

POSSIBILITY OF METAPHYSICS

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in

Philosophy

By

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DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis entitled "Possibility of Metaphysics" has been prepared by me under the guidance of Dr.Koushik Joardar, Department of Philosophy, University of North Bengal. No part of this thesis has formed the basis for the award of any degree or fellowship previously.

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that Smt.Bishnuriya Saha has prepared the thesis "**Possibility of Metaphysics**" for the award of PhD degree of the University of North Bengal, under my guidance and supervision. She has carried out the work at the Department of Philosophy, University of North Bengal.


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ABSTRACT

Metaphysics is one of the most controversial branches of Philosophy. It is controversial in terms of its nature and object of discussion. In western Philosophical world, since classical Greek Philosophers to a large number of modern philosophers have criticised metaphysics as meaningless discipline. The Greek sceptics were considered as the earliest critic of metaphysics. As for the sceptic the very notion of 'knowledge' is problematic. For them, knowledge is not possible. Obviously metaphysical knowledge is not possible. The radical modern empiricist philosopher David Hume and the logical positivist thinkers like, Rudolf Carnap, A.J Ayer were considered as the modern critic of metaphysics. For them metaphysics is discipline which deals with supernatural concepts like God, Soul, etc. which do not have any factual basis, thus not verifiable by any empirical means. As the subject matters of metaphysics are not empirically verifiable therefore it is baseless in other word meaningless discipline. Thus they shout for the elimination of metaphysics from Philosophy. Thus for many thinkers of this present era metaphysics loses its significance from present philosophical discourses.

But at the same time many thinkers of this current era try to point that metaphysics does not lose its importance from the present discourses of Philosophy. Rather the many modern branch of Philosophy show their debt by considering the significance of many metaphysical discussion of the ancient philosopher like Aristotle. The modern philosophical branch like 'Existentialism' shows that the very notion of 'existence',

which is obviously a metaphysical notion is not only discussed in the Aristotle's philosophy but also raised back in Descartes's Philosophy. So they are maintaining a chain of thought which is metaphysical in essence. So like existentialist Philosopher, many other thinkers hold the position that the spirit of metaphysics is still taking its breath in many philosophical discussions. So for metaphysics is not a discipline which deals with certain supernatural concepts' rather it is discipline which deals with the most basic and fundamental concepts in order to explore its true nature.

Preface

In the history of Western Philosophy we do not find any discipline other than 'Metaphysics' which holds such a controversial position. The controversy arises among the thinkers concerning the nature, scope and objects of metaphysics. For so many thinkers, like, Aristotle, Descartes, Heidegger etc. metaphysical enquiry consists of certain fundamental questions relating life and world. From the very beginning, it tries provide certain answers to the questions which cannot be attainable any other means like mere empirical means. It has a peculiar speculative attitude to explore the answers to the questions that human beings spontaneously asked to live a meaningful life. Thus metaphysics serves a great purpose of entire mankind. For them the controversy concerning the nature of metaphysical discourse arises due to the failure to understand the essence of metaphysics. As for many metaphysicians the logical positivist thinkers fails to grasp the essence of metaphysics. They just try to understand metaphysics by their departmental scientific understanding. Such understanding only demands empirical evidence to establish any theory or view, as it can be easily seen in the research works of any departmental scientific laboratory. In doing so they are actually confine them within certain periphery (the periphery of scientific knowledge), fail to see the essence and relevance of any speculative means like metaphysics, in attaining certain knowledge concerning life and world.

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INTRODUCTION

In the history of western philosophy, Metaphysics holds a central character. The study of metaphysics can clearly be seen in the writings of the philosophers from early Greek era to modern era. However, it is true that the thinkers often shares very different view concerning the nature of metaphysics. Philosophers have disagreed vastly about the nature of metaphysics. That's why it is not easy to say what metaphysics is. If someone looks into the works in metaphysics, he/ she may find quite different characterizations of the discipline. Philosophers have been doing metaphysics for more than 2000 years; and the results of their efforts have been accounts with a wide variety of subject matters and approaches. But the difficulty of identifying a unique subject matter for metaphysics is not easily traceable in the long history of the discipline. The word —metaphysics” is derived from a collective title of the fourteen books of Aristotle. Aristotle himself never called the treatise by the name; the name was given by the latter thinkers'. Aristotle called the treatise as _first philosophy'. Aristotle also tells us that it is the science that studies _being qua being'. Metaphysics as _the study of being qua being' is a universal science, that considers all the objects that there are. Metaphysics examines

the properties that constitute the subject matter for the other sciences. In this thesis I do not use the term metaphysics in its traditional sense that metaphysics is the theory of what lies beyond nature, rather have done in the Aristotelian sense. In the long history of metaphysics, there are many opponents of metaphysics who questions the possibility of metaphysics. Following Immanuel Kant we can say that –there was a time when metaphysics was called the queen of all the sciences, and if the will were taken for the deed, the exceeding importance of her subject matter might well have secured for her this title of honour. At present, it is the fashion to despise metaphysics. Many opponents of metaphysics have declared that the doctrine of metaphysics is false, since it contradicts our empirical knowledge. Others have believed it to be uncertain on the ground that it transcends the limits of human knowledge. Many anti-metaphysician have declared that occupation with metaphysical questions is sterile. They think that there is no purpose of studying metaphysics. My main objective is to develop a critical view regarding the possibility of metaphysics as a discipline. In order to accomplish the said objective the thesis is divided into six chapters.

The first chapter of this thesis is concerned with the origin of metaphysics in which we shall try to analyze the notion of metaphysics from early Greek philosopher's point of view and mostly from Aristotelian point of view. The

early Greek philosophers or the pre-Socratic philosophers indeed did metaphysics. In their metaphysical discourse they have tried to explore the nature of first cause. Aristotle equates metaphysics with philosophy. For Aristotle, philosophy as a separate discipline is engaged in the search for the primary causes and principles of the common aspects of the world. For him, metaphysics was ‘first philosophy’. In his accounts of ‘first philosophy’, it is the study of causes of principles of ‘being qua being’. The question ‘what is being?’ is the foundation of Aristotelian definition of metaphysics. But it is true that in his writings we find different characterisations of the task of metaphysics. For Aristotle metaphysics is the theory of the highest being as well as theory of being as such.

In the second chapter of this thesis, we have tried to describe philosopher’s quest for a universal metaphysics. Philosophers who think that metaphysics is the essence of philosophy are never in agreement with each-other regarding any metaphysical theory. The rationalist like Descartes, Spinoza, and Leibniz searched for a universal metaphysics which will be accepted for all but they failed in this project. The empiricist Hume tried to pave the path for true metaphysics but ended in scepticism.

The third chapter of this thesis deals with the question regarding the possibility of metaphysics from Kantian point of view. The usual interpretation of Kant is that he completely rejects metaphysics. If it is true then how could Kant writes the *Metaphysics of Morals* or the *Metaphysical Foundations of the Natural Sciences*, had he totally rejected metaphysics in every form. But through a careful reading one can see that Kant only rejects certain points of view and some of methods of metaphysics, like he rejects proofs for the existence of God oriented on mathematical methods. In the *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant holds quite positive attitude regarding the nature of metaphysics as he announces that metaphysics is not possible as a science but as a natural disposition and hence we cannot ignore metaphysical questions. So, in the *Critique of Practical Reason* Kant gives a great importance into the metaphysical problems.

Again in the fourth chapter of this thesis we deal with the problem regarding the possibility of metaphysics from logical positivist's point of view. The impossibility of metaphysics has also been shown by logical positivist. They gave primary importance on the principle of verification. For them, any proposition is meaningful if it is verifiable by sense perception. Metaphysical propositions are not verifiable through sense perception because this type of proposition deals with metaphysical entities which are beyond sense perception. So, metaphysics is meaningless.

In the fifth chapter of the thesis, we have tried to show that, in spite of all the efforts to demonstrate metaphysics as a meaningless, it continues to occupy much space in the minds of Philosophers. In this chapter we have tried to analysed the existentialist's view especially Heidegger's view concerning the nature of metaphysics. We have tried to show how metaphysics enjoys the central place in his philosophy. Heidegger did metaphysics in the name of exploring the nature of being. For Heidegger, ontology is the other name of metaphysics.

The sixth chapter consists of the main findings of the thesis. In this chapter we have re-examined the question _whether metaphysic is dead or not?‘ In other words, it can be said that, _whether the significance of metaphysics gets lost from the philosophical discourses?‘ As for now it can be said that if metaphysics deals with the conditions and questions which make human life more meaningful then its significance is never lost.

Chapter one

The origin of metaphysics: Aristotle

The history of metaphysics in western philosophy began with the speculations by the *Ionian cosmologists* in the 6th century B.C about the origin of physical universe, the matter or stuff from which it is made and that laws or uniformities everywhere present in nature. Aristotle is indirectly the source of the term “metaphysics”; he is also the source of a systematic list of metaphysical issues and a technical language in which these issues are stated. The word “metaphysics” is derived from the Greek “*metataphysika*” (literally means “after the things of nature”) an expression used by Hellenistic and later commentators to refer to Aristotle’s united group of texts that we still call the *Metaphysics*. Aristotle himself called the subject of this text First Philosophy or sometimes wisdom. Later classical and medieval philosopher took the title ‘metaphysics’ to mean that the subjects discussed in the ‘Metaphysics’ came to “after the things of nature”. In medieval and modern philosophy ‘metaphysics’ has also been taken to mean the study of things transcending nature. In modern philosophical usage “metaphysics” refers generally to the field of philosophy dealing with

the questions about the kinds of things there are and their modes of being. Its subject matter includes the concept of existence, thing, property, event, the distinction between particulars and universals and so on. Ancient and Medieval philosophers described metaphysics as the study of —being as such” or —the first cause of things.” Metaphysics‘ is about things that do not change.

For Aristotle, there is no difference between philosophy and metaphysics‘. Metaphysics‘ for him was —First Philosophy.” His —First Philosophy” is the study of causes and principles of being qua being. According to Aristotle, —Philosophy is the search for the most fundamental causes and principles of the most general aspects of the world”ⁱ. These causes and principles are clearly the subject matter of what he calls first philosophy‘. His use of the term philosophy‘ is too broad and it includes any domain of pure science, say for example, physics, mathematics, Logic etc. Aristotle’s First Philosophy becomes imperative as no science can verify itself. No science can contain a justification of its own principles. This is so because these principles which were the —basic truths” of that science cannot be demonstrated within the realm of that science. They have to be either assumed or have to be established demonstratively on the basis of another science. This is to say that any attempt to —prove” the basic truths

of a science within its own realm results in vicious circle and to prove them on the basis of another science results in infinite regress. Hence the final theory is impossible. This is to say that the impossibility of the final theory led Aristotle to —First Philosophy.”

In his book *Metaphysics* Aristotle tells that ‘metaphysics’ is —a science of being just qua being, which will be different from all other departmental sciences, which deal with some limited part of being. The study of being qua being turns out to be the same thing as the study of the primary causes and principles, which has previously been said to be the task of philosophy, because the primary causes and principles are the causes and principles of being, being qua.”ⁱⁱ Aristotle’s description of ‘the study of being qua being’ is easily misunderstood, for it seems to suggest that there is a single subject matter—being qua being—that is under investigation. But Aristotle’s description does not involve two things—(1) a study and (2) a subject matter (being qua being)—for he did not think that there is any such subject matter as ‘being qua being’. Rather, his description involves three things: (1) a study, (2) a subject matter (being), and (3) a manner in which the subject matter is studied (qua being). The term ‘qua’ means roughly ‘in so far as’ or ‘under the aspect’. A study of x qua y is a study of x that concerns itself solely with the y aspect of x. So Aristotle’s study does not concern

some recondite subject matter known as being qua being'. Rather it is a study of being, or of things that can be said to be—that studies them in a particular way: as beings, in so far as they are beings. Of course, First Philosophy is not only the field of inquiry to study beings. Natural science and Mathematics are also study beings, but in different ways, under different aspects. The natural scientist studies them as things that are subject to the laws of nature, as things that move and undergo change. That is, natural scientist studies things qua movable and the mathematician studies things qua countable and measurable. The metaphysician on the other hand, studies them in a more general and abstract way—qua beings. So, First Philosophy' studies the causes and principles of beings qua beings.

Although the term metaphysics' must be said to be found in Aristotle first but the spirit of metaphysics' found in early philosophers too. The pre-Socratic philosophers are also investigating a cause. They began by looking for the ultimate material cause of the world, with various elements or combinations of elements. The fundamental thought of that period was, under the multiplicity of the world there must be a single ultimate principle. The problem of all the philosophers from Thales to Anaxagoras was what is the nature of that first principle from which all things have issued? Their systems are all attempts to answer this question, and may be classified

according to their different replies. Thus Thales asserted that the ultimate reality is water, Anaximenes air, Democritus atoms and so on.

The earliest Greek philosophers belong to what in after times came to be known as the Ionic school. The name was derived because the three chief representatives of this school, Thales, Anaximander, and Anaximenes were all men of Ionia, the coast of Asia Minor. The earliest philosophical speculations were attempts to explain the origin and structure of the physical world. Thales of Miletus is generally accounted the founder and father of all philosophy, Anaximander and Anaximenes developed his materialist account of the origins of the universe. These thinkers held in common, first that there must be some entity from which all other things come into being, and second that this entity is some kind of material. They differed on the nature of the material. Thales named water as the original material from which everything else is produced. Thales also claimed that, the earth is a float-disc which floats upon water. For him water is the one primal kind of existence and everything in the universe is merely a modification of water. He represents water as the first principle. Aristotle conjectures that observation may have led Thales to the conclusion that (1) the nutriment of everything is moist and that even heat is generated from moisture upon which it depends for its existence; and (2) that the seeds of

everything have a moist character, and water is the first principle in the character of moist things. The phenomenon of evaporation suggests that water may become air, while the phenomenon of freezing might suggest that, if the process were carried further, water could become earth. The importance of this early Greek philosopher lies in the fact that he raised the question, what is the ultimate nature of the world? Another pre-Socratic philosopher Anaximander agrees with Thales that the ultimate principle of things is material, but he also differed from Thales in that he held that the origin of all things is not water but the *apeion* (*apeion* is usually rendered “indefinite”, “infinite” or “unlimited”). The *apeion* is deathless, imperishable, everlasting and ageless. Pre-Socratic philosopher Anaximenes proposed that air is the origin of all things. Other things are formed air through the process of condensation and rarefaction. The earth itself was formed through the condensation of air; the earth is flat and floats on the air —like a leaf.” The Ionian philosopher actually tried to explain the origin of all things out of some material element: but they were not materialists in the sense of deliberately denying a distinction between matter and spirit.

Subsequent pre-Socratics were concerned with other attempts to understand nature and the possibility of change within it. Ancient philosophers like

Parmenides, Heraclitus were also aware about the question that regarding the ultimate thing of the universe is. The reflection of Parmenides takes its rise from observation of the transitoriness and changeableness of things. The world, as we know it, is a world of change and mutation. All things arise and pass away. Nothing is permanent. The thought of Parmenides becomes the effort to find the eternal amid the shifting, the abiding and everlasting amid the change and mutation of things. And there arises in this way the antithesis between Being and not-being. The absolutely real is the Being. Non-being is unreal. He identifies not-being with becoming, the world of shifting and changing things, the world which is known to us by senses. As Thales designated water the ultimate thing of the universe, likewise, for Parmenides the first principle of things is Being. Another ancient-Greek philosopher Heraclitus who was contemporary with Parmenides, thought that only Becoming is; and Being, permanence etc. are nothing but illusion. All things are perpetually changing, passing over into new forms and new shapes. Our next discussion will be start with the philosophy of Anaxagoras. The first period of Greek philosophy closes with this great philosopher. His doctrine of the world-forming intelligence introduced a new principle into philosophy, the principle of the antithesis between corporeal matter and incorporeal mind, and therefore, by implication, the antithesis between nature and man. And if the first period of philosophy has for its problem the origin of the world, and the

explanation of the being and becoming of nature, the second period of philosophy opens, in the Sophists, with the problem of the position of man in the universe. Sophists were exclusively humanistic in nature. The Sophists have been described as teachers of virtue. For the Greeks, virtue meant the capacity of a person successfully to perform his function in the State. Thus the virtue of a physician is to cure the sick; the virtue of a mechanic is to understand machinery. The Sophists undertook to train men to virtue in this sense, to make them successful citizens and members of the State. They questioned many things of the present Greek society. By questioning the absolute foundations of traditional institutions, beliefs and ways of life, Sophists tended to foster a relativistic attitude. Against this relativism Socrates and Plato reacted, endeavoring to establish the sure foundation of true knowledge and ethical judgments. The ancient Greek thinkers actually try to generalize about the common factors that underlie the changing appearance of physical things. This search for world-stuff dominates the first century of the development of philosophy and this course of philosophical speculation is changed by Socrates of Athens and his pupil Plato.

The Socratic teaching is essentially ethical in character. It was Sophists who had introduced into Greek philosophy the problem of man and of the duties

of man and to these problems Socrates also gave his primary attention. He brushes aside all questions as to the origin of the world, or the nature of the ultimate reality, of which we have heard so much in the philosophies of the earlier thinker. Our knowledge of the teaching of Socrates is derived mainly from two sources, Plato and Xenophon. Plato the pupil of Socrates portrays a great sketch of Socrates and his philosophical teachings through his dialogues. In the dialogue *The Republic-V* we can see that —...Socrates defines what he means by philosopher, a lover of wisdom. True knowledge is concerned not with the physical world of the senses but with the qualities, the realities that are inherent in the everyday world—with Beauty, not with beautiful sounds and colors. The changing world of the senses is the object of opinion, but the unchanging world of realities is the object of true knowledge or wisdom, and it is this wisdom that true philosophers love”ⁱⁱⁱ. Socrates considers all such knowledge comparatively worthless as against ethical knowledge, the knowledge of man. The ethical teaching of Socrates was founded upon a theory of knowledge and this knowledge founded upon reason. Socrates thought that all knowledge is knowledge through concepts. But the question is, _what is knowledge?’ Whenever we are directly conscious of the presence of any particular thing like—a man, a tree, a star such consciousness is called perception. When we shut our eyes that time we are able to frame a mental picture of such an object, that consciousness is called an image or representation. These mental images are always ideas

of particular individual objects. But besides these ideas of individual objects, whether through sense-perception or imagination, we have also general ideas, that is to say, not ideas of any particular thing, but ideas of whole classes of things. If I say —“Socrates is mortal”, I am thinking of the individual Socrates. But if one says —“Man is mortal”, he is thinking about the class of men, not of any particular man. Such an idea is called a general idea or a concept. Every class name like- tree, man represents concept.

In placing all knowledge in concepts, Socrates makes reason the most important organ of knowledge. This is a direct opposition to the principle of the Sophists, who placed all knowledge in sense-perception. In *Phaedo*, Socrates argues that the reality cannot grasp through sense organ. He believed that there is a division between the body and the soul. As we can see in the dialogue *Phaedo*, that;

—“Is anything more than the separation of the soul from the body?” said Socrates. —“Death is, that the body separates from the soul, and remains by itself apart from the soul, and the soul, separated from the body, exists by itself apart from the body.”^{iv}

For Socrates, body played no part in attainment of knowledge. To Socrates, knowledge is something that never changes, but concrete and eternal. So, he thinks that we will never learn the reality and truth of anything if we continue to rely on our sense organ. Of things that are changeable and imperfect, there can never be knowledge. Knowledge can only be found in our souls and with the Forms. As objects of knowledge, the Forms cannot be known through sense organ because they can only interact with things that are less than perfect. The Forms are eternally perfect and are known only through the soul.

Without alteration, Plato adopts the Socratic doctrine that all knowledge is knowledge through concepts. He also accepts that knowledge is founded on reason and knowledge belongs to what is real. Here in this regard a dialogue between Socrates and Glaucon can be mentioned to highlight the nature of knowledge as maintained by both Socrates and Plato. The Dialogue goes in the following way:

—“...knowledge belongs to what is, and ignorance of necessity to what is not. For this thing between something must be sought between ignorance and acquired knowledge, if there really is such a thing between?”

—“Certainly.”

—Do we say there is such a thing as opinion?”

—Of course.”

—Is it the same power as knowledge or different?”

—Different.”

... —Then knowledge naturally belongs to that which is, to know in what way it is?...”^v

Though Plato follows the teachings of Socrates, he yet builds upon this teaching a new and wholly un-Socratic metaphysic of his own. The concept had been for Socrates merely a rule of thought. Definitions, like guide-rails, keep thought upon the straight path; we compare and act with the definition of virtue in order to ascertain whether it is virtuous. But what was for Socrates merely regulative of thought, Plato now transforms into a metaphysical substance. His theory of Idea is the theory of the objectivity of concepts. The concept is not merely an idea in the mind, but something which has a reality of its own outside, and independent of the mind—this is the essence of the Philosophy of Plato. Plato built the metaphysical system from which Socrates was distracted by his more directly ethical concern. Plato combined a Heraclitean distrust of the world of the senses with a Parmenidean faith in the capacities of pure reason and the Socratic

conviction that whatever is right. The result was the Theory of Forms. The Theory of Forms is a theory that can be extracted from the masterpieces of Plato's middle period, especially the great dialogues the *Meno*, the *Phaedo*, the *Republic*, and the *Theatetus*.

Now the question is how Plato arrived at this doctrine. It is founded upon the view that truth means correspondence of one's ideas with the facts of existence. If one person sees a lake of water, and if there really is such a lake, then his/her idea is true. But if there is no lake, then his/her idea is false, it is a hallucination. According to this view, truth means that the thought in one's mind is a copy of something outside of one's mind. Falsehood consists in having an idea which is not a copy of anything which really exists. And when a person says that a thought in his/her mind is knowledge, he must therefore mean that this thought is a copy of something that exists. But we have already seen that knowledge is the knowledge through concepts. And if a concept is true knowledge, it can only be true in virtue of the fact that it corresponds to an objective reality. There must, therefore, be general ideas or concepts, outside of mind.

Now if knowledge through concepts is true, our experiences through sensation must be false. Our senses make us aware of many individual horses. Our intellect gives us the concept of the horse in general. If the

latter is the sole truth, the former must be false. And this can only mean that the objects of sensation have no true reality. This and that particular horse have no true being. Reality belongs only to the idea of the horse in general. Let us consider this theory from a different direction. Suppose, someone asks the question, —~~what~~ is beauty?” To answer this question one can point to a rose, and say —~~her~~ is beauty” and one can say the same of a woman’s face. But the question is —~~what~~ is beauty?” not —what things are beautiful?” When someone asks the question —~~what~~ is beauty”, he did not ask for many things, but for one thing, namely beauty. If by the word beauty we mean beauty is a rose than it cannot be moonlight, because a rose and moonlight are extremely different things. By beauty we mean, not many things, but one because we use only one word for it. Through this question someone wants to know what this one beauty is which is distinct from all beautiful objects. It can be said that there is no such thing as beauty apart from beautiful objects. In reality there are many beauties, each of them situated in a beautiful object and we use only one word that is beauty to indicate all of them. Though all the beautiful things are different but we use one word beauty to describe all of them. Because we think that they are similar to each other. How do we know that they are similar? Our eyes cannot inform us about this similarity because it involves comparison, and comparison is an act of the mind, not of the senses. Therefore, we must have an idea of beauty in our mind, with which we compare the various

beautiful objects and recognize them as beautiful objects. So that there is at any rate an idea of one beauty in one's mind. Either this idea corresponds to something outside of the mind or it does not. If the idea does not correspond to something outside of the mind then this idea of beauty is a mere invention, a figment of one's own brain. If so, then, individual brain became the standard of external truth. Therefore, the only alternative is to believe that there is not only an idea of beauty in one's mind, but that there is such a thing as the one beauty itself, of which one's own idea is mere a copy. This beauty exists outside of the mind, and it is something distinct from all beautiful objects.

Now, what has been said of beauty may equally be said of justice, or goodness, or of whiteness etc. There are many just acts, but only one justice, since we use one word for it. This justice must be a real thing, distinct from all particular just acts. Our ideas of justice are copies of it. So, also there are many white objects, but only one whiteness. Now, beauty, justice, goodness in general is all concepts. The idea of beauty is formed by including what is common to all beautiful objects and excluding those points in which they differ. And this is just what is meant by a concept. Therefore, Plato's theory is that concepts are objectively real. He gives to these objective concepts the technical name Ideas. With the help of Ideas

Plato explained all the appearances and unrealities of things. Let us explain what the characteristics of the Ideas are.

In the first place, Ideas are substance. Substance is a technical term in philosophy. In philosophy Substance means that which has its whole being in itself, whose reality does not flow into it from anything else, but which is the source of its own reality. Substance is self-caused and self-determined. It is the ground of other things, but itself has no ground except itself. For example, if we believe the popular Christian idea that God created the world, He should be an ultimate and uncreated being. The world depends for its existence upon God, but God's existence depends only upon Him. So, God is a substance and the world is not. In this technical sense the Ideas are substances. They are absolute and ultimate realities. All things depend on them, but they depend on nothing. They are the first principles of the universe.

Secondly, the Ideas are universals. An Idea is not any particular thing. The Idea of the horse is not this or that horse. It is the general concept of all horses. It is the universal horse. For this reason the Ideas are sometime called —universal”.

Thirdly, Ideas are Essences of all things. The definition gives us what is essential to a thing. If we define man as a rational anima, this means that reason is the essence of man.

Fourthly, Ideas are rational, that is to say, they are apprehended through reason. Through reason alone is knowledge of the Ideas possible.

It results from this whole theory of Ideas that there are two sources of human experiences, sense-perception and reason. Sense-perception has for its object the world of sense; reason has for its object of Ideas. The world of sense has all the opposite characteristics to the Ideas. The Ideas are absolute reality, absolute Being. Plato identifies Heraclitean theory of absolute Becoming with the world of sense, which contains nothing stable and permanent. The Idea always is, and never becomes; the thing of sense always becomes, and never is. It is for this reason that, in the opinion of Plato, no knowledge of world of sense is possible, for one can have no knowledge of that which changes from moment to moment. The subject of knowledge has to be permanent. So, knowledge is only possible if its subject stands as permanent and changeless. Therefore, the only knowledge is the knowledge of the Ideas.

Let us now turn to Aristotle. It is impossible to understand Aristotle's philosophical project without realizing that he thought that it was of central importance to get clear about the 'Theory of Forms'. Aristotle's *Metaphysics* as the systematic treatise in metaphysics, contains not only discussions of the notion of being but also criticism of earlier thought of the subject, particularly Plato's theory of Forms. Aristotle himself illustrates Plato's importance as an object of criticism in the history of 'metaphysics'. Aristotle's 'metaphysical' theory grows naturally out of his polemic against Plato's theory of Ideas or Forms because his own system was an effect simply an attempt to over-come the defects which he found in Plato. The main heads of this polemic are presented in the following way. The world consists of a multitude of things, and it is the business of philosophy to explain why they exist. By way of explanation Plato merely assumes the existence of another multitude of things, the Ideas. But the only effect of this is to double the number of things to be explained. In his book *Metaphysics* he says in this regard that "Those who first proposed the ideas as causes were in effect doubling the number of things to be explained; as if a man wished to count a few things but imagined he could not do so unless he added two there number."^{vi}

Plato has not explained the relation of Ideas to things. Things, we are told, are “copies” of Ideas, and —participate” in them. But how are we to understand this —participation”?

Ideas are assumed in order to explain what is common to many objects. Wherever there is a common element there must be an Idea. Thus, there is a common element in all men, and there is an Idea of man. But there should also be an element common to the individual man and to the Idea of man. There must, therefore, be a further Idea, the “third man”, to explain this. And between this further Idea and the individual man there must be yet another Idea to explain what they have in common, and so on *ad infinitum*.

Aristotle’s objection to the ideal theory and that which, to all intents and purposes, sums up all the others, is that it assumes that Ideas are the essences of things, and yet places those essences outside the things themselves. The essence of a thing must be in it, and not outside it. But Plato separated Ideas from things, and placed the Ideas away somewhere in a mysterious world of their own. The Idea, as the universal, can only exist in the particular. Possibly the reality in all horses is the universal horse, but, the universal horse is not something that exists by itself and independently of individual horses. Hence Plato was led into the absurdity of talking as if, besides the individual horses we know, there is somewhere another individual called the horse-in-general, or as if besides white objects there is

a thing called whiteness. And this is in fact the supreme self-contradiction of the theory of Ideas that it begins by saying that the universal is real, and the particular unreal, but ends by degrading the universal again into a particular. This is the same thing as saying that Plato's mistake lay in first seeing that existence is not reality, but then going on to imagine that the reality is an existence.

Out of this last objection grows Aristotle's own philosophy, the fundamental principle of which is that the universal is indeed the absolute reality, but that it is a universal which exists only in the particular. What is reality? What is substance? This is the first question for the metaphysician. Aristotle's answers to these questions are most important contribution to metaphysics. The word "being" has a variety of senses. It denotes first what a thing is, and then its quality, quantity or other category. In *Metaphysics* Aristotle says that;

"...of all these senses which being may have, the primary sense is clearly what a thing is; for this denotes substance, whereas nothing else is considered to exist unless by virtue of its being a quantity, quality, affection, or other determination of substance. Hence one might doubt whether or not such terms as walking, being in good health, sitting, etc., signify each of these things as being; for none of them has an

independent existence or can be separated from its substance. Rather, if anything it is the thing which walks or sits or is in good health that is existent, because its subject is something definite; i.e. the substance and individual which is clearly implied in the use of such a designation, since the good‘ or the sitting‘ has no meaning apart from it. Clearly, then, it is by virtue of substance that each of the other categories exists‘. Therefore that which is‘ primarily (i.e. not in any qualified sense, but absolutely) must be substance”.^{vii}

The ancient and everlasting question what is being?‘ really amounts to what is substance? The central concept of Aristotle’s metaphysics‘ is substance, the concrete individual thing. However, his detailed account of substance is very difficult to understand.

In the Book *Zeta 3* of *Metaphysics* Aristotle gives a list of four possible candidates for being the substance of something that is: essence, universal, genus and subject. Most probably this means that if x is a substance, then the substance of x might be either (i) the essence of x, or (ii) some universal predicated of x, or (iii) a genus that x belongs to, or (iv) a subject of which x is predicated. Book *Zeta* is devoted to an examination of the fourth candidate: the idea that the substance of something is a subject of which it is predicated. Aristotle tells us, a subject is “...that of which other entities are said, it itself never being said of anything else”^{viii}. It also can be said

that “...for a strong case can be made for the claim that it is the primary subject that is substance to the full extent”.^{ix}

According to Aristotle, matter, form, and the compound of matter and form all can be considered as subjects. But which of them is substance?—this is the question to which Aristotle next turns. Substance is “...that which is not predicated itself and is the subject of the predication of other things”^x. The subject criterion by itself leads to the answer that the subject of x is an entirely indeterminate matter of which x is composed. For form is predicated of matter as subject, and one can always analyze a hylomorphic compound into its predicates and the subject of which they are predicated. And when all predicates have been removed (in thought), the subject that remains is nothing at all in its own right—an entity all of whose properties are accidental to it. The resulting subject is matter from which all form has been expunged. So the subject criterion leads to the answer that the subject of x is the formless matter of which it is ultimately composed. But Aristotle rejects this answer as impossible because it lacks two characteristics that are crucial to substance, separability and thisness. So it does not qualify as the substance of the thing whose matter it is. In *Zeta-6* of *Metaphysics* Aristotle goes on to argue that:

“... essence is the criterion of substantiality, that essence is what is definable in a thing and that by the essence criterion it is preliminary species that are substances. He does this by connecting the essence criterion with the subject criterion examined in chapter 3. That chapter had left it open how the subject criterion was to be used, except that it ruled out its use in such a way as to lead to the ascription of substantiality to ultimate matter.”^{xi}

Aristotle also says that “...such things, of course, are the species, which, taken as a whole not as a collection of particulars, are identical with their species essence.”^{xii} At this point there appears to be a close connection between the essence of substance and its species and this might tempt one to suppose that Aristotle is identifying the substance of a thing with its species. But such identification would be a mistake for two reasons: First, Aristotle’s point is that an essence of the primary kind corresponds to a species (e.g., man) and not to some more narrowly delineated kind (e.g., paleman). Second, ‘species’ in the logical works has acquired a new meaning in a hylomorphic context, where it means ‘form’ rather than ‘species’. In the conceptual framework of Book *Zeta* of *Metaphysics* a universal such as man or horse — which was called a species and a secondary substance in the *Categories*— is construed as ‘not a substance, but a compound of a certain formula and a certain matter, taken universally.’

The primary substance in book *Zeta* is not the species that an individual substance belongs to but the form that is predicated of the matter of which it is composed.

The role of form is the central topic of *Zeta* 7-9. Individual substances are seen as hylomorphic compounds, so the role of matter and form in their generation must be accounted for. Whether we are thinking of natural objects such as plants and animals, or artifacts, such as houses, the requirements for generation are the same. We do not produce matter nor do we produce form; rather, we put the form into the matter and produce the compound. Both the form and matter must pre-exist. As Aristotle says, "...the production of composite particulars through the union of form and matter, Aristotle proceeds to his key point, which is that form itself cannot be produced. In a production, say in the production of a bronze sphere, it is the bronze sphere, the composite particular, that is produced."^{xiii}

But the Aristotelian portrait of composite production is something different from the Platonic portrait of composite production. As we see in book *Zeta*-8 that —In Plato's theory, the production of the composite particular is explained as something caused by a separately existing form, which is wholly external to the composite. Aristotle has many times argued that such a model of production is incoherent, and in this passage he makes very clear

his view that an external Formal cause is not needed to explain production. The production of the composite particular is sufficiently explained merely by the entry of the immanent form into new indeterminate matter”^{xiv}. In Aristotelian conception the essence of such of hylomorphic compound is its form, nor its matter but the point is that form is not produced. If we make the form, we must make it out of something. In the case of bronze sphere, we make a sphere out of bronze. If we make a spherical form itself then we shall have to make it too out of something, and the process will go on like *ad infinitum*. Therefore, the form is not produced.

But in *Zeta-13* Aristotle throws the entire discussion of substance into disarray. Aristotle introduced four candidates for the title of substantiality in *Zeta-3*: the subject, the essence, the genus, the universal. Now the entire discussion of chapter 13 consists of arguments to the conclusion that universals are not substance. As we see that —The fact is that no universal can be a substance: (a) The substance of a thing is that which is peculiar to it and belongs to nothing else, whereas the universal is common to many.... (b) The substance of a thing is that which is not predicated of a subject, whereas the universal is always predicated of some subject”^{xv}. In *Zeta-17* Aristotle proposes a new point which is what sort of thing a substance is. The new idea is that substance is a principle and a kind of

cause”^{xvi} Aristotle uses the word ‘cause’ in various ways. In one sense, a cause is that out of which a thing comes to be, and which persists: e. g., bronze, silver, and the genus of these are causes of a statue or a bowl. A cause in this sense has been traditionally called a material cause. In a second sense, we have the law, formula or definition of thing giving the principles according to which it is constructed. This is the formal cause. A third sense, traditionally called the efficient cause, is the primary source of change. Forth is what is traditionally called the final cause, which is the end or purpose of thing. In the final chapter of *Zeta* we can see that, Aristotle, in the *Physics*, distinguishes four kinds of explanation, material, motive, final and formal. The material explanation of a thing adverts to its matter and the motive explanation of an events adverts to whatever initiates it. The final explanation of either an event or a thing specifies its purpose (and Aristotle notoriously seems to apply this style of explanation to natural things as well as to artifacts), and the formal style of explanation shows why something must have some feature simply by dint of being the thing that it is”^{xvii}.

The job of a cause or principle of being is to explain why one thing belongs to another; that is, it is to explain some predicational fact. This needs to be explained, for example, why this is a man, or that is a house. But what kind of a question is this? The only thing that can be a man is a man; the only

thing that can be a table is a table. In that case we would appear to be asking why a man is a man, or why a table is a table, and these seem to be foolish questions that all have the same answer: —Because each thing is itself^{xviii}. We must ask, e.g., Why are these things, viz, bricks and stones, a house?”^{xix} The answer Aristotle proposes is that the cause of being a substance is the form or essence that is predicated of the matter that constitute that substance. The essence is not always just a formal cause; it is also a final cause, and in some cases an efficient cause.

But what we seek is the cause i.e., the form, by reason of which the matter is some definite thing and this is the substance of each thing, and the primary cause of its being. But in the *Categories*, he talks about substance from the point of view of language and logic. In the *Categories* the number of categories given by Aristotle is ten. The doctrine of categories constitutes the ways in which we can think about things. The list of ten categories constitutes an orderly arrangement, a classification of concepts, the fundamental type's concepts that governs our scientific knowledge. In *Categories* Aristotle considered substance as subject and he also holds the view that as subject substances have priorities over other categories of features of substances and in this way they were all dependent on substance for their being but not vice versa. But many problems are connected with

this view. In *Metaphysics* we find a more understandable approach of substance. The concrete individual things like man, horse, tree, stone and the like may be viewed by the philosophers from two different points of view. (1) They may look at it as a permanent static feature of the world with a fixed nature. (2) They may also look at substances as centers of change. We ask simply, what happens when something changes?

In considering substance as a center of change, we seem to be on more familiar ground. To ask —“what happens when x changes?” is a recognizable type of scientific question which can be answered once by putting the name of some specific substance for x. A chemical change can be explained by describing the re-assembling of atoms, a physical change in terms of transformation and discharges of energy. But for Aristotle, this was now a scientific question in our sense of the phrase. No modern scientist would attempt to answer the question what happens when something changes? But Aristotle did attempt to answer just this question. He was looking for an answer to a general question —“why are things as they are in general?” His answer to this question is contained in two closely linked parts of his philosophy: his doctrine of matter and form, potentiality and actuality. These doctrines have traditionally been regarded as the very heart of Aristotelian philosophy.

If we consider any object, natural or artificial, we can distinguish it in two factors: the stuff of which it is made and the shape. Two bowls may both be of silver but differ in their design or they may share an identical design but one may be molded in silver and one in gold. This contrast of stuff and shape, material and organization or to use Aristotle's terms matter and form can be traced throughout nature. Aristotle very sharply extends and generalizes the notion of form and matter in three ways:

1. Matter and form are correlative notions that can be distinguished anywhere in nature. A silver bowl may be analyzed into its matter — silver and its form, the structure given to the silver by the craftsman who made the bowl. But a piece of un-worked silver provides the some distinction. It has an observable character; it is different from a similar piece of gold or copper. This is its form. For Aristotle its matter consists of the elements out of which the silver is composed that are fire, earth, air and water. The potentialities of the elements present in the silver are of course part of the form. For it is to these proportions that Aristotle must trace the difference between silver and other substance. But what of the basic elements of fire, earth, air, water themselves? They too are composed of form and matter. Two pairs of contrary qualities, hot –cold, dry –wet are combined in pairs to

make the four elements. Thus the form of fire is the hot and the dry, that of water and soon. But the matter of the elements is what Aristotle calls at higher levels in that it is never found apart from its form. It is entirely featureless and structureless.

2. The second way in which he generalizes his concept of matter and form is that form is the knowledge element in things. It is what we can describe, define, classify, communicate and be aware of. Matter is the unknowable structureless residue of things that mind cannot assimilate or deal with.

3. Lastly, matter is the source of plurality and individuality in things. If the form in two or more things of the same species is identical, those things can be distinguished only by their matter.

Matter and form are the outcome of Aristotle's analysis of things. He develops the concept of matter and form to explain for the fact of change. Things in nature do change. They grow, decay, shed some qualities and assume others, move and so on. Aristotle develops the concept of matter and form to account for the fact of change. Consider a simple case of change say for example, the change of colour in an apple when it ripens. Here matter may be regarded as a substratum in which change takes place. And in order for a given substratum, x , to be the site of a change from

property A to property B, it must have the capacity or potentiality for the change. Nature works in a certain order and within certain limits. Only those changes can take place in things for which the potentiality exists there. Apples become red or yellow but not blue or white. Thus matter and form regarded as factors in a process of change become potentiality and actuality. Potentiality and actuality is the subject of book *Theta*. Actuality and potentiality can be considered in regard to process or change and in regard to substance. In this book Aristotle makes a variety of distinction. —The most important of these is that between active and passive potentiality. The agent of change has an active potentiality to change the object of change, and the object has a passive potentiality to be changed by the agent. Both these potentialities are realized when the change takes place, and in a way they can be considered the same potentiality. But from the point of view of the agent and the object separately, they are, of course, distinct”.^{xx} This distinction is very much important in Aristotelian philosophy. But there exists some opposite view regarding this distinction, for example the School of Megara who had denied any distinction between potentiality and actuality. The position of the School of Megara is like that one is potentially builder only when one is actually employing the power of building. So the non-builder is no bearer of a potentiality for building—the only such bearer is the builder when engaged in his building. For them potentiality and actuality should be identical. Aristotle holds a different

position; he remarks that it would be absurd to say that the builder who is not actually building cannot build. Because he has a potentiality for building, a power to build, even when he is not actually engage in building. A man who is in a state of coma is not actually thinking, but, being a man, he has the potentiality of thinking. But this is not possible in the case of stone, though it is not actually thinking; it has no potentiality for thinking. So potentiality is not identical with actuality.

Aristotle gives actuality priority over potentiality. And that is exactly what we find in book *Theta-8* of *Metaphysics*. Aristotle distinguishes between priority in thought, in time, and in substance. As he says;

—The priority of the actual in thought consists in the fact that one cannot have a conception of a potentiality without already having a conception of the actuality, while the reverse is not the case. The priority in time of the actual refers to the species rather than the individual. At the level of the individual, the potential, the egg, must indeed precede the actual, the chicken, but this is a relatively trivial fact. It is much more important that the species chicken must temporally precede the actual, the chicken, but this is a relatively trivial fact. It is much more important that the species chicken must temporally precede the egg. The substantial priority of the actual is defended in terms of the equation of actuality with form and thus with the principle and cause of a thing's being and that of potentiality with matter.

There is also an argument that the actual, being imperishable, must have priority over the potential, which is perishable”.^{xxi}

Here we can see that Aristotle argues for the priority of actuality over potentiality in two ways. (i) The first argument makes use of his notion of final causality. Things that come to be move towards an end (*telos*)—the boy becomes a man, the acorn becomes an oak. Form or actuality is the end toward which natural processes are directed. Actuality is therefore a cause in more than one sense of a thing’s realizing its potential. The efficient cause here is the actual oak tree that produced the acorn; the formal cause is the *logos* defining that actuality; the final cause is the *telos* toward which the acorn develops an actual oak tree. (ii) A potentiality is for either of a pair of opposites; so anything that is capable of being is also capable of not being. What is capable of not being might possibly not be, and what might possibly not be is perishable. Hence anything with the mere potentiality to be is perishable. What is eternal is imperishable, and so nothing that is eternal can exist only potentially—what is eternal must be fully the actual. So what is actual is prior in substance to what is potential.

The problem regarding substance is the central task of *Metaphysics* and it is discussed from *Zeta* 1 to *Theta*. Aristotle investigates the principle and causes of substance. In book *Lambda* Aristotle describes substance as

something changeable. Here he offers three fundamental types of substance, "...substance which is perceptible and perishable, substance which is perceptible and imperishable and substance which is immune to change of any kind".^{xxii}

The primary two of this category drop in the domain of natural science and the last one in logic and mathematics. Book *Lambda* is all about the discussion regarding the problem of substance, those of divine and of natural. In this book Aristotle presents his legendary conception of God as an unmoved First Mover, as an originator of all course of actions who himself stands outside all change. This conception has mesmerized both theologians and philosophers and also motivated them to attempt to grasp the general account of substance.

In Book *Lambda* of the *Metaphysics* Aristotle develops the concept of God. It can be summarized in the answers to two questions: (1) why must we postulate the existence of God? (2) What can we know about God?

In answers to (1) Aristotle develops one argument, the argument for the existence of change or motion. His statement is very complex, but its main outlines can be indicated as follows: (a) there exists an eternal circular

motion, namely the movement of the sphere of the fixed stars. (b) Everything that is moved is moved by something else.(c) Therefore, there must be either an infinite series of causes or a cause of motion that is itself unmoved.(d) An infinite series of causes and effect is impossible.(e) There is a unmoved causes of motion and that is God. Aristotle reply to (2) runs as follows: Since God is an unmoved mover he must be changeless. He cannot therefore be composed like other substance of potentiality and actuality. He must accordingly be all form, all actuality, and so completely immaterial. He moves the outermost sphere of the fixed stars, and this motion is transmitted to the inner spheres by ordinary mechanical process. But God himself does not move outer haven mechanically. Indeed, he could not do so, sponce he is immortal and not in space. Instead, he moves it in a nonphysical way by being an object of attraction or desire. God is thus efficient cause by being a final cause. His own activity, being that of a purely immaterial being, must be an actively of thought which has itself for its object. In the book *Lambda* Aristotle says, —Therequirement that thought be about itself for the prime mover is intended to eliminate various possibilities that would undermine the dignity of his thought. His thought might not have any object at some point, a danger which is avoided by its being permanently actual”.^{xxiii} So we can see that there is a substance eternal, unchangeable and separate from sensible things.

Throughout the work we can see that Aristotle's aim is to solve the central problem of Metaphysics that is the problem regarding substance. The task of this chapter is to understand the notion of Metaphysics in the light of ancient Greek philosopher's point of view to Aristotelian point of view. There is nothing even in modern world which Aristotle has not touched and in relation to which he has not presented his extraordinary insight. Aristotle has influenced Western thought throughout all ages down to the present time. Not only the philosophers but also the theological systems of Judaism, Islam and the Christian Catholic Church are influenced by the Aristotle's ideas. Aristotle gives us an understanding of physical world and also investigates the nature of its "*being*"—*the being of motion*. Under his influence a large number of medieval and modern thinkers (philosophers, theologians and scientists) pursued this type of investigation.

Chapter: 2

Quest for universal Metaphysics

In the first Chapter of this thesis we have tried to understand the nature of metaphysics by following by Classical Greek philosophy. They did metaphysics in the name of searching the ‘first principle’. For them there is no difference between Philosophy and metaphysics, because both of them try to analyze and explore the fundamental or the basic truth of the reality. For The classical Greek thinkers, Philosophy is not something that subsists independently of the growth and decay of the spirit of man. It goes hand in hand with political, social, religious and artistic development. The philosophy of this classical Greek tradition influenced many great thinkers in later history of time. It is believed that it also inspired many Christian scholastic thinkers in formulating the Christian religious thought.

But for many critics the intense subjectivism is essential mark of the failure of Greek thought, which can be seen as a feature of all the post-Aristotelian schools. The pure scientific spirit, the desire for knowledge for its own sake, is gone. The motive power of philosophy is no longer the disinterested pursuit of truth, but only the desire of the individual to escape from the ills

of life. Philosophy only interests men in so far as it affects their lives. It becomes anthropocentric and egocentric. Everything pivots on the individual subject, his destiny, his fate, the welfare of his soul. Philosophy is now expected to do work of religion, and to be a haven of refuge from the storms of life. Thus for many thinkers classical Greek Philosophy results in the philosophy of Medieval period.

This kind of subjectivism has its necessary consequences, one-sidedness, absence of originality, and finally complete skepticism. Men no longer have universal, all-embracing systems like those of Classical Greek philosophers. Metaphysics, physics, logic are not studied for their own sakes, but only as preparations for religion. Absence of originality is a consequence of the subjectivism of the age. In this age philosophy is actually a revival of old thought.

With the rediscovery of Aristotle in the thirteenth century, after a period of ignorance of his philosophy in the west, realism about universals became the accepted view. There was, however, a connection between the issues over universals and theological issues because this period was totally dominated by Christian thought. If we analyze the development of

philosophy then we can see that philosophy contain two main periods, apart from the medieval period, namely the ancient period and the modern period. The ancient period, consists of philosophies of Plato and Aristotle, and the modern period, when the speculative reason once more began to enjoy freedom after the dark night of the *Middle Ages*.

In this present chapter, of the thesis we are trying to make a comparative study between the theosophy of medieval thinkers and the philosophy of some modern thinkers, to find out the answer to the question, ‘whether the essence of classical Greek metaphysical study get lost in the darkness of medieval era?’ or is it revised in the philosophical discourse of modern era?

Philosophy is founded upon reason. It is the effort to understand the reality of things intellectually. Hence, it cannot admit anything higher than reason. But in the middle age the place of reason is replaced by religious faith. In this era of philosophy, the human spirit had first to pass through the arid wastes of Scholasticism. The great majority of mediaeval philosophers or the philosophers of meddle age were priests and theologians, so, it is obvious for us to find a great relation between philosophy and theology in their philosophical thinking. The main metaphysical concerns of medieval philosophers were similarly theologically oriented, particularly the existence of God and the nature of soul. Anselm in the eleventh century

became famous for his ontological proof for the existence of God, maintaining that God's existence followed from the fact that God is that than which no greater can be conceived. The great Thomas Aquinas in the thirteenth century took a more Aristotelian line on the arguments for God's existence, relying in the main on considerations concerning the supposed nature of the world which point to the need to assume the existence of a deity. So after Aristotle western philosophy was totally dominated by religion. That period is generally known as the age of theology. So, the religion took the place of philosophy in human thinking. The period of A.D.400- A.D.1400 is counted as the era of medieval philosophy. During this period, philosophy was used as a tool to form certain theological belief, like the existence of God. Greek Philosophy of Plato, Aristotle was used to elucidate theology. Philosophy in this period is characteristically theological. Medieval thinkers did not consider themselves philosophers at all; their concerns are theological. Although some thinkers of this age like St. Augustine, St. Anselm St. Thomas Aquinas etc. are important for their contributions to prepare the ground for the rise of modern philosophy. Medieval philosophy was subordinate to Christian theology.

But at the same time it is undoubtedly true that we can trace a progressive emancipation of philosophy from theology from the beginning of philosophical reflection in the early middle Ages up to the modern era.

St. Augustine (A.D.354 to A.D. 430) shared with all his contemporaries the belief that it was the business of philosophy to discover the way to wisdom and thereby to show men the way of happiness or blessedness (*beatitudo*). So, this wisdom is not purely theoretical. It deals not only with questions about physical universe, about man's own nature, about God but it shows men the way to happiness. After his conversion, Augustine accepted Christianity as the only way to happiness, and therefore, as the only true —philosophy—. The ultimate source of the saving truths taught by Christianity was the scriptures, which for Augustine had supplanted the teachings of the philosophers as the gate way to truth. Hence, authority rather than reasoning, faith rather than understanding came to be the emphasis of Christian Philosophy. In his book *De Doctrina Christiana* Augustine discusses the way in which the various intellectual disciplines may serve to assist the Christian in understanding the faith. Philosophy along with the other branches of learning is here seen as subordinated to the service of a purpose outside it, that of nourishing and deepening faith; it is no longer to be pursued for its own sake, as an independent avenue to truth. Therefore, Augustine is not interested in philosophy in the modern sense of the word. Philosophical concepts and arguments play a subordinate role in

his work; and where they occur; they are usually employed to help in the elucidation of some aspects of Christian doctrine.

St. Anselm (A.D. 1033 to A.D.1109) the Archbishop of Canterbury, like the other medieval philosophers, made no clear distinction between theology and philosophy. Anselm's Ontological argument for the proof of God's existence makes him important in the history of theological development. In his book *Monologium* Anselm develops the ontological proof of God's existence from the degrees of perfection which are found in creatures. He develops his ontological argument in the following way:

—God is that than which no greater can be thought:

But that than which no greater can be thought must exist,

Not only mentally, in idea, but also extra mentally:

Therefore God exists, not only in idea, mentally, but also extra-mentally".^{xxiv}

This ontological proof for the existence of God starts from the idea of God as that than which no greater can be conceived, i.e. as absolute perfect being: that is what is meant by —Gd". Modern philosopher like Rene

Descartes claims to provide a proof demonstrating the existence of God from the idea of a supremely perfect being was fully influenced by Anselm's ontological argument. Descartes adopted the idea; Leibniz defended it in an ingenious manner. Kant attacked it. So, the influence of St. Anselm on the history of modern philosophy is unforgettable.

St. Thomas Aquinas is another medieval thinker, who asserted the independence of philosophy as a separate branch of study. His philosophy is a rethinking of Aristotelianism. Aquinas' work in philosophy is a temperamental tendency to seek a middle way on questions that have been given a wide range of answers. For centuries philosophers had debated whether genera and species are realities in themselves or mere mental constructs. What made this discussion important was the conviction that these universals (such as humanity, justice, whiteness, dogness) are the primary objects of human understanding. Most thinkers in the middle ages felt that if something is to be explained, it must be treated in universal terms. Therefore, the problem of universals was not simply an academic question. Aquinas's position on this problem is now called moderate realism. He denied that universals are existing realities, but he also insisted that men's universal concepts and judgments have some sort of foundation in extra mental things. This basis for the universality, say of humanity,

would consist in the real similarity found among all individual men. It was not that Aquinas attributed an actual, existent universal nature to all individual men: that would be an extreme realism. Though Aquinas adopts the Aristotelian statement that First Philosophy or metaphysics studies being as being but it is perfectly clear that he does not presuppose a notion from which reality is to be deduced. But he starts from the existent world and inquires what its being is, how it exists, what is the condition of its existence. Moreover, his thought concentrates on the Supreme Existence. Being a Christian philosopher and theologian, Aquinas not only sees metaphysics as the science of being as being but also emphasizes the view that metaphysics or First Philosophy is totally directed to the knowledge of God as the last end. St. Thomas Aquinas attempts to reconcile Aristotelian thought with Christian theology. The first of the five proofs of God's existence given by Aquinas is that from motion, which is found in Aristotle. —...there is something which is always moved through an uninterrupted motion, and this motion is circular (as is evident not merely by argument but as a matter of fact), and consequently the primary heaven will be eternal.

But there will then also be something that moves them. And since that which is moved and which also moves is an intermediate, it follows that

there must be something that moves without being moved. This will be eternal, it will be a substance and it will be activation.”^{xxv}

Following Aristotle, Aquinas argues that everything which is moved is moved by another. If that other is itself moved, it must be moved by yet another agent. As an infinite series is impossible, we come in the end to an unmoved mover, a first mover and this unmoved mover is God. When Aristotle argued to the existence of an unmoved mover, he was answering a metaphysical problem; but when St. Anselm and St. Thomas proved God's existence, they were showing the rational foundation for the acceptance of a revelation in which they already believed. Christian writers and Fathers applied Greek philosophy as a preparation for Christian wisdom because most of the mediaeval thinkers were primarily theologians. The development of philosophy in the Christian world had always a connection to theology. Looking back from the present day, we can see that Greek philosophy helps mediaeval Scholastic development.

St Anselm, St Thomas Aquinas and St Augustine prepared a path for modern philosophy as in their philosophy both the rights of reason and the rights of revelation were recognized. From this era the position of philosophy was changed. Modern philosophy is generally said to have begun with Descartes or with Francis Bacon. Sometimes it is said that

modern philosophy is autonomous; it is the product of reason alone, whereas mediaeval philosophy was subordinate to Christian theology. In the Middle Ages theology was esteemed as the supreme science, and we find theologians, who were also philosophers. But in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries we find philosophers, some of whom believed in Christianity while others did not. Seventeenth century philosopher like Descartes, Spinoza Locke etc. were fundamentally in the same position with today's philosophers who happens to be a Christian but who is not, in the professional sense, a theologian. Descartes was the first who tried to establish a philosophy in a systematic way, which was free from any theological dogma. He replaced reason in the place of faith. Descartes' philosophy was a revival of Aristotelian philosophy. Inspired by Aristotle's *Metaphysics* he named his book *Meditations on First Philosophy*. Descartes' book is both a challenge to authority and an enquiry into the nature of knowledge rather than faith. There is a meaningful distinction between metaphysical knowledge and religious experience. The mediaeval tradition in philosophy takes it largely for granted that metaphysical knowledge is both a way to and a form of religious experience. In his book, *Meditations on First Philosophy* Descartes, decidedly assume that philosophy, or the quest for metaphysical knowledge, must be detached from religious commitment. In invoking 'First Philosophy' Descartes' casts us back into the Aristotelian roots of metaphysical philosophy. According

to Aristotle, First Philosophy is the study of being qua being. But there are some difference between Descartes' understanding of First Philosophy and Aristotelian understanding of First Philosophy. For Descartes, First Philosophy is the study of that which is necessary for the experience of particulars rather than the study of that which is necessary for the being of particulars. Descartes' orientation to philosophy was mainly epistemological in character; it might indeed be said that his metaphysics was founded on epistemological considerations. In this context it can be said that Descartes opinion concerning the nature and function of Philosophy is quite similar with the opinion of Plato. As for Plato the main purpose of Philosophy is to have knowledge of unchanged reality. By following the Socratics' definition of Philosophy Plato in his book *V of Republic* writes, —Socrates defines what he means by philosopher, a lover of wisdom. True knowledge is concerned not with the physical world of the senses but with the qualities, the realities, that are inherent in the everyday world—with Beauty, not with beautiful sounds and colours. The changing world of the senses is the object of opinion, but the unchanging world of the realities is the object of true knowledge or wisdom, and it is this wisdom that true philosophers love”^{xxvi}.

However, Descartes' main project was to construct a grand, all-embracing system of philosophy which would encompass metaphysics, natural science, psychology and morals, connecting all the objects within the scope of human understanding. Descartes was interested in mathematics because he thought mathematics gives us knowledge, which is certain and self-evident (especially Geometry). His vision was to establish a philosophy which gives us certain and self-evident knowledge like mathematics. For this reason, he wished to demolish everything completely and start again right from foundation. Descartes speaks of discovering the first principles of everything which exist naturally in our souls. According to Descartes we can construct metaphysics and physics by logical deduction from a number of innate ideas implanted in the mind by nature or by God. All clear and distinct ideas are innate. And all scientific knowledge is knowledge by means of innate ideas. For Descartes, the idea of God is innate. Such ideas are not, indeed, innate in the sense that they are present in the newborn baby's mind as fully-fledged ideas. But the mind produces them, as it were, out of its own potentialities. Mind does not derive them from sense-experience. Because empirical hypothesis cannot provide us real scientific knowledge and Descartes' project was to find a scientific knowledge which is absolutely certain. As a preliminary to the search for absolute certainty he thought that it was necessary to doubt all that could be doubted and to treat provisionally as false all that could be doubted. He was interested in

mathematics because he thought mathematics gives us knowledge, which is certain and self-evident knowledge like mathematics. As he said that —But I noticed, immediately afterwards, that while I thus wished to think that everything was false, it was necessarily the case that I, who was thinking this, was something. When I noticed that this truth I think, therefore I am was so firm and certain that all the most extravagant assumptions of the skeptics were unable to shake it, I judge that I could accept it without scruple as the first principle of the philosophy for which was searching.

Then, when I was examining what I was, I realized that I could pretend that I had no body, and that there was no world nor and place in which I was present, but I could not pretend in the same way that I did not exist.^{xxvii} Descartes' doubt is methodic in the sense that it is practiced not for the sake of doubting but as a preliminary stage in the attainment of certainty and in shifting the true from false.

Descartes employed methodic doubt with a view to discovering whether there was any indubitable truth or not. He said, —But I have persuaded myself that there is absolutely nothing in the world: no sky, no minds, no bodies. Is it then the case that I too do not exist? But doubtless I did exist, if I persuaded myself something^{xxviii}. ...”And let [the evil genius] do his best at deception, he will never bring it about that I am nothing so long as I shall

think that I am something. Thus after everything has been most carefully weighed, it must finally be established that this pronouncement ‘I am, I exist’ is necessarily true every time I utter it or conceive it in my mind”^{xxix}.

Descartes both in the *Discourse on Method* and in the *Meditation on First Philosophy*, describes how he was applying the method of doubt and rejecting one proposition after another as not being what he required, he realized that in order to doubt anything he must exist. According to Descartes however I doubt, I must exist; otherwise I could not doubt. So it is impossible to be mistaken about the proposition that – I exist. The same could be said for the proposition —“I think”: because to doubt something is to think, then it is impossible to believe that one is thinking unless one is indeed thinking; it is impossible to believe that one is thinking and to be mistaken. Doubting is a form of thinking. Then, I am thinking, therefore I exist—this is known as cogito argument, *cogito ergo sum* (I think, therefore I exist). According to Descartes, things which we conceive very clearly and distinctly are all true. In the *Principles of Philosophy* Descartes tells us that --I call that clear which is present and apparent to an attentive mind, in the same way as we assert that we see objects clearly when, being present to the beholding eye, they operate upon with sufficient strength. But the distinct is that which is so precise and different from all other objects that it contains within itself nothing but what is clear. So he says that I affirm the proposition, I think, therefore I am, not because I apply some extrinsic

criterion of truth, but simply because I see clearly and distinctly that so it is. The certainty of the cogito is, for Descartes, a curiously temporary affair: I can be sure of my existence only for as long as I am thinking. But from this fleeting and flickering insight, Descartes attempts to reconstruct a whole system of reliable knowledge. Here Descartes introduces the idea of God.

After discovered the indubitable truth, *Cogito, ergo sum*, Descartes inquires for a general criterion of certainty. Descartes tried to establish a general rule that is-- about a person's perception of all things which very clear and very distinct are true. According to Descartes, we affirm the proposition I think, therefore I am, not because we apply some extrinsic criterion of truth, but simply because we see clearly and distinctly that so it is. But the matter is not so simple as it appears. In the book *Discourse on Method* Descartes said that, "Having noticed that there is nothing at all in the proposition 'I think, therefore I am' which convinces me that I speak the truth, apart from the fact that I see very clearly that one has to exist in order to think, I judge that I could adopt as a general rule that those things that we conceive very clearly and distinctly are all true. The only outstanding difficulty is in recognizing which ones we conceive distinctly"^{xxx}. After that, he thought — as my being is not completely perfect so, I have to think about something that is more perfect than me and that is God. For God, the supremely

perfect being, liable to no error or defect to exists. It is certainty about God's existence which enables us to apply universally and confidently the criterion of truth. Descartes also considered that – as a less perfect being I have to depend on some more perfect being and from which I receive everything that I have. To prove God's existence, Descartes introduced the ontological argument. In connection of this theme Descartes analyzed that—if all which I know clearly and distinctly as pertaining to this object really does belong to it, may I not derive from this an argument demonstrating the existence of God? He also said that—as I know, for example, that all the properties which I clearly and distinctly perceive to belong to the essence of a triangle really do belong to it. Can I demonstrate the existence of God by considering the perfection contained in the idea of God? Descartes answered that this is possible. For existence is itself one of the perfections of God and belongs to the divine essence. The divine essence, however, being supreme perfection, comprises existence, which is itself a perfection. Hence we cannot conceive of God except as existing. In point of fact we cannot understand the idea of God, which expresses His essence, and at the same time denies His existence. In this regard Descartes said that — it is not within my power to think of God without existence (that is, of a supremely perfect being devoid of a supreme perfection), though it is in my power to imagine a horse either with wings or without

wings. Thus, according to Descartes this idea of a perfect being cannot be thought apart from His existence.

Substance plays a central role in Descartes philosophy. Descartes defined substance as an existent thing which requires nothing but itself in order to exist. Strictly speaking, there is only one substance, namely, God, for He alone exists in Himself and through Himself and does not involve the existence of anything else. However, besides God, there are two relative substances, namely, mind and body. Each can exist without the other, though both of them depend on God for their existence. The attribute of mind is thought and the attribute of body is extension. There is no real casual connection between mind and body. The relation between mind and body is known as interactionism. So, we can see that Descartes affirmed the existence of two different types of substances, spiritual and material. In this sense of the word he can be called a dualist. But Descartes was not a dualist in the sense that he postulated two ultimate, independent principles. There is a plurality of finite minds and there is a plurality of bodies. But both finite minds and bodies depend on God as creator. God is the link between the spheres of finite spiritual substances and material substances. Descartes felt that by using a method of systematic doubt he could come to at least one indubitable true proposition—the assertion of the self's existence and this would then lead on to other equally certain propositions—the assertion

of God's existence. Descartes was convinced with the fact that by doubting one can establish his own existence which is beyond doubt and self-evident. As we have seen, Aristotle considered that it is metaphysics' business to seek self-evident premises — assumptions so basic that their evidence could be obtained only by considering them and not by referring them to any assumptions more basic. Descartes' approach has been helpful to metaphysics, for he raised the question of the starting point of philosophy itself.

When we turn to Spinoza, we find that although the monistic system of him is opposed to the pluralistic system of Descartes, there are equally obvious connections. It can hardly be denied that Cartesianism exercised an influence on the mind of Spinoza but it does not follow that his monism was adopted from Descartes. Descartes defined substance as an existent thing which requires nothing but itself in order to exist. But Descartes did not draw any conclusion like Spinoza that there is only one substance, God, and that all creatures are simply modifications of God. He said that the term substance' can be predicated in an equivocal sense of God and of other beings. So, Descartes applies the term primarily to God and then secondarily, and analogically, to other beings. Substance is defined by Spinoza as, cause of itself: it is explained through itself and not by

reference to any external cause. This definition of substance implies that substance is completely self-dependent. Like Descartes, Spinoza, however, adopting a similar definition of substance, drew the conclusion that there is only one substance, God and that creatures cannot be more than modifications of the divine substance. In this sense his system is a development of that of Descartes. At the same time this two systems are very different as Descartes begins with the *cogito, ergo sum*, not with God but Spinoza starts his philosophy with God.

Substance is defined by Spinoza as that which is in itself and is conceived through itself: I mean that the conception of which does not depend on the conception of another thing from which it must be formed. Then substance is what Spinoza calls “cause of itself”, it is explained through itself and not by reference to any external cause. Therefore, the definition implies that substance is completely self-dependent. As Spinoza’s substance or God is an all-inclusive whole, outside of which nothing can lie, so Nature conceived as a whole is identical with God. Hence God and Nature are one. Here we can see the influence of Parmenides on Spinoza. The Greek philosopher Parmenides had regarded the all as one, and the one as indivisible and perfect, similarly Spinoza affirmed that there is only one substance—God. Spinoza described God as infinite, unique, eternal and

simple substance. If God were distinct from Nature and if there were substances other than God, God would be finite. Conversely, if God is infinite, there cannot be other substances. Finite things cannot be understood or explained apart from God's causal activity. They cannot, therefore, be substances in the sense in which Spinoza has defined the term 'substance'. They must, then, be in God. Whatever is, ~~is~~ in God, and nothing can exist or be conceived without God". For Spinoza finite beings are mere modifications of God. God possesses an infinity of attributes, each of which is infinite; and of those two are known to us, namely, thought and extension. Finite minds are modes of God under the attribute of thought, and finite bodies are modes of God under the attribute of extension.

Spinoza's major metaphysical treatise is entitled *Ethics*, and this title indicates that his metaphysical proposals cannot be understood without his ethical intent. On the other hand, Descartes could never develop a moral theory that was clearly related to his beginning point and Aristotle made ethics into a practical affair not subject to the same rigor as metaphysical inquiry. Spinoza's *Ethics* tolerates no separation of speculation and human practice. The reason for metaphysical construction is to provide the framework necessary for moral achievement. To understand how this can be done, we must first understand what Spinoza means by "freedom".

According to Spinoza, freedom means a lack of outside interference in the development and action of a thing. In the natural development of the powers of the thing, freedom means that it encounters no block to its expression. Since there is only one substance, nothing outside His nature exist to limit him. On the other hand man can never achieve full freedom since his existence as a finite thing means that his natural drive to achieve a full expression for his powers is always subject to a threat from outside himself. Still, freedom for man is possible in the intellectual sense. To come to understand this is in a certain way to share in God's freedom by an intellectual grasp of the causes which establish things as they are. The result of this understanding is the dissipation of useless and frustrating emotions, since these arise only through ignorance of the causes which establish all things. A fruitless attempt to change a fixed order, or the mental anguish to protesting against it, provokes passion, but a proper understanding can eliminate this danger. Man becomes free to the extent that he achieves God's self-understanding and thus shares God's freedom from useless passion. This freedom involves the fact that "good" means simply existence, so that all are good to the extent that they exercise their full power to exist. To understand one's nature, its causes and its powers, and the necessary connection of these to Substance as a whole is to understand that good means fulfillment and that evil means the failure to achieve what Spinoza calls a —adequate idea" of this. Thus, the ethical life is intimately

bound up with the intellectual life and its successful achievement. According to Spinoza the —intellectual love of God” is the goal of all men, and it is the one goal which can be shared in by all without exclusion. To love God in this way means to seek an adequate understanding. This is how God understands Himself—by grasping all of substance under the aspect of eternity.

Therefore, understanding is the way to freedom from the obedience of the passions. And the highest function of the mind is to know God. Here, it is important to remember that for Spinoza God and Nature are the same. Everything is contained in God. Whenever we conceive things in their relation to the infinite casual system of Nature, we conceive them under the species of eternity‘. Actually, we conceive them as part of the logically connected infinite system. In this system everything is connected. So, in a way Spinoza accepts determinism. Acceptance of determinism arise an important problem in regard to ethics as determinism denies human freedom. Of course, Spinoza did not deny that we often feel‘ free, in the sense that we feel responsible for making a given choice some action. But determinism was partly maintained by Spinoza as he said that we feel ourselves to be free because we do not understand the causes of our actions and the causes which determine us to desire things and to have certain

motives. In this way, ultimately freedom becomes a problem in Spinoza's metaphysics.

The continental rationalist metaphysicians from Descartes to Leibniz eliminate the study of spiritual reality from philosophy. The assertion of the existence of spiritual substance and of God is integral to the Cartesian system, and in his theory of monads Leibniz, spiritualized body. In his philosophy Leibniz tried to reconcile Plato with Democritus, Aristotle with Descartes and the Scholastics with the moderns. Like his predecessor Descartes and Spinoza, Leibniz was biased for a mathematical method in philosophy and as such he intended to give a geometrical proof in metaphysics. To discuss Leibniz's logical principle, at first we have to explain the fundamental distinction between truths of reason and truths of fact. For Leibniz every proposition possesses the subject-predicate form. But propositions are not all of the same kind, and a distinction must be made between truths of reason and truths of fact. For Leibniz all truths of reason are necessarily true, and their truth rests on the principle of contradiction. On the other hand, truths of fact are not necessary propositions, their opposites are conceivable; and they can be denied without logical contradiction. Leibniz's truths of reason are analytic and his truths of fact are synthetic propositions. These truths of reason are analytic

and *a priori* in nature. So, like Descartes, Leibniz also accepts the idea of innate or *a priori* truths. He thought that certain truths are virtually innate in the sense that experience provides no more than the occasion on which the mind by its own light perceives their truths. One can perceive the truth of a self-evident principle only on the occasion of experience; but its truth does not depend on experience. Therefore, they are virtually innate rather than actually innate.

Leibniz's metaphysics is pluralistic in nature. Reality consists of infinity of monads or active substances, God being the supreme monad. Thus, as far as pluralism is concerned, his philosophy is more akin to that of Descartes than that of Spinoza. At the same time he did not believe that there are two radically different types of substances. Each monad is a dynamic and immaterial centre of activity; and no monad can be identified with geometrical extension. The world is a dynamic harmony, expressing the divine intelligence and will. In the case of man there is a dynamic unity between the monads of which he is composed. And so it is with the universe. There is a universal harmony of monads. And the principle of this harmony is God. The monads are so knit together that, even though one monad is reflected throughout the whole system in the divinely pre-established harmony. Each monad reflects the whole universe. Like

Descartes and Spinoza, Leibniz also tried to explain some metaphysical problems.

It is customary to divide pre-Kantian modern philosophy into two main divisions, the first is the rationalist divisions of the Continent, from Descartes to Leibniz and the second is the British empiricism, from Locke to Hume. This division has been maintained here. On the above section we have discussed about some metaphysical problems in the light of rationalists like Descartes, Spinoza, and Leibniz and also their effort to search a universal metaphysics accepted for all. Now we may discuss empiricists' position in this regard. Empiricist David Hume have tried to pave the path for true metaphysics but ended in skepticism.

The aim of Hume's Philosophy is to make a critical analysis of human mind to know its capacity of having the empirically verifiable knowledge. In explaining the purpose of Hume's famous book namely, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, Prof. J.N Mohanty writes in the very introduction of the said book that, —Sectin I of the Enquiry may be taken as the Introduction to the book...We gather that his aim is to make an —accurate scrutiny into the powers and faculties of human nature,” —to know the different operations of the mind, to separate them from each other, to class them under their proper heads, and to correct all that seeming

disorder, in which they lie involved, when made the object of reflexion and enquiry”— in other words, to build up a ~~m~~ental geography”^{xxxix}

However, it is generally believed that Hume has rejected metaphysics as meaningless discipline. But if we look intensely into the philosophy of David Hume then we can realize that Hume’s intention is to not demolish Philosophy as a whole. Here it is important to mention that Hume has made distinction between true metaphysics and false metaphysics. He has tried to provide us tool to do to true metaphysics with care. For Hume false metaphysics concerned with supernatural concepts which does not have any factual basis. Being an empiricist philosopher Hume tried reduce all this supernatural concepts from the domain of Philosophy. However Hume considered that limitation of the power of human intelligence and senses. Thus he never denies the possibility of the discussion of certain concepts within the domain of Philosophy, which are important for living a meaningful life, although these concepts are not primarily verifiable by any empirical means. Hume leaves a room for academical skepticism in his philosophy.

Hume is partly concerned with distinguishing true from false metaphysics, and for this purpose he recommends two methods: first, an accurate reasoning against all false metaphysics, and secondly, an examination of the faculties and powers of the human mind with a view to showing that the human mind is not fitted for such abstruse subjects.

In this regard a comment of Prof J.N. Mohanty is important to mention. As Prof Mohanty says, —It is a common error to suppose that Hume sought to demolish metaphysics by which he meant nothing other than all profound, abstract and accurate reasoning. ...He is aware of the fact that metaphysics has been the source of —uncertainty and error” and so is not a science in the strict sense that it tries to give knowledge of a sphere which lies beyond the limits of human understanding, and that it has a tendency to get entangled with religious prejudices and superstitions. Hume is also aware that metaphysical enquiries into the supersensible get —involved in inextricable difficulties, and even contradictions.” But all this for Hume is not enough reason why metaphysics should be rejected in *toto*. The fact that metaphysics has as yet failed to give us certain knowledge is no reason for that metaphysics should be abandoned, for —the motive of blind despair can never reasonably have a place in the sciences”. Therefore, we should try to cultivate true metaphysics with some care.””xxxii

Thus from analyzing and understanding the essence of philosophical discourse of some modern Philosophers and some scholastic thickeners we come to a position at least to say that the spirit of metaphysical discourses of classical Greek thinkers (Specially Socratic, Plato and Aristotle) do not lost in the darkness in the medieval period. It revised in the Philosophy of many modern thinkers like Descartes. Even the radical empiricist philosopher like David Hume leaves the space for certain metaphysical by leaving space for academic skepticism into the world of human knowledge.

CHAPTER-3

Impossibility of Metaphysics: Immanuel Kant

Skepticism about metaphysics arises because of the desire to test the validity of the metaphysical doctrines. In the previous chapter we saw that the desire of Descartes' was to overcome the revived skepticism of the Renaissance which includes skepticism about the possibility of solving metaphysical problems and attaining truth in metaphysics. And to do this he banked on mathematics, especially, geometry as a model of clear and certain reasoning. Rationalist philosopher Descartes wished to give philosophy clarity and certainty analogous to the clarity and certainty of geometry. So, he applied mathematical model in philosophy. There is another empiricist philosopher Hume, who was very much influenced by the model of Newtonian physics. Hume also had sought to limit philosophy to what could be immediately traced to some sense impression. He actually made an experiment in applying the methodological limitations of classical physics in philosophy. But Hume applied this method of investigation in a more radical way than his predecessors. We have seen this kind of radical investigation in his analysis of causality and of the self. Hume's empiricism can be regarded as a psychological doctrine about the origin and formation

of ideas, or as an epistemological doctrine concerning the nature, scope and limits of human knowledge. Conceptual analysis of some concepts like mind, body, cause etc. were unified by Hume himself in his idea of the science of human nature, the study of man in his cognitive and reasoning activities and in his moral, aesthetic and social life. Hume tried to investigate the nature of man as a moral subject in terms of physics which has some methodological limitations. And this meant to restrict oneself to the evidence offered by observation alone. So, he faced a great difficulty in analyzing the meanings of concepts such as self, cause, justice, mind, body etc. because these concepts cannot be deduced from any empirical observation. Although he had a profound faith in scientific method but later on we see that science constructs its laws with the help of uniformity of nature, which remains a merely probable conviction. Hence the problem regarding certainty of knowledge persists.

German philosopher Immanuel Kant tried to resolve the problem regarding the certainty of knowledge and skepticism about metaphysics by examining the power of human cognition and reason as the basis for all claims about the laws of nature and morality. He thought that his principle task was to determine the cognitive powers of reason, to find out what it could and could not achieve in the way of knowledge. In doing this, Kant tried to mediate between two different philosophical schools—empiricism, and

rationalism. Rationalism grounds all our knowledge in reason, while empiricism grounds all our knowledge in experience. In the eighteenth century empiricism arose as an opposition to traditional rationalism, which it regarded as barren and dogmatic. Empiricism claimed experience as the principal source of knowledge and also a source from which we also form all our rational concepts and principals. It also holds the view that there is no need to assume any overarching principals of reason which would contain our highest knowledge. Rationalism had begun with Descartes', who set up reason, everyone's own rational faculty, as the sole authority and criterion of truth. Nothing in the explanation of the unchanging principles of the natural universe is to count as truth that can be doubted and is not clearly and distinctly perceived by reason. The concepts and principles needed for this explanation are part of the fabric of our minds or in other words, our mental constitution itself yields knowledge. We could not acquire this knowledge through experience. By intuiting self-evident propositions and subsequently deducing additional information, reason, provides us this kind of knowledge, such as, the laws governing the natural universe, a perfect triangle. Here the model for all science is the deductive method of mathematics, and logic. Hume's empiricism, which Kant claimed woke from his dogmatic slumbers, showed him that there is no necessity of reason involved. But later Kant saw that the empiricist doctrine formulated an intolerable skepticism, it claimed that a good number of our

beliefs about the natural world are either false or unjustified. For Hume, our beliefs in the existence of permanent things were mere collections of perceptions. The ideas of God, of unchanging morality determined by reason, of human freedom and of an immortal soul, none of which could be proved, but all of which could be seriously challenged, if sensory experience were taken as the basis of our knowledge. Here, Kant perceived an inevitable conflict with many fundamental human convictions. In the opening paragraphs of the Preface to the first edition of *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant's first concern is with the form of skepticism that is the inevitable response to the seemingly endless and intractable conflicts between metaphysical dogmas that seem to be well grounded but cannot all be true:

—Our reason has the peculiar fate that, with reference to one class of its knowledge, it is always troubled by questions which it cannot ignore because they are prescribed by the very nature of reason itself, and which it cannot answer because they transcend the power of human reason. Nor is human reason to be blamed for getting into this perplexity. It begins with principles the use of which is inevitable in the course of experience and at the same time sufficiently supported by it. With these principles it rises, as required by the ways of its nature, higher and higher to more remote conditions. But when it becomes aware that in this manner its work would

remain forever incomplete, because the questions never cease, it finds itself constrained to take refuge in principles which exceed every possible application in experience and nevertheless seem so little suspect that even ordinary human reason agrees with them. Thus reason becomes involved in darkness and contradictions, from which, no doubt, it may conclude that errors must be lurking somewhere; but it is unable to discover them because the principles which it follows transcend the limits of all experience and thus no longer acknowledge any empirical test. The battlefield of these endless controversies is called metaphysics...At first the rule of metaphysics, under the administration of the dogmatists, was despotic. But as the legislation still bore the traces of an ancient barbarism, intestine wars broke out and she gradually degenerated to complete anarchy, and the sceptics, a kind of nomads who despised all settled cultivation of the land, disrupted civil society from time to time”^{xxxiii}.

Whenever human reason attempts to reach beyond the immediate limits of ordinary experience to determine the truth about such matters as the nature and existence of God, the nature of soul, the boundaries of universe—it falls into contradictions. Scepticism about the power of human reason to reach at any well-founded belief about matters of the most fundamental human concern is the equally expectable result. According to Kant, Hume’s scepticism about the concept of causation lies under the skepticism about

the universality and necessity of first principles, not only the first principles of —speculative philosophy”, that is , theoretical cognition, but also to the first principles of practical philosophy, the basic principles of morality. Kant thought that we have to presuppose some matters beyond the reach of sense experience only when the very possibility of morality demands that. If we analyze Kant’s writings critically, we may find that how systematically he developed a bridge between the world of experience and the world beyond experience.

In the prefaces to the first and second editions of the *Critique of Pure Reason* we find that Kant emphasized on the problem of metaphysics. In the preface to the first edition of *Critique* Kant said that:

—For it is vain to assume an artificial indifference concerning inquires the object of which cannot be indifferent to human nature. Nay, those supposed indifferentists, however they may try to disguise themselves by changing the terminology of the schools into popular language, if they think anything at all, fall back inevitably into those very metaphysical dogmas which they professed so greatly to despise. None the less this indifference, showing itself in the very midst of the most flourishing state of all sciences, and affecting precisely those sciences the knowledge of which, if such could be attained, we would least of all surrender, is a phenomenon well worthy of our attention and consideration. It is clearly the result, not of carelessness

but of the matured judgment of our age, which will no longer rest satisfied with the mere appearance of knowledge. It is, at the same time, a powerful appeal to reason to undertake anew the most difficult of its tasks, namely that of self-knowledge, and to institute a court of appeal which should protect reason in its rightful claims, but dismiss all groundless pretensions, and to do this not by means of despotic decrees but according to the eternal and unalterable laws of reason. This court of appeal is no other than the critique of pure reason itself.

I do not mean by this a critique of books and systems, but of the faculty of reason in general, touching that whole class of knowledge after which it may strive independently of all experience. Hence I mean by this the decision about the possibility or impossibility of metaphysics in general, and the determination of its sources, its range and its limits—and all this according to principles”^{xxxiv}.

So, for Kant, the question is, whether metaphysics is capable of giving us knowledge of the existence of God, of human freedom etc. as these are the main problem of metaphysics. Kant admits that there are reasons to doubt the possibility of metaphysics. As Kant explained knowledge that it begins with experience, but does not necessarily originate from it, so, for him knowledge is a joint venture of sense and understanding. Apart from sensibility and understanding, there is the reason that tries to constitute

knowledge. Hence, in Kantian view, knowledge begins with sense, proceeds thence to understanding and ends in reason. According to him, there are three ideas of reason, namely, the world, soul and God. However, these metaphysical ideas are regulative only and concerning them no knowledge is possible.

In maintaining that metaphysics as commonly understood, is nothing but an illusory and pretended knowledge, Kant was not advancing anything original. As we saw in the last chapter, Hume had entertained a view of metaphysics very near to this; and we have Kant's own admission that it was in consequence of his perusal of Hume's *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* that Hume's criticism of the concept of causality awakened from his dogmatic slumber. But whereas Hume was an unavoidable enemy of metaphysics, Kant concentrating upon the question as to what constituted true knowledge, refrains from dismissing metaphysical knowledge as utter nonsense. Kant's position was similar to Hume that metaphysical principles cannot be established either by deductive reasoning or by experimental inquiry, but he found Hume's conclusion intolerable. He thought that some metaphysical questions are unavoidable, particularly the questions about God's existence, the immortality of human soul etc. On the one hand he was faced by the scientific conception of the world, with the physical universe of Copernicus, Kepler and Newton, as subject to mechanical

causality and determined in its motions and on the other hand he was faced by the rational creature who can understand the physical world, set over against it, so to speak, as subject to object, who is conscious of moral obligation and freedom, and who sees in the world the expression of rational purpose. How can these two aspects of reality be reconciled? How can we harmonize the physical world with the sphere of freedom? It is not simply a matter of juxtaposing the two worlds, as though they were completely separate and independent. Man is both an item in Nature, in the physical system, and a moral and free agent. The question is, therefore, how can the two points of view, the scientific and the moral, be harmonized without denying either of them. Let us ask first, exactly why Kant supposed that the very possibility of metaphysics must be called into question. Here we may follow his own explanation.

One of the most striking passages in Hume's inquiries had been his investigation of the concept of causation. It is, as Hume and Kant agreed, generally supposed that when it is asserted that A causes, B, what is meant there by is that if A occurs, B necessarily ensues. Now Hume asked, by what right we suppose, in such a case that given the one occurrence, the other is necessary. Do we learn this by observation? No, for what we learn by observation is that when A occurs, B in fact does ensue. We do not learn that it always will be, still less that it is necessarily so. Do we then discern

by reason that A and B are connected necessarily? No, for we are required by reason to accept as necessary only those propositions the contradiction of which are impossible that is contradiction. But the denial of a causal statement is never a contradiction; although fire boils water, there is no contradiction in supposing that it should not. But if so, then we are not in a position to assert that any pair of events is connected necessarily. According to Hume when we assert this we are mistaking our own habitual, confident expectations for features of the world. This argument rests on a general doctrine that is any true proposition is either a truth of reason, necessary in that its negation would be contradictory, or a truth of fact, established as such by observation or experiment and, even if certainly true, not necessarily true. On this dichotomy Hume based the charge that divinity and school of metaphysics must be senseless and illusory. Now Kant entirely agreed with Hume that if this dichotomy were valid and exhaustive, then there could be no such subject as metaphysics as had been traditionally supposed to be. There would be only empirical sciences and on the other hand formal exercises in calculation. All necessary truths, all truths demonstrable a priori, would be on this view merely analytic; all synthetic truths, all assertions of matters of fact, would correspondingly be merely contingent.

In the course of human experience we find, whether by simple observation or by deliberate experiment, that certain events occur and certain features are present which it is possible and often easy to suppose might have been otherwise. Such things we record, of course, in contingent assertions; and it is evident that we can know such assertions to be only if we have found that our experience does in fact comprise the events or the features alleged. In contrast with this, by examining the concepts, we may have some other propositions which are certain, necessarily true propositions and the denial of these propositions leads to logical inconsistency. Thus here we have no need of empirical confirmation. But Kant holds that there is a third class of propositions, whose existence none of his predecessors had explicitly recognized — certain propositions that must be true if human experience is to occur at all, propositions that state, in Kant's phrase — “the conditions of the possibility of experience”, or, as we might say, its fundamental defining characteristics. Now such propositions will not be analytic, for it is not analytic that any such thing as human experience does not implies no contradiction. But equally they will not be ordinarily contingent, for if the truth of a certain proposition is a condition of the very possibility of experience; there will clearly be no place for consulting the verdict of experience as to whether or not that proposition is true. On the assumption that any experience occurs at all, such a proposition could be asserted a

priori. But if propositions of this class are not analytic and are not contingent then they are synthetic a priori propositions.

According to Kant in synthetic a priori propositions, the connection between predicate and subject, though not knowable by mere analysis of the concept of the subject, is none the less necessary and strictly universal. Kant gives us an example – ‘Everything which happens has its cause’. This proposition is synthetic because the predicate, ‘having a cause’ is not contained in the concept of ‘what happens’, that is, of an event. But it is at the same time a priori. For it is characterized by necessity and strict universality, the marks of a priori judgments. This kind of proposition is found in mathematics and physical science. The proposition ‘ $7+5=12$ ’ is an a priori proposition as it is necessary and universal. At the same time, according to Kant this proposition is not analytic, it is synthetic. The concept of 12 is not obtained by mere analysis of the idea of the union between 7 and 5. For this idea does not of itself imply the concept of 12 as the particular number resulting from the union we cannot arrive at the notion of 12 except with the aid of intuition. The mathematical proposition is therefore always synthetic a priori. Synthetic a priori propositions are also found in physics. Take, for instance, the propositions, ‘in all changes of the corporeal (material) world the quantity of matter remains unchanged’.

For Kant this proposition is necessary and therefore a priori. But it is also synthetic. For in the concept of matter we do not think its permanence but merely its presence in space, which it fills. So, the propositions of physical science are synthetic a priori.

In Kant's view, knowledge means scientific knowledge and this kind of knowledge is found in synthetic a priori propositions. He thinks, God, freedom and immortality of soul are the problems of metaphysics. The science whose final aim, with all its apparatus, is directed solely at the solution of these problems is called metaphysics. He said, —There was a time when metaphysics was called the queen of all the sciences, and if the will were might well have secured for her this title of honour. At present, it is the fashion to despise metaphysics...^{xxxv}

Kant believes that there was a time when metaphysics was called the queen of all the sciences but now metaphysics has fallen into disrepute. Mathematics and natural sciences have advanced, and there is in these fields a great area of generally accepted knowledge. Nobody seriously questions this fact. But metaphysics appears to be an arena for endless disputes. Metaphysics, unlike physics has not found any scientific method the application of which will enable it to solve its problems. If we try to establish the possibility of metaphysics then at first we have to establish it

as a science. But whether metaphysics as a science is possible or not is debatable. If we bear in mind Kant's agreement with Hume concerning the impossibility of deriving necessity and strict universality from empirical data, we can see how difficult it would be for him to maintain that knowledge consists simply in the conformity of the mind to its objects. The reason for this is obvious. If to know objects, the mind must conform itself to them, and if at the same time it cannot find in these objects, considered as empirically given, necessary connections, it becomes impossible to explain how we can make necessary and strictly universal judgments which are as a matter of fact verified and which, as we know in advance or a priori, must always be verified. It is not merely that we find, for instance, that experienced events have causes: we also know in advance that every event must have a cause. But if we reduce experience to the merely given, we cannot discover there a necessary causal relation. It is thus impossible to explain our knowledge that every event must have a cause on the hypothesis that knowledge consists simply in the mind's conforming itself to objects. Kant therefore suggested another hypothesis. It has been assumed that all our knowledge must conform to objects. But all attempts to ascertain anything about them a priori by concepts, and thus to extend our knowledge, came to nothing on this assumption. Let us try, then whether we might not make better progress in the tasks of metaphysics if we assume that objects must conform to our knowledge. This accords better with the

possibility which we are seeking, namely of a knowledge of objects a priori, which would determine something about them before they are given to us. This hypothesis, Kant observes, is analogous to that proposed by Copernicus.

According to Kant we have to assume that the objects must approach the mind to be known at all. We have to assume that the mind lays down the conditions for the objects to become objects for knowledge. As for Kant we have two a-prior forms of sensibility namely space and time and twelve categories of understanding like substance, causality etc. an object must confirm these pre-conditions to become an object of knowledge. Suppose there are a number of holes of the various shapes and sizes in a surface of a table. Similarly, suppose that there are a number of pebbles roll down the surface. Only those pebbles will be caught up that fit into their holes. In the same way the mind lays down the conditions for the objects, to be known. Only those objects which fit into these conditions are known; those which do not fit are not known at all. For Kant spatial and temporal character of the world is a consequence of the nature of our sensibility. We are no doubt naturally inclined to think of space and time as being simply given features of the world. We think, that we find ourselves in a space of three dimensions, and that events occur successively in a single and irreversible

time order. But Kant points out that, we seem to find it inconceivable that space and time might become fundamentally different from what they are. It is a fact about the world that elephants are gray in color; we can easily suppose that they might have been pink or blue. If it were similarly just a fact about the world that space has three dimensions, it ought to be no less easy to suppose that it might have had two or four or seven. Do we know what a world in seven dimensions would be like? For another thing, we are evidently prepared to make assertions about space and time for which, if these are merely assertions of fact, we surely have not the necessary evidence. Without any qualification, we are prepared to assert that, there is only one space; what evidence has us for so vast a claim? We take it to be certain that in any part of the universe the nature of temporal sequence will be the same as it is in our vicinity; but by what right could we make assertions of fact about vast tracts of the universe which we have never inspected, which perhaps are inaccessible to our inspection? It appears then that we do not really treat assertions about space and time as ordinary assertions of fact-as assertions to which alternatives are perfectly conceivable and for which we require the warrant of empirical observation. It appears that we approach the universe with the postulate that whatever it may anywhere contain, its contents shall be in a three-dimensional space, and that whatever events may at any time be found to occur, they shall all have their places in a single time series; and it appears also that this

postulate is for us the only one that is fully and genuinely intelligible. We can say that time and space are the pure forms of all sensible intuition, and so are what made a priori synthetic proposition possible. But these a priori sources of knowledge, being merely conditions of our sensibility, just by this very fact determine their own limits, namely that they apply to objects only in so far as objects are viewed as appearances, and not present things as they are in themselves. Space and time are a priori conditions of experience. These are necessarily required for object to be known. But metaphysical object like God, soul, freedom are not in space and time. For first Kant takes it to be perfectly clear in fact that there is no metaphysical doctrine whose truth is in any degree a condition of the possibility of experience; and second, such doctrines, he thinks, are always supposed in principle to be independent of experience altogether to be established. Kant rightly thought it proper to examine more precisely the errors into which they had been betrayed. The essence of situation, as Kant saw it, is this: It is, understandably and properly, a persistent desire of rational beings to construct some picture of the world and of their own place in it that will be rationally satisfactory. But the central difficulty is: what reason may be supposed to demand of an account of reality is that it should be complete and comprehensive; of an explanation of the state of things, that it should be final and unconditional. However, Kant points out that our actual knowledge must always and necessarily be incomplete and that our

explanations can never be more than conditional. If so then there arises a natural and unavoidable dialectic of pure reason – a conflict that is inseparable from human reason, between what we demand and what we are in a position to achieve. Metaphysics, in Kant’s view, is the natural attempt to supply what our reason demands but can never have.

Kant is not content with saying simply that the knowledge which traditional speculative metaphysics claims to provide is illusory. In the preface to the second edition of *critique* we can see that:

—Metaphysics, a completely isolated and speculative branch of rational knowledge which is raised above all teachings of experience and rests on concepts only(not, like mathematics, on their application to intuition), in which reason therefore is meant to be its own pupil, has hitherto not had the good fortune to enter upon the secure path of a science...”^{xxxvi}

He wished to illustrate and confirm the truth of his contention through a detailed criticism of speculative psychology, speculative cosmology and theology. In Kant’s analysis, the traditional metaphysics of the self arises from attempting to obtain knowledge of the soul as a substance from mere representation of the self. In the —Paralogisms of Pure Reason” Kant represents the first —paralogism” about the soul as the following syllogism:

—That the representation of which is the absolute subject of our judgments, and hence cannot be used as the determination of another thing, is substance.

I, as a thinking being, am the absolute subject of all my possible judgments, and this representation of myself cannot be used as the predicate of any other thing.

Thus, I, as thinking being (soul), am substance^{xxxvii}

Kant thought this ego of the —I think” cannot be an object of any possible experience as it is always behind experience. Because this ego is not a possible object of experience, it cannot be known under the categories. So, the traditional doctrine of soul cannot give us any knowledge. Likewise, Kant argues that all previous attempts to prove the existence of God, actually arrive at their conclusion through fallacious reasoning. Kant placed the Ontological proof for the existence of God which says:

—...In the concept of a most perfect being existence is included. For if it were not, the concept would not be the concept of a most perfect being. Therefore, if such a being is possible, it necessarily exists. For existence is included in the full complement of its possibility. But the concept of a most

perfect is the possible being. Therefore, such a being necessarily exists”^{xxxviii}.

But Kant refutes this kind of argument by saying contradictory. In the theological reflection we may seek to attribute the contingent existence of the world to the creative act of a Supreme Being whose existence must be supposed necessary. Yet, we may perhaps bare the form concept of such a Being. It is evident that nothing encountered in our actual experience to prove the existence of such a being. And it is also evident that the existence of such a being cannot be proved by mere analyzing the verbal or conceptual analyzing. Moreover, in both these cases what is sought to be proved is too vast and ambitious for any available evidence to support it. In the —cosmological ideas” Kant demonstrates the remarkable consequences of the illusory use of pure reason. Here Kant shows that metaphysics not only provides thesis which cannot be justified in the traditional way, but also produces thesis whose antithesis can be defended equally valid arguments from equally compelling premises. For example:

I.—Thesis The world has a beginning in time, and is limited also with regard to space.

Antithesis: The world has no beginning and no limits in space, but is infinite as regards both time and space.”^{xxxix}

II. —Thesis Everything composite substance in the world consists of simple parts, and nothing exists anywhere but the simple or what is composed of it.

Antithesis: No composite thing in the world consists of simple parts, and now here in the world does there exist anything simple.”^{xl}

In these and other ways Kant argues that the natural inclination of rational beings to push their inquiries to the limit is doomed to perpetual disappointments. It expresses indeed the natural but incoherent desire of beings whose existence is limited and conditioned to free themselves from all limits and all conditions- though they cannot really conceive what such freedom would be. Kant holds that the labors of metaphysicians are in a certain indispensable, and also, even more importantly, that their doctrines are not completely without foundation, though their proper foundation is not at all what has usually been supposed. It is important to understand that in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant has no desire to eliminate metaphysics but he takes God, freedom, immortality of soul these three metaphysical principles as the central concern of his entire philosophy. As we can see that in the preface to the second edition of *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant said that,

—Reasonnamely, in order to arrive at this, must employ principles which extended only to objects of possible experience and which, if in spite of this they are applied also to what cannot be an object of experience, actually always change this into an appearance, thus rendering all practical expansion of pure reason impossible. Hence I had to suspended knowledge in order to make room for belief. For the dogmatism of metaphysics, that is, the presumption that it is possible to achieve anything in metaphysics without a preceding critique of pure reason, is the source of all that disbelief which opposes morality and which is always vary dogmatic...Some kind of metaphysics has always existed and will always exist, but with it a naturally given dialectic of pure reason. It is therefore the first and most important task of philosophy to deprive metaphysics once and for all of its pernicious influence, by blocking off the source of its errors.”^{xli}

Chapter- 4

Impossibility of Metaphysics: Logical Positivists / Analytic Philosophy

In the first chapter of this dissertation, we have seen that Aristotle has defined ‘_Metaphysics’, as a science which explores the most basic causes or principles of all the particular sciences. As he said in his book *Metaphysics* that, —There must be...a science of being qua being, which will be different from all other departmental sciences, which deal with some limited part of being. The study of being qua being turns out to be the same thing as the study of the primary causes and principles ...”^{xliii} Thus, it can be said on the basis of the above definition that metaphysicians tried to give us a picture of reality as a whole and in doing so they make a difference between the world as appearance and the world as reality. So, from Aristotelian point, the task of the metaphysicians is not an easy one. And that task of the metaphysicians has been appreciated in writings of Aristotle and many

other thinkers around the world. But metaphysics has never been without its critics.

In the beginning of the early twentieth century, a group of philosophers having scientific background, appeared in West with a unique way (method) of doing Philosophy as a meaningful discourse. In their way of doing Philosophy, they found metaphysics simply as a meaningless discipline. That group of Philosophers largely known as ‘logical positivists’, and their view known as ‘logical positivism’ in the discourse of academic departments around the world. In the present chapter of this dissertation, we shall critically examine the views of ‘logical positivists’ concerning the nature of metaphysics.

Here it is important to mention that, in the previous chapter, we have tried to show the impossibility of metaphysics from Kantian point of view, but the purpose of this chapter is slightly different. The objective of this chapter is to show the impossibility of metaphysics from the logical positivists or analytic philosopher’s point of view. Their argument is in the different line from that of Immanuel Kant.

Logical positivists belong to the tradition of empirical philosophy. They were highly influenced by the basic assumptions of empirical philosophy. However they were specially influence by David Hume, the renowned empiricist philosopher. According to this empirical school of thought,

‘experience is the only source of having knowledge’. Experience provides us with the most fundamental elements of knowledge. And it is needless to say that by the term “experience” the empiricist philosophers mean ‘sense-experience’. By following their terminology, we may say that the only source of knowledge is ‘sense-experience’. For Hume, we do not have any thing in our mind which is not there in the factual world. If we do have any idea about something which does not refer to anything in the factual world, then it must be either a fancy or illusory idea. On the basis of that ground, Hume rejects metaphysical ideas as illusory. For Hume, metaphysics does not have any factual basis, thus it must be eliminated.

The pioneers of logical positivism like, Moritz Schlick (1882-1936), Rudolf Carnap (1891-1970), A.J. Ayer (1910-1985) etc. were inspired by the philosophy of Hume, especially in regard to his position towards metaphysics. They consider the basic assumption of empiricism concerning the source of knowledge as valid. Like empiricist philosophers, they too give preference to sense-experience as the source of knowledge. However, here it is important to mention that primarily the logical positivists were associated with academic circle of the University of Vienna, famously known as Vienna circle. In 1929 the thinkers of Vienna circle issued a publication, named as in English translated as, „*The Vienna Circle: Its scientific World Conception*“. In that publication, they announced their

objectives. Among these objectives, one of the primary objectives is to eliminate metaphysics from the natural sciences, and human knowledge in general‘.

It is needless to say that they adopted the scientific empirical method to eliminate metaphysics from the said disciplines. Prof. Michael Rea in his book *Metaphysics The basics*, tries to show that why the logical positivists select the scientific (empirical) method, in other words we may say that the method of verification instead of any other method, in solving the problems of Philosophy. He writes,

—Thescience enjoy a great deal of respect as fields of inquiry, and many think that the methods of science and those methods alone are the tools by which we ought to build our theories about the world. A priori theorizing about the world--the sort of theorizing that requires no lab equipment or experimental apparatus but just a rocking chair, a working brain, and a good chunk of time of free for thinking- has long been viewed with skepticism. According to many to many philosophers, metaphysical theorizing is just idle tale-spinning”^{xliii}

The flavor of logical positivist thought comes out most strongly in their hostility to metaphysics. The so-called elimination of metaphysics‘ was an

explicitly proclaimed objective. The positivists rejected transcendental metaphysics on the ground that its assertions were meaningless, since there was no possible way of verifying them in experience. In other words, it can be said that for them, metaphysics is meaningless, as its sentences are not empirically verifiable in any possible way (neither by observing empirical facts nor by in principle). Logical Positivism sought to eliminate metaphysics by arguing that metaphysical claims are not verifiable through sense experience. But they distinguish themselves from the classical by declaring that they are concerned not with facts but with language. By language, they do not mean phonetics, but logic or semantics. It is because of this that they call themselves logical positivists. “Logical” because they claim to deal with the logic of language and —Positivists” because they accept only what is positive i.e., only ‘given facts’. The only reason A. J. Ayer could give for the logical positivists to re-state the old philosophy was their —attempt to make it logically rigorous and in their use for the purpose of a developed and sophisticated logical technique”^{xliv}. The logical positivists claim that analysis of language is the only subject matter of philosophy. Ayer stated that the function of philosophy consists —in analyzing and clarifying the concepts which figure in the everyday, and also in scientific use of language”^{xlv}. In this way the logical positivists claimed that the subject-matter of philosophy is confined within the authority of language and the method of philosophy is the analysis of language. They

called their philosophy ‘scientific’ because they claimed that analysis of concepts and propositions in science and in everyday language is meant to —eliminate metaphysics” and consequently clarify our thought. Logical Positivists for the circulation of the Scientific World-Outlook seeks to create a climate which will be free from metaphysics in order to promote scientific studies in all fields by means of logical analysis. Logical positivists have organized the principle that the meaning of a proposition consists in its method of verification. The claim that for a statement to be meaningful, in the cognitive sense, it must be empirically verifiable was made explicit by Schlick, Waismann, Carnap, Neurath and other logical positivists like A.J. Ayer.

It would presumably be agreed that the propositions of which any metaphysical theory is composed are intended to fall within the general class of statements; they are offered for our attention as being truths. It must be fair to ask how these truths are established. They might be said to be a priori, necessary truths, established purely by reasoning. But this, the positivists contends, is to say that they are true in virtue of the general rules for the use of language; their necessity consists in the fact that to deny them would be to break the rules, to contradict one’s self. But this in turn is to say that their necessity rests ultimately on tautology; and if so, in a sense they say nothing; their truth is purely formal and abstract. But if they are

not of this character, if they are fact-stating and not purely formal, then surely some observation is required in order to determine whether what they say is a case of fact or not. But observation can only be empirical observation. Logical positivists assumed, there is no doubt that neither of the alternatives would be acceptable to the metaphysician. He would not be prepared to admit that his doctrines ought to be subject to experimental tests, as if they were a kind of contribution to natural science; nor would he be willing to admit that they stated no facts at all, that their validity was purely formal and ultimately dependent simply upon the rules of logic and language.

The metaphysician may indeed try to claim that not all facts are empirical facts, and hence that not all statements of facts are capable of confirmation or falsification by observation; but this is dismissed as hollow pretention. For if we do not know what sort of observations or experiences would confirm or falsify a statement, we do not know what it means; and if we are told that no observation or experience would confirm or falsify it, this can only amount to the admission that it has no meaning. If it means anything it must in principle, at least, be testable.

And here lies the positivist's central contention. For logical positivists, if the meaning of any statement could not be verified either by observing facts or by making observation in principle then it must be considered that the statement has no meaning. It thus appears to the metaphysician, if he is to save his doctrines, must present them either as abstract theory, quite devoid of factual content, like pure mathematics, or as bodies of experimentally testable statements of fact. But he could not take either of these courses while continuing to be a metaphysician; so it remains only that he must cease to be so. The idea that there is a class of metaphysical truths distinct both from truths of common experience or natural science and from formal tautologies without factual content has turned out to be pure illusion. To say that an alleged assertion is metaphysical, amounts to saying that it is bogus.

Rudolf Carnap in his article, *"The Elimination of Metaphysics Through Logical Analysis"* rejects metaphysics as meaningless discipline. For him, metaphysics has faced many criticisms in the past from the Greek skeptics to the empirical philosopher of 19th century. But the development of modern logic explores a new sharper way to prove metaphysics as purely meaningless discourse. In the light of modern logical theory he claims the metaphysical sentences, through which the whole body of metaphysical discourses is constructed, is purely meaningless. Through a logical analysis of the metaphysical statements it can easily be proved. For Carnap, the

metaphysical sentences fail to fulfill certain logical rules of sentence making. As for Carnap, —A language consists of a vocabulary and syntax, i.e. a set of words which have meanings and rules of sentence formation. These rules indicate how sentences may be formed out of the various sorts of words”^{xlvi} For Carnap, a logically meaningful sentence constructed through meaningful words and the meaning of a word is determined by the ‘ criterion of verification’. Here by following Carnap, we may say that, a word will have meaning if and only if it designates a concept in the empirical world which can be verified through empirical verification method. Moreover, a word will be considered as meaningful if and only if we can make an ‘ elementary sentence’ through that word. For Carnap, an elementary sentence is the smallest form of sentence, which is constituted by a meaningful word. For him, an ‘ elementary sentence’ has specific truth-conditions. We think a brief explanation is needed here. By citing a quote from the said article we may try to understand what he means by elementary sentence and how it forms. As he said —..the syntax of the word must be fixed, i.e. the mode of its occurrence in the simplest sentence form in which it is capable of occurring; we call this sentence form its elementary sentence. The elementary sentence form for the word —stone e.g. is ‘ x is a stone’; in sentence of this form some designation from the category of things occupies the place of “x” e.g. —“his diamond”, —“this apple.”^{xlvii}

According to Carnap, most of the words of metaphysics are meaningless as they do not refer to any empirically verifiable concept in the factual world; we cannot make any 'elementary sentence' with those words. All most all the metaphysical sentences are constituted out of such word that's why the sentences of metaphysics are also meaningless, that means, 'pseudo-sentences' in Carnap's own language. Carnap himself used the example of metaphysical word "—God" to demonstrate that how that word fails to produce meaningful elementary sentence in metaphysical discourse and thus makes metaphysics mare meaningless discipline. Let us try to clarify this point by following Carnap. In the field of metaphysics the term "—God" has been defined as an entity which belongs outside the realm of this empirical world. Thus it does not refer anything into this physical world accordingly can't be known through any empirical means. But for Carnap it will be wrong if we think that the term "—God" refers something like 'divine entity' outside this physical world. It we will lead to mistake if we tend to do so. For him most of the metaphysicians have done that said mistake. They have tried to define the meaning of the term "—God" by pointing a supernatural entity into a supernatural spiritual world, which is obviously mistake. Carnap says that often the term "—God" has been defined by the metaphysicians as an 'autonomous being', or as an 'absolute being'. For

him such definition of the term “God” seems like a proper definition. But if we take a deep look into such definitions then we can see that such definitions are not proper definition. They are pseudo- definitions, because such definitions fail to fulfill the basic of criteria of the definition of a meaningful linguistic term. For Carnap the definition of any linguistic term must be given by certain logical combination of meaningful words, which can be verified through empirical means. If we look into the definition of the term —God” given by the metaphysicians then we can see that the words by which the metaphysicians trying to define the term “God” is itself vague and not verifiable by any empirical means. Often they use the terms like —absolute being”, —primordial being” etc. to define the term —God”. But the meanings of such terms itself are not very clear and verified. Thus the metaphysicians have done a mistake by using such terms to define a metaphysical concept. Furthermore he says that in doing so the metaphysicians fail to full fill the criteria of logical rules (syntactical rules) of an elementary sentence, which we have discussed earlier.

A.J. Ayer raises arguments against the meaningfulness metaphysical discourse. For him, metaphysical sentences are not meaningful sentences, because they fail to fulfill the basic criteria of meaningfulness and such lacking make metaphysics a complete meaningless discourse. Ayer does not

try to prove meaningless of metaphysical discourse by entering into any supernatural world which is the center of attraction of many celebrated metaphysicians. As for him such world does not exist at all because it cannot be verified through any empirical means. The main aim of Ayer is to prove the meaningless of metaphysical discourse by analyzing the structure and logic of the sentences of metaphysics. He believes that the metaphysical sentences fail to fully fill the criteria of a meaningful sentence. In order to have a literary significant statement in the domain of Philosophy Ayer in his book *Language, Truth and Logic* provides us a verification principle to determine the meaningfulness of any statement or any assertion. In explaining the nature of verification principle, he writes:

—The criterion which we use to test the genuineness of apparent statements of fact is the criteria of verifiability. We say that a sentence is factually significant to any given person, if, and only if, he knows how to verify the proposition which it purports to express—that is, if he knows what observation would lead him, under certain conditions, to accept the proposition as being true, or reject it as being false. If, on the other hand, the putative proposition is of such a character that the assumption of its truth, or falsehood, is consistent with any assumption whatsoever concerning the nature of his future experience, then, as far as he is concerned, it is, if not

tautology, a mere pseudo- proposition. The sentence expressing it may be emotionally significant to him, but it is not literally significant.”^{xlvi}

But for Ayer, the criteria to judge the meaningfulness of any metaphysical sentences do not simply depend upon the ‘verification principle’. It actually depends upon the logic of the grammatical rules of our language. The ‘verification principle’ might help us to see the violation of grammatical rules of our language.

For AJ Ayer, our language is based upon certain grammatical rules. By following these rules of grammar we make a meaningful sentence. The sentences of metaphysics do not based upon such grammatical rules. For Ayer, metaphysical sentences are constructed by following its own peculiar structure of grammar, which does not have any meaningful base. The metaphysical structure of grammar is superficial which leads to meaninglessness. In his book *Language, Truth and Logic*, Ayer shows that how the sentences of metaphysics violates the basic grammatical rules of language which makes a sentence meaningful by showcasing some examples. For him, a meaningful sentence must have a grammatical subject which corresponds to a real entity, as for example ‘the rose is red’. That statement has a grammatical subject called ‘rose’, which refers to a real entity in the empirical world. But most of the metaphysical sentences do not contain such grammatical subject. As for example, ‘God is the highest

substance', here in this metaphysical sentence the grammatical subject called 'God' does not refer anything into the empirical world, which can be verified through empirical means. As this metaphysical sentence is constructed by such a nonsensical grammatical subject, the whole sentence becomes a nonsensical sentence. Thus for Ayer, the metaphysicians fail to fulfill that grammatical condition of our language due to their own superficial grammatical feature. For Ayer metaphysical words/sentences exist in the discourse of many metaphysicians because of a 'primitive superstition' i.e. 'every word refers to a sensible property'. Due to that superstition many metaphysicians employ a metaphysical word like 'substance' without introducing any sensible object that could be used as a reference of that very particular word. They often use these words as a grammatical subject in metaphysical sentences to form and demonstrate certain metaphysical theses. Ayer claims that the metaphysicians fail to understand that they are misguided by their superficial grammatical characteristic of their language.

Thinkers like C.A. Mace say that although metaphysical statements do not have any literal meaning but might have some emotional meaning, which may inspire someone in the case of morality and art. So for thinkers like C.A. Mace metaphysical statements in many respects are like poetic statements.

But Ayer rejects Mace's view about the meaning of metaphysical statements. For A.J Ayer, Metaphysical statements are not even like the poetic statements. For him, poetic statements do have certain literal meaning. Even when a poet writes about nonsense, he/she intentionally writes it to demonstrate certain facts, whereas the statements of metaphysics do not even have such sort of meaning at all. The metaphysician indeed fails to fulfill the grammatical conditions of meaningfulness in making a metaphysical statement. According to this condition, we must employ a word as grammatical subject in any sentence which does refer a sensible appearance of a thing into the actual world. Thus metaphysical sentences are nonsensical. As Ayer writes, —Its, in fact, very rare for a literary artist to produce sentences which have no literal meaning. And where this does occur, the sentences are carefully chosen for their rhythm and balance. If the author writes nonsense, it is because he considers it most suitable for bringing about the effects for which his writings is designed. The metaphysician, on the other hand, does not intend to write nonsense. He lapses into it through being deceived by grammar, or through committing errors of reasoning, such as that which leads to the view that the sensible world is unreal. But it is not the mark of a poet simply to make mistakes of this sort.”^{xlix}

From the above discussion we it can be said that the claims of logical positivist thinkers concerning the nature of metaphysics is different from Kant. Unlike Kant, they argue for complete rejection of metaphysical enquiry from the Philosophy. Thus by asserting metaphysics as purely nonsensical discourse _logical positivist‘ thinkers leave no possible room for metaphysical enquiry in the domain of Philosophy. The objective this thinkers is reflected in the following dictum of A. J Ayer, as he writes —...Our object is merely to show that Philosophy, as a genuine branch of knowledge, must be distinguished from metaphysics.’”¹

However, we if regard logical positivist’s view that _whatever is not verifiable through any empirical method is meaningless‘ is true then materialist philosophy also becomes meaningless. Materialist philosopher Karl Marx said, whatever exists ultimately can be explained in terms of dialectics. Marx’s philosophy is known as Dialectical Materialism. The word —dialectis” is derived from the Greek word —dialeq”, which means discussion or debate. It was considered that to discuss a question from all sides, and from all angles, allowing different one-sided points of view to oppose and contradict each other during the debate, was the best method of arriving at the truth. Such was the dialectics employed, for example, by Socrates. The Marxist dialectical method develops from and includes dialectics in the sense in which it was understood by the Greeks. Dialectical

materialism understands the world, not as a complex of processes, in which all things go through an uninterrupted change of coming into being and passing away. Dialectical materialism considers that, in the manifold processes taking place in the universe, things come into being, change and pass out of being, not as separate individual units, but in essential relation and interconnection, so that they cannot be understood each separately and by itself but only in their relation and interconnection.

Dialectics also considers things not only from the standpoint of their interconnection and interdependence, but also from the standpoint of their movement, their change, their development, their coming into being and going out of being. But through any empirical method we cannot show this inseparability and interconnectedness of things. The method of dialectics means to think dialectically. Dialectics teaches us to think of things in their real changes and interconnections.

The logical positivists defined metaphysics as study of supersensible reality and proclaimed to eliminate it through their verification principle. Ayer defined this Verification Principle of Meaning by saying that “the meaning of a statement is determined by the way in which it can be verified, where it’s being tested by empirical observation. Consequently, statements like those of metaphysics ...of which no empirical observation could possibly be relevant are ruled out as factually meaningless”^{li}. In the process of

eliminating metaphysics, thus, Ayer and other logical positivists eliminate the whole of dynamic, causally interconnected objective reality—natural and social. We are left with discrete, isolated, mental, un-connected units called sense-data or sense-contents.

Moreover, the logical positivist's understanding of the metaphysics may become subject to challenge. By following the writings of many academic writers like Michale Rea, we may say that the logical positivist fails to grasp the true meaning or the essence of metaphysics. All they have acquired a distorted picture of metaphysics, which is actually a common sense understanding of the term metaphysics. In its true essence metaphysics is not a branch of philosophy which deals with some supernatural entity. In true sense of the term, metaphysics is a branch of Philosophy that not only deals with the question of 'what is ultimate reality' or 'what really exists?' etc., but also deals certain basic question that we ask to lead a meaningful life, e.g. 'What does it mean to be free?', 'are we at all?' etc. In this regard a comment of Michale Rea is worthy to mention. He says, —From the fact is metaphysicians examine and critically evaluate some of the most existentially important beliefs that human beings ever hold, beliefs that lie at the very heart of our conception of ourselves and our commonsense ways of thinking about the world. It matters very much to us whether we are free in a way that allow us to be genuinely responsible for

our actions, whether there might be things-perhaps even intelligent and powerful things.-beyond what we find in the material world and so on.^{lii}

Thus, we can say that the criticism of logical positivist does not successfully eliminate metaphysics from the human knowledge in general.

As a result, the spirit of metaphysics is still alive in philosophy of many great philosophers.

Chapter—5

Possibility of Metaphysics / Return to Metaphysics: Heidegger and Existentialist:

In the previous chapter we have seen, the Logical Positivist and the Analytical philosopher tried hard to demolish metaphysics. The arguments given by Positivists against metaphysics were: (1) they were empirically convinced that all knowledge ultimately depended on sense experience; and (2) their logical analysis of language revealed that even compound linguistic statements could be resolved into simple ones so as to convey some reports of immediate sense- experience. Following Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico- Philosophicus* Positivists like Schlick held that the structure of all meaningful language represented the structure of the facts of experience. Whether a sentence like: "That was green" was true; we had to refer to the experience to the state of affairs that made the sentence true. To understand whether it was true or false, it could be said that the method of

ascertaining the significance of a sentence was the same as that of its verification. The Logical Positivists maintained that the meaning of a sentence was the method of its verification. Thus when the method of verification was applied to metaphysical doctrines regarding the concept of ultimate truth, the Idea the Absolute, the doctrine became meaningless as these entities could not be verified by any sense- experience. In spite of all the efforts to demonstrate metaphysics as meaningless, it continues to occupy much space in the minds of philosophers. The philosopher like Heidegger, who is also a pioneer of existentialism, did metaphysics in the name of interpreting the concept of Being. In his book *Being & Time* Heidegger started about the problem of Being. This problem can be asked in many different ways, What is Being?, What is the meaning of Being? etc. In *Introduction to Metaphysics* the question becomes, Why are there things rather than nothing? So the problem of Being is the central task of Heidegger's metaphysics.

The problem of Being is a problem central not only to philosophy but vital to all human culture. Philosophers have always been concerned with metaphysics, they concerned with what is. Heidegger frequently distinguishes between metaphysics, ontology, and the study of Being. The common distinction between metaphysics and ontology is that metaphysics is the study of Being and ontology is the study of entities. But

Heidegger's use of these terms is not consistent. Sometimes he uses —~~metaphysics~~” to refer to the study of Being and other times he does not. In *Being & Time* Heidegger used the term ontology as a blanket term to designate all investigations of Being. For simplicity, we shall continue to employ the term ~~metaphysics~~” to refer to the study of Being, and restrict ontology. In Heidegger's metaphysics we actually find two very different sorts of metaphysical questions. First, whether a particular entity exists; for example, —Isthere a God?” —Isthere a Santa Claus?” Secondly, what it is for anything to be. Heidegger thinks that previous philosophers were concern about the first question and they forgot the second one. But what is the difference between these two questions? To ask whether a particular entity exists presupposes that we already understand what it is to exist and that it makes sense to speak in general of “existence”. Philosophers only asked the first question (about entities) instead of second question (about —the Being of entities”). Here Being (Sein) is the problem.

In doing metaphysics, Heidegger was actually looking back to Pre-Socratic Philosophers. Heidegger's lifelong project was to answer the —~~question~~ of Being”. It is the question which was first posed by ancient Greek philosophers from Anaximander to Aristotle. Heidegger's pursuit of the grounding question of metaphysics uncovered what he called the history or destiny of the truth of Being. That history or destiny viewed as a whole,

unfolded essentially as oblivion of Being. According to Heidegger metaphysics begins with Plato and Aristotle. In their metaphysics –Being” is accepted as ‘permanence of presence’ and they in some sense initiated the forgetting of the question of Being. For Heidegger it was early Greek thinker who experienced the uncoverdness of Being. But they did not preserve that experience in texts, they leave only mere traces of Being. Heidegger thinks, metaphysics in its present form always represents only ‘beings as beings’, but it does not recall Being itself. This description of metaphysics emerged with Plato when he made the distinction between the beings of experience as a world of shadows and the Being of these beings as a world of ideas. Heidegger understands by Being the lighting process by which beings are illumined. In *Humanisms* Heidegger says that Being is not a being, because it is that which makes beings present to man, and men to each other. It is nearest to man because it makes man what he is. It allows him to enter into comportment with other beings. But it is farthest removed from him, because it is not a being, due to his own structure which can comport himself. Being encompasses all beings, just as a domain of openness encompasses everything found in it. Heidegger thinks it is from Being, that metaphysics derives all its vigour. Being can be understood as the ground in which metaphysics as the root of the tree of philosophy is held fast and nourished. To understand the ground of metaphysics we have to pose the ‘ground’-question and it is the question about the sense of

Being. The ‘sense’ of anything is the non-concealment by which it appears as itself. Non-concealment is what is meant by truth. So the ground-question of metaphysics becomes the interrogation of Being as truth. But metaphysics cannot ask such question. It is concerned with beings as they appear, but it cannot mediate the light by which beings are illumined, as the light does not appear as a being. So there is no way in which metaphysics can get Being in focus.

Although Being is the central question of all the metaphysical questions but Heidegger says, it is difficult to grasp the meaning of Being. In doing metaphysics Heidegger actually describes the nature of Being. He says, we see a building over there. It is an essent (Seindes). We encounter corridors, staircases, rooms etc. in that building but where is the Being of that building? We utter such expressions like “—being of the building” etc. Do we really encounter being? Etymology shows that “—being” is a noun but it does not belong to the class of nouns like “house”, “chalk”, “bread” etc. “—Being” is a noun like “—falling”, “going” etc. Thus “—being” is a substantive formed out of an infinitive—“to be”. It is clear then, “—being” cannot be encountered like chalk and duster can be. Nevertheless, we can see an apple falling, a boat sailing etc. Being is encountered neither in that way. Then do we have to agree with Nietzsche that “being” is an empty, vaporous term? But the emptiness of “being” does not make it meaningless to Heidegger. For

Heidegger —being” is the most universal word. So many things are expressed with the help of the single word —s”. He cited many expressions like —God is”, —The lecture is in the auditorium”, —The book is mine” and many other. In each case “is” is meant differently. —Being proves to be totally indeterminate and the same time highly determinate”.^{liii}

To understand a concept is to understand it as opposed to its limitations, that is to that form which it is distinguished. In understanding the concept of Being, Heidegger contrasts it with the concepts of become, appearance, thinking and ought. The distinction between being and become stands at the beginning of the inquiry into being. Become is genesis, the —notyet”. But being appears as the pure fullness of the permanent, completely untouched by the changing process and unrest. For Heidegger, in the thinking of Pre-Socratic philosophers there is no difference between Being and Becoming. It is Plato, who is responsible for such a distinction. Plato accomplished a metaphysical revolution by contrasting Being and Becoming. The later concept applies to the entire visible world insofar as the world is involved in constant change and is always in the process of Becoming something other than it has been. Plato found becoming (the world of change before us) unsatisfactory as an object of knowledge, and since for him every form of knowledge corresponds to a type of object. He thought genuine knowledge must have for its object something changeless,

something different from the immediate realm of becoming. So, Plato was convinced that knowledge must be direct to Being.

Heidegger thinks early Greek thinker shared a totally different view regarding the question of Being and Becoming. Here he actually follows the view of Heraclitus and Parmenides. It is a common belief that Heraclitus perceived the world only as becoming and Parmenides saw a being behind becoming. Aristotle himself writes about Heraclitean view that —all perceptible things were in a permanent state of flux and that there was no knowledge of them...”^{liv}

The distinguishing mark of Heracliteanism is the acceptance of change as the law of all being. It is Heraclitus who said that you cannot step twice into the same river. All things, for Heraclitus are in perpetual flux and change; nowhere in the universe is there to be found eternal rest, unchanging stability. And there is not only perpetual change but also perpetual conflict. The clash of opposites is the very condition of life. Evil and good, hot and cold, wet and dry and the rest are each other’s necessary complements and the endless strife between them is the sum of existence. The only harmony possible is a harmony of conflict and contrast. With Parmenides we find

ourselves in an entirely different intellectual atmosphere. Parmenides considered the sense as deceptive and condemned the multitude of sensible things as mere illusion. The only true being is ‘the one’, which is infinite and indivisible. It is not, as in Heraclitus, a union of opposites, since there are no opposites. That concept, which was placed as central and drew all the others entirely into its circle, was Being. All time and qualitative distinctions must be denied to Being. Being is also unchangeable, entirely homogeneous and unitary in quality. It is also not plural, but is the one unique, individual, absolute cosmic Being. All plurality, all qualitative difference, all origination, all change or destruction are shut out by true Being.

Heidegger rejects the traditional interpretation of Heraclitus and Parmenides. It is a customary description that Heraclitus’s doctrine is opposed from the doctrine of Parmenides. A much quoted saying is attributed to Heraclitus: everything is in flux. Accordingly there is no being, everything is becoming. —Actually Heraclitus, to whom is ascribed the doctrine of becoming as diametrically opposed to Parmenides’ doctrine of being, says the same as Parmenides”.^{lv} Generally Heraclitus was viewed as the preacher of becoming and Parmenides was viewed as the preacher of being. But this world of change and conflict pictured by Heraclitus is not a

mere chaos. It is governed by an imminent principle of order and measure. His name for the ruling principle is the Logos. Logos means a variety of things. In ordinary Greek speech some of its meanings are explanation, argument, reason (in many senses), story, language (grammatical) etc. The Logos of Heraclitus is the universal —proportion of the mixture”, the law or principle of measure and just order which effects the harmony of opposing tensions. But the Logos is law because it is God, a living all-ruling intelligence which seems to be in same way identified with the Ever-Living Fire which is the stuff of the universe. This Fire is not identical with the visible, elemental fire and is —everliving” not immortal, for it is in turn transformed into all things and all things into it. This transformation of all things into each other according to the living-divine law which somehow persists when the Logos-Fire itself is transformed is a cyclic, ever-recurring process, the —way up and down”. The Logos is the principle of life and intelligence of men, but they have the choice of shutting themselves up in their private worlds of ignorance and stupidity or opening themselves to the universal Logos and the unbounded depth of its wisdom. For Heraclitus the Logos is a universal principle which is the cause of order, proportion, balance, harmony in the continual flow of being. So, Heraclitus saw a universal principle or Logos behind the concept of becoming.

There is a tendency to reduce the distinction between being and appearance but this distinction is as old as the distinction between being and becoming. Being is real and authentic whereas appearance is unreal and inauthentic. —The distinction implies an evaluation- the preference is given to being”.^{lvi} Although Heidegger clarifies being by contrasting it to becoming and appearance but on a closer analysis of the concepts, he rejects any essential difference between being and becoming or being and appearance. Heidegger’s uses of the German word *schein* for “appearance” provoked him to conclude that appearance means exactly the same as being. Heidegger said, when we say: the moon shines, this means not only that it spreads a glow, a certain brightness, but also it stands in the sky, it is present, it is. —Here appearance <*Schein*> means exactly the same as being”^{lvii} that is both of them indicate to a presence. Actually non-being is the opposition of both “being” and “appearance”, which means to withdraw from presence. After becoming and appearance Heidegger examined the distinction between being and thinking. Being has often been understood as opposed to thinking but thinking differs from the other counter parts of being that is becoming and appearance. Being is placed before thinking as an object, being takes on its entire interpretation from thinking. —Thinking brings something before us, represents it”^{lviii}. Being can be understood by differentiating it from ought. The distinction between being and thinking is downward and it indicates that thought is the

sustaining and determining ground of being. On the other hand, the distinction between being and ought is upward. This proposes that while being is grounded in thought it is surmounted by the ought. It is the idea, the prototype. The idea presents a view, it is in an essent. For Plato the idea of ideas, the supreme idea is the idea of good. The idea constitute being, ousia, the supreme idea stands beyond being. —Thus being itself, not as such but as idea, comes into opposition to something other, on which it, being is dependent”^{lix} .

This discussion of the four distinctions shows us the determinateness of being. As different from becoming being is permanence and from appearance being is the enduring prototype, the always identical. As against from thought it is the underlying, the already there. Being as different from ought is the datum, the ought that is not yet realized or already realized. So, being is defined as permanent, always identical, already-there, enduring presence, the ousia. This definition of being is not sudden. This definition has grown out of the determination which dominates our historical being-there by virtue of its real beginning among the Greeks. —If being has determinateness it is not because we have delimited a mere word meaning. The determinateness of being is the power which still sustains and

dominates all our relations to the essent as a whole, to becoming, to appearance, to thinking, and to the ought”^{lx}.

The problem of Being is asked in many different ways, —“what’s Being?” —“what’s the meaning of Being?” etc. Metaphysics asks and answers the question concerning Being. Metaphysics thinks of Being only by representing beings as beings. It means all beings as a whole, although it speaks of Being. From its beginning the propositions of metaphysics have been strangely involved in a persistent confusion of beings and Being. For Heidegger, this confusion must be considered an event—and not a mere mistake. Due to the manner in which metaphysics thinks of beings, metaphysics almost seems to be, without knowing it, the barrier which keeps man from the original involvement of Being in human nature. To lead our thinking on the way on which it may find the involvement of the truth of Being in human nature, to open up a path for our thinking on which it may recall Being itself in its truth—to do that the thinking attempted in *Being & Time* is —“its way”. On this way—that is, in the service of the question concerning the truth of Being—it becomes necessary to stop and think about human nature. The unconcealedness of Being, the involvement of Being in human nature is an essential feature of Being. But how could this nature of Being be explained. To characterize with a single term both the involvement of Being in human nature and the essential relation of man

to the openness (—here”) of Being as such, Heidegger chose the name of —beinghere (Dasein)”. Heidegger says —thequestion of Being is nothing other than the radicalization of an essential tendency-of-Being which belongs to Dasein itself...”^{lxi} In metaphysics this term is used interchangeably with existential, actuality, reality and objectivity. —Being there” names that which should first of all be experienced, and subsequently thought of, as a place—namely, the location of the truth of Being. In metaphysical language the word —existence” is a synonym of —Beinghere” and both of them refer to the reality of anything at all that is real, from God to a grain of sand.

In *Being & Time* Heidegger exclusively used the term —existence” for the being of man. Once “existence” is understood rightly, the —essence” of being there can be recalled: in its openness, Being itself manifests and conceals itself, yields itself and withdraws. In *Being & Time* the word “existence” designates a mode of Being; specifically, the Being of those beings who stand open for the openness of Being in which they stand, by standing it. This —standing it” this enduring is experienced under the name of —care. The ecstatic essence of Being there is approached by way of care, and, conversely, care is experienced adequately only in its ecstatic essence. For Heidegger, the being that exists is man. But human existence cannot really be defined as it is potentiality of being. Man is continually in advance

of himself. If we analyze the ontological structure and mode of existence of man then we firstly notice that man is being-in-the-world. That man stands in relation with other things and persons. But Heidegger does not mean merely that man finds himself standing, as a matter of fact, in relations with other things and persons. He means that man exists as a being which is concerned with —the other”. Man is being-in —the-world as concerned with the other‘ in the realization of his own possibilities. Heidegger is not saying that the human ego is responsible for the being of everything other than itself. For him, the individual comes to discover himself as an individual subject only as a being within the world and as a being in relation with other persons. Social interdependence, being-with, is also constitutive of human mode of existence as a human being. Man is a being who is set towards the realization of his possibilities, not as an isolated ego, but as a being, who is interrelated with the world of things and the world of persons.

Heidegger is also careful to insist that when he that man is being-in-the-world he did not mean to affirm that man is a worldly being in the metaphysical and theological sense. And the term —the world” should not be taken to mean this world‘ in contrast with the other world‘ or the material world as contrasted with the spiritual world. According to Heidegger man

is being-in-the-world' means that man is open to Being. It is man who can raise the problem of Being; and he can do so because he stands out from the background of Nature as open to Being. This openness can be obscure, but this does not alter the fact that man as man is potentially open to the mystery of Being. In his book *Being & Time* Heidegger tried to see whether any new vocabulary and even a new grammar is possible to talk about Being. In *Introduction to Metaphysics* he begins the question with an investigation into the etymology and grammar of Being. The search for an unmetaphysical language, a language which is thereby non-conceptual' leads him to poetry, philosophy of the Pre-Socratics and the poetry of Holderlin. For him it is poetry through which we can grasp the true meaning of Being. According to Heidegger, as the first step in the search for the meaning of Being, we must start with the being of the questioner himself. Man stands in a peculiar position with regard to the problem of Being. It is he who raises the problem; and he is able to do this because he has a special relation to Being.

In doing metaphysics Heidegger actually uncovers the concept of Being. Heidegger has tried to show that philosophers forgot the distinction between Being and beings and thus unable to capture the real sense of Being. And thus they gradually fall away from Being. Against the fallen'

historical positions Heidegger asserts that understanding of Being is the basic problem not only of philosophy, but of all human enterprise and of human beings in general. There are many presuppositions and prejudices about Being. We can discuss the problem of Being, following R.C. Solomon in this way—

(i) The analytical question: what is the meaning of the expression Being?

(ii) The metaphysical question: what is Being? Or what is the ground of Being?

(iii) The theological question: why is there Being at all?

The first question asks, what are we saying of a thing when we assert that it exists? The answer to this question would naturally want to have a set of criteria of some sort for determining whether or not a thing exists, independently of what particular thing or type of thing it is. The second question is the most puzzling and Heidegger often suggests that the expressions we use to discuss Being do not faithfully capture the correct concept of Being. Heidegger states in his later works that our everyday language cannot capture essential truths about Being. Solomon calls the third question theological and it is the most perplexing of the three questions. The question why...? in this interpretation is just the question for an explanation of what it is for something to exist. It is not a quest for an

explanation of why it ought to exist. In the words of Heidegger, we find out that this privileged question why has its ground in a leap through which man thrusts away all the previous security, whether real or imagined, of his life. The question is asked only in this leap: it is the leap; without it there is no asking. This question, because of such an interpretation, is of profound importance in all human culture. The neglect of the question and the subsequent falling way from Being is responsible not only for the unhappy state of metaphysics, but of a decline of culture in general.

CHAPTER-6

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In the history of Western Philosophy we may find a wide range of quite opposite views as answer to the question ‘What is metaphysics?’. As a branch of philosophy, metaphysics has always been a domain of criticism. Many philosophers from ancient period to modern period said in favour of the ‘Possibility of Metaphysics’ although there are some other group of philosophers who said against the ‘Possibility of Metaphysics’. In a sense, we have also tried to find out a possible answer to the said question that is ‘What is Metaphysics?’ by searching the possibility of metaphysics in Philosophical discourses. It will not be wrong to say that metaphysics is one of the most ancient branches of Philosophy. The essence of metaphysics can be seen in the philosophy of some Cosmologist thinkers, like Thales, though at that time metaphysics was not developed as a systematic branch of Philosophy as we find it today. It is claimed that in Aristotle’s Philosophy metaphysics has first appeared as a systematic branch of philosophy. Aristotle has done metaphysics under the name of ‘First Philosophy’. For Aristotle, ‘First Philosophy’ is the study which deals with

the most basic principles or most fundamental presuppositions of all the other sciences. As for example, Physics, presupposes the 'principle of causation', but never judges the validity of that principle. In a sense it is not under its jurisdiction, but itself is based on that principle. If it tries to judge the validity of that principle then it commits either the 'fallacy of Vicious Circle' or the 'fallacy of Infinite Regresses'. So the basic principles of other departmental sciences must be judged by a discipline which needs no further justification. For Aristotle that self-justified study is 'First Philosophy'. So, for many thinkers, the essence and purpose of Aristotle's metaphysics can be found in his doctrine of 'First Philosophy.' In Aristotle's writings we find that, his metaphysical concern primarily centred in to the search for the meaning of 'Being qua-being'. In other words, we may say that his main metaphysical concern is to find out the meaning of 'existence'. So following Aristotle, we may say that metaphysics is a branch of Philosophy that deals with the most fundamental principles of life and world as it aims to explore the true nature of existence. Thus, many fundamental questions become important in the domain of metaphysics, like 'what does it mean to be free?', 'what is the meaning of life?' etc. Michael Rea has given a number of important questions that is asked and analyzed by the metaphysicians. As he says, —Metaphysics is not just about what is fundamental. Historically, the following questions have

been almost universally acknowledged as falling within the domain of metaphysics:

- Is Change really Possible? If so, what does it mean to say that something has changed?
- Can the past be changed? ...
- Are there nonphysical things? If so, could they causally interact with physical things?
- Are human beings free? Is freedom even possible?...^{lxii}

However, we have seen in the discussion of our previous chapters that the metaphysical doctrines have been criticized by a large number of philosophers, in different periods of the history of time. The classical Greek sceptics said that metaphysical knowledge is not possible because for them knowledge itself is not possible. So the sceptic's position is quite problematic, as we live our life by believing that we have certain knowledge about certain things which help us to sustain our life in this world.

The logical Positivist thinkers are considered as the radical critic of Metaphysics. For them, metaphysics is completely a meaningless discipline as the sentences that constitute the whole body of metaphysics is itself meaningless. The positivist thinkers like Moritz Schlick and Waismann

hold that the meaning of the metaphysical sentences are not verifiable in empirical method, thus it is meaningless. Whereas the positivist thinker like Rudolf Carnap and A.J. Ayer thinks metaphysical sentences fail to fulfil the basic criteria, i.e. the logical, grammatical rules of any meaningful sentence. They tried to see verification principle as a helping tool to find out whether a sentence fulfils the logical, grammatical rules or not. As R.W. Ashby says, —..he logical positivist may regard the verifiability principle as a decision or recommendation or prescription for the use of the expressions —cognitive meaning” and —understanding.” He may claim that this decision prevents radical confusion and helps to promote clarity in the discussion of many philosophical questions. As we shall see, Carnap took this view of the status of the verifiability requirement, and Ayer takes the same view in his most recent remarks on the subject.”^{lxiii} Thus for a logical positivist, metaphysics deals with supernatural objects like God, soul etc. and it must be completely eliminated from the domain of Philosophy. So if we sum up the views of logical positivist against the metaphysics then we can see that the logical positivists have rejected metaphysics on the following grounds (i)the metaphysical sentences are fail to fulfil the logic of language (ii) most of the metaphysical concepts are not verifiable through empirical means.

The doctrine of the logical positivists will be true if we consider that logic and empirical verification method are the highest and only absolute authentic method of doing Philosophy. But we have seen in the discussion of our fourth chapter that the methods of logical positivists are not the absolute authentic method. Moreover in this context we may specially mention the name of Heidegger who says that through logic and logical language we are not be able to grasp the whole range of human endeavour. The post-structuralist and post-modern thinkers like Derrida, and Foucault etc. have questioned the validity of reason and logic in understanding every aspect of human life, society and world. They have criticised the modernist project of ‘Enlightenment’ which considers reason and logic as the highest authority to judge the every single phenomena of this world. In defining the modernist project of Enlightenment Peter Barry says that —Thiso-called Enlightenment ‘project’ is the fostering of this belief that a break with tradition, blind habit, and slavish obedience to religious precepts and prohibitions, coupled with the application of reason and logic by the disinterested individual, can bring about a solution to the problems of society.’^{lxiv}

The modernist thinkers try to encompass the human life into the frame of reason and logic. So whatever will not be fitted into this frame of reason and logic seems irrational, abnormal, misleading, mysterious, meaningless etc. in modernist terminology and thus must be avoided to live a meaningful

life. For Derrida and Foucault if we tend to see things through this modernist glass of reason and logic then we may leave many essential aspects, questions concerning life like justice, progress etc. behind. The absolute dependency upon the modernist project of 'Enlightenment' can make us subject to the laws of reason and logic, which ultimately makes us unable to reach into the realm which is still untouched by the reason and logic. The power of pure speculation gives human beings so many advances in life to revel in such realm, which has a tremendous effect in our life, as for example we may here mention the Platonic 'doctrine of Ideas' or 'the idea of Justice'. It is needless to say the platonic doctrine of ideas is metaphysical doctrine which can't be explained through the logical language of the logical positivist thinkers. Most of the logical positivist thinkers would at least say that Plato's doctrine of idea is a fruit of Plato's irrational speculation which can be easily proved meaningless by their method of verification. But are they able to explain the influence and impact of his 'doctrine ideas' in the work of the later philosophers or upon institutional religion like Christianity? Whenever we are just trying to ignore such doctrine as a meaningless doctrine like the logical positivist we are just leaving aside this such questions which seems important to understand our position into this world. There are so many concepts and elements exists into this world which primarily seems irrational as it is not

verifiable through logical/empirical means but have an incredible role in shaping our life.

Reason, Logic and empirical method are the most important and popular tool to understand, interpret, demonstrate any philosophical concept as well as to solve many philosophical problem. But they have their limitations too. Sometimes reason and logic fails to define the emotive aspect of human nature. Human beings are not just rational being they have emotions too. The emotional aspect of human nature often lead the life of human beings into that glorious path of life like sacrificing one's life for the sake of the greater human purpose. That nature of human psyche often also helps human beings to find the meaning of their life in writing poetry or drawing paintings. It is needless to say the creative aspects of human psyche are highly influenced by the emotive aspect of human nature. It is really hard to grasp, interpret the inner psyche through the framework of logic, empirical method. It is really hard to draw the picture of any one's emotion only through the colour of logic which is one of the key factors behind various short human endeavours. Here we are not denying the role of logic and empirical method from the domain of philosophy but we are trying to showcase that there are other factors exists besides the reason and logic which lead and guide our life in order to live a meaningful life. The existentialist philosophers have very successfully showcased the limitations

of logic in understanding the one of the most fundamental philosophical concept i.e. existence (Being).

If we concentrate upon the history of western Philosophy then we can see that the importance of metaphysical discourse has been always felt by the western philosopher's right from the pre-Socratic philosophers. Yes it is true that often metaphysics has been defined and understood wrongly by the Western thinkers. The body of metaphysics has been contaminated when it defined as the study of supernatural beings by the logical positivist. Indeed metaphysics does not concern with any such super natural phenomena. Metaphysics tries to explore the base, foundation of certain important phenomena related to life and world, like truth, meaning of life etc.

In history of western philosophy such metaphysical questions have continuously been asked and discussed by many philosophers like, Descartes, Leibnitz, Kant, Heidegger, Sartre etc. Descartes is well known for his metaphysical discourse. If we look back into the history of Modern Western Philosophy, we may see that the father of modern philosophy Rene Descartes meditates upon the Aristotelian conception of First Philosophy in order to establish philosophy as mathematics. He does not think that metaphysics is meaningless discourse. Rather he thinks that the true spirit of Philosophy can only be attained by analysing things metaphysically. It

will not be wrong if we say that it is Descartes who has raised some fundamental metaphysical questions like ‘mind-body problem’ in the beginning of modern era of western philosophy. In later times many philosophers like Spinoza, Leibnitz and Malebranche etc. have found the relevance of asking and continuing the discussion of the same metaphysical questions which is raised by Descartes, in his philosophy.

Often the name of David Hume and Immanuel Kant are considered as the opponents of metaphysics. It is generally believed that Hume and Kant have rejected metaphysics as a meaningless discourse. But if we go through their work properly then we may realise that they hold quite a different position concerning the nature of metaphysics. In a sense we may say that they have tried to make reform in the body of metaphysics rather to eliminate it as a meaningless discourse within the domain of Philosophy. The empiricist philosopher like David Hume also criticised metaphysics. He made a distinction between two kinds of metaphysics, namely, ‘true metaphysics’ and ‘false metaphysics’. Hume’s criticism was mainly against the ‘false metaphysics’. For him, false metaphysics is concerned with supernatural entities which have no factual basis. As experience is the only source of knowledge, whatever we consider as knowledge can be verified in empirical terms. The subject matter of false metaphysics cannot be verified empirically, thus it has no basis at all, and must be rejected as a

philosophical discourse. But at the same time, Hume shows his doubt in the power and capacity of our senses and intellect. He believes that it may be possible that our mind fail to grasp the meaning of certain experiences. Thus, there is always a scope regarding the discussion of certain non-empirical phenomena, which are truly essential to lead a meaningful life. In this way, Hume leaves the room for metaphysical discourse (true metaphysical discourse) in the domain of Philosophy. The famous German philosopher Immanuel Kant has also judge the possibility of metaphysics. For Immanuel Kant, metaphysics is not possible as a science. That means metaphysical sentences are not like scientific sentences that can be verified in scientific manner. For Immanuel Kant, metaphysics is possible as natural disposition.

Thus by following the philosophies of these great thinkers it does not seem that the metaphysical questions are worthless and do not serve any purpose to human beings. As a self-conscious being we spontaneously asked so many metaphysical questions like, ‘_what is the relation between mind and body?’, ‘_is there any absolute creator exists?’ etc. and also longing for the answer to these questions. In that sense the metaphysics is a spontaneous outcome of our inner quest. And the study and discussion of metaphysics indeed is an attempt to fulfil that inner quest. So we will be failed to grasp

the essence of metaphysics if we tend to understand it solely based upon the means of reason, logic and empirical method etc.

Thus by following the great work of many renowned philosophers especially Aristotle, we may say that metaphysics does not deal with supernatural objects. Rather it deals with many primary questions concerning life and world in order to explore its true nature. Such discussion seems necessary to live a meaningful life. Thus it has been centre of attraction since ancient Greek times to the present era. The continuous flow of metaphysical discourse shows implicitly or explicitly the possibility of metaphysics in future philosophical discourse.

Endnotes:

- ⁱ Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, trans. Hugh Lawson (England: Penguin Books, 1998), 3.
- ⁱⁱ Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 79.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Plato, *The Republic*, trans. W.H.D. Rouse (New York: Penguin Group, 2015), 134.
- ^{iv} Plato, *Phaedo*, trans. W.H.D. Rouse (New York: Penguin Group, 2015), 557.
- ^v Plato, *The Republic*: Book V, trans. W.H.D. Rouse (New York: Penguin Group, 2015), 323.
- ^{vi} Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, ed. & trans. John Warrington (London: Everyman's Library, 1996), 75.
- ^{vii} Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, ed. & trans. John Warrington (London: Everyman's Library, 1996), 167.
- ^{viii} Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, trans. Hugh Lawson (England: Penguin Books, 1998), 174.
- ^{ix} Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, trans. Hugh Lawson (England: Penguin Books, 1998), 174.
- ^x Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, trans. Hugh Lawson (England: Penguin Books, 1998), 174.
- ^{xi} Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, trans. Hugh Lawson (England: Penguin Books, 1998), 185.
- ^{xii} Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, trans. Hugh Lawson (England: Penguin Books, 1998), 185.
- ^{xiii} Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, trans. Hugh Lawson (England: Penguin Books, 1998), 193.

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- ^{xiv} Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, trans. Hugh Lawson (England: Penguin Books, 1998), 193.
- ^{xv} Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, ed. & trans. John Warrington (London: Everyman's Library, 1996), 196.
- ^{xvi} Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, trans. Hugh Lawson (England: Penguin Books, 1998), 227.
- ^{xvii} Aristotle, *Metaphysics* trans. Hugh Lawson (England: Penguin Books, 1998), 227.
- ^{xviii} Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, ed. & trans. John Warrington (London: Everyman's Library, 1996), 205.
- ^{xix} Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, ed. & trans. John Warrington (London: Everyman's Library, 1996), 205
- ^{xx} Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, trans. Hugh Lawson (England: Penguin Books, 1998), 253.
- ^{xxi} Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 272.
- ^{xxii} Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 355.
- ^{xxiii} Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 382.
- ^{xxiv} Fredrick Copleston, *A History Of Philosophy* vol-2, Mediaeval Philosophy part-1 (New York: Image Books, 1962), 183.
- ^{xxv} Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 373.
- ^{xxvi} Plato, *Great Dialogue of Plato*, translated by W.H.D. Rouse (New York: Penguin Group, 1999), 134.
- ^{xxvii} Rene Descartes, *Discourse on Method and Related Writings*, translated with an Introduction by Desmond M. Clarke (England: Penguin Books, 1999), 25
- ^{xxviii} Kurt Brandhorst, *Descartes "Meditations on First Philosophy"* (Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 54. (from online)

^{xxix} Kurt Brandhorst, *Descartes' Meditations on First Philosophy* (Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 55.

^{xxx} Rene Descartes, *Discourse on Method and Related Writings*, 25.

^{xxxi} *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, David Hume, Progressive Publishers, 1999, ix.

^{xxxii} David Hume, *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, ix-x.

^{xxxiii} Immanuel Kant, *Critique Of Pure Reason*. Trans. & ed. Marcus Weigelt, (London: Penguin books, 2007), 5-7.

^{xxxiv} Immanuel Kant, *Critique Of Pure Reason*, 6-7.

^{xxxv} Immanuel Kant, *Critique Of Pure Reason*, 5.

^{xxxvi} Immanuel Kant, *Critique Of Pure Reason*, 17.

^{xxxvii} Immanuel Kant, *Critique Of Pure Reason*, 321.

^{xxxviii} Frederick Copleston, S.J., *A History Of Philosophy* (Vol.6, Part II), (New York: Image Books, 1964), 89,

^{xxxix} Immanuel Kant, *Critique Of Pure Reason*, 391.

^{xl} Immanuel Kant, *Critique Of Pure Reason*, 397.

^{xli} Immanuel Kant, *Critique Of Pure Reason*, 26.

^{xliixlii} Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 79.

^{xliii} *Metaphysics the basics*, Michale Rea, Routledge, London, New York, 2015, 11.

^{xliv} 'The Vienna Circle' Ayer A.J., *The Revolution in Philosophy*, ed. By A. j Ayer. Macmillan & Co. Ltd. London, 1960. 73-74.

^{xlv} 'The Vienna Circle' Ayer A.J., 79.

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- ^{xlvi} *Elimination of Metaphysics Through Logical Analysis*“ Rudolf Carnap, ed. By Willam Barrett and Henry D. Aiken, voll.3, Random House, New York.1962,61.
- ^{xlvii} *Elimination of Metaphysics Through Logical Analysis*“ Rudoulf Carnap, 62.
- ^{xlviii} Ayer. A.J *Language, Truth and Logic*, Penguin Books, London, 2001,16.
- ^{xlix} Ayer. A.J *Language, Truth and Logic*,28-29.
- ^l Ayer. A.J *Language, Truth and Logic*, 23.
- ^{li} *The Vienna Circle*‘ Ayer A.J.,74.
- ^{lii} *Metaphysics the basics*, Michale Rea, Routledge, London, Yew York,2015,15-16.
- ^{liii} Martin Heidegger, *An Introduction to Metaphysics* (Delhi: MLBD,2005),p.78.
- ^{liv} Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, trans. Hugh LA Wson-Tancred (London: Penguin Books.2004).p.4.
- ^{lv} Heidegger, Martin: *An Introduction to Metaphysics*(MLBD, Delhi1999)p.97.
- ^{lvi} Martin, Heidegger: *An Introduction to Metaphysics*(MLBD) p.98.
- ^{lvii} Martin, Heidegger: *An Introduction to Metaphysics*(MLBD)p.100.
- ^{lviii} Martin, Heidegger: *An Introduction to Metaphysics*(MLBD)p.118
- ^{lix} Martin, Heidegger: *An Introduction to Metaphysics* (MLBD)p. 197.
- ^{lx} Martin, Heidegger: *An Introduction to Metaphysics* (MLBD) p.202.
- ^{lxi} Martin HEIDEGGER, *Being And Time*, Oxford (1978)p.35.
- ^{lxii} *Metaphysics the basics*, Michael Rea, Routledge, London, New York, 2015, 7.
- ^{lxiii} *Logical Positivism*‘, R.W. Ashby, *A Critical History of Western Philosophy*, ed. by D.J.O Connor, The Free Press Of Glencoe collier-Macmillan Limited, London. 1964, 496-497.s

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IN DEFENCE OF METAPHYSICS*

BISHNUPRIYA SAHA

Western philosophy began with metaphysics. The term "metaphysics" is derived from a collective title of the fourteen books of Aristotle. In its original use, the term "metaphysics" means no more than 'after-physics'. Aristotle characterized metaphysics as the study of 'being qua being' or 'of being as such'. Aristotle equates philosophy with metaphysics. Metaphysics for him was "First Philosophy". His "First Philosophy" is the study of causes and principles of being qua being. Like Aristotle ancient and medieval philosophers also hold that philosophy and metaphysics are equal. According to them metaphysics means what exist ultimately or what could be the ultimate explanation of everything. The early Greek philosophers were on a quest for the underlying natures of things. Some said everything is ultimately water, others said everything is fire, and still there is other group of philosopher who said everything is air. Heraclitus observed the world is all in flux, so it is impossible to step into the same river twice. Other hand Parmenides said ultimate reality had to consist only of unchanging things. Actually ancient philosophers of Greece were always in a search, they think, whenever we search, we search the things that exist ultimately and this is metaphysics.

At the beginning of the movement of Logical positivism Rudolf Carnap, A. J. Ayer and other dismissed metaphysics as non-sense. As metaphysics means any theory of reality beyond what could be grasped by sense experience, it was declared 'out' by the positivist philosophers. The reasons given by the positivists against metaphysics were: (i) they were empirically convinced that all knowledge ultimately depended on sense experience; and (ii) their logical analysis of language revealed that even compound linguistic statements could be resolved into simple ones so as to convey some reports of immediate sense-experience. Following Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* Logical positivists like Schilck held that the structure of all meaningful language represented the structure of the facts of

* I am thankful to my supervisor Dr. Koushik Jocardar for his valuable guidance in framing this paper.

experience. Whether a sentence like: "that was green" was true; we had to refer to the experience to the state of affairs that made the sentence true. To understand whether it was true or false, it could be said that the method of ascertaining the significance of a sentence was the same as that of its verification. A.J. Ayer clarified the principle of verification as 'a sentence is factually significant to any given person if, and only if, he knows how to verify the proposition which it purports to express - that is, if he knows what observations would lead him, under certain conditions, to accept it as being true or reject it as being false'⁴⁴ The Logical positivists maintained that the meaning of a sentence was the method of its verification. Thus, when the method of verification was applied to metaphysical doctrines regarding the concept of 'ultimate truth', 'the Idea', 'the Absolute', the doctrine became meaningless as these entities could not be verified by any sense-experience.

The fact that metaphysics is concerned itself with non-empirical questions about the character and makeup of the world that made any philosopher uneasy with the whole enterprise. The sciences enjoy a great deal of respect as fields of inquiry, and many think that the methods of science alone are the tools by which we ought to build our theories about the world. Sharing a similar view Rudolf Carnap said that metaphysicians are like musicians without musical ability. His point was that metaphysical theories are devoid of cognitive content and not even endowed with aesthetic value. On his view, the questions discussed by metaphysicians do not rise to the level of being meaningful. Underlying this view is the idea that a question is meaningful only if it can be answered somehow by appeal to observation, empirical theory, or the meanings of the words in the question. In other words, the meaningful questions are ones that science can be answered by appeal to analytic truths—sentences like "bachelors are unmarried", which are commonly said to be purely conceptual truths, expressible by sentences that are "true by definition", or such that their truth is grounded solely in the meanings of the terms involved. If the questions can't be answered in one of these ways, then they are meaningless; and if they can be then they are meaningful.

For Logical positivists, each of the special sciences deals only with a fragment of the world. Metaphysics goes beyond them in being concerned with reality as a whole.

⁴⁴ *Language Truth and Logic* (1936), A.J. Ayer, p.16.

There is one way of attacking a metaphysician who claimed to have knowledge of a reality which transcended the phenomenal world would be to inquire from what premises his propositions were deduced. He must not begin with the evidence of his senses. But if so, then what valid process of reasoning can possibly lead him to the conception of a transcendent reality? To answer this question a metaphysician may say that he was endowed with a faculty of intellectual intuition which enabled him to know the facts that could not be known through sense-experience. If it could be shown that he was relying on empirical premises then his venture into a non-empirical world was therefore unjustified. The metaphysician whose theories are not similarly testable by observation would have nothing to contribute.

So, from the previous discussion it is clear that Logical positivists view regarding the meaninglessness of metaphysics is based mainly on same assumptions, that - (i) metaphysics deals with the things beyond our sense-experience so metaphysical entities are not verifiable through any empirical method and, (ii) metaphysical-sentences violate the rules of syntax. But metaphysics is not just about what is 'really' or 'ultimately' exists. Historically, the following questions have been almost universally acknowledged as falling within the domain of metaphysics:

- Is change really possible? If so, what does it mean to say that something has changed?
- Is the passage of time possible?
- Are human beings free? Is free will even possible?
- What is the meaning of life?
- Is it possible to live after death?

There are many such questions that can be enlisted, but I think the above mentioned are sufficient to represent the kind of issues dealt with by metaphysics. What do these questions have in common? One can say that what they have in common is that they are nonscientific questions about what exists. It also could be said that it is a kind of hodge-podge or meaningless discipline? Let us see. In this regard we can consider the question about human free will.

Sometimes we say, whatever will be, will be. Most often, these famous words simply express a carefree attitude towards the future: let things unfold as they will; whatever will be, will be! Nothing I do can make any difference to what happens; the future is set, and there is nothing I can do about it. I can do about it. I cannot do anything except sit and wait to see what happens. There are some people who believe

that the laws of nature are deterministic. They think that the universe is like a machine that has to unfold in one very specific way. But there are some other people who reject this view. Regarding the questions of human freedom we find mainly two theories- (i) determinism and (ii) indeterminism. Determinism is commonly defined as "the doctrine of universal causation: it says only that every event has a cause. It does not say whether the cause is mental or physical, whether it is inorganic nature or organisms or people or God"⁴⁵. Whereas Indeterminism is the thesis that determinism is false. "Indeterminism denies that every event has a cause".

The question about the free-will is a deliberately asked question by the philosophers. The problem of determinism arises because many have thought that our acts are determined in various ways, and these forms of determination all seem to preclude our having genuine control over our actions. Some people believe that the laws of nature are deterministic, that the universe is like a machine that has to unfold in one very specific way. Others reject this view. If determinism is true then there is no room for human freedom. But that does not mean that opposite is true. Then what is about the will. What does it mean to be free, or to act freely? In this regard we can offer three other concepts with which it is closely connected. Firstly, the concept of freedom is connected with the idea of control: To be free is to have a certain kind of control over one's acts. Secondly, the concept of freedom is connected with the notion of responsibility: Our free acts seem just to be those acts for which we can be held responsible. Thirdly, the concept of freedom is connected with the idea of being able to choose among incompatible courses of action. Together, these claims give us a pretty good idea of what we mean when we say that an agent acts freely. However, each of them is problematic. Here we can take a look on John Locke's view of free will. According to Locke, the will is nothing but a power, a power to choose. For Locke, freedom is also a power: a power to act as one chooses. Thus, on his view, to say that a person's will is free is to say that his/her power to choose has a certain power to act. So, for Locke it is simply confused to ask whether the will is free or not. The problem of determinism arises because our actions are subject to various kinds of

⁴⁵ *An Introduction to Philosophical Analysis* (1953), John Hospers, p.322

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, p.322.

local determination. If we admit, everything is determined then I am not an agent of my action and so, my action could not be judged as moral or immoral. But moral philosophy recognizes the freedom of will as a postulate of morality. Because, if we do not admit free will then we will be not in a position to judge one's action as moral or immoral.

So we can see that the questions regarding the free-will, the causation are occupying much space in the mind of philosophers. These questions are not meaningful in Logical positivists desired way. Actually Logical positivists view about metaphysics is a one sided view. Generally, they characterized metaphysics as the idea that it is the study of what 'really exists' or it is 'the study of things, which are beyond our sense-experience'. But metaphysics is also deals about human beings and the fundamental features of reality. It is not so much easy to define human beings in terms of truth or false, because human beings are full of emotions, contradictions.

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