fundamental ground of the universe, was identical with the divine and creative Reason or God. It was not only Stoicism that accepted such an interpretation, but, strange as it may seem, the Epicureans, who were wedded to the mechanistic materialism, also had fundamentally to accept it on account of their predominant interest in the moral value. Stoics, who believed completely in teleology, were thoroughgoing idealists. They drew their main inspiration from the Socratic theory of rational knowledge. They implicitly believed also in its transformation into philosophy by Plato. The predominantly moral and religious character of the later Greek philosophy led it to de-philosophize even Aristotelianism. The efficient cause, through which Aristotle could bestow upon Philosophy her independence of both mechanism and teleology, was completely neutralized and was absorbed into the formal and final causes. Instead of the efficient cause, which was creative and infinite principle, it was God, who was conceived as the Creator of the universe. This paved the way for a complete identity of philosophy with the theory of rational knowledge.

Stoicism exerted a powerful influence for several generations. Even after the inception of Christianity, it went

on attracting several devout Christians of exceptional character and integrity of mind. But to the popular mind, the ritualistic and dogmatic aspect of Christianity had a wider appeal. To justify this, the Christian theologians harked back to Plato and Aristotle and rallied support from them to rationalize the Christian dogmas. This gave birth to the so-called *Mediaeval Philosophy*, which is nothing but a regular effort to press all the resources of the idealistic philosophy as developed by Plato and the later followers of Aristotle into the service of Christian theology. This naturally deprived it of its logical rigour. Like a tamed lion, it had no purpose other than to humour the wishes of its mistress, viz. Christology.

Descartes

His Rationalism :— Such was the miserable plight into which the idealistic philosophy found itself when Descartes took the field. It was really disgusting and awful to witness the Scholastic philosophers spending all the ingenuity of their mind in the endless controversies concerning such idle and unmeaning questions as the number and hierarchical gradation of angels, etc. Descartes was much moved by such an abject degradation of philosophy and ran to its rescue. He believed that the main cause of such a miserable condition of philosophy was its subordination to theology. He, therefore, raised a standard of revolt against mediaeval Scholasticism. He directly attacked the principle of Authority, which had been consecrated by it. Scholasticism tended to cling to the biblical dogmas without taking into consideration whether they were in conformity with truth or not. In fact, it was already known in Descartes' time that several dogmas of Christianity were absolutely false. In spite of this, the scholastic thinkers not only did not pay any heed to them, but they also tried to suppress the truth by a systematic persecution of its votaries. This was the weakest point of the mediaeval Scholasticism. Descartes hit precisely very hard on it. According to him, none had the right to suppress the truth. And if the truth

is to be realized, it is not the faith, but the spirit of free inquiry that must ultimately prevail. Taking his stand on this ground, Descartes threw a challenge to the prevailing dogmatism of Christian theology and laid the foundations of modern philosophy.

When, in order to checkmate the evils of Scholasticism, Descartes took recourse to Rationalism, it is believed by some that he was breaking an absolutely new ground. Such, however, is not the case. In fact, Descartes was championing the cause of the old idealistic philosophy. The idealism of the ancient Greeks lacked any definite method. But it cannot be doubted that it was based on that Reason, which is the supreme principle of logical understanding. This Reason was waylaid into religious dogmatism, because it was not sufficiently conscious of its method. Descartes could immediately perceive this. Mathematician that he was, Descartes found in the geometrical method the best model of the rationalistic philosophy in so far as it showed the organization of our concepts into a perfect system. In order to keep dogmatism away from philosophy, it was necessary to follow the basic implications of such a method. This had the effect of sharpening the logical rigour of the old idealistic philosophy and inspiring into it more self-confidence and self-consciousness.

The Geometrical Method in Philosophy :— In order to save philosophy from falling into the clutches of religious dogmatism, Descartes thought it necessary to follow such a method as would lead us to absolutely rational conclusions. Descartes knew fully well the way in which the mathematical sciences obtained such conclusions. Particularly geometry followed such a method very rigorously. Starting from certain self-evident axioms, it goes on deducing theorems and propositions from them in a necessary and logical manner. Why not apply such a geometrical method, thought Descartes, to philosophy in order to purge it off of all the traces of unsound reasoning ?

> "The long chains of simple and easy reasonings by means of which geometers are accustomed to reach the conclusions of their most difficult demonstrations had led me to imagine that all things, to the knowledge of which man is competent, are

> mutually connected in the same way, and that there is nothing so far removed from us as to be beyond our reach, or so hidden that we cannot discover it, provided only we abstain from accepting the false for the true, and always in our thoughts the order necessary for the deduction of one truth from another."[1]

In order to apply such a method accurately, Descartes advises us to follow mainly the four following precepts :—

> "The *first* was never to accept anything for true which I did not clearly know to be such ; that is to say, carefully to avoid precipitancy and prejudice, and to comprise nothing more in my judgment than what was presented to my mind so clearly and distinctly as to exclude all ground of doubt.
>
> "The *second*, to divide each of the difficulties under examination into as many as possible, and as might be necessary for its adequate solution.
>
> "The *third*, to conduct my thoughts in such order that, by commencing with objects the simplest and the easiest to know, I might ascend by little and little, and, as it were, step by step, to the knowledge of the more complex ; assigning in the thought a certain order even to those objects which in their own nature do not stand in a relation of antecedence and sequence.
>
> "And the *last*, in every case to make enumeration so complete, and reviews so general, that I might be assured that nothing was omitted."[2]

The Doctrine of Innate Ideas :— Having laid down the basic requirements of the geometrical method, Descartes was confronted with the problem of finding out such ideas, which could be presented to our mind "so clearly and distinctly as to exclude all ground of doubt." Unless such ideas are found, how can we make any beginning at all ? According to Descartes, such a possibility can be realized only when we come across ideas, which are perfectly rational. Such ideas are called by Descartes the *innate* ideas. These ideas are opposed to the ideas, which are *adventitious* and *factitious*. The class of adventitious ideas is obtained from the affection of our senses through the external objects.

---

[1] *Discourse on Method*, Pt. II.

[2] *Ibid.*

For example, when we hear a noise, or see the sun, or feel the heat, our ideas are adventitious. The class of factitious ideas comprises the inventions of our mind, such as Sirens, hieroglyphs, and the like. Now, both these classes of ideas cannot attain the character of rational ideas, because they are mostly accidental. They are not logical and necessary or, as Descartes puts it, they do not satisfy the test of clearness and distinctness. Such a test can be fully satisfied only when such ideas leave no trace of doubt with regard to the existence of those objects which they refer to. The adventitious ideas or factitious ideas are not completely free from such a doubt. With regard to the feeling of heat, for example, there may be differences of opinion. Similarly, with regard to the existence of the factitious ideas, simply because they are the inventions of our mind, their objective existence is not always certain. It is only the innate ideas, which are embedded in our power of reasoning, that can be beyond all touch of doubt. Their certitude is self-evident.

Cogito Ergo Sum :— The question now is : How are we to find such innate ideas, which might be clear and distinct and which might serve as the firm and abiding basis for philosophy to start with ? With a view to discovering such fundamental ideas, Descartes found it necessary to doubt the existence of each and everything in the world unless we are convinced that it is absolutely clear and distinct. While applying this test rigorously, Descartes found that the evidence of senses is not at all reliable. Our senses often deceive and mislead us and "it is the part of prudence not to place absolute confidence in that by which we have even once been deceived." Descartes cites the following examples of self-deception through senses.

> "How often have I dreamt that I was in these familiar circumstances, that I was dressed, and occupied this place by the fire, when I was lying undressed in bed ? At the present moment, however, I certainly look upon this paper with eyes wide awake ; the head which I now move is not asleep ; I extend this hand consciously and with express purpose, and I

> perceive it; the occurrences in sleep are not so distinct as all this."[3]

If it is not possible to trust our senses, this also means definitely that sciences like physics, astronomy, medicine, which are directly occupied with the sensible objects, are indeed of "a doubtful character." Can we say the same thing with regard to the truths of mathematical sciences? For, these sciences "regard merely the simplest and most general objects, and scarcely inquire whether or not these are really existent, contain somewhat that is certain and indubitable: for whether I am aware or dreaming, it remains true that two and three make five, and that a square has but four sides; nor does it seem possible that truths so apparent can ever fall under a suspicion of falsity."[4] But even concerning the certainty of the truths of mathematics, Descartes is not sure. For, it may be that "some malignant demon, who is at once potent and deceitful, has employed all his artifice to deceive me;" so that "how do I know that I am not also deceived each time I add together two and three, or form some judgment still more simple, if more simple indeed can be imagined?[5]

Everything seems to be engulfed in the universal doubt with which Descartes had started. But just at this moment, Descartes found something to save himself from the *impasse*.

> "I supposed that all the objects (presentations) that had ever entered into any mind when awake, had in them no more truth than the illusions of my dreams. But immediately upon this I observed that, whilst I thus wished to think that all was false, it was absolutely necessary that I, who thus thought, should be somewhat; and I observed that this truth, *I think, hence I am,* was so certain and of such evidence, that no ground of doubt, however extravagant, could be alleged by the Sceptics capable of shaking it, I concluded that I might, without scruple, accept it as the first principle of the philosophy of which I was in search."[6]

---

[3] *Meditation,* I.
[4] *Ibid.*
[5] *Ibid.*
[6] *Discourse on Method,* Pt. IV.

The truth that *I think, therefore I am* (Cogito ergo sum) is the one which resolves all doubt. It fully satisfies the test of being clear and distinct. For, in the very act of doubting is not the existence of the doubter necessarily presupposed ? The existence of my self in the act of doubting is absolutely certain and indubitable. Hence, it can be safely relied upon to serve as the firm foundation on which the entire superstructure of philosophy can be reared.

But what is the nature of such a self ? One thing about it is quite certain, namely, that it is a thing which doubts, affirms, denies, wills, imagines, feels. This means that these are the various attributes of the self and the self underlies them as a spiritual substance or a soul. Of all the attributes of the self, thought is the principal and essential one. A thinker without thought can have no meaning.

Another characteristic of the self is that, it is finite and imperfect. This definitely follows from the fact that it is obsessed with doubt. But, according to Descartes, it is "a greater perfection to know than to doubt." There are obvious limitations to the powers of my self. Hence, it cannot be regarded as wholly perfect.

God :—This naturally leads Descartes to the conception of God. The idea of Perfect Being is logically involved in the very conception of the finite substance. When I know myself to be imperfect, does it not imply that I must "think of something more perfect than myself ?" The idea of Infinite Substance is one which necessarily follows clearly and distinctly from the conception of a finite substance. The conception of God is, thus, another innate idea, which is self-evident and indubitable. In contradistinction from the finite substance, God is "a substance infinite, eternal, immutable, independent, all-knowing, all-powerful and by which I myself, and every other thing that exists, if any such there were created."[7]

Descartes advances three principal arguments for the existence of God. Firstly, I am finite and imperfect and still I can conceive the idea of a Perfect Being. How is this possible ? Every effect must have its cause. The idea

---

[7] *Meditation*, III.

of a Perfect Being could not have been caused by me. For "not only that what is cannot be produced by what is not, but likewise that the more perfect—in other words, that which contains itself more reality,—cannot be the effect of the less perfect ; and this not only evidently true of those effects, whose reality is actual and formal, but likewise of ideas, whose reality is only considered as objective."[8]

Secondly, I am finite and imperfect. As such, I cannot be the author of my being. In order, therefore, to explain my existence, the existence of a Perfect Being must be necessarily implied. "And thus it is absolutely necessary to conclude, from all that I have before said, that God exists ; for though the idea of substance be in my mind owing to this, that I myself am a substance, I should not, however, have the idea of an infinite substance, seeing I am a finite being, unless it were given me by some substance in reality inifinite."[9]

Thirdly, Descartes advances what is usually known as the ontological argument, although Descartes gives it in a slightly modified form. The argument is this. As a finite and imperfect being, it is not possible for me to comprehend the existence of the Perfect Being. But this is no reason to deny His existence. For, an idea which is clear and distinct or logically necessary must also necessarily exist. For example, in geometry when we argue that the idea of a triangle necessarily implies its three angles to be equal to two right angles, we are never in doubt with regard to its existence, even if it is not directly verified by us. In the same way, the idea of God, which has been found to be innate, clear and distinct, must have an existence corresponding to it.

> "While, on the contrary, recurring to the examination of the idea of a Perfect Being, I found that the existence of the Being was comprised in the idea in the same way that the equality of its three angles to two right angles is comprised in the idea of a triangle, or as in the idea of a sphere, the equidistance of all points on its surface from the centre, or even still more clearly; and that consequently it is at least as certain that God, who is

---

8 *Ibid.*

9 *Ibid.*

this Perfect Being, is, or exists, as my demonstration of Geometry can be."[10]

The Material Substance :— From the conception of God as a Perfect Being certain consequences necessarily follow. When I feel confident of the existence of my own body and of external objects, such a feeling must have its origin in the Perfect Being. As a Perfect Being, God could not have any motive of deceiving me, when He endowed me with such a feeling. True that my senses are frequently the source of error and illusions, but these are due to my imperfect understanding. If I look at the world from the standpoint of Reason, all these contradictions in my knowledge will totally disappear. Instead of the chaotic material of the senses, Reason will reveal to us the permanent qualities of the world of objects, such as extension, movement and flexibility. This is illustrated by Descartes through the famous example of a piece of wax. When it is taken from the beehive, the piece of wax is quite fresh and retains the sweetness of the honey it contains and the odour of the flowers from which it is gathered. It is hard, cold, easily handled and when struck emits sound. But when it is placed near fire, what remains of it ? The taste exhales, the smell evaporates, the colour changes, its figure is destroyed, its size increases, it becomes liquid, it grows hot, it can hardly be handled and, although struck upon, it emits no sound. Does the same wax still remain after this change ? It must be admitted that it does. In the same way, instead of the various qualities of the bodies, there remains only extension.

But the attribute of extension cannot stand by itself. It requires a substance to hold it. Such a substance, as we know, is nothing but the material substance, of which extension is the essential attribute. Now, the quality of extension can be understood through Reason and not through our senses. Hence, the idea of material substance is rooted in our Reason. It is the third innate idea, which is clear and distinct and which necessarily follows from the idea of God.

---

[10] ***Discourse on Method***, Pt. IV.

The Relation between the Three Substances :—Of the three substances, the Infinite Substance is sharply distinguished from the other two substances, namely, the spiritual and material, which are finite. The latter depend on the former, which alone can be self-subsistent and hence can be called 'substance' in the real sense of the word. Descartes, however, has not discussed the question with regard to the way in which the Infinite Substance gives rise to the two finite substances. Even if the Infinite Substance has been conceived as having the power of creating the finite existence, will not such an act of creation lead God to lose His concrete existence ? We know this to be the old difficulty, which is closely associated with idealism as such. As far as the teleological or idealistic explanation is concerned, God's existence is necessarily implied as one of its essential presuppositions. But to think that such a Divine Being can also serve the purpose of the Absolute of philosophy immediately involves us into contradictions. For teleology is based on the theory of rational knowledge. And all knowledge works only within the province of finite experience. Hence, to expect that teleology can yield a principle which is infinite is to deprive philosophy of its independence and autonomy and to make it again subservient to Religion. But this is exactly what Descartes wanted to avoid. Hence, in investing the character of infinity into the Divine Being, Descartes seems to be guilty of self-contradiction.

Coming now to the relation between the two finite substances namely, the mind and the body, we find Descartes to be equally misleading. According to him, the mind and the body are independent existences. In our concrete experience, we find them constantly interacting. The body affects the mind and creates various sensations, feelings and emotions. Similarly, the mind can also direct the body by bringing about through it the changes in the disposition of the external objects in accordance with its own desires. Descartes frankly accepts such a relation of interaction between the two finite substances.

But the theory of interaction between mind and body creates additional complications. How and where does the

interaction between mind and body take place ? Descartes in the *Passions of the Soul* suggests that both these substances come together in the pineal gland, which is located somewhere at the back of the brain. But such an hypothesis is absurd. Firstly, it destroys the substantial character and independence of mind and body. When both of them can interact, they can no more be regarded as substances, when "substance" is taken to mean that which exists in and by itself. Secondly, the same hypothesis leads to the degradation of the mind by making it stand on the same level as that of the body. The mind and body are never co-ordinate, but they stand in a hierarchical gradation. The mind represents a higher level of existence, inasmuch as it can make the body subservient to itself. This was totally ignored by Descartes most probably on account of his yielding to the growing claims of scientific mechanism of his own time. Whatever be the reason, the contradiction is quite obvious and it disrupts the entire philosophy of Descartes by creating the two-fold dualism, the one between the Infinite and the finite substances and the other between the material and the spiritual substances.

Spinoza

The Geometrical Method :— Spinoza overtly accepts Descartes' geometrical method in order to prevent dogmatism from entering into the realm of philosophy. In fact, Spinoza applied the geometrical method to philosophy more rigorously than Descartes. According to Spinoza, the principal task of philosophy is to grasp "that idea which represents the origin and sum of nature, and so to develop all our ideas from it that it shall appear as the source of all other ideas." If this be so, then the fulfilment of such a plan can be quite possible by taking recourse to the model of geometry. In his metaphysical work, *Ethics,* Spinoza follows the geometrical method in all strictness both in external form and in its main spirit. The entire book has been cast by Spinoza after the manner of Euclid. He starts from definitions, axioms and postulates and deduces certain propositions and corollaries by working out their logical implications.

The Infinite Substance :— Turning to the constructive aspect of Spinoza's philosophy, we find that Spinoza straightway rejects the Cartesian notion of the plurality of substances. A plurality of substances is a contradiction in terms. For, what is meant by "substance" ? Etymologically, it means that which stands under. That is to say, it is something on which everything else depends, while it is in and by itself quite independent, self-contained and self-existent. Such a characterization of substance is fulfilled when we have only *one* substance. Again, this one substance must not be finite. For a finite substance is bound to be limited by something besides itself. But the moment it is so limited, it loses its character of independence and self-existence.

In pursuance of such a line of thinking. Spinoza makes the idea of Infinite Substance the starting-point of his philosophical system. The Infinite Substance is defined as "that which is in itself and is conceived through itself i.e. that the conception of which does not need the conception of

another thing in order to its formation." The Infinite Substance is also called God or Nature. It is eternal and perfect. Spinoza also regards it as the cause of itself (*causa sui*) and the cause of everything in the world (*causa omnium rerum*).

Spinoza advances four arguments for the existence of God. The first is the ontological argument. The conception of God as infinite substance is a clear and distinct idea. Hence, it must necessarily have an existence corresponding to itself. Secondly, the conception of God is absolutely free from any contradictions. Hence, His existence is not impossible and whatever is not impossible must exist. Thirdly, as finite beings, we cannot produce ourselves nor is it possible for any other finite being to produce us, because this would lead to infinite regress. This necessarily leads us to an Infinite Being, who is the cause of our existence as well as that of its own. Fourthly, it is only Infinite Being that would have an infinite power required to produce and maintain its own existence.

The Doctrine of Attributes :— Having assured himself of his starting-point, Spinoza next proceeds to show how the multiplicity of the world of objects has its main source in the notion of infinite substance. As the first step in this direction, Spinoza propounds his doctrine of Attributes. Every substance must have attributes. Hence, it is quite natural that the Infinite Substance must have infinite attributes. Again, the number of such infinite attributes must not be finite. Hence, Spinoza believes that the Infinite Substance possesses infinite number of infinite attributes.

"By attribute," says Spinoza, "I understand that which the intellect perceives of substance as constituting its essence." Out of the Infinite number of the infinite attributes possessed by the Infinite Substance, our intellect is capable of knowing only the two, namely, the mind and body. Each one of these attributes exists independently. For, it reflects the essence of the Infinite Substance in its own way. According to Spinoza, each attribute is "infinite in its own kind," but not "absolutely infinite" like God.

We have now to see whether in the doctrine of attri-

butes, Spinoza has in any way succeeded in effecting a transition from the One to the Many.

(1) The most obvious criticism of the doctrine of attributes is that it involves the fallacy of *petitio principii*. It takes for granted what is required to be proved. Spinoza's starting-point is the Infinite Substance. Now, Spinoza is required to show how from this ultimate principle the multiplicity of the world is produced. The theory of Spinoza in this connection is that the Infinite Substance never gets itself differentiated. There is no impulse in it to go forth out of itself. The multiplicity of attributes is brought to it from without through the agency of our intellect. But our intellect is only a finite mode. Hence, in assigning to our intellect the cause of producing the multiplicity, Spinoza is taking for granted what is really required to be proved.

(2) Secondly, when Spinoza maintains that the Infinite Substance has infinite number of infinite attributes, he is only creating a semblance of the multiplicity having been derived from the One. For, the word "infinite" is used in a double sense. When the ultimate Substance is spoken of as infinite, what Spinoza had in mind is that it is self-contained and independent. But when he speaks of the infinite number of attributes, he is using the same word in a totally different sense. Here it means that the substance has so many attributes that they cannot be counted. This is the mathematical infinity, which means endlessness. But such an infinity is spurious and false. Hence, in qualifying the attributes with the word "infinite," Spinoza is playing fast and loose with the meaning of the same word.

These points are enough to expose the inherent defectiveness of the doctrine of attributes. It is, nevertheless, necessary to examine yet another device through which Spinoza sought to effect a transition from the One to the Many. This device consists of the doctrine of modes. It is necessary to examine it here.

The Doctrine of Finite Modes :— "By mode," says Spinoza, "I understand affection of substance, or that which is in another, through which also it is conceived." The finite modes are identified with particular things (*res particulares*), of which it is said that "they are nothing but the affections

of the attributes of God, or modes by which the attributes of God are expressed in a certain definite manner." What this means is that in contradistinction from the Infinite Substance that alone is self-existent, modes have an existence which is absolutely dependent on, and derived from, it. Their being is not in themselves, but in another that is, "in God."

This view finds support through those passages in Spinoza where he speaks of the relation between God and the modes as identical with that of cause and effect. The modes are supposed to be "following from God" or "caused by God." But, as Caird points out, the causal relation can subsist in one of the two ways. Either the cause is co-existent with the effect, just as one billiard ball in setting the other in motion exists along with it. Or the cause in producing the effect gets completely transformed as in the case of a seed, which, in giving rise to the sprout, completely disappears and is replaced by another mode of existence. Now, it is not possible to conceive the relation between the Infinite Substance and the modes in either of these ways. For, if the first alternative is accepted, then the effect lies outside the cause, which means that the modes cannot be said to be produced by God at all. If the other alternative is accepted, then in giving rise to the effect the cause is completely annihilated. Such a situation will jeopardize the very existence of God. From this it is quite evident that the expressions such as "God is the cause of everything in the world," "Whatever is, is in God," should be taken with great caution. Sometimes such expressions have been rallied in support of a pantheistic interpretation of the universe. Causality itself is a category of finite experience. Hence, to make it the basis of the relation between the Absolute and the world and to say that it can solve the philosophical problem of the One and the Many is extremely misleading.

There are, however, strong reasons to believe that Spinoza did not entirely favour pantheism. "The finite," says Spinoza, "is *in part* negation (*ex parte negatio*)." For, according to him, everyone of the modes shows a positive tendency to preserve or maintain itself (*conatus*). If such

is the case, then to say that the modes are absolutely transient forms or purely fictitious or fugitive semblances is improper. As Caird says :

> "For, even if the modes are regarded as having a negative existence, then there must be a reason in the nature of Substance for their existence as such. Though everything else in the finite world is resolved into negation, the negation is not so resolved. Evanescence itself does not vanish. In ascribing to intelligence the function of rising above and abolishing the distinction from substance of finite things, Spinoza virtually exempts intelligence itself from the process of abolition. The criterion of the illusory cannot be itself illusory."[1]

A Critical Estimate of Spinoza's Philosophy :— In so far as his adherence to idealism is concerned, Spinoza definitely follows the lead of Descartes in accepting his rationalistic method as well as in agreeing to identify the Absolute of philosophy with the supreme principle of religion, namely, God. The very title, *Ethics*, which he gives to his metaphysical work, reveals Spinoza's strong predilection in favour of the teleological interpretation of the universe. In the beginning, Spinoza placed mind and body on an independent footing. He looked upon both of them as of equal importance, inasmuch as each of them reflects the infinite essence of God in its own way. Without interacting they run parallel to each other. But as Spinoza proceeds with his work, he was more and more engrossed with the moral and religious values. Consequently, he found it necessary to subordinate mechanism to teleology. One of Spinoza's active correspondents, Tschirnhausen, had pointedly drawn Spinoza's attention to this fact. In one of his letters, he raises the pertinent question whether "the attribute of thought is not really of wider extent than any of the other attributes." The fact is that in the Spinozistic system while the body cannot have anything to do with the mind, the mind, on the contrary, can overreach the gulf between itself and the body in so far as it is able to *know* that besides itself there is also another attribute of body

---

[1] Spinoza, ***Blackwood's Philosophical Classics Series.***

belonging to the infinite Substance. Moreover, in his theory of knowledge, Spinoza has expressly placed the knowledge of body (*the idea of body*) at a lower level than the self-knowledge of mind (*the idea of mind*). Mechanism and teleology are thus not co-ordinate, but the one is sub-ordinate to the other.

The hierarchical gradation of mechanism and teleology, to which Spinoza was led in spite of himself in the act of exalting God to the rank of the Absolute, is, in principle, not wrong. Indeed, it at least cures the dualistic trend of Cartesian philosophy and saves us from those absurd consequences which accrue from it. Moreover, in so far as this point is concerned, Spinoza seems to have reaffirmed the fundamental belief of the ancient Greeks that teleology stands at a higher level than mechanism. Although Spinoza had sufficient regard for mathematics and science, the subordination of their value to that of morality and religion, nevertheless, does not in any way amount to doing any injustice to them. For, in the logical evolution of the individual's experience, the body cannot but be regarded only as a means for the realization of the higher spiritual life.

But when we turn to Spinoza's solution of the philosophical problem, we find that his attempts are as futile as those of his predecessor, Descartes. The Infinite Substance is static and sterile. It has no impulse to go forth out of itself, no power of self-differentiation into the multiplicity of the world. What with the doctrine of attributes or with that of modes, Spinoza has totally failed to show that the multiplicity of the world is ever created by the Absolute. Such a consequence was but natural. For, Spinoza invests into teleology the character of the Absolute. But, as we have been repeatedly pointing out, teleology is not self-explanatory. For, in the first place, its conception is relative to that of mechanism. Secondly, the values in which teleology is mainly interested fall definitely within the range of finite experience. Hence, the moment teleology usurps the place of philosophy, it is bound to create contradictions. The supreme principle of teleology, namely God can have nothing to do with the world of mechanism.

Hence the ascription of reality to teleology inevitably leads to the relegation of mechanism to the realm of illusions. Spinoza's philosophy dangerously comes on the verge of such a conclusion. But the growing importance of science in Spinoza's age along with his preoccupation with the moral value prevents him to carry out such a conclusion logically. In morality we have to start with such an experience which is still imperfect. Now, if such an experience, which, on account of its imperfection is condemned as unreal or illusory, we lose the very zest in putting forward any moral effort at all. This is one of the reasons why Spinoza is required to say that the finite is *in part* negation and that every mode has a *conatus* through which it seeks to preserve itself. But the moment we concede a positive and real element in the finite modes, the reality of the Absolute either has no significance or, if it has, then the Absolute loses its character as an Absolute.

Leibnitz

His Starting-Point :—Spinoza started from the one Infinite Substance and sought to effect a transition from it to the world of finite objects. In this Spinoza could not succeed. The Infinite Substance, being static, foiled the possibility of establishing any *via media* between itself and the world. Leibnitz, however, attributed Spinoza's failure to his belief in the *quantitative* relation between the Infinite Substance and the finite objects. The former was the whole of which the latter formed parts. And if the Infinite Substance alone is real, it is but natural that the finite modes, which are dependent on it, must be deprived of any reality. That is why, Spinoza condemned the finite world as something illusory or a figment of our imagination. The whole and its parts are exclusive of each other. Their relations are external as are the relations of the things in a mechanical aggregate or the relation of a geometrical whole to the spatial units of which it is made. In such a whole the *continuity* of the whole can never be synthesized with the *indivisibility* of its elements. That is why, the reality of the whole is opposed to that of its parts. But in the preface to his *Théodicée*, Leibnitz points out that the principal task of a philosopher is just to reconcile the idea of continuity with that of the individual points.

The Intensive View of the Relation between the Whole and Parts :—How to solve this difficult problem ? According to Leibnitz, the best way to do so would be to reject altogether the notion of quantitative or extensive relation between the whole and its parts and to substitute it by the conception of *intensive* relation between them. In such a relation, it is not the whole which contains the parts, but, paradoxical though it might seem, here even a part can *contain* the whole. Such an intensive relation is best illustrated by the living organisms. In an organism, the whole is not a mechanical aggregate of parts, but it is of the nature of a principle which is realized by *degrees* in and through the parts. The parts do not contain the whole actually, but

potentially. That is to say, in proportion to the capacity of the parts to represent the whole within themselves the organism will show a higher degree of individuality. This leads Leibnitz to maintain that in such a whole, the parts are active and never passive. They are the centres of dynamic force. But this force is not blind or mechanical. It is inwardly purposive, because it leads the part to represent the whole within itself. That is to say, by means of such a force the part is able to realize or actualize its inward potentiality. The activity of the part, therefore, is *spiritual*. What Leibnitz means by 'spiritual' is that the inward force of the parts is not purely mechanical. Again, by spiritual is not meant here anything which is fully conscious or intelligent. For, consciousness constitutes only one of the stages of spiritual evolution. According to Leibnitz, spirituality is possible even in the state of unconsciousness.

Monads as the Centres of Spiritual Force :—If this is properly understood, then it is possible to follow Leibnitz when he says that the world of objects consists of Monads, which are nothing but the centres of spiritual force. Such a conception of Monad leads Leibnitz to call it a substance. For in so far as a Monad is capable of representing the whole universe within itself, it contains everything within itself. And that which is self-contained is nothing but a substance. But in so far as monads are substances, they are absolutely independent. According to Leibnitz, they are "windowless." No two monads can ever interact directly.

Perception and Appetition in a Monad :—If a Monad is a centre of spiritual force, then it is bound to pass through the various degrees of individuality according as it passes from the stage of potentiality to that of actuality. This means that every Monad possesses two main faculties. The first is *perception*, which is the same as the faculty of representation by means of which a unity is established in the multiplicity of relations. A Monad as perceptive is "a universal within, rather than exclusive of, the particular."[1] But the representation of the universal in the particular admits of various degrees. That is to say, it is *dynamic*. Such a faculty is called by Leibnitz *appetition*, which is "the

[1] Latta's *Leibnitz*, Introduction, p. 35.

action of the internal principle which produces change or passage from one perception to another." Since, Monads alone are real, every change must be a change within a Monad. Such a change cannot be anything but "the unfolding of the whole which the Monad potentially contains or represents. That is to say, it must be passing from one perception (or state of representation, whether conscious or unconscious) to another. And, thus, wherever there is change there is appetition. It is simply another name for the spontaneity of the Monad, its power of unfolding its whole nature and experience within itself."[2]

Hierarchical Gradation of Monads : Laws of Identity of Indiscernibles and Continuity :—Although Monads are the centres of spiritual force endowed with the faculties of perception and appetition, they, nevertheless, differ from each other in the degree with which they represent the universe. There are some Monads whose power of representation is not sufficiently intense. Hence, their perception and appetition are much confused. Such Monads stand at the lowest grade. There are, however, such Monads whose power of representation is more and more clear and distinct. As such their perception and appetition also become more and more clear and distinct. A Monad in which such a power reaches the highest degree of intensity is the best of all the Monads (*Monas Monadum*).

According to Leibnitz, there is a perfect continuity in the world of Monads. Every Monad differs from the other in the degree of its representation, howsoever small or infinitesimal the difference might be. In no case can any two Monads be absolutely identical. For, such Monads would then be indiscernible. They would in that case lose their difference. Hence, it is impossible to find any such Monads in reality. This is what is meant by Leibnitz through his doctrine of the *Identity of the Indiscernibles*. This doctrine is only the law of Continuity in a negative form. Through the law of Continuity Leibnitz wants to suggest that there is no absolute break in between any two Monads. It is possible to arrange them in such a way that they would form a hierarchical scale, in which, while no two Monads will be

[2] *Ibid.*

absolutely identical, every Monad will differ from the other in an infinitely small degree ; so that no other Monad can be put in between any two Monads differing from each other in an infinitesimal degree. This gives an infinity of Monads, which is necessary to represent the universe from all points of view in order to save it from being imperfect. In one of his letters Leibnitz explains his law of Continuity thus :

"I think, then, that I have good reasons for believing that all the different classes of beings, the totality of which forms the universe, are, in the ideas of God, who knows distinctly their essential gradations, merely like so many ordinates of one and the same curve, the relations of which do not allow of others being put between any two of them, because that would indicate disorder and imperfection. Accordingly men are linked with animals, these with plants, and these again with fossils, which in their turn are connected with those bodies which sense and imagination represent to us as completely dead and inorganic. But the law of continuity requires that, *when the essential determinations of any being approximate to those of another, all the properties of the former must gradually approximate to those of the latter.*"[3]

We thus find that from the Monads, which are unconscious and inorganic we pass on to those, which are organic, such as plants and animals ; from the organic we come to men, who are conscious. But even beyond men, we have God, who is omniscient and all-powerful. As such, He is called the most perfect of all the Monads (*Monas Monadum*).

The Doctrine of Pre-Established Harmony :—Monads are substances. Hence, they exist absolutely independently of each other. They cannot influence each other physically. But, according to Leibnitz, one Monad can influence another *ideally*.[4] Such an ideal influence proceeds "through the mediation of God, in so far as in the ideas of God any Monad rightly claims that God, in regulating the others from the beginning of things, should have regard to it."[5] This requires an explanation.

---

[3] Quoted from Latta's *Leibnitz*, pp. 37-38.

[4] *Monadology*, sec. 51.

[5] *Ibid.*

Monads differ from each other in their degrees of representation. Hence, the relation between the Monads can be resolved into the relation between the degrees of representation. But representation is nothing but a kind of spiritual activity. Hence, the entire world of Monads is the expression of the various degrees of intensity of such a spiritual force. Now, the intensity of spiritual force is determined through the inward logic, which operates through the principles of Identity and Contradiction. An experience which is perfectly systematic and free from contradictions is the supreme. With reference to such an experience it is possible to determine the validity of any other experience. For, all such experiences are ultimately subordinate to and under the governance of the most perfect experience, which, according to Leibnitz, can be none but God. It is God, who is regarded by Leibnitz as the Creator of the universe. It is He, who has chosen to create the world of Monads in such a way that when they are taken together, they form the best of all possible worlds or, as Leibnitz puts it, the world which alone is *compossible*. The reason is that the relations between the various elements of such a world are so determined by God that they do not create any discord, but give rise to harmony. This is called by Leibnitz the doctrine of pre-established harmony. Leibnitz illustrates it thus :

> "In short, to use an illustration, I will say that this concomitance, which I compare to several different kinds of musicians or choir, playing their parts separately and so placed that they do not see or even hear one another, which can nevertheless keep perfectly together by each following their own notes, in such a way that he who hears them all finds in them a harmony that is wonderful and much more surprising than if there had been any connection between them."[6]

A Critical Estimate of Leibnitz's Philosophy :— Although Leibnitz follows Descartes in accepting the fundamental presuppositions of Rationalism, it must, nevertheless, be said to his credit that he has succeeded to a large extent in overcoming the dualism of mind and body, which

[6] *Lettre à Arnauld*, 1687 Quoted in Latta's *Leibnitz*, p. 47

created insurmountable difficulties in the philosophies of his predecessors. Through the law of Continuity, Leibnitz established a hierarchical gradation in the physical and mental worlds. Body and mind, according to Leibnitz, are the expressions of one and the same spiritual force at different degrees of its intensity. This way of looking at the problem has completely toned down the opposition between mind and body,—the opposition, which was regarded as almost irreconcilable before Leibnitz. To say that matter is the expression of spiritual force is in itself a bold step. But this was not simply a freak of Leibnitz's imagination. On the contrary, he was fully conversant with the mathematical and scientific advances of his time. It is quite well-known that he shared with Newton the honour of discovering the famous mathematical theory of infinitesimal calculus. Whether the application of such a calculus is ever possible beyond the realm of material world might still be disputed. But one thing is quite certain that it dealt a death-blow to the old conception of matter as consisting of inert and solid lumps of atoms. Matter, to which the mathematical theory of infinitesimal calculus is applicable can no more be regarded as static. For, that which admits of various degrees in a hierarchical order cannot but be intensive. And it is this which has led Leibnitz to find a *via media* to bridge up the gulf between the mind and body. Once matter is regarded as intensive, it will have to be conceived as dynamic. In other words, it must contain the source of its motion within itself. This is only another way of saying, as Leibnitz does, that the material world is the expression of spiritual force. The moment this is recognized the way is paved for assimilating matter to mind and ultimately to God, who is the supreme expression of such a spiritual force. There is one continuity running in between the two poles of our experience, namely matter and God. What the Greek thinkers like Anaxagoras and Aristotle had anticipated as an unproved assumption was brought within an ace of theoretical justification by Leibnitz.

But does this necessarily warrant the idealistic interpretation of the universe ? If the entire universe right from the physical world to the Deity is the expression of spiritual force, is not such a force itself to be regarded as the ultimate

philosophical principle ? This, in fact, is the only obvious conclusion, which should definitely follow. The ancient Greeks, particularly Anaxagoras and Aristotle, have led us to it through the doctrines of *Nous* and Efficient Cause respectively. Why then did Leibnitz turn it down and subscribe to the idealistic philosophy ? It is not the spiritual force, but God, who, according to Leibnitz, is the Creator of the universe. But on what grounds ? God, of course, is the most perfect Being. But perfection has nothing to do with creativity. Man is more perfect than the plants. But that does not entitle him to create them in any way. Indeed, perfection is only a state of existence. And hence, it cannot be the source of existence. Leibnitz does not seem to have appreciated this.

Instead of this when Leibnitz favoured the idealistic philosophy, he got himself involved into difficulties. If the starting point of Leibnitz is the reality of the parts or the Monads, then the question is : How to save ourselves from the difficulties of pluarlism? Leibnitz has advanced the doctrine of pre-established harmony in order to circumvent these difficulties. But the harmony does not spring from within the independent parts or the Monads themselves, but it is brought to them from outside through the agency of God. When a direct relation between the parts of the universe is forbidden, their pre-established harmony is another name for determinism. Instead of idealistic interpretation, which remains only a lable, Leibnitz's doctrine is a confusion worse confounded than even the mechanical interpretation of the universe.

THE EMPIRICAL SCHOOL

John Locke

Descartes and Locke :—John Locke laid the foundation of the Empirical School of Philosophy in England. It is generally believed that Locke was prompted to do so with a view to reacting against the Cartesian Rationalism. His attack on the doctrine of Innate Ideas seems to have confirmed this belief. But now it is fully recognized that Locke's criticism of Innate Ideas has no direct concern with Descartes' doctrine. In his *Essay concerning Human Understanding,* Locke directs his criticism against Herbert of Cherbury and other unnamed British philosophers. These thinkers were mostly responsible in reviving "The old Stoic conception of innate ideas (*koinai 'ennoiai*) supposed to be inborn in the human mind and universally accepted by all races."[1] As a supporter of positive science and its method, Locke was opposed to such a tendency which smacked of dogmatism. Locke was not hostile towards Descartes, because Descartes was not in the least opposed to the Enlightenment which followed in the wake of Renaissance. As we know, Descartes openly disparaged the dogmatism of mediaeval scholastic philosophy. In order to put an end to it, he started doubting the truth of each and every idea until it fulfilled the test of being clear and distinct. Descartes called such ideas 'innate', meaning thereby that such ideas form part and parcel of the faculty of human reason itself. In contradistinction from the adventitious ideas, the innate ideas of Descartes were perfectly universal and necessary. Hence, Locke might not have found any reason to find fault with them.

There is also another point on which Descartes and Locke seem to be in fundamental agreement. Commenting on the importance of Locke's work, Fraser writes :

---

[1] Wright's *A History of Modern Philosophy,* p. 143.

"The *Essay* was the first deliberate attempt, in modern philosophy, to engage in what might now be called epistemological inquiry, but mixed up by Locke with questions logical, psychological, and ontological; all subordinated in his design to 'what may be of use to us, in our present state,' and 'to our concerns as human beings.' Locke inaugurated the modern epistemological era, characteristic of philosophy in the eighteenth century, which culminated in Kant—the reaction against mediaeval dogmatism of authority, and the abstract ontology of Spinoza and physiological materialism of Hobbes, in the seventeenth century, which last involve questions that Locke expressly avoids."[2]

It is quite obvious from this that the significance of Locke's work is far-reaching. Considering its bearing on philosophy, it can be said definitely that the tendency initiated by Locke gave a different turn to the philosophical movement after him. The best way to characterize it would be to say that *Locke identified ontology with epistemology.* In other words, epistemology attained primacy over philosophy. The question with regard to the various conditions which make knowledge possible was regarded as more fundamental than that with regard to the nature of Being as such. Not only this, but, as the course of philosophical thought subsequent to Locke unmistakably shows, henceforward philosophy was made absolutely subservient to epistemology. It was belived there could be no being or reality possible, which did not conform to the conditions which make knowledge possible. This idea is so important that it will help us in understanding that spirit which gave a conceptual unity to the entire philosophical movement from Locke to Hegel.

But what is generally not appreciated is that even in this respect it was Descartes who had given a lead to Locke. We have already pointed out that Descartes' Rationalism was in principle a revival of the old idealistic philosophy of Plato. Those, who have carefully followed us, will immediately understand that Platonism is nothing but a philosophical superstructure reared on the Socratic theory

---

[2] *Locke's Essay concerning Human Understanding,* Edited by Fraser, Introduction, Vol. I, lv.

of rational knowledge. Thoroughout our examination of the Rationalistic School we have maintained such a standpoint and with reference to it we have been able to show how all those, who had followed it, had ultimately succumbed to the same drawbacks which are naturally inherent in the ontology made subservient to the rational epistemology.

Now, Locke in founding the new school of empirical philosophy was in no way opening an absolutely fresh ground. In so far as their fundamental presupposition, namely, the identification ontology with epistemology, is concerned, both Descartes and Locke were in perfect agreement. Where they differed was simply in the circumstance that while Descartes followed the old idealism founded on the theory of rational knowledge, Locke was simply pressing the claims of empirical epistemology as sponsored by the advocates of those positive sciences, which were rapidly flourishing after experiencing the terrible suffocation of over twelve centuries of the middle ages. Bacon had already warned the researchers in the field of positive sciences against the several idols and prejudices, which create formidable obstacles in the progress of scientific investigation and required them to restrict themselves to a careful and open-minded observation of the objective phenomena in order to wrest secrets out of Nature. Locke, as a staunch supporter of such a tendency pushed forward the claims of this method and wanted to see whether philosophical problems could also be approached through it. In the *Epistle to the Reader*, Locke has given us an idea of such a motive underlying his attempt to write his *Essay*.

> "Were it fit to trouble thee with the history of this *Essay*, I should tell thee, that five or six friends meeting at my chamber, and discoursing on a subject very remote from this, found themselves quickly at a stand, by the difficulties that rose on every side. After we had awhile puzzled ourselves without coming any nearer a resolution of those doubts which perplexed us, it came into my thoughts that we took a wrong course ; and that before we set ourselves upon inquiries of that nature, it was necessary to examine our own abilities, and see what *objects* our understandings were, or were not, fitted to deal with."[3]

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 9.

We thus find that Descartes and Locke, while being animated by the same spirit, differed only on the issue whether ontology is to be identified with rational epistemology or empirical epistemology. The first experiment was already tried by Plato and was by the time of Descartes sufficiently outmoded. Locke's experiment, on the other hand, was a new one. Hence, he has to be given the credit of having put forward a new suggestion and worked it out with some success.

But from the standpoint of philosophy, both Descártes and Locke are equally hostile to its main spirit. Descartes claimed to have emancipated philosophy from the servility of mediaeval dogmatism. But his idealism was only another trap for her to pass on to the servility of rational epistemology. Locke may be said to have played the same trick with philosophy. For, while this time he saved philosophy from the subordination of rational epistemology, he had already forged for her new shackles. Indeed, Locke's empiricism was as it were a bed of Procrustus, in which philosophy was made to lie not in order to breathe a sigh of relief, but in order to perform those fateful operations on her, in which if her stature fell short of the dimensions of empirical epistemology, she was to be stretched so as to fit its framework. If the stature was already longer than that, it was to be chopped off for the same reason. Such was the deadly plight to which philosophy was led by Locke. In what follows, we propose to acquaint the readers with the new series of harassment to which philosophy was subjected from Locke onwards and how strenuous was her struggle to emancipate herself from it.

The Origin of Ideas :— Concerning the origin of ideas, Locke firmly believes that originally human mind is like an "empty cabinet," a "sheet of blank paper," or a "waxen tablet." There is nothing in it in the beginning. But it comes to have its materials of thinking *by degrees* according as it becomes more and more familiar with the object in the environment.

> "Let us then suppose the mind to be, as we say, void of all characters, without any ideas :— How comes it to be furnished ? Whence comes it by that vast store which the busy

and boundless fancy of man has painted on it with an almost endless variety? Whence has it all the *materials* of reason and knowledge? To this I answer, in one word, from EXPERIENCE. In that all our knowledge is founded; and from that it ultimately derives itself. Our observation employed either, about external sensible objects, or about the internal operations of our minds perceived and reflected on by ourselves is that which supplies our understandings with all the *materials* of thinking. These two are the fountains of knowledge, from whence all the ideas we have, or can naturally have, do spring."[4]

Thus, according to Locke, Experience is the only source of knowledge. And knowledge consists of two things : (1) Sensations, which 'convey into the mind several distinct perceptions of things, according to those various ways wherein those objects do affect them. And thus we come by those *ideas* we have of *yellow, white, heat, cold, soft, hard, bitter, sweet,* and all those which we call sensible qualities.' (2) Reflection or *internal sense,* 'the other fountain from which experience furnisheth the understanding with ideas is,—the perception of the operation of our mind within us, as it is employed about the ideas it has got;.... And such are *perception, thinking, doubting, believing, reasoning, knowing, willing,* and all the different actings of our own minds;....."[5]

The Doctrine of Innate Ideas and Its Criticism :— In view of his general position as an empiricist, Locke found it necessary to reject the doctrine of Innate Ideas as it was sponsored in his time by some British philosophers. We have already pointed out that Locke did not have Descartes in view in this connection. For, by innate ideas Descartes meant those conceptions, which, being essentially logical, were universal and necessary. Locke accepted such concepts as forming the basis of scientific knowledge. There was, therefore, no point of serious disagreement in them. Locke, however, was definitely opposed to the belief in such innate ideas as were regarded inherent in the human mind, or, as Locke puts it, those innate principles "which the soul receives in its very first being, and brings into the world

[4] *Essay,* Bk. II, ch. i, 2.

[5] *Ibid,* Bk. II, ch. i, 3 and 4.

with it," and which "asserted their being imprinted on the minds of men by the hand of God."

The innate principles were believed to be both speculative and practical. The instances of speculative principles could be found "in those magnified principles of demonstration, 'Whatsoever is, is,' and 'It is impossible for the same thing to be and not to be.' The practical principles include the most basic moral principles, conscience and God.

Locke rejects the notion of innate ideas mainly on the following grounds :—

(1) Firstly, children and idiots are not in the least aware of them. This destroys "that universal assent which must needs be the necessary concomitant of all innate truths;. . . ."[6] As a matter of fact, the innate ideas would have asserted themselves best in the mind of children, idiots and savages, and illiterate people "being of all the others the least corrupted by custom, or borrowed opinions ; learning and education having not cast their native thoughts into new moulds."

> "But alas, amongst children, idiots, savages and the grossly illiterate, what general maxims are to be found ? What universal principles of knowledge ? Their notions are few and narrow, borrowed only from those objects they have had most to do with, and which have made upon their senses the frequentest and strongest impression. A child knows his nurse and his cradle, and by degrees the playthings of a littie more advanced age ; and a young savage has, perhaps, his head filled with love and hunting, according to the fashion of his tribe. But he that from child untaught, or a wild inhabitant of the woods, will expect these abstract maxims and reputed principles of science, will, I fear, find himself mistaken."[7]

Whatever is true of speculative principles is applicable to the practical principles as well. Children, idiots, savages, do not commonly cherish the same notions concerning virtue, or God.

(2) Secondly, Locke also rejects the argument that although the innate ideas may not be known to be actually

---

[6] *Ibid.*, Bk. I, ch, i, 5.

[7] *Ibid.*, 27.

existing in the mind, yet they are implicit and "that as soon as children come to the use of reason, they come also to know and assent to these maxims." In this sense, every idea would be innate. There remains, therefore, no point of special distinction between the innate ideas, which are supposed to have superior certainty and authority about them and other ideas.

(3) Even if the innate idias are known by us, they never come to us as general and abstract principles, but they are apprehended as *particular* ideas. "The senses at first let in *particular* ideas, and furnish the yet empty cabinet, and the mind by degrees growing familiar with some of them, they are lodged in the memory, and names got to them. Afterwards, the mind proceeding further, abstracts them, and by degrees learns the use of general names."

(4) Again, if by innate ideas is taken to mean "an implicit knowledge of these principles, but not an explicit," then it can be maintained that implicit knowledge can only signify that the mind is capable of understanding them. Hence, to say that they are innate would only be a contradiction in terms. For an idea of which we are not conscious is no more an idea.

The Classification of Ideas :— In this connection Locke maintains that there are two main categories of ideas, namely, *simple* ideas and *complex* ideas. Locke regards the simple ideas as the atoms out of which our knowledge is composed. They can be obtained from sensation, reflection or from both of them operating jointly. Simple ideas of sensation differ according as they are obtained either from one sense, such as colours, sounds, tastes, odours, touch, heat, cold, and solidity ; or as they are obtained from more than one sense, such as space, figure, motion and rest. Simple ideas of reflection arise from our becoming aware of our mental operations, such as our ideas of perceiving, thinking, doubting, knowing and willing. Lastly, there are simple ideas received from *both sensation and reflection,* such as pain, pleasure, existence, unity and succession.

According to Locke, simple ideas of sensation *resemble* the qualities of objects actually existing in the external

world. These are called by him the *primary* qualities of size, shape, figure, number, motion, solidity and extension. But the ideas produced in us by the *secondary* qualities have no resemblance of them at all, because these qualities are produced "by the operation of insensible particles on our senses." Colours, tastes, odours, temperature, etc. are secondary qualities. These qualities exist in things only as modes of the primary qualities. This can be illustrated thus particularly in connection with temperature of heat and cold. The same water may "produce the idea of cold by one hand and heat by the other ; whereas it is impossible that the same water, if those ideas were really in it, should at the same time be both hot and cold."

Coming now to the category of *complex* ideas, Locke asserts that these ideas are produced by our mind from out of its simple ideas by means of combining and putting them together in various ways. "Ideas thus made up of several simple ones put together, I call *complex ;* such as are beauty, gratitude, a man, an army, the universe ; which, though complicated of various simple ideas, or complex ideas made up of simple ones, yet are, when the mind pleases, considered each by itself, as one entire thing, and signified by one name."

The complex ideas are subdivided by Locke under three heads :—

(1) Modes.
(2) Substances.
(3) Relations.

(1) Modes are such complex ideas "which, however compounded contained not in them the supposition of subsisting by themselves, but are considered as dependences on, or affections of substances ;. . . ." Modes are of two types : (i) simple modes and (ii) mixed modes. Simple modes are only "variations, or different combinations, of the same simple idea," such as a dozen or score," which are nothing but the ideas of so many distinct units added together." Mixed modes are "compounded of simple ideas of several kinds, put together to make one complex one :— e.g. beauty, consisting of certain composition of colour and figure, causing delight to the beholder ;. . . ."

(2) In contradistinction from modes the complex ideas of Substances are "taken to represent distinct *particular* things consisting by themselves ; in which the supposed or confused idea of substance, such as it is, is always the first and chief. Thus if two substances be joined the simple idea of a certain dull whitish colour, with certain degrees of weight, hardness, ductility, and fusibility, we have the idea of lead ; and a combination of the ideas of a certain sort of figure, with the powers of motion, thought and reasoning, joined to substance make the ordinary idea of a man."

With regard to the way in which we come to have the complex ideas of Substance, Locke maintains that it is obscure. The idea of Substance, in and by itself, is *unknown* and *unknowable*. This point has evoked much controversy. We shall do well to approach Locke with a view to knowing what he has to say about it.

> "So that if any one will examine himself concerning his notion of pure substance in general, he will find he has no other idea of it at all, but only a supposition of he knows not what *support* of such qualities which are capable of producing simple ideas in us ; which qualities are commonly called accidents. If any one should be asked, what is the subject wherein colour or weight inheres, he would have nothing to say, but the solid extended parts ; and if he were demanded, what is it that solidity and extension adhere in, he would not be in a much better case than the Indian .... who, saying that the world was supported by a great elephant, was asked what the elephant rested on ; to which his answer was—a great tortoise ; but being again pressed to know what gave support to the broad-backed tortoise, replied—*something, he knew not what*. And thus here, as in all other cases, where we use words without having clear and distinct ideas, we talk like children : who being questioned what such a thing is, which they know not, readily give this satisfactory answer, that it is *something ;* which in truth signifies no more, when so used, either by children or men, but that they know not what ; and that the thing they pretend to know, and talk of, is what they have no distinct idea of at all, and so are perfectly ignorant of it, and in the dark. The idea then we have, to which we give the general name substance, being nothing but the supposed, but unknown, support of these qualities we find existing, which we imagine cannot subsist *sine re substante*, without something to support them, we call that support *sub-*

> *stantia*; which, according to the true import of the word, is, in plain English, standing under or upholding."[8]

According to Locke, such substances are three : (i) material ; (ii) spiritual and (iii) God.

(i) The idea of *material* or *corporeal* substance is involved in the experience of anything which exists physically. For example, a piece of lead consists of several sensible qualities, such as a certain dull whitish colour with certain degrees of weight, hardness, ductility, fusibility, etc. But along with these sensible qualities, the complex idea of lead also includes *something* which holds these qualities together. According to Locke, such a physical support of these qualities yields the idea of material or corporeal substance.

(ii) Similarly, we can have the complex idea of spiritual substance as the underlying substrate of our mental operations, such as thinking, understanding, willing, knowing, and power of beginning motion, etc.

(iii) The complex idea of God is formed by us from the simple ideas which we experience in ourselves and "which it is better to have than to be without." These ideas are those of existence, duration, knowledge, power, pleasure, happiness, etc. Theses ideas are so enlarged as to yield "our idea of infinity and so putting them together, make our complex idea of God."

(3) Complex ideas of Relation are obtained by comparing one thing with the other. "Thus, when the mind considers Caius as such a positive being, it takes nothing into that idea but what really exists in Caius ; e.g. when I consider him as a man, I have nothing in my mind but the complex idea of the species, man. So likewise, when I say Caius is a white man, I have nothing but the bare consideration of a man who hath that white colour. But when I give Caius the name *husband,* I intimate some other person ; and when I give him the name *whiter,* I intimate some other thing ; in both cases my thought is led to something beyond Caius ; and there are two things brought into consideration. "According to Locke, more important of such relations are those of *cause and effect, identity and diversity.*

---

[8] *Ibid.*, Bk. II. ch. xxiii, 2.

Berkeley

Adherence to the Empirical Formula :—Berkeley starts by believing that it is possible for us to know objects, which are either "(a) *ideas* actually imprinted on the senses ; or else (b) *ideas* perceived by attending to the passions and operations of the mind ; or lastly (c) *ideas* formed by help of memory and imagination, either compounding, dividing, or barely representing those originally perceived in the aforesaid ways." In so far as the classification of ideas is concerned, Berkeley more or less agrees with Locke. Indeed, in the three different classes of ideas, which we are capable of knowing, he has lent a strong support to Locke's empiricism, inasmuch as, according to Berkeley, all the objects that we can know, must be given either through sensation or reflection or through such ideas which are the result of combining both of them.

Esse est Percipi :— Berkeley's next step is to show that *anything* whatever is capable of being resolved and analysed in terms of the three classes of ideas as mentioned above.

> "Thus, for example, a certain colour, taste, smell, figure and consistence having been observed to go together, are accounted one thing, signified by the name *apple ;* other collections of ideas constitute a stone, a tree, a book, and the like sensible things—which as they are pleasing or disagreeable excite the passions of love, hatred, joy, grief, and so forth."[1]

When once the world of things is resolved into ideas or the combination of various ideas, the next question is : On what do the ideas depend ? To this Berkeley gives the reply : On the mind of the percipient. For, no idea can exist without the mind.

> It is this mind "*which knows or perceives them, and exercises divers operations,*—as willing, imagining, remembering,—about them." This leads Berkeley to formulate his famous doctrine *esse* is *percipi,* i.e. the existence of an idea consists in

---

[1] *Selections from Berkeley,* by Fraser, pp. 32-33.

being perceived. "I think an intuitive knowledge may be obtained of this by any one that shall attend to *what is meant by the term EXIST when applied to sensible things*. The table I write on I say exists, that is, I see and feel it ; and if I were out of my study I should say it existed—meaning thereby that if I was in my study I might perceive it, or that some other spirit actually does perceive it. There was an odour, that is, it was smelt ; there was a sound, that is, it was heard ; a colour or figure and, it was perceived by sight or touch. This is all that I can understand by these and the like expressions. For as to what is said of *the absolute existence of unthinking things without any relation to their being perceived*, that is to me *perfectly unintelligible*. Their *esse* is *percipi* ; nor is it possible they should have any existence out of the minds or thinking things which perceive them."[2]

Rejection of the Doctrine of Material Substance :— The doctrine *esse* is *percipi* naturally leads Berkeley to affirm that "there is not any other substance than SPIRIT, or *that which perceives*." This means that, according to Berkeley, there is no such thing as material substance. Berkeley adduces following arguments in support of this.

(1) Firstly, if all things can be resolved into ideas, then to say that such ideas "exist in an unperceiving thing is a manifest contradiction."

(2) Secondly, if it believed that although the ideas do not exist without the mind, yet there may be things existing independently of the mind of which they might be copies or resemblances, then to this Berkeley's reply is this :

> "I answer an idea can be nothing but an idea ; a colour or figure can be like nothing but another colour or figure. If we look but never so little into our own thoughts, we shall find it impossible for us to conceive a likeness except only between our ideas. Again, I ask whether those supposed originals or external things, of which our ideas are the pictures or representations, be themselves perceivable or no ? If they are, then they are ideas and we have gained our point, but if you say they are not, I appeal to any one whether it be sense to assert a colour is like something which is intangible ; and so of the rest."[3]

---

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 34.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 38.

Rejection of the Doctrine of Primary and Secondary Qualities :— Berkeley's immaterialism leads him also to reject the Lockean doctrine of the distinction between primary and secondary qualities. We know that through this doctrine Locke sought to support the belief in the independent existence of things. For, according to Locke, primary qualities resembled something really existing in the external world, while the secondary qualities, being their modes of existence in our mind, did not have anything to correspond to them in the external world. According to Berkeley, however, such a distinction is quite unwarrantable. For, in the first place, no primary quality can be found to exist apart from some one or the other secondary quality. For example, extension is a primary quality. But is it ever possible to conceive extension apart from some colour or other sensible quality ? If not, then it necessarily follows that just as secondary qualities are mind-dependent, the primary qualities are also of the same type.

Again, if it is believed that the primary qualities such as solidity, figure, motion may exist without the mind and correspond to the ideas we have of bodies, how are we to know this ? Either we must know it by Sense or by Reason.

> "As for our senses, by them we have the knowledge only of our sensations, ideas, or those things that are immediately perceived by sense, call them what you will : but they do not inform us that things exist without the mind, or unperceived, like to those which are perceived. This the Materialists themselves acknowledge.—It remains therefore that if we have any knowledge at all of external things, it must be by Reason inferring their existence from what is immediately perceived by sense. But what reason can induce us to believe the existence of bodies without the mind, from what we perceive, since the very patrons of Matter themselves do not pretend there is any *necessary* connexion between them and our ideas ? I say it is granted on all hands—and what happens in dreams, frenzies, and the like, puts it beyond dispute—that it is possible we might be affected with all the ideas we have now, though there were no bodies existing without resembling them. Hence, it is evident the supposition of external bodies is not necessary for producing our ideas ; since it is granted they are produced sometimes, and might

possibly be produced always in the same order we see them in at present, without their concurrence."

Lastly, Berkeley's argument against the independent existence of primary qualities is this. "All our ideas, sensations, notions, or the things which we perceive, by whatsoever names they may be distinguished, are visibly inactive—there is nothing of Power or Agency included in them. So that one idea or object of thought cannot produce or make any alteration in another. . . . Whence it plainly follows that extension, figure, and motion cannot be the cause of our sensations."[5]

The Doctrine of Spiritual Substance :— Having rejected the Lockean doctrine of Material Substance and of Primary and Secondary Qualities, Berkeley proceeds to prove the existence of spiritual substance. In this connection he draws our attention to the fact that we perceive "a continual *succession* of ideas ; some are anew excited, others are changed or totally disappear." There must be some *cause* to produce such changes in our ideas. It has already been proved that such a cause cannot be any corporeal or material substance. The cause of change in our ideas, therefore, cannot be anything but "an incorporeal active substance or Spirit." According to Berkeley, 'a Spirit is one simple, undivided, active being as it *perceives* ideas it is called the *Understanding,* and as it *produces* or otherwise *operates* about them it is called the *Will.*' It is not possible to know this Spirit like any of the things. Hence, there can be no *idea* formed of a soul or spirit. But, according to Berkeley, we can have "some *notion* of soul or spirit, and the operations of the mind ; such as willing, loving, hating—inasmuch as we know or understand the meaning of these words."

The Doctrine of Infinite Substance or God :— Berkeley proves the existence of God by drawing attention to the distinction between the ideas actually perceived by Sense and those of the Imagination.

"The ideas of Sense are more strong, lively, and distinct

---

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 45.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 50.

than those of the Imagination ; they have likewise a steadiness, order, and coherence, and are not excited at random as those which are the effects of human wills often are, but in a regular train or series—the admirable connexion whereof sufficiently testifies the wisdom and benevolence of its Author. •Now the set rules or established methods wherein the Mind we depend on excites in us the ideas of senses are called the *laws of nature ;* and these we learn by experience, which reaches us that such and such ideas are attended with such and such other ideas, in the ordinary course of things.'[6]

If the ideas of sense are more real, regular, vivid and constant than those of Imagination, then does it mean that they are caused by something existing outside our mind ? To this Berkeley's answer is emphatic No. "The ideas of Sense are allowed to have more reality in them, that is, to be more strong, orderly, and coherent than the creatures of the mind ; but this is no argument that they exist without the mind. They are also less dependent on the spirit, or thinking substance which perceives them, in that they are excited by the will of another and more powerful Spirit ; yet still they are *ideas,* and certainly no idea, whether faint or strong, can exist otherwise than in a mind perceiving it."

The other and more powerful Spirit, who is the cause of the ideas of Sense, is nothing but God. The only difference between our mind and God is that the former is finite, while the latter is infinite and almighty.

---

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 54.

Hume

His Allegiance to Locke's Empiricism :— In his *Treatise of Human Nature* Hume right at the outset swears allegiance to Locke's empiricism. Like Locke, Hume believes that our experience gets all its perceptions either through *impressions* or *ideas*. There is no qualitative difference between these two sources of knowledge. They differ only in degree. Those perceptions which come to us with "most force and violence" are called *impressions*. *Ideas* are only faint images of these and as such they do not lead us to anything absolutely new. They cannot give us anything, which is not already contained in our impressions.

> "All the perceptions of the human mind resolve themselves into two distinct kinds, which I shall call *impressions* and *ideas*. The difference between these consists in the degrees of force and liveliness, with which they strike upon the mind, and make their way into our thought or consciousness. Those perceptions which enter with most force and violence, we may name *impressions*; and, under this name, I comprehend all our sensations, passions, and emotions, as they make their first appearance in the soul. By ideas, I mean the faint images of these in thinking and reasoning; such as, for instance, are all the perceptions excited by the present discourse, excepting only those which arise from the sight and touch, and excepting the immediate pleasure or uneasiness it may occasion."[1]

Having laid down these two primary sources of our knowledge, Hume proceeds to give us their various classifications into simple and complex and each of these again is subdivided into sensation and reflection. With these detailed classifications, we are not directly concerned here. It is enough to note that they do not involve any fundamental departure from the general empirical line of thinking.

Rejection of the Idea of Substance in General :— Hume is more rigorous in applying the test proposed by him in

---

[1] *A Treatise of Human Nature,* Pt. I, Bk. i, sec. 1.

agreement with Locke to determine the validity of the philosophical ideas. In this connection, Hume in the first place, perfectly agrees with Berkeley in rejecting the idea of material substance. For, it involves manifest contradiction from the standpoint of empiricism. How can one affirm the existence of something which is declared to be unknown and unknowable ? But Hume's attack on the idea of substance is not specific like that of Berkeley. With the material substance is linked up the fate of other substances as well. We know that Berkeley, even after the rejection of material substance, persisted in maintaining the existence of spiritual substance viz. the self and the Infinite Substance, viz, God. According to Hume, if the idea of substance is itself found to be defective, the rejection of both these substances is incumbent on us logically. Hume's clear verdict concerning the validity of the idea of substance is as folows :—

> "I would fain ask those philosophers, who found so much of their reasonings on the distinction of substance and accident, and imagine we have clear ideas of each, whether the idea of *substance* be derived from the impressions of sensation or reflection ? If it be conveyed to us by our senses, I ask, which of them, and after what manner ? If it be perceived by the eyes, it must be a colour ; if by the ears, a sound ; if by the palate, a taste ; and so of the other senses. But I believe none will assert, that substance is either a colour, or sound, or a taste. The idea of substance must, therefore, be derived from an impression of reflection, if it really exist. But the impressions of reflections resolve themselves into our passions and emotions ; none of which can possibly represent a substance. We have, therefore, no idea of substance, distinct from that of a collection of particular qualities, nor have we any other meaning when we either talk or reason concerning it."[2]

Rejection of the Idea of Spiritual Substance :— With the rejection of the idea of substance in general, it follows that not only can there be no material substance, but the idea of spiritual substance also can no more be entertained by us. In fact, Hume discards the notion of *personal identity* by

[2] *Ibid.*, sec. 4.

subjecting it to the inexorable test of the empirical formula. Here is what Hume has to say about the idea of personal identity.

> "For my part, when I enter most intimately into what I call *myself*, I always stumble on some particular perception or other, of heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure. I never can catch *myself* at any time without a perception, and never can observe anything but the perception. When my perceptions are removed for any time, as by sound sleep, so long am I insensible of *myself*, and may truly be said not to exist. And were all my perceptions removed by death, and could I neither think, nor feel, nor see, nor love, nor hate, after the dissolution of my body, I should be entirely annihilated, nor do I conceive what is further requisite to make me a perfect non-entity. If any one, upon serious and unprejudiced reflection, thinks he has a different notion of *himself*, I must confess I can reason no longer with him. All I can allow him is, that he may be in the right as well as I, and that we are essentially different in this particular. He may, perhaps, perceive something simple and continued, which he calls *himself*; though I am certain there is no such principle in me."[3]

Rejection of the Idea of Infinite Substance :— With the rejection of material and spiritual substances, the idea of Infinite substance, for which both Locke and Berkeley had a soft corner in their heart, is virtually disposed of. When, however, we take into consideration Hume's views on the nature of religion, we find that he did not go to the extent of rejecting the *belief* in the being of God altogether. Such a conclusion is fully supported by referring to Hume's *Dialogues concerning Natural Religion*. In this work, Hume never attacks the belief of common man in the existence of God ; on the contrary, he takes it for granted. The speakers of the *Dialogue* only seem to be in the doubt concerning the validity of the logical proofs for the existence of God as advanced by the theists. Hume makes them discuss the futility of almost all the traditional arguments, such as the ontological, physico-theological and cosmological arguments. In none of them could be found a convincing proof for the existence of God. But, strange as it may

[3] *Ibid.*, Bk. I, Pt. iv, sec. 6,

seem, this does not lead Hume to reject the belief in the being of God. For, according to Hume, human understanding is so narrow and limited that through it man cannot be helped "in forming an inference concerning the goodness of superior powers, since he must form that inference from what he knows, not from what he is ignorant of." And yet in spite of this Hume has not completely undermined the foundation of Natural Theology. What he wants to suggest is that although no sure ground can be found to *establish* the existence of God, we can at least be led to it in all *probability* through our analogy of human intelligence. In the concluding words of Philo, who is one of the interlocutors in the *Dialogue* : "The whole of Natural Theology resolves itself into one simple, though somewhat ambiguous, at least undefined proposition : That the cause or causes of order in the universe probably bear some remote analogy to human intelligence."

It is on account of such passages that Prof. Huxley speaks of Hume's "shadowy and inconsistent Theism." In our opinion, Hume cannot be accused of any inconsistency in this respect. The reason is that Hume throughout his works is guided by the motive to apply the empirical formula with the utmost logical rigour. Of course, this has led him to reject outright several of our settled convictions. But, according to Hume, questions of theoretical importance are required to be kept apart from the questions and problems as they affect us in our practical life. Sometimes it may happen that they may stand poles apart. But no serious student of philosophy need recoil from such a situation. In the Introduction to his *Treatise* Hume writes :

> "When we see that we have arrived at the utmost extent of human reason, we sit down contented ; though we be perfectly satisfied in the main of our ignorance, and perceive that we can give no reason for our most general and most refined principles, beside our experience of their reality ; which is the reason of the mere vulgar, and what it required no study at first to have discovered for the most particular and most extraordinary phenomenon. And as this impossibility of making any further progress is enough to satisfy the reader, so the writer may derive a more delicate satisfaction from the free confession

> of his ignorance, and from his prudence in avoiding that error, into which so many have fallen, of imposing their conjectures and hypotheses on the world for the most certain principles. When this mutual contentment and satisfaction can be obtained betwixt the master and scholar, I know not what more we can require of our philosophy."

Hume's views on Religion and Causality, which had caused unusual stir in the minds of philosophical thinkers after him, have been prompted from such a view of philosophy. For it may be that logically we may not be able to *establish* a certain idea, but that need not prevent us from believing in it for our *practical* purposes. In his *Dialogue* Hume followed such a line of thinking. He rejected the idea of God logically and not practically. As a philosopher Hume is definitely opposed to the idea of Infinite Deity, while in his everyday life he remained devoutly religious. But for Hume this did not in the least involve any contradiction. The question of inconsistency arises only within the province of logical thinking. But, according to Hume, thought is only one of a number of "powers or energies in nature." Besides thought, there are also other principles such as instincts, generation and vegetation. Our practical life, when it is not guided by Reason, may be governed by anyone or all of them. Under such circumstances, if our course of action seems to be at logger-heads with our theoretical conclusions, nobody can hold us guilty of having committed any contradictions.

Hume's Critique of Causality :—Hume shows a similar attitude of combining logical rigour along with his generous concession to the needs of practical life even in his treatment of the problem of causality. It is well-known that it was particularly Hume's treatment of causality rather than any other thing that had roused Kant from his 'dogmatic slumber,' so much so that with a view to furnishing an adequate solution to this problem Kant had to write his *Critique of Pure Reason.* Kant's reaction against Hume was, of course, perfectly justified, inasmuch as the principle of causality is the very foundation on which the entire superstructure of natural sciences is reared. While Hume knew this, his conclusions with regard to it seriously called in

question its validity from the standpoint of theoretical justification. Let us try to understand the reasons on account of which Hume was led to say so.

Causality, according to Hume, is one of such philosophical relations in the objects "as may be changed without any change in the ideas." The relation of causality involves three main elements : (1) *Contiguity* of the object in such a relation ; (ii) their *succession* and (iii) their *necessary connection.*

> "We remember to have had frequent instances of the existence of one species of objects ; and also remember that the individuals of another species of objects have always attended them, and have existed in a regular order of continuity and succession with regard to them. Thus we remember to have seen that species of object we call *flame,* and to have felt that species of sensation we call *heat.* We likewise call to mind their constant conjunction in all past instances. Without any further ceremony, we call the one *cause,* and the other *effect,* and infer the existence of the one from that of the other."[4]

These facts lead us to define "a cause to be *an object precedent and contiguous to another, and where all objects resembling the former are placed in a like relation of priority and continuity to those objects that resemble the latter.*" Now, the problem of causality crops up when we seek to find a theoretical justification for the various elements that constitute a causal relation. Out of the three elements, the two, namely, contiguity and succession create no difficulty. For, these relations can be verified immediately among our impressions. The chief difficulty arises when we come to the third element, namely, "our idea of necessity when we say that two objects are necessarily connected together." Hume's analysis in this connection is as follows :—

> "Upon this head, I repeat, what I have often had occasion to observe, that as we have no idea that is not derived from an impression, we must find some impression that gives rise to this idea of necessity, if we assert we have really such an idea. In order to this, I consider in what objects necessity is commonly

[4] *Ibid.*, Bk. I, Pt. iii, sec. 6.

supposed to lie ; and, finding that it is always ascribed to causes and the effects, I turn my eye to two objects supposed to be placed in that relation, and examine them in all the situations of which they are susceptible. I immediately perceive that they are *contiguous* in time and place, and that the object we call cause *precedes* the other we call effect, in no one instance can I go further, nor is it possible for me to discover any third relation betwixt these objects. I therefore enlarge my view to comprehend several instances, where I find like objects always existing in like relations of contiguity and succession. At first sight this seems to serve but little to my purpose. The reflection on several instances only repeats the same objects ; and therefore can never give rise to a new idea. But upon further inquiry I find that the repetition is not in every particular the same, but produces a new impression, and by that means the idea which I at present examine. For, after a frequent repetition, I find that upon the appearance of one of the objects the mind is *determined* by custom to consider its usual attendant, and to consider it in a stronger light upon account of its relation to the first object. It is this impression, then, or *determination,* which affords me the idea of necessity.'"[5]

This passage brings home to qur mind that Hume totally rejects the idea of necessity on the *logical* grounds, while he affirms it as a custom or *psychological habit* that we form in dealing with the objects in our practical life. According to Hume, there is no inconsistency involved in this. For, if we apply the empirical test rigorously, there is no possibility of finding any impression or idea of the necessary connection in between the two objects, which enter into causal relation. And yet for all practical purposes, we *believe* in it. Such a belief, however, is not *logical,* but only psychological.

A Critical Estimate of the English Empirical Philosophy :— Locke, in the first part of his *Essay,* directs a vigorous polemic against the doctrine of Innate Ideas. He adduces several arguments to expose the dogmatic element in it. Locke was, in fact, convinced that the root-cause of all dogmatism in philosophy was the want of proper comprehension of the limits and extent of the faculty of knowledge. In order, therefore, to shake philosophy free

[5] *Ibid.,* Bk. I, Pt. iii. sec. 14.

from dogmatism, Locke regarded it as of utmost importance to make first an investigation into the origin, extent and limit of human understanding.

In this way, Locke was the first philosopher in the modern period to make a move towards instituting a *scientific inquiry* into the problem of knowledge. The method for the scientific procedure was already formulated by Bacon, who had already laid down certain principles to enable the researchers in the field of natural sciences to give up all morbid habits of mind to lean on the words of some authority and to guide a free and unprejudiced search into the laws of nature. Locke introduced the same *empirical* method in the domain of philosophy.

Locke has been frequently accused by the critics for having taken recourse to a purely psychological method in dealing with the problems of philosophy. In our opinion, this accusation is not well-founded. As a matter of fact, it was Locke who first introduced a really critical method in philosophy. Riehl, in his commentary on Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason,* takes the same view. He regards Locke's *Essay* as the English critique of the faculty of knowledge. His analysis of human understanding into sensation and various types of ideas is quite consistent with the demand of epistemology.

But the real mistake of Locke lies in the circumstance that in his *Essay,* he looks upon empirical epistemology as the only correct and independent discipline, while he regards ontology as a discipline subservient to empirical epistemology. In other words, for Locke, empirical knowledge is the sole test of reality. Whatever could be known empirically is alone valid and real. Contrarily, whatever could not be known through experience is chimerical and unreal. Reality thus has left no scope apart from the empirical knowledge and hence ontology becomes identified with empirical epistemology in Locke's system.

In the earlier part of his *Essay,* Locke's attitude towards ontology, however, was not so radical. He *did* leave some place for ontology apart from epistemology. This can be seen from the two doctrines of Locke, namely, those of Material Substance and Primary and Secondary Quali-

ties. Through the doctrine of Primary and Secondary Qualities, Locke maintained that the things in the objective world possess two different kinds of properties. One kind of them depends for its existence entirely on the percipient's mind. Such qualities, for example, are colour, sound, taste, smell, etc. Locke calls these the Secondary qualities. But besides these there are also certain qualities, which are the permanent possessions of things themselves and which do *not* at all depend for their existence on the perception of the subject. These are called the Primary qualities, such as, extension, figure, size, motion, etc. From the conception of Primary qualities, we can very easily understand that Being is not altogether identical with knowledge in Locke's system.

Being displays a similar independence of knowledge in Locke's doctrine of Material Substance. Material Substance, according to Locke, is the substratum or support underlying the phenomena of the objective world. Locke also positively maintains that this substrate is abstract in its nature. That is to say, though it positively exists behind the knowable phenomena of the world, yet in and by itself it is something unknown and unknowable. From this conception of Material Substance it is quite evident that Locke did leave room for ontology apart from epistemology. The material substance, which is an ontological principle, while, truly existing, is perfectly abstract and beyond the pale of knowledge.

But no sooner did Locke formulate the doctrine of Material Substance than he forgot the claims of ontology. For, in the latter portion of his *Essay*, Locke openly maintains that what is known through our sensations and ideas has solely the claim to reality. What is not known in this way cannot be said to be real at all. This change in Locke's view occurs as follows :—

Locke initially did hold that the object as it exists independently can be known. But the cognitive process takes place through the mediation of its various sensory "representations." Locke then thought that we have a direct access to our "ideas" about the object. The object as it is in and by itself or the *archetype* of our ideas is not possible

for us to know. And since the bodily aspect of the object does not enter into the field of knowledge, it is of no significance philosophically. When the argument reached this stage, the way was clear for making epistemology the supreme discipline of philosophy and making ontology subservient to it. For, now there is left no room for ontological reality apart from epistemology. The real henceforward becomes co-extensive with the knowable. And this is the same as saying that ontology is perfectly identical with epistemology. This confusion is the root-cause of misguiding the entire philosophical speculation in the modern period. We shall now proceed to trace the development of the chaos in the philosophies of Locke's successors.

Berkeley, in his *Principles of Human Knowledge,* makes a vigorous attempt to identify ontology with epistemology. The famous doctrine which he propounds in this treatise, namely, *esse* is *percipi,* unambiguously shows that in the beginning Berkeley is not in the least prepared to concede to Being any room apart from knowledge. In fact, Berkeley's doctrine of *esse* is *percipi* is only a culmination of Locke's epistemologism. Locke himself, however was precluded from advocating a full-fledged epistemologism, inasmuch as the ghost of his earlier ontologism, to be met with in the doctrines of Primary and Secondary Qualities as well as Material Substance, was haunting his mind till the end. But Berkeley, in order to give us a thoroughgoing epistemological philosophy, wiped away all the vestiges of Locke's ontologism. With regard to Material Substance, Berkeley maintained that since it is something unknown and unknowable, it had no right to exist. For, knowledge alone is the test of reality. Again, in connection with the primary qualities Berkeley asserts that it is wrong to divorce them from the secondary qualities. For both these types of qualities are invariably found together in our experience. And since the secondary qualities are mind-dependent, the primary qualities too like-wise must be dependent for their existence on the knowledge of the percipient. In this way, Berkeley, by stripping off Lockean epistemologism of all traces of ontologism, had almost carried it to its logical extreme.

But Berkeley makes a return to ontologism in his doctrine of Self and God. With regard to the Self, Berkeley maintains that our understanding and will presuppose the existence of a spiritual substance. The question is : Is this spiritual substance empirically knowable ? Berkeley says : No. Here Berkeley clearly gives up his allegiance to the empirical method. He, however, suggests that although we cannot know the Self, we can, nevertheless, have a *notion* of it. Here Berkeley has uttered a great truth without being aware of its momentous implications. That is why, his statement particularly in the context in which he is thinking, is nothing short of a dogma. With regard to the conception of God we find that Berkeley was led to formulate it in order to explain the *cause* of our sensations. The order and coherence of sensations, as is self-evident, do not at all depend upon the mind of the individual percipient. Consequently, they must have their source in some over-personal mind, which, according to Berkeley, can be nothing else but God. But to regard God as the *cause* of sensations really makes Him indistinguishable from the Material Substance, which discharges the same function in the Lockean system. Thus, in Berkeley's doctrine of God, ontology asserts its independence of epistemology. For, God is an ontological entity whose *esse* is not dependent on the perception of the finite mind.

Moreover, there is good reason to believe that Berkeley himself felt a positive repugnance to his epistemological philosophy that he propounded in his *Principles*. For, in his later works, especially in the *Siris*, he definitely abandons it and adopts a position akin to that of Platonic Idealism.

In Hume's philosophy, the epistemologism of the empirical school meets its Nemesis. For, if, according to the empirical formula, Being is identical with knowing, then nothing that does not form part of knowledge can be said to exist. The doctrine of material substance was already discarded by Berkeley. But Berkeley himself had retained the doctrine of Self or spiritual substance as well as that of God. Hume, however, through a rigorous adherence to the empirical formula, showed the futility of these doctrines of Berkeley. For, neither the self nor God form part of the

knowable world. Hence, neither of the doctrines of Berkeley can be said to be valid. Hume's philosophy thus lands us in absolute scepticism. But Hume is not to blame for this. For, to Hume goes the credit of showing that scepticism inevitably follows in the wake of empirical epistemologism as such.

Kant

His Copernican Revolution in Philosophy :— As has expressly been mentioned by Kant, it was Hume, who first roused him from his " dogmatic slumber. " We have already seen that Hume's chief merit lay in carrying the empirical philosophy to its logical extreme through a rigorous adherence to its original assertion, namely, Experience is the source of our knowledge. The consequence of this endeavour has been to precipitate the entire metaphysical speculation into a thoroughgoing sensationalism and scepticism. Especially, Hume's critique of causality has had a singularly malignant effect on the objective validity of the natural and mathematical sciences. For, the principle of causality is their very life and soul. Hence, when Hume declared that the principle of causality is nothing but a fiction of mind, the very foundation, on which the natural and mathematical sciences were based, was removed.

Kant, who himself was a good mathematician and physicist, could hardly tolerate the pitiable condition in which the entire science was put. Kant himself had no doubt in his mind about the objective validity of the natural and mathematical sciences. He presupposed it. What Kant had uppermost in his mind was to vindicate it and thus to circumvent the sceptical consequences of Hume's philosophy. In order to achieve this aim Kant thought it worthwhile to undertake a fresh inquiry into the problem of knowledge and to demonstrate through it the objective validity of the mathematical and natural sciences. The results of Kant's epistemological investigations are, as is well-known, embodied chiefly in the *Critique of Pure Reason*.

In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant also believes that it is not possible to escape scepticism so long as the epistemological inquiry is carried along the method followed by the philosophies before his time. For, the traditional method

was mainly dogmatic in character. That is to say, it made use of the faculty of knowledge without any previous consideration of its proper limits and extent. The weakness of such a procedure is apparent on the very face of it. It consists in the circumstance that through it we are sometimes led to believe in the existence of certain objects, which do not at all fall within the province of knowledge. The doctrines of spiritual substance, God, material substance, etc, especially of the Cartesian philosophy, were such unproved assumptions. It is quite proper, therefore, that the sceptic should doubt the existence of such transcendent objects. Scepticism is thus the inevitable consequence of dogmatic philosophy. This is expressed by Kant in his Preface to the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason.*

> "Hitherto it has been assumed that all our knowledge must conform to objects. But all attempts to extend our knowledge of objects by establishing something in regard to them *a priori,* by means of concepts, have, on this assumption, ended in failure."

The only way in which the *debâcle* can be avoided is pointed out by Kant in continuation of the passage just quoted :

> "We must therefore make trial whether we may not have more success in the tasks of metaphysics, if we suppose that objects must conform to our knowledge. This would agree better with what is desired, namely, that it should be possible to have knowledge of objects *a priori,* determining something in regard to them prior to their being given. We should then be proceeding precisely on the lines of Copernicus' primary hypothesis. Failing of satisfactory progress in explaining the movements of the heavenly bodies on the supposition that they all revolved round the spectator, he tried whether he might not have better success if he made the spectator to revolve and the stars to remain at rest."[1]

This is how Kant wanted to effect a sort of Conpernican revolution in the method of philosophy. The new standpoint introduced by Kant is called *criticism.* It is criticism,

[1] *Critique of Pure Reason,* Preface to Second Edition, Pp. xvi-xvii, Eng. translation by N. K. Smith.

because, according to Kant, a critical examination of the limits and extent of the faculty of knowledge can alone make metaphysics free from all dogmatism and hence make it truly scientific.

The Problem of the Critique :—Kant has formulated the general problem of Pure Reason in the second edition of his *Critique* thus : How are *a priori* synthetic judgments possible ?

According to Kant, our knowledge consists of two elements : the one is *perception* and the other is *conception*. Perception yields only such propositions as are synthetic. For example, when I say that "The tree is green," the predicate of the proposition, viz. 'green' is something new, because it is not already contained in the subject term, viz. 'tree'. Howsoever much we may analyse the subject term, 'tree', it can never lead us to the concept 'green'. The two concepts, which are independent of each other, are *synthesized* in the proposition "The tree is green," by means of our perception. Thus, perception is absolutely essential in order to explain synthetic judgments.

Now, synthetic judgments in and by themselves are particular. For, when we say that "The tree is green," the proposition does not state a fact which is absolutely universal and necessary. For it cannot be regarded as the essential character of a tree to be green at all. A tree can as well have a different colour. Synthetic judgments, therefore, yield knowledge, which is only particular and contingent. At best, such judgments can have such a generality which can yield only probable truths. For, example, the empirical generalizations, such as. "All crows are black", only yield such truths as are probable. They can never lead us to a knowledge which is absolutely certain and universal.

We are, therefore, required to pass on to those judgments, which, while synthetic, are also universal and necessary. We come across such judgments in mathematics and natural sciences. For example, "All bodies are heavy" or "2+5=7," are judgments which, according to Kant, are synthetic as well as universal and necessary. In the first proposition the subject and predicate are quite independent of each other. No amount of analysis of the subject term

can ever yield us the predicate. But the synthesis of both these concepts in the proposition "All bodies are heavy" is not accidental. On the contrary, it expresses a universal and necessary truth. The same is true of the mathematical propositions. According to Kant, 7 can be obtained in several ways. We can obtain it by combining 3 with 4, or by subtracting 2 from 9. But in a certain experience, when 2+5 is given, it necessarily leads to 7. In such a conclusion, therefore, along with the particularity, there is also involved the universal character, which is due to the operation of the conceptual faculty of our mind. It is necessary to observe here that the conceptual synthesis invariably bestows upon a judgment a character of being universal and necessary. Such a conceptual synthesis is called by Kant *"a priori"* or transcendental. It is *a priori,* not because it comes first in time, but because it is essentially *presupposed* in any knowledge which is universal and necessary. It is also called transcendental (and *not* "transcendent") in order to suggest that the universal and necessary character of such judgments does not have its origin in the empirical experience or sensibility, but it is derived from the faculty of conception or Reason, which transcends that of sensibility.

If this is understood, then, according to Kant, the judgments which are *a priori* and synthetic hold the very key to unravel the secrets of our faculty of knowledge. If we are able to explain the possibility of such judgments, we can as well know fully the limits and extent of our knowledge. When, therefore, Kant formulated the problem of his *Critique* by saying : How are *a priori* synthetic judgments possible ?, he has given in our hands as it were the very helm, which will keep us on the right path throughout the inquiry into those *a priori* conditions which make knowledge possible.

The Critique of Pure Reason combines both Epistemology and Metaphysics :—It would be wrong to think that in the *Critique of Pure Reason,* Kant intended to give us only a theory of knowledge. This is, no doubt, the primary purpose of the book. But Kant also wanted that his epistemological analysis should subserve the purpose of solving the metaphysical problem. In the Preface to the First Edition of his *Critique,* Kant clearly says :

"I do not mean by this a critique of books and systems, but of the faculty of reason in general, in respect of all knowledge after which it may strive *independently of all experience.* It will therefore decide as to the possibility or impossibility of metaphysics in general and determine sources, its extent, and its limits — all in accordance with principles."

It is quite obvious from this passage that Kant's original intention in writing the *Critique* was not only to give epistemology, but also such metaphysics as would be founded strictly on his epistemology. This requires us to be very cautious in accepting Kant's results as they are. For here Kant manifests the very same prejudice, with which Locke embarked on writing his *Essay.* Nay, we can as well go back to Plato, who had made a similar attempt by identifying ontology with the Socratic theory of knowledge. Indeed, Kant's attempt bears great similarity to Plato's. For, just as Socratic theory of knowledge is the result of overcoming the defects of the empirical epistemology of Protagoras, similarly Kantian *Critique of Pure Reason* seeks to substitute rational epistemology for Locke's empirical epistemology.

But side by side with his epistemological analysis, Kant has also made an attempt to identify ontology with epistemology. And it is this which is the fundamental basis of the entire German Idealism right from Kant to Hegel. This has not only created unnecessary complications in Kant's epistemological analysis itself, but it has also made him change and shift his position very frequently in analysing the nature of reality without knowing the reason why such a confusion was caused. In the *Critique of Pure Reason* itself he puts forward as many as three different views of things-in-themselves. When he was not satisfied with them, he passed on to the other *Critiques.* Here also he had to confront similar difficulties. It is this which made Kant's mind extremely restless. When we pass on to Kant's successors, such as, Fichte, Schelling and Hegel, we find that the more they tried to make ontology subordinate to the rational epistemology of Kant, the more they got themselves entangled into innumerable difficulties and contradic-

tions. In the following pages, we propose to narrate the story of such a confusion.

Kant's First Conception of Thing-in-Itself :—It has already been pointed out that the critical standpoint of Kant is nothing but a fresh move towards indentifying ontology with epistemology. This is evident from the express declaration of Kant that reality must be *immanent* in knowledge. If reality, is transcendent to knowledge, that is to say, if it is not conformable to the conditions which make knowledge possible, then it is, for Kant, as good as nothing. Now, this proposition evidently means that metaphysics must necessarily be subservient to epistemology. For, a genuine metaphysics is possible, so we are led to believe, only when the objects, which it deals with, are first declared to be knowable and valid by epistemology. In this way, epistemology is made the supreme discipline of philosophy and is granted complete independence.

But what is given with one hand is taken away with the other. For, in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, ontology as the doctrine of thing-in-itself constantly makes its appearance and begins to encroach upon the domain of epistemology. Thus, to begin with, in the Transcendental Aesthetic Kant says : "The effect of an object upon the faculty of representation, so far as we are affected by it, is *sensation.*" Now, the "object," to which our sensations must correspond, is believed by Kant to be outside the pale of our knowledge. It is called by him an unknown and unknowable or more precisely the *transcendental object.* The following quotation will make this clear :

> "Now, also, we are in a position to determine more adequately our concept of an *object* in general. All representations have, as representations, their object, and can themselves in turn become objects of other representations. Appearances are the sole objects which can be given to us immediately, and that in them which relates immediately to the object is called intuition. But these appearances are not things in themselves ; they are only representations, which in turn have their object—an object which cannot itself be intuited by us, and which may,

> therefore, be named the non-empirical, that is, transcendental object = *X*."[2]

Kant's doctrine of transcendental object, it should be observed here, is quite inconsistent with the requirements of the new method which he introduced in the domain of philosophy. Kant, as we have just seen, speaks of the transcendental object as the cause of sensations. But, according to the teaching of the *Critique,* casuality is a category of knowledge. Hence, to apply it to the transcendental object, which absolutely transcends experience, is quite inconsistent. Moreover, if we look into the matter more closely, we shall find that Kant's doctrine of transcendental object is an ontological doctrine closely akin to the Lockean doctrine of material substance. It is simply another name for the abstract essence lying behind the things of the phenomenal world. If such be the case, then the retention of such a doctrine will necessarily cause a serious limitation to the self-government granted to epistemology. For, ontology, since its object is now totally outside the jurisdiction of knowledge, will refuse to yield its palm to epistemology and lay claim to a position quite independent of it.

Kant's Second Conception of Thing-in-Itself :—In fact, Kant himself, as he proceeds with his *Critique,* appears to have realized the weakness of his doctrine of transcendental object. For, in the Transcendental Logic, which follows immediately after the Transcendental Aesthetic, Kant comes to maintain that an object of knowledge cannot exist independently of the conceptual activity of the subject's mind. This is expressed by Kant in the following sentences :

> "Thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind. It is, therefore, just as necessary to make our concepts sensible, that is, to add the object to them in intuition, as to make our intuitions intelligible, that is, to bring them under concepts. These two powers or capacities cannot exchange their functions. The understanding can intuit nothing, the senses can think nothing. Only through their union can knowledge arise."[3]

---

[2] *Ibid.*, A 108-109.

[3] *Ibid.*, A. 51.

Henceforward, Kant increasingly comes to regard the object not as transcendent to, but immanent in, knowledge. The gradual change in Kant's standpoint reaches its climax when Kant in the Transcendental Analytic, especially in the chapter entitled "The Ground of the Distinction of all Objects in general into Phenomena and Noumena", definitely maintains that the thing-in-itself, which was originally looked upon as completely outside the mind, is made here an object of pure intelligence. In its new rôle, the thing-in-itself is called a *noumenon*.

Now, the above change in Kant's conception of thing-in-itself is very significant. For by substituting the conception of noumenon for that of transcendental object, Kant firstly rejected the possibility of any ontology independently of epistemology ; and secondly, by making reality one with the ultimate principle of knowledge, namely, pure intelligence, Kant positively subordinated ontology to epistemology. In this way, epistemology ultimately triumphs over ontology, when the thing-in-itself becomes a noumenon.

But, curiously enough, immediately after formulating the conception of noumenon, Kant makes a departure from his original critical standpoint. The reason is this : The noumenon, according to Kant, is accessible only through intellectual intution, which is not possible for a man. Kant says :

> "None the less, if the concept of a noumenon be taken in a merely problematic sense, it is not only admissible, but as setting limits to sensibility is likewise indispensable. But in that case a noumenon is not for our understanding a special (kind of) object, namely, an *intelligible object ;* the (sort of) understanding to which it might belong is itself a problem. For we cannot in the least represent to ourselves the possibility of an understanding which should know its object, not discursively through categories, but intuitively in a non-sensible intuition."[4]

Elsewhere Kant says that the intuitive apprehension (spoken of in the above passage) is "the prerogative of the original Being," that is, God and not of man. In this connection Dr. Maitra says :

[4] *Ibid.*, A. 256.

"What exactly does Kant mean by saying that God has the faculty of knowing things by means of an intellectual intuition? There are two distinct ideas involved in this statement. In the first place, it means that the knowledge of the thing-in-itself can be given only in an intuition; thought is incompetent to give it. Vaihinger lays stress upon this and shows that Kant had distrust of discursive thinking."[5]

To admit that reality cannot be given by thought is clearly to abandon the critical standpoint and to lapse into pure ontologism. Dr. Maitra, in another of his articles entitled *"Kant's View of Intellectual Intuition,"* comes to the conclusion that Kant's conception of noumenon, like the doctrine of transcendental object, is equally prejudicial to his critical standpoint :

> "What I want to say, is that this doctrine of a noumenon as an object of an intellectual intuition is also a pre-critical survival. I have clearly shown that it is found in a very early writing, namely, the *Nova Dilucidatio* (1775) written twenty-six years before the First Edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason.* It is also quite as abstract as the doctrine of the transcendental object. The change, in fact, from the transcendental object to the noumena, as Caird has pointed out in a remarkable passage of his *Critical Philosophy of Kant,* is one from the 'abstractly real' to the 'abstractly ideal'..... To the concept of the noumenon also there clings, therefore, the same abstract character as does to the concept of thing-in-itself. Consequently, from the point of view of concreteness there is no advance in the change from the standpoint of transcendental object to that of the noumena."

It is now clear that in the two doctrines of thing-in-itself in the *Critique of Pure Reason,* namely, those of transcendental object as well as noumenon, there has been a recrudescence of ontology in epistemology.

Kant's Third Conception of Thing-in-Itself :—Kant, however, soon regained the lost balance of his mind. For, in the same *Critique,* there is also a third conception of thing-in-itself, namely, the Idea of Reason, which, as we shall pre-

---

[5] *Kaleidoscopic Changes in Kant's Conception of Thing-in-Itself*—A Paper.

sently see, is on the whole quite consistent with the original plan of the *Critique*.

The conception of Idea of Reason is formulated by Kant in the last division of his *Critique*, namely the Transcendental Dialectic. Here Kant distinguishes the faculty of Reason from that of Understanding. While the Understanding is the *faculty of rules*, Reason is the *faculty of principles*. The faculty of Reason, however, is not absolutely divorced from that of Understanding. On the contrary, it is Reason that gives unity to the rules of understanding by means of its principles.

The reason why Kant was obliged to invoke the aid of the faculty of Reason is this. There is an insistent demand in us to find such a principle as would give an absolute and unconditional unity to the facts of experience. Now, the understanding, as the faculty of knowledge, is unable to give an unconditional unity to our experience. For, the categories, which are the part and parcel of understanding, are by themselves unable to give rise to any kind of knowledge. For their operation they invariably require the data 'given' through sense-perception. The manifold of sense, however, which forms the *matter* of the *a priori forms* of understanding is always particular and conditioned. The Understanding, being thus chained to the knowledge of the conditioned, cannot possibly take us to the Unconditioned. The knowledge of the particular and conditioned object can lead us possibly to the knowledge of another particular and conditioned object, but it can never lead us to the Unconditioned which is absolutely universal in its character.

Precisely here the faculty of Reason comes to the aid of Understanding. It is possible for Reason to give an unconditioned unity to our experience simply because it does not deal with the perceptions directly, but indirectly, through the pure *a priori* conceptions of Understanding. Now, Kant believes that the synthetic process of pure Reason is the same as the analytic process of thought found in the syllogistic reasoning of Formal Logic. Formal Logic makes us aware of three ways in which Reason in its logical use seeks to unify knowledge. They are, namely, the cate-

gorical, hypothetical and disjunctive syllogisms. And since, according to Kant, analytic and synthetic processes of thought are quite identical, Pure Reason also seeks the Unconditioned in three different directions. "First, the *Unconditioned* of the *categorical* synthesis in a *subject*; secondly, of the *hypothetical* synthesis of the members of a *series*; thirdly, of the *disjunctive* synthesis of the parts in a *system*."

Now, the important point to observe here is that, according to Kant, the Ideas of Reason are also things-in-themselves. That is to say, the absolute principles of knowledge are at the same time ontological entities. The three ontological objects corresponding to the three Ideals of Reason are the Self, the World and God. The last is called by Kant the Ideal of Pure Reason simply because it is "the Idea, not only *in concreto*, but also *in individuo*, that is, an individual thing determinable and determined by the Idea alone."

It is easy to see now that in the Ideas of Reason, Kant has almost reached the fulfilment of his idea with which he began the *Critique*, namely, to make reality conform to the conditions of knowledge. Ontology, which in the first two conceptions of thing-in-itself, namely, the transcendental object and noumenon, tried to break loose from epistemology, is now made one with it in the third conception of thing-in-itself, that is, the Idea of Reason.

But curiously enough, just when we expect epistemology to be all in all, Kant's old predilection for ontology returns, and he declares the Ideas of Reason, although they are the fulfilment and completion of knowledge, to be outside the pale of knowledge. The Ideas of Reason are "transcendent, as overstepping the limits of all experience which can never supply an object adequate to the transcendental idea."[6] The same idea is expressed by Kant when he asserts that the Ideas of Reason are *regulative* in contradistinction from the rules of understanding which are *constitutive*.[7] Now, to maintain that the Ideas of Reason are only regulative and not constitutive principles is tantamount to saying

---

[6] *Ibid.*, A. 327.

[7] *Ibid.*, A. 509.

that the relation between reality and knowledge is asymptotic.

We thus find that in the doctrine of Idea of Reason, ontology once more shakes itself free from epistemology. Kant's best attempt, therefore, to identify ontology with epistemology in the *Critique of Pure Reason* ultimately proves a failure.

Kant's Fourth Conception of Thing in-Itself :—Seeing that reality is beyond the reach of epistemology, Kant in his ethical works tries to subordinate it to axiology. We shall now proceed to examine this new confusion.

In the *Metaphysic of Morals,* Kant attempts to find an *a priori* basis for morality. Kant is able to do so by discovering the source of goodness in the will of the moral agent. "Nothing in the world, or even outside the world, can possibly be regarded as good without limitation except a good will." Now, the will cannot be good absolutely, if it is determined by a necessity that is not its own, because in this case the Will will be good only as a means to some end other than itself. But in order that the will may be good in itself or *absolutely* and not simply as a means, it is essential that it must be determined solely by virtue of its own inner necessity. Now, the inner necessity cannot be the mechanical necessity of nature, because then the will cannot but be determined by the laws of nature and will lose all the power of self-determination. If the will is to have a scope for self-determination, it must be determined by a law that is opposed to the mechanical law. Such a law cannot but be the law of freedom which is categorically imperative. The law of freedom, again, cannot be *a posteriori.* Kant says :

> "When we add further that, unless we deny that the notion of morality has any truth or reference to any possible object, we must admit that its law must be valid, not merely for men, but for all *rational creatures generally,* not merely under certain contingent conditions or with exceptions, but *with absolute necessity,* then it is clear that no experience could enable us to infer, even the possibility of such apodictic laws."[8]

---

[8] *Metaphysic of Morals,* Abbot's translation, p. 30.

The moral law, thus, is extra-experiential or, which is the same, *a priori.*

Now, it will be remembered here that in its theoretical aspect, the faculty of Reason is the source of certain principles or Ideas. But, according to Kant, the Ideas cannot be realized completely in knowledge. They are, therefore, *transcendent* for speculative reason. But the same Reason, according to Kant, although it fails to realize itself in its theoretical aspect, does so in its practical aspect by becoming the source of moral law. We thus find that what Reason is unable to accomplish in its theoretical aspect is achieved by it in its practical side.

Again, we have already seen that the Ideas of Reason are also things-in-themselves. Consequently, the above-mentioned difference in the view of the function of Reason is sure to affect the conception of thing-in-itself as well. Such, in fact, is actually the case. In the *Critique of Pure Reason,* Kant regarded the Ideas of Reason as transcendent entities. But in the *Critique of Practical Reason,* Kant's view undergoes a complete change. For, he says that the moral law is "able for the first time to give objective, though only practical, reality to reason, which always became transcendent when it sought to proceed speculatively with its ideas. It thus changes the transcendent use of reason into an immanent use. . . . . ."[9] Thus, the thing-in-itself is not transcendent to, but *immanent* in, the practical Reason.

The above change in Kant's conception of thing-in-itself is very significant. For, through it Kant is able to concede supremacy to axiology over ontology. The highest principle of morality, namely, the law of freedom is now directly conversant with noumenal reality. There is, therefore, left no scope for ontology as apart from axiology. We thus find that in the *Critique of Practical Reason,* we meet with a definite change in Kant's attitude towards axiology. Kant so far has been maintaining that a will in order to be good must be determined by itself, that is, by its own law, which is the same as moral law. Self-determination, however, according to Kant, definitely excludes all extraneous motives involved mainly in striving for happiness, which arises from

---

[9] *Critique of Practical Reason,* Abbot's tr., p. 154.

the consequences of our actions issuing into the world of nature. But in the Dialectic of Practical Reason, Kant believes that in the *Summum Bonum,* which is the highest object of Practical Reason, the possibility of happiness in so far as it is in conformity with the moral law, is not excluded. Read the following passage :

> "It has been shown in the Analytic that *virtue* (as worthiness to be happy) is the *supreme condition* of all our pursuit of happiness, and is therefore the *supreme* good. But it does not follow that, it is the whole and perfect good as the object of the desires of rational beings ; for this requires happiness also, and that not merely in the partial eyes of the person who makes himself an end, but even in the judgment of an impartial reason, which regards persons in general as ends in themselves."[10]

If the complete good includes also happiness, the question naturally arises : Is the connection between virtue and happiness analytic or synthetic ? That it is not analytic can be seen from the fact that it is not contained in the conception of moral law which excludes all motives except those that issue directly from the ideas of duty. The relation between virtue and happiness, therefore, "must be synthetic, and synthetic in the way of cause and effect." But this involves us in the antinomy of Practical Reason. For, either "the desire for happiness must be the motive to maxims of virtue, or the maxims of virtue must be the efficient cause of happiness "

Indeed, Kant makes an attempt to solve the antinomy of the relation of virtue and happiness by making them belong to the noumenal and phenomenal world respectively. But the solution is hardly satisfactory. For, the noumenal and phenomenal world, being entirely disparate in their nature, stand in need of the medium of "an intelligent author of nature" to bring them together. In the same Critique Kant speaks later on that "it is morally necessary to hold the existence of God." For, God alone can distribute happiness in proportion to goodness.

It is easy to understand now that the supremacy, which

---

10 *Ibid.*, p. 245.

Kant had assigned to axiology in the Analytic of the *Critique of Practical Reason* was only nominal. For, axiology also seeks ultimate rest in the conception of a Supreme Being, whose existence is quite independent of the moral law. In this way, ontology, which was sought to be indentified with axiology by Kant in the *Critique of Practical Reason,* asserts its identity apart from axiology and insists on having an independent sphere for itself.

Kant's Fifth Conception of Thing-in-Itself :—When Kant was disappointed in getting an access to reality through the Pure and Practical Reason, he turned to the faculty of Judgment or Feeling for the same reason. This attempt is embodied in Kant's *Critique of Judgment.*

In the *Critique of Judgment* Kant tries to maintain that our feeling of pleasure involves certain *a priori* principles. The method followed by him in this connection is briefly as follows :

The fundamental principle underlying our feeling of pleasure, according to Kant, is that of purposiveness (*Zweckmässigkeit*) of Nature. By virtue of this principle we are enabled to look upon Nature as a well-ordered whole or a cosmos. That is to say, it makes us believe that the various empirical laws of Nature are not isolated and disparate, but are inter-connected "deriving their unity in seeming diversity from an intelligence which is at the source of nature." It gives us pleasure to think that Nature is a well-ordered whole, just as the contemplation of chaos would be painful.

Now, the principle that Nature is purposive is an *a priori* principle. This will be clear from the following passage :

> "That the concept of a purposiveness of nature belongs to transcendental principles can be sufficiently seen from the maxims of the Judgment, which lie at the basis of the investigation of nature *a priori,* and yet do not go further than the possibility of experience, and consequently of the cognition of nature—not indeed nature in general, but nature as determined through a variety of particular laws. These maxims present themselves in the course of this science often enough, though in a scattered way, as sentences of metaphysical wisdom, whose necessity we cannot demonstrate from concepts. "Nature takes the shortest

> way (lex parsimoniae) :.....etc..... If we suppose to set forth the origin of these fundamental propositions and try to do so by the psychological method, we violate their sense. For they do not tell us what happens, i.e., by what rule our cognitive powers actually operate, and how we judge ; but how we ought to judge and this logical objective necessity does not emerge if the principles are merely empirical. Hence that purposiveness of nature for our logical cognitive faculties and their use, which is plainly apparent from them, is a transcendental principle of judgments...."[11]

The important point to notice here is that, according to Kant, the feeling of pleasure is the mediating link between epistemology and axiology or, what is the same, between the world of nature and the world of freedom. Kant tries to prove this as follows :

In the two previous Critiques, Kant had drawn a sharp line of distinction between subject and object. Thus, in the *Critique of Pure Reason,* Kant separated the world of objective existence from pure self-consciousness. For, according to Kant, the unity of self-consciousness *per se* is analytic. Though the same becomes a synthetic unity in the process of knowledge, yet it is unable to assimilate to itself completely the object, which according to Kant, is "given" to it from outside. Consequently, after knowing the object, self-consciousness has to make a negative return to itself. In other words, it has to fall back upon its original blank and empty analytic unity. The same duality between subject and object continues in the *Critique of Practical Reason.* For, here also, as we have seen, the moral law, which has its source in the pure self-consciousness, is opposed to the mechanical necessity of the world of nature.

But in spite of the distinction between the self-consciousness and the objective world in the two Critiques, Kant did *implicitly* recognize the ultimate unity underlying the two. Caird has nicely elucidated this point in the following passage :

> "Now the *Dialectic* showed us that reason in its regulative use gives rise to certain principles of investigation, which reach

---

[11] *Critique of Judgment,* Bernard's tr.. pp. 21-22.

beyond the laws of the understanding, and both incite and guide us in the application of these laws. The principles are especially the principles of the "homogeneity, specification and continuity" of the natural forms of things ; principles the meaning of which, summarily expressed, is that nature is a system, whose systematic order is discoverable by our intelligence. If these principles are assumed, we are able not only to say that all objects as such fall under the laws of pure understanding, but that the intelligence acting through these laws may by their means expect to be always advancing in the discovery of systematic unity in the world—more and more definitely to see unity under all its diversity, diversity flowing out of its unity, and diversity and unity more and more closely knit together by continuous steps of transition. To say this, however, is to say that nature is relative to the intelligence not only as a system in which the laws themselves have an order of subordination, ultimately pointing to the unity of intelligence as their source ; or, in other words, that the world has in it such a unity as it *would* have, if it had been arranged with a view to its being comprehended by our intelligence."[12]

A similar recognition of the basic unity between Reason and Nature is to be found in the *Critique of Practical Reason*. For, the conception of *Summum Bonum* combines goodness with happiness.

> "This, however, necessarily involves a conformity of nature to the law of reason, which nothing in the conception of nature enables us to anticipate ; it involves, in fact, that nature must ultimately be thought of as a teleological system, for which the final cause is determined by the same practical reason which determines the ends of human action."[13]

We thus find that in pointing out that the laws of nature are somehow adapted to that of freedom in knowledge as well as in action, Kant did imply the ultimate unity of the two. Kant, however, wanted to bring the ultimate unity into clear prominence. This is done by him in the *Critique of Judgment* which is "equivalent to a discussion of the validity of the Teleological Idea ; because design is

---

[12] *Critical Philosophy of Kant*, Vol. II, p. 381.

[13] *Ibid.*, p. 378.

the *a priori* principle which underlies the activity of judgment, as the intermediary between Reason and Understanding."[14]

We are now in a position to understand that Kant in his *Critique of Judgment,* by showing that there is an ultimate unity underlying subject and object, bridged over the chasm between epistemology and axiology. The reconciliation of the two latter disciplines, again, soon settles their terms with ontology. For, the ontological principle is, for Kant, the same as the ultimate unity of subject and object. In the first two Critiques, Kant had made an attempt to identify ontology severally with epistemology and axiology. But Kant's effort was unsuccessful, because he put self-consciousness in diametrical contrast with the objective world. This precluded him from recognizing the ultimate unity underlying the two. But in the *Critique of Judgment,* Kant gradually became conscious of this. For, now he definitely urges that the fact that the object is adaptable to the requirements of self-consciousness in knowledge as well as in action clearly points to the conclusion that the opposition between the ego and the non-ego is only provisional and not absolute. Nay, on the basis of the above fact we can even say positively that subject and object must be ultimately one. And the unifying principle, according to Kant, cannot be anything but intelligence which in opposing itself to the object can also over-reach the distinction. We thus find that Kant, in the *Critique of Judgment,* not only sought to cure the dualism between subject and object, but by throwing the unity underlying the two into clear relief, he also gave us an ontological principle.

Kant's attempt, however, to repair the breaches between ontology, epistemology and axiology in the *Critique of Judgment* was not crowned with complete success. For, in the Dialectic of Teleological Judgment, Kant declares that the Teleological Idea is only *reflective* (i.e. regulative) and not *determinant* (i.e constitutive) in its nature. The reason is, the Teleological Idea requires for its complete realization a *perceptive intelligence,* which is capable of determining its perceptions quite spontaneously. But the in-

---

[14] *Ibid.,* p. 385.

telligence, such as we have, is *discursive* in its nature. That is to say, it can determine its data as they are 'given' to it in the manifold of sense. Thus, the finite intelligence is always beset with the duality of subject and object,—a duality, which, though it constantly seeks to reconcile, yet is unable to do so completely. Kant says :

> "In order now to be able at least to think the possibility of such an accordance of things of nature with our Judgment...., we must at the same time think of another Understanding, by reference to which and apart from any purpose ascribed to it, we may represent as necessary that accordance of natural laws with our Judgment, which for our understanding, is only thinkable through the medium of purposes."[15]

The phrase "another Understanding" occurring in the above passage refers to an "intelligence which is the cause of the world," that is, God. We can easily conclude from this that Kant's attempt to heal the breaches between ontology, epistemology and axiology in the *Critique of Judgment* is hardly successful. For, ontology in the form of the doctrine of original Intelligence disentangles itself both from epistemology and axiology and demands a special consideration for it.

Post-Kantian German Idealism :—So far we have seen how Kant sought to identify ontology first with epistemology in his *Critique of Pure Reason.* When he failed to do so, he took recourse to the expedient of identifying ontology with axiology in his *Critique of Practical Reason* as well as in the *Critique of Judgment.* In this attempt too Kant could not succeed.

We may ask here : What was the main reason of Kant's repeated failure ? To this our answer is this : Both epistemology and axiology operate in the realm of finite objects. This is quite clear from the fact that both of these disciplines presuppose a distinction between subject and object, which only constitute the two poles of our *finite* experience. The only distinction between epistemology and axiology consists in this that while epistemology leads us from the objective to the subjective pole, axiology, on the

---

[15] *Critique of Judgment*, P. 322.

contrary makes us effect the transition from the subjective to the objective pole. But both these disciplines are commonly pre-occupied with the finite experience as such. If such is the case, then they are not in a position to deal with the Infinite, which, as we have already seen, is abstract and dynamic. Kant, like all the other thinkers of modern philosophy, had the least conception of such an Infinite. That is why, he ransacked all the fields of finite experience as they were governed by epistemology and axiology one after the other. All such experiences, when analysed, split themselves up into the dual aspects of subject and object. This invariably raised the problem : How to explain this duality of experience ? To this Kant never found any satisfactory answer. In his five conceptions of thing-in-itself, he went on finding the ultimate cause of this duality either in the objective aspect (as in the case of the first conception of thing-in-itself) or in the subjective aspect consisting of a number of faculties such as Understanding, Reason, Practical Reason and Feeling (as in the case of the second, third, fourth and fifth conceptions of thing-in itself). In these conceptions of thing-in-itself Kant had already exhausted all the spheres of the finite experience. And yet the ontological reality eluded Kant's grasp. This clearly shows that the spheres of our finite experience, which are governed by epistemology and axiology are incapable of yielding any notion of reality which is infinite.

But, unfortunately, Kant's failures did not teach such a lesson to his successors. For they kept on believing that there can be no reality possible apart from the experience as it is revealed to us either through epistemology or axiology. This is the reason why, Kant's successors found fault directly with his doctrine of thing-in-itself. They sought to banish it from the domain of philosophy itself, so that they could then force ontology to become subordinate either to epistemology or axiology. It is this which has given rise to the various systems of German Idealism. After throwing the doctrine of thing-in-itself overboard, Kant's successors felt as if they had completely cured Kant's illness. But, as we shall see, ontology proved itself to be too strong to be suppressed through the methods of German Idealism. As usual it went on creating disruptions and contradictions

in their systems. For example, Fichte took recourse to the fourth conception of thing-in-itself in order to find the real in the sphere of axiology alone. But this resulted in the negation of the necessity of the objective world by giving supreme importance to the spiritual and moral activity of the Self. That is why, Schelling, who followed Fichte, accused him of extreme subjectivism and pointed out that the claims of the objective world cannot be waived aside in any case. For this would jeopardize the objective validity of all values as such. He, therefore, maintained that the objectivity or Nature as the limiting condition of our Self must be recognized. But then how to overcome the duality of the Nature and the Self, which are now brought face to face ? According to Schelling, it is in the identity of the Nature and the Self that reality can be found. Such an identity can be given to us through the feeling of harmony that we experience in both knowledge and practice. Schelling, thus, approximates to Kant's fifth conception of thing-in-itself and turns a romanticist. Hegel, who came after him, declared that the feeling of identity in the subject and object, as suggested by Schelling, is purely blank and arbitrary. It has no content, no method. If we set store by any and every feeling of ours to give an access to reality, it would lead us to the wildest vagaries. Hegel, therefore, drew attention to the inexorable logic of Reason, which governs the relation between subject and object. Unless such a logic is understood, no reality can be ever found. That is why, Hegel says : The Real is rational. In saying so, Hegel is, in fact, reverting to Kant's third conception of thing-in-itself. For, through this maxim he once again makes a bid to identify ontology with epistemology. But this attempt also meets a shipwreck in the *impasse* created by the two opposite conceptions of the Absolute found existing side by side in his system, namely, the conception of the Absolute as self-fulfilling itself and that of the Absolute as self-fulfilled. No *via media* could be effected in these opposed concepts of reality. And here Hegel's philosophy, with all its magnificence and grandeur, failed to satisfy us.

In what follows, we shall give a broad outline of Post-Kantian German Idealism with a view to acquainting our readers with the troubled and tortuous course followed by it.

Fichte

In order to find a good starting-point, the post-Kantian Idealists were in need of a principle on which, as Fichte said, everything would "hang firmly in a single ring, which is fastened to nothing, but maintains itself and the whole system by its own power."[1] They were, however, not required to search far and wide for such a principle. Fichte, for example, at once found the realization of the above possibility in Kant's doctrine of the transcendental unity of apperception. The suggestion of this possibility, however, was contained in the very works of Kant. For, it was Kant, who declared for the first time that the unity of apperception is the supreme principle of knowledge as well as of action. But the prejudice that the object of knowledge contains something in it which the subject is unable to assimilate to itself had such a strong hold on him that it kept on haunting his mind even in the latest phase of his thought. And this is why, as we have seen, his thought is throughout characterized by a dualistic trend.

Fichte, however, very soon discovered the real cause of Kant's disease. It consisted in Kant's doctrine of the transcendental object which Kant had posited in the very beginning of his *Critique of Pure Reason*. Though subsequently in the same *Critique* Kant had definitely given up his adherence to it, its ghost, nevertheless, was haunting his mind throughout and was frustrating his every attempt to rise higher than his earlier dualistic standpoint. Fichte, therefore, applied himself, first of all, to exorcise the ghost of the transcendental object from the realm of philosophy altogether. This he did by pointing out, firstly, that to believe in the existence of a thing which forms no part of our knowledge is an illogical assumption. Secondly, the conception is inconsistent with Kant's system as such. In making the thing-in-itself the *unknown cause* of our sensations, Kant has illegitimately extended the use of the category of causality, which has an application only within the

[1] Fichte's *Sämmtliche Werke*, I. 56.

province of knowledge, into the realm of transcendent objects.

When once the ghost of the transcendental thing-in-itself is exorcised, what is left is the kingdom of Experience. It is now possible to organize the entire experience in one system based on a unitary principle. And such a principle is Kant's doctrine of the transcendental unity of apperception. This principle figures as the Absolute in the system of all the post-Kantian Idealists.

Now, the question is : How are we to deduce the facts of theoretical and practical experience from the Absolute ? The difficulty of giving a satisfactory answer to this question consists in the circumstance that both epistemology and axiology, which are the two disciplines dealing with the theoretical and practical aspects of our life respectively, necessarily presuppose a distinction between the subject and object. The problem, therefore, is : How can the duality of the subject and object be reconciled with the Absolute which cannot but be unitary in its character ? The different post-Kantian philosophers tried to solve this problem in different ways.

Fichte, to begin with, maintains that the Absolute *posits* or *asserts* itself first in the form of the finite ego and then opposes itself to the non-ego. This occasions a shock (*Anstoss*) between the two. For, when the finite ego finds the non-ego opposing it and hence causing a check to its freedom, it gets disturbed. It, therefore, makes an active effort to overcome the opposition of the non-ego and bring it into harmony with itself. The ego does not stop in this endeavour until it has perfectly synthesized the non-ego to itself. When the ego has reached this stage, it becomes the Absolute itself. For, the Absolute is simply another name for a complete unity of subject and object in an all-comprehensive concrete Experience. Thus, according to Fichte, the one Absolute itself expresses in three different moments. The one is self-position of the Absolute in the form of the finite ego, that is, thesis ; the other is the opposition of the Absolute in the finite ego in the form of the non-ego, antithesis ; and finally the overcoming of the opposition between the ego and non-ego in the Absolute Ego, the synthesis. From these three princi-

ples of thesis, antithesis and synthesis, Fichte derives. all the principles of theoretical and practical life.

It is important to observe at this place that Fitche in his philosophy regards the practical aspect of the self as more fundamental than the theoretical one. For, according to him, the self is able to conquer the non-ego solely through its practical activity. This is the main reason why Fichte's philosophy goes under the name of ethical idealism.

> "The supremacy which Kant had accorded to the practical reason was taken, therefore, by Fichte in a much more literal and exclusive sense than it had borne to the elder philosopher. The activity of the ego became the sole principle by which the existence of the intelligible world was to be explained."[2]

Schelling

Schelling accused Fichte of extreme subjectivism. For, according to Fichte, the purpose of Nature or the non-ego is simply to serve as the necessary limit of the finite ego ; or as an arena for the moral athlete. Thus, for Fichte, the ego with its practical activity is all in all, while Nature has only a negative significance.

Schelling, however, in opposition to Fichte, maintained that it would not do to dismiss Nature as something useless or unconscious in contradistinction from the ego. Nature, on the contrary, is "a magazine of intelligible forms." In his *Naturphilosophie* Schelling goes so far as to maintain that Nature is "the process of intelligence towards intelligence." Nature is visible intelligence and intelligence invisible Nature. Thus, for Schelling, the non-ego is as much essential as the ego. In his *Identitäts-philosophie,* Schelling moulds his thought somewhat on Spinozistic lines. By Absolute Schelling means "the true In-itself (*An-sich*) which coincides with the indifference-point of subjective and objective." The subject and object are but the two modes or "potences" of the Absolute. The Absolute, however, persists as an identical ground of the two.

---

[2] ***From Kant to Hegel*** by Seth, p. 33.

Hegel

Hcgel took objection to the Schellingian conception of the Absolute on the ground that the In-itself (*An-sich*) of Schelling is an undifferentiated blank unity. It is like the "night in which all cows are black." It would not suffice to say that the subject and object are different aspects of the absolute Identity. But Hegel insists that it is essential to reveal the very ground of this difference. To explain this was precisely the task that Hegel set to himself.

Hegel, however, perfectly agrees with the other post-Kantian Idealists in believing that the Absolute is the highest synthetic principle underlying the world of expe-rience. It is perfectly self-fulfilled inasmuch as there are no contradictions in it which it has to overcome. It is also purely spiritual and free, because it is Thought itself, which has completely overcome the opposition of the objec-tivity and has become perfectly self-conscious. This is why, Hegel calls it pure Idea.

Though the Absolute is self-fulfilied, yet, according to Hegel, it is also self-fulfilling itself. That is to say, though the Absolute in and by itself is pure identity, yet it is at the same time the ground of distinction. In fact, the Absolute fulfils itself only through the opposition of sub-ject and object. "The Idea itself is the dialectic which forever divides and distinguishes the self-identical from the differentiated, the subjective from the objective, the finite from the infinite, soul from body. Only on these terms is it an eternal creation, eternal vitality, and eternal spirit."[1] In other words, the entire process of self-fulfilment owes its motive power to the principle of contradiction. The need for self-realization arises only when the object stands in opposition to the subject. For, every opposition involves the correlativity of the opposites. The opposites are dis-tinguished only when they are related. And relativity in-variably presupposes that the entities between which a rela-tion subsists are ultimately identical in their nature. In

[1] *The Logic of Hegel,* Eng. tr. by Wallace, Vol. II, p. 356.

fact, this is precisely the meaning of the fundamental doctrine of Hegelian philosophy, namely, "Being and non-Being are identical."

> This paradoxical utterance of Hegel "does not mean that Being and non-Being are not also distinguished; but it does mean that the distinction is not absolute, and that if it is made absolute, at that very moment it disappears. The whole truth, therefore, cannot be expressed either by the simple statement that, Being and non-Being are identical or by the simple statement that they are different. But the consideration of what these abstractions are in themselves when we isolate them from each other,.... show that their truth is not *either* their identity or their difference, but it is their *identity in difference.*"[2]

It is important to observe here that it is not possible for the subject in its very first encounter with the object to realize fully the identity underlying itself and the object. The identity, no doubt, is implicit even in the *prima facie* view of the object by a subject. But the subject has to make it explicit to itself through a gradual process of ratiocinative or logical thought. This is why Hegel believes that the process of self-fulfilment of the Absolute is a *logical* moment.

The process of self-fulfilment of the Absolute, which Hegel calls the dialectic proceeds, like Fichte's theory of *Anstoss*, in a sort of triadic rhythm. Firstly, the Ego posits itself in the form of the finite ego. This is the first moment of the dialectic and is called the thesis. Secondly, the finite ego passes over into its opposite. This constitutes the second moment, the antithesis. Thirdly, there is a provisional reconciliation of the subject and object. This is the third moment, the synthesis. Every synthesis forms a temporary stoppage in the dialectic process. For, it again forms the point of new departure for another similar movement culminating in a synthesis more adequate and comprehensive than the previous one. This process continues till a synthesis, which perfectly realizes or makes explicit the inner identity of subject and object is reached. Such a synthesis is *ex hypothesi* the Absolute. Thus, the absolute is the highest

---

[2] Caird's *Hegel*, Blackwood's Philosophical Classics, p. 163.

and most concrete of all syntheses and is the final goal of the entire dialectic process.

It is out of place here to go into the practical details of the process of self-realization of the Absolute, to give a general scheme of which was the purpose of Hegel in his philosophical works, especially *Logic*. Suffice it to observe here that Hegel's *Logic* falls into three main divisions, which deal respectively with the three stages in the development of the subject's view of the objectivity. The first attitude of the subject, which corresponds to our simplest and unsophisticated consciousness, is characterized by the fact that in it a " thing is referred to itself *as if* it had no relation to other things or to the mind."[3] That is to say, this view refers merely to the *being* of a thing. The pre-scientific view, however, gradually leads to the second attitude of the subject towards the objectivity, which in general corresponds to the scientific or reflective consciousness. This is because a thing is unable to maintain itself, as it does in the first view, in its aloofness for long. For it is always found bounded or limited by other things. Hence, the real *essence* of a thing cannot be understood unless it is viewed in its *relation* to other things. This problem of finding out the particular relations subsisting between the various things is precisely the task of Science as such. But the highest conception of the world which science presents to us, — the conception, namely, that of a "multiplicity of substances, acting and reacting on each other, and by their action producing continual changes in each other according to unchanging laws,"[4] has still much of abstractness in it. For a multiplicity of objects connected with each other is unable to give us the principle of relation itself, or " the universal which differentiates or particularizes itself and yet is one with itself in its particularity." This defect of the scientific view can be removed only when the totality of object is brought in relation to the Self. For the Self alone " has in it the essential nature of the intelligence or self-consciousness, as a unity which is one with itself, not by the absence of difference, but rather by means

---

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 164. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 173.

of difference, which it at once asserts and overcomes.'"[5] To achieve this end is, according to Hegel, the business of philosophy, which constitutes the third and highest attitude of subject towards objectivity.

Corresponding to these three stages in the development of the logical Idea, there are three main divisions in Hegel's *Logic*. They are namely, the Logic of Being, the Logic of Essence and the Logic of Notion.

> " The first main division of logic, then, will have to do with the categories in which, as yet, relativity is not expressed, categories like Being, Quality, Quantity, which, though they involve, do not immediately suggest any relation of the object to which they are applied to any other object. The *second* main division will have to do with categories such as Essence and Existence, Force and Expression, Substance and Accident, Cause and Effect, which force us to go beyond the object with which we are dealing, and to connect its other objects, or at least with something that is not immediately presented to us in the perception of it. And the *last* main division will have to do with categories, such as those of final cause and organic unity, by which the object is characterized as related to intelligence, or as having in it that self-determined nature of which the intelligence is the highest type : or to put it otherwise, it will have to do with categories by which the object is determined as essentially being, or having in it, an ideal unity which is reached and realised in and through all the manifoldness of its existence." [6]

Criticism :— The post-Kantian philosophy labours under one serious drawback. Granted that the Absolute fulfils itself in and through the dialectic method, this cannot solve the difficulty as to *why* the Absolute which is perfectly self-fulfilled should give up its contented state and undergo all the trouble of self-fulfilment ? In other words, why should the Absolute, which in itself is an undifferentiated unity at all differentiate itself into subject and object? Fichte, as we have seen, tried to solve this problem by saying that the act of self-position of the Absolute, is of a piece with the self-assertion of the ego in its *moral* endeavour, while Hegel

---

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 176. [6] *Ibid.*, pp. 164-165.

maintained that the same is a *logical moment*. But these answers hardly contribute an iota towards the solution of the problem. In fact, they aggravate the difficulty all the more. For both the theoretical and practical endeavours presuppose an ideal or norm. And an attempt to realize this norm is necessarily dynamic in nature. Now, change-fulness is a conception correlative with that of imperfection. For the necessity to change comes only from the desire to achieve something external to oneself. But the desire, that is, the longing for something not yet attained, is a sure sign of imperfection. The question then is : If the self-fulfilment of the Absolute is of a piece with the theoretical or practical endeavour, then how can the imperfection which attends on these endeavours be reconciled with the perfection of the Absolute ? For a satisfactory reply to this question, we seek in vain in the systems of post-Kantian Idealism.

We thus find that in the post-Kantian philosophy there is an absolute *impasse*, an unbridgeable gulf fixed between the Absolute as self-fulfilling itself and the same as self-fulfilled. This entirely breaks the unity of the dialectic. This, in fact, is the Nemesis of all Absolutism which seeks to maintain unity by a *tour de force*.

> "The apparent ease with which we have brought together the 'truth' of human knowledge and the ideal of coherence-notion, is due to a degradation of the latter, and an ambiguity in our account of the former. For we have lapsed into a static conception of the ideal. We have talked complacently as if it were a finished complete whole of truth ; and we have made no attempt to dwell on what formerly we emphasised, viz., its dynamic character, as a self-fulfilling life or movement. And if we were challenged as to how *such* ideal — a rigid, static, finished system is related to, or implied by, the developing human knowledge, we should find ourselves in an indefensible position."[7]

We can now understand that in the post-Kantian Idealism the two aspects of their Absolute, namely, the Absolute as self-fulfilled and the Absolute as self-fulfilling

[7] Joachim, *The Nature of Truth*, p. 114.

itself fall quite apart. In our opinion, all this is due to the enchainment of ontology to the sphere of the *finite* experience as it is governed by epistemology and axiology. The cognitive and conative attitudes, with which these disciplines are concerned always presuppose that the self is still imperfect and hence is in need of making an effort to attain the specific norms or ideals prescribed by epistemology and axiology. This requires the flux of the objective world to be synthesized with the universal and necessary conditions of the subjective experience. Now, as long as we move within the limitation of epistemology and axiology, no contradiction arises in establishing a relation in the seemingly opposed aspects of our experience, viz., subject and object. But when any one of these disciplines is exalted to the rank of ontology, the duality of the two aspects of experience proves an extremely damaging factor to the nature of their Absolute. For, now it creates the problem as to how the same Absolute can be both dynamic and static. The root-cause of the difficulties of the post-Kantian Idealists, then, is to be traced to their common prejudice that the ontological reality can be given only within the sphere of either epistemology or axiology.

CONTEMPORARY PHILOSOPHY

Neo-Romanticism

WITH Hegel modern philosophy comes to an end. After Hegel we step into the sphere of contemporary philosophy. The line of demarcation between these two periods of philosophy may be regarded as natural. For, now the era of philosophy based on epistemology is more or less a thing of the past. With Hegel the tendency to identify ontology with epistemology is completely discredited. As a reaction against such a confusion, philosophical thinkers of the new generation show a predilection in favour of axiology. Turning their back against the rigid logicism of epistemology, they find axiology with its hierarchy of values and praxis as the proper resort for the investigation of ontological reality. As a matter of fact, such a tendency was already anticipated by Kant and Fichte in their attempt to give primacy to Practical Reason over Pure Reason. At that time the implications of such a line of thinking were not fully realized. But now when epistemologism was proved to be absolutely bankrupt, there was no other alternative except turning to axiology in order to save oneself from falling into the clutches of stark scepticism. This has ushered in a new era of axiologism, which finds its best expression in the neo-romantic movement in contemporary philosophy.

Ludwig Stein has expressed the essence of Neo-romanticism in a nutshell thus :

> " Apotheosis of instinct and the non-artificial, unreflecting, natural common-sense at the cost of all abstract discursive knowledge."

As a matter of fact, the entire neo-romantic movement has taken its rise as a protest against the excess of intellectualism as such. Following Aliotta, we may take the term

"intellectualism" in the sense of "those epistemological systems which assign an autonomous value to the cognitive function." In this wider sense "intellectualism" includes both the philosophical rationalism, which reached its zenith in the Hegelian philosophy and scientific philosophy; which issued into a thoroughgoing mechanistic materialism in the nineteenth century. As forms of reaction against intellectualism we may regard "all those currents of thought which make the value of science and of knowledge in general depend upon the ends of other functions of the mind and rank, will and imagination above intellect."[1]

The chief defect of intellectualism, according to the romanticist, is that it completely overlooks the concrete and complex nature of reality. Reality, so say the Romanticists, is changeful, active, ever-moving. The movement of reality is not mechanical in its nature. It is, on the contrary, spontaneous, self-initiated and creative.

Intellectualism falls much short of giving expression to the creativity and complexity of the real. It simply has regard for those aspects of the real, which, owing to their outward similarity, are capable of being classed together. From this apparent similarity, it sifts its various concepts and axioms. Feeling confident that these concepts provide a good explanation of the phenomena which fall under it, it substitutes these abstract concepts for the facts themselves. When this has been done, the representatives of intellectualism think that reality is nothing but a system of such concepts. Such was the case with Hegel's Absolute, which, according to the neo-romanticist, is nothing but an "unearthly ballet of bloodless categories ;" and also with the scientific philosophy, which is an outcome of the hypostatization of the various concepts obtained by means of intellect.

In fact, empirio-criticism, represented by Mach and others, centred round the fundamental contention that the theories and principles of science are quite valid as long as they serve our *practical purpose* of a successful prediction of the succession and co-existence of natural phenomena. They are as it were, the sign-posts or short-hand symbols to economize our effort or repeated observation. But it

---

1 ***Idealistic Reaction against Science,*** **p. xxii.**

is a wrong procedure to construct a world-picture out of the various hypotheses of sciences by ascribing to them an objective significance.

Curiously enough, the champions of empirio-criticism based their conclusion against intellectualism on the very law of evolution which was the stronghold of intellectualism itself and which was formerly pressed into service by the physicists and biologists to reduce all organic phenomena to the mechanical view of science. It was now asked : If evolution, as Spencer believed, is essentially a change from the purely homogeneous to heterogeneous, then how are we to explain the creation of ever new forms of evolutionary process ? Here there is not only a quantitative difference but qualitative difference. Again, evolution is no blind process. It aims at producing better and better evolutes. How can this direction of change be deduced from the mechanical furmulae ? For the law of causality it does not matter whether the change is forward or backward. But an evolutionary process, on the other hand, inevitably requires that the change should proceed in a particular direction. Aliotta has rightly observed in this connection the following :

> " Mechanism and evolution are two concepts which cannot be derived from one another, since they correspond to two different aspects of nature : one is quantitative permanence and absolute determinism of mathematical law ; the other qualitative transformation and fruitful genesis of individual forms which no set of abstract formulas comprehends in the fulness of its living reality. The evolutionary conception of things could never be made to fit the Procrustean bed of the traditional mathematical method ; it was inevitable that it should (if I may so say) insinuate the poison of dissolution into the veins of intellectualism. The living spirit of history, which has animated the idealistic speculation of the beginning of the century, finding its way with Darwinism into the domain of positive research, whilst thus endeavouring to find itself a place in the schemes of science, breaks down their mechanical rigidity, and exposes the tremendous gap by empty formulas in the sphere of experience."[2]

---

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 10.

The upshot of all this was that the vital and organic processes were again considered to be beyond the compass of mechanical causality, which lost all its absolute value that it formerly possessed. All axioms and principles of science began to be regarded as merely of pragmatic importance, as mere tools forged by the intelligence of man in course of the adaptation of organism to its surroundings.

In this way, criticism of Mach, Avenarius and others showed that the theoretical function is subservient to the biological development of an individual and in doing so it paved the way for an axiological view and led to Neo-Romanticism. Reality, according to the romanticist, is changeful, active, ever-moving, ever-flowing. An access to such a reality can only be had through Feeling and Will, which together constitute the practical aspect of the self.

Now, the chief question is : Is it correct to exalt Feeling and Will to the rank of the ultimate principle ? As Dr. Maitra points out :

> "But it is an irony of fate that the romanticist by his emphasis of the personal element misses the very thing for which he contends, namely, the fulness of the concrete personality. The concrete to be full must be viewed in its totality and this can only be done by throwing the clear light of reason upon it. As we have already said, it is an *Unendlichkeitsdrang* that leads the romanticist to search for a principle which can comprehend the complexity of the world better than reason. But this search leads him precisely where he ought not to go, namely, to this vagueness of a dreamy mysticism which obscures everything."[3]

Now, the root-cause of this trouble is that the romanticists have actually substituted axiology, as the rationalists had done epistemology, for ontology. This becomes all the more evident from the circumstance that the romanticists hark back to Kant and Fichte for their inspiration, both of whom are at one in conceding supremacy to the practical over the theoretical reason. "The origin of this line of thought is to be traced to Kant's doctrine of the primacy of the practical over the theoretical activities of the ego.

---

[3] *The Neo-Romantic Movement in Contemporary Philosophy*, pp. 18-19.

But it was Fichte who by his characterization of the world as "a free act" gave impetus to this mode of thinking."[4]

The romanticists also, following Kant and Fichte, give to axiology the dominant position and do not regard ontology as a discipline separate from axiology. For, according to the romanticists, Feeling and Will alone express the true essence of reality and hence they are the basic principles of the world of existence.

Now, such a procedure is metaphysically quite unjustifiable. For, reality cannot but be all-comprehensive. Hence, an attempt to explain it by taking account of only some aspects of it and neglecting the other equally important ones is sheer fanaticism. The Romanticists have done well in exposing the one-sidedness of intellectualism which tried to reduce reality to the cognitive function of the Self at the cost of its practical activity. But in trying to escape one evil, they have fallen prey to another. For, in putting an exclusive faith in the practical aspect of the Self, they have entirely ignored the theoretical aspect. Thus, in shifting the centre of gravity from intellect to feeling and will, the romanticists have simply created a new point of view from which we can look at reality. But they did not bring about any revolution in the philosophical method which would have enabled us to synthesize all the aspects of reality. Romanticism, therefore, is another tributory of the same general chaos which prevails in the philosophical speculation from Locke onwards. In what follows, we shall try to take a critical review of the important types of neo-romantic systems. First of all, we shall deal with the French Philosophy of Freedom.

---

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 12.

French Philosophy of Freedom

As early as 1819 Schopenhauer in his *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* maintained, in opposition to Hegelian rationalism, that the world is a creation of blind will. The blind will was conceived by Schopenhauer as a thing-in-itself underlying the phenomena. He characterizes it blind only to accentuate its irrational character and thus to put it in opposition to the fundamental principle of Hegelian philosophy, namely, pure Reason. The chief characteristic of will is perpetual striving. The will objectifies itself in Nature and the various phenomena of the world are the manifestations of the same in its act of individuation.

Schopenhauer's conception of blind Will was taken up and modified by von Hartmann in his doctrine of Unconscious. The Unconscious, however, does not mean completely irrational as did the blind Will of Schopenhauer. It is, on the other hand, a combination of both will and idea. But Hartmann preferred to call the synthesis of both the Unconscious so as not to allow the conscious feature to predominate over that of the active will.

The strong voluntaristic bias of the philosophies of Schopenhauer and von Hartmann, however, found its expression in France in the philosophy of Freedom. This philosophy agrees with the empirio-criticism, inaugurated by Mach, in declaiming intellect as having only a heuristic value. Ravaisson and Secrétan, for instance, gave an aesthetic and moral conception of the universe. They maintained that reality is full of activity and spontaneous movement. The world is "an act of unfettered expansion and act of love and infinite benevolence." We can grasp the essence of such a world only by means of artistic intuition or religious mysticism. Science, on the contrary, takes a stable view of this creative reality and hence it, as it were, devitalizes it. Reality with ever new and fresh creations can hardly be comprehended by virtue of scientific concepts and laws.

Emile Boutroux also regards the world as an act of artistic and moral endeavour. According to Boutroux, the

highest principles of things are moral and aesthetic laws "regulating the spontaneous activity of beings in their ascent to God." Natural laws have only a pragmatic value. They are the result of the persistent habit formed by our intelligence to have eye only on the similarity of various phenomena in order to guide us in our practical life.

> "Analysing the notion of natural law as seen in the sciences themselves, I found that this law is not a first principle but a result that life, feeling, and liberty are true and profound realities, whereas the relatively invariable and general forms apprehended by science are but the inadequate manifestation of these realities."[1]

Thus, the natural laws, according to Boutroux, do not represent anything real. Reality is always moving, always progressing. It never repeats itself. Every occurrence is unique, always a new, fresh creation.

Religion moves in this world of self-initiated, creative change. In the uniqueness and irrepeatability of the real it finds the fullest scope for freedom. For, there is no extraneous principle or force to check the spontaneous flow of the world-process. Science only takes a static view of such a process. It concerns itself only with the general. For the real concrete facts science substitutes its various concepts and hence loses touch with the inner throb of reality. The uniqueness of reality, therefore, eludes the grasp of science. We thus find that Boutroux's system marks a protest against the mechanical view of science and lays emphasis on the changing, creative aspect of the real.

The idea of freedom finds its more thorough expression in the system of Alfred Fouillée. According to Fouillée, the fundamental principle underlying the world-process is what he calls 'idée-force.' All experience consists of two main factors, cognitive and volitional. These two are conjoined in an indissoluble unity. Thought without volition is quite impotent. It is, in fact, the latter which gives reality to the former. Every psychical state is an idea in so far as it brings about a discrimination of the various elements of our experience and it is will in so far as it makes a choice

---

[1] Boutroux, *The Contingency of the Laws of Nature*, p. vi.

or selection. This is what Fouillée means by his doctrine of *idée-force.*

All our experience, then, according to Fouillée, involves a conscious willing. Fouillée in fact does not subscribe to the conception of freedom as absolute indetermination. He believes, on the other hand, that freedom is the realization of one's personality in a society of persons. This can only be possible when we guide our actions with some idea or motive. In this way, Fouillée brings about a total transformation in the ideas of freedom and necessity. Necessity means being carried away by any random extraneous force. But a free act involves a deliberate choice, a determination by one's own character.

In pursuance of the above idea, Fouillée propounds the doctrine of "L'Evolutionisme des Idées-Forces." Fouillée opposes such an idea of evolution to that of mechanical evolution propounded by Darwin and Spencer. The evolutionary process, according to Fouillée, does not proceed by the impact of external forces. But it is, on the contrary, urged from within. The "struggle for existence" is not a struggle of forces ; but it is a real struggle of one will with a multitude of wills of a like nature. The direction of the spiritual evolution is not determined from without. It is, on the other hand, a self-determined, self-initiated movement, progressing in accordance with its own inner laws.

We thus find that Fouillée propounds a thoroughgoing doctrine of freedom. But the ideas and implications of his system are developed more thoroughly and with greater clearness by another important representative of this school, namely, Bergson. We shall now proceed to take account of his system.

The fundamental thesis of Bergson's philosophy is that change is the essence of reality. The nature of this change is not dead mechanical motion. But it is a vital urge, an *élan vital,* impelled from within, ever-creating, ever-progressing. The real flows without any break or discontinuity. Like our personality, it "shoots, grows and ripens without ceasing."[2] Bergson also calls reality duration, in-

[2] *Creative Evolution,* Eng. tr. p. 6.

asmuch as in it the past *endures* or prolongs into the present and the present gnaws into the future.

Bergson also calls reality creative evolution to signify that each of its moments is heterogeneous, that is, something new and unforeseeable. Bergson is particularly solicitous in maintaining that the creative evolution is not to be confused either with the mechanical evolution of Darwin and Spencer or with the teleological evolution which Hegel championed in his Dialectic. For, according to Bergson, the upholders of both these types of evolution are at one in believing that the evolutionary process marches towards a single goal.[3] Bergson, however, denies any goal for the creative evolution. For, the being guided by a goal will evidently set limitations to the creative activity of reality. In this case, the evolution will be of the nature of a push and pull. It will not be urged from within, but forced from without. Hence, according to Bergson, the truly creative evolution is self-determined and is not guided by any goal that is external to it. It follows its own caprices. It is multilinear in contradistinction from the mechanical or teleological evolution which is unilinear. The evidence of this fact, says Bergson, is to be found in the existence of several heterogeneous types of species which are everyone an outcome of the vital urge of reality.

In the *Time and Freewill*, Bergson has tried to maintain that the creativity of reality can be very easily understood by taking recourse to the freedom of will displayed by the ego. The question of the freedom of will arises when the self has to make a choice between two alternatives. Now the defenders and the opponents of freedom agree in believing that a mechanical oscillation between the various alternatives must precede the action of self. But, according to Bergson, this view of free will is quite fallacious. For, the representation of the voluntary act as oscillating between two different paths is tantamount to taking an external view of it.

> "Do not ask me then whether the self, having traversed the path M O and decided in favour of X, could or could not

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 48 and seq.

> choose Y'. I should answer that the question is meaningless, because there is no line M O, no point O, no path O X', no direction O Y. To ask such a question is to admit the possibility of adequately representing time by space and a succession by simultaneity."[4]

In this way, Bergson positively denies that the self is determined from outside. All questions concerning the making of choice are dissolved as soon as we understand that the self grows, develops in obedience to its inner urge and hence is determined from within.

The changefulness of reality, according to Bergson, can be apprehended only through intuition. By intuition Bergson means "the kind of intellectual sympathy by which one places oneself within an object in order to coincide with what is unique in it and consequently inexpressible."[5] Intuition alone can lead us to "the very inwardness of life."[6] Intelligence, on the other hand, "goes all round life, taking from outside the greatest possible number of views of it, drawing it into itself instead of entering into it."[7] Bergson, in fact, attaches only a pragmatic and no real value to intellect. "To act and to know that we are acting, to come into touch with reality and even to live it, but only in the measure in which it concerns the work that is being accomplished and the furrow that is being ploughed, such is the function of human intelligence."[8] Intellect, in order to facilitate our understanding, breaks up the simple and indivisible movement of reality into a multitude of points and thinks that the sum of them is capable of constituting the movement. But this is only a delusion. There are no discrete divisions in the real. As Bergson says, ". . . .the state of consciousness overflows the intellect ; it is indeed incommensurable with the intellect, being itself indivisible and new."[9] The real is one continuous flow without any stop or break. The concepts of intelligence, therefore, which aim at parcelling out the flow of reality into discrete divisions, have, besides being useful in our practical endeavours,

---

[4] *Time and Freewill*, p. 180.
[5] *Introduction to Metaphysics*, p. 6.
[6] *Creative Evolution*, p. 186.
[7] *Ibid.* [8] *Ibid.* [9] *Ibid.*, p. 211.

no absolute reality in them. In this way Bergson is at one with Boutroux and Fouillée in regarding the concepts and laws of science as merely pragmatic in their nature.

The legitimate region where intellect holds its sway is the world of matter.

> "Now, whether our conception of the intellect be accepted or rejected, there is one point on which everybody will agree with us, and that is that the intellect is at home in the presence of unorganized matter. This matter it makes use of more and more by mechanical inventions, and mechanical inventions become the easier to it the more it thinks matter as mechanism. The intellect bears within itself, in the form of natural logic, a latent geometricism that is set free in the measure and proportion that the intellect penetrates into the inner nature of inert matter. Intelligence is in tune with this matter, and that is why the physics and metaphysics of inert matter are so near each other."[10]

The matter itself comes into existence in consequence of "inversion" or "interruption" of the vital current. If life is movement, materiality is the inverse movement.[11]

Since Bergson's system is the summing up and the most perfect expression of the French Philosophy of Freedom, we shall do well in concentrating our attention chiefly on its fundamental assumptions.

To begin with, in Bergson's distrust in the potency of intellect lies the fundamental error of his system. As we have just seen, intellect, according to Bergson, has only a pragmatic value. It is unable to give us access to reality as such. The question now is : If intelligence has no claim to reality, how are we to explain its very existence ? As Aliotta says :

> "But if the essence of life of things is to be sought in creation and artistic contemplation, it is difficult to understand how intellect and the practical matter can have sprung from such a source or why the duality of subject and object and the other factors determining the real came into being."[12]

---

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 206.

[11] *Ibid.*, p. 263.

[12] *Idealistic Reaction against Science*, p. 135.

The weakness of Bergson's theory of intellect is the source of another deficiency in Bergson's system. The legitimate region where the intellect operates is, for Bergson, the world of matter. This world, he believes, is due to the check or interruption in the vital flow of reality.[12] Criticizing this conception of matter Dr. M'Kellar Stewart says :

> "Now this theory appears to bristle with difficulties. There seems to be no reason at all why this original pure creative activity should ever be interrupted ; and even if it does throw out so many jets, is there any reason to believe that these jets should at once begin to 'fall?' There seems to be every reason why they should continue their free activity, their essential nature, their whole nature, in fact, is freedom. The analogy of creation in our world does not help us here, for divisions take place in the vital current, as Bergson himself has argued, owing to the opposition of matter, and the existence of matter must not be assumed as a factor in its own genesis. Further, what precisely does Bergson mean when he says that matter is a movement the direction of which is opposed to that of life? Does he mean that life and matter have started from a common point, and that, while life ascends from that point, matter descends from it? If so, it is difficult to see how they will ever come to oppose one another."[13]

The above criticism of M'Kellar Stewart clearly shows that in Bergson's philosophy it is not possible to reconcile the conception of matter with that of life. Bergson, in fact, frequently says that life 'canalizes' itself through matter. Elsewhere he says :

> "The impetus of life, of which we are speaking, consists in a need of creation. It cannot create absolutely, because it is confronted with matter, that is to say, with the movement that is the inverse of its own. But it seizes upon this matter, that is necessity itself, and strives to introduce into it the largest possible amount of indetermination and liberty."[14]

All these expressions give us a presumption in favour of the fact that matter acts as a sort of environment in

---

[13] *Critical Exposition of Bergson's Philosophy*, pp. 180-181.

[14] *Creative Evolution*, p. 265.

conformity with which life marks out its sinuosities. But to believe that the *élan vital* has an environment is to set up a rival reality alongside the original one. For, how can reality have, without contradiction, an environment that is foreign to itself ? We thus find that in Bergson's system there is an unresolved dualism between life and matter.

If we consider a little we shall find that the root-cause of all the inconsistencies in Bergson's system is his identification of ontology with axiology. That is to say, Bergson has made reality one with the practical aspect of individual's life. This is the reason why the theoretical aspect is completely ignored in Bergson's philosophy. But reality can hardly put up with onesidedness. The truth of this statement is amply borne out by the fact that the theoretical aspect continually asserts its identity in the form of the theory of matter and foils all attempts of Bergson to give us a consistent view of reality as such.

Pragmatism

We now turn to consider another current of the present philosophical movement, namely, *Pragmatism*. The main representatives of this tendency are William James (now late) and Dewey in America and F. C. S. Schiller in England.

The various representatives of Pragmatism are at one in giving primacy to practical over theoretical aspect of our life. Cognitive function is subordinate to practical activity, because the former has arisen in the process of adaptation of organism to its environment.

> "For it may boldly be affirmed that the speculative impulse both in its origin and in its inmost essence is profoundly *practical*. It sprang from practical necessities, and it is still concerned with them."[1]

James similarly says :

> "The importance to human life of having true beliefs about matters of fact is too notorious. We live in a world of realities that can be infinitely useful or infinitely harmful.... If I am lost in the woods and starved, and find what looks like a cow-path, it is of utmost importance that I should think of a human habitation at the end of it, for if I do so and follow it, I save myself."[2]

These passages clearly show that the pragmatists make theoretical function subservient to the biological development of the individual organism. The element of life, thus, is again pushed to the forefront. And this is what stamps Pragmatism as essentially a romantic system.

An idea is true so long as it serves some practical purpose and it is false when it ceases to be useful. In fact, what Utilitarianism is to ethics, Pragmatism is to episte-

---

[1] Schiller, *Riddles of the Sphinx*, p. 8.

[2] *Pragmatism*, p. 203.

mology. "The true, to put it very briefly, is only the expedient in the way of our thinking, just as the right is only expedient in the way of behaving."[3] Pragmatism refuses to attach absolute significance to any of our ideas. These are to be considered as tools to help us in our practical endeavour.

The logical and epistemological aspects are developed chiefly by Schiller and Dewey. Schiller prefers the term Humanism to Pragmatism. Humanism is so called, because it regards human consciousness as the centre of universe. Schiller, in fact, sets great store by the old saying of Protagoras : "Man is the measure of all things." Everything has a value in proportion as it is able to fulfil human needs. Logical principles, too, are no exception to this rule.

> "The conclusion that the 'laws of thought' are postulates, and neither facts in nature, nor even necessarily applicable to all reality, will perhaps be thought to reduce their truth to the level of (more or less) successful fictions. And certainly they are not 'true,' if it is the business of thought to correspond with reality : they openly and 'arbitrarily' idealize certain features in it, and demand that reality shall conform to these ideals, although it plainly never does. However convenient then they may be, they cannot be more than fictions."[4]

Scientific hypotheses also have no absolute value. They are valid so long as they work well.

Dewey also takes a similar view of the nature of logical and scientific principles. Dewey calls logic instrumental in order to emphasize the fact that its various principles have no absolute, but a relative, value, inasmuch as they serve as a means for the individual to adjust himself to special situations of his environment. "All knowledge, as issuing from reflection, is experiemental in the literal physical sense of experimental."[5]

Again, Dewey says elsewhere.

> "And so all 'knowledges' are differences made in things by knowing, but some differences are not calculated or wanted

---

[3] W. James, *Meaning of Truth*, p. vii.

[4] Schiller, *Formal Logic* pp. 132-133.

[5] Dewey, *Essays in Experimental Logic*, p. 236 seq.

> in the knowing, and hence are disturbers and interlopers when they come—while others fulfil the intent of the knowing, being in such harmony with the consistent behaviour of the organism as to reinforce and enlarge its functioning. A mistake is literally mishandling; a doubt is temporary suspense and vacillation of reactions; an ambiguity is the tension of alternative but incompatible modes of responsive treatment; an inquiry is a tentative and retrievable (because intra-organic) mode of activity entered upon prior to launching upon a knowledge which is public, ineluctable—without anchors to windward—because it has taken physical effect through overt action."[6]

The pragmatic conception of reality is based essentially on its epistemological standpoint. Reality is not something absolutely fixed. But it is what an individual makes of it. Every cognitive act makes a difference in the nature of things. As Schiller says, "....our making of truth really alters reality."[7] "Reality is like a block of marble on which we have to carve out a statue."[8] It is not the given that counts, but it is the way in which we regard it that matters. In fact, pragmatists want us to look upon the world *sub specie generationis* instead of *sub specie aeternitatis* which is the rationalist's mode of looking at the reality. Schiller, indeed, believes that the world process is evolving and attains perfection only very gradually. There is no perfect or infinite God. But God, too, according to Schiller, is finite and needs the co-operation of finite selves to bring about a perfect state of the world.

Let us now examine the vitality of the contentions of pragmatism. In the first place, the subordination of the theoretical function to the practical activity by the pragmatists is hardly justifiable. As Aliotta points out :

> "Undoubtedly the human mind is an activity in its every moment; even in knowledge it is not a passive receptacle of impressions which it receives from without, but is the reconstruction of reality in accordance with its intimate laws. This must not, however, lead us into the mistake of confusing the

---

[6] Dewey's article on "Does Reality Possess Practical Character?" in *Essays in Honour of William James*, pp. 54-57.

[7] *Studies in Humanism*, p. 438.

[8] W. James, *Pragmatism*, p. 247.

various forms of spiritual activity, and neglecting the specific differences which impart to each of them a physiognomy proper to itself, and an independent value in the life of consciousness. Cognitive *doing* is not practical *doing*, just as it is not artistic *doing* : the attitudes assumed by us differ widely in the three cases."[9]

If now the theoretical and practical activities are different from each other, then the subordination of the former to the latter cannot but be a onesided procedure. Pragmatists have no doubt done well in drawing attention to the practical aspect which was entirely neglected by the rationalists. But in reacting against them, they themselves have become guilty of neglecting the theoretical aspect which has as much claim to existence as the practical aspect.

Moreover, the exclusive emphasis on the practical aspect has led pragmatists to extreme subjectivism and pluralism. If we look into the implications of the pragmatic theory of truth this will be clear. Truth is what is useful. What helps an individual in its biological development is true to him. Now the adaptation to the environment is always individual. A thing which is useful to an individual may be quite useless to another. The use of a particular thing depends upon the particular situation, nay, even on the specific temperament of an individual. Consequently, truth, which, according to the pragmatists, is the same as useful, must be subject to the vagaries of the individual's passions and feelings and hence must lose all its objective significance. But as soon as truth loses its objective validity, it becomes indistinguishable from the subjective fancies. Thus, if we carry the pragmatic theory to its logical extreme, we shall be led to maintain that the objective world is nothing but a phantasmagoria of subject's mind. Pragmatists, however, have saved themselves from the difficulties of extreme subjectivism only at the cost of committing manifest contradictions. As Aliotta points out :

> "Pragmatism, which accepts blindfold and dogmatically the biological origin and meaning of mental life, ends by con-

---

[9] *Idealistic Reaction against Science*, p. 185.

> tradicting its own postulate, when it denies the presupposition of all natural selection, that is to say, the objective physical order. Pragmatists are indeed very enigmatical on this point : they affirm and do not affirm, in order to clash too violently with common sense. Dewey admits before logical thought a more or less organic situation, which is not, however, the absolute absence of determination ; Schiller recognises in the external world resistant factors capable of establishing a limit to action, although he proposes not to take it into account, and to act so long as no obstacle intervenes (as if the most elementary action did not presuppose a more or less explicit knowledge of these factors) ; James, on the other hand, states that sensations are thrust upon us, and come from some unknown source, and that we have no control over their *nature, order* and *quality* .....; yet a few pages farther on he affirms that the order of sensations, and, in general, of every determination of them depends upon us."[10]

In this way, the pragmatists try in vain to avoid subjectivism which follows inevitably from the premises of their theory.

Pluralism, however, follows closely in the wake of subjectivism. For subjectivism excludes all the possibility of admitting any ultimate principle that is common to all individuals. The pluralistic tendency is to be found in the philosophy of William James as well as in that of Schiller. Especially in the latter it becomes quite prominent. As Dr. Maitra says :

> "The extremely logical bent of Schiller's mind likewise leads him to the excesses of monadism. Reality being in Schiller's view essentially individual, he formulated in his *Riddles of the Sphinx* a system of the 'ultimate egos' or monads which is more radical than the pluralistic universe of James Ward. According to this monadism, the so-called world of object exists fragmentarily in the individual egos. In its complete form, the objective world does not even appear to God, who is only an ego among egos. Philosophy, therefore, in its search for the complete and total reality, only substitutes a hallucination for a dream and a dream for a hallucination."[11]

---

[10] *Ibid.*, pp. 187-188.

[11] *The Neo-Romantic Movement in Contemporary Philosophy*, p. 137.

We thus find that Pragmatism finally lands us into abject subjectivism and pluralism. These deficiencies of Pragmatism, however, we repeat here, are due mainly to its placing an undue emphasis on the practical or axiological aspect and a total neglect of the theoretical activity of the self. In the theoretical activity, our experience is essentially kept linked to the objective world. But in the practical activity, we draw ourselves into our own private selves and have no direct concern with the world of objectivity. Hence, the neglect of the theoretical function is apt to lead us to utter subjectivism by making us deny all objectivity as such. That subjectivism cannot be a satisfactory solution is obvious from the circumstance that the pragmatists, as has been shown above, have to maintain, inconsistently with their own position, that there exists some objective reality, which is incapable of being moulded in accordance with the subject's views, but which, on the other hand, compels the subject to conform to it.

Philosophy Of Values

The protest against intellectualism, which is the distinguishing feature of Neo-Romanticism, finds a more definite and pronounced expression in the philosophy of values. This philosophy complains that the world of facts with which the intellect deals is dull and empty and hence it cannot satisfy us. "Our time," says Münsterberg, "needs a new philosophy. The mere heaping up of facts no longer satisfies us ; the world is tired of the pose of a triumphal march from discovery to discovery without ever asking what it all means. We have to feel that life is not more worth living by the mere accumulation of collected facts."[1] It is the business of science to deal with facts. But philosophy for value-philosophers, if it is to be of any worth, must seek the *meaning* or *value* of the facts rather than the facts themselves.

The stress on the meaning of value has, as Urban points out,[2] created a new standpoint, namely, the axiological, the possibility of which was hitherto little recognized. The axiological point of view differs from the purely epistemological one in that, while the latter deals only with facts and their inter-relations, the former insists on revealing what meaning the facts have for the evaluating self. In fact, the axiological standpoint is essentially the standpoint of self in contradistinction from the purely objective standpoint of epistemology. Facts cannot have any meaning unless the self shows its activity in approving or disapproving of them. Value is dependent mainly on the satisfaction of self in some degree. The philosophy of values, therefore, by insisting on the value or meaning of facts, pushes into the forefront the practical activity of self. And this is what stamps it as typically a neo-romantic system.

---

[1] *Eternal Values* p. 3.

[2] See his article on the "Value, Theory and Aesthetics," in F. L. Schaub's *Philosophy Today*, p. 54.

The metaphysical value-theories start with the very assumption that the theoretical activity of self is not co-ordinate, but subordinate, to the practical activity. In obedience to this assumption all metaphysical value-philosophers make a distinction between the world of facts and the world of values and believe that the former is the subject-matter of science, while the latter forms the true object of philosophy. Stern, for example, makes a distinction between the standpoint of persons and the standpoint of things. By the former he understands the teleologico-spiritualistic view, while by the latter the mechanico-materialistic view. Person, according to Stern, "has reality, spontaneity, individuality, activity and claims a separate value among the values of the world." On the contrary, thing is mechanical. "It serves a foreign purpose ; it is composed of separate parts which have no connection with one another and of which it is only the aggregate." The main problem, for Stern, is the relation between person and thing.

Windelband also in his *Präludien* makes a difference between philosophy and science. Philosophy, according to Windelband, is essentially normative in character, while science is purely ideographic. This can be seen from the difference in the nature of judgments employed by each of these disciplines. The judgments (*Urteile*) with which the natural sciences deal merely express a relation between two representations or ideas. The judgments of philosophy (*Beurteilungen*), on the contrary, express satisfaction or dissatisfaction, approval or disapproval on the part of the judging consciousness. The difference between the Urteil and the Beurteilung is elucidated by Windelband thus :

> "In the first, the connection of two contents of ideas, in the second the relation of the judging consciousness to the conceived object, is expressed. There is a fundamental distinction between the two propositions, 'This thing is white' and 'This thing is good,' although the grammatical form of both the propositions is absolutely the same. In both the cases—according to the grammatical form—to a subject a predicate is ascribed : but this predicate is in one case—as the

predicate of a judgment of fact—a determination which is in itself complete and which takes its content from what is objectively conceived ; in the other case—as the predicate of a judgment of value—it is a reference to consciousness that sets before itself an end."[3]

The predicate of an Urteil is positive in nature, while that of a Beurteilung expresses satisfaction or dissatisfaction on the part of the judging self. The latter, however, involves a belief in the existence of a norm, with reference to which the validity of a particular Beurteilung is affirmed. Philosophy, then, which deals with the Beurteilungen, is defined by Windelband as " *the critical science of universal values*. The science of *universal values* : that indicates the objects ; the *critical* science : that indicates the method of philosophy."[4]

The important point to be noticed here is this. In his definition of philosophy as the critical science of universal values, Windelband takes a definite step towards indentifying ontology with axiology. In the essay, *Immanuel Kant,* Windelband says that the norms or values, of which he speaks, are identical with the Kantian *a priori*.

"The truth is, Kant has fixed, as the problem of philosophy, reflection upon the 'principles of Reason,' that is, upon the norms, and this reflection cannot at all be exhausted by the rules of thinking and can only be completed by the rules of willing and feeling. In reflection upon the highest determination of value, the norms of science form only a part ; along with these there hold good, quite independently of them, the norms of ethical consciousness and aesthetic feeling. Quite as deep as the roots of our thinking lie those of our morals and our art in Reason ; it is only through a combination of all the three that there is formed, not a world-picture, but the normal consciousness which 'with necessity and universality' shall stand above the chance flow of individual life work as its measure and purpose.'"[5]

---

[3] *Präludien,* I. p. 29.

[4] *Ibid.*

[5] *Präludien,* Essay on " *Immanuel Kant,* p. 141.

In other words, the framework of our entire experience is constituted by the norms of thinking as well as of feeling and willing ; and the feature which distinguishes these norms from the laws of nature is, according to Windelband, their *absolute universality* (*Allgemeinengiltigkeit*).

In looking upon the norms as being of the nature of an *a priori* and also as possessing absolute universality, Windelband has verily invested them with the status of an ontological principle, which is *ex hypothesi* a common basis of everything whatever. Windelband, therefore, by virtue of his insistence on the universality of norms has brought about a complete identification of ontology with axiology.

In the essay, *Normen und Naturgesetze,* however, Windelband takes an entirely different view of the nature of norms. Here norms are no more regarded as identical with the Kantian *a priori.* They are looked upon as a *selection* from a manifold of the possible and actual experience.

> "All norms are thus *special* forms of realization of natural laws. The system of norm represents a *selection* out of the immense multitude of combination-forms through which, according to individual relations, the natural laws of physical life can manifest themselves."[6]

Now, as Picard observes : "This change of view-point, however, necessitates dropping the Kantian conception of norms as the framework of all possible experience and shifting the conception to that of norms operating against a background of laws of nature."[7] This change in Windelband's standpoint, however, is quite in tune with his characterization of philosophy as a science of norms. For, norms necessarily presuppose the selective activity on the part of the agent who seeks to achieve them. But when the norms are conceived as a selection from a manifold of experience, they essentially lose the ontological status to which they were exalted. Norms are no more the basic principles underlying the facts of experience. For the existence of the facts is *presupposed* before the norms could be selected out of

[6] *Präludien,* II. p. 75.

[7] *Values, Immediate and Contributory,* pp. 130-131.

them. From this it is clear that the world of facts falls outside the realm of values. And though Windelband frequently says that the task of philosophy is to bind the world of facts and the world of values, or, which is the same, the realm of Science and the realm of History into "einer höchsten geistigen Einheit," yet the dualism of the two worlds is too pronounced to allow any scope in Windelband's system for such an all-comprehensive synthesis.

> "Moreover, what is this 'highest spiritual unity?' Is it or is it not a value? If it is a value, then it is included in the kingdom of values. If it is not a value, then something which is not a value becomes the ultimate reality and the whole fabric of the philosophy falls to the ground. In fact, we have here the Nemesis of all philosophy of values: when it tries to be an all-comprehending system, it brings in something which saps its very foundation."[8]

Rickert also, in common with other value-philosophers, starts by making a distinction between reality (which is the same for Rickert as existence) and value.

> "The concept of existence is not the only one by means of which we can judge anything, but by the side of it there stands, besides the not-something or nothing, the concept of value as that of a non-existent. We use the word 'value' to denote that which is non-existent and yet at the same time something, and we express this last when we say that it is valid."[9]

Moreover, Rickert regrets the tendency in contemporary philosophy to accentuate the distinction between theoretical knowledge and values in such a way that the former becomes the enemy of the latter.[10] The chief representative of this tendency is Nietzsche. The result is a depreciation of the value of knowledge from the standpoint of moral, aesthetic or religious conviction. In contradistinction from this, Rickert believes that theoretical knowledge

---

[8] *The Neo-Romantic Movement in Contemporary Philosophy*, pp. 153-154.

[9] *Gegenstand der Erkenntnis*, p. 260.

[10] *System der Philosophie*, I. p. 30.

also presupposes the norm of truth with reference to which the truth-value of a judgment is determined. "Even the theoretical man," says Rickert, "*values*, for truth is a value, and whilst he knowingly puts himself in its service, he recognizes it thereby as a value.[11] In fact, the true object of our knowledge, according to Rickert, is not the *Sein*, but the *Sollen*. This *Sollen* or the value-in-itself (*Wert an sich*) is pure form without content. "What value-in-itself is, cannot be defined. But this only means that we have to do here with the final and most fundamental concept with which we think the world.." "Wert an sich" alone is the subject of transcendental philosophy, which investigates systematically the transcendental meaning of judgment. It is concerned exclusively with *what does not exist*. It has to do neither with the physical nor with the psychical existence, neither with a real nor with an ideally existing, neither with the sensuous nor with the over-sensuous reality, but only with the meaning (which is non-existing) of proposition and with the forms, which as values constitute this meaning.

It will now be seen that in his conception of *Wert an sich*, Rickert has transformed the basic principle of values, namely, the *Sollen* into an ontological principle. Indeed, as Aliotta points out, the concept of *Wert an sich* becomes indistinguishable from the "old idea of the Ding an sich," for, it, like the latter, is quite abstract inasmuch as it absolutely transcends all forms of existence. But this mode of thinking leads Rickert to confront precisely the same difficulties which haunt the conception of the thing-in-itself. For when the *Sollen* and the *Sein*, or the world of values and the world of existence, are totally estranged from each other dualism is an inevitable consequence.

In fact, Rickert himself has perceived the above fact. He, therefore, in the latter part of his *Allgemeine Grundlegung der Philosophie* has made drastic changes in his views. First of all, Rickert has tried to effect a *via media* between the world of values and the world of reality by bringing in the conception of the 'wertende Subject.' "Philosophy," says Rickert, "deals not with reality and value

---

[11] *Ibid.*, p. 27.

but also with the valuing subject."[12] And the subject it is which combines (*zusammenhält*) the world of reality and the world of values. For, both these domains are given as objects for the subject and hence both of them become synthesized into one living experience (*Erlebniss*) of subject, which is also called by Rickert "the living in its livingness."

But though the "wertende Subject" combines the domains of reality and values into one experience, yet this synthesis is not absolute or ultimate. There, therefore, still remains the task of synthesizing subject and object into a higher unity. This is achieved by Rickert by means of the conception of a world-whole.

Rickert gives an idea of the relation which the fundamental conceptions of his system bear to one another thus : The World-whole consists of two kingdoms—one the kingdom of the 'Erlebte' which, again, is sub-divided into the domains of reality and value, and the other the kingdom of the 'Erleben,' which combines the real and irreal (i.e. value).[13]

Now, in introducing the concepts of a subject and a World-whole, Rickert has undoubtedly got over his earlier dualistic view and has positively taken a monistic standpoint. For, the World-whole represents in itself an absolute synthesis of reality, value and the valuing subject. But Rickert's system has gained its thoroughness at the cost of the complete abandonment of its earlier status as a philosophy of values. The conception of a World-whole, though it is the supreme synthesizing principle in Rickert's system, is no principle of values. This is quite evident from the circumstance that the realm of value is only one among the various subordinate concepts which are subsumed under the supreme concept of World-whole.

> "'Value, therefore,' says Dr. Maitra, 'is not his' (i.e. Rickert's) ultimate ; it is not even his penultimate, which position is rather given to the subject, but it is only one of the two

---

[12] *System der Philosophie*, I. p. 313.

[13] *System der Philosophie*, I. p. 313.

regions of which the 'Erlebte,' or the world of experience, is composed."[14]

It is now clear that in Rickert's system ontologism gradually gains an upper hand over the purely axiological standpoint. The conception of a world-whole is simply another name for the Absolute of the Rationalists.

We now pass on to consider Münsterberg's system of Eternal Values. In pursuance of the general tendency of value-philosophers, Münsterberg, also makes a distinction between the world of facts and the world of values. The former gives us Nature and the latter History. The fundamental business of philosophy is not to seek what facts are, but what they mean.

"The philosopher leaves it to the historian to discover the special facts of reality. He keeps for his own inquiry only the deeper problem of the theory of knowledge, and what the real meaning of such facts can be, and what it means to have such knowledge of the world at all."[15]

Thus both in the theoretical and practical endeavour we are concerned not with pure facts but with what the facts actually 'mean'.

Now, value is defined by Münsterberg, as an over-personal satisfaction of the will. Mere satisfaction of will is not enough. The purely personal and private satisfaction, that is, pleasure, has, according to Münsterberg, no value at all. "Satisfaction of the will is independent of pleasure and displeasure, satisfaction of the will results from the realization of the anticipated stimulus to the personality without being themselves sources of satisfaction or dissatisfaction."[16] In order, therefore, to constitute value, the will must show in it an over-personal element.

To the question, What does it mean to fulfil our will ? Münsterberg, makes this reply : "We say our will is fulfilled when the idea which we try to maintain becomes realized. We must elaborate the statement further. What does this

---

[14] *Problem of Value*, I. p. 9.

[15] *Eternal Values*, pp. 5-6.

[16] *Ibid.*

realization mean ? We may say, in the first place, it means the identity of content between the preceding and the resulting experience."[17] The identity of content, then, according to Münsterberg, is the primary feature of the satisfaction of the will. The fundamental business of the philosophy of values is to find out the various ways in which the will expresses the identity of content, or, in other words, to explain how the will becomes an over-personal demand. In pursuance of this idea, Münsterberg in the *Eternal Values* gives us a scheme of threefold eight values.

Now, the chief defect of Münsterberg's system is to be found in the fact that, according to it, the will-act, as it is found in the individual subject, is not by itself sufficient to create value. It must, on the other hand, show in itself an "over-personal" element. In other words, the individual will-act must get itself identified with the extra-personal will so as to possess any value. This reasoning, however, appears to be fallacious. Our experience, to begin with, hardly makes us aware of the over-personal will of which Münsterberg speaks. We know only such will as is found in an individual ego. We know, too, that it is only finite will that is the creator of values. For, the creation of values always implies a "transition from a state of dissatisfaction to one of greater completeness, from an initial moment to a final moment." This condition can be fulfilled only by the will of a concrete historical subject which needs time to achieve its object. To attribute these features to the absolute or over-personal will, which is fully achieved and is beyond the limitations of temporal process, is tantamount to a manifest contradiction. These facts amply show that the conception of the over-personal absolute will is something which is inconsistent and hostile to the implications of the philosophy of values.

Again, in Münsterberg's belief that the satisfaction of will must be characterized by the identity of content, there is positively a recrudescence of Hegelian epistemological Absolutism. As Dr. Maitra points out :

> "If the maintenance of identity is the fundamental characteristic of satisfaction of the will and consequently defines a

[17] *Ibid.*, pp. 70-71.

> value, wherein does value differ from reality? For the essential characteristic of reality, as conceived by the rationalist, consists in the maintenance of identity."[18]

Criticism :— We can now very easily understand the drawbacks of the philosophy of values. As we have already seen, its starting-point is the distinction between the world of facts and the world of values. And the various value-philosophers try to show that the world of facts is subordinate to the world of values. In this way, they give supremacy to axiology over all other disciplines of philosophy.

But the supremacy of axiology in the philosophy of values is only nominal. For, in most of the value-philosophies there is an unresolved contradiction between the world of facts and the world of values. There is, as we have seen, an unresolved dualism between Person and Thing in Stern, between History and Nature in Windelband. Rickert and Münsterberg, however, try to overcome this dualism. But in doing so they have lapsed into a kind of Hegelian epistemological Absolutism. In other words, in these two systems the purely axiological viewpoint of the philosophy of values makes room for ontologism. We thus find that when the philosophy of values tries to remain true to its principle, it ceases to be consistent, and when it is consistent, it ceases to be a philosophy of values.

---

[18] *Problem of Value*, I. p. 3.

EXISTENTIALISM

NONE, who has followed the movement of philosophical thought so far, can resist the conclusion that the solution of the ontological problem can never be sought in terms of epistemology and axiology. It is such a clear and stern verdict that is brought home to our mind through a careful study of history of philosophy, particularly of the modern and contemporary periods. The poignancy of such a verdict is all the more intensified, when we find philosophical thinkers of acute mind meeting with a miserable failure in seeking to go against it.

English Neo-Hegelianism and Logical-Positivism are typical examples in this connection. The English Neo-Hegelianism met the same miserable fate as the Hegelian philosophy, when it sought to build its philosophy on the basis of the logical law of contradiction. Neither the eternal spiritual principle of Green nor the concrete universal of Bosanquet nor the Absolute of Bradley, which is given in the post-reflectional immediate experience, could solve the ontological problem of the One and the Many. The staticism of such notions of reality was so over-powering that it totally paralysed the life and activity of the finite world.

When the revival of Idealism thus showed its complete bankruptcy, there was a swing back towards the empiricism that was sponsored by Locke and Mill. The entire effort of Logical Positivism, which has for its advocacy such able and eloquent thinkers as G. E. Moore, Bertrand Russell, Whitehead and others, is to enchain philosophy to the categories of positive sciences. The main article of their faith is the formula : The truth of a proposition consists in the method of its verification. This formula works well as long as one deals with the contents of perceptual or intellectual knowledge. But the supreme norms of rational life can hardly brook any direct verification of themselves. But none can, therefore, deny their existence. Indeed, the values of Reason form the very basis of the entire human

culture and civilization. Moore, however, has made an effort to grapple with the problem of moral goodness in his *Principia Ethica.* He maintained that the moral value can exist independently of its relation to the mind. But such an analysis, in spite of the powerful advocacy of such an able thinker like Moore, seems to have been wasted on a lost cause. Russell, who is almost invincible when he deals with the categories of positive science and mathematics, shows lack of grasp of the fundamentals when he deals with the problems of spiritual life and hence fails to convince us. Whitehead, who worked shoulder to shoulder with Russell in writing the monumental *Principia Mathematica,* almost turns a *volte face* and speaks distinctly in an idealistic strain when he makes an effort to explain the rational values. There is thus an internal disruption rampant in those philosophical schools that have not paid heed to that verdict of history of philosophy to which we have already drawn pointed attention of our readers.

This naturally leads us to ask the important question : Are there any indications anywhere in the contemporary philosophical literature, which tend towards a healthy and constructive philosophical outlook. If so, what are they ?

Had there been no prospect of answering these questions positively, we would have spared our readers the trouble of going through one more chapter. For, mere repetitions are hardly significant in a work which aims directly at the exposition of the internal logic of the philosophical thought. We are, however, convinced that amidst all the welter and confusion of contemporary philosophical tendencies and ideas, the only ray of hope is held up by the contemporary Philosophy of Existence or simply Existentialism. After all the turmoils of fiery ordeals through which philosophy has passed during the past ages, she has at last found in Existentialism the only haven for her refuge. This, however, does not mean that Existentialism has solved all the problems of philosophy. Far from it. Even a cursory glance at the history of contemporary Existentialism will give one an impression of a battle-field, where even after a decisive victory is gained, the enemy is still lurking about and has not yet ceased firing from his artillery. One can still witness scenes of ruin and explosions,

which make the strong walls of the citadel of philosophy shake violently. But the partisans of philosophy know that they have gained a point of vantage and in case the enemy chose to engage himself in the open fight, he is sure to lose ground. Today, Existentialism is inspiring such a hope into our minds. This cannot but excite the interest of a genuine student of philosophy in having some idea of the new weapons forged by philosophy in her armoury whereby she could succeed in routing her deadly adversaries and thus putting an end once and for all to her perpetual harassment during the past ages.

What Existentialism Is Not :— The popularizers of existentialism in their over-enthusiasm have overshot the mark when they maintain that this philosophy has had its origin long back in the mediaeval or even in the ancient Greek period. They have not only enlisted the names of such philosophical thinkers as Socrates, St. Agustine, Thomas Aquinas, Pascal, etc., but also several poets and novelists among its champions. This has given rise to much confusion and instead of adding anything to its credit, it has seriously impaired its original character. Boschenski in his *Contemporary European Philosophy* complains of the same thing. In order, therefore, to remove any initial misunderstanding with regard to the positive contribution of Existentialism, he has made certain statements with regard to what existentialism is not. In the interest of clearness we shall do well to quote his statements here :

> "Existentialism addresses itself to what are today called the 'existential' problems of man—the meaning of life, of death, of suffering, to name but these. This is not to say that existentialism has originated these problems, since they have existed in all ages. But to call St. Augustine or Pascal an existentialist for that reason would be a mistake. The same holds of certain modern authors such as the Spanish critic, Miguel de Unamuno (1864-1937), the author of the great Russian 'epic,' Feodor M. Dostoievsky (1821-1881), or the German poet, Rainer Maria Rilke (1875-1926). These authors have, to be sure, discussed or given poetic embodiment to various human problems with great penetration. Nevertheless, they are not existentialist philosophers.

"It would also be an error to designate as existentialists those philosophers who have concerned themselves with the idea of existence in the classical sense or with specific existing things. Those Thomists, therefore, who regard Thomas Aquinas as an existentialist are far off the track, and it is an equally grotesque error to number Husserl among the existentialists merely because he exerted great influence upon them. The fact is that Husserl 'brackets out' existence.

"Finally existentialism must not be identified with any body of existentialist doctrine, for example, that of Sartre, for . . . . there are profound differences between individual points of view.

"In reply to all these misconstructions we emphasize that existentialist philosophy is a technical philosophical position which first came to its full development in our time and can be traced back no further than Kierkegaard, and that it has articulated itself into doctrines which diverge very widely—only those views which are held in common can be regarded as the existentialist philosophy."[1]

Fundamental Characteristics of Existentialism :— After having noticed what Existentialism is not, we would naturally like to know as to what constitutes its fundamental characteristics. In this connection, we can immediately point out two important considerations which every existentialist thinker must necessarily take into account.

Firstly, it is incumbent on every existentialist thinker to believe that existence is prior to essence.

Secondly, he must concede primacy to feeling, especially human feeling, in solving the ontological problem.

It is interesting to note here that in following such considerations the existentialists are guided strictly by the ontological standpoint. In maintaining that existence is prior to essence, the idea is to discard absolutely the primacy of any discipline which owes allegiance to any logical law. That is to say, both epistemology and axiology, which are guided by the logical laws, are at once denied any privilege to have anything to do with the absolute reality. This is followed by the positive stand taken by the existentialists in declaring that it is only feeling which can give us an access to the absolute reality. It will be seen that feeling is looked upon by the existentialists as both dynamic

[1] Pp. 155-156.

and abstract, although such a view of feeling is not understood in all its momentous implications. Nevertheless, one thing is quite certain that in following such a line of thinking the existentialists seem to recapture the same old spirit of philosophy which animated, with some exceptions, the minds of Greek thinkers in the ancient period. In what follows, we shall do well to appreciate how the leading existentialist thinkers, in spite of the radical differences in their individual opinions, have worked out the implications of their common stand. We shall refer here to the views of Kierkegaard, Heidegger, Jaspers, Sartre and Marcel, who are generally acclaimed the main protagonists of contemporary Existentialism.

Kierkegaard (1813-1855)

Kierkegaard is the chief pioneer of Existentialism. His inclination towards it, although determined through his revolt against Hegelianism, was nevertheless of a peculiarly subjective type. Kierkegaard's love affair with Regine Olsen and its subsequent failure have much to do with moulding Kierkegaard's mind. It is not that Regine had any hand in making Kierkegaard terminate his love affair abruptly. But as his diaries show, Kierkegaard was conscious of his own hereditary defect. (Kierkegaard had one leg shorter.) This prevented him from consummating his love into marriage, because he felt it would make his *fiancée* unhappy in course of time. It is this extreme regard for his own conscience which made him sacrifice voluntarily the happiness which he might have otherwise surely got. But the very prospect that his happiness might be secured by causing inconvenience to his partner—although this was nothing but imaginary—filled his mind with a sense of sin accruing from his selfishness. Such a bent of mind in Kierkegaard would seem to one to be almost pathological. But to Kierkegaard himself it was as real as anything. With a view to finding a parallel case he cites the instance of Socrates. His immortal sacrifice was meant to satisfy his own conscience which required him to follow a certain course of action in the teeth of overwhelming opposition of his compatriots. It is because of this that Kierkegaard has hailed Socrates as the great existentialist of the ancient world. In him he found the perfect example of a religious person, who is not in the least concerned with the opinions of the laity, but is guided by his inward subjective feeling of conscience. In spite of all that can be said against it, the reality of such a feeling cannot be denied. The common man, who is engrossed in his worldly affairs, may not have any regard for it. But such a feeling is a living reality for the truly religious person, inasmuch as it is the sole determinant of his entire individuality.

The Three Stages on Life's Way :— With a view to finding a justification for such a profound and subtle and yet unquestionably real religious feeling, Kierkegaard points out that it can be attained only by intensifying one's consciousness by passing through at least three stages in one's life. They are : (i) aesthetic ; (ii) moral and (iii) religious. In the first stage, man's attraction towards a woman is guided mainly by the considerations of his selfish pleasures. He treats woman as a means for gratifying his sexual passion and nothing else. Although indulgence into one's passions affords immense pleasure, it nevertheless leads one to realize sooner or later that the life of passion is devoid of all significance. The pleasure of an aesthete is ultimately disappointing and the source of melancholy. With regard to such pleasures, Kierkegaard says : "There are well-known insects which die in the moment of fecundation. So it is with all joy ; life's supreme and richest moment of pleasure is coupled with death."[1]

If a person is right-minded, he is bound to feel repulsion at such a life of passion. He is likely to move in the direction of such a life in which man and woman enter into marriage relation which is sanctified by social customs, traditions and law. Such a life develops steadiness in the emotions of both the partners and also contributes towards the realization of an orderly social life. In other words, man at such a stage transcends the limitations of his private life and tends to realize a certain universal in his particular being. According to Kierkegaard, marriage is not at all a hindrance. But it is a step in the direction of revealing one's own personality to the fullest possible extent. Hence, it is the duty of every man to marry, because it is the duty of every man to be revealed. It is in such an attitude that there lies a fundamental difference between the aesthetic and ethical modes of life. While in the former a man is a particular being, the latter puts meaning into his particular life by making him realize a universal.

But the ethical stage has its own limitations. Usually people feel quite secure in their emotional life when their relations are guaranteed by social traditions and legal

---

[1] *Either/Or*, I. p. 15.

enactments. But such a life cannot always be regarded as the sole guarantee for the perfect happiness of the individual. There may arise occasions in which one of the partners of the marriage relation may feel, as Kierkegaard himself did, that he is unfit to shoulder the responsibility of the marriage life, that his life is a burden to his partner, although she might willingly consent to make a sacrifice of her pleasure for her man. Under such circumstances, to continue the marriage relation is nothing short of sinning against the conscience of humanity, as it is represented by God. The only alternative here is that instead of making one's partner suffer, it is one's own self that must choose to suffer. Such is the verdict, stern though it be, of reason. It is such a sense of guilt that leads one to the third stage of one's life. This stage is called religious. Its fundamental character is that it places the individual above the universal. Although Kierkegaard has not been able to define "individuality", what he means thereby is quite clear. Individuality consists in leading life strictly in accordance with the dictates of Reason or Conscience. The law of Reason is superior to the law of ethical duty, inasmuch as now a man bids fair to represent not any one community or a part of humanity, but the entire humanity itself. Although susceptibility to the influence of Reason is a rare phenomenon, yet it is the profound craving of humanity which requires every member of it to have an absolutely clean heart. In the *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, Kierkegaard has clearly brought out the contrast between the three stages by saying that aesthetic existence is essentially enjoyment, ethical existence is essentially struggle and victory ; religious existence is essentially suffering.

Individuality, the Supreme Category of Human Life:— Let it be particularly noted here that the suffering of a religious person is not due to any weakness or abnormality of his mind. On the contrary, in so far as it is self-imposed, such a suffering bears an eloquent testimony of his truly healthy mind. For, in suffering, the religious man overcomes that cowardice usually concealed by the ordinary men under the garb of seeming respectability, which keeps them invariably away from God. By means of suffering or through the sense of guilt, man becomes one with God. It

is this idea which is sought to be expressed by Kierkegaard by saying that suffering is the only means to attain perfect individuality. According to Kierkegaard, individuality is the supreme category of life and it is in attaining it that the supreme bliss in one's life lies. In the *Point of View*, Kierkegaard says :

> " 'The individual' is the category through which, in a religious aspect, this age, all history, the human race as a whole must pass. And he who stood at Thermophylae was not so secure in his position as I who have stood in defence of this narrow defile, 'the individual', with the intent of making people take notice of it. His duty was to prevent the hosts from passing through the defile. . . .my task is, if possible, to invite, to stir up the many to press through this defile of the individual. 'The individual'—with this category the cause of Christianity stands or falls, since world-development has got so far along in reflection as it has. Without this category pantheism has triumphed absolutely. . . . .The category of 'individual' is and remains the fixed point which is able to resist the pantheistic confusion."[2]

Individuality is not purely a Logical Category :— Kierkegaard's importance does not lie in the discovery of the category of individuality. It was recognized fully as early as Aristotle. It is in his distinctive attitude towards this category that his character as an existentialist is revealed. Kierkegaard's main complaint is that the attitude of most of the thinkers towards individuality has been predominantly *intellectual*. Kierkegaard's entire criticism of Hegelianism is based solely on this ground. According to him, Hegel seeks to furnish the explanation of individuality through logic. Here Hegel is entirely wrong. For individuality may involve logic, but such a logic will not be in a position to explain the concrete synthesis of subject and object which it represents. It is this concreteness that gives to individuality its distinctive existential character. Logical analysis can only inform us what elements are found in an individual experience and to what extent they show internal system and order. But in order that such a logical analysis should operate, it is necessary that the individual experience

---

[2] Pp. 130, 136-137.

should first of all exist. The Rationalists like Hegel usually believe that logic can explain everything about the individual. But this is sheer illusion.

> "One may be great as a logician and become immortal through one's accomplishment, and yet postulate oneself by supposing that the logical is the existential, and that the principle of contradiction is removed in the realm of existence since it undeniably is removed in the realm of logic. Existence is exactly that separation which frustrates the mere logical stream."[3]

Indirect Communication :— What Kierkegaard really wants us to understand is that in the individuality the subject and object are never given to us in abstraction, as the rationalists would have us believe. On the contrary, every individual experience claims to have a uniqueness for itself simply because it holds these two aspects of experience in a concrete unity which is *sui generis*. But what is it that actually effects such a synthesis ? According to Kierkegaard, logic is unable to create such a synthesis, although it may be able to analyse it. Creative power is vested only in that inward *feeling* through which a man moulds his life and personality in a certain historical situation. Such a feeling is regarded by Kierkegaard as having inwardness and subjectivity. Or, as Kierkegaard puts it in his characteristic terminology, individuality is throughout sustained by "indirect communication." Indirect communication is quite different from the direct communication. The latter is the same as the discursive knowledge in which the thinker "thinks the universal," i.e., knows a particular object by subsuming it under a universal. But in the indirect communication the thinker " assimilates the universal in his inwardness, i.e., he applies it to his own personality and situation."[4] The distinction between these two different kinds of communication can be illustrated by taking the example of one's becoming a true Christian. A person may be born a Christian and yet, according to Kierkegaard, he may not be truly a Christian. The reason is that by listening to the sermons and

---

[3] *Papier*, VI B. 98 : 45.

[4] Thomte, *Kierkegaard's Philosophy of Religion*, p. 192.

by observing the usual rites of the institutional religion one cannot imbibe the true spirit of Christianity. Such a mode of knowing Christianity may furnish a good deal of information and food for intellect. Yet it may leave a person as irreligious as ever. In order to be truly religious, the person will have to identify himself with the ideals of religion. He is required to develop a *subjective* and *inward* feeling for them, so that he might be prepared to suffer and even to die for them. This requires the quickening of conscience in man, an openness of the mind to the influences of reason. Such a process, as Kierkegaard points out, is absolutely inward and subjective, by which he means that it is determined through that force of feeling which can create a concrete synthesis of personality by forging its various elements into an organic unity so as to represent the religious spirit in and through every part of it.

The doctrine of indirect communications thus leads Kierkegaard to invest into feeling the ontological status, i.e., the power of *realizing* an idea. Without such a feeling such an idea can never exist or be real at all. Such a spontaneous and creative feeling is not accessible through ordinary knowledge, because it is inward and subjective, that is, quite abstract in its nature.

From such a point of view, Kierkegaard's attitude towards God becomes radically different from the one which the philosophy of religion of the Rationalists manifests towards Him. For a confirmed rationalist God is not only the Perfect Self, but also the Absolute ; that is to say, God is at once both the supreme regulative principle and metaphysical principle. According to Kierkegaard, this leaves no scope for true religiosity. If Reason alone is enough to lead us to God then in order to be truly religious one will have to become a professor of philosophy. But this is absurd. According to Kierkegaard, a professor, unless he has a feeling for God, can do nothing more than storing up religious doctrine in his mind or at best can give learned discourses by putting forward reasons to justify a certain religious doctrine. But this by itself can never make him a god-man.

> "The transition to the Christian mode of life is not by means of intellectual apprehension of the doctrine of Christianity, but through a decisive act by which the individual enters into an obedient relation to Christ who is the pattern and by which relationship his life becomes heterogeneous with the life of the world. Once a man acts decisively and comes out into reality, existence can get a grip on him, and God can educate him. To enter into relationship with God means to act. Such action does not preclude reflection. Kierkegaard speaks of a 'prolonged' and 'continued' reflection which may be the very condition for decisive religious action. Such 'continued' reflection holds the individual at the point of decision day after day with the same intensity. It is physically exhausting and requires a great strength of character, but it serves a 'religious haemorrhage,' which weakens one's natural clinging to the world.'[5]

It is evident from the above that although Kierkegaard believes that the ultimate ground of existence is feeling and also that such a feeling is not accessible to intellectual knowledge, Kierkegaard, nevertheless, is not anti-intellectual. Feeling is not absolutely opposed to reason, but it is a force which gives rise to reason in the course of its operation. This is quite obvious from the doctrine of the three stages as referred to above. As the feeling of love goes on becoming more and more intense and conscious, it naturally develops its own logical dialectic. Otherwise, the hierarchical gradation of the stages will have no justification. Logic only furnishes the methodology of such an ordering process. But it can never constitute the order in the elements unless the logic is *felt* by one.

Conclusion :— This account of Kierkegaard's philosophy naturally leads us to the following important conclusions.

To begin with, religious experience represents a concrete individual unity of the object with the supreme subject. As such it is regulated by the logical principle of contradiction. But this is as good as saying that God is finite. For, the operation of the logical laws is possible within the sphere of finite experience alone. If such is the

---

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 171.

case, then God can no more figure as the metaphysical Absolute. Such a status, according to Kierkegaard, can be vested into that feeling, which being both creative and abstract, can be truly infinite. God is the result of the supreme individuation of such an abstract infinite feeling. By taking such a stand Kierkegaard is able to concede an independent status to ontology by subordinating both epistemology and axiology to it. Feeling is the infinite principle of reality, which in the act of its individuation gives rise to the logical categories in theory as well as in practice. It is in suggesting such a purely ontological approach to the problems of philosophy that Kierkegaard's originality lies.

Kierkegaard was not a professional philosopher. Moreover, his approach to philosophy has been directly from the experiences of his personal life. As such his views could not get the precision of language and terminology. Partially this defect has been overcome by those existentialists, who succeeded Kierkegaard.

Heidegger (1889-)

Distinction between a Being (*Seiende*) *and Being* (*Sein*) :—The distinction between a Being (*Seiende*) and Being (*Sein*) is the fundamental basis of Heidegger's philosophical thought. The *Seiende* is anything ordinarily found existing in our experience. It includes all objects, thoughts or events, which are constantly in flux and act and react on one another. The *Seiende* constitutes the proper field for positive sciences. The principal task of such sciences is to introduce system and order in the world of the *Seiende*.[1]

But, according to Heidegger, we are not satisfied with the knowledge about the *Seiende*. We also ask the further question : What is the source of the *Seiende* ? Or, more appropriately, what constitutes the *Being* of the Beings ? It is, however, not easy to answer such a question. For, the Being or the *Sein* can never be presented as an object, because it is the ultimate ground of the world of the *Seiende*. The *Sein* transcends everything that is concrete. Hence, it is not possible to describe it in terms of anything belonging to the world of the *Seiende*. It is neither numerable nor does it belong to any kind, neither is it spatial nor temporal, neither is it a substance nor an attribute.[2] It is incapable of being apprehended through any concept and hence it is indefinable.[3] In a word, it is, according to Heidegger, nothing ; that is to say, something mysterious and abstract.

Dasein and Existence :—If the *Seiende* and the *Sein* are absolutely opposed to each other, how are we to establish any *via media* between them ? With a view to solving this problem, Heidegger leads us to the conception of *Dasein*. The *Dasein* is that specific aspect of the world of *Seiende*, which is distinctly human. The distinguishing character of *Dasein* is that it is never static or closed, but

---

[1] Vide Knittermeyer's *Die Philosophie Der Existenz*, p. 217 in this connection.

[2] *Ibid*., p. 219.

[3] Cf. "Man kann das Sein nicht zu definieren versuchen, ohne einer Absurdität zu verfallen" (*Sein und Zeit*, 4).

it is characterized by openness or disclosure (*Erschlossenheit*). For, in the first place, it has its past and also it points to the future. Moreover, the *Dasein* is distinguished from any other object, such as a table, a tree, etc., inasmuch as it is never simply a means to an end, but it is an end in itself. It is this which leads a man to organize his experience in such a way that the various objects come to have any meaning only in so far as they are related to his self. This is expressed by Heidegger by saying that the *Dasein exists*. The word 'exist' is taken in its etymological sense, meaning thereby that it *ek-sists* or goes beyond itself. In other words, every *Dasein* has the capacity to transcend the limitations of both time and space. Unless it shows such a tendency, it cannot be said to exist at all. Existence is the very function of *Dasein*, through which it brings itself in relation to the Being itself.[4]

Historicity (Gechichtlichkeit) and Projection (Entwurf) of the Dasein :—According to Heidegger, man never lives in stark isolation, but he lives in the world. The being-in-the-world (*Das In-der-Welt-Sein*) implies that there is a certain historical situation within which human life finds its proper meaning. Such a situation consists of a multitude of objects. Now, our knowledge presents these objects as disconnected entities. It makes us believe that each of these objects has its own essence and if it is referred to its proper essence, it can be regarded as real. According to Heidegger, such is never the case. The knowledge of an object, which reveals to us its essence, can never invest it with reality. It can at the most inform us that an object is present or is before us (*vorhanden*) or that it can be turned to such and such use (*zuhanden*). But until and unless it enters into the relation to his interests, it cannot be said to *be* or to *exist*. It is this capacity to project itself into the world of objects that makes the *Dasein* a dynamic entity. Whatever be the historical situation into which the *Dasein* is thrown, it manifests the tendency to assimilate the set of objects to itself. It creates its history, and through such a historicity it feels more and more the operation of *Being* within itself.

---

[4] "Das Sein selbst, zu dem sich das Dasein so oder so verhalten kann, und immer irgendwie verhält, nennen wir Existenz." (*Sein und Zeit*, 12).

Anxiety (Angst) as the Existential Force :—According to Heidegger, the feeling which gives an access to the Being is best manifested in our anxiety (*Angst*) for the future. Every man feels anxious about his destiny. Such an anxiety goes on developing an inward tension in his mind till his death. It is this anxiety, which leads a man perpetually to mould his experience, to make the best of the objective situation, in which he is thrown. There are infinite possibilities of handling an objective situation. But the feeling of anxiety for his destiny requires him to choose only one of such infinite number of alternatives. It is in the moment of making his choice, that a man finds himself quite free and *feels* his existence.

It is necessary to observe that, according to Heidegger, the freedom of choice which is involved in his anxiety for the future is not the same as any teleological action. Every purposive action has a goal or an ideal, which it has to achieve. But the anxiety, which is the characteristic feature of every *Dasein* has no object. Heidegger distinguishes the *Angst* from fear. Fear has always some object for itself.[5] For example, I can say that I am afraid of a lion, a snake, flood, etc. Anxiety, on the contrary, has no object. It is something natural to man, because without it he never feels that he exists. Anxiety, according to Heidegger, is the very "Being of the Dasein."[6] It is the very dynamic impulse through which man creates and fulfils his own destiny.

Home-Sickness (Heimatlosigkeit) and Home-Coming :—When Heidegger suggests that the feeling of anxiety is the mainspring of human destiny, he does not mean to lead us to any pessimistic view of life. In trying to diagnose the chief malady which affects our age, in which along with intellectual enlightenment effected in consequence of scientific progress there are forces of unreason running rampant causing untold misery and suffering to humanity, Heidegger maintains that we have become strangers in the world which is ours. It is not that there is anything wrong

---

[5] Cf. "Die Furcht bezieht sich stets auf etwas Bestimmtes," and "Fragen wir nun naher, whelches der Gegenstand der Angst ist, so ist hier allwege zu antworten : Dieser ist Nichts. Die Angst und Nichts entsprechen einander beständig."

[6] "Das Sein des Daseins" ist die Sorge.

with the world, but the root-cause of the disease lies within ourselves. The same world of objects, which is wearing such a sinister appearance to humanity and inspiring terror into our mind, or the feeling of homesickness, which makes us lose heart, can be completely changed, provided we give up our allegiance to the false values of intelligence. Intellect may fascinate us, but it can never give us any satisfaction or happiness. In order to be happy, we shall have to take recourse to that existential feeling, which is the common ground of the entire human existence. If we look at the world from the standpoint of such a feeling, the same gloomy world will assume a welcome appearance. The same things, which surround us, namely, the houses, streets, trees, animals, etc., will be clothed with an indescribable joy.[7]

This is shown by Heidegger in his superb appreciation of Hölderlin's poem *"Home-coming."*[8] In this poem, the poet, who had returned home after his long stay in the foreign land, finds his weary heart filled with the sense of indescribable joy at the sight of even the trifling things of his home town. This was so, because he had a feeling of identity with them. It is only when one trains one's mind to be animated with such a feeling of love that the homesickness, which is overpowering our age, can yield place to infinite joy of home-coming.

The implications of such a stand taken by Heidegger are far-reaching, particularly in the sphere of religion. But unfortunately they have not been fully worked out by him. One thing is quite certain that, according to Heidegger, reality is not accessible through intellectual knowledge, but through intuitive feeling. In maintaining this, Heidegger has lent a powerful support to the main thesis of Existentialism.

---

[7] Cf. in this connection Rilke's following lines, which express the dejected mind of the poet when he happened once to look out of the window in a foreign town :

Noch war die neue
Stadt wie verwehrt, und die unüberredete Landschaft
finsterte hin, als wäre ich nicht. Nicht gaben die nächsten
Dinge sich Müh, mir verständlich zu sein. An der Laterne
drangte, die Gasse herauf : ich sah, dasz fremd war.

[8] Refer in this connection to *Being and Existence.*

Karl Jaspers (1883-)

Being-in-the-World and Dasein :— Like all existentialists Jaspers maintains that meaning can be ascribed to the objects in the context of certain historical situation.[1] And such a historical situation must be essentially human. The world is a world for me, because it surrounds me (*Umwelt*).[2] Of course, there is ample room for another world, which may be totally opposed to my world. But this does not mean that the world can exist independently of its entering into the consciousness of the Subject. Indeed, the consciousness is " that point of illumination which in the circumambient darkness of the abysmal Whole brings to light the Dasein itself and also the world."[3] Being-in-the-World and *Dasein* are the concepts, which thus mutually imply each other.

The Bi-polarity (*Spaltung*) *of Dasein* :—Jaspers gives a better analysis of *Dasein* than Heidegger. According to Jaspers, the *Dasein* is bi-polar. It is capable of being split up into two aspects : (i) the objective and (ii) the subjective. For the purposes of logical understanding, it is possible to treat the two aspects separately. In that case the objective aspect will reveal to us an interconnected system of several objects, which may be called simply the World (*Welt*). Again, we know that every object requires some subject to understand it. Hence, the objective aspect naturally leads to the subjective. From the standpoint of logic, it is possible to establish a complete synthesis of all the subjects. This leads us to the conception of consciousness-in-general (*Das Bewusstsein überhaupt*). Our concrete experience does not allow the subject and the object to remain completely isolated from each other. They are invariably

---

1 " Wir sind immer in Situationen." Jaspers, *Einführung in Die Philosophie*, p. 20.

2 Es ist zwar auch das " Sein in seiner Welt," aber diese Welt ist " Umwelt " (W 53 f.), Welt für mich. (Knittermeyer, *Die Philosophie Der Existenz*, p. 341.)

3 *Ibid.*, p. 342.

brought together into an all-comprehensive synthesis of subject and object.

In so far as such an analysis of the *Dasein* is concerned Jaspers has only followed Kant, who in his *Critique of Pure Reason* ultimately leads us to the three Ideas of Reason as the regulative principles of the totality of our experience. As Boschenski points out, Jaspers is indebted to Kant in two ways : "First, he takes the *maxim of consciousness* to be valid : no object without a subject, everything objective is categorically conditioned by consciousness, objective being (*Dasein*) is always an illusion. Second, he adopts the Kantian doctrine of *ideas* and amplifies it ; we are never presented with the whole of reality, and so he turns Kant's three ideas (the world, the soul, God) into three 'encompassers' (*Umgreifende*)".[4] Jaspers calls these concepts the encompassers (*Umgreigende*), inasmuch as they serve to furnish a complete explanation of the *Dasein*.

God both as the Encompasser and Transcendence :— There is, however, a radical difference between Kant and Jaspers in the assessment of the value of the encompassers from the standpoint of philosophy. While, according to Kant, the three Ideas of the world, self and God spring from the profound cravings of human reason, because they are necessarily implied in the systematic and regulative procedure of logical understanding ; they are denied any constitutive character. They are only ideals and as such they can never be presented in our actual experience. Hence, from the standpoint of logic they are regarded by Kant as purely *transcendent*. Now, Kant's conception of transcendent is detrimental to metaphysics. For, according to Kant, the Ideas of Reason are like those golden apples, which are kept under the perpetual vigil of Gorgon Medusa. The moment human understanding reaches out its hands to grasp them, it is completely petrified. But if the Ideas of Reason are beyond the reach of human understanding, are they not as good as unreal ?

Jaspers, however, seeks to solve Kant's problem from the standpoint of existentialism. In the first place, Jaspers makes us understand that the three encompassers are oper-

---

[4] *Contemporary European Philosophy*, p. 186.

ative within the domain of *Dasein.* The *Dasein* has a direct bearing on human existence. In such a *Dasein,* there is bi-polarity of subject-object. But the subject and the object are only logical concepts. As such, they are only appearances (*Erscheinungen*). They can be invested with the character of reality only when they are brought in relation to existential feeling. Such a feeling is neither objective nor subjective. It is transcendental to both. But the *Dasein* is unable to maintain itself without such a creative feeling, which, although transcendental, alone has the power to unify subject and object in a certain historical situation. Transcendence thus is the very function of feeling whereby it invests the *Dasein* with the character of existence.[5]

This is brought out more clearly by Jaspers in the doctrine of God. According to him, the idea of God has historically two roots : the Bible and the Greek Philosophy.[6] As the supreme encompasser, God conforms to the rationalistic view of Greek philosophy in so far as it is through Him that a complete organization of the total human experience is made possible. But as an encompasser, God is unable to *realize* such a possibility unless His idea is felt by man. It is this feeling or faith, which is mainly responsible in giving the personal character to God as an object of religious devotion. He is then conceived as the superhuman Individual, as the dispenser of Justice and the embodiment of all that is good.

In approaching God from the standpoint of existentialism, Jaspers has, in fact, saved both Religion and Philosophy from any loss of their independence. The Rationalist, by identifying God with the Absolute, deprives Religion of all the warmth of feeling which inspires the religious devotee to make the heaviest sacrifice in the name of God. Moreover, in Philosophy, the same rationalistic method gives rise to several insoluble problems, particularly by creating a rift in the two aspects of the Absolute as self-fulfilled and the same as self-fulfilling itself. But by dissociating the ration-

---

5 "Als Existenz sind wir auf Gott-die Transzendent-bezogen." (*Einführung in Die Philosophie,* p. 32.)

6 "Unser abendländischer Gottesgedanke hat geschichtlich zwei wurzeln: die Bibel und die grieshische Philosophie." (*Ibid.,* p. 3.)

alistic aspect of God from his *being* as realized by human feeling, Jaspers has saved both religion and philosophy from the above-mentioned difficulties.

Metaphysics as Cipher-Script of Existential Communication :—In his approach to Religion, Jaspers follows the lead of Kierkegaard. But he even goes back to Plotinus, "the greatest of the Western mystics," in order to find in him the correct representation of his own standpoint. In his *Einführung in Die Philosophie,* Jaspers quotes from Plotinus the following :—

> "Often when I awaken to self-consciousness after the slumber of body, I see a wonderful beauty ; I believe then most firmly my belonging to a better and higher world, imbibe powerfully within me the most commanding life and become one with the Godhead."[7]

According to Jaspers, in such a mystic vision as the above is contained the quintessence of philosophy. The mystic's vision has nothing to do with what is already given, but it aims at realizing or giving a concrete form to that which is incapable of becoming an object. God, as an encompasser, can never be an object. But through the personal feeling of the mystic, He can be *realized*.[8] For, now God does not remain an abstract possibility, but He has been completely identified by the mystic with his own self. He becomes the symbol of the mystic's spiritual perfection. The mystic has now made a choice to identify himself with God, no matter whether such a choice entails upon him suffering of any magnitude and intensity. Guided by the unflinching faith in God, the mystic ultimately succeeds in transcending the limitations of his finite self and brings himself into an intimate communion with God in whom he finds the fullest revelation of his own being. Where does this faith come from. "It does not come originally out of the limits of the world-experience, but out of the freedom of man. The man,

---

[7] *Ibid.*, pp. 33-34. Our tr.

[8] "Gott ist kein Gegenstand des Wissens, er ist nicht zwingend erschlieszbar. Gott ist auch kein Gegenstand der sinnlichen Erfahrung. Er ist unsichtbar, kann nicht geschaut, sonder nur geglaubt warden." (*Ibid.*, p. 43).

who has really known his freedom, has himself immediately and certainly become God. Freedom and God are inseparable."[9]

When we seek to explain this freedom, which we exercise in the moments of absolute failure (*Scheitern*), we find ourselves to be quite helpless. "Before Being we must be silent. When something is incapable of being presented as an object, speech is brought to a standstill."[10] Under such a situation, the faith or freedom helps us by creating the symbols or ciphers of that which is transcendental. For, as Jaspers says : "The wreck is the open ground of all cipher-being. Cipher, regarded as the reality of Being, springs first in the experience of the wreck." Such ciphers or symbols have no relation to anything as an object. On the contrary, it is through these ciphers that "the transcendence of the transcendents" comes to "transparence." They constitute the language of faith and one who has it can alone find any existential communication through them. Metaphysics is the language of such ciphers ; or in a word, Metaphysics has to do with the existential communication. "Through Metaphysics," says Jaspers, "we listen to the encompasser of the transcendence. We understand this Metaphysics as the cipher-script."[11]

---

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 43. Our tr.
[10] *Ibid.*, p. 47. Our tr.
[11] *Ibid.*, p. 35.

Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-)

Deontologization of Epistemology :—The best way to understand Sartre is to begin with his attitude towards epistemology. In conformity with the general position of Existentialism, Sartre strips epistemology of all its ontological pretensions. In this connection, he has taken recourse to the phenomenological method introduced by Husserl. According to Husserl, the main aim of philosophy is to analyse the meaning of phenomena as they appear to us. Phenomena include not only the sensible appearances, but also feelings, desires, love, hate, political institutions, philosophical doctrines,—in fact, everything which "appears" or "manifests" itself in our experience. How are we to find the meaning of such phenomena ? Husserl, in the first place, wants us to believe that phenomena should be taken as they are. That is to say, we must shake all our prejudice, if there is any, with regard to any noumenal entity or any transcendental object existing behind the phenomena and acting as their cause. No such transcendental metaphysical entity can be posited, because phenomena are analysed by human consciousness, which alone gives meaning and significance to them. Whatever appears thus has validity and justification only in relation to and within human consciousness.

This, however, does not mean that the world as it appears to us does not have any existence. According to Husserl, the question with regard to the existence of the phenomenal world does not arise at all. For in analysing the nature of a phenomenon its existence is taken for granted. The phenomenon exists. It is *there*. If such is the case, there is no need to raise any question with regard to its existence. For, its existence can neither be affirmed nor can it be denied. Husserl, therefore, refuses to judge it and simply puts it inside "brackets," called by him "Einklämmerung" or, in Greek, "epochè."

Sartre agrees with Husserl in excluding noumenal entities from the sphere of epistemology. The object of know-

ledge is simply what is given or presented to human consciousness. It has nothing to do with any noumenal object at all. "Thus we arrive at the idea of the *phenomenon* such as we can find, for example in the 'phenomenology' of Husserl or of Heidegger—the phenomenon or the relative-absolute. Relative the phenomenon remains, for 'to appear' supposes in essence somebody to whom to appear. But it does not have the double relativity of Kant's *Erscheinung*. It does not point over its shoulder to a true being which would be, for it, absolute." What it is, it is absolutely, for it reveals itself as it is. The phenomenon can be studied and described as such, for it is *absolutely* indicative of itself.

> "The duality of potency and act falls by the same stroke. The act is everything. Behind the act there is neither potency nor 'hexis' nor virtue. We shall refuse, for example, to understand by 'genius' or that he 'was' a genius—a particular capacity to produce certain works, which was not exhausted exactly in producing them. The genius of Proust is neither the work considered in isolation nor the subjective ability to produce it; it is the work considered as the totality of the manifestations of the persons."[1]

In this way, Sartre not only does not give any quarter to realism in epistemology, but he is also equally opposed to any kind of idealistic interpretation of the phenomenal world. Here he parts company with Husserl, who believed that the meaning is assigned to the phenomena by the transcendental Ego. The conception of transcendental Ego is not acceptable to Sartre, although he is of opinion that the meaning of a phenomenon is judged and determined by human consciousness. But human consciousness, according to Sartre, is not personal at all. In fact, it is nothing. It is neither subjective nor is it objective. We shall explain presently what Sartre means by this. One thing, however, is quite clear that there is no scope for any transcendental Ego in Sartre's philosophy and as such idealism is totally banished from the sphere of epistemology. In other words, epistemology is completely deontologized by Sartre.

---

[1] *Being and Nothing*, Eng. tr. by H. E. Barnes, p. xlviii.

Human Reality or Being-for-Itself :—The world as it is presented to us comes to have meaning only when the various objects are brought in direct relation to human consciousness. Nothing in the world, for example, table, chair, picture, etc. can have any meaning apart from the use to which they are put by man to subserve his interests. In fact, any object has meaning only in relation to the consciousness which knows it. Knowledge, thus, is purely a function of human reality, which is the same as the *Dasein* as understood by Heidegger and Jaspers.

Now, what kind of nature can human consciousness be said to have ? According to Sartre, such a nature can be best characterized by saying that it is *Nothing*. For, the distinctive feature of human reality is that it is constantly desiring something. The object of such a desire does not exist here and now. It is, therefore, nothing. But this should not be taken to mean that it is absolutely non-existent. On the contrary, human consciousness is rich in contents. But all these contents can have their value in relation to the end, which is posited by human consciousness. The entire human experience is the result of *projection* of human consciousness into its future. But the future "is not" there. It simply represents a "lack" and hence Sartre calls it Nothing.

Sartre usually calls human consciousness the Being-for-itself to suggest that the *being* of the phenomenal world has significance only for human consciousness. But through such a characterization one should not think that, according to Sartre, human consciousness *exists* only as a subject. For, according to him, it can also be objective. This is brought out by Sartre by analysing the sense of shame, which sometimes overpowers us. In such a sense of shame the same person, who a moment before claimed himself to be a subject, finds himself to be an object for others. In other words, that which was the Being-for-itself now becomes Being-for-others.

> "In fact no matter what results one can obtain in solitude by the religious *practice* of shame, it is in its primary structure shame *before somebody*. I have just made an awkward or vulgar gesture. This gesture clings to me ; I neither judge it nor blame it. I simply live it. I realize it in the mode of for-itself. Suddenly

> I realize the vulgarity of my gesture, and I am ashamed. It is certain that my shame is not reflective, for the presence of another in my consciousness, even as a catalyst, is incompatible with the reflective attitude; in the field of my reflection I can never meet with anything but the consciousness which is mine. I am ashamed of myself as *I appear* to the Other."[2]

Being-in-Itself :—It would, however, be wrong to think that the Being-for-itself is the same as the absolute ontological Being. We have just seen that the Being-for-itself is intensely active, inasmuch as it constantly projects itself into the future. The question now is : Towards what does this projection tend ? To this Sartre's answer is : the projection of human consciousness tends towards the Being-in-itself, which is the "brute existent" or absolute. Human consciousness springs from this Being-in-itself by boring a hole (*trou*) through it.

What Sartre seeks to suggest here is that although human consciousness with all its contents has a being, yet such a being is not self-subsistent. No doubt, human reality is ever active and changeful. But such an activity invariably points to the Being-in-itself for its solid and absolute support. The entire process of realization of human consciousness can have no meaning unless it reveals within itself the Being-in-itself. Sartre, who has de-ontologized epistemology by throwing overboard the idea of any noumenal entity, has verily embraced some sort of realism in so far as his ontological doctrine is concerned.

> "After all this, the reader may well wonder if Sartre is still a realist and, if a realist, of what sort ? Repeatedly Sartre takes a position against idealism and his book is, in any way, a long attempt to show that the whole mass of being lies outside consciousness in the Being-in-itself. Nobody except Sartre has *emptied* the For-itself or human consciousness to such an extent. And yet—this is paradoxical in Sartre's system—the nothingness of the For-itself does not create the being of the world in an idealistic way, but human reality nevertheless *makes* the 'there is' being. By this ambiguous statement Sartre means that the being of the world appears by means of the For-itself.

---

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 221-222.

> There is not at first a consciousness and afterward 'revelation' of the world by means of 'nihilation' or 'negation.' Granting that there is being *in* the world, however, Sartre does not include in this being such entities as time, space, or the Aristotelian potency. These are the result of the presence of human consciousness in the world. All the so-called categories (unity-multiplicity, whole-part, more and less, besides, outside of, one-two-three) are ideal manipulations of things which leave Being-in-itself completely intact. They are different ways in which the For-itself 'attacks' and organizes the 'apathetic indifference of things' " . . . . . .
>
> "Sartre, then is not an idealist : the predominating trait of his system is one of extreme realism. And yet, this extreme realism is interwoven with elements of an equally extreme subjectivism. To be exact, one could consider Sartre both as a realist and as an idealist ; as a realist because he accepts the 'brute existent' as being independent of human intervention, and as an idealist because he charges human consciousness (or For-itself), with the task of giving meaning or significance to this 'brute existent.' "[3]

These passages make it quite clear that in so far as the ontological position is concerned Sartre is a realist, inasmuch as he believes in the existence of a Being-in-itself which is independent of human consciousness and is incapable of being understood in terms of any of the categories of human knowledge. It is thus abstract and absolute. But the same Being-in-itself is capable of revealing itself through the activity of human consciousness. Hence, it is also dynamic.

There now remains the question : How can such a Being-in-itself, which is abstract, absolute and dynamic, be grasped ? The answer to this question is furnished by Sartre through his doctrine of Freedom.

Freedom as the Via-Media between the Being-in-Itself and the Being-for-Itself :—Human consciousness invariably seeks to reveal the Being-in itself by identifying itself continually with the latter. This implies constant activity. Human consciousness is aware of some want or lack within itself. I begin to perceive that there ought to be something, although it is not there. When a man is impelled

[3] Wilfrid Desan, *The Tragic Finale*, pp. 55-56.

by such an intuition, he goes on moulding his past, sometimes he might also completely tear himself away from it in order to realize that which is not yet but can be. Such a capacity of negation coupled with the capacity of exercizing absolute choice under a certain situation is *freedom*.

To be free does not necessarily imply that man will succeed in achieving what he has desired. According to Sartre, this may not happen at all on account of the extremely complex situation in which human consciousness operates. More frequently, human consciousness meets with failure and consequently has to pass through suffering and misery. Under such a situation, man is overpowered by the feeling of frustration or, what Sartre calls, nausea. "No necessary being can explain existence....It is complete gratuity. All is gratuitous, this garden, this town and myself. When one happens to realize it, then it turns one's heart, all begins to float....: that's the Nausea."[4]

A complete identity of human consciousness with the Being-in-itself is an empty dream and yet in order to exist it will have to embark continually on fresh hazards and to run perilous risks. In this way, freedom, which expresses itself through the feeling of nausea, acts as a *via media* between the Being-in-itself and the Being-for-itself.

Criticism :— It is easy to see from the above how Sartre conforms fundamentally to the general position of existentialism. In de-ontologizing epistemology as well as in maintaining that the ontological principle is abstract and dynamic, he has visualized the possibility of steering clear of both realism and idealism, which have been the source of mischief in the domain of philosophy.

There is, however, one weak point in Sartre's philosophy. His conception of human consciousness or Being-for-itself is not quite satisfactory. For, it rests on the confusion of the logical and psychological aspects of our self, namely, the transcendental subject and the empirical self, the *I* and the *me*. In de-ontologizing epistemology, Sartre has done well in dismissing the notion of transcendental object. But when he takes cudgels against the

---

[4] Sartre, *Nausea*, p. 166.

conception of transcendental ego, he has almost broken the very backbone of human reality. If by doing away with the transcendental ego Sartre wanted to attack the view, according to which the self is regarded as a spiritual substance, then he is perfectly justified. For, such a spiritual substance has been the refuge of all idealism and as such it must be rejected all at once. But if by spiritual substance Sartre means the transcendental subject, then he is grossly mistaken. The transcendental subject has nothing to do with the ontological character vested into the self by the idealists. The transcendental subject is the supreme *logical* condition of the possibility of any experience. It is also the ultimate standard of all human values. This is the main reason why Husserl could not dispense with it in his phenomenology, which was in the beginning preoccupied with the logical understanding of the meaning of phenomena. But when Husserl sought to solve the metaphysical problem through such a method, he lapsed into some sort of Hegelianism. The transcendental subject was found handy to play the rôle of the Absolute.

But Sartre, inso far as he had taken up the position of an existentialist, could have easily by-passed Husserl's defect without dispensing with his notion of the transcendental ego. It was enough for him to dissociate the Being-in-itself from the transcendental subject. This would have opened for him the possibility of giving autonomy to philosophy without crippling epistemology. But Sartre seems to be very much apprehensive of falling into the clutches of idealism in case he had retained the conception of transcendental ego.

The upshot of this was that Sartre's epistemology was seriously damaged and was overrun by the hordes of empiricism and psychologism. When there was no transcendental subject, there hardly remained a question of establishing any perfect system in the totality of experience. In the absence of reason, passions are bound to run amuck and to create a pandemonium in the human experience. This is exactly what has happened in Sartre's philosophy, which lands us into a world of contingency and pessimism.

Desan, after his masterly review of Sartre's doctrine, comes to the same conclusion.

> "Totality is wanted ; that is, a total application of all available methods in order to grasp the totality of being. 'Hegel may be right,' writes Sartre. 'Totality is perhaps the right viewpoint, the viewpoint of being.' This assertion seems to carry much truth indeed. But this is also the reason why we do not want a world which is Sartrian only ; we want a world which is *more* inclusive. Philosophy is not one man's life. It is not the product of one climate, of one nation or one era ; it is, on the contrary, homeless and supranational. We are crowded in the philosophical field with small orthodoxies which serve as refuge for many individualities. Although each viewpoint, even that in a novel or a play, may help us to understand ourselves and the world, we do not consider this as philosophical, for philosophy is still that which, having grown above the concrete and the subjective, achieves oneness from the multiple and builds a System with a variety of methods. There is no philosophy of one man. There is a Philosophy of Mankind. It is towards this synthesis that each effort must tend."[5]

This passage, while it voices the profound aspiration of human self to comprehend the total experience, is likely to be taken as a pointer in the direction of Idealism. If such is the case, then we would like to submit that after all that the other existentialists have said any recrudescence of Idealism in philosophy need not be apprehended. In depriving epistemology of its ontological character, existentialism has virtually attained victory over both realism and idealism. But this should not lead existentialism to take a stand against rational epistemology. This is not clearly perceived by Sartre. Kierkegaard and Jaspers have already visualized such a possibility. But in Heidegger and more so in Sartre, existentialism has tended more and more towards irrationalism and subjectivism. Heidegger's doctrine of *Angst* and Sartre's doctrine of *nausea* have opened the doors for subjectivism. When Heidegger suggests that the entire human destiny moves towards death and when Sartre believes that the life of unrestrained passions with all its perils is the

[5] *The Tragic Finale*, p. 197.

end of human life, they have almost decapitated the stalwart stature of man and thus reduced his life to the activity of physico-biological organism. Gabriel Marcel has sought to remove this defect by once again focusing our attention on the implications of religious life, which along with its transcendental character requires for its foundation the ontological principle which is both dynamic and abstract.

Gabriel Marcel (1889—)

Marcel's Problem :—Marcel starts by maintaining that human experience gives evidence of having several planes within it, which can be graded in a hierarchical order. The lowest plane is that of empirical experience, in which "the world is not only devoid of all meaning but even to raise the question of whether there is a meaning is a contradiction. This plane is that of immediate existence. It is of necessity the plane of the fortuitous, of the order of chance."[1] But empiricism, according to Marcel, is "self-destructive," because "the immediate is the very reverse of the principle of intelligibility."

When, therefore, we move in the direction of intelligibility, or when we seek to find system and order in our experience, we rise to higher and higher planes until we come to the highest. This requires *rational* reflection on the data of empirical experience.

Thus, Marcel has fully restored to rational epistemology all those claims and privileges, of which his other compeers had deprived it. But immediately after this, he takes cudgels against Idealism which makes a capital out of it. We know that Idealism takes its stand on the supreme rational plane of experience and by exalting it to the rank of the Absolute tries to explain or rather to explain away with reference to it the lower planes of experience. This, according to Marcel, creates insoluble problems.

> "I have shown elsewhere the vanity of the attempt of the Absolute Idealists to integrate phenomenal appearances into the absolute (whether or not the appearances are conceived in function of thought that is tainted with subjectivity). And so if we posit the dualism of what is outside time, we should not do so with the hope that we will, later, be able to unify the two orders. The logical faith with which a philosopher such as Bradley posits the unity and the transmutation of appear-

---

[1] Marcel, *Metaphysical Journal*, Eng. tr. by Bernard Wall, p. 1.

> ances in the heart of the real is only an appeal to the unintelligible."[2]

This leads Marcel to discover another method of explaining and justifying the hierarchical planes of thought.

> "The only problem lies in finding out in relation to what these hierarchical planes of thought are ordered. Thinkers like Leibnitz or Hegel believed that they were ordered in relation to an absolute plane which was the plane of being itself—the plane on which reality is what it is, the plane on which God sees reality. . . .But in my opinion this hierarchy neither should nor can be defined in function of an ontological order posited in an idealist way. The criticism of absolute knowledge ends in a condemnation of this way of looking at things. So the problem I am induced to raise amounts to asking how the hierarchy can be thought independently of this idea."[3]

Here Marcel clearly de-ontologizes epistemology. This constitutes only the negative aspect of Marcel's philosophy. But this cannot solve the ontological problem. With a view to solving such a problem, Marcel proceeds to make a distinction between being (*être*) and having (*avoir*).

Being and Having :—Conversion is not a miracle, but it is a fact. It is experienced by everybody (unless he is absolutely abnormal) in a more or less intensified form. When one passes from a lower to some higher view of life, there is a conversion of our personality, because the old set of values is completely replaced by an entirely different set of values. In religious conversion the only difference is that the set of values is determined through the rational consciousness which claims to have supreme validity for itself.

The question now is : What exactly is that which actually effects such a radical transformation of our personality? Can our knowledge be regarded as mainly responsible for bringing about such a radical change ? According to Marcel, this is not so. For, it is possible for us to have a complete idea of the higher life and yet such a knowledge may not lead us beyond the present lower stage of our personality. For, the realization of the higher life requires us to give

---

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 9. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 2.

up our present likes and dislikes. The entire mode of life is required to be changed and overhauled. This involves great risk and peril. We shall not only have to make the sacrifice of all that we have at present, and yet there is no guarantee that the new mode of life can ever be successfully realized. When our mind is in such a suspense, we rather lose heart in embarking on a new adventure and would fain keep ourselves to the same plane of experience fully knowing that it is the lower one and as such undesirable. For such a person the transition from the lower to the higher plane is a problem.

But now consider the case of a person (he may be the same person) who is of a different mettle. Knowing full well that this present life is not worth while and that it requires him to make a transition to the higher life which involves great risk and suffering on his part, he is not daunted in the least. On the contrary, he prepares himself to realize the higher life, come whatever may, at any cost. Such a person, to the surprise of all those who know him, suddenly turns over a new leaf and in course of time succeeds in moulding his entire personality in accordance with the conception of higher life, with which he set out. Such instances are sufficiently familiar to us.

Now the question is : What is it that makes a man actually achieve that which for another person constitutes an insoluble problem ? Clearly it cannot be the *knowledge* of the higher life. For, sometimes we find that the coward is more intelligent than the hero. Marcel points out that the difference consists in the freedom of choice exercised by the two men. The man, who keeps to the lower plane, knows that it is lower. He also has the idea of the higher plane. But the mere possession or *having* the idea is not sufficient. For, in having an idea, you are always aware of a distance between yourself and the idea. The idea is still foreign to you, which, while you may possess it, might as well be renounced by you. But in the case of a person, who resolves to realize it, the idea loses its externality. Now the personality of the man has been completely identified with the idea itself, so much so that apart from the idea the man finds it difficult *to be*. With regard to such a man we say that he is in love with the

idea or he has a passion for it. Such a man has freely chosen to be one with it for better for worse. It is in this freedom of his choice that the whole problem, which appeared insoluble to the other man, is completely solved. The freedom of choice is thus the fundamental existential principle. Marcel expressed such an attitude as the one in which one seeks to be one with something rather than one in which one seeks to *have* or possess something. The attitude of *having* is purely cognitive and as such keeps us within the realm of appearances, while the attitude of *being* leads us to the heart of reality and thus reveals to us the ontological aspect of our existence.

Knowledge and Love :—The difference between *having* and *being* is also expressed by Marcel in another way. According to him, conversion is possible through *grace* or *faith,* which represents the absolute act of self-affirmation. But such a grace can never be an object of discursive thought.

> "Inasmuch as I am a thinking subject and inasmuch as I remain external to myself I can easily imagine objective reasons for my conversion ; but inasmuch as I overcome the dualism of the thinking subject and the empirical ego, conversion appears to me to be an insoluble problem——I can think only of its being resolved by grace, but on the other hand I know that grace cannot be thought as objective cause, that it can only be affirmed after conversion; to think of grace objectively is to deny it absolutely and for certain."[4]

If grace, which leads us to realize a certain idea, is beyond the scope of knowledge, how are we to apprehend it? According to Marcel, grace can be grasped through faith, which is the same as love. "I believe that in reality love and faith cannot be dissociated. When faith ceases to be love it congeals into objective belief in a power that is conceived more or less physically."[5] Marcel then takes one further step and declares that divine experience is nothing but the result of the establishment of loving relation between the lower and the higher planes of experience. "In other-words, between God and me there must be a relation of the kind that love establishes between lovers.[6]"

---

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 56. [5]. Ibid., p. 58. [6].*Ibid.*, p. 56.

CHRISTIAN AND ORIENTAL PHILOSOPHY OF ART

By

Ananda K. Coomaraswamy

Christian and Oriental Philosophy af Art contains 9 of Coomaraswamy's most stimulating and provocative papers. The first essay discusses such matters as the true function of aesthetics in art, the importance of symbolism, and the importance of intellectual and philosophic background for the artist. He also analyzes the role of a traditional culture in enriching art, and demonstrates that modern abstract art and primitive art, despite superficial resemblances, are really completely divergent. The other essays discuss the common philosophy—the philosophia perennis—which pervades all truly great art, the nature of medieval art ; the nature of folklore and modern art ; the beauty inherent in such forms of activity as mathematics ; the union of traditional symbolism and individual portraiture in premodern cultures.

2 illustrations, Bibliography for the study of medieval and oriental art. 114 bibliographic notes. 148pp. $5\frac{3}{8}$ x 8.

Paper bound Rs. 6.25

CURRENT BOOK HOUSE
Post Bag No. 10071,
BOMBAY 1

TRANSFORMATION OF NATURE IN ART

By

Ananda K. Coomaraswamy

This is an unabridged reissue of a basic work upon Asiatic art principles first issued by Harvard University Press in 1934. Written with all the author's enormous erudition in art history, aesthetics, oriental languages, philosophy and religion, it analyzes the community of theory behind medieval European and Asiatic art. The author demonstrates that both differ radically from post-Renaissance European art because of a basic philosophic orientation on the part of the medieval and Indian artists. For both "art is religion, religion art, not related but the same."

The author examines Indian and Chinese treatises on aesthetic theory and art manuals, and isolates a general theory of art. He then examines the medieval, European aesthetic in terms of the 14th century German mystic Meister Eckhart, whose genius enabled him to subsume and concentrate the spiritual being of Europe at its highest tension.

Further chapters investigate through Indian texts the psychology of the Indian viewer of art, while a medieval Hindu encyclopedia is analyzed for iconographic instructions. Aesthetic texts explain the oriental theory of ideal representation, the nature of painting, the use of perspective and spatial relations, while the origin and use of images in India are described in a final provocative chapter.

This is a book not only for the orientalist, the art historian, the philosopher, but also for the artist who realized, with Dante, that "Who paints a figure, if he cannot be it, cannot draw it." Glossaries of Sanskrit and Chinese terms, Bibliography. 41 pp. of notes. v + 245 pp. $5\frac{3}{8}$ x 8.

Paper bound Rs. 8.75

CURRENT BOOK HOUSE
Post Bag No. 10071,
BOMBAY 1

FEW IMPORTANT PUBLICATIONS

POLITICS :

	Rs.
1. India in Transition by Ramesh Thaper Card Cover Rs. 5·75 Lib. Edition	7·75
2. Current International Problems, by D. N. Pritt & Danial Latifi	1·00 (Sh. 1/6)

LITERATURE :

1. Mayakovsky & His Poetry by Herbert Marshall (3rd Revised & Enlarged Ed.)	4·00 (Sh. 12/6)
2. Literature & Art by Marx & Engels (2nd Ed.)	2·62
3. Reflections on the Golden Bed & Other Stories, by Mulk Raj Anand	2·25
4. Flame & The Flower by Krishan Chander	2·25

ECONOMICS :

1. Agricultural Labourers in Modern India & Pakistan by Surendra J. Patel Lib. Ed.	4·00 (Sh. 12/6)
2. The Indian Plan—A Critical Survey by B. T. Ranadive (1954)	2·00
3. The Earth & Man by M. Ilyin	0·62
4. Co-operative Farming—Some Critical Reflections by Krishna, Jain & Krishnan	1·00

SOCIOLOGY AND EDUCATION :

1. Sexual Behaviour of the American Female. by Prof. G. S. Ghurye.	5·75
2. Children in Soviet Russia by Deana Levin.	2·00
3. Sin and Science by Dyson Carter 4th Edition	2·75 (Sh. 7/6)

CURRENT BOOK HOUSE
Post Bag No. 10071,
BOMBAY 1.