

## COGNITION IN THOUGHTS OF THINKERS

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### ABSTRACT

*In west the cognition is explained by many thinkers i.e. Thales of Miletus, Anaximander, Anaximenes, Homer, Xenophanes, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Copernicus and Galileo. In the views of these thinkers cognition is defined as the phenomenon related to knowledge, depends upon the personal of experience and senses according to the time period.*

### INTRODUCTION

Cognition is the best basic phenomenon related to the human mind and knowledge. In the western though system it is taken with keen interest from the beginning. These interest creating thinkers gave their views from the inner most corner of their mind and heart. They are given as follows: Thales of Miletus, Anaximander and Anaximenes.

The most outstanding aspects of Thales's heritage are: The search for knowledge for its own sake; the development of the scientific method; the adoption of practical methods and their development into general principles; his curiosity and conjectural approach to the questions of natural phenomenon. In the sixth century B C E Thales asked the question, "What is the basis material of the cosmos?" (Masih.Y(1994).A Critical History of Western Philosophy New Delhi:MotilalBanarsidas Publishers Private Limited) The answer is yet to be discovered. Thales is the first person about whom we know to purpose explanations of natural phenomenon which were materialistic rather than mythological or theological. His theories were new, bold, exciting, comprehensible, and possible of explanation. He did not speak in riddles as did Heraclitus, and had no need to invent an undefined non substance, as Anaximander did because he gave no role to mythical beings, Thales theories could be refuted. Arguments could be put forward in attempts to discredit them. Thales hypothesis were rational and scientific. Aristotle acknowledged Thales as the first philosopher, and criticized his hypothesis in a scientific manner.

Thales was the founder of a new school of philosophy (AristMetaph 983620). His two fellow Milesians who also engaged in the new questioning approach to the understanding of the universe, were Anaximander, his disciple (D. L. I. 13) an Anaximenes, who was the disciple Anaximander (D.L.11. Z). Anaximander was about ten years younger than Thales but survived him by only a year, dying in about 545. Anaximenes was born in 585 and died in about 528. Their lives all overlapped. Through their association they comprised the milesian school. They all worked on similar problems, the nature of matter and the nature of change, but they each proposed different material of as the primary principle, which indicates that there was no necessity to follow the master's teachings or attribute their discoveries to him. Each proposed a different support for the earth. Thales was held in high regard for his wisdom, being acclaimed as the most eminent of the wise Men of Ancient Greece, but he was not regard as and go as Pythagoras was . Anaximander and Anaximenes were free to pursue the own ideas and to express them in writing. This surely suggests that they engaged in critical discussion of the theories of each other. The Greeks are people with subtle knowledge, and their willingness to converse brought rewards in disagreement with other theories. It is the adoption, or in this case, the development, of a new style of discussion. It is a procedure which encourages questioning, debate, explanation, justification and criticism. There was a unique relationship between the three Milesians and it is highly probable that the critical method developed Milesian school under the leadership of Thales.

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Thales was surely an exceptional man, but he was not the only thinker in ancient Greece whose thoughts were ahead of his time. For instance, the idea that all forms of substances can be reduced to a few elements and that every form of matter are made of these elements, is essentially Greek, and was conceived around the time of Thales. He was the first who made difference by introducing deductive, scientific thought. He said: "All things are full of Gods" and left it unexplained.

### HOMER AND XENOPHANES

Human knowledge is the result of experience. So according to Homer the cognition can be achieved by only experience and experience is the source of knowledge and indirectly the means of cognition. The persons who are in lack of experience in the source of knowledge and with this personal experience one can not be able to achieve knowledge and in all cognition.

Xenophanes thinks that human beings are, at best, in the same situation, with regard to information about the gods and certain other matter, as Homer thought they were regard to the distant past "What human beings get is not certain knowledge, because (whether individually or collectively) have no way of making their own independent verification of it'. An independent verification would require human beings generally, or at least some of the things, to have direct experience of the matters in question, and to be certain that the experience was indeed the kind of experience which was relevant. Xenophanes supreme god was a supreme perceiver and knower. It had all knowledge that human beings lacked; sense perceptions. This was the way Xenophanes' invented metaphysical reasoning'.

### SOCRATES

Socrates said that a small part of knowledge is already present in the mind of knower, so all knowledge can not be learnt after the birth but it can be acquired in some extent before the birth also so it is the recollection of lessons before the birth which remained in small amount after the birth and which simply meet with the other knowledge and forms the complete system of knowledge of person and further call it cognition. According to

Socrates there are two types of knowledge; expert knowledge and non-expert knowledge with their theories they became the theory of expert knowledge and the theory of nonexpert knowledge. Expert knowledge will include the quite ordinary skills, and non-expert knowledge will include the quite extraordinary human knowledge that Socrates connects with virtue of understanding of one's own epistemic limitations.

'Socrates' theory is clear enough. It entails that person may have true beliefs of which he is not aware and that after becoming aware of such beliefs and being questioned about them, a person may come to know in the full sense the subject of those beliefs. From this it can be concluded that one may learn and know things that one was never thought.

### PLATO

According to Plato the true knowledge is a part of soul itself. In other words true knowledge is innate. He thinks that knowledge does not come to the soul at or after birth, but it remains in it. Plato concluded that soul existed before the body and during the prenatal existence it learned all that with which it is familiar in this world. But the question arises that "How did this innate knowledge come to the soul in the former state of being? Plato became unable to give answer of this question".

In Plato's view knowledge is of three kinds i.e. knowledge which comes through senses; the knowledge in Plato's opinion because senses are not real. The second kind of knowledge is that of opinion regarding things. An opinion regarding things may be valuable in certain situations, but it cannot be true knowledge nor is it innate. The third kind of knowledge, which alone is true is innate and is in the mind or reason. All mathematical truths, general concepts, absolute and abstract ideas fall within this category. Absolute ideas about beauty, justice, goodness are never acquired through experience. They are innate and the possession of the mind itself, independent of experience.

Plato said that there are two kinds of world; the world of ideas and the world of objects of senses. The world of ideas is real and the other is only a shadow or phenomenal. "The world of ideas is eternal spaceless and unchangeable. It

is the world of mind, a world of abstract thought. The absolute ideas are entities in themselves and they form an organic whole, a "World or Ideas". According to Plato "ideas are interrelated in a divine order or perfect mind". The world of 'Ideas' is the mind Of God. Ideas are eternal divine thoughts. They are gods. Platonic idealism regards that true reality is thought, and therefore, it is spiritual. Thus to Plato thought alone is true and perfect, and it does not belong to material things.

### ARISTOTLE

In general there are two constituents of a human life which make that life supremely worth living i.e. excellence of character and intellectual excellence.

Aristotle takes initiative in favour of intellectual excellence by listing five cognitive states in which the agent possesses the truth in asserting or denying there are (1) Art or craft (techne), (2) Scientific knowledge (episteme) (3) Practical wisdom (Phronesis), (4) Sophia and (5) Nous. Two of these kinds, techne and phronesis are practical and two episteme and Sophia theoretical, while nous is employed in both spheres. Though perception or perceptual knowledge does not itself figure of the list, yet Aristotle frequently counts perception as a sort of knowledge or acquaintance of things. Perception is said to be one of those things in the soul which control action and truth, the other two being desire and nous. In Aristotle's terminology what is known (or knowable) is what can be taught and learned. The necessary truths can be learned in precisely two ways either by education or by induction. In either case one learns by making use of some things which is already known. According to Aristotle, "All teaching is from things previously known". This might lead us to expect Aristotle to divide knowledge into two kinds, demonstrative and inductive, but in fact he says something different. Episteme is a demonstrative state, and wherever some one believes something and he knows the principles (i.e. premises) then he 'knows'.

Some teaching proceeds via induction. Theoretical knowledge being apparently divided exhaustively into episteme and nous, and the former being imparted not by induction. But by

demonstration, it follows that induction is the method by which nous is attained. So there are principles from which there are deductions, but of which there is no education' so there is induction. Demonstrative knowledge (episteme) and undemonstrative knowledge (nous) seem thus to be very special kinds of cognitive state, constituting at best only a small fraction of our total body of knowledge. Broadly speaking nous episteme is the ideal type of knowledge. Thus, Aristotle insists that explanatory knowledge. Thus, Aristotle insists that explanatory knowledge of a phenomenon, i.e. knowing in the full sense why that phenomenon occurs, presupposes knowledge that occurs.

According to Aristotle, whether theoretical or practical, proceeds from 'what is better known to us to what is better known is itself, what is better known to us is what is closer to perception.

### COPERNICUS AND GALILEO

They made unique contribution to epistemology and further in cognition. Galileo kept faith on the continuous progress of industry and inquiry to prove the validity of building theoretical knowledge on the basis of logical analysis and observation, as against the right of the church to determine theoretical knowledge as a matter of dogma. It should be noted that Galileo did not call into question the right of the church to rule within its own domain, but that matters which can be demonstrated as true or false in nature cannot be subject of scriptures. Galileo's magnificent achievements are: (1) that in making statements and hypothesis about nature one must always appeal to observation and not to authority. (2) The natural process can best be understood if they are represented in mathematical terms.

Copernicus was commissioned to investigate possible improvements in methods of constructing the calendar, but his report had revolutionary implications. Galileo fought for his life defending Copernicus system and in presenting his view of a material world existing independently of human consciousness which can be understood through theories which reflect the actual movements of bodies verified by observations accumulate over generations. Thus Galileo have place to the regular practices and

efforts made a person in compare to the still and stagnant theories which are kept for records only.

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