



外语专业通识课教材  
大学专业英语系列教程

Selected Readings  
in Western Philosophy

# 西方经典哲学文选

(英文版)

辜正坤 主编

马士奎 孟凡君  
刘 昊 孙继成 编注



北京大学出版社  
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# 西方哲学专业英语教程序

辜正坤

从 2003 年起,我为北京大学的本科生开设了一门用英语讲授的全校性选修课《西方学术精华概论》。该课程后来作为全校通选课程,几乎每学期都开设,一直讲授到 2012 年上半年,共讲授了 15 个学期。课程涵盖的内容以西方哲学为主,兼顾部分其他学科的知识如达尔文学说、弗洛伊德学说,以及部分自然科学的内容,例如牛顿、爱因斯坦的学说、大爆炸宇宙学、量子理论等等。

到 2012 年下半年,我又为北大外院世界文学研究所研究生开设了《西方哲学精华与文学研究》,在相当大的程度上,该课程承袭了《西方学术精华概论》中的哲学内容。但是在阐述上有所深化并加入了不少中国哲学内容,以资比较;同时附加了若干文学研究内容,以资应用。由于有关方面未在选课表上注明是英语授课,所以,这个学期首次尝试使用 PPT 显示英文讲义,授课却用汉语的方式。

追溯起来,最初开设《西方学术精华概论》这门课程的原因有三个。第一,中国学生对于西方哲学和一般性的人文社科知识的了解,往往依赖与之相关的汉译本和汉语课程,这对于理解西方的哲学思想和概念显然有相当的障碍,并造成相应的误解误读,因为思想和概念通过翻译之后,往往会产生不同程度的偏差。如果直接用英语来传授和接受这些知识,障碍和偏差就会小得多,因为英语属于印欧语系。凡是属于印欧语系的思想、概念,在这个语系之内,相互之间由于语言而产生的含义偏差要比译成汉语后产生的含义偏差相应小得多。而西方哲学、人文社会科学内容大多是用印欧语系里的语言书写的,所以,用英文来开设这样的课程对于中国学生来说,就显得很有必要。第二,由于我从 1995 年起,开设了《中西文化比较》这门全校性选修课(后来也成了通选课)。这门课程是用汉语讲授的。讲授这门课程时,我往往是把西方文化作为理解、阐释中国文化的参照,因此重心常常落在对中国文化、尤其是对其长处的阐释上。这样一来,对西方文化的介绍就相对要少一些。为了弥补这个缺陷,所以我专门开设了《西方学术精华概论》,以便能够一定程度上满足那些希望更多地整体性概括了解西方文化长处的同学。第三,开设这门课程是想帮助北大的本科生可以借此提高自己的人文社科类英语接受能力。

这样的课程一旦开设起来,除了自己的英文讲义,我发觉还需要一本配套的英文哲学经典文章选集。学生不能只是听教员的概括性讲述。教员所能利用的课堂教学时间是很有限的,不能囊括尽可能多的内容,应该给他们在课后留下更多的可以自由选择

浏览空间。但是这个空间又不能过大,让他们无所适从,因为学生的学习时间也是有限的。于是产生了目前这本书。它由 27 篇有定评的西方经典哲学家的文章组成。从古希腊的柏拉图(Plato, 427 BC—347 BC)直到当代的英国哲学家艾耶尔(Alfred Jules Ayer, 1910—1989),上下涵盖西方 2 千多年间的最有声望的哲学家的文章。基本上可以满足教员用作英文哲学通识类课程辅助教材的需要,也可以满足学生借此直接阅读英文哲学经典文献的需要。当然,挂一漏万,27 篇文章实际上少得可怜,还有大量的经典性文章无法入选。不过,一般人文社科专业的大学生如果能够把这些文章都真正学完,他对于西方哲学的认识必然有很大的提高,他阅读哲学专业文献的英语水平也必然会大大提高。

实际上,为了同类目的,我还主编了一套专业英语教程(涵盖政治学、心理学、计算机学、宗教学、教育学、社会学等专业)。目前这本书,属于哲学专业领域的辅助教程。

教程有教程的体例。为了方便使用者,我组织了几位英文博士从有助于理解英文原文的角度,对每篇文章的作者、其主要思想贡献、所选文章的背景等,都进行了简略介绍。对英文正文则进行了简繁适度的注释。此外,每篇文章后还设计了一些思考题或练习题。希望能够对有兴趣的读者起到辅助作用。这些编注者,除了孙继成副教授还是英文博士候选人之外,其余都是英文博士,且都是若干所大学的现任教授或副教授。他们是:孟凡君、马士奎、刘昊、孙继成。他们牺牲了不少课余时间来做这种非常琐碎的注释工作,实在令人感动。我在这里代表读者向他们表示衷心的感谢。北大出版社公共英语教材发展中心主任兼外语编辑部副主任刘强先生系本书责任编辑,为了此书的审校、修改、编辑,提出了诸多建议,付出了大量劳动;北大出版社外语编辑部主任张冰女士一直对此书的出版工作非常关心,多方督促,使此书能够尽早出版。我也在此代表全体编注者对他们二位致以由衷的谢意。

是为序。

2012 年 10 月于北京大学世界文学研究所



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# THE ROLE OF PERCEPTION IN KNOWING<sup>①</sup>

## 论感知在认识中的作用

Plato 柏拉图

柏拉图(公元前427—前347)生于雅典一个最辉煌的望族之家。他本会成为一名伟大的政治家,可是他的朋友也是老师苏格拉底受到不公正的审判之后,他就在深恶痛绝中放弃了这一抱负。在公元前399年苏格拉底被处死之后,柏拉图到处周游,认定雅典已经抛弃了其古老的公正理念。在周游期间,他写了许多哲学对话录,运用他的朋友苏格拉底的特点将问答过程予以简化。随着他的哲学思辨能力的不断增长,他又返回雅典,创建了一所学院。该学院不久就成为了希腊的文化中心,许多伟大的数学家和科学家,包括亚里士多德,都在学院里学习过。



选文的第一部分选自《泰阿泰德》,是以学院的重要成员、立体几何的创立者泰阿泰德的名字来命名的。在这篇对话中,宣称知识的主观性的怀疑论者普罗塔哥拉的理论受到了质疑。苏格拉底和泰阿泰德得出结论,知识的获得需要积极的思想,而且必须超越被动的感知。那么如何才能做到这一点?如何超越感性的推证?第二部分选自《理想国》,此为柏拉图的代表作,在该部分中柏拉图做出了答复,知识与客观物体没有丝毫关系,而是与思想的形式相关联的。这些抽象的物体单凭思维能力就可以获知,但是破除感悟的幻觉需要付出巨大的努力。“洞穴说”揭示了通往思想的境界时所付出的艰辛,这一著名学说对早期的基督教思想家奥古斯丁等人产生了重大影响,因为它似乎与信仰者对上帝的探求如出一辙。

在柏拉图的思想体系中有一个中心概念  $\iota\delta\epsilon\alpha$ (archetypal form, pattern),这里由于篇幅所限未选其有关的专文,但其哲学意义却特别值得一提。辜正坤教授认为:西方人错误地将柏拉图的  $\iota\delta\epsilon\alpha$  不加区别地译作 Idea,造成了西方若干普通读者对柏拉图  $\iota\delta\epsilon\alpha$  这个概念的误解,甚至把它等同于“思想”或“观念”。同样的学术误解发生在中国,由于中国学者错误地将 idea 译作“理念”,则造成了大量中国学人对柏拉图  $\iota\delta\epsilon\alpha$  的误解。辜教授

<sup>①</sup> From “The Theaetetus,” in *Plato’s Theory of Knowledge*, translated with commentary by F. M. Cornford. First published in 1935 by Routledge & Kegan Paul, Ltd. (London), and reprinted with their permission and that of Humanities Press, Inc. (New York).



认为, *ιδεα* 这个词绝不能翻译成“理念”,也不宜译成“理式”,而应该译成“原型”、“范型”、“本真形式”等等。因为在柏拉图的理论中,它不属于主观的东西,而是客观的东西;它虽然可以存在于人的思想中,但不从属于人的思想,因为从根本上来说,它是脱离人的思想而存在的。它既不是“理”,也不是“念”,而是存在于彼岸世界 (the world of being) 中的最真实的“原型”,此岸世界 (the world of becoming) 的一切现象都是彼岸世界中各类原型的对应物。原型是永存不朽的,而此岸世界的现象却是流变的,会灭亡的。<sup>①</sup>



## Knowledge as Perception

*Socrates*<sup>②</sup>: ... So, Theaetetus, try to explain what knowledge is. Never say it is beyond your power; it will not be so, if heaven wills [it] and you take courage.<sup>③</sup>

*Theaetetus*: Well, Socrates, with such encouragement from a person like you, it would be a shame not to do one's best to say what one can. It seems to me that one who knows something is perceive the thing he knows, and so far as I can see at present, knowledge is nothing but perception.<sup>④</sup>

*Socrates*: Good. That is the right spirit in which to express one's opinion. But now suppose we examine your offspring together and see whether it is a mere wind egg or has some life in it.<sup>⑤</sup> Perception, you say, is knowledge.

*Theaetetus*: Yes.

*Socrates*: The account you give of the nature of knowledge is not, by any means, to be despised.<sup>⑥</sup> It is the same that was given by Protagoras though he stated it in a somewhat different way. He says you will remember, that “man is the measure of all things—alike of the beings that are and of the not-being that are not.”<sup>⑦</sup> No doubt you have read that.

*Theaetetus*: Yes often.

*Socrates*: He puts it in this sort of way, doesn't he, that any given thing “is to me such as it appears to me, and is to you such as it appears to you,” you and I being men?

*Theaetetus*: Yes, that is how he puts it.

*Socrates*: Well, what a wise man says is not likely to be nonsense. So let us follow up his meaning. Sometimes, when the same wind is blowing, one of us feels chilly, the

① 引自辜正坤:《对索绪尔和乔姆斯基的批判与语言学新定律》,载《外语与外语教学》,2004年第4期,第5页。又,笔者还参考了辜正坤教授在讲授《西方学术精华》课程时对此术语的专门解释。

② Socrates, 苏格拉底(公元前470—前399),希腊哲学家。

③ 千万别说那不是你力所能及的;如果那是天意,如果你孜孜以求之,就不会如此。

④ 在我看来,一个人的知识就是他对所了解的事物的感知,因此,就我目前看来,知识即感知。

⑤ 现在让我们对你的说法进行一下推敲,看是否言之有理。offspring:后代。wind egg:未受精的蛋,即软皮蛋。

⑥ 不管怎么说,你对知识本质的描述是不容轻视的。

⑦ 人是万物的尺度——譬如实相与空相。

other does not, or one may feel slight chilly, the other quite cold.

*Theaetetus*: Certainly.

*Socrates*: Well, in that case are we to say that the wind in itself is cold or not cold? Or shall we agree with Protagoras that it is cold to the one who feels chilly, and not to the other?

*Theaetetus*: That seems reasonable.

*Socrates*: And further that it so “appears” to each of us?

*Theaetetus*: Yes.

*Socrates*: And “appears” means that he “perceives” it so?

*Theaetetus*: True.

*Socrates*: “Appearing,” then, is the same thing as “perceiving,” in the case of what is hot or anything of that kind. They are to each man such as he *perceives* them.

*Theaetetus*: So it seems.

*Socrates*: Perception, then, is always of something that *is*, and as being knowledge, it is infallible.<sup>①</sup>

*Theaetetus*: That is clear.

*Socrates*: Well then, Theaetetus, here is a point for you to consider. The answer you gave us that knowledge is perception, wasn't it?

*Theaetetus*: Yes.

*Socrates*: Now suppose you were asked, When a man sees white or black things or hears high or low tones, what does he see or hear with? I suppose you would say with eyes and ears.

*Theaetetus*: Yes, I should.

*Socrates*: To use words and phrases in an easygoing way without scrutinizing<sup>②</sup> them too curiously is not, in general, a mark of ill breeding; on the contrary there is something lowbred in being too concise. But sometimes there is no help for it, and this is a case in which I must take exception to the form of your answer. Consider. Is it more correct to say that we see and hear *with* our eyes and ears or *through* them?

*Theaetetus*: I should say we always perceive through them, rather than with them.

*Socrates*: Yes, it would surely be strange that there should be a number of sense ensconced<sup>③</sup> inside us. Like the warriors in the Trojan horse<sup>④</sup>, and all these things should not converge<sup>⑤</sup> and meet in some single nature—a mind, or whatever it is to be called—with which we perceive all the objects of perception *through* the senses as instruments.

① 那么,感知往往就是所感知的东西本身,而且,作为知识,这是准确无误的。

② scrutinize:细察,详审。

③ ensconced:安置(自己在隐秘、安全之地)。

④ the Trojan horse:特洛伊木马。

⑤ converge:汇合,聚集。

*Theaetetus*: Yes, I think that is a better description.

*Socrates*: My object in being so precise is to know whether there is some part of ourselves, the same in all cases, with which we apprehend black or white through the eyes, and objects of other kinds through the other senses. Can you, if the question is put to you refer all such acts of apprehension to the body? Perhaps, however, it would be better you should speak for yourself in reply to questions, instead of my taking the words out of your mouth. Tell me, all these 4 instruments through which you perceive what is warm or hard or light or sweet are parts of the body, aren't they, not of anything else?

*Theaetetus*: Of nothing else.

*Socrates*: Now you will also agree that the objects you perceive through one faculty cannot be perceived through another—objects of hearing, for instance, through sights, or objects of sight through hearing?

*Theaetetus*: Of course I will.

*Socrates*: Then, if you have some thought about both objects at once, you cannot be having a perception including both at once through either the one or the other organ.

*Theaetetus*: No.

*Socrates*: Now take sound and color.<sup>①</sup> Have you not, to begin with, this thought which includes both at once—that they both exist.

*Theaetetus*: I have.

*Socrates*: And, further, that each of the two is *different* from the other and the *same* as itself?

*Theaetetus*: Naturally.

*Socrates*: And again, that both together are *two*, and each of them is *one*?

*Theaetetus*: Yes.

*Socrates*: And also you can ask yourself whether they are *unlike* each other or *alike*?

*Theaetetus*: No doubt.

*Socrates*: Then through what organ do you think all this about them both? What is common to them both cannot be apprehended either through hearing or through sight. Besides, here is further evidence for my point. Suppose it were possible to inquire whether sound and color were both brackish<sup>②</sup> or not; no doubt you could tell me what faculty you would use—obviously not sight or hearing, but some other.

*Theaetetus*: Of course, the faculty that works through the tongue.

*Socrates*: Very good. But now, through what organ does that faculty work, which tells you what is common not only to these objects but to all things—what you mean by the words “exists” and “does not exist” and the other terms applied to them in the

① 现在以声音和颜色为例。

② brackish:微咸的,略带盐味的。



questions I put a moment ago? What sort of organs can you mention, corresponding to all these terms, through which the perceiving part of us perceives each one of them.

*Theaetetus*: You mean existence and nonexistence, likeness and unlikeness, sameness and difference, and also unity and numbers in general as applied to them, and clearly your question covers “even” and “odd” and all that kind of notions.<sup>①</sup> You are asking through what part of the body our mind perceives these?

*Socrates*: You follow me most admirably, *Theaetetus*; that is exactly my question.

*Theaetetus*: Really, *Socrates*, I could not say, except that I think there is no special organ at all for these things, as there is for the others. It is clear to me that the mind in itself is its own instrument for contemplating<sup>②</sup> the common terms that apply to everything.

*Socrates*: In fact, *Theaetetus*, you are handsome, not ugly as *Theodorus* said you were, for in a discussion handsome is as handsome does. And you have treated me more than handsomely in saving me the trouble of a very long argument, if it is clear to you that the mind contemplates some things through its own instrumentality, others through the bodily faculties. That was indeed what I thought myself, but I wanted you to agree.

*Theaetetus*: Well, it is clear to me.

*Socrates*: Under which head, then, do you place existence? For that is, above all, a thing that belongs to everything.

*Theaetetus*: I should put it among the things that the mind apprehends by itself.

*Socrates*: And also likeness and unlikeness and sameness and difference?

*Theaetetus*: Yes.

*Socrates*: And how about “honorable” and “dishonorable” and “good” and “bad”?

*Theaetetus*: These again seem to me, above all, to be things whose being is considered one in comparison with another, by the mind, when it reflects within itself upon the past and the present with an eye to the future.

*Socrates*: Wait a moment. The hardness of something hard and the softness of something soft will be perceived by the mind through touch, will they not?<sup>③</sup>

*Theaetetus*: Yes.

*Socrates*: But their existence and the fact that they both exist and their contrariety<sup>④</sup> to one another and again the existence of this contrariety are things which the mind itself undertakes to judge for us, when it reflects upon them and compares one with another.

① 你指的是存在与虚无、相似与不似、相同与差异以及整体与个体，而且很清楚，你的问题也包括偶数与奇数等诸如此类的东西。

② contemplate: 默想, 沉思。

③ 坚硬物体的硬度和柔软物体的软度都是你的思想通过触觉感知的, 不是吗?

④ contrariety: 对立, 矛盾。

*Theaetetus*: Certainly.

*Socrates*: Is it not true, then, that whereas all the impressions which penetrate to the mind through the body are things which men and animals alike are naturally constituted to perceive from the moment of birth, reflections about them with respect to their existence and usefulness only come, if they come at all, with difficulty through a long and troublesome process of education?

*Theaetetus*: Assuredly.

*Socrates*: It is possible, then, to reach truth when one cannot reach existence?

*Theaetetus*: It is possible.

*Socrates*: But if a man cannot reach the truth of a thing, can he possibly know that thing?

*Theaetetus*: No, Socrates, how could he?

*Socrates*: If that is so, knowledge does not reside in<sup>①</sup> the impression, but in our reflection upon them. It is there, seemingly, and not in the impression, that it is possible to grasp existence and truth.

*Theaetetus*: Evidently.

*Socrates*: Then are you going to give me the same name to two things which differ so widely?

*Theaetetus*: Surely that would not be right.

*Socrates*: Well then, what name do you give to the first one—to seeing, hearing, smelling, feeling cold and feeling warm?

*Theaetetus*: Perceiving. What another name is there for it?

*Socrates*: Taking it all together, then, you call this perception?

*Theaetetus*: Necessarily.

*Socrates*: A thing which, we agree, has no part in apprehending truth, since it has none in apprehending existence.

*Theaetetus*: No, it has none.

*Socrates*: Nor, consequently, in knowledge either.

*Theaetetus*: No.

*Socrates*: Then, Theaetetus, perception and knowledge cannot possibly be the same thing.

*Theaetetus*: Evidently not, Socrates. Indeed, it is now perfectly plain that knowledge is something different from perception.

*Socrates*: But when we began our talk it is certainly not our object to find out what knowledge is not, but what it is. Still, we have advanced so far as to see that we must not look for it in sense perception at all, but in what goes on when the mind is occupied by things by itself, whatever name you give to that.

*Theaetetus*: Well, Socrates, the name for that, I imagine, is “making judgment”.

① reside in:存在于……之中。

*Socrates*: You are right, my friend. Now begin all over again. Blot out<sup>①</sup> all we have been saying, and see if you can get a clear view from the position you have now reached. Tell us once more what knowledge is.

*Theaetetus*: I cannot say it is judgment as a whole, because there is false judgment, but perhaps true judgment is knowledge. You may take that as my answer. If, as we go further, it turns out to be less convincing than it seems now, I will try to find another.

*Socrates*: Good, Theaetetus. This promptness is much better than hanging back as you did at first.<sup>②</sup> If we go on like this, either we shall find what we are after or we shall be less inclined to imagine we know something of which we know nothing whatever, and that surely is a reward not to be despised. And now, what is this you say—that there are two sorts of judgment, one true, the other false, and you define knowledge as judgment that is true?...

### Knowledge as True Belief

*Theaetetus*:... True belief is knowledge.<sup>③</sup> Surely there can at least be no mistake in believing what is true, and the consequences are always satisfactory.

*Socrates*: Try, and you will see, Theaetetus, as the man said when he was asked if the river was too deep to ford<sup>④</sup>. So here, if we go forward on our search, we may stumble upon<sup>⑤</sup> something that will reveal the thing we are looking for. We shall make nothing out, if we stay where we are.

*Theaetetus*: True. Let us go forward and see.

*Socrates*: Well, we need not go far to see this much. You will find a whole profession to prove that true belief is not knowledge.

*Theaetetus*: How so? What profession?

*Socrates*: The profession of those paragons<sup>⑥</sup> of intellect known as orators<sup>⑦</sup> and lawyers. There you have men who use their skill to produce conviction, not by instruction, but by making people believe whatever they want them to believe. You can hardly imagine teachers so clever as to be able, in the short time allowed by the clock, to instruct their hearers thoroughly in the true facts of a case of robbery or other violence which those hearers had not witnessed.

*Theaetetus*: No, I cannot imagine that, but they can convince them.

*Socrates*: And by convincing you mean making them believe something.

*Theaetetus*: Of course.

① blot out: 涂掉。

② 这种干脆利落要比你开始时的游移不定好得多。

③ 正信即知识。

④ ford: 涉水, 过河。

⑤ stumble upon: 偶然碰见。

⑥ paragon: 模范, 典范。

⑦ orator: 演说家。



*Socrates*: And when a jury is rightly convinced of facts which can be known only by an eyewitness<sup>①</sup>, then, judging by hearsay and accepting a true belief, they are judging without knowledge, although if they find the right verdict, their conviction is correct?

*Theaetetus*: Certainly.

*Socrates*: But if true belief and knowledge were the same thing, the best of jurymen could never have a correct belief without knowledge. It now appears that they must be different thing. . . .

## The Objects of Knowledge<sup>②</sup>

(Socrates is conversing with Glaucon)

*Socrates*: . . . Let me remind you of the distinction we drew earlier and have often drawn on other occasions,<sup>③</sup> between the multiplicity of things that we call good or beautiful or whatever it may be and, on the other hand, Goodness itself or Beauty itself and so on. Corresponding to each of these sets of many things, we postulate<sup>④</sup> a single Form or real essence, as we call it.

*Theaetetus*: Yes, that is so.

*Socrates*: Further, the many things, we say, can be seen, but are not objects of rational thought; whereas the Forms are objects of thought, but invisible.<sup>⑤</sup>

*Theaetetus*: Yes, certainly.

*Socrates*: And we see things with our eyesight, just as we hear sounds with our ears and, to speak generally, perceive any sensible thing with our sense-faculties<sup>⑥</sup>.

*Theaetetus*: Of course.

*Socrates*: Have you noticed, then, that the artificer<sup>⑦</sup> who designed the senses has been exceptionally lavish of<sup>⑧</sup> his materials in making the eyes able to see and their objects visible?

*Theaetetus*: That never occurred to me.<sup>⑨</sup>

*Socrates*: Well, look at it in this way. Hearing and sound do not stand in need of any third thing, without which the ear will not hear nor sound be heard;<sup>⑩</sup> and I think

① eyewitness: 目击证人。

② From Plato's *Republic*, translated by F. M. Cornford. Published in 1941 by Oxford University Press and reprinted with the permission of Clarendon Press of Oxford, England.

③ Perhaps an allusion to the *Phaedo* (especially 78 E ff.), where the theory of Forms was first explicitly stated in similar terms. The earlier passage in the *Republic* is at 475 E ff., p. 179.

④ postulate; 以……为前提。

⑤ 进而言之,好多东西是可见的,但并非是理性思维的对象,因此,形式是思维的对象,但是看不见。

⑥ sense-faculty: 感官。

⑦ artificer: 技工。

⑧ lavish of: 慷慨的,大方的。

⑨ 我从来没想到过这些。

⑩ Plato held that the hearing of sound is caused by blows inflicted by the air (*Timaeus* 67B, 80A); but the air is hardly analogous to light.

the same is true of the most, not to say all, of the other senses. Can you think of one that does require anything of the sort?

*Theaetetus*: No, I cannot.

*Socrates*: But there is this need in the case of sight and its objects. You may have the power of vision in your eyes and try to use it, and color may be there in the objects; but sight will see nothing and the colors will remain invisible in the absence of a third thing peculiarly constituted to serve this very purpose.

*Theaetetus*: By which you mean—

*Socrates*: Naturally I mean what you call light; and if light is a thing of value, the sense of sight and the power of being visible are linked together by a very precious bond, such as unites no other sense with its object.

*Theaetetus*: No one could say that light is not a precious thing.

*Socrates*: And of all the divinities in the skies<sup>①</sup> is there one whose light, above all the rest, is responsible for making our eyes perfectly and making objects perfectly visible?

*Theaetetus*: There can be no two opinions; of course, you mean the Sun.

*Socrates*: And how is sight related to this deity<sup>②</sup>? Neither sight nor the eye which contains it is the Sun, but of all the sense-organs it is the most sun-like; and further, the power it possesses is dispensed by the Sun, like a stream flooding the eye.<sup>③</sup> And again, the Sun is not vision, but it is the cause of vision and also is seen by the vision it causes.

*Theaetetus*: Yes.

*Socrates*: It was the Sun, then, that I mean when I spoke of that offspring which the Good has created in the visible world, to stand there in the same relation to vision and visible things as that which the Good itself bears in the intelligible world to intelligence and to intelligible objects.

*Theaetetus*: How is that? You must explain further.

*Socrates*: You know what happens when the colors of things are no longer irradiated<sup>④</sup> by the daylight, but only by the fainter luminaries<sup>⑤</sup> of the night; when you look at them, the eyes are dim and seem almost blind, as if there were no unclouded vision in them. But when you look at things on which the Sun is shining, the same eyes see distinctly and it becomes evident that they do contain the power of vision.

*Theaetetus*: Certainly.

① Plato held that the heavenly bodies are immortal living creatures, i. e. gods.

② deity: 神。

③ Plato's theory of vision involves three kinds of fire or light: (1) daylight, a body of pure fire diffused in the air by the Sun; (2) the visual current or "vision," a pure fire similar to daylight, contained in the eyeball and capable of issuing out in a stream direct toward the object seen; (3) the color of the external object.

④ irradiate: 照射。

⑤ luminary: 发光体, 指太阳, 月亮或星星。

*Socrates*: Apply this comparison, then, to the soul. When its gaze is fixed upon an object irradiated by truth and reality, the soul; gains understanding and knowledge and is manifestly in possession of intelligence. But when it looks towards that twilight world of things that come into existence and pass away, its sight is dim and it has only opinions and beliefs which shift to and fro<sup>①</sup>, and it seems like a thing that has no intelligence.

*Theaetetus*: That is true.

*Socrates*: This, then, which gives to the objects of knowledge their truth and to him who knows them his power of knowing, is the Form or essential nature of Goodness. It is the cause of knowledge and truth; and so, while you may think of it as an object of knowledge, you will do well to regard it as something beyond truth and knowledge and precious as these both are, of still higher worth. And, just as in our analogy light and vision were to be thought of as like the Sun, but not identical with it, so here both knowledge and truth are to be regarded as like the Good, but to identify either with the Good is wrong. The Good must hold a yet higher place of honor.

*Theaetetus*: You are giving it a position of extraordinary splendour<sup>②</sup>, if it is the source of knowledge and truth and itself surpasses them in worth. You surely cannot mean that it is pleasure.

*Socrates*: Heaven forbid, I exclaimed. But I want to follow up our analogy still further. You will agree that the Sun not only makes the things we see visible, but also brings them into existence and gives them growth and nourishment<sup>③</sup>; yet he is not the same thing as existence.<sup>④</sup> And so with the objects of knowledge; these derive from the Good not only their power of being known, but their very being and reality; and Goodness is not the same thing as being, but even beyond being, surpassing it is dignity and power.

*Theaetetus*: Glaucon exclaimed with some amusement at my exalting Goodness in such extravagant terms.

*Socrates*: It is your fault, I replied; you forced me to say what I think.

*Theaetetus*: Yes, and you must not stop there. At any rate, complete your comparison with the Sun, if there is any more to be said.

*Socrates*: There is a great deal more, I answered.

*Theaetetus*: Let us hear it, then; don't leave anything out.

*Socrates*: I am afraid much must be left unspoken. However, I will not, if I can help it, leave anything that can be said on this occasion.

① to and fro: 来来回回的。

② splendour: 光华, 光亮。

③ nourishment: 养料。

④ The ambiguity of *genesis* can hardly be reproduced. The Sun "gives things their *genesis*" (generation, birth), but "is not itself *genesis*" (becoming, the existence in time of things which begin and cease to exist, as opposed to the real being of eternal things in the intelligible world).