

## Précis 17: CSS 2006

**Q.2:** Write a précis of the following passage and suggest a suitable title: (20)

It was not so in Greece, where philosophers professed less, and undertook more. Parmenides pondered nebulously over the mystery of knowledge; but the pre-Socratics kept their eyes with fair consistency upon the firm earth, and sought to ferret out its secrets by observation and experience, rather than to create it by exuding dialectic; there were not many introverts among the Greeks. Picture Democritus, the Laughing Philosopher; would he not be perilous company for the desiccated scholastics who have made the disputes about the reality of the external world take the place of medieval discourses on the number of angles that could sit on the point of a pin? Picture Thales, who met the challenge that philosophers were numskulls by "cornering the market" and making a fortune in a year. Picture Anaxagoras, who did the work of Darwin for the Greeks and turned Pericles from a wire-pulling politician into a thinker and a statesman. Picture old Socrates, unafraid of the sun or the stars, gaily corrupting young men and overturning governments; what would he have done to these bespectacled seedless philosophizers who now litter the court of the once great Queen? To Plato, as to these virile predecessors, epistemology was but the vestibule of philosophy, akin to the preliminaries of love; it was pleasant enough for a while, but it was far from the creative consummation that drew wisdom's lover on. Here and there in the shorter dialogues, the Master dallied amorously with the problems of perception, thought, and knowledge; but in his more spacious moments he spread his vision over larger fields, built himself ideal states and brooded over the nature and destiny of man. And finally in Aristotle philosophy was honoured in all her boundless scope and majesty; all her mansions were explored and made beautiful with order; here every problem found a place and every science brought its toll to wisdom. These men knew that the function of philosophy was not to bury herself in the obscure retreats of epistemology, but to come forth bravely into every realm of inquiry, and gather up all knowledge for the coordination and illumination of human character and human life.

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## Role of Epistemology in Philosophy

Greek philosophers were different in their approach of the subject. While philosophers after Socrates focused more on discussions of history and nature of knowledge, his predecessors took action and tried to learn from the universe around them. They were fearless ~~in their approaches~~ and evolved with time in their approach to tackling problems. Such philosophers, comparatively, and were more influential, stepped into unexplored dimensions and horizons to understand the world and meaning of life. Unlike the more contemporary thinkers, they understood the real purpose of epistemology and the aim of philosophy to help others understand their <sup>surrounding</sup> ~~surround~~ and themselves better.

[Words: 97]