BLOCK-1 INTRODUCTION

The Renaissance (during the 14th-16th centuries) and the Enlightenment (1650-1800) in Europe heralded major changes in culture, art, philosophy, science, and mathematics. The Renaissance has usually been associated with advances in literature, architecture, humanism, and a world economy. In French, Renaissance translates as "rebirth," meaning that this was a Golden Age of artistic, cultural, and intellectual thought and production. Some famous people of this period include William Shakespeare, Amadeus Mozart, Leonardo da Vinci and Nicolaus Copernicus. The period of Enlightenment was a period of discovery, but is generally limited to the realm of science, mathematics, and technology. Logic and reason reigned as thinkers became convinced that society and the natural world were like a giant machine. The scientific method, which relied on the notion of objective observation leading to verifiable conclusions, spurred developments in astronomy, philosophy, medicine, physiology, and chemistry. The block serves as an introduction to the course on "Modern Western Philosophy." It consists of 4 units.

Unit 1, "Introduction to Modern Philosophy," is a succinct introduction to the background to and major trends of modern philosophy. It is a brief survey that examines modern philosophical developments in Western Europe. Its purpose is to give students a background for more in-depth study in philosophy and the history of modern ideas.

Unit 2, "Renaissance," provides an overview of the Renaissance and the impact it has had in the development of Western Philosophy. Quite often we find that the philosophy of a given time is related to the culture from which it arises. Hence if we wish to understand the period of 'Modern Western Philosophy,' we would need to be familiar with the prevailing culture of the Renaissance.

Unit 3, "Enlightenment," deals with the period of the Enlightenment, which is characterized by the growing acceptance of reason (rather than cultural and religious tradition) as the primary authority used to settle philosophical, scientific and political problems. This emergence of a reason-based approach to life brought the age of the Renaissance to a close.

Unit 4, "Socio-political Implication," describes how the enlightenment broke through "the sacred circle," and became the source of critical ideas, such as the centrality of freedom, democracy, and reason as primary values of society. This view argues that the establishment of a contractual basis of rights would lead to the market mechanism and capitalism, the scientific method, religious tolerance, and the organization of states into self-governing republics through democratic means.

To conclude: As we see in the above units the Renaissance and the Enlightenment heralded major changes in culture, art, philosophy, science, and mathematics. Hence if we wish to understand the period of 'Modern Western Philosophy,' we would need to be familiar with the prevailing culture of the periods with their socio-political significance for posterity.

Block
1

RENAISSANCE AND ENLIGHTENMENT

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Director, School of Humanities
IGNOU

Prof. Gracious Thomas
Director, School of Social Work
IGNOU

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Mumbai

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Rachol
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J D V
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Pes'srsn College of Arts & Science, Goa

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Vijnananilayam
Eluru

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Mumbai

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DVK
Bangalaore

Dr. Pushpa J
University of Madras
Chennai

Prof. George Panthanmackel, Senior Consultant, IGNOU

Block Preparation Team

Unit 1	Dr. Mathew Pattamana Good Shepherd College, Kunnoth
Unit 2 &3	Dr. Keith D'Souza St Pius College, Mumbai
Unit 4	Dr. Kalipada Mohanta Central University of Jharkhand

Content Editor
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IGNOU, New Delhi

Format Editor
Prof. Gracious Thomas
IGNOU, New Delhi

Programme Coordinator
Prof. Gracious Thomas

Block
2
RATIONALISM

UNIT 1
Descartes

UNIT 2
Spinoza

UNIT 3
Leibniz

UNIT 4
Resume and Critical Appraisal

Expert Committee

Prof. Renu Bharadwaj
Director, School of Humanities
IGNOU

Prof. Gracious Thomas
Director, School of Social Work
IGNOU

Dr. Priyedarshi Jetli
University of Mumbai
Mumbai

Dr. Victor Ferrao
Rachol
Goa

Dr Babu Joseph
CBCI Centre
New Delhi

Dr. N. Sreekumar
IIT Madras
Chennai

Dr. Kalipada Mohanta
St. Anthony's College
Shillong

Dr. Alok Nagims
Vishwa Jyoti Gurukul
Varanasi

Dr. Pushparajan
Vr Japalaya
Bangalore

Dr. George Karuvelil
J D V
Pune

Dr. Kamladevi R Kunkolieuker
Pes'srsn College of Arts & Science, Goa

Dr. Sudha Gopinath
Koramangala
Bangalore

Dr. Johnson Puthenpurackal
Vijnananilayam
Eluru

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St. Pius College
Mumbai

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Bangalaore

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Chennai

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IGNOU, New Delhi

Programme Coordinator
Prof. Gracious Thomas
IGNOU, New Delhi

Block
3
EMPIRICISM

UNIT 1
Locke

UNIT 2
Berkley

UNIT 3
Hume

UNIT 4
Resume and Appraisal

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Director, School of Humanities
IGNOU

Prof. Gracious Thomas
Director, School of Social Work
IGNOU

Dr. Priyedarshi Jetli
University of Mumbai
Mumbai

Dr. Victor Ferrao
Rachol
Goa

Dr Babu Joseph
CBCI Centre
New Delhi

Dr. N. Sreekumar
IIT Madras
Chennai

Dr. Kalipada Mohanta
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Shillong

Dr. Alok Nagims
Vishwa Jyoti Gurukul
Varanasi

Dr. Pushparajan
Vr Japalaya
Bangalore

Dr. George Karuvelil
J D V
Pune

Dr. Kamladevi R
Kunkolieuker
Pes'srsn College of Arts & Science, Goa

Dr. Sudha Gopinath
Koramangala
Bangalore

Dr. Johnson Puthenpurackal
Vijnananilayam
Eluru

Dr. Keith D'Souza
St. Pius College
Mumbai

Dr. Kurian Kachappilly
DVK
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Chennai

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Aligarh Muslim University

Unit 3 — Prof. Jose Kannanaikkal
Suvidya College, Bangalore

Unit 4 — Prof. Augustine Mangalathu
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IGNOU, New Delhi

Programme Coordinator
Prof. Gracious Thomas
IGNOU, New Delhi

Block
4
IDEALISM AND POSITIVISM

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IGNOU

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Director, School of
Social Work
IGNOU

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University of Mumbai
Mumbai

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Goa

Dr Babu Joseph
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Pune

Dr. Kamladevi R
Kunkolieuker
Pes'srsn College of
Arts & Science, Goa

Dr. Sudha Gopinath
Koramangala
Bangalore

Dr. Johnson
Puthenpurackal
Vijnananilayam
Eluru

Dr. Keith D'Souza
St. Pius College
Mumbai

Dr. Kurian Kachappilly
DVK
Bangalaore

Dr. Pushpa J
University of Madras
Chennai

Prof. George
Panthanmackel, Senior
Consultant, IGNOU

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Prof. George Panthanmackel
IGNOU, New Delhi

Format Editor
Prof. Gracious Thomas
IGNOU, New Delhi

Programme Coordinator
Prof. Gracious Thomas
IGNOU, New Delhi

MODERN PHILOSOPHY (4 Credits)

COURSE INTRODUCTION

Modern philosophy is philosophy practiced in Western Europe and North America between the 17th and early 20th centuries. The periods roughly mark the beginning and the end of modern philosophy. In this course we shall focus on two paramount characteristics of modern philosophy: its relentless search for solid *foundations* and its resolute turn toward *subjectivity*. While the renaissance, the reformation, the discovery of the new world, the rise of science and capitalism, represent the external (socio-historical) determinants of modernity, its major internal driving forces have been undoubtedly the human *subjectivity* (reason, freedom, creativity, innovation, autonomy, self-reflection) and the new spirit of *positivism* (a philosophy which holds that the only authentic knowledge is that which is based on actual sense experience). The course consists of 4 blocks with 16 units.

Block 1 is on "Renaissance and Enlightenment." The Block begins with an introduction to modern western philosophy and then explains in detail both renaissance and enlightenment. The block is concluded with a highlight of the socio-political implications of modern philosophy in general and of renaissance and enlightenment in particular.

Block 2 is on "Rationalism." This block searches into the philosophies of the Continental Rationalists: Descartes, Spinoza and Leibniz. The block is concluded with a resume, and a critical appraisal of these philosophers.

Block 3 is on "Empiricism." The block includes the philosophies of the British empiricists: Locke, Berkley and Hume. The block is concluded with a resume, and a critical appraisal.

Block 4 is on "Idealism and Positivism." Its content consists of the great philosophical systems of Kant and Hegel. The concluding unit is on positivism.

All these four blocks provide a student with basics in "Modern Western Philosophy," with an introduction to the major figures in philosophy of mind, epistemology, ethics, and metaphysics. Political philosophy is usually not subsumed under these categories (except Locke). Other important figures in political philosophy include Thomas Hobbes and Jean-Jacques Rousseau.

UNIT 1 INTRODUCTION TO MODERN PHILOSOPHY

Contents

1.0 OBJECTIVES

The principal objectives in this unit are:

- to become acquainted with the spirit of modern Philosophy from Renaissance to Positivism. In pursuing that goal the students should develop necessary skills for a valid interpretation of relevant ideas as well as become able to evaluate main arguments supporting modern trends.
- to help students understand the rationale and the motivation of the modern philosophers. If we do not take into account the intellectual reasons for certain solutions offered by them we cannot possibly recognize the relevance of the underlying problems. Along with this goal the students are expected to acquire a better appreciation for the contribution that modern philosophy has provided both in creating and understanding our current world.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

In this unit, which is an introduction to the whole course, we shall focus on two paramount and seemingly separate characteristics of modern philosophy: its relentless search for solid *foundations* and its resolute turn toward *subjectivity*. While the Renaissance, the Reformation, the discovery of the New World, the rise of Science and Capitalism, represent the *external* (socio-historical) determinants of modernity, its major *internal* driving forces have been undoubtedly the human *subjectivity* (freedom, creativity, innovation, autonomy, self-reflection) and the new spirit of *foundationalism* (laying down firm and stable grounds of all human knowledge and practical endeavor).

The 'I' (the *Ego*), the most basic principle of human subjectivity in general, becomes both the center and an all-pervasive philosophical theme of modern thought. It integrates as different contents as the ancient concept of soul, the medieval spirit, the Cartesian consciousness or the mind and the 'transcendental apperception' of Kant. Descartes grasps the principle of subjectivity as an abstract 'thinking thing,' while Kant conceives it as a self-relating subject that

attains absolute self-consciousness. For both, the contents of our mind are the products of an active subjectivity which is the fountain of all knowledge. By examining its operations and achievements they respond to the skepticism of their predecessors and contemporaries.

The modern quest for the new reliable foundations manifests itself in the form of the first and the most universal principle that grounds and defines everything else in the totality of the world. However, instead of searching for the first principles of being(s), modern philosophers are looking for the first principles of human knowledge. This *epistemological turn* away from the ancient cosmological and medieval theological approach was performed in a ground breaking manner by Rene Descartes in his *Meditations on First Philosophy* (1641). A more decisive and elaborate transformation of ancient Metaphysics (i.e., First Philosophy) into a science of *a priori* principles of human knowledge was subsequently carried out by Immanuel Kant in his *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781). The Kantian emphasis on the necessity of new foundations was largely determined by the Cartesian project and needs to be placed into the same overall context of modern thinking. While Descartes introspectively reconstructs the contents of his consciousness Kant transcendentally reconstructs the *a priori* workings of the cognizing subject. Despite all the differences in their respective positions, subjectivity in Kant's philosophy remains the main source of self-reflection and of *a priori* legislation. Kant replaces the Cartesian quest for absolute certainty with a concern for the *a priori* forms of intuition and understanding, but subjectivity is no less their origin for him than it was the source of certainty for Descartes. Both Descartes and Kant view mathematics as the model of knowledge. Accordingly, Descartes conceives mathematics as the unified science of the entire world, whereas Kant takes the supposed *synthetic a priori* judgments of mathematics as the pattern for the reformed (scientific) metaphysics.

A transformation of the *old ontological paradigm* into a new subject-centered (though not necessarily subjectivist) perspective lies at the core both of the Cartesian *epistemological* and the Kantian *transcendental turn*. This characterization is not misguided provided one does not lose out of sight the common denominator in the whole process, which is the idea of subjectivity as the foundation of all spheres of human pursuit. The *subject* supplies not only the original point of departure and the only directly accessible subject-matter of the mind, but it ultimately secures the *objectivity* of possible objects as well. Although subjective by their origin, the *a priori* principles of knowledge acquire objective validity by becoming the conditions of possibility for any objectivity. Thus the true source of every *objective foundation* eventually turns out to be the *subjectivity of the subject* itself.

While Descartes describes the contents of our consciousness in terms of mental events and entities, Kant is very anxious to avoid any substantification of our subjectivity. He clearly prefers to speak about judgments, propositions and human representations rather than about 'thinking things' or mental events occurring in our mind. With Kant, theory of knowledge definitely ceases to search for the most certain representations and turns its attention instead toward the rules which *a priori* determine how we acquire any possible experience. This means that Kant does not any longer conceive knowledge upon the old model of reliable perceptions although he still remains caught in the language of accurate representations. Nonetheless, instead of dealing with "objects in themselves," Kant sets forth to examine the conditions of their possibility as they are given in our experience, following the critical spirit of renaissance and reformation.

1.2 INFLUENCES OF RENAISSANCE AND REFORMATION

As we know the philosophy of a period arises as a response to the then existing social situations and social needs. And the development of philosophy in the history of Western civilization since the Renaissance has, thus, reflected in the thinking pattern of the philosophers of that time. Thus, Western philosophy in the middle ages was primarily a Christian philosophy, complementing the divine revelation. Renaissance and Reformations were two great reform movements that took place in 15^{th} and 16^{th} century. During this period there was a growing tendency to find fault with the old tradition, with the old language, the art, theological system, political relations of the church and state.

The reflective spirit generated by reformation and renaissance strengthened an abiding faith in the power of human reason, an intense interest in natural things, a lively yearning for civilization and progress. In scientific, religious, social, moral and political fields there was a demand for freedom and expression. The over all result was a slow but steady collapse of the ecclesiastical and political organization that was prevalent in the middle ages.

The same spirit of reformation and renaissance is reflected in the modern philosophy. So Modern philosophy is furnished with a different out look, a mental out look different from Greek and medieval philosophy. In modern philosophy two important aspects can be emphasized i.e., dismissing authority of the church and giving importance to the authority of the science. As we have studied last year medieval philosophy always wedded to theology. During that time philosophy was considered as the handmaid of theology. But modern philosophy originated at the wake of scientific developments and it always remained as subservient to science.

Thus we have the description of modern philosophy. According to Frank Thilly "Modern Philosophy may be viewed as an awaking of the reflective sprit quickening of criticism, as a revolt against absolutism and collectivism as a demand for freedom in thought, feeling and action." It sums up the nature of modern Philosophy.

Modern philosophy is generally said to have began with Francis Bacon in England and with Rene Descartes in France. For ex: Francis Bacon began his philosophy with an attack on the Aristotelian deductive method and proposed new starting point for philosophy i.e., inductive method. The power of a single religious authority was slowly eroded under the influence of the Protestant Reformation and as the prestige of the universal Latin language gave way to vernacular tongues, philosophers became less and less identified with their positions in the ecclesiastical hierarchy and more and more identified with their national origins.

1.3 CHARACTERISTICS OF MODERN THOUGHT IN GENERAL

Modern philosophy has a mental outlook, which differs from that of the medieval period in many ways. As we have seen, with Descartes in France and with Francis Bacon in England, it is generally said that modern philosophy took its origin. These philosophers strongly believed that they have initiated new systems of thought, which inaugurated a new philosophical tradition which largely distinct from the medieval inheritance. We will see the new element present in their thought and the major topics or concerns of these philosophers.

Hence it is appropriate to note some of the important differences between medieval and post-medieval philosophies. 1. The desire for independence, leads the post-medieval philosophers to find expression in the freedom of enquiry and freedom of thinking 2. The medieval philosophers wrote and taught in Latin language, whereas the modern philosophers

increasingly made use of the vernacular language 3. In the middle age, philosophers were mainly theologians. The modern thinkers in general were not theologians. 4. Again, there was a shift of emphasis from theological themes to the study of man and nature without explicit reference to God. 5. Almost all the medieval philosophers were mainly University professors engaged in teaching. On the other hand, the majority of the modern philosophers were not associated with academic teaching. Francis Bacon and Descartes were not teachers, Spinoza was not in favour of positions and refused to accept the invitation from Heidelberg University; Leibniz had refused the professorship for his personal reasons; Locke held some post in the state; Berkeley was a bishop. In short the modern philosophers were from different life circumstances. 6. Philosophy in this period was a concern of the fresh minds and not of the traditionalists. In general, the awakening of the reflective spirit, a spirit of criticism, a spirit of revolt against tradition and authority, a plea for freedom of reason, a shift of orientation etc. can be seen in this period. We can summarise the chief characteristics of modern western philosophy as the following.

The Spirit of Criticism

The critical spirit that soon grew into a revolt against authority and tradition, absolutism and collectivism of church and the state. Modern philosophy began as revolt against the religion-oriented thinking of the medieval period and had its origin in the new intellectual awakening, the Renaissance. Thinkers developed a keen critical faculty. They refused to accept traditions and scriptures without critical examination. Descartes' methodic doubt influenced the thinkers to never accept anything as true without doubting. There was a tendency to liberate every aspect of the society from the influence of the church. Philosophy at this time also shared the time to free search for a definite knowledge.

Revolt Against Tradition and Authority

The salient feature of the medieval mind was of an uncritical and blind acceptance of authority and power overemphasized by theology and salvation neglecting the human freedom and life on earth. But modern mind the secular authority replaced ecclesiastical authority and as the dominant interest of the age shifted from religion to politics, it was natural that the rivalries of the national states and their persistent crises of internal order should raise with renewed urgency philosophical problems, practically dormant since pre-Christian times, about the nature and the moral status of political power. This new preoccupation with national unity, internal security, state power, and international justice stimulated the growth of political philosophy in Italy, France, England, and Holland.

Predominance of the Scientific Spirit

One of the outstanding characteristics of modern philosophy is that it is scientific. In the Middle Ages theology was regarded as the supreme science, but in the post-medieval period the natural sciences begin to occupy the centre of the stage. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, however, we are still in a period when the philosopher is confident that he, like the scientist, can add to our knowledge of the world. The 16th and 17th cent. Philosophy was most influenced by the development of natural and physical science. The marvellous success of modern science induced the philosophers to apply scientific method in the field of philosophy too. The new discoveries in science changed the worldview of the modern period. Renaissance scientists were more interested in quantitative measurements rather than qualitative explanation

and contemplation of nature. They destroyed the static world-scheme of Middle-ages, which was based to a large extent on the speculative theories of Aristotle combined with presuppositions in the Bible. They rebelled against scholasticism. Human person was a microcosm, a miniature of the immense universe. Because of this relationship, man could coerce nature, understand her laws and her behaviour, and ultimately become king of creation. Science was the answer to the how of this and they achieved as they wished.

Four great men-Copernicus, Kepler, Galileo and Newton – are pre-eminent in the creation of science. Of these Copernicus belonged to the sixteenth century, but in his own time had little influence. Copernicus put forward the heliocentric theory for the first time, even though as a hypothesis. Kepler was the first important astronomer after Copernicus to adopt the heliocentric theory. Kepler's great achievement was the discovery of his three laws of planetary motion. Galileo is the greatest of the founders of modern science, with the possible exception of Newton. Galileo was the first to establish the law of falling bodies. Newton (1642-1727) achieved the final and complete triumph for which Copernicus, Kepler and Galileo had prepared he way.

Thus the physical science of the 17^{th} and 18^{th} centuries had a great influence on the philosophical thinking. The new astronomy and the new mathematical systems not only created a different outlook on part of the scientists: likewise changed the perspective of the philosophers. In the medieval agesphilosophy *was* crowned by theology. In opposition to this modern philosophy is scientific in its outlook it is no longer the handmaid of theology. It has a method of its own and it becomes the interpreter of science. Moreover what is called the European Renaissance followed upon the introduction of three novel mechanical inventions from the East: gunpowder, block printing from movable type, and the compass. The first was used to explode the massive fortifications of the feudal order and thus became an agent of the new spirit of nationalism that threatened the rule of churchmen with a competing secular power. The second, printing, made the propagation of knowledge widespread, secularised learning, reduced the intellectual monopoly of an ecclesiastical elite, and restored the literary and philosophical classics of Greece and Rome. The third, the compass, increased the safety and scope of navigation, produced the voyages of discovery that opened up the Western Hemisphere, and symbolized a new spirit of physical adventure and a new scientific interest in the structure of the natural world.

Each of these inventions with its wider cultural consequences presented new intellectual problems and novel philosophical tasks within a changed political and social environment.

The Development of Humanism

The development of humanism was another characteristic of modern thought. The Renaissance was characterized by the renewed study of mathematics, medicine, and classical literature. The first two sparked the scientific revolution of the 16th and 17th centuries; the last became the foundation of the philosophy of Renaissance humanism. From its origin, humanism – suspicious of science and generally indifferent to religion emphasized anew the centrality of man in the universe, his supreme value and importance. Humanism represented for a passion of learning and a stress on scholarly exactness. They gave importance to man than God and reason over faith. They contrasted the medieval sterile thinking with that of the Greek and Roman

thinking and cultural diversity. Characteristic of this emphasis was the famous *Oratio de hominis dignitate* (written 1486; *Oration on the Dignity of Man*) of a late 15th-century Platonist, Pico della Mirandola, a leading member of Lorenzo de' Medici's Platonic Academy of Florence. But the new emphasis upon man's personal responsibility and on the possibility of his self-creation as a work of art was in no small part a consequence of the rediscovery of a series of crucial classical texts, which served to reverse the trends of medieval learning. Humanism stressed the need for a political, economic, cultural, religious and social change. New books were created expressing the flowering of human spirit that criticised the powerful and ridiculed the mighty and praising the common man singing his passions and interests. Renaissance humanism was predicated upon the victory of rhetoric over dialectic and of Plato over Aristotle.

Individualism:

In line with the development of humanism we can see the growth of individualism as an important characteristic of modern philosophy. Emancipation from the authority of the Church led to the growth of individualism. Modern Philosophy has retained for the most part an individualistic and subjective tendency. The authority of the church over the mind gradually weakened and the individual began to gradually assert his intellectual independence. Modern philosophy is always individualistic in its thinking. While Greek and medieval philosophers were more institutional for example Plato and Aristotle were supported and directed by the city-states. In the Middle Ages philosophers were usually monks. The monks philosophised only in accordance with the institutions in which they were members. In the modern period philosophers are more individualistic and the spirit of subjectivity is the main thrust. There was an individualistic and subjective tendency in modern thinkers. This is marked very much in Descartes, who builds up all knowledge from the certainty of his own existence, and accepts clearness and distinctness (both subjective) as criteria of truth

In this process each philosopher has his own method. Philosophers of modern period accepts nothing as true simply because it is asserted by the authority. They gave importance to originality rather than conventionality. Their disagreement and difference were seen as the plus point of their originality. Since the universe is very vast so many truths can be exposed. He sees some aspects of truth, which no one has ever seen.

Secularism:

A shift of interest from the contemplation of super natural things to the explanation of natural things is an important characteristic of modern philosophy. Reason and logic were accepted as the final criteria both in the field of philosophy. The intellectuals of the modern thought realised that the truth cannot be arrived at through the dogmatic statements of the religious authorities but only through the freethinking. And hence, thinking freed itself from the clutches of the religious authorities and turned towards the natural subjects. Religion was pushed into the background by science and philosophy. Philosophy was brought down from heaven to the earth. Philosophy became more secular. So far philosophy is considered to be subservient to theology or to explain and confirm theological matter, the temporal order was self sufficient to explain everything. Consequently God and religion lost their relevance among temporal concept. Knowledge was sought no more for its own sake but for its practical utility i.e., in view of its achievements in mechanics, technology, medicine etc.

Predominance of Reason:

The main landmark of modem Philosophy, which distinguishers it from the medieval thinking is its growing faith in the power of reason. It is this faith in the assumed power of reason, which was responsible for the fresh researches and explorations in the field of Natural science, and for the unprecedented progress in very field of life. Beginning With Francis Bacon every new thinker wanted to improve life by applying the research into nature. There was an awakening in the realm of knowledge. Reason became the sole authority in the matters concerning Philosophy and science (Truth is not something to be dedicated by authority-ecclesiastical or political, but something to be discovered by free and impartial investigation). Hence attempts were made to develop a new Philosophical method after the model of mathematical science so as to make Philosophical investigation really scientific and reasonable.

Check Your Progress I

Check Your Progress I

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit

1. What is the view of Descartes and Kant on the principle of subjectivity?

……
……
……
……

2. What do you understand by predominance of reason in Modern Philosophy?

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1.4 THE CHANGING FACE OF THE CHURCH AND THE STATE

The political conflict was settled in favour of the state and the state took the place of kings, kingdom and the empire. Within the state itself there appeared a growing tendency towards the formation of constitutions and democratic institutions. There was a revolt against collectivism, feudalism and other social evils. The demand for grater social justice shocks then the political and social structures leading to the gradual disintegration of the empires in to small states marking the emergence of nationalism

In church also there were reactions and renewals due to reformation. The absolutism of the church in religious moral and intellectual fields was also strongly questioned. In the place of scholastic Theology, the elaborate questions of indulgences and rituals of the church the reformation emphasized an inner religion and personal worship: justification by faith instead of justification by work. The individual began to through off the yoke of the church and refused to accept church as the source of faith. Reason became the sole authority, the protest of the heart against mechanizations of the faith got more appreciations

Modern philosophy is rationalistic in the sense that it makes human reason the highest authority in the pursuit of knowledge. It is naturalistic in the sense that it seeks to explain inner and outer nature without supernatural presuppositions. It is thus scientific, keeping in touch with the new sciences, especially the science of external nature. It does not mean the modern thinkers were totally deprived of the scholastic theses; in fact there is continuity and discontinuity in their thought patterns. Sometimes the difference is more evident in their discussions. In general, empiricism and rationalism are the main streams of thought in this period, together with scepticism and idealism.

Quickening of criticism as a revolt against authority and tradition, demand for freedom in thought, feeling and action, assertion of nationalism against ecclesiasticism and in nationalism plea for the democracy, cry against slavery and serfdom and declaration of 'laissez faire' in economics, re-enthronement of reason in the style of Greek genius etc. mark the coming of a new era in the history of philosophy.

1.5 THE TWO PHASES OF MODERN PHILOSOPHY

The phase of Modern Philosophy can be divided into two rationalism and empiricism. The spirit of rationalism is particularly associated with certain philosophers of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, the most important being Descartes, Spinoza, and Leibniz. They emphasized the predominance of reason in constituting the knowledge. From the historical point of view rationalism begins with the philosophy of Descartes, the father of modern western philosophical thought. Before him, the sayings of the scriptures were accepted word by word and it was sin to doubt religious scriptures. Descartes for the first time declared that in philosophical reflections nothing should be admitted purely on the basis of faith. According to Descartes reason is the source of real knowledge. Spinoza gave a developed form of rationalism. According to him reality is rational and he explained the whole reality in terms of substance, attributes and modes. With Leibniz rationalism came to its climax. According to him there is nothing in the intellect besides the intellect itself. Intellect is the source of knowledge and experience provides only the occasion for us to become conscious of our ideas, which are totally innate. Thus while for Descartes only the basic ideas were innate, Leibniz considers all our ideas as innate. The empiricist philosophers John Locke, Barkley and Hume emphasized the role of experience and empirical origin of all ideas. However this is not strict exclusive division. Kant's great project was to combine the future of rationalism and empiricism a synthesis of both, known as synthetic a-priori. The development of philosophy after 1790 led to the revival of the old proposition under new form of idealism and positivism. The idealist philosophers Fichte, Shelling & Hegel supported the extreme views of reason and systematic thinking. Positivists Augusta Comte and J.S Mill appeal to our own experience of facts

Rationalism in General

The term rationalism has been used to refer to several different outlooks and movements of ideas. By far the most important of these is the philosophical outlook or theory of knowledge which stresses the power of a priori reason to grasp substantial truths about the world. According to rationalism intellect or reason is an independent source of knowledge. The word 'Ratio' means reason. According to them intellect is the independent source of knowledge. In our daily language rationalism comes to mean that the attempt to judge everything in the light of reason. The intellect gives us self-evident innate or a priori ideas. Thus knowledge consists of these innate ideas. These are necessary and universal truths. True knowledge is attained by innate ideas

alone. Hence knowledge obtained through innate ideas is universal and necessary. Reason is the standard of knowledge and not the authority or revelation. The extreme form of rationalism does not accept any role to sense-experience in the formation of knowledge. Generally, it gives a subordinate role to experience, i.e., experience does not constitute but serve as an occasion for the exercise of intellect, whose innate idea constitute knowledge. Hence sense experience serves only as an opportunity for the play of intellect and its innate idea. Such knowledge is universal and necessary. The senses play only a secondary role in the cognitive process; they can illustrate a universal truth given by the intellect but they can not constitute knowledge. For rationalism the mind or intellect is active both in obtaining ideas and constituting ideas. Rationalist philosophers were more influenced by the model of mathematical reason because mathematics provides the model of clarity, certainty and deduction. By employing mathematical methods we can avoid the personal elements and subjective factors such as feelings, moods etc. An overall effect of rationalism was everywhere. There was an appeal to the natural realities and things in the place of supernatural. The progress of science also gave a hope in the power of human reason to know everything.

In the 17th cent rationalists were more pre-occupied to explain the world than God. Many of them were scientists who made notable contribution to mathematics and physics. However we cannot say that they were totally irreligious.

Empiricism

The important philosophers of this movement are Locke, Berkeley and Hume. According to them there is no inborn truth. All knowledge comes from sense experience or perception. Hence the so-called necessary propositions are not necessary or absolutely certain but it gives only a portable knowledge. According to the empiricists the mind at birth is a clean state (*tabula Rasa*) All the characters of knowledge are acquired through sense experience. Sensation and reflection, the outer and inner sense experience are the only two windows through which the dark chamber of mind comes to be filled with light.

1.6. LET US SUM UP

Modern philosophy grapples with issues raised by our attempts to understand reality scientifically, by our need to reconcile such attempts with traditional moral and religious conceptions and practices, and by our need to reconcile all of this with our commonsense understanding of our world and ourselves. Issues and problems that arise in these connections include the following. *Mental representation*: How does the mind reflect reality? Do all our concepts arise from sense experience or does the mind contain *innate ideas* which inform our understanding prior to all experience, informing, perhaps, experience itself? Does all knowledge derive from sensory experience or are some things known *a priori* (independently of experience)? *The existence of external reality*: Are some realities mind-independent (as realists maintain), or are things-themselves thought-dependent (as idealists say)? Concerning *substance*: Are there two fundamentally different sorts of realities, mental and material (as dualists hold), or just one; and if one sort, is that one *mental* (idealism), or *physical* (materialism), or *monism* (Spinoza)? Other topics include *free will* and *causation*; *God*; the *mind-body* problem; the meaning of *life*; and the nature of *value*.

Check Your Progress II

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit

1. What do you understand by rationalism?

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2. What do you understand by empiricism?

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1.7. KEY WORDS

Subjectivity: Subjectivity refers to a person's perspective or opinion, particular feelings, beliefs, and desires. In philosophy, the term is often contrasted with objectivity.

Objectivity: A proposition is generally considered to be objectively true when its truth conditions are 'mind-independent.' Contrary to this, several philosophers, following Immanuel Kant, have concluded that scientific knowledge is systematic knowledge of the nature of things as we perceive them rather than they are in themselves.

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1.9. ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answers to Check Your Progress I

1. The 'I' (the *Ego*), the most basic principle of human subjectivity in general, becomes both the center and an all-pervasive philosophical theme of modern thought. It integrates as different

contents as the ancient concept of soul, the medieval spirit, the Cartesian consciousness or the mind and the 'transcendental apperception' of Kant. Descartes grasps the principle of subjectivity as an abstract 'thinking thing,' while Kant conceives it as a self-relating subject that attains absolute self-consciousness. For both, the contents of our mind are the products of an active subjectivity which is the fountain of all knowledge. By examining its operations and achievements they respond to the skepticism of their predecessors and contemporaries.

2. The main landmark of modem Philosophy, which distinguishers it from the medieval thinking is its growing faith in the power of reason. It is this faith in the assumed power of reason, which was responsible for the fresh researches and explorations in the field of Natural science, and for the unprecedented progress in very field of life. Beginning With Francis Bacon every new thinker wanted to improve life by applying the research into nature. There was an awakening in the realm of knowledge. Reason became the sole authority in the maters concerning Philosophy and science (Truth is note something to be dedicated by authority- ecclesiastical or political, but something to be discovered by free and impartial investigation). Hence attempts were made to develop a new Philosophical method after the model of mathematical science so as to make Philosophical investigation really scientific and reasonable.

Answers to Check Your Progress II

1. The term rationalism has been used to refer to several different outlooks and movements of ideas. By far the most important of these is the philosophical outlook or theory of knowledge which stresses the power of *a priori* reason to grasp substantial truths about the world. According to rationalism intellect or reason is an independent source of knowledge. The word 'Ratio' means reason.

2. The important philosophers of this movement are Locke, Berkeley and Hume. According to them there is no inborn truth. All knowledge comes from sense experience or perception. Hence the so-called necessary propositions are not necessary or absolutely certain but it gives only a portable knowledge. According to the empiricists, the mind at birth is a clean state (*tabula Rasa*) All the characters of knowledge are acquired through sense experience Sensation and reflection, the outer and inner sense experience are the only two windows through which the dark chamber of mind comes to be filled with light.

UNIT 2 THE RENAISSANCE

Contents

2.0. OBJECTIVES

The main objective of this Unit is to provide an overview of the Renaissance and the impact it has had in the development of Western Philosophy. Quite often we find that the philosophy of a given time is related to the culture from which it arises. Hence if we wish to understand the period of 'Modern Western Philosophy,' we would need to be familiar with the prevailing cultures of the Renaissance and the Enlightenment. This Unit deals with the Renaissance and the next Unit will deal with the Enlightenment.

By the end of this Unit you should be familiar with:

- The basic understanding of the period of the Renaissance
- Major events and their significance during this period
- Aspects of Renaissance Culture and Philosophy
- Prominent thinkers and personalities and their contribution
- The significance of this period in terms of Modern Western Philosophy

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The term 'Renaissance,' sometimes 'Renascence,' is derived from a French / Latin word meaning 'rebirth'. It refers to an experience of the European world that began from the 14th century and was characterised by a rebirth of learning, arts and culture. The people of this period felt that there was a sharp break between their own age and the 'Dark Ages' that had preceded them, and moreover, that there were similarities between their own civilisation and that of the Greeks and Romans who had flourished between 400 B.C.E and 300 C.E. Later historians have sometimes agreed and sometimes disagreed with this point of view. Jules Michelet in his book 'La Renaissance' held that the two most significant features of this epoch were 'the discovery of the world, and the discovery of man'.

The Renaissance began in Italy. It lasted from around 1300 to 1600. Historically, it followed the Mediaeval period and led into the Modern period which began with the Enlightenment. Politically, Mediaeval Europe was dominated by the Feudal Hierarchy. This meant that the

peasants were subject to a landowner, who in turn would be subject to a higher lord and so on, all the way up to the King. In the field of learning, the Catholic Church was dominant, and all arts, sciences and philosophical learning were regarded as servants of Christian theology. Hence, mediaeval architecture expressed itself in Cathedrals, while mediaeval art expressed itself in the form of religious paintings. Even the ancient authors were read principally from the point of view of mastering the Latin language so as to study Theology which was taught in Latin. Scholasticism was the term used to describe this attitude and methodology, which was declining by the middle of the 14th century.

The Renaissance put an end to this subservience of the arts, sciences and philosophy. Beginning from the 14th century, there was an increasing tendency to study these subjects for their own sake and not merely as servants of theology. This led to a flowering of the arts and sciences and paved the way for the 'Modern' period in philosophy. This new-found independence in thought was also manifested in the Protestant Reformation, which ended the Catholic Church's dominance in northern Europe. The feudal system was also collapsing during this period, partly due to the increasing number of urban dwellers and traders, who did not fit in with the land-based feudal hierarchy. Ultimately, all these changes amounted to a totally new vision of the human person through Renaissance Humanism.

The revival of arts and learning was financed by the commercial revival of Europe through the rise of great banking families in Italy (particularly in the city of Florence) during the 14th century, followed by the discovery of the sea routes to India and America towards the end of the 15th century. The Renaissance transformed Mediaeval Europe beyond recognition. It resulted in the development of an intellectual independence that no longer took arguments from authority for granted but instead strove to explore and discover new frontiers in philosophy, science and technology. Hence it took Europe to the threshold of the Age of Reason. The period of the Renaissance was followed by that of the Enlightenment, during which the new attitudes, supported by new discoveries, gave birth to Modern Philosophy and Science which are characterised by their total independence from Theology.

2.2. MAJOR EVENTS AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE (1300 – 1600)

1305-1378	After over 12 centuries, the Popes leave Rome to stay at Avignon in France. This is known as the 'Babylonian Captivity of the Church' and results in a loss of prestige for the Church leaders.
1341	Petrarch, the first great humanist, is crowned as 'Poet Laureate' in Rome.
1348	The Black Death in Europe: Bubonic plague drastically reduces the population. However, the plague is followed by an economic revival.
1378	The Pope returns to Rome but the French insist on having a Pope at Avignon as well, resulting in the Great Schism or split in the Church.
1397	The Medici Bank is founded in Florence. The Medicis, great patrons of art and culture, soon become practically the rulers of the city. Also in Florence, Greek literature is introduced as a subject at the University.
1400-1450	Donatello, artist and sculptor, flourishes in Florence.

c. 1450	Johann Gutenberg invents the printing press (printing was earlier known to the Chinese) and uses it to print the Latin Bible.
1453	Constantinople falls to the Turks; many Greek scholars settle in Italy, bringing their manuscripts.
1479	The Italians (of Venice) are defeated by the Turks; hence the ancient trading route to India (via Egypt) is cut off. The Portuguese and Spanish begin exploring new routes.
1492	Christopher Columbus, in search of India, reaches America.
1495-1498	Leonardo da Vinci paints *The Last Supper*.
1498	Vasco da Gama discovers a sea route to India, arriving at Kerala. The Portuguese become the first European colonial power in India.
1503-1505	Leonardo da Vinci paints the *Mona Lisa* while Michelangelo completes his statue of *David*.
1508-1512	Michelangelo paints the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel in St. Peter's Cathedral, Rome.
1517 onwards	Rise of Martin Luther, who initiates the Protestant Reformation in Germany. He is followed by Ulrich Zwingli in Switzerland and (in the 1530s) by John Calvin in France.
1519 onwards	Expansion of the Spanish empire in Central and South America.
1543	Copernicus publishes his work on the Solar System, claiming that the Earth travels around the Sun.
1546-1563	The Catholic Church holds a Council at Trent in Italy and initiates a process of Counter-Reformation. The measures taken include strict censorship of books (resulting in the "Index" of forbidden books), with consequences for philosophers and scientists in southern Europe.
1585	Introduction of the modern (Gregorian) calendar by Pope Gregory XIII.
1588	The Spanish Armada (Navy) is defeated by Queen Elizabeth I of England, paving the way for the rise of new colonial powers like the British, Dutch and French.

Check Your Progress I

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit

1) What is generally understood by the word 'Renaissance'?

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2) What are some of the major events which gave rise to the formation of this period?

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2.3. ASPECTS OF RENAISSANCE CULTURE AND PHILOSOPHY

Humanism:

Today, humanism refers to an attitude of deep concern for the welfare of humanity. However, during the time of the Renaissance, a humanist was one who had mastered the five subjects known as humanities. The Italian universities were famous for these humanities which included grammar, rhetoric (the art of persuasive speech), poetry, history and moral philosophy. The humanists often studied these subjects for their own sake and not merely as an aid to theology. Hence, the attitude of the humanists was quite distinct from that of the Scholastics who followed the Mediaeval tradition. This led some of the humanists to look down upon the later Scholastics who were unable to move beyond Aristotle's philosophy.

Renaissance Humanism began in Italy with the rediscovery of certain ancient manuscripts of classical Latin literature. Later, with the fall of Constantinople in 1453, a number of Greek scholars immigrated to Italy, bringing their precious manuscripts with them. Hence, the study of the Greek language and literature became more widespread than before. The writings of Plato and other early philosophers were read in a new light. All this had a direct impact on society in the fields of letter writing, literature, art, architecture, philosophy, religion and the sciences. Further, a positive attitude emerged which led scholars to study these subjects for their own sake and not merely as a prelude to the study of Theology.

The Arts and Architecture: The architects of the Renaissance went back to the Classical Greek temples and Roman buildings for their models. Churches were increasingly built with domed roofs rather than vaults. The construction of St. Peter's Basilica, in Rome (1506-1667), can be said to be one of the highlights of this period. The dome of this church (designed by Michelangelo) was modelled on the ancient Roman Pantheon.

The secularisation of architecture also took place during this period. Henceforth, there were many rich noblemen and princes who could afford to build a palace for themselves, and elaborate buildings began spreading throughout Italy. A large number of country houses in France were built during this period.

Sculptors and painters also began to look to ancient models which were regarded as more natural and lifelike than mediaeval art. Rather than follow convention, the artists studied the human body and attained a better sense of proportion. A sense of perspective was also achieved by painting distant objects smaller than nearby ones. Italian painting generally remained religious in nature. Raphael, Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci were famous for their paintings.

The art of music also began to flourish during the Renaissance period. New instruments were invented, and harmony was increasingly used, though most music (as an art form)

was still composed either for the courts or for religious purposes. Music composed during this period remains an integral part of European culture today.

Literature: The Renaissance can be said to have begun with the rediscovery and translation of many ancient Roman and Greek texts. Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, which had earlier been known only through brief Latin summaries, could now be read in full, as could other ancient literature. This led to the revival of certain features of classical style, which were imitated by humanist authors and poets. The Popes shared this love for classical literature, and established the Vatican Library in 1447. The humanist scholars, who were skilled in languages, were often employed as secretaries to the Popes, princes and noblemen of the period. Initially, their letters were composed in Latin, but by the end of the 14th century, vernacular languages were beginning to take over. Many humanists were also known for their poetry. Petrarch, an early humanist, was crowned as 'poet laureate' in Rome in the year 1341. The humanists began to contribute to the spread of new ideas through their works. A Greek edition of the Bible, produced by Erasmus in 1516, revealed that the Latin version in use had deviated in certain places from the Greek text which was now understood to be the original. This led to new religious movements. Similarly, the field of politics, which had been changing rapidly with the decay of feudalism, was analysed in Machiavelli's *The Prince,* Thomas More's *Utopia,* Rabelais' *Gargantua* and several other works. Cervantes' famous *Don Quixote* took a humorous look at the outdated feudal system. One of the greatest European playwrights ever, William Shakespeare, flourished during the later years of the Renaissance.

During the Middle Ages, manuscripts had to be copied by hand. The arrival of printing simplified the process of making copies of books, and hence paved the way for the spread of literacy and learning. Paper had been invented by the Chinese and was introduced into Europe by the Arabs in Spain. In 1450, Johann Gutenberg, a German, designed and built a printing press and printed the famous Gutenberg Bible, in Latin. Ultimately, printing proved to be a great liberative force, spreading the light of learning to the common man through affordable mass-produced literature, public libraries, and soon newspapers.

Religion: The two major religious events of the Renaissance were the Babylonian Captivity of the Church and the Protestant Reformation. The Popes had generally been associated with Rome, but due to largely political compulsions, one of them decided to establish his permanent seat in Avignon, a town in southern France. When a later Pope decided to return to Rome, there was opposition and the result was that two Popes were elected, one at Avignon and one at Rome. This resulted in constant conflicts. The presence of two Popes divided the Christian world and lowered the status of the Church. This condition lasted until 1417. The Popes were heavily concerned with secular matters, and vast wealth began to accumulate in Rome. Exactly a hundred years later (in 1517), Martin Luther, a German monk, condemned what he described as the Catholic Church's immoral ways of collecting money through the sale of indulgences (cancellation of the punishment due to sin, in return for a donation). He also pointed out other areas of

corruption that had crept into religious practices and structures. The need for change was felt strongly and many people from different strata of society sided with Martin Luther. His followers included a number of German princes, and with their help, he established a Church organisation that was independent of the Pope. Luther intended this to be a temporary measure until Rome itself could be purified of its immorality. However, other reformers such as Zwingli and Calvin began to take still more radical measures such as destroying the statues in the Churches. It soon became impossible to heal the divisions within Christianity, which have therefore endured to this day. The new churches began to call themselves Protestant.

Science: During the Mediaeval period, arguments based on Aristotle's writings were still considered to be more important than actual observation of nature. The Renaissance, however, was an age of discovery. It opened people's minds to new ways of thinking, and thus helped to create the modern scientific mentality. One of the key discoveries of the Middle Ages was the fact that the Earth was in constant motion around the Sun. This idea, first proposed by Nicolaus Copernicus and later by Galileo, led to what is known as the 'Copernican Revolution.' After this discovery, humans were no longer able to consider themselves the centre of the Universe. This led to a dramatic change in the European worldview.

Such discoveries in astronomy, as well as important medical studies such as Vesalius' detailed description of the human body and William Harvey's discovery of the circulation of blood, led the thinkers of the Renaissance to reject all blind dependence on Aristotle's teachings. Aristotle had held that blood was formed in the liver. His views were now challenged. But more significant was the new scientific method of observation and experiment by which he was shown to be in the wrong. Towards the end of the Renaissance period, most European scholars were aware that if they wanted to progress, merely turning to the ancients was not enough; they needed to surpass the classical authors in their knowledge, and this knowledge could be attained through the scientific method. Thus, the Scientific Renaissance paved the way for the next age, the Age of Enlightenment.

Check Your Progress II

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit

1) What is understood by Renaissance 'humanism'?

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2) In what ways did Renaissance culture differ from mediaeval or 'Middle Age' culture?

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2.4. MAJOR THINKERS DURING THE RENAISSANCE

Petrarch (1304-1374) has been described as the first great humanist and the first modern scholar. Noted as a poet, he was crowned as 'Poet Laureate' in Rome, in the year 1341. He travelled from city to city and composed literature in Italian and Latin. He rightly described himself as standing between two eras, and in many ways the attitudes of the Renaissance were first seen in his writings.

Nicholas of Cusa (1401-64) began originally by studying Church law and ended his career as a Cardinal of the Catholic Church. He was a man ahead of his times. He anticipated Copernicus by holding that the Earth was not the centre of the Universe. He made major contributions through his study of ancient manuscripts. He is famous for his philosophy which he explained in his book *On Learned Ignorance*. He criticised the philosophy of Aristotle which was the prevailing view at that time, and held that we can attain only an approximate knowledge of reality which he calls 'conjecture'. Although he did not belong to any particular school, he paved the way for the revival of Platonic ideas during the Renaissance.

Desiderius Erasmus (1466-1536), from Rotterdam in Holland, was the foremost humanist of the Renaissance. He did much to spread the values of the humanists. In 1516 he published his Greek text of the New Testament, which had wide-ranging implications for the field of religion. It showed that there were errors in the official Latin Bible that was being used. He also wrote *In Praise of Folly*, which satirically exposed the shortcomings of the upper classes and religious institutions of his time. Martin Luther was strongly influenced by the writings of Erasmus and thus the humanism of Erasmus prepared the way for the Reformation.

Niccolò Machiavelli (1469-1527) *[pron: mak-ya-velli]* was an Italian statesman who served at the court of the Republic of Florence (in Italy) which was then dominated by the Medici family of bankers. After he left the court in 1512, he began publishing his views in the form of books, the most famous of which is *The Prince*. This contains an analysis of Italian politics and shows how a prince who is not bound by scruples will be successful not only in ruling his own city but also in conquering his neighbours. This has given rise to the English term 'Machiavellian' which refers to plans and schemes that involve deceit or other underhand means to gain power.

Nicolaus Copernicus (1473-1543), justly famous for bringing about the 'Copernican Revolution,' was a Polish astronomer and scientist who realised that the patterns of the movement of the heavenly bodies would make more sense if the Sun, rather than the Earth, was regarded as the centre of the Universe. He published this view (known as the

Heliocentric Theory) in his book *De Revolutionibus*, which was printed in the year of his death (1543). This was a daring theory because it seemed to contradict both the Bible and Greek Philosophy. Though his views took time to get established, this book marked a major milestone in the history of science.

Thomas More (1477-1535) was an eminent humanist and statesman. He studied law at Oxford University, where he met several humanists. Later, he served as Lord Chancellor to King Henry VIII of England. However, when Henry VIII proclaimed that the King, rather than the Pope, was the head of the Church of England, Thomas More refused to sign the Act. He was sent to the Tower of London and beheaded. His *Utopia*, a novel about an imaginary republic, was a protest against the abuses of the day. It is an important work of political philosophy.

Martin Luther (1483-1546) was well known for his lead role in the reformation of the German church. He was a monk in the Augustinian Order and was a professor of theology. He was shocked by the wealth and the scandalous life of some of the clergy, especially in Rome. He began his struggle to reform Christianity by protesting against another monk named Johann Tetzel who was collecting money in return for 'indulgences.' These indulgences were designed to excuse a person from the penalties of his or her sins. Luther also called for a change in the Church structure. When several of the German princes supported him, a new Church (later known as the Lutheran Church) was established, based on the principle of the Bible alone as the source of doctrine, and faith alone as the means of salvation.

John Calvin (1509-1564) was a Frenchman who expounded the principles of Protestantism in a systematic manner in his book, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. He stressed the importance of the Bible, and stopped all practices not mentioned in Scripture. He believed in predestination – the belief that human beings are predestined by God either for Heaven or Hell. The French Protestant communities, later to be known as the Huguenots, accepted his doctrines. When he had to leave France for Geneva (Switzerland), his followers managed to take over the city and rule it on Calvinist principles. The movement spread to Holland and Scotland as well.

Giordano Bruno (1548-1600) held views on religion, society and human life that were quite different from those of his contemporaries. He argued, for example, that reason was the only source of knowledge, that the Copernican model was correct and that the universe was infinite in size. He also taught that the universe was made up of two principles, namely matter and the soul, both of which were aspects of the same substance. This idea, similar to Baruch Spinoza's [See: Enlightenment], led him to a form of monism. He was condemned as a heretic and executed in 1600.

Francis Bacon (1561-1626) was an English intellectual reformer. He held a number of Governmental posts during the reign of King James I of England. In his *Novum Organum*, he proposed a new system of knowledge based on the principle of induction, which should be used along with deduction in order to build human knowledge. Through induction (by which we observe a number of individual facts and are able to draw a

general conclusion) we are able to learn not only through reasoning but also through our experience. The method of induction still serves as the basis of scientific research today.

William Shakespeare (1564-1616) is the best known English playwright of the Renaissance. His historical dramas, comedies and tragedies reveal a deep understanding of human nature and have been a tremendous force in the creation of modern English literature. Like other Renaissance writers, he too made use of classical themes in his works – for instance in his *Julius Caesar*.

Johann Kepler (1571-1630) was a German astronomer and mathematician. Reflecting on the views of Pythagoras, he came to the conclusion that the Universe has a geometrical arrangement. He abandoned the ancient theory that the orbits of the planets were circular, and instead brought out the three laws of planetary motion which state that the orbit of the planet is elliptical in shape. He is known to have corresponded with Galileo.

2.5. MAJOR AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE FOR WESTERN PHILOSOPHY

The following advances that took place during the Renaissance are significant for the development of Western philosophy:

- There was a move to return to the original texts or sources, rather than to read their accepted interpretations. This attitude of going to the origins of texts was echoed in the numerous 'Modern Philosophy' projects of discovering the origins of human experience rather than choosing any other commonly accepted starting point. Later Units will show that the Rationalists chose the mind and its powers as the starting point of experience and knowledge, while the Empiricists chose the senses and what they revealed as the starting point of experience and knowledge.
- This desire of going to the original texts resulted in a gradual turning away from the dominance of Scholastic and Aristotelean-influenced thinking, and an embracing of alternative worldviews, including a renewed interest in Platonism.
- The turning away from theological interests to more humanistic interests sowed the first seeds of the gradual secularisation of learning and the secularization of European consciousness in general. The seeds of this movement have taken root and grown steadily in Europe, so that what we see today in the contemporary European scenario is a culture which is predominantly characterised by secular and humanistic ideals rather than religious ones. This has direct consequences for contemporary European philosophical interests.
- The religious turmoil which Europe witnessed during this age (and during the Enlightenment) was one more reason which determined the later reluctance to allow religion to enter spheres of social and political influence. That is why, as compared to Medieval Philosophy, Modern and Contemporary philosophy are not as concerned about theological questions as they are about the human and the social horizon of meaning.
- The emphasis on creativity in artistic expression (in art, sculpture, architecture and music) replaced the desire to repeat the aesthetic forms of the medieval age. This also had an echo in philosophy, where creativity in thinking and in choosing new starting points for philosophical inquiry was encouraged rather than frowned upon.

- The invention of printing and the spread of literature enabled philosophical tracts to become more widespread and to be available throughout the continent. Printing made the process of education (including exposure to these philosophical works) comparatively more accessible and democratic, especially since works were translated into vernacular languages and widely disseminated for the first time.
- This period also witnessed the decline of a feudal social structure and a feudal mentality. Consequently, capitalism was born and grew rapidly, aided by the growth of Protestantism. All of these had serious consequences in terms of socio-political philosophy, especially in terms of the birth of Marxism, which was a response to capitalism. The modern phenomenon of globalization is a development of capitalism, which had its origins in this age.
- The Copernican Revolution set Europe on the path of scientific progress. Once again, theological interests and control gave way to more positive and scientific inclinations and inquiries. This resulted in the rapid advance of science and technology in the Age of Reason (17^{th} century) and during the Enlightenment in general (17^{th} and 18^{th} century), and in the birth of 'Positivism' and many human-centred philosophical projects in 'Contemporary Philosophy' (from 1800 onwards).

Check Your Progress III

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit

1) Give examples of major thinkers who represented this period, and their contribution.

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2) In what way was the Renaissance significant in terms of Western Philosophy?

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2.6. LET US SUM UP

The period of 'Modern Western Philosophy' cannot be fully understood without reference to the prevailing cultures of the time in Europe, namely, the Renaissance and the Enlightenment. In this Unit we have portrayed the basic features of Renaissance culture. We began by providing a

basic understanding and overview of the 'Renaissance,' by highlighting the most significant and defining moments during this period. We then focused on key aspects of the culture and philosophy of the times, and some prominent thinkers and personalities who contributed to the development of this culture. Finally, we reflected over the significance this culture had in terms of the development of the history of Western Philosophy.

Try and remember the following key points related to the Renaissance:

- 'Renaissance' means 'rebirth'. This period (from the 14^{th} to the 16^{th} centuries) saw the rebirth of classical patterns in art, architecture and literature in Europe. It is sometimes called the 'Early Modern' period.
- This was also a period of cultural and social turmoil. The Feudal System declined and trade became more important, leading to the beginnings of a capitalist economy.
- The Renaissance began in Italy with the revival of interest in Greek learning and Greek philosophy. All this was funded by rich banking families and several Popes who were patrons of art and architecture.
- The five subjects known as humanities (grammar, rhetoric, poetry, history and moral philosophy) began to be studied for their own sake and not as a preparation for theology. Hence the Renaissance became an age of humanism, dominated by humanists such as Erasmus. The humanists also prepared the ground for the Reformation which affected the religious sphere.
- All this undermined the mediaeval schools of thought and led to independent thinking. An interest arose in observing nature directly, rather than merely quoting from the ancient authorities. This led to the birth of modern science through the discovery of the heliocentric theory (Copernicus) and the focus on the law of induction (Francis Bacon).
- During this period, sea routes to America and India were also discovered.
- The most important invention of this period was that of the art of printing. Printing led to the spread of learning across Europe and prepared the way for the Enlightenment.

2.7. KEY WORDS

Heliocentric Theory: The theory proposed by Nicolaus Copernicus, which states that the Sun (rather than the earth) is at the centre of the Solar System, and the earth and other planets revolve around it.

Protestantism: The most recent of the three major branches in Christianity. Protestantism arose from the Reformation. Its main characteristics are the belief that we are saved by God's grace through faith, and a strong reliance on the authority of the Bible.

Reformation: A revolution in the religious sphere brought about by Martin Luther, John Calvin and their followers, which resulted in the creation of independent Christian churches in several parts of Europe.

Renaissance: The period in European history following the Middle Ages. It lasted from 1300 to 1600 and saw the revival of classical culture, the growth of humanism, and the important geographical discoveries of sea routes between Europe and other continents.

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Important reference websites:
1. Renaissance-Related Resources: *www.learner.org/exhibits/renaissance/resources.html*
2. Mediaeval Sourcebook: Renaissance *www.fordham.edu/halsall/sbook1x.html*
3. Italian Renaissance: *history.hanover.edu/courses/italren.html*
4. The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy: *www.iep.utm.edu*
5. The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy: *plato.stanford.edu*
6. The Meta-Encyclopedia of Philosophy: *www.ditext.com/encyc/frame.html*

2.9. ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress I

1) What is generally understood by the word 'Renaissance'?

Ans: The term 'Renaissance' is derived from a French / Latin word meaning 'rebirth'. It refers to an experience of the European world that began from the 14th century and was characterised by a rebirth of learning, arts and culture.

2) What are some of the major events which gave rise to the formation of this period?

Ans: The following are some of the major events that gave rise to the Renaissance:
a) The rise of great banking families in Italy
b) The immigration of Greek scholars to Italy after the fall of Constantinople
c) The increase in the number of urban dwellers
d) The rediscovery of ancient texts and the invention of printing

e) Interest in the study of the humanities

Check Your Progress II

1) What is understood by Renaissance 'humanism'?

Ans: During the Renaissance, a humanist was one who had mastered the five subjects known as humanities: grammar, rhetoric, poetry, history and moral philosophy. Unlike the Scholastics, the Humanists had a positive attitude towards these subjects and studied them for their own sake and not merely as a preparation for Theology.

2) In what ways did Renaissance culture differ from mediaeval or 'Middle Age' culture?

Ans: Some major differences between Mediaeval and Renaissance culture are as follows:

a) Mediaeval Europe had a feudal social structure, whereas Renaissance Europe had several city states, nation states and the first colonial empires.

b) Mediaeval education was oriented towards theology, whereas during the Renaissance the humanities were studied for their own sake. Books became widespread in the Renaissance due to the invention of printing.

c) Renaissance art, architecture and literature were influenced by classical models which had not been used during the Middle Ages.

d) Aristotelian philosophy which was dominant during the Middle Ages lost its prestige during the Renaissance, and the philosophy of Plato gained more attention once again.

Check Your Progress III

1) Give examples of major thinkers who represented this period, and their contribution.

Ans: The following thinkers are most significant for this period:

a) Petrarch: He was the first great humanist, and revived classical themes in his poetry.

b) Erasmus: He spread the values of the humanists throughout Europe.

c) Copernicus: He proved that the Sun was the centre of the Solar System.

d) Thomas More: He wrote *Utopia* – a work of political philosophy.

e) Martin Luther: He attempted to reform the Church on biblical lines.

f) Francis Bacon: He gave importance to the principle of induction.

2) In what way was the Renaissance significant in terms of Western Philosophy?

Ans: The Renaissance was a turning point in the history of philosophy. It was an age of discoveries, which Michelet has described as 'the discovery of the world, and the discovery of man.' Important developments include the Copernican Revolution, the invention of printing, and the use of the inductive method in scientific inquiry. Together, all these changes put an end to the dominance of scholastic theology, and thus philosophy and science were set free from their role as servants of theology. The Renaissance writers began to recognise the limitations of depending on authorities such as Aristotle, and this resulted in the growth of independent thinking, leading to the birth of Modern Philosophy.

UNIT 3 THE ENLIGHTENMENT

Contents

3.0. OBJECTIVES

The main objective of this Unit is to provide an overview of the Enlightenment and the impact it has had in the development of Western Philosophy. As is often the case, the philosophy of a given time is closely related to the culture from which it arises. Hence if we wish to understand the period of 'Modern Western Philosophy,' we would need to be familiar with the prevailing culture of the Enlightenment. The high point of this culture was in the 18th century, but we shall extend our study to also include its origins, thus studying the period from 1600-1800 C.E. (Remember that the previous culture – portrayed in the previous Unit – was the Renaissance, which dominated European consciousness roughly from 1400-1600, though we have extended our study of this period from 1300-1600).

By the end of this Unit you should be familiar with:

- The basic understanding of the period of the Enlightenment
- The major events and their significance during this period
- Significant themes during this period
- Prominent thinkers and personalities and their contribution
- The significance of this period in terms of Modern Western Philosophy

3.1.INTRODUCTION

The 17th century (the age of Descartes and Francis Bacon) is generally referred to as the Age of Reason, while the term 'Enlightenment' is often restricted to the 18th century. There is in fact no clear demarcation between the two. Hence when we refer to the 'Enlightenment,' we shall refer to the events unfolding in Europe during the 17th and 18th centuries (that is, roughly from 1600-1800).

The period of the Enlightenment is characterized by the growing acceptance of reason (rather than cultural and religious tradition) as the primary authority used to settle philosophical, scientific and political problems. This emergence of a reason-based approach to life brought the

age of the Renaissance to a close. This is because the Western mind entered a brand new phase in its history, during which there was no need to prove one's theories by citing Plato, Aristotle or any other authoritative thinkers of the past any more. Anyone was free to contribute to the stock of human knowledge through the means of observation, experimentation, and inference. A new age with a scientific mindset had begun.

Almost every aspect of the Enlightenment is linked with this basic shift in philosophy. Indeed, the shift had partially already begun during the Renaissance. But the Enlightenment was in a special way the awakening of Europe, beginning with England. It was a time when philosophical ideas began to play a role in transforming the day-to-day lives of even the simplest people. Unlike previous cultural shifts such as the Renaissance, the Enlightenment was not restricted to a particular social class but directly affected the general public through the spread of science, education and democratic values. Wherever the new aspirations of the people were blocked, pent-up tensions resulted in dramatic events such as the American War of Independence and the French Revolution.

The most important countries influenced by the Enlightenment were England, France and Germany. To begin with, in England, the 17th and 18th centuries were characterised by the steady progress of science. The sciences were now completely separated from philosophy. The development of science in England finally led to the Industrial Revolution through which technology changed the face of England. Alongside this, there was a steady growth in the British colonial empire, especially in India. Australia was discovered by Captain Cook. Trade with such colonies helped to enrich England and fuelled the Industrial Revolution.

France, on the other hand, was driven by the prestige of the Bourbon royal family. Under the great King Louis XIV, France became the cultural centre of Europe and all other European nations tried to imitate French customs and manners. Every art and science was dominated by the needs of the King and the Royal Court. However, during the 18th century, the common people of France began to lose their respect for the King and were influenced instead by the writings of Voltaire and other radical thinkers. Finally, King Louis XVI was overthrown and a Republic was established.

Germany was divided into many small states as a result of the 30 years war. Austria and Prussia were dominant but neither of them was able to unify the whole of Germany during this period, and Germany was often vulnerable to the French. Nevertheless, German philosophy flourished, and the period of the Enlightenment produced some of the greatest of philosophers, including Immanuel Kant.

In general, Protestant States accepted the Enlightenment more readily than Catholic countries, though Portugal (Catholic) was the first to promulgate laws based on Enlightenment Philosophy. In France, the Enlightenment finally reached its climax in the French Revolution, while in Germany, philosophy reached its highest point in the 'transcendental idealism' of Kant and the 'absolute idealism' of Hegel.

At the close of the Enlightenment, the intellectual atmosphere of the modern age was already in place. Education was widespread in every country of Europe. The Industrial Revolution had

begun in England but had been adopted by other countries as well. Finally, freedom and democracy, the hallmarks of the modern age, had established themselves as ideals in England, America, France and gradually other European countries.

3.2. MAJOR EVENTS DURING THIS PERIOD (1600-1800)

1600	The East India Company is founded in England.
1609	Kepler publishes *The New Astronomy* based on his first two laws.
1610	Galileo publishes *The Starry Messenger*, containing reports of his telescopic discoveries including the moons of Jupiter and the phases of Venus.
1618-1648	The Thirty Years War between Catholics and Protestants in Germany.
1620	Francis Bacon's *Novum Organum* introduces a new system of logic based on the method of induction.
1628	William Harvey publishes a description of the circulation of blood.
1632	Galileo Galilei presents his arguments in favour of Copernicus' theory in the form of a book titled *Dialogue on the Two Chief Systems of the World*. The book brings him into conflict with the Church.
1641	Publication of Rene Descartes' *Meditations*.
1642-1714	Reign of Louis XIV, the 'Sun King' of France. France becomes the centre of European culture.
1645	The first calculating machine is invented by Blaise Pascal.
1649	King Charles I of England is beheaded after a seven-year civil war. Parliament takes over the government of the country.
1651	Thomas Hobbes publishes *Leviathan*, a work of political philosophy.
1687	Sir Isaac Newton publishes *Principia Mathematica.*
1688-89	The Stuart dynasty is overthrown in England and William of Orange (from the Netherlands) is invited to be the King. Establishment of a Constitutional Government brought about via the Declaration of Rights.
1690	John Locke's *Two Treatises on Civil Government.*
1705	The steam pump is invented by Thomas Newcomen.
1721	Robert Walpole becomes the first Prime Minister of England.
1740-87	Reign of Frederick II the Great, 'enlightened' ruler of Prussia and friend of Voltaire.
1744 onwards:	Anglo-French struggle for supremacy in India.
1751	Diderot's *Encyclopedie* began to be published (a multi-volume exposition by prominent thinkers to promote the ideals of the Enlightenment).
1756-63	The Seven Years' War; France loses its influence in India and Canada.
1757	The Battle of Plassey: The British become the *de facto* rulers of Bengal.
1758	Voltaire completes *Candide.*
1762	Rousseau publishes *The Social Contract*.
1764	Battle of Buxar: The Mughal Emperor is defeated and becomes a pensioner of the British. The Marathas become a leading power in India.
1768	Captain Cook begins his voyages on the *Endeavour.*
1769	James Watt patents the improved steam engine.
1775-83	American War of Independence.

1781 Immanuel Kant publishes *A Critique of Pure Reason*.
Emperor Joseph I of Austria liberates the serfs.
1789 onwards: The French Revolution.
1799 Napoleon becomes First Consul of France (later Emperor in 1804).

Check Your Progress I
Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit

1) What is generally understood by the term 'Enlightenment'?
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2) What are some of the defining moments of the period of the Enlightenment?
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3.3. ASPECTS OF ENLIGTENMENT CULTURE AND PHILOSOPHY

The Scientific Culture: Science in ancient and medieval times was largely dominated by the 'deductive method,' which began with generally accepted conclusions (which were culturally and theologically accepted as true) and then only applied to particular observable cases. After the Renaissance, and especially during the Enlightenment, this deductive method gave way to the 'inductive method,' which was based on observations leading to newer and newer conclusions. This gave rise to new discoveries, and paved the way for the 'Industrial Revolution.' This new form of scientific demonstration and knowledge began to have greater prestige among the general population, and scientists such as Isaac Newton and Edmund Halley were as prominent in their day as Michelangelo and Leonardo had been during the Renaissance. Scientific inventions such as the steam engine began to have an increasing application in controlling the forces of nature. The advances in travel made the world grow smaller and allowed the development of the vast British and Russian Empires. The new knowledge was compiled by the Encyclopaedists in France.

Although the epoch can be said to have begun with Galileo, the person who stands out with the greatest clarity is Sir Isaac Newton, the British scientist who discovered the Universal Law of Gravitation and thereby showed how every object in the Universe is related to every other object. Chemists increasingly discarded the ancient concept of the four elements, while biologists, rather disturbingly, were beginning to show that man – contrary to what the people of the Middle Ages had believed – was in fact similar in

many ways to the lower animals. This 'humbling' of man, however, was not taken negatively but seen as a challenge, namely, how human society could achieve the greatest welfare of the greatest number of people, through the mastery of nature by means of science and technology.

A New Philosophical Beginning: The Philosophy of the Enlightenment began with Descartes' tremendous decision to reject all previous philosophy as uncertain and make a fresh beginning with the facts that he could be absolutely certain of: namely the fact that he was thinking, and therefore that he himself existed ('cogito, ergo sum'). His methodology was highly successful and he was the father of a whole new movement that sought to establish a valid epistemology through French and German Rationalism, English Empiricism and finally German Idealism.

Hence a new age dawned – the age of 'Modern Philosophy'. Modern philosophy no longer made appeal to authorities such as Plato and Aristotle except as examples. Rather, the main source of knowledge was the 'great book of the world' itself, and this book was 'read' through experience. Since the experiences of different peoples are different, toleration and pluralism increased and there were calls for freedom of thought and freedom of religion. There were also sceptics who tried to show that nothing was knowable. Finally, there were political philosophers who were convinced that the old order was the source of nothing but misery and slavery and were determined that it should be replaced by a new order.

The Emergence of the Public Sphere: Strangely, one of the most important cultural changes that took place during this period was the emergence of a space in which private people were able to come together as a public. This public sphere included coffeehouses, reading societies, etc. Through the growth of the international book trade and the emergence of mass-produced pamphlets and news bulletins, people in different parts of the world were increasingly reading and discussing the same events, persons and ideas. For example, in 1776, Adam Smith estimated that 33,000 newspapers were sold in Britain everyday. Voltaire's books sold 1,500,000 copies within seven years. The phenomenal growth of the press led to the establishment of what Immanuel Kant called a 'tribunal of reason,' i.e., an informal forum in which persons and their opinions were either accepted or condemned. This proved important for the politics of the day but it also had an impact on philosophy and religion.

The kind of books that were read also changed. Whereas books were earlier chiefly used as a means to spiritual development, now they were increasingly read for intellectual stimulation (as in the case of scientific literature) as well as for information that could result in action (as in the case of political literature).

The Spread of Democratic Values: The 17th century saw various attempts made by monarchs to establish the principle of the Divine Right of Kings. In the 18th century, this was no longer possible. The bankrupt monarchs had to turn to assemblies and parliaments to raise money to finance their projects. The result was that different groups of people increasingly saw it as their right to place limits on the power of the kings.

In England, this was achieved during the 17th century itself, with the Civil War (1640s) and the Glorious Revolution (1688). Power began to pass from the King to the Prime Minister. However, the French Kings refused to part with power in spite of their loss of prestige in the 18th century. As a result, the writings of philosophers such as Voltaire and Rousseau gained popularity and were instrumental in spreading the idea that all people had a right to freedom and equality. Finally, after the Americans (with French support) had given themselves a republican form of government, the common people of France, who had been oppressed for centuries, rose up in Revolution against their King and rebuilt their country and laws on the principles of liberty, equality and fraternity.

Check Your Progress II

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit

1) How did the Enlightenment give rise to a 'modern' mentality?

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2) What are some areas of continuity and difference between the Enlightenment and the earlier period of the Renaissance?

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3.4. MAJOR FIGURES DURING THE ENLIGHTENMENT

Galileo Galilei (1564-1642) was an Italian astronomer and mathematician. He is famous for having discovered the moons of Jupiter. He publicly defended the view that the Earth travelled round the Sun. When he published these views in the form of a book titled *Dialogue on the Two Chief Systems of the World*, he had to face intense opposition and persecution, particularly from the religious authorities. He was put on trial in 1633, suspected of contradicting the Bible. Hence, his life brought out the tragedy of the contradiction between fundamentalist religious beliefs and scientific progress.

Rene Descartes (1596-1650), a French philosopher, widely regarded as the 'Father of Modern Philosophy.' He began his career as a soldier but devoted his leisure hours to philosophizing. In an age of uncertainty, he made a new beginning by discarding the traditional scholastic methodology and beginning with the one fact that he could be certain of – the fact that he was thinking. From this, he concluded that his own existence

was also a certainty. His well known saying is 'cogito, ergo sum' ('I think, therefore I am'). Proceeding in this manner, he built his entire philosophy using a mathematical style of reasoning (he was also an excellent mathematician and is known for his contributions to Coordinate Geometry). He published his philosophical reflections in several works such as *Discourse on Method* and *Meditations on First Philosophy*.

Blaise Pascal (1623-1662) was a French mathematician, physicist and philosopher. The scientific unit of pressure is named after him. At an early age, he invented the world's first calculating machine. In addition to his scientific achievements, he had a deep insight into human nature, which he explores in his work titled *Pensées* ('Thoughts'). He believed that philosophy leads to scepticism, and that man's true happiness lies in religion. His 'wager' argument shows that if we cannot be certain of God's existence, it is more reasonable to believe in God (to bet that God exists and to live a life accordingly) rather than to be an atheist.

Benedict (Baruch) Spinoza (1632-1677), a Dutch Jewish (later Christian) rationalist philosopher, used a geometric method similar to Descartes in his philosophy. He came to the conclusion that mind and matter were two aspects of the same substance. This led him to a kind of pantheistic view according to which all things were somehow included in God, and that nature was a manifestation of God. He also called for a government that would be broad-minded and liberal. However, he was a thinker ahead of his times, and his views were not easily accepted in 17th century Europe.

John Locke (1632-1704), in his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, began a new phase in philosophy by turning from reason (Descartes' method) to sense experience as a means of attaining truth. This began the movement known as 'Empiricism.' He held that all our ideas come ultimately from sense experiences. The mind combines simple ideas to produce more complex ideas. For example, the sensations of 'white,' 'hard,' 'high' and 'flat' may be combined to form the idea of a white wall. Locke also wrote significant treatises on economics and politics, and argued in favour of religious toleration, which was rare in the 17th century. He is one of the first thinkers to propose that human beings have rights innate to human nature. This thinking has gradually led to the creation of our modern understanding of 'human rights.'

Sir Isaac Newton (1642-1727) will probably rank as one of the greatest scientists ever. In less than two years (1665-67) he invented a new branch of mathematics known as calculus, discovered that white light is a mixture of different colours, and hit upon his Universal Law of Gravitation. He is also known for his three laws of motion. However, he was more interested in research than fame, and neglected to publish his discoveries until his friend Edmund Halley (discoverer of Halley's comet) urged him to do so in 1687 (in the book titled *Principia Mathematica*). His scientific method, today known as 'Classical Physics,' went unchallenged until the arrival of the Quantum Theory and the Theory of Relativity in the 20th century.

Gottfried Leibniz (1646-1716), a German Rationalist, was highly skilled in a number of disciplines and has made remarkable contributions in the fields of engineering, library

science, mathematics, logic, physics, linguistics, history, aesthetics and political science. The modern system of library cataloguing comes from him. As a philosopher, he was influenced by the teachings of Descartes and Spinoza but sought to build unity between them and several other philosophies and religions. The result was his famous philosophical concept of the monads which are the smallest units of substance, similar to atoms but containing the past and the future of the substance as well. This will be discussed in greater detail in the Block on 'Rationalism'.

George Berkeley (1685-1753), an 18th century Irish (Anglican) Bishop and empiricist philosopher, was famous for his statement that 'to be is to be perceived' ('*esse est percipi*' in Latin). In other words, that which is not perceived has no real existence. This philosophy is known as Immaterialism. For Berkeley, even the physical objects in our world are nothing but ideas. Hence, he did not believe in the existence of matter.

Charles-Louis de Secondat (1689-1755), known as **Montesquieu**, was a pioneering French political thinker and supporter of human freedom. In his book, *The Spirit of the Laws*, he analysed different systems of government such as the Republic, the Monarchy and the Despotic State. He argued that the best government would be one in which the three powers of government, namely the legislative, executive and judicial, would be separate from each other. His views have influenced the constitutions of many countries, including India.

Francois-Marie Arouet (1694-1778), a famous French thinker, was better known by his pen name of **Voltaire**. He was a deist, who believed in God, but not in any particular religion. He strongly advocated the three principles of free trade, religious tolerance and freedom of expression. He felt that it was only a combination of these that could lead to progress and prosperity. Although he himself supported the idea of monarchy, his political thought strongly influenced the French Revolution.

David Hume (1711-1776) was a famous Scottish philosopher of the Enlightenment. Although he was born in a pious family, he gradually became a sceptic. He published *A Treatise of Human Nature* at the age of 29. His writings are famous for their direct attacks on religious belief. One of his claims is that human beings can never know for certain that one event is the cause of another. By this skeptical claim, he undermined the foundation of all human knowledge.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) was born in Geneva but settled in France. He was one of the philosophers who prepared the ground for the French Revolution. In his most important work, *The Social Contract*, he taught that human beings are naturally in competition with one another and hence they join together to form groups so that they stand a better chance in the struggle. Rousseau believed that this Social Contract was at the basis of modern civilisation and society. He criticised the concept of private property because it created social inequality. He advocated freedom, equality and justice for all.

Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) was probably the most influential philosopher of the Enlightenment. He claimed that we can never know objects in themselves, but only as

they appear to us. Thus he brought about a 'Copernican Revolution' in philosophy because his major insight was that knowledge is not determined by the nature of the external world of objects but rather by the nature of human rationality. This approach addressed many of the problems that philosophers had been discussing, and led to the emergence of idealism in German philosophy. Some of Kant's famous disciples include Fichte, Schelling and Hegel, all of them great philosophers in their own right.

3.5. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ENLIGTENMENT FOR WESTERN PHILOSOPHY

- Ancient Philosophy was interested in wisdom which governed different aspects of theoretical and practical life. Medieval Philosophy was interested in wisdom which governed life in relationship with the divine reality. In contrast to these two approaches, Modern Philosophy was more modest in its methods and its goals. It largely restricted itself to epistemology, namely, the philosophical quest to know the nature, origins and scope of human knowledge. This quest was considered to be basic to all other theoretical and practical questions.
- This was because the Enlightenment was a period when neither theological authority (the primary texts, the prominent thinkers and leaders of the Church), nor philosophical authority (the texts and prominent thinkers of ancient and medieval philosophy) was given primary importance.
- Instead, there was a desire to think things through from scratch, so that one could arrive at the truth without the baggage and the blindfolds of theological and philosophical tradition.
- Descartes is considered to be the father of Modern Philosophy. This is because he was one of the first to decide that rather than accepting arguments from tradition and authority, he would rely on his own power of reasoning and thus arrive at facts that he could be certain of.
- After starting from scratch, the well known conclusion that he arrived at was 'cogito, ergo sum' ('I think, therefore I am'). From this, he was led to numerous other conclusions.
- Of course, this attitude of starting from scratch was not easy, and was not even possible. This is because many of the thinkers of this time were influenced by their cultural, philosophical and religious traditions, and so their methodological processes and conclusions were not as impartial as they thought them to be.
- Basically, the Rationalists (Descartes, Spinoza Leibniz) believed that the mind and its faculties were largely responsible for most of the authentic knowledge which human beings possess. On the other hand, the Empiricists (Locke, Berkeley, Hume) believed that the senses and their powers were primarily responsible for genuine human knowledge.

- It was the German philosopher Immanuel Kant who reconciled these two positions by claiming that while the mind produced necessary 'concepts' or categories with which to understand reality, the senses produced necessary 'percepts' or sensations which filled in these concepts. However, Kant influenced the whole of Contemporary Philosophy to a large extent, because he believed that while the concepts of the human mind are common to all of us, they do not allow us to know reality as such. We only know reality based on the limits of these concepts of the human mind.
- Many philosophers after Kant began to doubt whether we can truly know and understand metaphysical realities. Thus from the time of Kant, philosophy has refrained from turning its gaze towards metaphysical questions concerning the Heavens, and instead focused on questions primarily concerned with human and social problems.
- On account of this Kantian influence, Contemporary Western Philosophy largely focuses on issues concerned with human existence, scientific knowledge, language, communication, social structures and similar human problems. The larger and all-embracing vision of Ancient and Medieval Philosophy has been replaced by more narrow concerns in Modern and Contemporary Philosophy which address the problems which face people on the personal, inter-personal and social fronts.
- On the socio-political front, this attitude of starting from scratch with the use of reason alone resulted in the downgrading of the authority of the many European monarchs and of the upgrading of democratic processes in many nations.
- That is why while most parts of the world are still largely influenced by cultural tradition and by religious authority, contemporary European consciousness – largely influenced by the Enlightenment – is influenced by the powers of reason, scientific demonstration and democratic social consensus to help form the fabric of society. In this way, the Enlightenment has shaped current European culture and given it an identity which is quite distinct from that of the rest of the world.
- In conclusion, it may be stated that the period of the Enlightenment has largely defined the consciousness and social structure of modern Europe. This has happened through the intellectual revolution in philosophy (the birth of Modern Philosophy, and Kant's 'Copernican Revolution'), the scientific and technological revolution, the Industrial Revolution (in England) and lastly the political revolutions in England, France and America.

Check Your Progress III

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit

1) Give examples of major thinkers who represented this period, and their contribution.

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2) In what way was the Enlightenment significant in terms of Western Philosophy?

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3.6. LET US SUM UP

The period of 'Modern Western Philosophy' is closely related to the prevailing culture generally known as the 'Enlightenment.' In order to enter more fully into the study of Modern Philosophy, this Unit has helped us become more familiar with a basic overview of the Enlightenment, and the more significant events and personalities prevailing during this timeframe of 1600-1800. We have had a chance to reflect over some prominent problems and areas of concern which dominated European consciousness during this age. Finally, we were also able to see how all of these dimensions of the Enlightenment (significant events and developments, prominent problems and themes, outstanding personalities) have had an impact on the development of Western philosophy.

Try and remember the following key points related to the Enlightenment:

- The 'Enlightenment' (18^{th} century) followed the Age of Reason (17^{th} century). But more generally speaking, the Enlightenment may be considered to cover the 17^{th} and 18^{th} centuries (1600-1800), as it was the authority of reason which was increasingly used in philosophical and scientific arguments, rather faith and cultural tradition.
- The period of the 'Enlightenment' largely coincides with the period in Western Philosophy known as 'Modern Philosophy.' Modern philosophy was concerned with the problem of the nature, source and scope of knowledge (that is, the branch of philosophy known as 'Epistemology').
- During the Renaissance, social progress was largely experienced by the rich, powerful and educated. However, during the Enlightenment, social progress was enjoyed by a far wider segment of the population.
- This period saw the rapid growth of democracy, beginning with England, France and America. The spread of democracy helped to strengthen the values of liberty and equality in Europe and in the 'New World' (North America).
- This period also resulted in the Industrial Revolution, because of the many technological applications which sprang from scientific discoveries and inventions, and because of the opportunities for trade with many European colonies all over the world.

3.7. KEY WORDS

Enlightenment: A period in European cultural history beginning in the 17th century but peaking in the 18th century, during which Reason (rather than cultural, religious and philosophical tradition) was advocated as the main source and legitimacy for authority. It was a period of great progress in science, philosophy and politics.

Inductive Method: This is a method of obtaining new knowledge through experimentation and observation rather than from previously held theories. It allows the researcher to eliminate false theories by seeing whether they correspond with the facts observed. As a method, it was described in detail by Francis Bacon in 1620. It was very useful for scientific research and scientific progress, as it led to many new discoveries and inventions.

Industrial Revolution: A period in the late 18th and early 19th centuries when great changes took place in the fields of mining, agriculture, transportation and other areas of technological development. These changes made life more efficient, comfortable, and less physically stressful, as machines began to do the work of human beings. These industrial changes transformed the economic and cultural situation in Britain and subsequently led to social change all over the world.

Democracy: A form of government "of the people, by the people and for the people," in which the citizens have the right to govern the state, and they exercise this right through a majority rule. It is derived from the Greek terms *demos* ('people') and *kratos* ('strength'). Modern democracy is quite different from the democracy practiced in ancient times, as it attempts to give more and more sections of people power, and not only certain privileged sections of society as in the past.

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3.9. ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress I

1) What is generally understood by the term 'Enlightenment'?

Ans: The Enlightenment was a period in the cultural history of Europe beginning in the 17th century and reaching its climax in the 18th century. During this time, there was a general awakening of Europe from its tradition-bound past, in favour of a future which was to be governed by reason and scientific and social progress. It was a period when learning and philosophy were no longer restricted to a few scholars but became widespread among the common people. This resulted in important intellectual, scientific, cultural and political revolutions.

2) What are some of the defining moments of the period of the Enlightenment?

Ans: Some of the most important historical events of the Enlightenment are given below:

1620	Francis Bacon's *Novum Organum* introduces a new system of logic based on the method of induction.
1632	Galileo Galilei publishes his arguments in favour of Copernicus' theory, bringing him into conflict with the Church.
1641	Publication of Rene Descartes' *Meditations*
1687	The publication of Isaac Newton's *Principia Mathematica*
1688-89	The 'Glorious Revolution' in England
1751-72	Publication of Diderot's *Encyclopedie*
1756-63	The Seven Years War
1775-83	American War of Independence
1781	Immanuel Kant publishes *A Critique of Pure Reason*
1789-93	The French Revolution

Check Your Progress II

1) How did the Enlightenment give rise to a 'modern' mentality?

Ans: The Enlightenment saw the birth of a scientific culture, which in turn led to many technological innovations. Argument from authority began to lose ground while reason and empirical evidence became more important as sources of knowledge. At the same time there were numerous social changes, as a result of which people were reading more and discussing

various issues in the newly-emerging public forum. Finally, the understanding by which human beings were believed to possess natural rights gave birth to the modern political ideas of freedom, equality and democracy.

2) What are some areas of continuity and difference between the Enlightenment and the earlier period of the Renaissance?

Ans: Some areas of continuity between Renaissance and Enlightenment:

a) The separation of philosophy and theology continued.

b) There was a similar appeal to the power of reason and experience rather than authority.

c) There was a gradual spread of education, learning and reading.

Some areas of difference between Renaissance and Enlightenment:

a) The Renaissance aimed to revive classical ideas whereas the Enlightenment aimed at progressing beyond what had been achieved in the past.

b) The Renaissance was a cultural change that affected certain strata of society whereas the Enlightenment affected the daily lives of society as a whole, including ordinary, simple people.

c) The Renaissance was dominated by the arts and humanities, while the Enlightenment was dominated by science and technology.

Check Your Progress III

1) Give examples of major thinkers who represented this period, and their contribution.

Ans: Some of the most important thinkers of the Enlightenment were:

a) Rene Descartes, who attempted to make a fresh beginning in philosophy, presupposing nothing from authority or tradition.

b) Sir Isaac Newton, who discovered the Universal Law of Gravitation and the three laws of motion. These and other discoveries helped to revolutionize the world of science and technology.

c) Montesquieu, Voltaire and Rousseau, who propagated Enlightenment ideas in France, leading ultimately to the French Revolution.

d) Immanuel Kant, who brought about a 'Copernican Revolution' in philosophy by turning philosophical attention from the world of objects to the world of the subject.

2) In what way was the Enlightenment significant in terms of Western Philosophy?

Ans: The Enlightenment was significant for the following reasons:

a) A new beginning was made in philosophy by the return to direct experience and reasoning rather than arguments from tradition and authority.

b) There was a shift in philosophical interest from metaphysics towards epistemology. Within epistemology, there was a shift from the world of external objects to the faculties and conceptual abilities of the knowing subject.

c) Numerous changes in the scientific, industrial and political realms brought about a new confidence in human potential and human progress. This in turn led to the gradual secularization of Europe (where earthly interests took prominence over other-worldly considerations). Likewise, the philosophical horizon began to become more human and more secular, rather than show interest in transcendental questions which were earlier discussed in metaphysics and ethics.

UNIT4 SOCIO-POLITICAL IMPLICATION

Contents

4.0. OBJECTIVE

In this unit, we will see the emergence of modern Western philosophy and its impact on different spheres of human society and in the domain of academic. We will also see the chronological development of modern Western thinkers.
By the end of this unit one will be able to:
* Know the glimpses of modern western philosophers
* Their influence on society and human thoughts in general

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Before we discuss the socio- political implications of Modern Western Philosophy we should know the distinction between ancient, medieval and modern. These three terms are used to divide human history and civilization. Accordingly history is divided into ancient history, medieval history and modern history. Sometimes the term pre-history is used to stand for very very ancient time. It should be remembered in this connection that ancient, medieval and modern are relative terms. That which is modern today will be medieval tomorrow and ancient day after tomorrow and so on. Further, it is not necessary that ancient and medieval are useless and modern is very useful. To get rid of these confusions and obviate the difficulties these terms have to be redefined in terms of mind sets and attitudes. So ancient, medieval and modern stand for particular mind sets and attitudes.

Seen in this light according to some sociologists ancient means superstitious medieval means religious and modern means scientific. One thing common between ancient and medieval is that faith and unquestioned belief characterize these two mind sets whereas doubt and questioning spirit characterize the so called modern mind set. If this definition of modern and modernity is accepted then Francis Bacon should be regarded as the precursor and father of modern and

modernity. Bacon prescribes a method of cleansing the mind before we do any philosophy or science. Human mind is infected with idols or false beliefs and misconceptions. After removing the idola from mind one should develop questioning sprit. According to Bacon, Idols are of the following types; (i) Idols of Tribe, (ii) Idols of Cave, (iii) Idols of Market place and (iv) Idols of Theatre. In nutshell, human mind is the source of all superstitions. So it has to be kept neat and clean. In other words before understanding any inquiry or investigation one has to clean the mind set and one has to approach native with a clean slate. Mind has to be kept neat and clean. But Bacon's views should not be misunderstood and misinterpreted. Bacon recommends elimination of blind belief, prejudice and superstitions.

4.2. DESCARTES, SPINOZA AND LEIBNITZ

However, it is conventional to treat Rene Descartes and not Francis Bacon as the father of modern Western philosophy. Descartes was a French Philosopher and made original contribution to mathematics and geometry. He is known as the father of the modern western philosophy because he introduced absolutely a new method of philosophizing. Do not take anything granted. Think, reflect and doubt and then we will know – was the motto of Descartes. This methodological doctrine ultimately led to *cogito ergo sum* (I think therefore I exist). This is otherwise known as the method of universal doubt. At the same time Descartes streamlined matter and mind as two distinct substances that influenced and inspired both Spinoza and Leibnitz. The trios are known as the modern rationalist philosophers as Plato and Aristotle are known as the ancient rationalist in Europe. Modern rationalism did give rise to a new wave of metaphysics, ontology and epistemology. But it did influence socio-political life of people in Europe. Descartes protected and preserved the independence of mind and spirit against the onslaught of materialism. Further Cartesianism made God a necessity because without God matter and mind cannot interact. So Deism got a booster. Further, mathematics and geometry were influenced by Descartes to such an extent that the subsequent thinkers made search for universal and indubitable truths. Only reason, unalloyed reason can give us truth.

Pantheism became the watch word of Spinoza. In a sense deistic religion got a set back but in another sense pantheism reigned supreme. If there is a God it is all pervasive. There is nothing that falls beyond the purview of God and divinity. The spinozistic metaphysics did encourage humility, tolerance and universal brotherhood.

Leibnitz's concept of monad and God as the monad of all monads restored Omnipresence, Omnipotence and Omniscience to God. Thus the supposed materialism that was likely to flow from Newton's concepts of matter, motion and energy was obstructed and came to a halt. Newton and Leibnitz were contemporaries. There was some kind of jealousy between the two. But in many ways Leibnitz surpassed Newton.

The medieval conflict between science and theology came to a stop with philosophies of Descartes Spinoza and Leibnitz. Matter and mind or spirit belongs to two different spheres and sometimes God the Divine plays a very important role in the world. But at the same time the emphasis on mathematics geometry and mathematical reasoning by the philosophers like Descartes, Spinoza and Leibnitz paved the way for greater applications of mathematics and mathematical methods in understanding the world at large. Emphasis on reason and rationality

glorify reason. It led to the conclusion that there is only one order of rationality. Thus universalism reigned supreme and any kind of specificity and particularity as denounced. Cultural universalism replaced cultural relativism and cultural pluralism. This type of metaphysics aimed at eliminating and uprooting all types of particularity and in due course of time the Western or European model of society and culture was treated as the paradigms for all cultures and societies. The social scientists particularly the social anthropologists who were influenced by this type of philosophical ideology began to denounce the non-western culture and civilization.

4.3 EMPIRICIST MOVEMENT

After the rationalists it is the empiricists like Locke, Berkeley and Hume who played a major role in shaping the socio cultural history of Europe. The empiricist emphasis on experience and experiential knowledge inspired empirical sciences. Empirical method is one of the primary methods of knowing and studying the world. Locke, Berkley and Hume are the accredited empiricists though Bentham Mill and Spencer are also included in the group for various reasons. It is necessary in this connection to mention that liberalism and individualism in politics, Laissez Fair in Economics and Behaviorism in psychology go along with empiricist epistemology and theory of knowledge. Locke's thesis that simple and complex ideas constitute knowledge gives rise to the thesis that individuals are the basic units of the state. The social contract theory advocated by Locke was the logical outcome of such an epistemological theory. In due course of time, Locke's philosophy encouraged and inspired politics in England and the United States of America.

It is said that it is Berkeley who made Locke consistent. That empiricism ultimately leads to solipsism was shown and argued out in detail by Berkeley. Berkeley was a bishop and he had to account for the omniscience of God. Accordingly he gave sophisticated arguments for the existence of an omniscient God.

It is said that Hume made empiricism consistent. According to Hume, experience is the ultimate source of knowledge and no knowledge about the world can be necessary. Thus Hume was led to classify propositions into two broad types. They are (i) synthetic or empirical and (ii) analytic or necessary. Synthetic or empirical propositions are probable; there is no necessity in them. On the other hand, the so called necessary propositions are vacuous or empty; they are devoid of factual content. The positivistic distinction between analytic and synthetic thus owes its origin to Hume's classification of propositions. The phrase "Commit it to flame" was very famous with Hume. Any proposition that is neither analytic nor synthetic must be committed to flames. The later day dictum that metaphysics is nonsense is really Humean in nature. The idea of synthetic a priori was crumbled thus dethroning mathematics from its pristine glory. It paved the way for Kant but did not give up faith and belief from human world. Empiricist epistemology and metaphysic gave rise to probabilism. It is note worthy to note that Locke and Newton were contemporaries. But while Locke's theory was bound to give rise to probabilism Newton's Mathematical and Physical theory gave rise to some kind of universalism and necessity in the sphere of natural world. Further Berkley's dictum *'Esse est Percipi'* along with certain other principles was almost to give rise to Einstein's theory of relativity making motion and rest relative to the position of observer. This shows how the so called abstract philosophical and metaphysical theories shape construction and reconstruction of physical theory. Further the empiricist epistemology gave rise to hedonistic and utilitarian ethical theories.

4.4 ERA OF IMMANUEL KANT

The empiricist tradition particularly the Humean analysis of experience gave a serious jolt to Copernican – Galilean – Newtonian mechanics. There is no necessity in any knowledge worth its name. The Humean probabilism aroused Kant, it is said, from the latter's dogmatic slumber. Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* is a defense of Newtonian mechanics. Kant's argument was that there is necessity in the world and knowledge. This necessity comes from mind. It is mind that is the source of necessity. Two forms of intuition that is space and time and twelve categories constitute the very basis of scientific knowledge. It is the alpha and omega of knowledge. Thus the necessity and universality of knowledge that was challenged by Hume was restored to it by Kant.

Mathematical and scientific knowledge are synthetic a priori. It is synthetic because it gives us information and it is a priori because it is necessary and universal.

Further, Kant brought to an end the age old conflict between science and religion by introducing two concepts such as phenomenon and noumenon. Science belongs to the domain of phenomenon and religion ethics, and aesthetics etc. belong to the domain of noumenon. Thus Kant's philosophy gave an assurance not only to philosophers and scientists but also to common man as well. The boundaries of knowledge, faith and belief were clearly drawn. The long drawn conflict between science and religion came to an end. It was shown by Kant that science and religion have distinct and different domain. Therefore there is no scope for conflict between the two. Thus Kant not only brought an end to the conflict between rationalism and empiricism but gave a new direction to philosophising. This justification of the Newtonian mechanics was unparallel. It is Kant who treated moral principles as *Sui generis,* unique, and autonomous so that it cannot be reduced to anything at all. Autonomy of moral was the slogan. Neither utility nor subjective sentiment nor even pragmatic value can justify the moral principles. Thus Kant's synthetic a priori and categorical imperative held roost many many years almost in every field. Thus, Kant's three critiques, Critique of Pure Reasons, Critique of Practical Reason and Critique of Judgment can be said to have defended *Satyam Shivam and Sundaram* (Truth, Good and Beauty). The Critique of Pure Reason lays down the conditions of truth scientific and otherwise; Critique of Practical Reason lays down the conditions of morality and the Critique of Judgment lays down the conditions of Beauty. In this sense they are the three milestones or land marks in the history of human thought.

Check Your Progress I

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit

1) Explain the four types of idols according to Francis Bacon.

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2) Explain briefly the impact of Descartes on later thought
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4.5 HEGEL AND HIS DIALECTIC METHOD

But soon philosophers were dissatisfied with the bloodless ballets of categories. The Kantian categories were fixed in number and static. They do not grow and thus are still and lifeless. It was Hegel who was dissatisfied with the Kantian categories. Being, Nonbeing and Becoming or Thesis, Anti Thesis and Synthesis soon replaced the fixed Kantian categories. Reality or Geist is dynamic, it grows and develops until it achieves and attains completion. Thus for Hegel law of contradiction is the basic law. It is not only the law of logic but also the law of reality as well. The law of contradiction operates in the world.

Hegelian dialectics changed the cognitive structure of people. Hegel supported the cause of absolute monarchy. He pleaded that freedom is obedience to the order of the state. It may not be out of place to mention in this connection that dictatorship got support from the Hegelian philosophy. Hitter and Mussolini the two notorious dictators were inspired by Hegel's philosophy. But Hegelian dialectic was not only adopted but also used by Marx in understanding human society. It is said that Hegel was standing on his head and Marx made him stand on his leg. This is a metaphor but the metaphor is very meaningful in the context. Hegel used dialectics and the dialectical method to support the spirit (Geist). The Geist or the spirit is the final reality. But for Marx it is Matter that is the ultimate reality. On the surface Hegelian philosophy appears to be strange and replete with contradiction. But attempt has been made by scholars like Findlay and others to trace back analytical philosophy and the modern philosophy of language to Hegel. The Hegelian doctrine that the absolute reality is a totality and dynamic gives significant insight to the man and nature. That the entire world is interrelated and interdependent is a Hegelian insight. The supposed dichotomous division between man nature and God does not really exist. The entire universe or the world is an interdependent unit.

4.6 MARXIAN ALTERNATIVE OR DIALECTICAL MATERIALISM

Marx replaced the tripartite dialectic by Haves and Have-nots or Bourgeoisie and Proletariat a classless society. Engles joined hands with Marx in this respect. Both Marx and Engles claim that human society has been divided into two opposing classes: (i) the capitalist and (ii) the labouring class. That was the period of industrial revolutions when Marx was writing. He saw in his own eyes in England how the industrial workers were being oppressed and exploited. Marx vehemently argued that Hegel was standing on his head and he made him stand on his legs.

Dialectical spiritualism was replaced by dialectical materialism. The Communist Manifesto and the Das Capital are full of vivid description of the suffering of the tooling masses. Marx developed an economic theory to support his thesis. According to Marx, though land, labour, capital and organization are the known factors of production yet labour plays an important role in the process of production. The value of a commodity is equal to the units of labour consumed in the process of its productions. The value and the price of a commodity increases solely because of labour. Marx characterizes it as the theory of surplus value. The capitalists without doing any work corner, appropriate and enjoy the surplus. As a result, the toiling masses, the labourers progressively get pauperized. The capitalist successfully exploit the workers by using religion as a means. Marx treats religion as the opiate of people. The Common man falls an easy prey to the booby trap of religion set by the capitalist. Both Marx and Engels gave clarion call to the workers --- "Workers of the world unite, you have nothing to loose but only the fetters". The workers were inspired. Marx and Engels predicted that the proletariat revolutions will take place in highly industrial society but interestingly the communist revolutions took place in highly agrarian societies like Russia and China. The Bolshevik and Kamitang revolutions are testimony to the triumph of Marxist and communist ideology. Both Soviet Union and China went RED. This is for the first time in world history that a philosophical theory brought about radical socio-economic change. Of course this is true that the philosophical thesis of Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau, Mill Bentham and Spencer had great impact on human society but not to the extent in which Marxism encouraged revolution. Marx's dictum that religion is the opiate of the people brought into bold relief the point how religion has been misused through the ages. Bentham's views on society and man led to extensive jail reforms in England. That economy plays an important and pivotal role in the human world was emphasized by Karl Marx. In the Upanishadic and Indian tradition it is said that *Anam eva Brahman* (Food or eatables are basic realities). No philosophical or political theory affords to ignore economy or material conditions. To reorder and change the society is to reorder and change the economic conditions. No social theory could be understood without reference to matter or economic conditions. This is a crash truth and this was emphasized by Marx.

4.7 PHENOMENALISM AND EXISTENTIALISM

Phenomenology and Existentialism grew as a reaction to Hegelian absolutism. Jean Paul Sartre, Kierkegaard and Albert Camus are the chief exponents of existentialism. It protested and revolted against all types of absolutism and moral and political paradigms. According to the existentialists, it is individual human person who has to decide what is good or moral for him. We are condemned to be free. Freedom, morality and ethics cannot be imposed from above. In a sense, we are all condemned to be free. Thus existentialism brought about a major change and revolution in the field of morality. Soon young people were inspired by the existential view of morality and the slogan existence precedes essence gained ground. There is no universal morality and ethics. The individual creates his/her morality. Therefore, no morality can be imposed from above. The Hippies and the Beatles were inspired by this type of philosophy and they made it a life style. They questioned all types of age old traditions and customs. They wanted a seamless limitless free society. To be guided by any tradition is to act like a slave. Slavery and bondage curtail freedom of the individual.

Thus nothing but absolute freedom of the individual became the motto of the existentialist. Thus phenomenology and existentialism currents of thoughts and varieties became the life style. The existentialist emphasized the context element in morality. There may be Moral Universals and paradigms but when the individual is called upon to take a decision he/she faces a dilemma. What is to be done under a particular situation? This becomes the pertinent problem before the active agent and he/she has to take a decision. This context aspect of the moral situation has been not been taken care of by what may be called as the Universal Moralism. Thus existentialism provides an answer to the individual in a tying situation.

In the first part of 20th century astounding discoveries and inventions were made both in natural Sciences and Mathematics and Mathematical logic. For centuries together philosophers and mathematicians were thinking on the foundation of mathematics and geometry. Euclidian geometry provided the basis for Newtonian mechanics. But slow and silent revolution was taking place in the domain of mathematics and geometry. Gauss and Riemann established and demonstrated the view that an alternative Non-Euclidian geometry is possible. If the Euclidian geometry formed the basis and foundation of Newtonian mechanics the non-Euclidian geometry formed the basis of Einstein's physics.

The Newtonian mechanics advocated absolute motion and absolute rest. Einstein replaced absolutism by relativism. Further the logistic view of Mathematics that the so called synthetic a priori knowledge is not possible began to undermine the foundation of Mathematics. The publications of *Principia Mathematica* by Russell and A.N. Whitehead played a major role in this regard. Mathematical propositions are not synthetic a priori as held by Kant; they are purely analytical and tautological. The entire intellectual process gave rise to the movement of logical positivism.

4.8 LOGICAL POSITIVISM

A.J.Ayer, Rudolf Carnap, Moritz Schlick and others started the positivistic movement in philosophy. Positivism as a philosophical movement not only decried metaphysics as non-sense and meaningless but decried ethics and religion as meaningless and nonsense. For the positivists, all significant propositions are of two types (i) analytic and (ii) synthetic. Metaphysical propositions are neither synthetic nor analytic. Further, positivism also dethroned synthetic a priori propositions from its pristine glory. Thus positivism created an intellectual vacuum. Only sciences and scientific methods hold the sway. Even grand Social theories were ridiculed. Only science and scientism were encouraged. For a spell, metaphysics came to a grinding halt. Philosophers were busy with discussing and discovering the concepts of meaning and verification. It made philosophers self conscious. Thus, the task of philosophy was reduced to analysis of language and methods of sciences. No more philosophy was held in high esteem for the simple reason that now it has a very minor and insignificant function, no more it has the important function of guiding the people.

It is necessary in this connection to mention the role played by Karl Popper with reference to positivism. Popper replaced verification by falsification. Scientific theories are falsifiable but metaphysical theories are not. Popper went steps ahead and castigated historicist doctrine. Thus he vehemently criticized Plato, Hegel and Marx Popper's doctrine, thus gave rise to the concepts

of paradigms and paradigm shift. It is time that logical Positivism gave a serious blow to speculative metaphysics. It is challenged all the concept of necessary truth and infallible reason. In this sense positivism resembles the Carvak system of philosophy in India. The Carvakas denounced all types of universalism and metaphysical speculation. Buddhism in India did reject all types of *kalpanas* (Imaginative Creations). It directed the attention of man to concrete human situations. Thus in a sense Buddhism Carvakas and Logical positivism are on the same intellectual place. In nut shell these three philosophies tried to demystify thought and there by tried to set man free from age old dogmas.

4.9 STRAWSON WITH AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH TO METAPHYSICS

P.F. Strawson an Oxford philosopher tried to rehabilitate metaphysics. He made a distinction between reversionary metaphysics and descriptive metaphysics. Reversionary metaphysics aims at revising the basic categories of thought. Revision of concepts is occasioned because of various reasons. Thus reversionary metaphysics is not meaningless and non-sense. It caters to the need, aspirations and expectations of people. On the other hand, descriptive metaphysics aims at describing the basic categories in terms of which we think about the world.

Strawson in this sense may be regarded as a neo-Kantian. Like Kant he assumed that material bodies and human persons in space and time constitute the basic particulars. Identifications and re-identification are the process by means of which human mind operate. The critics of metaphysics became less aggressive and more tolerant. Consequently today philosophers are falling back on classics for illuminations and insight.

Social and Cultural impact of modern western philosophy cannot be fully appreciated without reference to instrumentalism and pragmatism. Instrumentalism and pragmatism treat knowledge as efficient instruments. Knowledge for the sake of knowledge is discarded as old fashioned ideas. Thus American education and politics were greatly influenced by the two great philosophers such as John Dewey and William James. Further, this view of education also spread to other countries of the world in due course of time. Today in the so called modern world it is the view of James and Dewey that operate in the world of education. These instance clearly show that philosophy is not only a cognitive and intellectual enquiry but also it influences and effects life at various points. It should be noted in this connection that philosophy is a very serious cognitive and intellectual activity: Various currents and cross currents of it testifies to the claim. Not only speculative philosophy was taken seriously but positivism including its theory of meaning were taken seriously too. Did it stop there? The answer is ‘no’. Examination and re-examination of views and counterviews is an ongoing process in philosophy. This makes philosophy lively, vibrant and relevant intellectual enterprise.

4.10. LET US SUM UP

Now that I have sketched out in broad strokes some of the impacts of modern philosophy, especially its impact on later philosophers and societal institutions. Not all environmental determinism leads to Marxism, nor does all biological determinism lead to the Holocaust. Not all existentialism or postmodernism leads to immoral behavior, either. However, false conceptions of philosophy can lead to destructive behavior and harmful policies, both by societies and by individuals. It can and does affect the way we treat other human beings. Human rights are meaningless in a world of determinism or social (or individual) constructivism. The underlying philosophical vision in any society shapes the political and social institutions, the laws, and the entire culture in far-reaching ways. The converse is also true – the political, social, and legal developments in a society influence its philosophical views too.

Check Your Progress II

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit

1) How did Hegelian dialectic change the cognitive structure of people?

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2) Positivism was influenced by Modern Philosophy. How?

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4.11. KEY WORDS

Solipsism: Solipsism is an epistemological or ontological position that knowledge of anything outside the mind is unjustified. The external world and other minds cannot be known and might not exist. In the history of philosophy, solipsism has served as a skeptical hypothesis.

Instrumentalism: Instrumentalism is the view that a concept or theory should be evaluated by how effectively it explains and predicts phenomena, as opposed to how accurately it describes objective reality.

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4.13. ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answers to Check Your Progress I

1. Bacon prescribes a method of cleansing the mind before we do any philosophy or science. Human mind is infected with idols or false beliefs and misconceptions. After removing the idola from mind one should develop questioning sprit. According to Bacon, Idols are of the following types; (i) Idols of Tribe, (ii) Idols of Cave, (iii) Idols of Market place and (iv) Idols of Theatre. In nutshell, human mind is the source of all superstitions. So it has to be kept neat and clean. In other words before understanding any inquiry or investigation one has to clean the mind set and one has to approach native with a clean slate. Mind has to be kept neat and clean. But Bacon's views should not be misunderstood and misinterpreted. Bacon recommends elimination of blind belief, prejudice and superstitions.

2. Descartes was a French Philosopher and made original contribution to mathematics and geometry. He is known as the father of the modern western philosophy because he introduced absolutely a new method of philosophizing. Do not take anything granted. Think, reflect and doubt and then we will know – was the motto of Descartes. This methodological doctrine ultimately led to *cogito ergo sum* (I think therefore I exist). This is otherwise known as the method of universal doubt. At the same time Descartes streamlined matter and mind as two distinct substances that influenced and inspired both Spinoza and Leibnitz. The trios are known as the modern rationalist philosophers as Plato and Aristotle are known as the ancient rationalist in Europe. Modern rationalism did give rise to a new wave of metaphysics, ontology and epistemology. But it did influence socio-political life of people in Europe. Descartes protected and preserved the independence of mind and spirit against the onslaught of materialism. Further Cartesianism made God a necessity because without God matter and mind cannot interact. So Deism got a booster. Further, mathematics and geometry were influenced by Descartes to such an extent that the subsequent thinkers made search for universal and indubitable truths. Only reason, unalloyed reason can give us truth.

Answers to Check Your Progress II

1. Hegelian dialectics changed the cognitive structure of people. Hegel supported the cause of absolute monarchy. He pleaded that freedom is obedience to the order of the state. It may not be out of place to mention in this connection that dictatorship got support from the Hegelian philosophy. Hitter and Mussolini the two notorious dictators were inspired by Hegel's philosophy. But Hegelian dialectic was not only adopted but also used by Marx in understanding human society.

2. A.J.Ayer, Rudolf Carnap, Moritz Schlick and others started the positivistic movement in philosophy. Positivism as a philosophical movement not only decried metaphysics as non-sense and meaningless but decried ethics and religion as meaningless and nonsense. For the positivists, all significant propositions are of two types (i) analytic and (ii) synthetic. Metaphysical propositions are neither synthetic nor analytic. Further, positivism also dethroned synthetic a priori propositions from its pristine glory. Thus positivism created an intellectual vacuum. Only sciences and scientific methods hold the sway. Even grand Social theories were ridiculed. Only science and scientism were encouraged. For a spell, metaphysics came to a grinding halt. Philosophers were busy with discussing and discovering the concepts of meaning and verification. It made philosophers self conscious. Thus, the task of philosophy was reduced to

analysis of language and methods of sciences. No more philosophy was held in high esteem for the simple reason that now it has a very minor and insignificant function, no more it has the important function of guiding the people.

BLOCK-2 INTRODUCTION

Rationalism is the view that reason as the source of knowledge or justification. It is a method or a theory in which the criterion of truth is not sensory but intellectual and deductive. Different degrees of emphasis on this method lead to a range of rationalist standpoints, from the moderate position that reason has precedence over other ways of acquiring knowledge to the radical position that reason is the unique path to knowledge. It has long been the rival of empiricism, the doctrine that all knowledge of matters of fact ultimately derives from and must be tested by sense experience. As against this doctrine, rationalism holds reason to be a faculty that can lay hold of truths beyond the reach of sense perception, both in certainty and in generality. The block, which consists of 4 units, exposes the rationalist views of Descartes, Spinoza, and Leibniz. The block is concluded with a critical evaluation.

Unit 1, "Descartes," studies philosophy of René Descartes who is widely considered to be the 'father of modern philosophy.' In this unit we deal with Descartes' life and works, his method and criterion of knowledge, proofs for the existence of God, the existence of the world, the relation of mind and body and the theory of innate ideas.

Unit 2 is on "Spinoza," who is one of the most important of the post-Cartesian philosophers. His thought combines a commitment to Cartesian metaphysical and epistemological principles with elements from sources such as Stoicism, Jewish Rationalism, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Descartes, and a variety of heterodox religious thinkers of his day. For this reason he is difficult to categorize, though he is usually counted, along with Descartes and Leibniz, as one of the three major rationalists.

Unit 3 is on "Leibniz." Leibniz tried to reconcile Plato with Democritus, Aristotle with Descartes, the scholastics with the moderns, theology and morals with the dictates of reason. He tried to achieve this highly critical aim with the help of a few leading principles. Leibniz was a great mathematician and along with Newton shared the credit of inventing infinitesimal calculus. Naturally like Descartes and Spinoza he was biased for a mathematical method in philosophy and as such he intended to give geometrical proof in metaphysics.

Unit 4, "Resume and Critical Appraisal," highlights the points of convergence and divergence among the continental rationalists: Descartes, Spinoza and Leibniz. Descartes was bothered by the question of certainty and he designed an ingenious "method of doubt" in order to arrive at what could not at all be doubted. Spinoza's method is not only thoroughly deductive like the mathematical method, but even the exposition of his philosophy is rigorously deductive. Leibniz is no less rationalistic and deductive in his philosophy.

To conclude: With the view that reason as the source of knowledge or justification, rationalism became a method in which the criterion of truth is not sensory but intellectual and deductive. Descartes, Spinoza and Leibniz were convinced of this view.

UNIT1 DESCARTES

Contents

1.0. OBJECTIVES

The objective of this unit is to introduce and study about René Descartes who is perhaps the most widely studied of all the great philosophers. He is commonly considered to be the 'father of modern philosophy', and for good reason; for both the programme he set for himself, and the general sort of method he adopted in his attempt to carry it out, involved something of a break with medieval philosophical tradition, and greatly influenced the subsequent course of modern philosophy. He was one of the founders of modern thought and among the most original philosophers and mathematicians of any age. In this unit we shall see Descartes' life and works, his method and criterion of knowledge, proofs for the existence of God, the existence of the world, the relation of mind and body and the theory of innate ideas.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

René Descartes was born in 1596 at La Haye, Touraine in central France.He was the son of a minor nobleman and belonged to a family that had produced a number of learned men. At the age of eight he was enrolled in the Jesuit school of La Flèche in Anjou, where he spent the rest of his schooldays. Besides the usual classical studies, Descartes received instruction in mathematics and scholasticism, which attempted to use human reason to understand Christian doctrine.

Upon finishing school, he studied law at the University of Poitiers, graduating in 1616. He never practised law, however; in 1618 he entered the service of Prince Maurice of Nassau, leader of the United Provinces of the Netherlands, with the intention of following a military career. In succeeding years Descartes served in other armies, but his attention had already been attracted to the problems of mathematics and philosophy, to which he was to devote the rest of his life. One of the important influences on Descartes during this period was Dutch mathematician Isaac Beeckman, who encouraged him to pursue his studies.

On November 10, 1619 he had three consecutive dreams which convinced that his mission was to seek truth by reason and vowed to make a pilgrimage to the shrine of Our Lady at Loreto In Italy. However, his military engagements and travels did not permit him to go to Loreto immediately. But he went there in 1623. He lived for a while in Paris where he enjoyed the friendship of men like Mercenre and Cardinal de Berulle. Finding Paris life too distracting, in 1628 he retired to Holland where he remained till 1649.

In Holland, Descartes worked at his system, and by 1634 he had completed a scientific work called *Le Monde* (the world). When he heard, however, of the condemnation of Galileo for teaching the Copernican system, as did *Le Monde*, he immediately had the book suppressed. Then he left Holland for Sweden at the invitation of Queen Christina. The Swedish winter proved too harsh for Descartes and the Queen's habit of having his tuition at 5 in the morning was too much for him. He died on 11 February 1650 in Stockholm, Sweden.

1. 2. WORKS OF DESCARTES

Descartes' literary work is quite extensive. His writings are not restricted to philosophical works, but also comprise basic books in the fields of mathematics, biology and physics, and an extensive correspondence. His principal works on philosophy are:

1. *Discourse on the Method* (1637)
2. *Meditations on First Philosophy* (1641)
3. *Principles of Philosophy* (1644)
4. *Rules for the Direction of the Mind* (1701)

1. 3. DESCARTES' AIM, METHOD AND CRITERION OF KNOWLEDGE

The fundamental aim of Descartes was to attain philosophical truth by reason. Philosophy must rest on pure reason and not on tradition. He wanted to develop a whole system of philosophy based on true propositions which were part of an organic whole, so that nothing was presupposed but each would be self-evident and certain. For Descartes knowledge begins with some self-evident innate ideas or principles and deduce other truth from them. Hence, he wanted to give philosophy a new start, desiring to reject any authority. His aim was to bring into philosophy the kind of clarity and certainty which is found in mathematics. Therefore he wanted to use the method of mathematics in philosophy.

The method of mathematics consists in the use of only two mental operations by which true knowledge can be achieved: intuition and deduction. By intuition he means our understanding of self-evident principles, such as the axioms of geometry (a straight line is the shortest distance between two points; or, things equal to the same thing are equal to each other.) They are self-evident. No rational mind can doubt them. By deduction he means orderly, logical reasoning or inference from self-evident proposition.

According to Descartes, the chief secret of method is to arrange all facts into a deductive, logical system. Descartes' goal is to build a system of philosophy based upon intuition and deduction which will remain as certain and as imperishable as geometry. What he is determined to find is a self-evident principle which will serve as the axiom or first principle for his mathematical philosophy, and which will serve as the foundation from which absolutely certain philosophy can be deduced.

In order to obtain mathematical certainty in philosophy he introduces his famous *methodic doubt*. He says that it is necessary to doubt everything and to regard as provisionally false anything of which there can be the slightest doubt. In this sense, it is universal doubt. It is called methodic doubt, and not the doubt of the Sceptics, because he uses this doubt only as a method, to attain certain knowledge. Sceptics doubted because they said it is impossible to attain certainty.
He doubted the testimony of the senses because the senses make mistakes. As he says, "What has deceived me once may deceive me again." He doubts the opinion of others and the reality of his own body and of the external world. Even he doubts mathematical beliefs, which he regarded as model of certainty. However, while carrying out his assigned task of subjecting all our knowledge methodically to doubt, Descartes was struck by one truth of which there could be no doubt whatever. From the fact that a person is thinking (even doubting), he knows at least that he exists, because he is carrying out these activities. This is the fundamental truth of the whole of Descartes' Philosophy. "I think, therefore, I am", "*Cogito ergo sum*". By intuition he knows that he could not think if he did not exist. Descartes, however, still doubts the existence of his body. Hence, the self he arrives at is only an immaterial thinking self, thinking substance (*res cogitans*).

It is certain that I doubt or think. Doubt implies a doubter; thinking implies a thinker, a thinking thing (*res cogitans*) or spiritual substance; thus he reaches what seems to him a rational, self-evident proposition. To doubt means to think, to think means to be; 'Cogito ergo sum'. "I think, therefore I am." It is the first and most certain knowledge that occurs to one who philosophizes in an orderly manner. Here is the principle we have been seeking- a certain, self-evident starting-point.

In this process of doubting, we finally reach a solid foundation, for while we are doubting we are using the thinking process. In fact, our doubts imply the reality of our thoughts. Descartes' Cogito ergo sum in many ways the most famous principle in modern philosophy. Descartes regarded it as a primary truth of all human reason. Descartes' first axiom has significant implications. "I think, therefore I am" means that the existence of reason is more important than anything else; man's reality lies in his thinking process.

Descartes reminded that the student of philosophy and science not to base his conclusions upon the work of the ancients. Even knowing all of Aristotle will not make philosophers out of us. We must have originality and the capacity to discriminate between permanent and transitory knowledge. The power of judgment is not increased through academic studies. Principles can be memorized, but philosophy must be understood and digested.

According to Descartes, instead of accepting the traditional views, we must study the great book of the world. "We shall never become philosophers even though we should read all the reasoning of Plato and Aristotle if we cannot form a sound judgment upon any proposition."

Check Your Progress I

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit

1) René Descartes is rightly labelled as the 'father of modern philosophy'. Why?

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2) Explain Descartes' mehtodic doubt.

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1. 4. EXISTENCE OF GOD

We now have a fundamental principle and a criterion of true knowledge. What else can we know? It is doubtful whether anything can be certain, so long as we are confronted with the possibility of a deceiving God; we do not know as yet whether there is a God, and, if there is, that he is not a deceiver. This difficulty must be removed. Some of our ideas appear to be innate, some are our own inventions, most of them seem to have been received from without. Certain ideas we regard as effects or copies of an external world. But all this may be illusion. One of the ideas I find in myself is the idea of God. Now, nothing can come from nothing, whatever exists must have a cause for existing; this, too, is a self-evident proposition. The principle of Descartes argument is actually the long established principle of medieval philosophy is that *ex nihilo nihil fit*: out of nothing can come nothing. Moreover, the cause must be at least as great as the effect, there must be at least as much reality in it. That which contains greater reality in itself and which is the more perfect, cannot be a consequence of, and dependent on, the less perfect. Hence, I myself cannot be the cause of the idea of God, for I am a finite, imperfect being, while the idea of God is the idea of a perfect, infinite being. It must have been placed in me by an infinite being, or God, and hence God must exist.

This proof for the existence of God is not the ontological proof of Anselm, but a causal proof, which begins with the idea of a perfect being existing in my mind. It is not argued that such a being exists merely because we have a concept of him, but, rather, that from the idea of such a being we can necessarily infer the existence of that being as the cause of the idea. The argument differs from the ontological proof in two respects: (1) its starting point is not the concept of God as a formal essence, but the actual existing idea of God in the mind of a man; (2) it proceeds by causal inference from the idea of God to God himself and not, as in the case of the ontological argument, by strict formal implication from the essence of God to his existence. But, it may be urged, the concept of infinity is a mere negative concept the denial of perfection. This cannot be so, according to Descartes, for the idea of finitude implies the idea of infinity, or of God; how could I doubt or have desires if I did not have in myself the idea of a being more perfect than myself, by comparison with whom I recognize the defects of my nature? Doubt implies a standard of truth, imperfection a standard of perfection. Again, I could not have been the cause of my own existence; for I have an idea of perfection, and if I had created myself, I should have made myself perfect, and, moreover, I should be able to preserve myself, which is not the case. If my parents had created me, they could also preserve me, which is impossible.

Finally, it also follows from the very notion of God as a perfect being that he exists. It is not in my power to conceive a God without existence, that is, a being supremely perfect and yet devoid of an absolute perfection. This is the ontological argument used by both Anselm and Augustine. It is also unthinkable that the divine perfections, which I conceive, should have more than one cause, for if these causes were many, they would not be perfect; to be perfect there must be one cause only, one God. God must be self caused, for if he is the effect of another being, then that

being is the effect of another, and so on ad infinitum: we have an infinite regress and never can reach a causal explanation of the effect with which we began. The idea of God I have received from God; it is innate. God is not only the cause, but the archetype of our existence; he has created man in his own image. We need not wonder that God in creating us should have placed this idea in us, to serve as the mark of the workman imprinted on his work. If God did not exist, we could not possibly be what we are, nor could we have an idea of God. We know more of God himself and of the human mind than we know of corporeal objects.

Reflecting upon the idea of God, we perceive that he is eternal, omniscient, omnipotent, the source of all goodness and truth; the creator of all things. He is not corporeal and does not perceive by means of the senses, as we do. He has intellect and will, but not like ours; and he does not will evil or sin, for sin is the negation of being. This is the usual theistic position with which we have become acquainted in scholasticism. Descartes agrees with Duns Scotus that we can accept reason only in so far as it does not conflict with revelation. He also holds with him that God could have arranged the world otherwise than it is; and that a thing is good because God makes it so; he does not make it so because it is good.

1.5. EXISTENCE OF THE EXTERNAL WORLD

Another problem demanding consideration is that of the external world. We imagine that there are bodies outside of us. How can we know that they actually exist? We have feelings of pleasure and pain, appetites, and sensations, which we refer instinctively to bodily causes. But since our sensations often deceive us, and, since our desires and appetites are often misleading, we cannot prove the existence of bodies from the existence of such experiences. Yet, if God induced in us a deeply rooted conviction of the existence of an external world, when no such world existed, he could not be defended against the charge of being a deceiver. The existence in my mind of illusions of sense and even hallucinations and dreams is, however, compatible with the divine goodness, since God has endowed me with the power of intellect to dispel and correct such delusions. Thus, God is not a deceiver, but a truthful being, and our sensations must therefore, be caused by real bodies. What are bodies? Bodies exist independently of our thinking: they do not need our existence in order to exist. According to Descartes, in reality there is only one such being God, who is substance in the absolute sense. Descartes also affirms two relative substance-mind and body, which exist independently of one another, but both depend on God. The essential characteristic of a substance, which inheres in it, is called the attribute. It is a quality without a substance cannot possibly exist. An attribute may manifest in different ways or modes. Substance and attributes can be conceived without modes, not vice versa. That is to say, substance and attribute can be conceived without modes, whereas modes cannot be conceived without substance and attributes. We cannot conceive figure without extension, nor motion except in extended space; nor imagination or will, except in a thinking thing. We can, on the other hand, conceive extension without figure or motion, and thought without imagination or sensation. The substance cannot change its attributes, but it can change its modes: the body will always be extended, but its figure need not remain the same.

What, then, is the nature of external things? What we clearly and distinctly perceive in body is the essential attribute of body. Sounds, colours, taste, smell, heat and cold are not attributes of Body: we are unable to conceive these clearly and distinctly, they are confused; what we sense is not the body's true reality. The attribute of body is extension, and nothing else; Attribute of body

is extension; figure is its mode. Body and extension are identical. We can conceive body without figure but not without extension. Extension is a spatial continuum of three dimensions, length, breadth, and thickness; every body is a limited magnitude.

All the process of external world are modifications of extensions. Body conceived as extension is passive and cannot move itself; we must, therefore God as the first cause of motion in the world. He is the mover. Descartes holds that God has given the world a certain amount of motion: motion is constant. Since God is immutable, all changes in the world of bodies must follow constant rules, or laws of nature. All laws of nature are laws of motion. All differences in bodies are explained by different relations of the parts: solid bodies are bodies in which the parts are united and at rest; fluids are bodies in which the parts move.

Check Your Progress II

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit

1) How does Descartes prove the existence of God?

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2) What are the relative substances according to Descartes?

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1. 6. RELATION OF MIND AND BODY

Descartes maintains that we do indeed have both minds and bodies- and that the two are not ultimately one and the same thing, but rather are radically and irreducibly different sorts of thing, which exist in an intimate union. Attribute of body is extension. The attribute of mind is thinking. Body is passive while mind is active and free. These two substances are absolutely distinct. Mind/ soul is *res cogitans*; as far as I am a thinking and unextended thing I have clear and distinct idea of myself. Therefore, I, that is, my mind, through which I am what I am, is entirely and truly separate from my body and may exist without it. I can conceive myself as entire without the faculties of imagination and perception, but I cannot conceive these without the faculties of imagination and perception, but I cannot conceive these without an intelligent substance in which they reside. Imagination and perception are distinct from myself, they are like modes are to things. Descartes includes will and also such higher emotions as are not the result of the union of mind and body in thought. According to Descartes, a thinking thing is one that doubts, understands, conceives, affirms, denies, wills, refuses, imagines as well as feels. Thought embraces everything which we now label ‘consciousness’ and is not restricted to the intellectual and cognitive activities of the mind. Neither extension nor figure, nor notion pertains to the

thinking thing. My knowledge about my mind precedes that of any corporal thing. I may not doubt whether there is any body in existence, while I already perceive that I think.

Descartes follows this extreme dualism between mind and body so that the nature is left free for the mechanical explanations of natural science. Mind is separated from nature with its own territory. However, this duality of mind and body puts Descartes in a difficult position. On the one hand his application of the criterion of clarity and distinction leads him to emphasize the duality of mind and body. On the other hand, he does not want to accept the conclusion that the soul is lodged in the body which it uses as an instrument. This is the conclusion that Descartes could not accept. Empirical data went against such a conclusion, leave alone the theological objection. He was aware of the interaction between soul and body and that they in some sense constitute a unity. Descartes tries to explain this problem by locating the soul and its activity in a gland in the very centre of the body. However, this localization does not solve the issue; but Descartes had no intention to deny the interaction. He tries to get out of the problem finally by saying that mind and body are incomplete substances viewed in relation to man who is unity which they for together. A clearly unsatisfactory solution to the problem.

According to Descartes, mind and body compose a substantial unity. All the sensations just mentioned are merely confused modes of consciousness, the result of this union; man is not a pure sprit, Motion in animals, and often in ourselves, occurs without the intervention of reason; the senses excited by external objects simply react to the animal spirits and the reactions are mechanical-the animal is nothing but a machine. But in man bodily motion may produce sensations. If I were merely a thinking being, if my soul were not some how intimately conjoined with my body, I should, for example, know that I am hungry, but not feel hungry. I should not have sensations and feelings which are confused modes of consciousness resulting from the intimate union of body and mind.

Just how this intimate union is to be conceived, is not made clear by Descartes and indeed, it is not possible within the framework of his dualism. Descartes warns against confounding mind and body with one another. Thought and extension are combined in man, in unity of composition but not in unity of nature: the union should not be compared with a mixture of two bodies.

Descartes suggested that the body works like a machine, that it has the material properties of extension and motion, and that it follows the laws of physics. The mind (or soul), on the other hand, was described as a nonmaterial entity that lacks extension and motion, and does not follow the laws of physics. Descartes argued that only humans have minds, and that the mind interacts with the body at the pineal gland. This form of dualism or duality proposes that the mind controls the body, but that the body can also influence the otherwise rational mind, such as when people act out of passion. Most of the previous accounts of the relationship between mind and body had been uni-directional.

Descartes suggested that the pineal gland is "the seat of the soul" for several reasons. First, the soul is unitary, and unlike many areas of the brain the pineal gland appeared to be unitary (though subsequent microscopic inspection has revealed it is formed of two hemispheres). Second, Descartes observed that the pineal gland was located near the ventricles. He believed the animal spirits of the ventricles acted through the nerves to control the body, and that the pineal gland influenced this process. Finally, Descartes incorrectly believed that only humans have pineal glands, just as, in his view, only humans have minds. This led him to the belief that

animals cannot feel pain, and Descartes' practice of vivisection (the dissection of live animals) became widely used throughout Europe until the Enlightenment. Cartesian dualism set the agenda for philosophical discussion of the mind-body problem for many years after Descartes' death. The question of how a nonmaterial mind could influence a material body, without invoking supernatural explanations, remains controversial to this day.

1. 7. PSYCHOLOGY OF THE EMOTIONS

The soul, according to Descartes, does not consist of separate souls or faculties, but is a single principle expressing itself in various ways: the same soul that feels also reasons and wills. He distinguishes between its active and passive phases, the actions and passions of the soul, as he calls them. The former are our volitions or acts of will, which depend on soul itself: I am free to will to love God, to affirm or deny propositions, to revive memories, to create pictures in the imagination, or to move my body. The latter include sensations and their copies, appetites, pain, heat, and other bodily feelings, which are referred either to external objects or to the body. The voluntary or active states are absolutely in the power of the soul only indirectly, except in those cases in which the soul is itself their cause. There are, however, other states, or “perceptions,...of which we feel the effects as in the soul itself.” These are sentiments of joy, anger, and the like, which are passions in the restricted sense of the term; they are perceptions, or sentiments or emotions of the soul, which we refer particularly to it and which are caused, supported, and strengthened by certain movements of the animal spirits. The principal effect and use of such passions however, is to incite and dispose the soul to will the things for which they prepare the body: fear incites the will to flee, courage to fight, and so on. The passions have as their immediate cause the movements of the animal spirits which agitate the pineal gland, but they can sometimes be caused by the action of the soul, which wills to conceive such and such an object; thus I may arouse feelings of courage in myself by analyzing the situation.

The so-called conflicts between natural appetites and will are explained as oppositions between movements, which the body by its spirits, and the soul by its will tend to excite in the pineal gland at the same time. Everyone can recognize the strength or weakness of his soul by the outcome of such conflicts. But there is no soul so feeble that it cannot, if well conducted, acquire an absolute power over its passions. The power of the soul, however, is inadequate without the knowledge of truth.

Descartes enumerates six primary passions: wonder, love, hate, desire, joy, and sorrow, of which all the rest are species. They are all related to the body, their natural use being to incite the soul to consent and contribute to the actions which tend to preserve the body or to render it in some way more perfect; and in this sense joy and sorrow are the first to be employed. For the soul is directly turned from harmful things only by the feeling of pain, which produces the passion of sorrow; then follow hatred of the cause of the pain and desire to be freed from the pain.

Our good and evil depend chiefly on the inner emotions excited in the soul by itself. So long as the soul has something within it to satisfy it, all the troubles which come from without have no power to hurt it. And, in order that it may have this inner satisfaction, all that is needed is to follow virtue exactly.

Descartes attempts to apply it in detail to a large portion of our psychic life, but he does not use it to explain all our mental processes. Mind itself is a distinct entity, having the power of understanding and will. Moreover, all the "perceptions," of which Descartes speaks-sensations, appetites, emotions-are states of mind, not motions; and some passions are purely mental, not caused by organic activities at all. The will is independent of bodily states and can of its own accord produce such states. The will is free, and the ethical ideal of the soul is to make itself free from external influences.

1. 8. THE THEORY OF INNATE IDEAS

Descartes distinguishes three kinds of ideas namely those that are fabricated, adventitious, or innate. Fabricated ideas are mere inventions of the mind. Accordingly, the mind can control them so that they can be examined and set aside at will and their internal content can be changed. Adventitious ideas are sensations produced by some material thing existing externally to the mind. But, unlike fabrications, adventitious ideas cannot be examined and set aside at will nor can their internal content be manipulated by the mind. For example, no matter how hard one tries, if someone is standing next to a fire, he cannot help but feel the heat as heat. He cannot set aside the sensory idea of heat by merely willing it as we can do with our idea of Santa Claus, for example. He also cannot change its internal content so as to feel something other than heat--say, cold. Finally, innate ideas are placed in the mind by God at creation. These ideas can be examined and set aside at will but their internal content cannot be manipulated. Geometrical ideas are paradigm examples of innate ideas. For example, the idea of a triangle can be examined and set aside at will, but its internal content cannot be manipulated so as to cease being the idea of a three-sided figure. Other examples of innate ideas would be metaphysical principles like "what is done cannot be undone," the idea of the mind, and the idea of God.

The aim of Descartes is to reach clear and certain knowledge, such as arises when we judge that it is impossible for a thing to be otherwise than as we conceive it. We have such necessary knowledge in the demonstrations of mathematics, and also in philosophy, if we follow the proper method. Certainty is a property of truths which are clearly and distinctly perceived. Now, certain knowledge cannot spring from the senses, for the senses do not reveal what things are in themselves, but only how they affect us. Colours, sounds, taste, odors, do not belong to the object. What the real object is, what it is when stripped of the qualities the senses ascribe to it, we can know only by clear and distinct thinking. If we cannot derive true knowledge from sense experience, if genuine knowledge is the result of reasoning from certain basic concepts and principles, these must be inherent in the mind itself- i.e**.,** innate or a priori.The mind has its own standards or norms, which guide it in the pursuit of truth. Principles of knowledge can become explicit only in the course of experience, as the mind exercises itself in thought, but they are somehow present from the beginning. Descartes basic idea is that reason has its natural norms; how they are present; he is not sure.

By innate knowledge he means at times ideas or truths impressed upon the mind, principles which the soul finds in itself, and at other times, the native capacity of the soul to produce such knowledge in the course of human experience.

Check Your Progress III

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit

1) Explain Descartes' notion of mind and body.

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2) Briefly describe the theory of innate ideas.

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1.9 LET US SUM UP

In the words of Jean L. Mercier, "Descartes' glory and right to be labelled as the 'father of modern philosophy', is because of his concept of the COGITO. Every good thinking must begin with the thinker himself, the truth of one's own existence as a conscious subject."

In his search for indubitable truth, Descartes laid greater emphasis on discovering a method than on a theory of knowledge. Descartes was interested in discovering a method of truth rather than in a detailed discussion of epistemological problems. For this he has recourse to mathematics and a priori ideas. Descartes was almost a dogmatist in his belief that the reason was competent to attain certain knowledge. Though he adopted and studied scepticism, he was a realist enough to accept the existence of an external world, whose true nature could be discovered only by rational thinking. Like Parmenides, Descartes placed reason before experience and even opted for reason against experience, as is clearly the case with his anthropological dualism.

1.10 Key Words

Deduction: The logical process of drawing conclusions from premises.

Induction: Modern scientific or empirical logic.

Inference:	Reasoning from premises to a conclusion.
Innate:	Inborn; arising from the mind rather than from experience.
Intuition:	A direct or immediate perception.
Skepticism:	An attitude of doubt concerning the possibility of knowledge.
A priori:	Argument based on evidence obtained prior to and independent of sense experience

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1.12 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check your progress I

1) René Descartes is commonly considered to be the 'father of modern philosophy', because of the programme he set for himself, and the general sort of method he adopted in his attempt to carry it out. Thus his attempt effected a break with medieval philosophical tradition, and greatly influenced the subsequent course of modern philosophy.

2) In order to obtain mathematical certainty in philosophy he introduces his famous *methodic doubt*. He says that it is necessary to doubt everything and to regard as provisionally false

anything of which there can be the slightest doubt. In this sense, it is universal doubt. It is called methodic doubt because he uses this doubt only as a method, to attain certain knowledge.

Check Your Progress II

1) The principle of Descartes argument is actually the long established principle of medieval philosophy that *ex nihilo nihil fit*: out of nothing can come nothing. Moreover, the cause must be at least as great as the effect, there must be at least as much reality in it. That which contains greater reality in itself and which is the more perfect, cannot be a consequence of, and dependent on, the less perfect. Hence, I myself cannot be the cause of the idea of God, for I am a finite, imperfect being, while the idea of God is the idea of a perfect, infinite being. It must have been placed in me by an infinite being, or God, and hence God must exist.

2) Descartes also affirms two relative substances. They are mind and body, which exist independently of one another, but both depend on God. The essential characteristic of a substance, which inheres in it, is called the attribute. It is a quality without a substance cannot possibly exist. An attribute may manifest in different ways or modes. Substance and attributes can be conceived without modes, not vice versa. That is to say, substance and attribute can be conceived without modes, whereas modes cannot be conceived without substance and attributes. We cannot conceive figure without extension, nor motion except in extended space; nor imagination or will, except in a thinking thing. We can, on the other hand, conceive extension without figure or motion, and thought without imagination or sensation. The substance cannot change its attributes, but it can change its modes: the body will always be extended, but its figure need not remain the same.
Body and extension are identical. We can conceive body without figure but not without extension. Extension is a spatial continuum of three dimensions, length, breadth, and thickness; every body is a limited magnitude.

Check Your Progress III

1) Descartes maintains that we do indeed have both minds and bodies- and that the two are not ultimately one and the same thing, but rather are radically and irreducibly different sorts of thing, which exist in an intimate union. Attribute of body is extension. The attribute of mind is thinking. Body is passive while mind is active and free. These two substances are absolutely distinct. Mind/ soul is *res cogitans*; as far as I am a thinking and unextended thing I have clear and distinct idea of myself.
Descartes follows this extreme dualism between mind and body so that the nature is left free for the mechanical explanations of natural science. Mind is separated from nature with its own territory.
He suggested that the body works like a machine, that it has the material properties of extension and motion, and that it follows the laws of physics. The mind (or soul), on the other hand, was described as a nonmaterial entity that lacks extension and motion, and does not follow the laws of physics. Descartes argued that only humans have minds, and that the mind interacts with the body at the pineal gland. This form of dualism or duality proposes that the mind controls the body, but that the body can also influence the otherwise rational mind, such as when people act

out of passion. Most of the previous accounts of the relationship between mind and body had been uni-directional.

2) According to Descartes, innate ideas are placed in the mind by God at creation. These ideas can be examined and set aside at will but their internal content cannot be manipulated. Geometrical ideas are paradigm examples of innate ideas. If genuine knowledge is the result of reasoning from certain basic concepts and principles, these must be inherent in the mind itself- i.e**.,** innate or a priori.The mind has its own standards or norms, which guide it in the pursuit of truth.

UNIT 2 **SPINOZA**

Contents

2.0. OBJECTIVES

Baruch (Benedictus) Spinoza is one of the most important of the post-Cartesian philosophers—and certainly the most radical—of the early modern period in the second half of the 17th century. His thought combines a commitment to Cartesian metaphysical and epistemological principles with elements from sources as Stoicism, Jewish Rationalism, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Descartes, and a variety of heterodox religious thinkers of his day. In this Unit you are expected to understand his views on:

- God
- World
- Human
- Knowledge
- Moral Philosophy
- Political Philosophy

2.1. INTRODUCTION

Born in 1632, he was the son of Marrano parents. They had immigrated to Amsterdam from Portugal in order to escape the Investigation that had spread across the Iberian Peninsula and live in the tolerant atmosphere of Holland. Spinoza's father, Michael, was a successful merchant and a respected member of the community. Just before Spinoza was to turn six, his mother, Hanna, the second of Michael's three wives, died in 1638. As a boy—known to his fellow Portuguese as Bento—he had been one of the shining pupils in the congregation's Talmud Torah school. As Spinoza made progress through his studies, he was being groomed for a career as a rabbi. But at the age of seventeen, he cut short his formal studies to work in his father's business, which he eventually took over with his half-brother, Gabriel. Spinoza's intellectual orientation, however, came at a cost. On July 27, 1656, Spinoza was issued the harshest writ of *cherem*, or excommunication, ever pronounced by the Sephardic community of Amsterdam. In 1661, he settled near Leiden, in the town of Rijnsburg. While in Rijnsburg, he worked on the *Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect*, an essay on philosophical method, and the *Short Treatise on*

God, Man and His Well-Being, an initial but aborted effort to lay out his metaphysical, epistemological and moral views. His critical exposition of Descartes's *Principles of Philosophy*, the only work he published under his own name in his lifetime, was completed in 1663. By this time, he was also working on what would eventually be called the *Ethics*, his philosophical masterpiece. However, when he saw the principles of toleration in Holland being threatened by reactionary forces, he put it aside to complete his "scandalous" *Theological-Political Treatise*, published anonymously and to great alarm in 1670. When Spinoza died in 1677, in The Hague, he was still at work on his *Political Treatise*; which was soon published by his friends along with his other unpublished writings, including a *Compendium to Hebrew Grammar*. Spinoza died peacefully in his rented room in The Hague in 1677.

2.2. THE *ETHICS*

As its title indicates, the *Ethics* is a work of ethical philosophy. Its ultimate aim is to aid us in the attainment of happiness, which is to be found in the intellectual love of God. This love, according to Spinoza, arises out of the knowledge that we gain of the divine essence insofar as we see how the essences of singular things follow of necessity from it. In view of this, it is easy to see why Spinoza favored the synthetic method. Beginning with propositions concerning God, he was able to employ it to show how all other things can be derived from God. In grasping the order of propositions as they are demonstrated in the *Ethics*, we thus attain a kind of knowledge that approximates the knowledge that underwrites human happiness. We are, as it were, put on the road towards happiness. Of the two methods it is only the synthetic method that is suitable for this purpose.

GOD

"On God" Spinoza begins with some deceptively simple definitions of terms that would be familiar to any seventeenth century philosopher. His definitions begins in following order "By substance I understand what is in itself and is conceived through itself", "By attribute I understand what the intellect perceives of a substance, as constituting its essence"; "By God I understand a being absolutely infinite, i.e., a substance consisting of an infinity of attributes, of which each one expresses an eternal and infinite essence." The definitions of Part One are, in effect, simply clear concepts that ground the rest of his system. They are followed by a number of axioms that, he assumes, will be regarded as obvious and unproblematic by the philosophically informed ("Whatever is, is either in itself or in another"; "From a given determinate cause the effect follows necessarily"). From these, the first proposition necessarily follows, and every subsequent proposition can be demonstrated using only what precedes it. For Spinoza, God is the infinite, necessarily existing (that is, uncaused), unique substance of the universe. There is only one substance in the universe; it is God; and everything else is in God.

MODES OF GOD

This proof that God—an infinite, necessary and uncaused, indivisible being—is the only substance of the universe proceeds in three simple steps. First, establish that no two substances can share an attribute or essence. Then, prove that there is a substance with infinite attributes (i.e., God). It follows, in conclusion, that the existence of that infinite substance precludes the

existence of any other substance. Then, prove that there is a substance with infinite attributes (i.e., God). It follows, in conclusion, that the existence of that infinite substance precludes the existence of any other substance. For if there *were* to be a second substance, it would have to have *some* attribute or essence. But since God has *all* possible attributes, then the attribute to be possessed by this second substance would be one of the attributes already possessed by God. But it has already been established that no two substances can have the same attribute. Therefore, there can be, besides God, no such second substance. If God is the only substance, and (by axiom 1) whatever is, is either a substance or *in* a substance, then everything else must be in God. "Whatever is, is in God, and nothing can be or be conceived without God". Those things that are "in" God (or, more precisely, in God's attributes) are what Spinoza calls modes.

2.3. GOD EXISTING ONLY IN A PHILOSOPHICAL SENSE

As soon as this preliminary conclusion has been established, Spinoza immediately reveals the objective of his attack. His definition of God—condemned since his excommunication from the Jewish community as a "God existing in only a philosophical sense"—is meant to preclude any anthropomorphizing of the divine being. In the *scholium* to proposition fifteen, he writes against "those who feign a God, like man, consisting of a body and a mind, and subject to passions. But how far they wander from the true knowledge of God is sufficiently established by what has already been demonstrated." Besides being false, such an anthropomorphic conception of God can have only deleterious effects on human freedom and activity.

WORLD AND ITS RELATION TO GOD

Much of the technical language of Part One is, to all appearances, right out of Descartes. But even the most devoted Cartesian would have had a hard time understanding the full import of propositions one through fifteen. What does it mean to say that God is substance and that everything else is "in" God? Is Spinoza saying that rocks, tables, chairs, birds, mountains, rivers and human beings are all *properties* of God, and hence can be predicated of God (just as one would say that the table "is red")? It seems very odd to think that objects and individuals—what we ordinarily think of as independent "things"—are, in fact, merely properties of a thing. Spinoza was sensitive to the strangeness of this kind of talk, not to mention the philosophical problems to which it gives rise. When a person feels pain, does it follow that the pain is ultimately just a *property* of God, and thus that God feels pain? Conundrums such as this may explain why, as of Proposition Sixteen, there is a subtle but important shift in Spinoza's language. God is now described not so much as the underlying substance of all things, but as the universal, immanent and sustaining cause of all that exists: "From the necessity of the divine nature there must follow infinitely many things in infinitely many modes, (i.e., everything that can fall under an infinite intellect)". According to the traditional Judeo-Christian conception of divinity, God is a transcendent creator, a being who causes a world distinct from himself to come into being by creating it out of nothing. God produces that world by a spontaneous act of free will, and could just as easily have not created anything outside him. By contrast, Spinoza's God is the cause of all things because all things follow causally and necessarily from the divine nature. Or, as he puts it, from God's infinite power or nature "all things have necessarily flowed, or always followed, by the same necessity and in the same way as from the nature of a triangle it follows, from eternity and to eternity, that its three angles are equal to two right angles". The

existence of the world is, thus, mathematically necessary. It is impossible that God should exist but not the world. This does not mean that God does not cause the world to come into being freely, since nothing *outside* of God constrains him to bring it into existence. But Spinoza does deny that God creates the world by some arbitrary and undetermined act of free will. God could not have done otherwise. There are no possible alternatives to the actual world, and absolutely no contingency or spontaneity within that world. Everything is absolutely and necessarily determined. In nature there is nothing contingent, but all things have been determined from the necessity of the divine nature to exist and produce an effect in a certain way. Things could have been produced by God in no other way, and in no other order than they have been produced.

There are, however, differences in the way things depend on God. Some features of the universe follow necessarily from God—or, more precisely, from the absolute nature of one of God's attributes—in a direct and unmediated manner. These are the universal and eternal aspects of the world, and they do not come into or go out of being; Spinoza calls them “infinite modes”. They include the most general laws of the universe, together governing all things in all ways.

LAWS GOVERNING THE UNIVERSE

From the attribute of extension there follow the principles governing all extended objects (the truths of geometry) and laws governing the motion and rest of bodies (the laws of physics); from the attribute of thought, there follow laws of thought (understood by commentators to be either the laws of logic or the laws of psychology). Particular and individual things are causally more remote from God. They are nothing but “affections of God's attributes, or modes by which God's attributes are expressed in a certain and determinate way” (Ip25c). More precisely, they are finite modes. There are two causal orders or dimensions governing the production and actions of particular things. On the one hand, they are determined by the general laws of the universe that follow immediately from God's natures. On the other hand, each particular thing is determined to act and to be acted upon by other particular things. Thus, the actual behavior of a body in motion is a function not just of the universal laws of motion, but also of the other bodies in motion and rest surrounding it and with which it comes into contact.

2.4. MODAL SYSTEM

In line with his rejection of classical theism, Spinoza famously identifies God with Nature. Nature is no longer seen as a power that is distinct from and subordinate to God, but as a power that is one and the same with divine power. Spinoza's phrase '*Deus sive Natura*’ (‘God or Nature’) captures this identification and is justly celebrated as a succinct expression of his metaphysics. In isolation, however, the phrase is relatively uninformative. It tells us nothing about how Spinoza, having rejected the creator/creation relation posited by the classical model, conceives of the relation between God and the system of modes.

NATURA NATURANS AND *NATURA NATURATA*

To fill out his thoughts on this matter, Spinoza distinguishes between Nature taken in its active or productive aspect, which he identifies with God or the divine attributes, and Nature taken in its derivative or produced aspect, which he identifies with the system of modes. The former he

calls *Natura naturans* (literally: Nature naturing) and the latter he calls *Natura naturata* (literally: Nature natured). Spinoza's use of these formulas is revealing in two respects. First, his double employment of '*Natura*' signals the ontological unity that exists between God and the system of modes. Each mode within the system is a modification of nothing other than the very substance that is God. Second, his employment of the active '*naturans*' in the first and the passive '*naturata*' in the second signals a causal relation between God and the modal system. God is not merely the subject of modes; he is an active power that produces and sustains them.

In view of the ontological unity that exists between God and the modal system, Spinoza is careful to specify that the divine causality is immanent rather that transitive. What this means is that God's causal activity does not pass outside of the divine substance to produce external effects, as it would if God were a creator in the traditional sense. Rather, it remains wholly within the divine substance to produce the multitude of modes that constitute the modal system. Spinoza likens this to the way in which the nature of a triangle is productive of its own essential properties: "From God's supreme power, or infinite nature, infinitely many things in infinitely many modes, that is, all things, have necessarily flowed, or always follow, by the same necessity and in the same way as from the nature of a triangle it follows, from eternity and to eternity, that its three angles are equal to two right angles" (IP17S1). The entire modal system, *Natura naturata*, follows immanently from the divine nature, *Natura naturans*.

TWO TYPES OF MODES

Into this relatively simple picture, Spinoza introduces a complication. There are, he says, two types of modes. The first consists in what he calls infinite and eternal modes. These are pervasive features of the universe, each of which follows from the divine nature insofar as it follows from the absolute nature of one or another of God's attributes. Examples include motion and rest under the attribute of extension and infinite intellect under the attribute of thought. The second consists in what may be called finite and temporal modes, which are simply the singular things that populate the universe. Modes of this type follow from the divine nature as well, but do so only as each follows from one or another of God's attributes insofar as it is modified by a modification that is itself finite and temporal. Examples include individual bodies under the attribute of extension and individual ideas under the attribute of thought.

Unfortunately, Spinoza does little to explain either what these infinite and eternal modes are or what relation they have to finite and temporal modes. Taking their cue from a statement in the *Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect* that the laws of nature are embedded in the infinite and eternal modes, many commentators have suggested that Spinoza thought of these modes as governing the manner in which finite modes affect one another. For example, if laws of impact are somehow embedded in the infinite and eternal mode motion and rest, then the outcome of any particular collision will be determined by that mode together with the relevant properties (speed, direction, size, etc) of the bodies involved. If this is correct, then Spinoza envisions every finite mode to be fully determined by intersecting lines of causality: a horizontal line that stretches back through the series of antecedent finite modes and a vertical line that moves up through the series of infinite modes and terminates in one or another of the attributes of God.

CAUSAL DETERMINISM

However it may be that Spinoza ultimately conceives of the relation between infinite and finite modes, he is clear about one thing - the system of modes is an entirely deterministic system in which everything is fully determined to be and to act: *In nature there is nothing contingent, but all things have been determined from the necessity of the divine nature to exist and produce an effect in a certain way*.

Spinoza reminds us that God's existence is necessary. It pertains to the very nature of substance to exist. Furthermore, since each and every mode follows from the necessity of the divine nature, either from the absolute nature of one or another of God's attributes, as is the case with the infinite and eternal modes, or from one or another of God's attributes insofar as it is modified by a modification that is finite, as is the case with the finite modes, they are all necessary as well. Since there is nothing other than the divine substance and its modes, there is nothing that is contingent. Any appearance of contingency is the result of a defect in knowledge, either of God or of the cause. Accordingly, Spinoza makes it central to his theory of knowledge that to know a thing adequately is to know it in its necessity, as it has been fully determined by its causes.

CAUSAL PARALLELISM

An obvious question to ask at this point is whether it is possible for finite modes falling under one attribute to act upon and determine finite modes falling under another attribute. Spinoza's answer is an unambiguous no. Causal relations exist only among modes falling under the same attribute. His explanation for this may be traced back to an axiom set forth at the beginning of Book One: *The knowledge of an effect depends on, and involves, the knowledge of its cause.* Given this axiom, if a finite mode falling under one attribute were to have God as its cause insofar as he is considered under a different attribute, i.e., if it were to be caused by a finite mode falling under a different attribute, then the knowledge of that mode would involve the knowledge of that other attribute. Since it does not, that mode cannot have God as its cause insofar as he is considered under some other attribute. In other words, it cannot be caused by a finite mode falling under some other attribute.

When applied to modes falling under those attributes of which we have knowledge - thought and extension – this has an enormously important consequence. There can be no causal interaction between ideas and bodies. This does not mean that ideas and bodies are unrelated to one another. Indeed, it is one of the best-known theses in the *Ethics* that the lines of causation that run among them are strictly parallel: *The order and connection of ideas is the same as the order and connection of things*. In the demonstration of this proposition Spinoza says that it is a consequence of previous established propositions and leaves it at that. Nevertheless, it is apparent that this proposition has deep foundations in his substance monism. As thought and extension are not attributes of distinct substances, so ideas and bodies are not modes of distinct substances. They are "one and the same thing, but expressed two ways". If ideas and bodies are one and the same thing, however, their order and connection must be the same. The doctrine of substance monism in this way insures that ideas and bodies, though causally independent, are causally parallel.

Check Your Progress I

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer.
b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit.

1) What do you understand by modes?
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……
……
……
……
……

2) Explain the difference between *natura naturans* and *nataura naturata*.

……
……

MIND AND COGNITION

Spinoza's metaphysics touches upon his theory of mind and yields some of its most profound consequences. Most obviously, substance monism prohibits him from affirming the kind of dualism that Descartes affirmed, one in which mind and body are conceived as distinct substances. What is more, his contention that modes falling under different attributes have no causal interaction but are causally parallel to one another prohibits him from affirming that mind and body interact. Because he takes seriously the reality of the mental while rejecting dualism and eliminating interaction, Spinoza's views on the mind are generally given a sympathetic hearing in a way that Descartes's views are not.

THE MIND AS THE IDEA OF THE BODY

To understand Spinoza's account of the mind we must begin with that for each finite mode of extension there exists a finite mode of thought that corresponds to it and from which it is not really distinct. More elaborately, it commits him to the thesis that:-

(1) for each simple body there exists a simple idea that corresponds to it and from which it is not really distinct and

(2) for each composite body there exists a composite idea that corresponds to it and from which it is not really distinct, composed, as it were, of ideas corresponding to each of the bodies of which the composite body is composed. Spinoza counts all of these ideas, whether simple or composite, as minds. In this respect he does not consider the human mind to be unique. It is simply the idea that corresponds to the human body.

In taking this position, Spinoza does not mean to imply that all minds are alike. As minds are expressions of the bodies to which they correspond in the domain of thought, some have abilities

that others do not. The greater the capacity of a body for acting and being acted upon, the greater the capacity of the mind that corresponds to it for perception. Spinoza elaborates:

[I]n proportion as a body is more capable than others of doing many things at once, or being acted on in many ways at once, so its mind is more capable than others of perceiving many things at once. And in proportion as the actions of a body depend more on itself alone, and as other bodies concur with it less in acting, so its mind is more capable of understanding distinctly. And from these [truths] we know the excellence of one mind over the others. Here lies the explanation of the excellence of the human mind. The human body, as a highly complex composite of many simple bodies, is able to act and be acted upon in myriad ways that other bodies cannot. The human mind, as an expression of that body in the domain of thought, mirrors the body in being a highly complex composite of many simple ideas and is thus possessed of perceptual capacities exceeding those of other, non-human minds. Only a mind that corresponds to a body of complexity comparable to that of the human body can have perceptual abilities comparable to those of the human mind.

IMAGINATION

A perceptual ability that is of particular interest to Spinoza is imagination. This he takes to be a general capacity of representing external bodies as present, whether they are actually present or not. Imagination thus includes more than the capacity to form those mental constructs that we normally consider to be imaginative. It includes memory and sense perception as well. Since it is clearly impossible to get around in the world without this, Spinoza concedes that it is "in this way [that] I know almost all the things that are useful in life". Spinoza consistently opposes imagination to intellect and views it as providing no more than confused perception. For him the ideas of the imagination are inadequate. They may be essential for getting around in the world, but they give us a distorted and incomplete picture of the things in it. To understand why, it is useful to begin with sense perception. This is the most important form of imaginative perception, and it is from this form that all others derive.

SENSE PERCEPTION

On Spinoza's account, sense perception has its origin in the action of an external body upon one or another of the sensory organs of one's own body. From this there arises a complex series of changes in what amounts to the body's nervous system. As the mind is the idea of the body, it will represent these changes. This, Spinoza contends, is what constitutes sense perception.

In order to explain how this act of representation yields perception of an external body, Spinoza appeals to the fact that the changed state of one's body is a function both of the nature of one's body and the nature of the external body that caused that state. Because of this, the mind's representation of that state will express something more than the nature of one's own body. It will express the nature of the external body as well: *The idea of any mode in which the human body is affected by external bodies must involve the nature of the human body and at the same time the nature of the external body*.

It is this feature of the mind's act of representation - that it expresses the nature of an external body – that explains how such an act constitutes sense perception.

ADEQUATE AND INADEQUATE IDEAS

In view of this it is not difficult to see why Spinoza judges sense perception to be inadequate. Grounded as it is in the mind's representation of the state of one's own body rather than in the direct representation of external bodies, sense perception is indirect. Since this goes for all imaginative ideas, the problem with them all is the same: *It follows, second, that the ideas which we have of external bodies indicate the condition of our own body more than the nature of the external bodies.*

It is because of this that Spinoza refers to the ideas of the imagination as confused. The vision they give of external bodies is unavoidably colored, so to speak, by the lens of one's own body.

Confusion, however, is just one aspect of the inadequacy of imaginative ideas. Such ideas are also mutilated. The reason for this is that the knowledge of an effect depends upon and involves the knowledge of its causes. This is a condition that imaginative ideas can never satisfy. The mind may contain the idea of an external body, but it cannot contain ideas of all of the causes of that body. These, being infinite, fall outside of its scope and are fully contained only in God's infinite intellect. God's ideas of bodies may be adequate, but ours are not. They are cut off from those ideas that are necessary in order to render them adequate. Although imaginative ideas of external bodies are the most important examples of inadequate ideas, they are not the only examples. Spinoza goes on to show that the mind's ideas of the body, its duration, and its parts are all inadequate. So too is the mind's idea of itself. Even so, he remains optimistic about the possibility of adequate ideas.

This optimism becomes evident as Spinoza shifts his attention from imaginative ideas of singular things to intellectual ideas of common things. These common things are things that are either common to all bodies or common to the human body and certain bodies by which the human body is regularly affected. They are fully present in the whole and in each of the parts of every body in which they are present. Nevertheless, it is fairly certain that the class of things common to all bodies includes the attribute of extension and the infinite and eternal mode of motion and rest. Spinoza assures us that our ideas of them can only be adequate.

Any idea that follows from an adequate idea is itself adequate, these ideas, appropriately called common notions, can serve as axioms in a deductive system. When working out this system, the mind engages in a fundamentally different kinds of cognition than when it engages in any of the various forms of imaginative perception. In all forms of imaginative perception the order of ideas mirrors the order of bodily affections, and this order, depending as it does upon the chance encounters of the body with external bodies, is entirely fortuitous. By contrast, the derivation of adequate ideas from common notions within a deductive system follows a wholly different order. This Spinoza calls the order of reason.

2.5. THREE KINDS OF KNOWLEDGE

With the distinction between adequate and inadequate perception in place, Spinoza introduces a set of further distinctions. He begins with inadequate perception, which he now calls knowledge of the first kind, and divides it into two parts.

experientia vaga

The first consists of **knowledge from random experience (*experientia vaga*).** This is knowledge "from singular things which have been represented to us through the senses in a way which is mutilated, confused, and without order for the intellect".

ex signis

The second consists of knowledge from signs (*ex signis*), "for example, from the fact that, having heard or read certain words, we recollect things, and form certain ideas of them, like those through which we imagine the things". What links both of these forms of knowledge is that they lack a rational order. It is obvious that knowledge from random experience follows the order of the affections of the human body, but so does knowledge from signs. A Roman who hears the word '*pomum*', for instance, will think of an apple, not because there is any rational connection between the word and the object, but only because they have been associated in his or her experience.

ratio

When we reach what Spinoza calls the second kind of knowledge, reason (*ratio*), we have ascended from an inadequate to an adequate perception of things. This type of knowledge is gained "from the fact that we have common notions and adequate ideas of the properties of things". What Spinoza has in mind here is what was just indicated, viz.,the formation of adequate ideas of the common properties of things and the movement by way of deductive inference to the formation of adequate ideas of other common properties. Unlike in the case of knowledge of the first kind, this order of ideas is rational.

scientia intuitive

We might think that in attaining this second kind of knowledge we have attained all that is available to us. However, Spinoza adds a third type, which he regards as superior. He calls this intuitive knowledge (*scientia intuitiva*) and tells us that it "proceeds from an adequate idea of the formal essence of certain attributes of God to the adequate knowledge of the [formal] essence of things". Unfortunately, Spinoza is once again obscure at a crucial junction, and it is difficult to know what he has in mind here. He seems to be envisioning a type of knowledge that gives insight into the essence of some singular thing together with an understanding of how that essence follows of necessity from the essence of God. Furthermore, the characterization of this kind of knowledge as intuitive indicates that the connection between the individual essence and the essence of

God is grasped in a single act of apprehension and is not arrived at by any kind of deductive process.

Problems of obscurity aside, we can still see something of the ideal at which Spinoza is aiming. Inadequate ideas are incomplete. Through them we perceive things without perceiving the causes that determine them to be, and it is for this reason that we imagine them to be contingent. What Spinoza is offering with the fourth kind of knowledge is a way of correcting this. It is important to note, however, that he is not proposing that we can have this knowledge with respect to the durational existence of any particular item. As we have already seen, this would require having ideas of all of the temporal causes of a thing, which are infinite. Rather, he is proposing that we can have it with respect to the essence of a singular thing as it follows from the essence of God. To have this kind of knowledge is to understand the thing as necessary rather than contingent. It is, to use Spinoza's famous phrase, to regard it *sub quadam specie aeternitatis*, under a certain aspect of eternity.

POLITICS

Spinoza treated the political problem and the religious problem in his **Tractatus theologico-politicus**. The methods of government of state and Church, for Spinoza, are not conducive to the elaboration of a rational philosophy. Actions performed in view of the temporal and eternal punishments threatened by the state or by the Church depend on fear and hope, which for Spinoza are irrational passions. For Spinoza, too, the ultimate end of man is, as we realize, for him to know God through reason and to act in conformity with this knowledge. The state must aid man in this rational knowledge of God. Spinoza holds that the state arose from a pact entered into by men, who at first lived in a condition of irrational nature and in perpetual war. Through this pact the members now composing the state renounced the use of force and violence in favor of authority or a sovereign who is the center of the state. The sovereign may use violence and force against the irrational instincts of his subjects. But this use of force is limited by rationality. Thus, if it should happen that the subjects are more rational than the sovereign, and then by psycho-physical parallelism the state would fall, to give place to the rise of another state more rational than the first. Thus, according to Spinoza, has come about the passage from the natural state to the rational state, with a tendency to perfect rationality.

2.6. LET US SUM UP

For Spinoza, there is only one substance, and there is only one individual of that substance. The one substance is characterized by an infinite number of attributes. But, we are aware only of two attributes: thought and extension. Spinoza’s God *thinks*, and also is or does many other things that are beyond our reckoning and comprehension. As God is eternal and infinite, so are his attributes eternal and infinite. The things we see that are *transient* and *finite* are the temporary modifications, or ‘modes’ of the attributes.

Check Your Progress II

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer.
b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit.

1) Explain the concept of imagination in Spinoza.

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2) What do you understand by intuitive knowledge?

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2.7. KEY WORDS

***Natura naturans* and *natura naturata*:** *Natura naturans* is a Latin term coined during the Middle Ages, meaning "nature naturing", i.e., "nature doing what nature does." The Latin, *naturans*, is the present participle of *natura*, indicated by the suffix "*-ans*" which is akin to the English suffix "*-ing*." *naturata*, is the past participle. For Spinoza, *natura naturans* refers to the self-causing activity of nature, while *natura naturata* refers to nature considered as a passive product of an infinite causal chain.

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2.9. ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answers to Check Your Progress I

1. If God is the only substance, and (by axiom 1) whatever is, is either a substance or *in* a substance, then everything else must be in God. "Whatever is, is in God, and nothing can be or

be conceived without God". Those things that are "in" God (or, more precisely, in God's attributes) are what Spinoza calls modes.

2. To fill out his thoughts on this matter, Spinoza distinguishes between Nature taken in its active or productive aspect, which he identifies with God or the divine attributes, and Nature taken in its derivative or produced aspect, which he identifies with the system of modes. The former he calls *Natura naturans* (literally: Nature naturing) and the latter he calls *Natura naturata* (literally: Nature natured). Spinoza's use of these formulas is revealing in two respects. First, his double employment of '*Natura*' signals the ontological unity that exists between God and the system of modes. Each mode within the system is a modification of nothing other than the very substance that is God. Second, his employment of the active '*naturans*' in the first and the passive '*naturata*' in the second signals a causal relation between God and the modal system. God is not merely the subject of modes; he is an active power that produces and sustains them.

Answers to Check Your Progress II

1. A perceptual ability that is of particular interest to Spinoza is imagination. This he takes to be a general capacity of representing external bodies as present, whether they are actually present or not. Imagination thus includes more than the capacity to form those mental constructs that we normally consider to be imaginative. It includes memory and sense perception as well. Since it is clearly impossible to get around in the world without this, Spinoza concedes that it is "in this way [that] I know almost all the things that are useful in life". Spinoza consistently opposes imagination to intellect and views it as providing no more than confused perception. For him the ideas of the imagination are inadequate. They may be essential for getting around in the world, but they give us a distorted and incomplete picture of the things in it. To understand why, it is useful to begin with sense perception. This is the most important form of imaginative perception, and it is from this form that all others derive.

2. Spinoza adds a third type, which he regards as superior. He calls this intuitive knowledge (*scientia intuitiva*) and tells us that it "proceeds from an adequate idea of the formal essence of certain attributes of God to the adequate knowledge of the [formal] essence of things".

UNIT 3 LEIBNIZ

Contents

3.0 OBJECTIVES

The objective of this unit is

- To make you familiar with the philosophy of Leibniz.
- To recognize that Leibniz continued the tradition of Descartes and Spinoza as a rationalist

Although he differed from them in his approach to the problem of substance and the relation between matter and mind he continued their tradition.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Leibniz was born in 1646. He was a great mathematician and scientist. He shared with Newton the honour of having discovered infinitesimal calculus. However, there is no doubt that Leibniz's notation was more convenient than that of Newton. . Some of the popular and important works of Leibniz are -

1. New Essays on Human Understanding
2. Monadology
3. Discourse on Metaphysics.
4. Theodicy

Like Descartes and Spinoza, Leibniz continued to employ the geometrical method, and based his philosophy on the notion of substance, but he differed radically from them as regards the relation of mind and matter and the number of substances. Descartes admitted three substances, viz., God, Mind and Matter. Spinoza admitted God alone. For Descartes extension is the essence of matter and for Spinoza both extension and thought are attributes of God. But Leibniz held that extension cannot be an attribute of substance. According to Leibniz extension involves plurality and belongs to an aggregate of substances. Each single substance must be unextended. He, therefore, believed in an infinite number of substances, which he called "Monads".

3.2 THE TRUTHS OF REASON AND THE TRUTHS OF FACT

Leibniz was a great logician and believed that logic is the basis of Metaphysics. He even worked on Mathematical Logic but he abstained from publishing it. If he had published his work, Symbolic Logic would have come to light one and a half centuries earlier than it did. He felt that even in Metaphysics and morals we should be able to solve problems like in Geometry.

While discussing Leibniz's logical principles the first point to be explained is the distinction between truths of reason and truths of fact. Leibniz based his philosophy on two logical premises – the Law of Contradiction and the Law of Sufficient Reason. For Leibniz every proposition possesses the subject – predicate form or they can be analysed into a proposition or set of propositions of this form. –Truth consists in the correspondence of a proposition with reality, which may be either actual or possible. The propositions of this form are of two kinds- Truths of reason and Truths of facts. Truths of reason are necessary propositions because they are either self-evident or reducible to self-evidence. By knowing its meaning we know that it's opposite or contradictories cannot be true. They are based on the principle of contradiction or the principle of identity. To take Leibniz's own example, it is not possible to deny that an equilateral rectangle is a rectangle without getting into contradiction.

Truths of fact are not necessary propositions, but they are contingent. When we deny them, there will be no logical contradiction... Quoting Leibniz from 'Monodology', "Truths of reason are necessary and their opposite is impossible; truths of fact are contingent and their opposite is possible". We cannot deduce truths of fact apriori from self-evident propositions. They are based on the law of sufficient reason. When we make existential statements we have to give sufficient reason to say that they are true.., Leibniz makes one exception, saying that 'God Exists' is a proposition embracing truths of reason. It is a necessary proposition whose denial would be a logical contradiction. To state that God is possible is to state that God exists. Apart from this exception no truths of reason affirm existence of any subject. Among truths of reason are those primitive truths which Leibniz calls 'identicals'. They are known by intuition, their truth being self-evident, like, A is A or what is A cannot be not A. In this manner Leibniz shows that truths of reason are finitely analytic propositions. For Leibniz all true propositions in a sense are analytic. The existence of the world and the whole harmonious system of finite things requires a sufficient reason which Leibniz finds in a free decree of God. The ultimate sufficient reason and ground of certainty of truths of fact is to be found in God. No finite mind can perform this analysis. It is in this sense Leibniz calls truths of fact as 'incapable of analyses. Only God can possess that complete and perfect idea of individuality of a being in order to know apriori all that will be predicted of him. It is therefore clear that applying the law of sufficient reason Leibniz affirms that all true propositions are analytic and this rule applies to even empirical statements concerning matters of fact. For human beings, there is a difference between truths known by logic and truths known by experience. But this difference arises only because of ignorance and intellectual limitation. For God this difference does not exist. . In conclusion we can say that Leibniz has complicated matters by saying that even contingent propositions are in some sense analytic.

3.3 DOCTRINE OF MONADS, AND PRE-ESTABLISHED HARMONY

Leibniz points out that it is not possible to demonstrate by any argument with certainty that external world exists, and says that the existence of spirit is more certain than that of sensible objects. However, we observe that the visible bodies, the objects of senses are divisible. Bodies are compounds or aggregates of simple substances without parts, called by Leibniz 'monads'. They are the 'true atoms of nature' or 'elements of things' says Leibniz in 'Monadology'. He believed in a plurality of monads and each monad can be looked upon as a unit of reality.

According to Leibniz, extension cannot be an attribute of substance. Hence each monad is a soul with the attribute of thought. Thus Leibniz was led to deny the reality of matter, and to substitute an infinite family of souls. He affirms that no two monads can ever have any causal connection. Monads are "windowless". It neither requires anything from outside nor does it give anything. This view led to two difficulties, one in dynamics where bodies seem to affect each other, as in impact, the other in perception which seems to be an effect of the perceived object on the percipient. With regard to perception, Leibniz held that every monad mirrors the universe, not because the universe affects it, but because God has given it a nature which spontaneously produces this result. There is "pre-established harmony" between the changes in one monad and those in another. This resembles interaction.

Monads form a hierarchy in which some are superior to others in the clearness and distinctness with which they mirror the universe. The activity of monads is "perception". The fully active monad whose perception is conscious is called "apperception". Perception is an active process of unfolding its own nature in each monad. The monads differ only in degrees. Some are least active and their perception is dull and confused and there are others which are higher in grade. Leibniz speaks of three grades of monads, viz., the bare monads, souls and spirits. Bare monads are inanimate things such as rocks and stones. Their perception would be very dim and confused like that of a person who gets up from a swoon. Animals have a relatively high degree of clearness of perception as they can learn by experience. These are souls. Men are spirits, with memory and they can learn and have knowledge by reason of the eternal truths. The Chief Monad is God. Each monad signifies a small little world in itself. . There are monads, from the lowest to the highest. In this theory of monads, Leibniz brings out the importance of continuity. . Aggregates of monads are continually forming joining some and losing some. These are the changes of bodies in the phenomenal world, the appearances of the real changes within each monad making up the aggregate. . Monad has an inner tendency to activity and self-development. Force and energy are the essence of substance. Activity is the activity of a substance. This means that there is in the monad a principle of activity or a primitive force, which can be distinguished from the actual successive activities of the monad. Leibniz thus introduced the idea of entelechy or substantial form. This entelechy is not to be conceived as a mere potentiality for acting which requires an external stimulus to make it active. Monads have a positive force that generally fulfils itself. In this manner Leibniz reintroduced the Aristotelian theory of forms in dynamic terms of force or energy. But Leibniz did not turn his back on the mechanical view of nature though he considered it insufficient. He insisted that the mechanical views of Nature are complementary.

In spite of the fact that each monad is a principle of activity, no created monad is without a passive component which Leibniz calls 'prime' or 'first matter'. However, prime matter does not consist in mass or extension but only points to the fact that it has potentiality to act. It also

indicates that the created substances are limited and imperfect and this imperfection and passivity is shown in confused perceptions. There is a dominant monad in each aggregate and that dominant monad confers unity upon aggregates. The best example of such dominance is the relation of the human mind to its body. According to Leibniz each self-existent being unfolds its changes according to its own inner principle and "mirrors" changes in other monads. Each monad contains within itself a representation of the whole universe from one particular point of view that differs to an infinitely small degree from the representation contained in some other monad. Since Leibniz affirms that monads cannot interact, the fact of perception makes it necessary to speak of the harmonious unfolding of each monad with every other. This is his principle of "pre-established harmony." It gives the reason as to how we can speak of perceiving the world and at the same time believes that monads are "windowless". Though no two substances can act upon each other, everything in the universe takes place as if the natural interaction were real. Substances form a system, not of physical relations but of harmony or natural compatibility. In the creation of the world, the inner development of each monad has been so pre-arranged that all its changes are accompanied by corresponding changes in others. Succession of changes in each monad is different from that in every other, and yet all are in harmony. One monad influences another ideally through an inner pre-established conformity. There is a 'pre-established harmony' which gives the appearance of interaction between two monads. Commenting on the concept, Bertrand Russell says, "Leibniz has an infinite number of clocks, all arranged by creator to strike at the same instant, not because they affect each other but because each is a perfectly accurate mechanism." (History of Western Philosophy – page 565 – Routledge, London and New York.)

There are ever so many worlds like the plants, the insects, the animals, the human, and the planetary and so on. In each one of these worlds, there is a certain order or perfect arrangement. The monads exist in such a way that there is a continuity and hierarchy. From the smallest to the biggest, from the lowest to the highest, there is a definite continuity. The Universe is a system of parts in perfect mutual adoption. Similarly a human body is entirely composed of monads. Each monad is a soul and is immortal but there is one dominant Monad, the soul of the man whose body it forms part. The changes in the human body is for the sake of the soul. When my arm moves, the purpose served by the movement is in the dominant Monad. This is the truth of what appears to common sense as the control of my will over my arm. Pre-established harmony thus solves the Cartesian dualism of mind and matter. Leibniz explains this as the mirroring of all substances. God's action upon the world, the relation of minds and bodies in perception and movement are simply examples of the general mirroring. Leibniz points out that the soul or mind follows its own laws and the body likewise follows its own laws. They agree with each other in virtue of the pre-established harmony of all substances since they are all representations of the same universe. , The ultimate realities are monads or simple substances. These are invisible. What we perceive are aggregates of monads. When an aggregate has a dominant monad, it is an organic body. It is this form which Leibniz calls a corporeal substance. Thus for Leibniz, substances in the sense of aggregates of monads are phenomena. What is meant is that stones and trees appear to our senses as being unitary things. But they are really aggregates of simple un-extended substances. In other words, our everyday life, the world of sense experience, the world of science is phenomenal. The monads or ultimate realities are not phenomenal. They do not appear in our sense perception but are known only by a process of philosophical analysis.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer
b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit

1. Bring out the distinction between truths of reason and truths of fact in the Philosophy of Leibniz.

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2. Examine Leibniz's Doctrine of Monads.

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3.4 THIS WORLD AS THE BEST OF ALL POSSIBLE WORLDS.

According to Leibniz there are an infinite number of possible worlds; "possible" stands for what is logically possible. Leibniz points out that before creating this world, God contemplated on all the possibilities and decided to create the best. The best is that where there is the greatest excess of good over evil. Good and evil go together and therefore it is not possible to have a world without any evil... The value of good health is known only because there are illnesses. From the point of view of Theology, the example of free will maybe considered. Freewill is a great good but once there is freedom of choice, sin is bound to be committed. Thus Leibniz argues that it was impossible for God to bestow freewill, and at the same time decree that there should be no sin. Hence God made man free, being able to make his choice although God foresaw that man would commit sins and also get punishment. However, according to Leibniz, this is the best of all possible worlds because even though there is evil, there is surplus of good over evil. Leibniz represents the creation as a free act of God. God chose to create this world among all the possible worlds. God being perfectly good and wise, He had a sufficient reason to create the best, and hence the statement 'God created an inferior world' is self-contradictory'. In other words, "This is the best of all possible worlds" is necessarily true. While explaining that God had a sufficient reason to choose this world instead of any other possible world, Leibniz uses the principle of perfection as a complementary principle. In Leibniz's opinion it is possible to assign a maximum of perfection to every possible world or set of compossibles. But God chose this world instead of any other because it has the greatest maximum of perfection. Further, God created man in such a way that he chooses what seems to him to be the best. God chose the most perfect world freely. So also, man chooses what seems to him to be the best. For an infinite mind man's actions are certain apriori. This means that when God chose to create Adam, he chose to create the monad containing the whole course of later events, including his off-springs, their history, etc., Successive events in the life history of a monad are connected by its appetition towards the good. Since the states of this monad reflect the states of all other monads, the complete system will reflect the final cause of God's intention of bringing into existence the greatest amount of good which can co-exist. So far as a man is concerned, to act in accordance with a judgement of reason is to act freely. . If there were no best possible series, God would have created nothing. He cannot act without a reason or prefer the less perfect for the more

perfect. Leibniz also points out that the "possible" has a claim to existence, meaning that creation is in some sense necessary. Leibniz makes a distinction between logical or metaphysical necessity on the one hand and moral necessity on the other. It was not logically or metaphysically necessary for God to create the best of all possible worlds but it was morally necessary for Him to act for the best. This necessity is not incompatible with contingency, because like logical necessity there is no contradiction in its denial.

Arnauld has criticised Leibniz saying that the view that God can foresee every event concerning an individual, is to say that man really has no freedom. But Leibniz does not consider this as a problem because there are final causes to fulfil the purpose of God in creating the best of all possible worlds. The necessity is hypothetical because it is initially dependent on God's choice and the whole courses of events contain free choices which God has given his creatures. Leibniz points out that having considered all the possibilities, God in his infinite goodness created the best of all possible worlds.

3.5 THE RELATIVITY OF SPACE AND TIME

Space and time, according to Leibniz, are relative. Space is an order of co-existents and time an order of successions. When we think of different things as co-existing, we have an idea of space as an order of co-existence, where the different things are in some relation. Further, when we consider that there are no actual existents and yet think of possible situations, we have an abstract idea of space. With this argument Leibniz insists that abstract space is not real. It is simply the idea of a possible relational order. Time is also relational. If two events A and B are not simultaneous and if they have a relation with each other, then we say B is after A or A is before B. There is no abstract time. Both space and time are ideal. Further, Leibniz points out that when X substitutes for A with relation to B, C, D, we say X has taken the place of A. When we say this we feel that 'place' is extrinsic to X and A and it is real. However, that is not the case, because the 'places'of co-existents can be determined only by relations. A relation supposes 'accidents' or 'affections' in the related things and no two things can have the same 'affections'. Therefore, in true accuracy 'X' does not acquire the same relation that 'A' formerly had. Space is a mental abstraction, an idea but not real. Only the relations that form the basis of the mental construction are real. With these arguments, Leibniz affirms that the void or empty space and empty time are absurdities. Space as it appears to the senses and as it is assumed in Physics is not real. . Monads which are simple substances conceived on the analogy of souls are the only real substances. The arrangement of monads in a three dimensional order is what mirrors this world. Each monad sees the world in a certain perspective peculiar to itself. In this sense we can speak of a monad as having a spatial position. In formulating the laws of motion, a scientist has to determine as to what moves and where the movement is. The first view is that atoms of matter which are extended though indivisible move through the void, and motion is imparted to the atoms by contact with one another. The second view is that non-extended elements may exert force on one another without contact and set up motion in the void. The third hypothesis is the Cartesian hypothesis that material substance is essentially extended. All these possibilities are not possibilities but absurdities, according to Leibniz. Leibniz's objection to all these views is that they all presuppose that motion is imparted to an otherwise inert substance. Out of these objections emerges his view of the ultimate entities as essentially active, non-extended, not in any medium not even in space. These ultimate entities are the monads. The simple elements cannot be derived in spatial terms. The atoms cannot serve as the elements

in the laws of motion. The essence of an atom is extension and it cannot resist impact, because the motion will be lost on impact. Leibniz affirms that the elements must be such as to resist impact. Therefore the essential property must be force not extension.

Leibniz opposes Newtonian absolute space with specific arguments. Leibniz points out that the concept of empty space and time is irrational. Leibniz's first argument is theological. He says that if there were empty spaces it would mean that a wise and benevolent being missed the opportunity to place beings in it, which is absurd. The second argument invokes the principle of sufficient reason and the identity of indiscernibles. For every state of affairs here is a sufficient reason why it is thus and not otherwise. If we suppose the material universe in absolute space, then the question is as to why it should be here and not there? There must be some sufficient reason for this state of affairs; otherwise the various states of affairs are indiscernible and hence identical. If this is so, God would be acting without a reason. . The same argument applies to empty time. In creating the world earlier than later, God would be again acting without a reason. The only true cause in operation is final cause and all monads direct their activity toward the best. The same argument offers a further objection to atoms. Further, Leibniz argues that unity cannot belong to an extended thing that is a mere aggregate of parts. Unity can belong only to an "entelechy", a centre of activity like a mind. A mind in its unity and activity is most like a monad. Thus Leibniz says that the ultimate entities cannot be described in terms of categories such as space, time and matter. The series of monads is the real counterpart of the continuity of space.

3.6 METAPHYSICAL PROOFS FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD.

Leibniz gives four proofs for the existence of God. They are:

1) The Ontological argument
2) The Cosmological argument
3) The argument from Eternal Truths
4) The argument from Pre-established Harmony.

1) The Ontological argument is dependent on the distinction between existence and essence. Generally we speak of things or beings as existing and possessing certain qualities that forms the essence of those things or beings. It is also possible to imagine certain things or beings as possessing various properties. The scholastics expressed this by saying that in the case of a finite substance, the essence does not imply its existence. But this is not so in the case of God. God is defined as a most perfect Being and hence Anslem and Descartes held that in the case of God essence does imply existence. Anslem and Descartes argued that God who has all the perfections is better if he exists than if he does not. Leibniz did not accept the ontological argument in this form. For Leibniz it is important to prove that the idea of God is possible. Leibniz, therefore, first proves that all perfections are compatible since perfection is a simple quality that is positive and absolute. From this it follows that God exists, for, existence is one of the perfections. God as a subject of all perfections exists, since existence is one of the perfections. Kant has criticised this theory by pointing out that existence is not a predicate.
2) Leibniz's version of the cosmological argument rests on the principle of sufficient reason. Cosmological argument is the First-Cause argument. Every effect has a cause and the

causal chain cannot be infinite and hence it must end in an uncaused cause. That is God. In Aristatle's words, God is the Unmoved Mover. Leibniz presents this argument in a different form. He says that everything has to have a sufficient reason and therefore universe as a whole must have a sufficient reason. This reason must be outside the universe and this sufficient reason is God. Leibniz's use of the principle of sufficient reason is to argue from truths of fact to the existence of God. Every event or everything can be explained in terms of finite causes. The process of explanation in terms of finite causes might proceed to infinity. But there must be a final reason or sufficient reason outside the sequence or series of this detailed contingents, however, infinite it may be. This final or sufficient reason must be in a necessary substance. This is what we call God. This substance being the sufficient reason of all details, also linked together throughout, there is but one God. This, according to Leibniz, is an a posteriori argument.

Leibniz's version of the cosmological argument is better than the straight forward First-cause argument. The First-cause argument rests on the assumption that every series must have a first term. It is easy to show that this assumption is false because the series of proper fractions has no first term. But Leibniz's argument does not depend upon the view that the universe must have had a beginning in time. Leibniz maintains a difference between necessary and contingent propositions. He calls all existential propositions contingent with the sole exception of the existence of God. God exists necessarily but when it comes to the creation of this world, He is not compelled by logic but he creates out of his own Free Choice motivated by his goodness. .

Kant criticises the above argument saying that this argument depends on the ontological argument. If the existence of the world is because of a necessary being, then the essence of that Being must involve existence. So the defects of the Ontological argument will be applicable to the Cosmological argument as well.

3) The argument from Eternal Truths: is little difficult to state precisely. Roughly the argument states that those propositions that are always true are called eternal truths. For example, 'four plus four is eight' is always true, everywhere and never false, whereas, a statement like 'It is raining now' may be either true or false, and hence such statements (existential statements) are contingent. The argument is that the gist of a truth must be the content of a mind, and hence eternal truths must be contents of an Eternal Mind. The reason for contingent truths must be in necessary truths. The reason for this whole contingent world cannot be found in contingency but it must be sought in eternal truths. Thus the eternal truths must exist in the mind of God. The question that arises is, in what sense can we speak of any truth as "existing" in a mind? Though it is the mind that apprehends the truth, the meaning of 'existence' in this context gets blurred. The truth is that eternal truths are so because they are self-consistent.
4) The argument from pre-established harmony is Leibniz's version of the argument from design. This argument follows from his doctrine of monads that mirror the universe. The monads do not interact with each other, yet they are like clocks, which keep the same time. This is possible because there must be a single outside cause that regulates all of them. Without reference to the metaphysics of Leibniz, what can be said is that surveying the world, this world cannot be explained as the product of blind forces but it has to be viewed as having a beneficent purpose.

The premises of this argument are empirical and it has no formal logical defect. Having spoken of a beneficent Creator, Liebniz had to address the problem of evil. Leibniz speaks of three types of evil – the metaphysical, the physical and the moral. Metaphysical evil is the imperfection involved in finite beings. Physical evil is necessary because it serves a purpose of acting as a penalty for sin. The chief problem considered by Leibniz is that of moral evil. God created the best of all possible worlds in which He had to make room for freewill. Therefore God is not responsible for evil. The harmony in the world makes all things progress towards grace. Sensitive souls get elevated to the rank of spirits. The harmonious union of spirits composes the city of God, a moral world within the natural world.

3.7 CRTITICISIMS

1. Leibniz is guilty of an inconsistency in combining pluralism with subject- predicate logic. Only a monist like Spinoza can speak of all propositions being of this form. According to Leibniz even the propositions of matters of fact are analytic. It is very difficult to understand this view.
2. According to his doctrine of Monads, the Monads never interact. If so, how does any one of them know that there are others? How the perfect independence of Monads is to be a reconciled with the continuity of their series is a question which Leibniz does not answer.
3. The idea that this is the best of all possible worlds is unacceptable to both philosophers and laymen. Schopenhauer is one of the philosophers who has severely criticised this view saying that this world is not the best but the worst.
4. Leibniz was eager to show the importance of free will but his system does not succeed in that. Arnauld criticises Leibniz as having made his system as deterministic as that of Spinozas.
5. Leibniz's solution to the problem of evil is logically possible but it is not very convincing.

What has been said so far refers to Leibniz's popular philosophy but he left a lot of his philosophical thoughts unpublished. This can be called esoteric philosophy. He did not want his philosophy to be Spinozaist and hence he refused to make many of his thought public. This unit can be concluded with a quotation from Bertrand Russell. "……..Leibniz remains a great man, and his greatness is more apparent now…… He was a pioneer in mathematical logic of which he perceived the importance when no one else did so. …….Even his Monads can still be useful as suggesting possible ways of viewing perception, though they cannot be regarded as windowless. What I, for my part, think best in his theory of monads is his two kinds of space, one subjective, in the perceptions of each Monad, and one objective, consisting of the assemblage of points of view of the various monads. This, I believe, is still useful in relating perception to physics." (History of Western Philosophy–Page-576).

Check Your Progress II

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer
b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit

1. How does Leibniz establish that this is the best of all possible worlds?

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2. Analyse the views of Leibniz with reference to the relativity of space and time.
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3. Critically examined the proofs for the existence of God as propounded by Leibniz.
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3.8 LET US SUM UP

The three chief philosophical concepts of Leibniz are:

I. Intention, force or life in the form of perception and appetitions is the essence of real, individual substance.
II. The principle of continuity or the identity of indiscernible is the hypothesis by which Leibniz endeavours to explain the system or inter-relation of strictly individual substances.
III. The pre-established harmony is introduced to account for the possibility of change in elementary substances without prejudice to the whole.

3.9 KEY WORDS

Monads: in the metaphysics of Leibnitz, an indivisible indestructible unit that is the basic element of reality and a microcosm of it.

Theodicy: argument in defence of God's goodness despite the existence of evil.

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3.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answers to Check your Progress I

1) Leibniz based his philosophy on two logical principles – The law of contradiction and the law of sufficient reason. Truths of reason are necessary propositions Quoting Leibniz from 'Monadology', "Truths of reason are necessary and their opposite is impossible; truths of fact are contingent and their opposite is possible". The truths of reason are about what is possible where as the truths of facts are about existence, one exception being God exists is a proposition of truths of reason and it is necessary. For Leibniz all true propositions in a sense are analytic.

2) Bodies are compounds or aggregate of simple substances without parts, called by Leibniz 'monads' According to Leibniz, extension cannot be an attribute of substance. Hence each monad is a soul with the attribute of thought. No two monads can ever have any causal connection. Monads are "windowless". There is "pre- established harmony" between the changes in one monad and those in another. This resembles interaction.

Monads form a hierarchy in which some are superior to others in the clearness and distinctness with which they mirror the universe. The activity of monads is "perception". The fully active monad whose perception is conscious is called "apperception". A monad actually stands for a certain amount of force or energy. Leibniz thus introduced the idea of entelechy or substantial form. There is a dominant monad in each aggregate and that dominant monad confers unity upon aggregates. The best example of such dominance is the relation of the human mind to its body.

Answers to Check your progress II

1. According to Leibniz there are an infinite number of possible worlds. The best is that where there is an excess of good over evil. Free will is a great good but once there is freedom sin is bound to be committed. Therefore, it was impossible for God to bestow free will and at the same time decree that there should be no sin. However, this is the best of all possible worlds because there is surplus of good over evil. This world has the maximum of perfection. God choose the most perfect world freely and man chooses what seems to him to be the best. This creation is necessary.

4) Space and time are relative according to Leibniz. Space is an order of coexistence and time an order of successions. There is no abstract space or abstract time both space and time are ideal. Space is a mental abstraction, an idea and only the relations which form the basis of this mental construction are real. Therefore, void or empty space and empty time are absurdities.

5) Leibniz gives four proofs for the existence of God. They are:

1. The Ontological argument
2. The Cosmological argument

3. The argument from Eternal Truths
4. The argument from Pre-established Harmony.

The Ontological argument of Leibniz is that all perfections are compatible and perfection is a simple quality which is positive and absolute. From this it follows that God exists because existence is one of the perfections.

Leibniz's version of Cosmological argument is based on the theory of sufficient reason. Every event or everything can be explained in terms of finite causes and there must be a final reason or sufficient reason outside the sequence or series of contingents and this final cause must be God.

This argument is that gist of a truth must be the content of mind and thus the eternal truths must be the contents of the eternal mind. Therefore, the eternal truths must exist in the mind of God.

Leibniz's principle of pre-established harmony is his version of the argument from design. This doctrine follows from the doctrine of monads which mirrors the universe. There must be a single outside cause, which regulates all monads and that is God.

UNIT 4: RESUME AND CRITICAL APPRAISAL OF RATIONALISM

Contents

4.0. OBJECTIVES

The main objective of this Unit is to give the students a critical appraisal of the tradition of Rationalism in Modern philosophy. By the end of this Unit you should be able:

- to have a basic understanding and some of the criticisms of rationalism;
- to have familiarity of some of the objections to Descartes' *cogito* and proofs for the existence of God and how Descartes would respond to these objections;
- to have a critical understanding of the difficulties with Spinoza's monism and concept of God;
- to have a familiarity with how Leibniz integrates the principle of sufficient reason with his concept of God having created the most perfect world to respond to objections against his notion of pre-established harmony.
- to have a critical understanding of why Descartes, Spinoza and Leibniz were rationalists by understanding what is common to their philosophical enterprises and also understand what was distinctive in each great philosopher's system.

4.1. INTRODUCTION

Modern philosophy begins in the Seventeenth century. Three of the great thinkers of the late 17th century were Francis Bacon (1561–1626), Galileo (1564–1642) and Rene Descartes (1596-1650). Bacon is famous for expounding the scientific method, Galileo is acknowledged as the founder of Modern science and Descartes is widely accepted as the founder of Modern philosophy. Undoubtedly, Galileo and Bacon also had a great impact on philosophy but it is Descartes who was more of a pure philosopher despite being one of the best mathematicians of all times and a good physicist as well.

4.2. DESCARTES' DEDUCTIVE METHOD VERSUS BACON'S SCIENTIFIC METHOD

Let us begin with recalling the rules Descartes set out for himself in order to implement his rationalist method:

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

Descartes' method is a philosophical method which stands in contrast with the scientific method which is attributed to have been first clearly stated by 11th century Polymath Ibn al-Haytham (965–1040):

A. Observation
B. Statement of problem
C. Formulation of hypothesis
D. Testing of hypothesis using experimentation
E. Analysis of experimental results
F. Interpretation of data and formulation of conclusion
G. Publication of findings

The features of observation, hypotheses and experimentation (A, C and E) seem to be missing from Descartes' method. Francis Bacon who was born 35 years before Francis was inspired by al-Hayatham's scientific method and its development over time and he put forward his scientific method as follows:

i. Go into an investigation with no expectations of how it will turn out.
ii. Wherever possible measure and quantify results.
iii. Use written records to analyze observations and to collaborate with others.
iv. Be slow to go from specific experimental results to general theories about nature.
v. Do not attempt to assign intentional purpose to anything other than the actions of man.
vi. If good evidence doesn't validate the theory, dump the theory and work on a different explanation.

Besides observation and experimentation Bacon also emphasises the importance of collaborating with others in acquiring knowledge (iii) as contrast to Descartes' insistence in (1) that one rely only on oneself and no one else in acquiring knowledge.

We may defend Descartes by saying that whereas Al-Hyatham and Bacon are providing a method for acquiring knowledge in science, Descartes is providing us with a method for acquiring ordinary knowledge which is in the purview of philosophy. However, Bacon insisted that his method was a method that would lead to knowledge in any human endeavour.

The main difference between the scientific method and Descartes' method is that whereas the former emphasises induction the latter is purely deductive. Here is what Bacon says in his famous work *The New Organon*:

> There are and can be only two ways of searching into and discovering truth. The one flies from the senses and particulars to the most general axioms, and from these principles, the truth of which it takes for settled and immovable, proceeds to judgments and middle axioms. And this way is now in fashion. The other derives axioms from the senses and particulars, rising by a gradual and unbroken ascent, so that it arrives at the

> most general axioms last of all. This is the true way but as yet untried. (*The New Organon*, aphorism 19)

It is remarkable that Bacon could in 1620 give this sharp critique of the deductive method for knowledge that Descartes would give in his *Discourse on Method* 17 years later. Even more remarkable is that Bacon could almost foresee the long and poignant debate between rationalism that would dominate 17th century continental philosophy and empiricism that would dominate late 17th century and 18th century British philosophy. And he leaves no doubt that he would favour empiricism in this debate of the foundations of knowledge as his inductive method requires empiricism.

Check Your Progress I

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit

1) Give a brief explanation about Descartes' idea of "Cogito"

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4.3. SPINOZA'S MONISM AND THE CONCEPT OF GOD

It is rare in history that one great philosopher like Aristotle follows a great philosopher like Plato. The great mathematician philosopher Descartes was followed by two great minds, one with an integrated system of philosophy much like Plato in Spinoza and the other an encyclopaedic mind like Leibniz. Just as Aristotle grew from within Plato's philosophy and at the same time crafted a radical departure from Plato, so did Spinoza and Leibniz grow from within Cartesian rationalism but each in his own way crafted his own radical departure from Descartes.

Spinoza performed a double-edged completion job of Cartesian rationalism. Wherever there were holes and incompletions in Descartes Spinoza shored up the holes and completed the task. More specifically, he claimed that the logical consequence of Cartesian method and rationalism culminates in the monism of God as an infinite singular substance from which everything emanates. Not only that but the ontological priority of God as demonstrated by Descartes' proofs for the existence of God implore us to start epistemology with the existence of God and not with the existence of the self or the world. This standing of Descartes on his head should draw cheers from the medieval theologians from Maimonides (his Jewish predecessor) to the Christian and Islamic theologians as God has again become the starting point of epistemology even after the epistemological turn of philosophy that Descartes initiated. Spinoza is pronouncing that knowledge of everything else depends on the knowledge of God. However, the applause would soon subside when it is realized that Spinoza was critical even of Maimonides' reliance on the scriptures. Here Spinoza is even more progressive than Descartes in claiming that his conclusions are based on pure reason and pure thought within his mind and not dependent on any outside sources except God perhaps, whereas Descartes though implicitly but never explicitly challenges the authority of scriptures. Furthermore, Spinoza's concept of God is far from the traditional theological God as his God is neither a personal God nor a Deistic

God, but the term 'God' could well be replaced by 'nature' and Spinoza would then be in synch with the most modern scientists in their concept of nature. Despite attempting to provide a more complete and more holistic philosophical system Spinoza at the same time allows for fallibility whereas Descartes is dogmatic about infallibility. This also brings Spinoza closer to his successors such as Kant, Russell and Popper.

Spinoza furthered Descartes' mathematical philosophy by infusing the geometric method and whereas Descartes may have been atomistic in that each proposition stands alone as true or false based on its axiomatic derivation from the foundations, for Spinoza the whole system of propositions of our epistemology stands or falls together.

Except for very technical arguments against monism it is really difficult to provide any sharp criticism of Spinoza. As we have probably gotten technically enough in our criticism and defence of Descartes' *cogito*, we will avoid the real scholarly endeavour here. However, we can look at a general objection that is raised against any kind of monism whether it be that of Parmenides, Shankra or Spinoza. It seems like all monisms start with plurality and then try to explain plurality away and argue that in the end there is only the One or only one type of entity like a spiritual substance or as for Spinoza an infinite God. Why do they do that? The common sense view of the world is surely that there is plurality in the world. As soon as a child begins to notice the world around her she observes her mother, her father, her sister, her brother, flowers, trees, birds, non human animals of different kinds; and as she grows up the plurality multiplies as she is able to distinguish among different types of birds and animals. Just applying common sense one would say how can all of this be unreal. The monism of Parmenides and Shankra does just that by claiming that plurality exists only in the world of appearances but not in the real world. As the arguments of Parmenides and Shankra against plurality are polemic and the positive arguments for monism are deficient their monism is not very appetizing to philosophers who place great importance on common sense and they appeal more to those who are ready to abandon common sense altogether in favour of accepting transcendental and esoteric doctrines.

Spinoza's monism is a bit different from his predecessors and perhaps not as offensive to common sense intuitions. Spinoza claims that even though ultimate reality is the infinite nonmaterial substance of God which is neither physical nor mental, he does not deny the plurality in the world by calling it an illusion or merely appearances but not reality. Rather plurality is accounted for by what Spinoza calls monads which are simply modes of the existence of the infinite being which is God or Nature. Each monad though numerically distinct from another monad simply reflects or mirrors the infinite God or nature. Hence, though each monad is one and there are many monads, each reflects the One monist infinite God.

Another criticism of Spinoza's system arises from its completeness. In other words it seems too comprehensive and consistent that it is difficult to launch any criticism from the outside. Is it then possible to criticize it from the inside? Only a real scholar of Spinoza could do that. But from what we can gather the defence against this objection is that Spinoza's system from the inside does allow both for flexibility and fallibility, whereas Descartes' system is relatively more rigid and infallible. Hence, Spinoza is an important transition to the future where fallibilism will emerge in Modern philosophy. By 'fallibilism' we mean that it is always possible that anything we know, even the foundations may turn out to be false. Though Descartes starts with doubting

everything he ends up with knowledge of the foundations that cannot be doubted. Spinoza leaves traces of possible cracks in such dogmantism even though he hangs on to Descartes' mathematisation of epistemology and further applies it to metaphysics.

4.4. LEIBNIZ'S LAW OF SUFFICENT REASON AND PRE-ESTABLISHED HARMONY

Leibniz's rationalism is perhaps best reflected in his principle of sufficient reason. Whereas the notion that everything has a cause or nothing happens without a cause had been around for ages among scientists and philosophers, Leibniz's claim that nothing happens in the world without a reason gives a rationalist twist to the old intuition. Leibniz's notion of 'sufficient' is stronger than just saying that everything has a reason. Leibniz depicts the principle of sufficient reason as follows in a letter to S. Clarke: 'I mean the principle of sufficient reason, that is, that nothing happens without a reason why it should be so rather than otherwise.' The qualification 'rather than otherwise' implies that there is a necessary connection between what happens and the reason for its happening. It also implies that the reason provides a complete explanation so that no other condition is required for the explanation. For example, for water turning into steam the explanation that water has been subjected to a temperature of above 100 degrees centigrade for a particular period of time is a sufficient reason. It also seems to imply that the correct explanation is not only the sufficient reason but the only correct reason.

Leibniz is also famous for his concept of pre-established harmony. The world operates on the laws of mechanics in a perfect and efficient manner because of pre-established harmony. For example, consider the human body, the brain is located at the top, the heart is located somewhat centrally as its function is to pump blood to different regions of the body, the spinal chord is located in the back, and so on. It does not take a student of anatomy to realise the wonder of the anatomy of the human body. We cannot imagine the heart being in the skull and the brain being where the liver is, with such locations these parts of the body could not function at all. Leibniz would say that the human anatomy is organized the way it is for its proper functioning because of pre-established harmony. And who is the creator of this pre-established harmony? Of course it is God who is the ultimate sufficient reason for pre-established harmony.

Leibniz also claimed that God made the most perfect world possible. So, that the human body could not have been arranged in any other way than it is. There lies the sufficient reason for why the anatomy of the human body is the way it is.

All three of these combine for Leibniz to create perfect explanations. However, all three have been heavily criticised.

Why should there be an explanation for everything? It is true that most scientists and philosophers have operated on this assumption throughout history, but why should there be an explanation for everything. Perhaps some things are just unexplainable. Leibniz as a rationalist would respond that even though humans may not be able to access explanation for everything, God as the ultimate rational agent does have an explanation for everything that exists and everything that happens, and from God humans acquire the ability to try to explain everything, even what seems beyond our reach. Even if there is an explanation for everything why should

there be one and only one correct explanation? Why can there not be alternative sufficient reasons for any given event? Leibniz may respond with a perhaps precarious appeal to simplicity here and claim that God would not have made the world so that we would be confused as to which is the sufficient explanation between alternative explanations but would have chosen the alternative route of there being one and only one correct sufficient explanation for any event.

Why should there be pre-established harmony? Why can't the world operate on chance and chaos? If there is a pre-established harmony why is there so much discord in the world? Why are their earthquakes and tidal waves? Leibniz would argue that the observation of the world indicates very strongly that it is orderly and not chaotic, like the human body. Chaos seems to ensue when the order is disturbed. As for discord in the world Leibniz would resort to the standard answer given by theologians in the middle ages as what appears as bad, evil or disturbing to us is really necessary and good in the larger scheme of things that God has planned.

The strongest objection against Leibniz is: why is the world we live in the best of all possible worlds created by God? Isn't it paradoxical to say that God could not have created an alternative world to the world He has actually created? This would be paradoxical as God is supposed to be omnipotent (all powerful) and it would limit his power if there was something that He could not do such as create an alternative world to the actual world. Leibniz was quite aware of this objection and claimed that though it is logically possible for God to have created another world it is not morally possible. What he means is that since God is also omniscient He knows what each alternative world that he could create would be like, hence he would choose the best (in a moral sense) of all the possible worlds that he could create. This is hardly a far-fetched idea as in ordinary discourse we often say, as in the case of an accident, just imagine it could have been much worse. Is God a moral agent? Well, God is supposed to be all good, and so He is the ultimate moral agent, hence he would create the morally best world among all the alternative worlds that he could create.

Finally, in defence of these three claims of Leibniz let us look at two very insightful and untraditional proofs that he proposed for the existence of God. What is unorthodox about these proofs is that whereas the traditional proofs for the existence of God are *a priori* (independent of experience), Leibniz here offers two *a posteriori* (dependent on experience) proofs for the existence of God. In the first proof he says that for any given series of events S-1 there must be according to the law of sufficient reason a series S-2 that is the one and only correct explanation for the series of events S-1. Now, S-2 will have to have another series S-3 as its one and only correct explanation, and so on to infinity. The law of sufficient reason requires that there must be a final sufficient reason that itself does not require a reason and this final reason is what we call God which then exists necessarily otherwise the very first series S-1 does not exist. One may object to the necessary condition here by saying that the existence of S-1 is not necessary as it is possible that the series of events could not have existed. Leibniz would respond with his pre-established harmony that it is necessary for the orderly functioning of the world that the series S-1 exists; and though it is logically possible that it did not exist since God made the most perfect world possible it is morally necessary that the series exists. This proof is *a posteriori* because it proceeds from what are usually called the contingent truths of facts, but these contingent truths Leibniz ends up calling 'hypothetically necessary'. The second *a posteriori* proof is simpler and less elegant. From the *a posteriori* observation of pre-established harmony such as in the

anatomy of the human body we infer that there must be a cause and sufficient reason for this pre-established harmony. This must be a common cause that communicates among all that do not seem to communicate with each other in the distant corners of the universe. Simply put, "someone has to establish the pre-established" and that Being is God, and since the existence of pre-established harmony is morally necessary, the existence of God is necessary.

Check Your Progress I

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit

1) Explain Leibniz's principle of sufficient reason, pre-established harmony and the claim that God created the best of all possible worlds. What are the main objections to these claims?

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4.5. LET US SUM UP

From the 1630s when Descartes was in his thirties to the 1710s just before the death of Leibniz, three of the greatest minds ever flourished. These are the three philosophers, Descartes, Spinoza and Leibniz that we have discussed in detail in units 1, 2, 3 and 4 of this block. Perhaps at no time in the history of Western thought have three such great minds flourished within a span of 80 years. In the three or four decades preceding these thinkers were the great minds of Galileo, Kepler and Bacon as well. Besides these three in the same period the great minds of Hobbes, Malebranche and Pascal also flourished. So, we can say that from the turn of the 16th century to the beginning of the 18th century we really had the golden age of Western thought from the perspective of science as well as philosophy, and the progress made during this time was remarkable so we can truly say that this period was the period of the emergence of Modern science as well as Modern philosophy.

The systems that Descartes, Spinoza and Leibniz proposed were rationalist systems. Descartes started the ball rolling with his foundationalism, the view that all knowledge is to be built on a few rock solid foundations and the system of knowledge that we build on it will also then be rock solid. Basically, Descartes wanted to axiomatise ordinary knowledge just as mathematics is axiomatised. Spinoza followed Descartes with his geometrical method and Leibniz's rationalism shifted the attention towards logic as Leibniz claimed that mathematics was basically logic. All three believed in God, though in different ways, and all three offered proofs for the existence of God though of different types. All three gave purely rationalistic reasons for the existence of God. Whereas Descartes was a dualist, Spinoza was a neutral monist and Leibniz was a pluralist; these differences among the three really make them quite distinct from each other. Also, whereas Descartes emphasised epistemology, Spinoza emphasised metaphysics and ethics and Leibniz turned to logic and pure conceptual thinking. This also distinguishes the three from each other markedly.

Besides the criticisms of each of the three great rationalists that we have expounded above, the major criticism of them is the attack launched by the British Empiricists Locke, Berkeley and

Hume. As you will be studying these philosophers next, we will not let the cat out of the bag but simply say that the general criticism is that sense perceptions are essential to gaining knowledge and the rationalists are mistaken in marginalizing or excluding sense experience from the formation of knowledge.

4.6. KEY WORDS

Monism: Monism is any philosophical view which holds that there is unity in a given field of inquiry. Thus, some philosophers may hold that the universe is really just one thing, despite its many appearances and diversities.

Monads: Monad (Greek philosophy) means "unit" used variously by ancientphilosophers from the Pythagoreans to Plato, Aristotle, and Plotinus to signify a variety of entities from a genus to God. *Monadology*, a book of philosophy by Gottfried Leibniz in which monads are a basic unit of perceptual reality.

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4.8. ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check your progress I

1. The main criticism of Descartes' *cogito* came from more orthodox Christians like Pascal. They objected that by beginning with 'I think therefore I am' as the first clear and distinct idea on which knowledge is to be built, Descartes implicitly doubts the existence of God. Descartes can

easily defend himself against this charge as follows. The proposition that 'God exists' cannot be doubted by applying the three reasons of doubting that Descartes gives so it is also a clear and distinct idea. It is simply a methodological preference that Descartes himself begins with 'I think therefore I am' as a clear and distinct idea and deduces the existence of God from that. He may well have begun with 'God exists' as the first clear and distinct idea. Though Descartes begins with the *cogito* he never says that this is the only proposition that is certain. Hence, the existence of God is never doubted. A more sophisticated criticism is that 'I think, therefore I am' is an argument which has the hidden assumption that thinking beings are existing beings. This makes Descartes' method self defeating because to reach the first truth we presuppose another truth. Descartes was intelligent enough to foresee this objection and he claimed that 'I think therefore I am' is not an argument but one clear and distinct proposition that draws a necessary connection between my thinking and my existing and it is grasped purely by my intuition.

Check Your Progress II

1. The principle of sufficient reason is the claim that nothing happens without a reason, that there is a necessary connection between what happens and the reason for its happening and that the reason gives a sufficient and complete explanation of why what happens happens. We observe so many magnificent and perfect mechanisms such as the human body and wonder why the brain, heart and spinal chord are placed in the body as they are and we see that they could only be placed as they are for the body to function properly. Similarly the whole cosmos with all the planets and solar systems rotating in their orbits is a perfect mechanism. All of this indicates that there is a pre-established harmony and thereby a Creator who created this pre-established harmony must exist. This leads to Leibniz's further claim that God made the best of all possible worlds, otherwise the world would show systems that did not display pre-established harmony and would display events which had no explanation.

3

BLOCK INTRODUCTION

Empiricism refers (British) to the 18th century philosophical movement in Great Britain which maintained that all knowledge comes from experience. Continental Rationalists maintained that knowledge comes from foundational concepts known intuitively through reason, such as innate ideas. Other concepts are then deductively drawn from these. British Empiricists staunchly rejected the theory of innate ideas and argued that knowledge is based on both sense experience and internal mental experiences, such as emotions and self-reflection. Exactly like rationalism, empiricism is also an extreme view. It holds that *all* substantial truths about the world are discoverable only by empirical experience. Thus, reason is substituted by empirical or sense experience. This block studies the major British empiricists: Locke, Berkley and Hume.

Unit 1 is on "Locke," who may be regarded as the founder of Empiricism, which holds that sense experience is the only source of philosophical knowledge. The conception of substance was a dominant category during the time of Locke, who did not attempt to reject it wholly. He thought in terms of concrete details rather than of large abstractions. He wanted to break from the bondage of words, from the bondage of wrong methods and from the bondage of the assumption that philosopher's business is to speculate.

Unit 2, "Berkley," describes the salient ideas of the British philosopher George Berkeley who followed John Locke and whose theory of knowledge became the focus of criticism. The unit proposes to study the arguments put forward by Berkeley to resolve some perennial and perplexing issues of epistemology and metaphysics. The unit exposes his theories of empiricism and subjective idealism and tries to explain the meaning of his famous saying: *esse est percipi* meaning, 'to be is to perceived.'

Unit 3 is on "Hume," who believed that the science of human nature affords fundamental insight not only into such domains as morals, aesthetics, and politics but even mathematics, natural philosophy, and natural religion. Human nature is thus the 'capital or centre' of sciences. The experimental method which has been applied with such success in natural science should also be applied in the study of human.

Unit 4, "Resume and Critical Appraisal," examines how empiricism defended the assumptions of and methods of science and developed a complimentary theory of mind. By grounding all knowledge in sensory experience and suggesting that experience may only represent or mirror the external world, empiricism reinforced Descartes' first-person stand-point and his conception that persons have privileged access to their own sensations. Continental philosophers often claim that empiricists overlook the temporal unity of and internal relations among experiences, and that they presuppose an arbitrarily limited conception of experience and of their possible combinations.

To conclude: Empiricism, which maintains that all knowledge comes from experience, is an extreme philosophical view. All major British empiricists – Locke, Berkley and Hume – were

united in this view. However, they differed among themselves on the nature, process and validity of knowledge.

U N I T- 1 **L O C K E**

Contents

1.0 OBJECTIVES

The objective of this unit is to introduce the philosophy of John Locke as the founder of Empiricism. At the end of the unit, one should be able

- to draw the distinction between rationalism and empiricism, and
- Appreciate Locke as being innovative in emphasizing the importance of sense-experience.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

John Locke was born in 1632; he was the apostle of the Revolution of 1688, which successfully brought in reforms in England. Most of Locke's works appeared within a few years of 1688. His chief work in theoretical philosophy is the Essay concerning Human Understanding. This work was published in 1690.

Locke may be regarded as the founder of Empiricism; according to which sense experience is the only source of philosophic knowledge. The conception of substance was the dominant category during the time of Locke. This was considered vague and not useful by Locke. However, Locke did not attempt to reject it wholly. He allowed the validity of metaphysical arguments for the existence of God. Locke thought in terms of concrete detail rather than of large abstractions. Locke wanted to break from the bondage of words, from the bondage of wrong methods and from the bondage of the assumption that philosopher's business is to speculate. Thus in the epistle to the readers in his Essay Locke says, "It is ambition enough to be employed as an under-labourer in cleaning the ground a little and removing some of the rubbish that lies in the way of Knowledge." Further, in Book-I of his Essay, Locke says that his task is "to enquire into grounds and degrees of belief, opinion and assent."

1.2 POLEMIC AGAINST INNATE IDEAS

Locke begins his Essay with a critical examination of the theory of innate ideas. In Book-I, Ch. 2 of the Essay, Locke gives his arguments for the rejection of innate ideas. He argues against Plato, Descartes and the Scholastics. Locke attacked the Scholastic maxims, specially the Law of Identity (whatever is, is) and the Law of Contradiction (what is, cannot be, both be and not be). Since they are self-evident, the proponents of the theory of innate ideas felt that they were innate or a part of mind's initial equipment. Locke argued that self-evidence and innateness are not equivalent. Locke says that in particulars our knowledge begins and spreads itself by degrees to generals. Descartes as a rationalist believed in innate ideas that are known a priori and are beyond doubt. However, Locke rejects the views of Descartes saying that if there were 'innate ideas' in the mind, then all minds should be having knowledge about them. But children and idiots do not claim to have such knowledge. Some rationalists try to improve their theory of innate ideas saying that even though such ideas are there in all minds, some minds may not have knowledge about them. Locke rejects this line of argument saying, "No proposition can be said to be in the mind which it never yet knew, which it never yet conscious of." Further, if someone says that ideas are there but we come to be aware of it through reason, Locke asks, then why say that they are innate?

Locke was against the theory that there are certain special ideas which are imprinted on the mind by God or Nature. The proponents of innate ideas held that they constituted a distinct sort of truths, a class apart, having a special authority and distinct from adventitious ideas, that come from outside. Rejecting this theory, Locke says, that there are neither innate speculative principles nor innate practical principles. He demolishes the universal assent argument. Most moral principles are got through convention and custom. All our ideas can be traced back to an origin in experience. What we can say is that mind has the capacity to know and not that the propositions are already there. Having disposed of the doctrine of innate ideas Locke went on to give his own theories. Locke says that the mind is like a white paper, the mind is empty. It is "tabula rasa", an empty tablet. From where does all the materials of knowledge and reason come? Locke answers in one word- Experience.

1.3 THEORY OF IDEAS

Ideas are the central conception of the philosophy of Locke. His view on the concept of 'idea' is presented in Book-II of the Essay. Locke says, "I have used it to express whatever is meant by phantasm, notion, species or whatever it is which the mind can be employed about in thinking." To Locke idea is 'the object of the understanding when a man thinks' where thinking includes all cognitive activities. Ideas form the materials of knowledge. The meaning of 'idea' can be understood as -

1. The immediate objects of understanding
2. Signs or representations of the world of things.
3. The modifications of the mind.
4. Caused by experience.

Our ideas are derived from two sources (a) sensation and (b) reflection or perception of the operation of our own mind which may be called 'internal sense.'

Our senses convey into the mind several distinct perceptions of things. This is what is called sensation. This is a process through which the mind receives ideas from external objects. By means of inner sense or introspection the mind gets the ideas not from the existing objects but by reflecting on its own operations within itself. This is the process of thinking, doubting, believing, willing, etc. The mind has powers of analyzing and reassembling the raw materials received.

Locke makes a distinction between simple ideas and complex ideas. Sensory experiences of the uniform character are called simple ideas. Color smell, sound, numbers, extension, etc are simple ideas. They are the contents of actual experience. Locke says that the mind uses some kind of liberty in forming those complex ideas, in contrast with simple ideas where the mind is passive. But Locke is not able to maintain this distinction successfully. He says that some complex ideas are given in experience. "Some ideas are observed to exist in several combinations united together." Again, Locke says that there are certain simple ideas with a complex content, example, Extension. He further modifies his distinction by saying that some ideas are simple but they are not atomic, for example, ideas of space and time. Locke says that by comparing ideas, mind obtains ideas of relations and by abstracting mind attains general ideas. Complex ideas according to Locke are of three kinds. They are ideas of substances, modes and relations. Complex ideas are combination of simple ideas representing distinct particular things. Locke says substance is the idea of a support or substratum in which the simple contents inhere. The notion of substance is implied because qualities have to inhere in something. It seems to be a necessity of thought.

The idea of modes is dependent on substance. For example, the idea of a dozen or a score is based on the idea of a unit and there is the operation of addition. We give fixity by giving it a name. Complex ideas are derived from simple ideas. The idea of relation is formulated through an act of comparison. Mind has the capacity to look beyond a particular object and involve in the mental operation of comparison. Of all the ideas of relation, the relation of cause and effect is the most important. Next, Locke speaks of the concept of identity as the relation between the thing and itself. The adjective "same" and "identical" have different senses in their application to different kinds of things, and he distinguishes a number of different senses of the word "identity". In the case of a simple material particle, we trace its identity in space and time. In the compound, identity is established by ensuring that all the particles making up the compound are identical. In a machine, identity consists in the organization or structure of the parts. When he comes to discuss, personal identity, in human beings, he rejects the traditional view that it is the identity of soul. According to Locke personal identity consists in identity of consciousness.

With regard to general ideas, Locke says that no general idea is given to us in sense perception. We form this idea by an act of abstraction. When we abstract something we look at that concept as standing for a whole set of particulars of the same kind.

> Locke gives a range of meaning to the word 'idea' and therefore it looks that Locke uses this term very ambiguously. However, this ambiguity does not matter too much because Locke supposes them to have the same function. They are all signs which represent the external

world of physical objects and the inner world of consciousness. Commenting on Locke's concept of 'idea',

Gibson says, "The idea for him is at once the apprehension of content and the content apprehended." (Locke's Theory of knowledge by Gibson Page -19)

To discover the nature of ideas 'better and to discover them intelligently', one further distinction must be examined. This is the distinction between primary and secondary qualities. In Book II of his Essay, Locke gives his definitions of Primary and Secondary qualities as follows. Primary qualities of bodies are those qualities which are "utterly inseparable from the body in what state so ever it be." Such qualities are solidity, shape, motion, rest and number. The secondary qualities "in truth are nothing in the objects themselves but powers to produce various sensations in us by their primary qualities." Under this category come qualities like color, auditory qualities, taste, scent and so on. They do not belong to the objects themselves. We get them as a result of the primary qualities. Our ideas of primary qualities are resemblances of the objects. They are 'real qualities.' On the other hand, the ideas of secondary qualities are mainly effects of certain operations of factors. They represent the powers in the things. One difference between primary and secondary qualities is that the former are perceived through more than one sense while the secondary qualities are perceived through only a single sense.

According to Locke, the objects have a third type of quality, simply called "powers". These qualities are the capacities which bodies have in virtue of their primary qualities. This power causes changes in bulk, figure, texture and motion of a body and it will affect our senses such that we can sense the difference. For instance, the power of fire to make lead fluid. They are also called tertiary qualities.

Check your progress I

Note: a). Use the space provided for your answer

b). Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit.

1. Examine Locke's refutation of the doctrine of innate ideas.

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2. Give a brief account of Locke's Doctrine of Ideas.

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1.4 LOKE'S REPRESENTATIVE THEORY OF PERCEPTION:

The distinction between primary and secondary qualities by Locke leads to his representative theory of perception. He maintains that the ideas of primary qualities are true copies of those qualities and they are caused by those qualities. This is not the case with secondary qualities. Of primary qualities Locke remarks in Book II Viii 15 "Ideas of primary qualities are resemblances of them and their patterns do really exist in the bodies themselves." Idea is the immediate object

of perception. It is the object of understanding when a man thinks. Sense experience is the fountain of all ideas. According to Locke, the material substance is passive and the mind is also passive. So, how does the material substance which is out there get in touch with the mind which is in the human organism? Locke solved this problem with the help of his representative theory of perception. According to this theory, the external object or material substance throws its own image into the mind through the respective sense organ. This image is called the idea and this idea acts as the 'copy' or representation of the external object. The ideas are spoken of as the tertium quid (third thing) between the mind and matter. The ideas represent the object. Consequently the mind perceives the external object through the medium of the idea which is a copy. Thus sensation stands as a symbol of external things. Sensation arises by bodily affection and it is representative of real things.

To verify the ideas as true copies, we should be able to see the original which is impossible on this theory. If we would see the qualities directly, then the ideas would be superfluous.

The representative theory is therefore extremely shaky. This representation leads to either, of the two conclusions:-

1. It leads to subjective idealism (like that of Berkeley) according to which ideas are the only objects of knowledge when we use the term 'copy' we mean resemblance. So how can one idea be a copy of that which is not an idea?

2. The second conclusion is that which is presented by the realists. The realists say that the representative theory is not correct since the mind knows the objects straight away and there is no need for ideas.

The other position that comes out due to representative theory is that of the sceptic who says that we do know that there are objects but do not know what exactly they are – a position taken by Hume.

What encouraged a theory like the representative theory? Firstly, the fact that our perceptions are relative dependent on the position in space from where the perceptual judgment is made. Secondly, the fact that one may have illusions due to certain factors also encouraged philosophers to fall back on a theory of representative perception with "idea" bridging the gulf between matter and mind. In fact, Locke's theory of ideas presupposes Descartes dualism of matter and mind, but Locke gave it an epistemological hue.

1.5 LOCKE'S THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE

Locke stresses that the central problem is to assess the nature and possible extent of human knowledge. In book IV he says, "With me, to know and to be certain is the same thing. What I know that I am certain of; and what I am certain of that I know. What reaches to knowledge I think may be called certainty, what comes short of certainty, I think cannot be knowledge." The simplest element of knowledge is for Locke a Judgment or an act of thought by which an

affirmation or denial is made. The distinction between these two kinds of judgments is one of degree. Locke is certain that there is nothing like doubt in knowledge. "What we once know, we are certain is so, and we may be secure that there are no latent proofs undiscovered, which may overthrow our knowledge or bring it in doubt." (IV 16.3)

Knowledge according to Locke's well-known definition consists in the 'perception of the connection and agreement or disagreement and repugnancy of any of our ideas." This power and the power to perceive the ideas themselves in our minds and apprehending the significance of signs constitutes the 'power of perception, which we call the Understanding." In this special form of perception, Locke finds absolute certainty, 'where this perception is, there is knowledge and where it is not there, though we may fancy, guess or believe, yet we always come short of knowledge.' In the various forms of judgments we 'think', 'take', 'suppose', or 'presume' our ideas to agree or disagree, but we do not perceive their agreement or disagreement.

Locke distinguishes two forms of knowledge. Viz., intuitive knowledge and demonstrative knowledge. Intuitive knowledge is that which we get by the mere consideration of the ideas themselves. This knowledge is self-evident. On the other hand, demonstrative knowledge is mediate. It depends on certain 'proofs' or 'interviewing ideas. "If we will reflect on our own ways of thinking, we shall find that sometimes the mind perceives the agreement or disagreement of two ideas immediately by themselves without the intervention of any other, and this, I think we may call intuitive knowledge." This is perceived by the mind just as the eye doth light. In this form of knowledge there is no place for doubt, hesitation or examination.

Turning to demonstrative knowledge we see that it is not always as reliable as Intuition. Demonstration, on every step is dependent upon intellectual intuition. Memory plays a part in this. Demonstrative knowledge consists of a series of intuitions in which the agreement or disagreement of each idea with its next is immediately perceived. In this way, a mediate relation is established between the first and the last idea. We definitely cannot perceive all the intuitive connection together and thus we fall back on memory. Locke traces the cause of all our errors to memory.

Locke sets forward four ways in which ideas may agree or disagree.

1. *Identity and Diversity*- the Mind perceives the agreement between an idea and itself and a disagreement in this respect between it and all others. For example, White is white and not black.

2. *Relation*- Mind perceives a relation between its ideas, For example, two triangles upon equal bases between two parallels are equal.

3. *Co-existence*- the Mind perceives 'a co-existence or non-co-existence in the same subject' For example, the specific gravity of gold and its solubility in aqua regia.

4. *Real existence*- The mind perceives actual real existence agreeing to any idea. Example, God is.

Locke implies that our object of knowledge is always in a proposition or an inference.

Knowledge of real existence is of course real knowledge but knowledge may be real without involving an affirmation of real existence. With only exception of substance, the reality of our knowledge is guaranteed if the ideas are of possible existents. The reality of all simple ideas is according to Locke, guaranteed by their very simplicity. Each of these ideas corresponds to some element or characteristic in the real world.

Considering the reality of complex ideas, Locke finds no difficulty except in so far as the ideas of substance is concerned. The ideas of relations and modes are formed by the free activity of the mind without any reference to any archetypes to which they confirm. What is non-contradictory is capable of real existence.

In the case of the substances, Locke thinks our claim to reality cannot be made easily and by a priori method. We may say that our knowledge of substances is real only when our ideas of these have been derived from experience. Locke says that we have three kinds of knowledge of real existence. Our knowledge of our own existence is intuitive, our knowledge of God's existence is demonstrative and our knowledge of things present to sense is sensitive (Book IV Chapter iii).

Even while talking of complex ideas as made up of simple ideas co-existing, he says we have no knowledge except (1) by intuition (2) by reason examining agreement or disagreement of two ideas (3) by sensation perceiving the existence of particular things (Book IV Chapter iii Sec.2).

Locke's ethical doctrines seem to be in anticipation of Bentham. It is hedonistic saying that things are good or evil in relation to pleasure and pain. He states that morality is capable of demonstration.

Locke makes a distinction between 'instructive' and 'trifling' propositions. Here Locke anticipates the Kantian classification of Judgments as analytical and synthetic.

Under trifling propositions Locke includes the purely identical propositions in which a term is predicted of itself. Although such propositions have certainty, yet they possess only 'verbal certainty and not instructive.' The Identical propositions just teach what everyone who is capable of discourse knows viz., that the same term is the same term and the same idea the same idea. Again, the analytical propositions can explain the meaning of a name to one who is ignorant but their function is confined to verbal elucidation.

Apart from verbal certainty Locke asserts the synthetic character of all instructive propositions. "We can know the truth and so may be certain in propositions which affirm something of another which is necessary consequence of its precise complex idea, but not contained in it. This is a real truth and conveys with it instructive real knowledge." By such propositions we are taught something more than what a word barely stands for.

For giving us real knowledge, the predicate of our propositions should carry beyond the idea for which its subject stands. His examination of ideas is a curious mixture of psychology and logic

together with the introduction of some metaphysics (more apparent in Book IV). Thus Locke traverses many by-paths in order to reach his goal of accounting human knowledge and its extent.

Locke gives three instances of insoluble problems-

1. That, things infinite are too large for our capacity. That is our finite minds cannot know the infinite things i.e., those things which it cannot know.

2. The essences also of substantial beings are beyond our ken'.

3. 'How, nature produces the several phenomenon and continues the species.'

As a matter of logic, we may be in a difficult position to say that certain things are insoluble, but practically speaking, there are certain problems which we know are insolvable for a considerable time to come.

1.6 CRITICISMS

1. The controversy of the innate ideas is a problem to the empiricists, particularly the universal and necessary principles. Also, modern psychology has shown that certain ideas may exist at the sub-conscious level.

2. The notion of substance raises several difficulties for Locke. By accepting that substance is something 'we know not what', we are accepting that we do not know the essence of either matter or mind. Just to take an example, when we say 'It is an apple' what is meant is that it is red, round, juicy, etc. But what is 'It' apart from these qualities. Common sense presumes that it is the 'thing' or 'substance' in which these qualities inhere. Since this is the knowledge we get from sense experience, Locke was forced to accept that substance is nothing but a combination of ideas of primary qualities and we only look for a support or base for these qualities. Locke did not have the courage to either affirm or deny firmly the existence of a material substance. He was also shaky on the question of spiritual substance. Not damaging the traditional theology which believes in a soul, he says that we must believe in a substance wherein thinking, knowing, doubting, and a power of moving, etc., do persist. After claiming that all our concepts originate from either sensation or reflection, the idea of a substance poses a great problem to Locke. Locke ceases to be a consistent empiricist by his inability to deny the notion of substance altogether. However, positively speaking, we have to admit that Locke should be credited for beginning the elimination of the metaphysical view of substance. He also begins the elimination of subjective factors from the real world by his concept of primary qualities which are measurable. In Chapter VI of Book III' Of the Names of substances', Locke is concerned to refute the scholastic doctrine of essence. We can conclude this unit by quoting Bertrand Russell who says that in spite of his merits and demerits, his views are valuable "Not only Locke's valid opinions but even his errors, were useful in practice." (History of Western Philosophy by Bertrand Russell – Page 585)

Check your progress II

Note: a). Use the space provided for your answer

b). Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit.

1. Critically examine Locke's representative theory of perception.
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2. Examine Locke's theory of knowledge and critically estimate if he is a consistent empiricist.
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1.7 LET US SUM UP

Locke can be called the founder of Empiricism, a theory according to which knowledge originates from sense – experience. He was against his predecessors who believed in innate ideas. According to Locke, the mind is a blank paper or a tabula rasa. Mind has the capacity to apprehend but it is wrong to say that certain propositions are already there. The material of knowledge comes from experience. Idea is the object of understanding when a man thinks. Our ideas are derived from two sources- Sensation and reflection which can be called the inner sense. Locke makes a distinction between simple ideas and complex ideas. Simple ideas are the most basic impressions and mind has the capacity to combine the simple ideas to form complex ideas. Complex ideas are of three kinds viz., that of substances, modes and relations. The notion of substance is implied because qualities have to inhere in something. The idea of modes is dependent on substance. The idea of relation is formulated through an act of comparison. Idea of a general proposition is through abstraction. One further important distinction brought out by Locke is the distinction between primary and secondary qualities. Primary qualities are solidity, shape, motion, rest and number and they are measurable and inseparable from the body. They are objective. Secondary qualities are color, auditory qualities, taste, scent and so on. They have a subjective side to them. Ideas of primary qualities are true copies of those qualities. This idea acts as a copy or representation of the external object. Thus Locke believed in the representative theory of perception. Coming to his theory of knowledge, Locke said only what is certain is what qualifies itself as knowledge. Knowledge consists in the perception of the connection and agreement or disagreement of our ideas. Knowledge is of three kinds (1) Intuitive Knowledge which is the ideal, infallible and self-evident (2) Demonstrative knowledge that is relational, analytic, concerning abstractions. Knowledge on morality, God's existence and mathematical knowledge belong to this category (3) Sensitive knowledge which is concerning co-existence, based on simple ideas of sense and complex ideas. Speaking of the limitation of knowledge, Locke says, "We can have knowledge no further than we have ideas."

1.8 KEY WORDS

Empiricism: the philosophical belief that all knowledge is derived from the experience of the senses

Idea: A concept that exists only in the mind or a mental image that reflects the reality.

1.9 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

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1.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check your progress I

1. Locke starts his philosophy by criticizing the 'doctrine of innate ideas'. Locke's arguments are mainly three: (i) if there are 'innate ideas' as the rationalists say, in the mind, and then all minds must have knowledge about them. But children, savages and 'idiots' do not claim to have such knowledge... (ii) Locke says that the rationalists cannot improve their position by saying that even though there are innate ideas in all minds, yet some minds may not have knowledge about them. It will be wrong to say that something is in the mind and yet the mind does not know of it. (iii) If the rationalists argue that even though the innate ideas are present in the mind, they require reason for their discovery, then they cannot be called 'innate.' Hence there are no such principles as innate ideas.

2. The material of knowledge comes from experience. Idea is the object of understanding when a man thinks. Our ideas are derived from two sources- Sensation and reflection which can be called the inner sense. Locke makes a distinction between simple ideas and complex ideas. Simple ideas are the most basic impressions and mind has the capacity to combine the simple ideas to form complex ideas. Complex ideas are of three kinds viz., that of substances, modes and relations. The notion of substance is implied because qualities have to inhere in something. The idea of modes is dependent on substance. The idea of relation is formulated through an act of comparison. Idea of a general proposition is through abstraction. One further important distinction brought out by Locke is the distinction between primary and secondary qualities. Primary qualities are solidity, shape, motion, rest and number and they are measurable and inseparable from the body. They are objective. Secondary qualities are color, auditory qualities, taste, scent and so on. They have a subjective side to them.

Check your progress II

1. According to Locke, the material substance is passive and the mind is also passive. The mind is within the human organism. The material substance is outside human organism. But the mind being passive cannot go out of the human organism to contact the external material substance nor can the material substance directly come to the mind. Hence the problem to explain the contact. Locke answers this with his theory of representative perception. According to this theory the external object gives its image to the mind through the sense organ. This is the idea which is the copy of the object. Therefore the perceptual knowledge is indirect. Sensation stands as symbol of external things. This theory implies epistemological dualism between matter and mind.

2**.** Coming to his theory of knowledge, Locke said only what is certain is what qualifies itself as knowledge. Knowledge consists in the perception of the connection and agreement or disagreement of our ideas. Knowledge is of three kinds (1) Intuitive Knowledge which is the ideal, infallible and self-evident (2) Demonstrative knowledge that is relational, analytic, concerning abstractions. Knowledge on morality, God's existence and mathematical knowledge belong to this category (3) Sensitive knowledge which is concerning co-existence, based on simple ideas of sense and complex ideas. Speaking of the limitation of knowledge, Locke says, "we can have knowledge no further than we have ideas."

UNIT 2 BERKELEY

Contents

2.0 OBJECTIVES

The main objective of this unit is to learn about the salient ideas of the British philosopher George Berkeley who followed John Locke and whose theory of knowledge became the focus of his criticism. In what follows we propose to study the arguments put forward by Berkeley to resolve some perennial and perplexing issues of epistemology and metaphysics. We will give an exposition of his theories of empiricism and subjective idealism and try to explain the meaning of his famous saying: *esse est percipi* meaning 'to be is to perceived.' In the course of discussion we shall also see how he refutes atheism, materialism, dualism and skepticism and shows how an omniscient and omnipresent God is the sole guarantor of the existence of an external world.

2.1. INTRODUCTION

As a critic of John Locke and precursor of David Hume, George Berkeley presented a profoundly original perspective on some of the crucial questions in epistemology and metaphysics. Denying the existence of matter with remarkable ingenuity Berkeley initiated an outlook to which philosophy has been indebted ever since. George Berkeley, an Irish man, was born in 1685. After his schooling in Kilkenny he entered Trinity College, Dublin in his sixteenth year where he had a brilliant career, first as a graduate student and later as a tutor and fellow, for about thirteen years. In those days Trinity was deeply impacted

by Newtonian science and the new philosophies of Descartes, Locke and Malebranche, and Berkeley with his keen intellect soon involved the young minds in scientific and philosophical deliberations.

Visiting London in 1713 he made an indelible impression upon the great literary men of the age like Swift, Steele, Addison and Pope. He devised a scheme for a college in Bermudas and for this purpose he went to America. But having spent three years (1728-31) in Rhode Island he relinquished the project and returned to England being excited about the future possibility of the new world. He wrote the poem containing the frequently quoted line, 'Westward the course of Empire takes its way' on account of which the town of Berkeley in California was called after him.

He married a young girl and said of her, 'I chose her for the qualities of her mind and her unaffected inclination to books. She goes with great cheerfulness to live a plain farmer's life and wears stuff of her own spinning wheel.'

In 1734 he became Bishop of Cloyne in the south of Ireland, where he led a retired life, engrossed with scholarly studies publishing books and articles from time to time but, above all, striving to ameliorate the wretched economic conditions of the peasants. When Berkeley's health began to fail he left Cloyne for Oxford at the age of sixty-seven and a year later in 1753 while sitting quietly at tea with his family he died. He was buried in Christ Church Chapel in Oxford.

Berkeley, with all his scholarship, lived a pious life and was described by Pope to possess every virtue under heaven. Alterbury said of Berkeley that he had, 'so much understanding, so much knowledge, so much innocence, and such humility I did not think had been the portion of any but angels till I saw this gentleman.'

Berkeley wrote extensively but his best work was over while he was still quite young. Some of his famous works are: *Commonplace Book* (1706-08), *A New theory of Vision* (1709), *The Principles of Human Knowledge* (1710), *The Dialogues of Hylas and Philonous* (1713), *Alciphron* (1732) and *Siris* (1744). His writings after the age of twenty-eight were of less consequence. Berkeley wrote with great elegance and lucidity.

The Problem of Berkeley: Berkeley belonged to an age in which under the influence of developments within science a tendency towards materialism and atheism was beginning to strengthen. A deeply religious man, Berkeley held out against such a disposition by declaring that the reality of the physical world is essentially spiritual for it is the manifestation of the activity of spirit and the goodness of God's Will. This spiritualism seemed so obvious to him that he did not find it necessary to defend it. It is the refutation of materialism that became essential to him and he executed the task by eliminating the inconsistencies involved in Lockean empiricism and taking it to its logical conclusion.

Check your progress I

Note: a). Use the space provided for your answer

b). Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit.

1. Write a short note on Berkeley's life and works.

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2. What were the main issues with which Berkeley grappled?
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2.2. REFUTATION OF MATERIALISM

Treating Locke's 'commonsense' philosophy as a point of departure, Berkeley developed the most provocative thesis in all philosophy. It is termed subjective idealism. It declares that there are no material substances, no physical objects, just minds and ideas in the minds. This astonishing position arises from Locke's thesis by three simple moves. First, it is in agreement with the argument that it is not possible to form an idea about a substance for all that can be known of a thing are its sensible properties. Secondly, the distinction between primary and secondary qualities as Locke had argued, a distinction between properties inherent in the objects themselves as opposed to properties that the objects cause in us, cannot be. And, thirdly, that once it has been established that all knowledge of the world, except that of one's existence and God, must be acquired through experience, the question of anything other than our experience does not arise. Berkeley argued that a consistent empiricist must turn down not only the causal theory of perception but reject the notion of physical objects as well since what we can experience is neither the objects themselves nor their causation, but only their effects in the form of the ideas they cause in us.

Making use of the basic tenets of empiricism laid down by Locke, Berkeley establishes idealism thereby refuting materialism and atheism. Following Locke's claim that sensation and reflection are intrinsic to all knowledge, and ideas are all we know, it becomes inconceivable to know a world of bodies i.e. a material world external to us. Our states of consciousness are limited to ourselves and any comparison of our ideas with these corporeal substances cannot be achieved for we are ignorant as to what they are and whether they are.

Berkeley further says that if an independent substance like matter and a world of pure space were to be possible, then an infinite, eternal and immutable reality would co-exist along with God thereby limiting Him or even tending to negate the very existence of God. The belief in matter forges the path towards atheism and materialism which can be avoided by disclaiming the premise that nurtures these tendencies – the assertion that matter exists.

2.3 REJECTION OF ABSTRACT IDEAS

In conformity with the practice of the preceding modern philosophers, Berkeley begins his *Principles of Human Knowledge* by cleansing the clutter of what he believed to be the false presuppositions of the past. Locke had discarded innate ideas and Berkeley, in advancing empiricism, further rejects abstract ideas. Locke started by declaring that only particular things exist but he further said that making a comparison of these things with each other it becomes viable to abstract common characteristics and assign names such as 'extension', 'colour', 'motion', 'man', 'animal' etc. He went so far as to maintain the existence of a 'substratum' which holds together the diverse qualities of material objects, although he did admit that a direct experience of such a substratum is not possible nor is it feasible to explore its true nature or the relation it bears to the ideas in our experience which we link it to. Berkeley insists that we can never experience any such abstract idea, and the terms by which they are referred to are simply names, for there is nothing in reality that corresponds to them.

Berkeley was agitated with philosophers who joined up with scientists in complicating relatively simpler things by confusing the common man in saying that the authentic means to apprehend reality was not through perception but through an insight into universal concepts. This in turn led to doubt regarding certainty of knowledge giving rise to skepticism.

The emphasis of the prevalent science of the day on the rationalistic approach to reality together with the Lockean conception of the unknown substance incited a revolt from Berkeley, a staunch defender of morals and religion. In a closely Cartesian mode science discards the ability of senses to deliver certain knowledge and thereby scientific laws and glorifies reason as the arbiter of truth. Berkeley expressed his complete dissent with a stance such as this and argued that scientists themselves made use of the empirical method though also continually discrediting it. He said that, 'starting from his awareness of *visibilia* and *tangibilia* he (the scientist) proceeds to the discovery of certain *invisibilia* and *intangibilia* underlying the world of senses. Eventually, he takes up the paradoxical position of asserting the real existence of the *invisiblia* and *intangibilia* and denying reality to *visibilia* and *tangibilia*, from awareness of which he started.' Berkeley was opposed to the scientist's subscription of a rationalist viewpoint, for the subsistence of physical sciences in the absence of observation was inconceivable. Berkeley's thought was an endeavour to redeem the harm done to religion and morals by skepticism and atheism by demonstrating the incongruity in belief in abstract ideas as well as matter.

Hume remarked that Berkeley's dismissal of abstract ideas was 'one of the greatest and most valuable discoveries that had been made of late years in the republic of letters.' Berkeley himself considered his rejection of abstract ideas as a vital component in the argument for immaterialism, for 'if we thoroughly examine (the belief in unperceived objects) it will perhaps be found at bottom to depend on the doctrine of abstract ideas.'

Berkeley's arguments were designed with the dual purpose of achieving an immediate target and a remote target. The immediate target lay in countering Locke's account of the ideas of determinable or generic things such as red as opposed to any particular shade of red or triangle as opposed to an isosceles triangle or a right angled triangle. The remote target was to dismantle any doctrine of concepts that allows that they are, in any sense, intrinsically universal. Berkeley was trying to work to completion the idea that everything is particular, whether it lies within the mind or outside it. In doing so his intention was to disengage his philosophy of the perennial problem of universals, which in some form or the other had been pivotal to scholastic metaphysics. Berkeley's theory declares that not only are there no forms, species or universals in the world but even concepts are, in themselves, purely particular. Locke, too, maintained particularism, but according to Berkeley he endorsed an incoherency inherent in it. Locke's particularist programme is confronted with a dilemma for the concept of red, for example, is by definition something that includes many things and is incapable of simply being a particular. Locke's defense is, "words become general by being made the signs of general ideas.' He grouped all mental contents, including concepts together as ideas and treated ideas as mental images. To further elaborate it: a mental image is quite clearly a particular, but a particular is incapable of accommodating a generic concept such as red or triangle. According to Berkeley, Locke's explanation to this is that such an image has an indefiniteness to it: 'Does it not require some pains and skill to form the general idea of a triangle… for it must be neither oblique nor rectangle, neither equilateral, equicrural nor scalenon, but all and none of these at once. In effect, it is something imperfect that cannot exist, an idea wherein some parts of several different and inconsistent ideas are put together.' So there is an indefiniteness implicit in this which manifests itself in two different ways. On the one hand the image is triangular without itself being either scalene or equilateral and, on the other, it is all of these incompatible properties at once, for it includes them all. In this way one has a particular object – the image – which both excludes all specific forms, and is a superimposition of the specific forms, thus encompassing just the right generality of things. Berkeley's objection is that one can have neither indeterminate particulars lacking a specific form, nor contradictory ones containing incompatible forms. Thus Locke's attempt to combine imagism with intrinsic generality fails.

To further clarify Berkeley's position, it is an impossibility to be able to perceive 'space' or 'bare extension' which is neither a line, nor a surface, nor a solid and can form no such ideas. To form an idea of a triangle which is neither oblique nor rectangle, neither equilateral, equicrural nor scalenon but all and none of these at once is inconceivable. The definition of a triangle as 'a plane surface comprehended by three right lines' ignoring the specific peculiarities of any particular triangle applies to all triangles, but this in no way implies that we actually have an abstract idea of triangle in general. Similarly, it is not possible to form an abstract idea of colour in general that is neither blue nor green nor orange nor any other determinate colour.

Strictly conforming to the empirical doctrine that all knowledge arises from the simple ideas of sensation and reflection Berkeley establishes the impossibility of abstract ideas for they appear in neither. He further says that any word used to designate common features of particular objects of our experience can only be a name and not the description of a fact. He called this theory nominalism that claimed that abstract ideas or universals are just names. Berkeley was of the view that the use of words that correspond to nothing in actual experience has only contributed to disorientation on account of confusing words with realities. Berkeley's suggestion is to attend to ideas actually experienced. He says, 'No one can be led into an error by considering his own naked undisguised ideas.'

Check your progress II

Note: a). Use the space provided for your answer

b). Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit.

1. How does Berkeley prove the immateriality of substance?.

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2. What did Berkeley wish to achieve by his rejection of abstract ideas?

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2.4 ESSE EST PERCIPI

Berkeley's astounding and provocative statement was that 'to be is to be perceived,' or esse est percipi, which entailed that if something were not perceived, it would not exist. This most naturally raises the question whether it exists when it is not being perceived. For Berkeley the entire issue depends on how we understand or interpret the word 'exists'. He writes, 'The table I write on I say exists; that is, I see it and feel it: and if I were out of my study I should say it existed; meaning thereby that if I were in my study I might perceive it, or that some other spirit actually does perceive it.' By this he means to say that there can be no imaginable situation where the term 'exists' is put to use without simultaneously assuming that a mind is constantly perceiving it.

The impossibility of an unperceived body follows from the idea of body as held by Locke. A body according to Locke is a solid, extended, figured substance possessing the power of motion, a certain colour, weight, taste, smell and sound. This latter set of qualities are simply the effects of the body that are produced in the perceiving subject and hence are present in the perceiver and do not reside in the body itself. They are not inherent in the body and are for that matter to be called secondary qualities. On the other hand are the qualities that are inherent in the substance, i.e. the body itself. These are primary qualities. Extension, figure, solidity, motion and rest are such primary qualities. Berkeley disagrees with

this distinction drawn by Locke and says that the so called primary qualities are just like secondary qualities. He says that the ideas of solidity and extension which Locke claims to be of primary qualities, are acquired through the sense of touch and become sensations in my mind much like the secondary qualities. It is not possible to disentangle the idea of extension from the idea of colour and other such secondary qualities. Besides, an extended thing which is not at the same time coloured cannot be perceived. The primary qualities are thus inseparably integrated with the secondary qualities making it impossible to cull out the secondary qualities leaving behind an extended solid substance, which is just that and nothing else. If we examine an object of our knowledge, a table, for instance, we do not find that its shape is 'out there' while its color is 'in here.' Thus the distinction that Locke makes between primary and secondary qualities is redundant. What is seen is not the coloured and the extended but the coloured extended object.

Locke had said that substance, or matter, supports or acts as a substrate to the qualities we sense. In Berkeley's First Dialogue between Hylas and Philonous, Hylas expresses Locke's view that 'I find it necessary to suppose a material substratum, without which (qualities) cannot be conceived to exist.' Philonous answers that the word substratum has no clear meaning for him and he needed to 'know any sense, literal or not literal, that you understand in it.' Hylas conceded his inability to assign a definite meaning to the term substratum, saying, 'I declare I know not what to say.' From this it is concluded that 'The absolute existence of unthinking things (matter) are empty words carrying no meaning.' This is however not to say that sensible things do not possess reality but only that sensible things exist only insofar as they are perceived. This in other words means that only ideas exist. To this Berkeley adds that 'I hope that to call a thing 'idea' makes it no less real.' He says that whatever we see, feel, hear, or any way conceive or understand, remains as secure as ever, and is as real as ever. To this the question arises as to why should one say that only ideas, instead of things exist? This, Berkeley says, was to eliminate 'the futile concept of matter:' 'I do not argue against the existence of any one thing that we can apprehend, either by sense or reflection…. The only thing whose existence we deny is that which philosophers call matter or corporeal substance.'

Since it was the science of his day, in particular, physics that leaned so heavily on the notion of matter, Berkeley realized the necessity to challenge its basic assumptions and methods. What agitated Berkeley most was that scientists made use of general and abstract terms as though they had reference to real entities, in particular to an underlying material substance in nature. Berkeley protested that we never encounter such a substance, for substance is an abstract idea, a misleading inference drawn from observed qualities. He said, 'As several of these (qualities) are observed to accompany each other, they come to be marked by one name, and so to be reputed as one *thing*. Thus for example, a certain colour, taste, smell, figure and consistence having been observed to go together, are accounted as a distinct thing, signified by the name 'apple'; other collections or ideas constitute a stone, a tree, a book and the like sensible things.' He aspired to clarify the approach of scientific language wherein terms such as force, gravity and causality refer to nothing more than an assembly of ideas, which our minds derive from sensation.

The more Berkeley examined the functioning of his mind and grappled with the relation of his ideas with objects outside his mind the more certain he became that no object independent of his ideas could be discovered. He said 'when we do our utmost to conceive the existence of external bodies we are all the while contemplating our own ideas.' He said there is nothing out there of which we do not have some perception.

As a clinching argument Berkeley remarked that 'an idea can be like nothing but an idea,' and so when Locke says that ideas and real things are different; ideas being mental and real things material and mental and material being disparate in nature, there is a contradiction evident in his views. Berkeley says if mind and matter are unlike each other and if knowledge depends upon the likeness of the unlike then it

is an absurdity. For Berkeley if my ideas are like anything outside my mind, it must be another idea in another mind. Since he had refuted Locke's distinction between primary and secondary qualities, which is the very essence of Locke's thought, he has in effect refuted the entire system of representative realism.

2.5 GOD AND THE EXISTENCE OF THINGS

A thing, says Berkeley, must needs be experienced in order to exist. This means if I see an object then it exists as I see it. But then the question remains if I do not see an object how would I know whether it exists or not and how then shall we account for the seeming reality of objects when they are not observed since Berkeley had neither denied the existence of things nor their order in nature. To this Berkeley responds by saying, 'When I deny sensible things an existence out of the mind…There is… some other mind wherein they exist during the intervals between the times of my perceiving them.' And because all human minds are intermittently diverted from things 'there is an omnipresent eternal Mind, which knows and comprehends all things, and exhibits them to our view in such a manner and according to such rules as he himself hath ordained, and are by us termed the Laws of Nature.' The existence of things, in other words, depends upon the existence of God, and God is the cause of the orderliness of things in nature.

Berkeley says that in attempting to describe reality as I experience it, I realize that there are other persons like myself who are endowed with minds, much like my own mind, and just as I possess ideas other persons too have ideas in their possession. But above and distinct from my mind and the minds of other finite beings there is a greater mind and that is God's Mind. The regularity in nature is on account of God's Ideas. He further elaborates that the ideas that occupy the minds of human beings are God's ideas, which He communicates to humans. Thus the perceptions made on a day to day basis by humans are caused by God and not by matter or substance. Also, it is God who coordinates all experiences of finite minds, assuring regularity and dependability in experience which, in turn, enables us to think in terms of the 'laws of nature.' However there lies a disparity between the orderly and neat arrangement of ideas that belong to Gods mind and those which are transmitted from God's mind to the minds of human beings on account of the difference in competence between the divine and the finite mind. The ultimate reality is thus spiritual and not material in nature and the continued existence of objects when we do not perceive them is explained by God's continuous perception of them. Berkeley applies a unique interpretation of causation when he suggests that the ideas in the minds of human beings emanate from God. He did not deny that we have an insight into causation but was resolute that our sense data do not disclose to us a unique causal power. It is just on account of our mental operations those causal connections are understood.

2.6 REFUTATION OF DUALISM, ATHEISM AND SKEPTICISM

Berkeley maintains that his idealistic theory eliminates several obscure and abstruse questions of philosophy. Apart from reducing human knowledge to knowledge of *ideas* and *spirit* it discards the dualism of objects in the mind (intelligible objects) and objects outside the mind (real objects). This dualism, he said, was the root of skepticism for how can we know that the things which are perceived conform to the things which are not perceived. If colour, figure, motion, extension etc. refer to things outside the mind, only appearances are perceived, not the real qualities of things. This distrust of the senses leads to skepticism which Berkeley believes is dispelled by the idealistic theory.

Berkeley held that the doctrine of matter was responsible for the prevalence of atheism and in discarding materialism the entire structure of atheism would collapse. He says if a self-existent, inert, unthinking substance is the origin of all things then naturally freedom, intelligence and design will have to be excluded from the formation of the universe. Berkeley also felt that idolatry persists on account of upholding matter as a permanent reality. If objects of sense are merely a cluster of sensations in the mind then it would be ridiculous for human beings to worship their own ideas. Further still he said if material

substance were to be stripped from what is seen and felt by every ordinary person as a body, which happens to be a combination of qualities or ideas, then every objection to bodily resurrection comes to nothing. Berkeley was convinced that by simply eliminating the hypothesis of matter, atheism, idolatry and irreligion would be empty of any support or justification.

Berkeley was confident that through his doctrine of *esse est percipi* he had convincingly undermined the position of philosophical materialism and religious skepticism. Building upon Locke's empiricism Berkeley made the decisive point that the human mind reasons only and always about particular sense experiences and that abstract ideas refer to no analogous reality. Hume, who later carried empiricism to its fullest expression, spoke of Berkeley as 'a great philosopher (who) had disputed the received opinion in this particular, and has asserted that all general ideas are nothing but particular ones…. I look upon this to be one of the greatest and most valuable discoveries that have been made of late years in the republic of letters.'

Check your progress III

Note: a). Use the space provided for your answer
b). Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit.

1. Did Berkeley accept Locke's distinction between primary and secondary qualities?

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2. What does Berkeley mean by *esse est percipi*?

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2.7 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we have tried to understand the chief tenets of Berkeley's philosophy. Berkeley was an empiricist and his philosophy is called subjective idealism. He refuted the doctrines of the reality of material substances and abstract ideas. He gave his famous theory of 'esse est percipi' which meant that things are not out there in an external world to be perceived by man but are in man's perception of them. In other words, ideas of things in minds are their existence. Berkeley's views about the existence of God also came under discussion because according to him an external world exists only in so far as it is perceived by an eternally perceiving God. This was followed by Berkeley's refutation of the theories of dualism. atheism and skepticism.

2.8 KEY WORDS

Empiricism: A type of theory in epistemology that says that our five senses are the source of our knowledge and that there is no knowledge before or beyond the experience.

Subjective Idealism: The philosophical theory that says that ordinary physical objects would exist if and only if they are experienced. All reality is mind-dependent which means it either exists in human or God's mind.

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2.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answers to Check your progress I

1) George Berkeley was an Irishman who was born in 1685. He joined Trinity college, Dublin when he was sixteen years old. He had a brilliant career, first as a graduate student and later as a tutor and fellow for about thirteen years. In 1734 he was pronounced bishop of Cloyne where he involved himself in scholarly work, publishing books and articles periodically. Berkeley wrote extensively, some of his main works being: Commonplace Book, A New Theory of Vision, The Princples of Human Knowledge, The Dialogues of Hylas and Philonous, Aliciphron dn Sins. When Berkeley's health suffered he went to Oxford where he died in1753. He was considered by all known to him as a very pious and gentle being.

2) During Berkeley's time the tendencies towards atheism and materialism were strengthening under the influence of contemporary developments within science. Berkeley, who was a deeply religious man, contested those ideas by declaring that the reality of the physical world is basically spiritual in nature for it is the product of the goodness of God's will He eliminated the inconsistencies of Locke's empiricism through his refutation of material substance thereby developing his own distinctive philosophical theory.

Answers to Check your progress II

1. Berkeley proved the impossibility of material substances by arguing that all that can be known of a thing are its sensible properties and the idea of a substance does not qualify for this. Further, he rejected Locke's distinction between primary and secondary qualities where the former were treated as being inherent in the objects while the latter were said to be those that caused the sensations in us. He said that all knowledge of the world must be acquired through experience and the question of the existence of anything that cannot be experienced does not arise.

2) Berkeley had a dual purpose in refuting the abstract ideas. One was to counter Locke's account of ideas of generic things such as 'red' as opposed to any particular shade of red or 'triangle' as opposed to a particular type of triangle like an isosceles or right angle triangle. His other purpose was to prove the theory that everything was particular. For this he disproved the old doctrine of concepts as being intrinsically universal. He said that there are no forms, species or universals and the concepts too are particulars.

Answers to Check your progress III

1) According to Locke a body has certain qualities. Some qualities like color, sound, taste, smell are simply the effects of the body that are produced in the perceiving subject and hence are present to the perceiver and do not reside in the body itself. Such qualities are called secondary qualities. On the other hand are qualities that are inherent in the body such as extension, figure, solidity, motion and rest. These are called primary qualities. Berkeley does not agree with this distinction saying that the so called primary qualities are no different from the secondary qualities in so far as they too are acquired through the sense of touch and sight etc. and become sensations in much the same way as do the colour, sweet etc. Beside, the primary and secondary qualities are quite integrated into each other making it impossible to separate them. For what we perceive is not the colour or extension of an object but a coloured, extended object.

2) In saying 'to be is to be perceived' Berkeley means that if I see an object then it exists as I see it. But the question remains how I would know an object to exist when I do not see it. To this Berkeley answers that it would still exist because it is being perceived by some other mind. And if there is no human mind to perceive an object that does not mean it has ceased to exist for an omnipresent mind i.e. God would be there to perceive it and thereby to ensure its existence.

UNIT 3 **HUME**

Contents

3.0. OBJECTIVES

In this unit we have the main dimensions of the philosophy of David Hume in nutshell. Of course it is not exhaustive and one is advised to read the recommended bibliography given at the end of the chapter. However after reading this lesson, one will be able to know Hume's

- Science of human nature,
- Causal relations,
- Two fundamental beliefs,
- Skepticism,
- His concept of passion, will, religion, politics and morality.

3.1. INTRODUCTION

Born on April 26, 1711, in Edinburgh, Scotland, David Hume attended Edinburgh University from the ages of eleven to fifteen, in which city he remained to study law. Finding this not to his taste, Hume read widely in ancient and modern literature, improved his knowledge of science and languages, and devoted himself above all to philosophy. Hume returned to England in 1737 with the intention of publishing the first two books, **of the Understanding** and **of the Passions**, of the work he decided to call **A Treatise of Human Nature: Being an Attempt to Introduce the Experimental Method of Reasoning into Moral Subjects.** However, reviewers were mostly hostile and uncomprehending. Having wisely taken the precaution to publish anonymously, Hume soon recovered from his failure and decided to apply his immense literary gifts to the more widely accessible medium of the essay. Hume presented a selection of the doctrines of the Treatise with some previously unpublished material in the form of **Philosophical**

Essays concerning Human Understanding in 1748. A sea change in the reception of Hume's theory of understanding occurred in 1783, when Immanuel Kant declared that Hume's treatment of cause and effect was responsible for awakening him from his dogmatic slumber.

3.2. HUME'S SCIENCE OF HUMAN NATURE

Hume believed that the science of human nature affords fundamental insight not only into such domains as morals, aesthetics, and politics but even Mathematics, Natural Philosophy, and Natural Religion. Human nature is thus the 'capital or centre' of the sciences. His point is that the experimental method which has been applied with such success in natural science should be applied also in the study of man.

3.3. ELEMENTS OF SCIENCE OF HUMAN NATURE

Perception

Hume considered human nature always and only in terms of perceptions. Perception refers to all objects insofar as they are immediately present to one by consciousness, be it in sensation, reflexion, or thought. Reflexion is Hume's catch-all term for the objects present to internal sense or inward sentiment, including passions, emotions, desires, volitions, and mental operations generally. Hume derives all the contents of the mind from experience and he divides perceptions into impressions and ideas.

Impressions and Ideas

Impressions are the immediate data of experience, such as sensations. Ideas are the copies or faint images of impressions in thinking and reasoning. If I look at my room, I receive an impression of it. Hume describes the difference between impressions and Ideas in terms of vividness. It is under impressions that we comprehend all our sensations, passions and emotions. This does not mean that impressions always make a forceful impression, for they can be as gentle as altogether to escape notice. Nor does it mean that they are vivid in the usual sense, since seeing a gray blur on an otherwise black night (visual sensation) is still more vivid than a brilliantly lit, detailed image in a day dream (visual idea).

Impressions of Sensation and Reflection

Impressions can be divided into impressions of sensation and impressions of reflection. The first kind arises in the soul originally from unknown causes. The impressions of reflections are derived in great measure from ideas. Suppose that I have an impression of cold, accompanied by pain. A 'copy' of this impression remains in the mind after the impression has ceased. This 'copy' is called an 'idea', and it can produce new impressions of aversion, for example, which are impressions of reflection. In the long run, therefore, impressions are prior to ideas.

Simple and Complex Perceptions

Hume makes a distinction between simple and complex perceptions. The perception of a red patch is a simple impression, and the thought (image) of the red patch is a simple idea. But if I

stand on the hill of Montmartre and survey the city of Paris, I receive a complex impression of the city, of roofs, chimneys, towers and streets. And when I afterwards think of Paris and recall this complex impression, I have a complex idea. In this case the complex idea corresponds in some degree to the complex impression; though it does not do so exactly and adequately. But let us take another case. 'I can imagine to myself a city as the New Jerusalem, whose pavement is gold, and walls are rubies, though I never saw any such'. In this case my complex idea does not correspond to a complex impression. We cannot say, therefore, with truth that to every idea there is an exactly corresponding impression.

The Idea of Substance

Hume says that the idea of Substance cannot be derived from impressions of sensation. If it is perceived by the eyes, it must be a colour; if by the ears, a sound; if by the palate, a taste. But nobody would say that substance is a colour, or a sound or a taste. If, therefore, there is an idea of substance, it must be derived from impressions of reflection. But these can be resolved into our passions and emotions. And those who speak of substances do not mean by the word passions or emotions. Hence the idea of substance is derived, therefore, neither from impressions of sensation nor from impressions of reflection. Thus, he comes to the conclusion that we have no idea of substance apart from a collection of particular qualities. For instance, if a child comes across the word 'skyscraper', he may ask his father what it means. He can explain its meaning by definition or description. That is to say, he can explain to the child the meaning of the word 'skyscraper' by employing words such as 'house', 'tall', 'storey', and so on. But the child cannot understand the meaning of the description unless he understands the meanings of the terms employed in the descriptions. In Hume's language, the child must be given 'impressions'.

Rejection of Abstract Ideas

In the first place, abstract ideas are individual or particular in themselves. For instance, the precise length of a line is not distinguishable from the line itself. We cannot form a general idea of a line without any length at all. Nor can we form the general idea of a line possessing all possible lengths. Secondly, every impression is determinate and definite. Since an idea is an image or copy of an impression, it must itself be determinate and definite, even though it is fainter than the impression from which it is derived. Thirdly, everything which exists must be individual. No triangle, for instance, can exist, which is not a particular triangle with its particular characteristics. To postulate an existent triangle which is at the same time all and none of the possible kinds and sizes of triangle would be an absurdity. But what is absurd in fact and reality is absurd also in idea. He thus agrees with Berkeley that there are no abstract general ideas.

3.4. CAUSAL RELATIONS

Causal relations are the centerpiece of Hume's theory of understanding. This is because, of all relations linking ideas to impressions, none approaches cause and effect in its power to produce belief. If I see smoke coming into the room, my belief in the reality of the unseen fire causing it is as great as in the smoke itself. It is to be noted that though causation be a philosophical relation, as implying contiguity, succession and constant conjunction, yet it is only so far as it is a natural relation and produces a union among our ideas that we are able to reason upon it or draw any inference from it.

Causation as a Natural Relation

The word 'relation' signifies the quality or qualities by which two ideas are connected together in the imagination. These qualities are resemblance, contiguity and the causal relation, and Hume calls them natural relations**.** In the case of natural relations, therefore, ideas are connected with one another by the natural force of association, so that the one tends naturally or by custom to recall the other. In causation considered as a natural relation there is, indeed, an inseparable connection between ideas.

Causation as a Philosophical Relation

There is a certain over-lapping between natural and philosophical relations and this is not due to any oversight on Hume's part. He explains, for example, that no objects can be compared unless there is some resemblance between them. Resemblance is, therefore, a relation without which no philosophical relation can exist. Hume enumerates seven types of philosophical relation: resemblance, identity, relations of time and place, proportion in quantity or number, degrees in any quality, contrariety and causation. Causation, considered as a philosophical relation, is reducible to such relations of space and time as contiguity, temporal succession and constant conjunction or togetherness.

Contiguity

Objects considered as causes or effects are contiguous. He does not mean, of course, that the things which we consider to be causes and effects are always immediately contiguous; for there may be a chain or series of causes between thing A, which we call a cause, and thing Z, which we call an effect. But it will be found that A and B are contiguous, B and C, and so on, even though A and Z are not themselves immediately contiguous. He does not regard spatial contiguity as essential to the idea of causation.

Temporal Priority

Hume argues that the cause must be temporally prior to the effect. Experience confirms this. But if all effects were perfectly contemporary with their causes, it is plain there would be no such thing as succession, and all objects must be coexistent. This is, however, patently absurd. Therefore, an effect cannot be perfectly contemporary with its cause, and that a cause must be temporally prior to its effects.

Idea of Constant Conjunction

The idea of constant conjunction is the idea of regular recurrence of two kinds of similar events according to a constant pattern of contiguity and succession. But we cannot, in Hume's opinion, derive the idea of necessary connection from observation of regular sequences or causal connections. We must say, therefore, either that there is no such idea or that it must be derived from some subjective source. Hume cannot adopt the first of these alternatives; for he has already laid stress on the importance of the idea of necessary connection. He must therefore adopt the second alternative; this is in fact what he does. To say that the idea of necessary connection is derived from a subjective source is to say that it is derived from some impression of reflection. Observation of the repetition does, however, produce new impression in the mind.

Check Your Progress I

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer
b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit

1) Explain the meaning of "reflexion."

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2) Why does Hume reject abstract ideas?

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3.5. FUNDAMENTAL MAXIMS

According to Hume, there are certain fundamental customary beliefs which dominate human life and condition our specific beliefs: belief in the continuous and independent existence of bodies, and the belief that everything which begins to be has a cause.

Whatever Begins to Exist must have a Cause

The maxim that whatever begins to exist must have a cause of its existence is neither intuitively certain nor demonstrable. If this principle is neither intuitively certain nor demonstrable, our belief in it must arise from experience and observation. It means that we frequently experience the conjunction of two objects, say, flame and the sensation which we call heat, and we remember that these objects have appeared in a regular recurrent order of contiguity and succession. We always tacitly presuppose the uniformity. This supposition that the future resembles the past is not founded on arguments of any kind, but is derived entirely from habit or custom.

Belief in the Independent and Continuous Existence of Bodies

According to Hume, we are confined to the world of perceptions and we cannot, therefore, ever conceive what objects would be like, or are like, apart from our perceptions. It is important to understand that Hume does not intend to deny the existence of bodies independently of our perceptions but we are unable to prove that. In the first place the senses cannot be the source of the notion that things continue to exist when they are unperceived. For in order for this to be the case, the senses would have to operate when they have ceased to operate. And this would involve a contradiction. Nor do the senses reveal to us bodies which are distinct from our perceptions. In the second place it is not reason which induces us to believe in the continuous and distinct existence of bodies. Whatever convincing arguments philosophers may fancy they can produce to establish the belief of objects independent of the mind, it is obvious these arguments are known but to very few; and that it is not by them that children, peasants, and the greatest part of mankind are induced to attribute objects to some impressions and deny them to others.

Imagination

Our belief in the continued and independent existence of bodies must be due, therefore, neither to the senses nor to the reason or understanding but to the imagination. The question thus arises, which are the features of certain impressions that work on the imagination and produce our persuasion of the continued and distinct existence of bodies? Hence we have to look elsewhere of the peculiar features of certain impressions, which work upon the imagination.

Constancy and Coherence

Hume mentions two such peculiar features, namely, constancy and coherence. Those mountains and houses and trees which lie at present under my eye have always appeared to me in the same order; and when I lose sight of them by shutting my eyes or turning my head, I soon after find them return upon me without the least alteration. Here we have constantly recurring similar impressions. But, obviously, bodies often change not only their positions but also their qualities. However, even in their changes there is coherence. When I return to my chamber after an hour's absence, I find not my fire in the same situation in which I left it; but then I am accustomed, in other instances, to see a like alteration produced in a like time, whether I am present or absent, near or remote. This coherence, therefore, in their changes, is one of the characteristics of external objects, as well as their constancy. But though coherence may give rise to the supposition of the continuous existence of objects, the idea of constancy is needed to explain our supposition of their distinct existence; that is, of their independence of our perceptions. Reflection, however, shows us that the perceptions are not the same. Hence we can feign a continued existence of objects. Yet we do not merely feign this; we believe it.

Memory

According to Hume, belief in the continuous and independent existence of bodies, and the belief that everything which begins to be has a cause can be explained by reference to memory. Memory presents us with a great number of instances of similar perceptions which recur at different times after considerable interruptions. His point is that we have an inevitable and ineradicable propensity to believe in the continuous and independent existence of bodies. This propensity produces belief and all attempts to give a rational justification of this belief are failures. In short, natural belief inevitably, and rightly, prevails.

3.6. SKEPTICISM

Was Hume a skeptic? If a skeptic is one who doubts or even rejects the use of reason as a means of arriving at truth, then Hume was no skeptic. However, Hume recognized that many beliefs are pointless to doubt because one is literally incapable of disbelieving them or not taking them for granted in all one's reasoning, including such philosophically contentious topics as the existence of external objects and the self, space and time, and the necessity of a cause to every beginning of existence. What makes Hume a skeptic is that he supposed one's ineliminable beliefs skeptically unassailable not because they are founded on reasons too strong to be undermined by skeptical argument but because they are not founded on reasons at all.

The Immateriality of the Soul

Hume suggests that the question whether perceptions inhere in a material or an immaterial substance is a meaningless question, in the sense that we can attach no clear meaning to it and

cannot, therefore, answer it. It may be said that we have an idea of substance because we can define it as something which may exist by itself. However the definition will not serve to distinguish substance from accident or soul from perceptions. Perceptions cannot inhere in a body. In order to do so, they would have to be present locally. But it is absurd to speak of passion, for example, being situated locally in relation to a moral reflection, as being above or below it, to the right or left of it. It does not follow, however, that perceptions can inhere in an immaterial substance. The conclusion which he draws is that the question concerning the substance of the soul is absolutely unintelligible.

Idea of the Self

Hume is obviously compelled to deny that we have any idea of the self as distinct from our perceptions. All our perceptions are distinguishable and separable, and we can discover no self apart from or underlying these perceptions. According to Hume, we tend to confuse the two ideas of identity and of a succession of related objects. For example, an animal body is an aggregate, and its component parts are constantly changing: in the strict sense it does not remain self-identical. But the changes are normally gradual and cannot be perceived from moment to moment. Further, the parts are related to one another, enjoying a mutual dependence on and connection with one another. The mind thus tends to neglect the interruptions and to ascribe persistent self-identity to the aggregate. Now, in the case of the human mind there is a succession of related perceptions. Further, our perceptions are mutually related by means of the causal relation. It is only by memory that we are able to be aware of the causal relations between our perceptions. Hence memory is to be accounted the chief source of the idea of personal identity.

3.7. PASSIONS

Hume used the word passion to cover all emotions and affects without confining it to unregulated bursts of emotion. The passions are divided by Hume into direct and indirect passions.

Direct Passions

Direct passions are those which arise immediately from the experience of pleasure or pain; and Hume mentions desire, aversion, grief, joy, hope, fear, despair and security. The pain of gout, for instance, produces direct passions. Hume also mentions direct passions which arise from a natural impulse or instinct, which is perfectly unaccountable. Of this kind is the desire of punishment to our enemies and of happiness to our friends; hunger, lust, and a few other bodily appetites.

Indirect Passions

Indirect passions do not arise simply from feelings of pleasure or pain; they arise from what Hume calls a double relation of impressions and ideas. The most fundamental indirect passions are pride, humility and love, hatred, but they also include ambition, vanity, envy, pity, and malice. What differentiates love and hate from pride and humility is simply the object of the passion. For just as I take pride in my body or mind, or some object, insofar as it possesses some pleasing quality and has a strong relation to me- my looks, my brilliance, the imposing house I own, the beautiful painting I created, the coveted office to which I have been elected, and so on- so too, I love or esteem someone else from precisely the same causes. Otherwise, these passions exhibit the same double relational structure. The object of pride and humility is the self.

Check Your Progress II

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer
b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit

1) What are the two fundamental beliefs?

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2) Was Hume a skeptic? Explain.
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3.8. WILL

Hume speaks of the will as one of the immediate effects of pleasure and pain. He describes it as the internal impression we feel and are conscious of, when we knowingly give rise to any new motion of our body or new perception of our mind. Volitions, for Hume, are feelings, felt excitations to mental or physical action. They are full-fledged perceptions (impressions of reflexion) in their own right, distinct from all others under the separability principle, capable of existing in complete isolation. As such, they are completely indefinable: like flavors. According to Hume, passion actuates the will. Reason can never directly oppose, curb, or in any way act as a counterweight to the actuation of the will by passions. It can do so only indirectly, by giving rise to some new passion, as when it informs one that the object of one's desire is unattainable, or attainable only by a different course of action, whereupon it will produce an aversion to counter, or a desire to override, the existing passion. Passions are therefore never rational in and of themselves; and since experience shows that only passions can actuate the will, reason is, and ought to be the slave of the passions.

Denial of Free Will

According to Hume, a free will would be one that acted blindly and randomly, unresponsive to one's desired and heedless of one's beliefs. Thus, from his standpoint, it is fortunate that experience shows one will not to be free, but instead to act only when necessitated to do so by some passion, be it calm or violent, beneficial or destructive, responsive or unresponsive to the deliverance of reason. The will is free as a cause to the extent the actions of one's body and mind are subject to its control, which is, causally necessitated by it. This is the freedom one would lose if one's body or mind became unresponsive to the will or responded only to some external control. By contrast, the will is free as an effect only if its action is not necessitated by any cause, including one's own passions and beliefs, and so acts at random. The latter is the kind of freedom no one wants and, on the evidence of experience, no one has.

Problem of freedom

Hume admits that the problem of freedom is to a certain extent a linguistic problem, in the sense that though freedom must be denied if it is defined in such a way as to exclude necessity, it can be asserted if it is defined in another way. For instance, if freedom is identified with spontaneity, there is freedom. For it is clear that a great number of actions proceed from a man as a rational agent without any external coercion. For, Hume maintains, if so-called free actions are due to chance and are not caused by the agent, it would be unjust for God or man to hold human beings responsible for bad and vicious actions and to pass moral condemnation on the agents. Having reduced freedom to spontaneity, Hume attempts to prove the truth of two propositions. The first proposition is that reason alone can never be a motive to any action of the will, and the second is that reason can never oppose passion in the direction of the will. It is obvious that when any object causes pleasure or pain we feel a consequent emotion of attraction or aversion and are impelled to embrace or avoid the object in question. But the impulse which governs our actions is only directed by reason; it does not arise from it. Thus Hume concludes that if reason has no immediate influence of its own, it cannot withstand any principle, such as passion, which does possess efficacy. In asserting this view of the subordination of the reason to the passions Hume held that reason alone cannot affect conduct and that it is the passion or affections which are the fundamental springs of action.

3.9. RELIGION

At a fairly early age, Hume discarded the Calvinistic doctrines which he had been taught in boyhood. Once he had shed his initial Calvinism, religion was for him a purely external phenomenon and in this sense he was an irreligious man. Furthermore, he came to the conclusion that the influence of religion was far from beneficial and religion impairs morality by encouraging people to act for motives other than love of virtue for its own sake. According to Hume, religion originated in such passions as fear of disaster and hope of advantage or betterment when these passions are directed towards some invisible and intelligent power. In the course of time men attempted to rationalize religion and to find arguments in favour of belief. Hume refused to recognize the validity of metaphysical arguments for God's existence; that is to say, he refused to allow that the existence of God is demonstrable. It is plain from the **Dialogues** that he disliked any form of the argument which is based on principally on an analogy between human artificial constructions and the world. The fact of the matter seems to be that Hume set out, as a detached observer, to examine the rational credentials of theism, maintaining in the meantime that religion rests on revelation, a revelation in which he personally certainly did not believe. The result of his investigation was to reduce the religious hypothesis to a meager a content that it is difficult to know what to call it. Its content is ambiguous, and Hume meant it to be ambiguous.

The Idea of God

Hume professed agreement with Locke that the idea of an infinitely intelligent, wise, and good Being has its origin in one's reflecting on the operations of our own mind, and augmenting,

without limit, those qualities of goodness and wisdom. Nevertheless, he also maintained that the attempt to realize this definition in an idea is fraught with difficulty. Thus Hume ended up on the same side as the most pious monotheists in insisting on the incomprehensibility of the nature of the divine.

Religious Belief

Having established that one has no clear idea of God to underwrite religious discourse or any rational basis for religious belief, Hume concluded that one believes in God and accepts the proofs of purported revelation from the same causes that lead one to form other beliefs not proportioned to experience (un-philosophical probabilities). The implication is that, however widespread a religious belief may be, it is not imposed on one by human nature, and so is not irresistible in the way that belief in causes, continued distinct existents, and the self are. Hume did not deny that religious belief can ever be agreeable or useful, either for the individual or society, but he did seem to think that, in the forms it actually takes-especially when vitiated by superstition or enthusiasm- it is neither.

3.10. MORALITY

In the case of moral discourse the question that was decisive for Hume regarding its objective significance is whether one's experience of good and ill is limited to passions and desires, or whether there is, in addition, a source of distinctively moral ideas. Moral ideas originate in a species of impression of reflexion that is entirely independent of imagination. The special status of the impression of reflexion source of moral ideas therefore derives not from any special authority intrinsic to these feelings themselves but from the unique circumstances of their causation and the special place in one's life they derive there from.

Virtue and Vice

Hume defines virtue to be whatever mental action or quality gives to a spectator the pleasing sentiment of approbation; and vice the contrary. Hume distinguished four (nonexclusive) types of virtue:

(a) Mental qualities immediately agreeable to their possessors, such as skill, greatness of mind, cheer, equanimity in the face of adversity, and courage.

(b) Qualities immediately agreeable to others, such as tact, delicacy, wit, and good manners.

(c) Qualities useful to their possessors, such as intelligence, industriousness, skill, patience, and perseverance.

(d) Qualities useful to others, such as gratitude, faithfulness, reliability, and charity.

Justice

Justice is founded on self-interest and also on a sense of utility. Even when injustice does not affect us personally as victims, it still displeases us. We share the uneasiness of other people by sympathy. And since that which in human actions produces uneasiness arouses disapprobation and is called vice, while that which produces satisfaction is called virtue, we regard justice as a

moral virtue and injustice as a moral vice. Thus self-interest is the original motive to the establishment of justice: but sympathy with public interest is the source of the moral approbation which attends that virtue. Hume calls Justice an 'artificial' virtue in the sense that it is an invention of man, invented as a remedy for human selfishness and rapacity combined with the scanty provision which nature has made for his wants. Hume, therefore, will not allow that there are eternal laws of justice, independent of man's conditions and of public utility. Men establish the laws of justice out of a concern for their own and the public interest. But this concern is derived not from reasoning about the eternal and necessary relations of ideas but from our impressions and feelings.

3.11. LET US SUM UP

Technology has changed since the eighteenth century, and the modern empiricist tries to avoid Hume's tendency to muddle up logic and psychology. But of the modern empiricist's direct or indirect debt to Hume there can be no doubt. His insight, which showed the centrality of man in the whole conspectus of the various sciences, is most welcome in a world where progress is conceived along very impersonal lines. However his reduction of the difference between what he calls impressions and ideas to a mere a question of quantity is also open to question. We cannot deny that Hume's scathing attack on principle of causality did spark of a lot of serious in depth reflection by later thinkers. In short, assessing the insightful contribution made by Hume, he deserves the epithet- the father of empiricism.

Check Your Progress III

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer
b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit

1) Why does Hume think that the problem of freedom a mere linguistic problem?

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2) "Incomprehensibility of the nature of the divine" Explain.
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3.12. KEY WORDS

i. **Perception:** Perception refers to all objects insofar as they are immediately present to one by consciousness, be it in sensation, reflexion, or thought.
ii. **Impressions:** Impressions are the immediate data of experience, such as sensations.
iii. **Ideas:** Ideas are the copies or faint images of impressions in thinking and reasoning.

iv. **Relation:** The word 'relation' signifies the quality or qualities by which two ideas are connected together in the imagination.

v. **Passion:** Hume used the word passion to cover all emotions and affects without confining it to unregulated bursts of emotion.

vi. **Will:** Will is the internal impression we feel and are conscious of, when we knowingly give rise to any new motion of our body or new perception of our mind.

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3.14. ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress I

1. Reflexion is Hume's catch-all term for the objects present to internal sense or inward sentiment, including passions, emotions, desires, volitions, and mental operations generally.
2. In the first place, abstract ideas are individual or particular in themselves. For instance, the precise length of a line is not distinguishable from the line itself. We cannot form a general idea of a line without any length at all. Nor can we form the general idea of a line possessing all possible lengths. Secondly, every impression is determinate and definite. Since an idea is an image or copy of an impression, it must itself be determinate and definite, even though it is fainter than the impression from which it is derived. Thirdly, everything which exists must be individual. No triangle, for instance, can exist, which is not a particular triangle with its particular characteristics. To postulate an existent triangle which is at the same time all and none of the possible kinds and sizes of triangle would be an absurdity. But what is absurd in fact and reality is absurd also in idea. He thus agrees with Berkeley that there are no abstract general ideas.

Check Your Progress II

1. According to Hume, the two fundamental beliefs are: belief in the continuous and independent existence of bodies, and the belief that everything which begins to be has a cause.
2. What makes Hume a skeptic is that he supposed one's ineliminable beliefs skeptically unassailable not because they are founded on reasons too strong to be undermined by skeptical argument but because they are not founded on reasons at all.

Check Your Progress III

1. Hume admits that the problem of freedom is to a certain extent a linguistic problem, in the sense that though freedom must be denied if it is defined in such a way as to exclude necessity, it can be asserted if it is defined in another way. For instance, if freedom is identified with spontaneity, there is freedom. For it is clear that a great number of actions proceed from a man as a rational agent without any external coercion. For, Hume maintains, if so-called free actions are due to chance and are not caused by the agent, it would be unjust for God or man to hold human beings responsible for bad and vicious actions and to pass moral condemnation on the agents.
2. Hume professed agreement with Locke that the idea of an infinitely intelligent, wise, and good Being has its origin in one's reflecting on the operations of our own mind, and augmenting, without limit, those qualities of goodness and wisdom. Nevertheless, he also maintained that the attempt to realize this definition in an idea is fraught with difficulty. Thus Hume ended up on the same side as the most pious monotheists in insisting on the incomprehensibility of the nature of the divine.

UNIT4 RESUME AND CRITICAL APPRAISAL (OF EMPIRICISM)

Contents

4. 0. OBJECTIVES

In this Unit we evaluate the Philosophy of British empiricists from an objective point of view to deepen and enrich the study that we have already made in the previous units. This end in view is the need for a student of philosophy to be able to study the different movements in philosophy without being subjected to their influence. At the same time a readiness to accept and appreciate whatever is true in every philosophy is to be encouraged. The three important philosophers of British Empiricism are considered by many to be very influential in the political and intellectual history of humanity.

By the end of this Unit you should be able to:

- Build up on the Philosophies of British Empiricists
- Look at various issues of life, such as moral, social, and political as was discussed by these great philosophers.
- Learn to appreciate objectively the contributions of British Empiricism to Philosophy
- Have a holistic and comprehensive approach to the philosophies of Locke, Berkeley and Hume taken studied together as a Unit.

4.1. INTRODUCTION

Empiricism holds that only sense knowledge is valid, for it alone securely rests on the impressions of the thinking subject. Hence the question arises: Can an objective metaphysics be established through the analysis of sense modifications? We shall examine this problem in the philosophical teachings of those philosophers called the Empiricists.

4.2. INFLUENCES OF RATIONALISM, IDEALISM AND FRANCIS BACON ON EMPIRICISM

"British" Empiricism refers to the 18th century philosophical movement in Great Britain which maintained that all knowledge comes from experience. Continental Rationalists maintained that knowledge comes from foundational concepts known intuitively through reason, such as innate ideas. Other concepts are then deductively drawn from these. British Empiricists staunchly rejected the theory of innate ideas and argued that knowledge is based on both sense experience and internal mental experiences, such as emotions and self-reflection. 18th century British Empiricists took their cue from Francis Bacon who, in the very first aphorism of his New Organon, hails the primacy of experience, particularly the observation of nature:

Humans, who are the servants and interpreters of nature, can act and understand no further than they have observed in either the operation or the contemplation of the method and order of nature. Although British Empiricists disavowed innate ideas, in favor of ideas from experience, it is important to note that the Empiricists did not reject the notion of instinct or innateness in general. Indeed, we have inborn propensities which regulate our bodily functions, produce emotions, and even direct our thinking. What Empiricists deny, though, is that we are born with detailed, picture-like, concepts of God, causality, and even mathematics.

Like Bacon, British Empiricists also moved away from deductive proofs and used an inductive method of arguing which was more conducive to the data of experience. In spite of their advocacy of inductive argumentation, though, British Empiricists still made wide use of deductive arguments. Commenting on the use of induction in the history of philosophy, 19th century Scottish philosopher James McCosh argues that induction is more representative of later Scottish philosophy than it is of earlier British Empiricism, specifically that of Locke.

4. 3. BRITISH EMPIRICISM: AN OVERVIEW

Whereas Galileo and Descartes emphasized the role of *deductive reason* in the acquisition and defense of knowledge, Francis Bacon [1561-1626] emphasized the *experimental and observational* methodology of induction for the acquisition and defense of knowledge. In his *The Great Instauration* [1620], he tries to provide "...a total reconstruction of sciences, arts, and all human knowledge, raised upon the proper foundations." According to him, ...what the sciences stand in need of is a form of induction which shall analyze experience and take it to pieces, and by a due process of exclusion and rejection lead to an inevitable conclusion. While Bacon contends that *ordinary sensory experience* is not to be trusted, he posits a "new organon". (or experimental method) which can correct the errors of ordinary experience: for the subtlety of experiments is far greater than that of the sense itself, even when assisted by exquisite instruments; such experiments, I mean, as are skillfully and artificially devised for the express purpose of determining the point in question. To the immediate and proper perception of sense therefore I do not give much weight; but I contrive that the office of the sense shall be only to judge the experiment, and that the experiment itself shall judge of the thing. And thus I conceive that I perform the office of a true priest of the sense (from which all knowledge in nature must be sought, unless men mean to go mad) and a not unskillful interpreter of its oracles….
Those however who aspire not to guess and divine, but to discover and know; who propose not to devise mimic and fabulous worlds of their own, but to examine and dissect the nature of this very world itself; must go to facts themselves for everything. Nor can the place of this labor and search and world-wide perambulation be supplied by any genius or meditation or argumentation; no, not if all men's wits could meet in one. This therefore we must have, or the business must be

forever abandoned. But up to this day such has been the condition of men in this matter, that it is no wonder if nature will not give herself into their hands.

Bacon is an early example of the second major "school of thought" in the Early Modern period: the British Empiricists. These empiricists hold that most of our knowledge is empirical (or *a posteriori*). Like the Continental Rationalists, they have a faith in human reason, but it they have a different conception of the nature of "reason"—one based upon sensory experience rather than upon *a priori* reasoning. Whereas the Continental Rationalists hold that deductive reason acting upon innate principles or ideas reveals the fundamental truths about the world, the British Empiricists maintain that deductive reasoning "...can only reveal the logical connections between our ideas; it never increases our knowledge of what exists; it only results in claims like "All triangles have three sides."" There are, of course, many other possible sources of knowledge: revelation, testimony, memory, authority, etc.

We must be careful as we attempt to initially characterize empiricism here, however. It is often said that empiricists assign a central role to experience. This broad characterization is insufficient—when someone says that everything is based on experience (or justified by appeal to experience, or originates in experience, etc.), we must know what concept of experience is being appealed to (atomistic, Romantic, religious, etc.). As Thomas Grey points out in his critical review of several books on Oliver Wendell Holmes:

One must always read Holmes's scientistic pronouncements remembering that he was also a Romantic. His skepticism was of the Wordsworthian kind that revels in the sublimity of the unknown, and when he said law had been and likely always would be based largely in "experience," he was invoking the Romantic historicist idea of a collective unconscious made up of custom and tradition that could never be fully captured by articulate reason.

As the above discussion of Bacon should illustrate, 'empiricism' in the sense in which we will be using the term refers to philosophers who assign a central role to sensory experience. It should be noted, however, that there are a variety of distinct ways in which such experience could "play a central role." Some of these can be usefully distinguished by noting the differences between the following claims:

(a) that human ideas, understanding, or knowledge have their source in sense experience;
(b) that they have their sole source in sense experience;
(c) that human understanding or knowledge, have sense experience as their object, or
(d) that human understanding or knowledge arises when sense experience is (properly) used to test propositions (or hypotheses, or theories), or ideas.

Whichever version of empiricism one adheres to; however, there is a clear-cut contrast with Continental Rationalism. Whereas the rationalists seek to derive knowledge from *a priori* axioms (truths which are held to be "indubitable") by means of strictly deductive procedures; the British Empiricists assign a fundamental role to sensory experience (whether as the source of, object of, or justificatory check upon our knowledge claims). Thus they contend that our knowledge is fundamentally *a posteriori*—as noted above, the empiricists tend to believe that deductive reasoning can only reveal logical connections between our ideas and can not reveal truths about what exists—the latter requires inductive procedures.

Like the Continental Rationalists, the British Empiricists begin with our ideas, but where the rationalists begin with *a priori* innate principles or ideas which are self-evident and form the basis for deductive knowledge, the empiricists "begin with" sensory ideas which form the source or basis for (or object of, or test for) *a posteriori* knowledge.

Three principal philosophers are associated with British Empiricism: John Locke, George Berkeley and David Hume. Occasionally 19th century philosopher J.S. Mill is added to this list. But even restricting the British Empiricist movement to the above figures is somewhat misleading. Until the rise of English idealism around 1850, all British philosophy after Locke bears the marks of his empiricism. More than any other philosopher, Locke was cited as an authority by philosophers, philosophical theologians, and political thinkers.

4.4. JOHN LOCKE (1632-1704)

It should be noted that Locke, while in error on many points regarding the traditional philosophical questions, made a major contribution to the development of modern political philosophy. For instance, Locke holds that rights can be determined from the relations that exist between an infinitely intelligent being (God) and a rational but dependent being. The moral norms are hence rational, and are identified with the divine right and then with natural right. Moral laws must have a due sanction (rewards and punishment) which is imposed on the will in such a manner as to restrain man from diverging from the tendency that leads to his own well-being.

Locke also opposes Thomas Hobbes' theory of society by holding that in the state of nature man did not live in a wild condition, in which right was force. Men even at this time were rational and had the notion of the fundamental rights of life, of liberty, property, and so forth. From man's natural condition to the state of society, there is a progression; but no innovation is involved. The sovereign who fails in his obligation to defend the rights of his subjects is no longer justified in his sovereignty and may be dismissed by his subjects. Locke is considered the founder of classical liberal politics, and his influence during the centuries following his lifetime has been great, including his philosophical contributions to the founding of the American Republic. Locke had the characteristics of most of the articulate university men of his day: a petulant rejection of Scholasticism without understanding it; a self-confident notion of doing philosophy all over again from the ground up; a readiness to speak with an air of finality upon subjects imperfectly mastered.

Now, the desire to see philosophical doctrines so clearly expressed and proved that none may doubt them is human and natural and even admirable. But the assumption that all philosophy can be reduced to the clarity of A-B-C is fantastic. And the further assumption that all philosophers of past times have been woolly-minded blunderers is ignorance and intolerable "cheek." The old impatience, the old want of humility, which brought in Humanism, the Renaissance, the Reformation, and all the other thin veneering which tried to pass for truth are evident in Locke as they are evident in Francis Bacon, René Descartes, and nearly all the philosophers who abandoned an authentic commonsense realism.

Locke had doubtlessly in mind the recasting of philosophy, for he was not wholly pleased with Bacon's plan for empiricism. Still, he seems to have had no detailed plan of his own. Indeed, he did not feel the need of any plan. He was convinced that, once the human mind had learned to grasp things clearly, once it knew its own powers and recognized its true limitations, once it was sure of the nature and extent of its knowledge, the developing of philosophy would be sheerly natural growth. Thus, Locke's special interest was the epistemological question, and he wrote of it in his famous Essay.

Keen as he was on clarity of knowledge, Locke did not escape the fatal confounding of sense-knowledge with intellectual knowledge. And so he proceeded to make confusion more confounded, so that one may take not only different, but opposite, doctrines from the premises his theories afford. Follow him in one set of principles and develop these to the end; you find yourself in idealism, the dream-philosophy which turns reality into shadow. Follow him in another set of thoughts, and you will be involved in sensism and positivism which takes the reality around us as the only thing there is, and denies value to the intellect and to reasoning (even to the reasoning by which you have reached this dull conclusion). This impossible agglomeration of conflicting theories was proposed, explicitly or implicitly, by a man of undoubted mental gifts who was thwarted at the outset by his muddling of the basic question of all philosophy, the epistemological question.

THE EPISTEMOLOGY OF LOCKE

Locke strenuously opposed Descartes' doctrine of innate ideas. All knowledge has its origin in experience, in sense-perception. The elements of knowledge are the ideas, and Locke, in his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, explains the idea in the following manner: "It being that term which, I think, serves best to stand for whatever is the object of the understanding when a man thinks, I have used it to express whatever is meant by phantasm, notion, species, or whatever it is which the mind can be employed about in thinking."

Descartes placed all sense-perception in the spiritual mind, thus identifying sense-perception with spiritual activity; Locke here does the reverse, by reducing ideas, at least in part, down to the level of sense-perception (phantasm, species). By thus arbitrarily blurring the nature of the idea so as to include sense-perception, he laid the foundation for sensism, where all thinking is nothing but a form of sensation. Another important feature of this definition of "idea" is, that the "idea" is the object of our understanding, instead of the reality of things being the object of our knowledge.

Ideas, according to Locke, are derived from two sources -- sense-perception and reflection; and all knowledge is restricted to ideas.

"Since the mind, in all its thoughts and reasonings, hath no other immediate object but its own ideas, which it alone does or can contemplate, it is evident that our knowledge is only conversant about them. Knowledge, then, seems to me to be nothing but the perception of the connection of an agreement, or disagreement and repugnancy of any of our ideas. In this alone it consists."

This means, of course, that we do not really know objects or things-in-themselves, but ideas or conscious states of the mind; and this is the standpoint of Descartes and idealism. Locke, however, did not deny the existence of material substances, such as bodies, nor of spiritual substances, such as the soul and God; but substance is unknowable to us, whether material or immaterial. However, there must be something there, because otherwise the sense experiences that are dropped on the blank sheet could never be analyzed. This type is where all knowledge of objects in the physical world originates. Locke does not take into consideration innate capacities as being something a priori in the mind. Locke states there are three degrees available to the human mind, intuitive knowledge, demonstrative knowledge, and sensitive knowledge. The first type, compounding, is simply the combination of two or more simple ideas to form a more complex idea. John Locke's work An Essay Concerning Human Understanding was said to usher in the Enlightenment. It is important to realize that he did not claim that his philosophy could

discover all certainties, but that it could discover those things that were certainly beyond our comprehension. For Locke this type of knowledge is the most certain, and provides the foundation of all other knowledge. For Locke all ideas are classified as either simple or complex. These are formed by comparing one idea to another. Locke answers this question by stating that, ideas will only resemble external objects in the world to the degree God wills it. Demonstrative knowledge is the degree of knowledge we can know by revealing through a process of logical steps, certain certainties. These ideas are formed by three different activities of the mind, compounding, relating, and abstracting. Simple ideas according to Locke are the most fundamental mental particles. The idea of a grape would be formed by the simpler ideas of roundness, red, and soft.

"Our idea of substance is equally obscure, or none at all, in both; it is but a supposed I-know-not-what, to support those ideas we call accidents...By the complex idea of extended, figured, colored, and all other sensible qualities, which is all that we know of it, we are as far from the idea of the substance of the body, as if we knew nothing at all."

While Locke, therefore, admits the existence of material and spiritual "substances," he asserts that they are unknowable; "accidents" or "phenomena" alone are knowable; he is in last instance an empirical phenomenalist. Locke was an analytical thinker. His main interest was in illuminating knowledge, examining its validity. The metaphysical factors of mind were of less account as a problem to him. He was the first to give logic for Empiricism. Granted this, it would be impossible to construct metaphysics of objective realities. But Locke, prescinding from what he had established in the question of knowledge, attempts a demonstration of the existence of God, of the world, and of the knowing subject.

PRIMARY AND SECONDARY QUALITIES

Locke is remembered for his distinguishing of primary and secondary sense-qualities in bodily things. In his study upon the nature of knowledge, he had constantly to face such questions as: are sense-objects really what they appear to be; is the grass really green; is the whirling wheel actually in motion; is the stone truly solid? Locke decided that there are certain qualities common to all bodies (impenetrability, extension, shape, rest, motion) and these are primary qualities which exist as objective things. He said that there are also other qualities not found in all bodies alike (color, sound, taste, odor, temperature, resistance) and these are secondary qualities which are largely subjective, that is, not so much objective things as the perceivings or feelings of the person who senses them.

Locke's distinction of sense-qualities as primary and secondary may serve us as a mere convenient list. But his theory of their objective reality cannot stand. For we are wholly unaware of the primary qualities except through the medium of the secondary. And if the secondary be unreliable (being largely subjective) we have no reason to put any trust in the actuality of the primary qualities. Locke's theory of sense-qualities points the way to the self-contradiction of complete skepticism.

Check Your Progress I

Note: a) Use the space provided for the answer.
b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit.

1) What are the basic ideas of Empiricism?

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2) Explain the Epistemology of John Locke

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4.5. BERKELEY [1685-1753]

John Locke had constructed a theory of knowledge in which the subject was closed up within himself. The object of such knowledge was consequently ideas (subjective impressions) and not things. If ideas are the immediate object of our knowledge, is it ever possible to admit an external reality corresponding to such ideas?

George Berkeley denied this theory and reduced the reality of the external world to the existence of finite spirits and the infinite spirit (God). There is no material world. For Berkeley, even Locke's concept of substance was merely a name devoid of reality. There exists only the world of spirits, dominated by God, the Supreme Spirit.

In order to show why the philosophy of Berkeley results in an immaterial spiritualistic world, it must be kept in mind that his philosophical meditations were concentrated on solving the religious problem. He sought to restore spiritual and Christian values in the society of his time, in which the so-called freethinkers, relying on Locke's theory of knowledge and on his concept of primary and secondary qualities, fell into incredulity and actual immorality.

Berkeley tried to prove to these materialists that in Locke's theory of knowledge there is no place for their idol -- matter -- and that hence their whole philosophy is vain. All that exists of reality is a communion of spirits to whom God is revealed immediately, and to whom He communicates the ideas they possess.

Berkeley’s starting point in philosophy is Locke’s theory of language. According to Locke words have meaning by standing for ideas, and general words such as sortal predicates, correspond to abstract general ideas. The ability to form such ideas is the most importance between humans and dumb animals.

Berkley extracts from Locke’s Essay two different accounts of the meanings of general terms. One, which we may call the representational theory, is that a general idea is a particular idea which has been made general by being made to stand for all of a kind, in the way in which a geometry teacher draws a particular triangle to represent all triangles. Another, which we may call culminative theory, is that a general idea is a particular idea which contains only what is common to all particulars of the same kind: the abstract idea of ‘man’ eliminates what is peculiar to Peter, john and James, and retains only what is common to them all.

The most interesting and original part of Berkeley's thought is his theory of knowledge. He accepts the Empiricist teaching of Locke that the immediate object of our knowledge is ideas (subjective impressions) but rejects the distinction of Locke regarding primary (objective) and secondary (subjective) qualities.

The primary qualities (time, space, motion) are not perceptible separately from the secondary qualities (color, sound, tactile qualities, etc.). Indeed we know the primary qualities only in conjunction with and through the secondary qualities. If we know means to perceive subjective impressions, such impressions cannot be divided into two categories, one subjective and the other objective; all must be impressions felt by the subject, and hence all are subjective.

Furthermore, Berkeley refuses to accept Locke's concept of substance as a mysterious objective substratum which would be the cause of our impressions. Berkeley asks whether such a material substratum, separate from our sensations, can exist. If it is separate from our impressions, then it is not perceptible, is reduced to a term void of significance, and is unknowable and inconceivable. If it is connected with our impressions as a support of those impressions, then it resides in the subject and material substances are cognitive phenomena and hence are subjective.

It is impossible, therefore, that matter be something existing in itself, objective, inert, devoid of thought. When we say that a thing exists, we mean nothing more than that such a thing is perceived by us. The being of things consists in this act of perception: "Omne esse est percipi." (To BE is to be PERCEIVED.)

Primary or secondary qualities, substance and impressions are nothing other than acts of perception, that is, mental facts; and their existence signifies their being perceived as mental acts. Berkeley's theory of knowledge thus reduces all reality to phenomena: The material world exists only as a cognitive act, produced and existing in a mental act, and hence is subjective and not objective.

Berkeley denied general or universal ideas. The mind cannot represent a general color which would be neither red nor white nor any determined color, such as the universal concept of color must be. Hence, only particular, determined ideas exist. The so-called universal ideas are names, not ideas, and exist neither in the mind (because they are not ideas) nor outside the mind (because it is absurd that there be a color which is not determined).

Berkeley's nominalism is more radical than Locke's in so far as he denies all value to general and abstract ideas, whereas Locke had only imposed restrictions upon them.

THE NATURE OF THE UNIVERSE

Berkeley, while denying the existence of a material world and reducing it to a phenomenon of knowledge, did not deny the existence of the world of spirits. He believed that he had proved the existence of the subjective spirit from the very presence of ideas, for ideas can be produced only by a spirit. Having thus assured himself of the existence of his own spirit, Berkeley devoted himself to determining its nature: the spirit is both active, a producer of ideas, and passive, a receptacle for ideas. Its activity is revealed in the imagination and in the memory, with which we produce or recall ideas, but more still in the coordination of ideas. Passivity, as we have said, is

revealed in the fact that the spirit receives ideas that it has not produced. For example, it is not within my power to see or not to see the objects that are in my room.

The passivity of the spirit gave Berkeley the means of proving the existence of other finite spirits, independent of his own, and the existence of God. In fact, he asked, what is the origin of these ideas that are imposed on my spirit and of which I am not the origin -- for instance, the objects I mentioned before as being present in my room?

They are produced by the will of other spirits, since I perceive, besides my own spirit, other particular agents like myself, who participate with me in the production of many ideas. Besides, there are ideas that I perceive which are not only not produced by my spirit, but are not produced by any finite spirit -- for instance, the regularity of natural phenomena. Fire always burns, independently of any will. Such ideas presuppose a cause superior to all finite spirits -- God, who exists, whole infinite will produces the order and harmony and constancy of natural phenomena.

Having thus demonstrated the existence of God, Berkeley believed that he had solved all the difficulties that could be raised against his idealistic phenomenalism. If, for example, one asks whether the objects in my room exist when I am outside and there is no one in my house, Berkeley answers in the affirmative; because if the objects are not perceived by a finite spirit they are perceived by God. If one should inquire about the difference between real fire and painted fire, why one burns and the other does not, Berkeley would have answered that God, the producer and supreme ruler of all ideas, unites to the first (real fire) the idea of burning, and denies it to the second (fire depicted in a painting).

In a word, the phenomenal world of Berkeley is not unlike the phenomenal world that everyone knows, with this difference: While commonly it is believed that natural phenomena are the product of a physical, material world, for Berkeley this material world does not exist. That which we attribute to matter, he says, must be referred to God, the exciter and revealer of ideas corresponding to material things. We are on the ground of the occasionalism of Malebranche: God presents to our souls -- produces in them -- the ideas that impress us. The constant relationship with which God determines the ideas of our spirits are the so-called laws of nature. They are the language with which God reveals Himself and speaks to us. Thus Berkeley believed that he had carried out the work he had set for himself: to justify theism against the attacks of incredulity; and to point out the emptiness of materialism by proving that the world as conceived by the materialist does not exist.

But did Berkeley really attain his goal? The existence of the (finite) spirit as something distinct from ideas implies the concept of spiritual substance; the activity and passivity of the spirit imply the concept of cause; the affirmation of the existence of God implies both the concepts of substance and of cause. Now, all these concepts should have been established in a preliminary metaphysical study; this Berkeley did not do, and because of his empiristic position, he could not do it. The development of Empiricism toward complete phenomenalism stops halfway in Berkeley.

It was David Hume who drew the logical consequences from Empiricism, and affirmed complete phenomenalism not only in reference to matter, as Berkeley had done, but also in reference to spiritual substance, the concept of cause, and the concept of God.

Berkeley feared to allow universals any validity. He denies universals and axioms when there is no necessity for this denial. The weakness of his philosophical doctrine is that it leaves too much to be explained, especially the explanation of the outer (external) world. Berkeley's fundamental

premise -- the mind can know only its own ideas -- has been called the "egocentric predicament." This is the predicament of one trying to imagine something unknown. Two lines of thought proceed from Berkeley's philosophy:

From his weaker side -- the denial of universals, leads to David Hume.

From his stronger side -- the supremacy of the spirit, leads to and ends in German idealism, Fichte, Schelling, Schleiermacher, and Hegel.

4.6. DAVID HUME [1711-1776]

For Hume, custom and tradition provide structure to the mind by guiding the manner in which experiences are organized and synthesized. Commonsense concepts embody the accumulated sum of experiences assimilated by prior generations new generations may supplement them, but must not ignore them. Custom and tradition, however, have no greater authority than the experiences they summarize. Should entirely new kinds of experience emerge (for example, as a result of new instruments like the electron microscope or new technologies like magnetic resonance imaging), and then customary habits of thought would require appropriate modification. Most Empiricists sharply distinguish facts and values. Value judgments derive from “irrational” elements of the mind such as feelings, emotions or attitudes, which lack experiential validation. Purely descriptive and verifiable, facts are statements that allegedly conform to experience. Many Empiricists insist that evaluative claims cannot be derived from mere facts; they are emotional reactions to facts, which may readily differ for different persons. Only if ethical claims could be reduced to peoples’ actual desires or to the maximization of actually experienced pleasures could Empiricists find them defensible. This is why later empiricists e.g., J. S. Mill and James, gravitated toward utilitarianism in moral theory. Empiricists generally interpret the mind to be passive, imprinted with representations of real objects. Reason’s major function is to discover similarities and differences among representations. In this way it creates concepts through grouping similarities into types and modest generalizations noting constant conjunctions to better organize future experience.

CAUSATION

If we look for the origin of the idea of causation, Hume says, we find that it cannot be any particular inherent quality of objects; for objects of the most different kinds can be causes and effects. We must look instead for relationships between objects. We find indeed, that causes and effects must be contiguous to each other and that causes must be prior to their effects. But this is not enough: we feel that there must be a necessary connection between cause and effect, though the nature denies that whatever begins to exist must have a cause of existence. If there is no absurdity in conceiving something coming into existence, or undergoing a change, without any cause at all, there is a fortiori no absurdity in conceiving of an event occurring without a cause of some particular kind. Because many different effects are logically conceivable as arising from a particular cause, only experience leads us to expect the actual one.

Paradoxical as it may seem, it is not our inference that depends on the necessary connection between cause and effect, but the necessary connection that depends on the inference we draw form the one to the other. Hume offers not one, but two definitions of causation. The first is this: a cause is an object precedent and contiguous to another and where all the objects resembling the

former are placed in a like relation of priority and contiguity to those objects that resemble the latter. In this definition, nothing is said about necessary connection, and no reference is made to the activity of the mind. Accordingly, we are offered a second, more philosophical definition. A cause is an object precedent and contiguous to another, and so united with it in the imagination that the idea of the one determines the mind to form the idea of the other, and the impression of the one to form a more lively idea of the other.

It is noticeable that in this second definition of cause the mind is said to be determined to for one idea by the presence of another idea. The originality and power of Hume's analysis of causation is concealed by the language in which it is embedded, and which suffers from all the obscurity of the machinery of impressions and ideas. But we can separate out from the psycho-logical apparatus three novel principles of great importance.

a. Cause and effect must be distinct existences, each conceivable without the other
b. The causal relation is to be analyzed in terms of contiguity, precedence, and constant conjunction.
c. It is not necessary truth that every beginning of existence has a cause.

Each of these principles deserves, and has received, intense philosophical scrutiny. Some of them were as we shall see, subjected to searching criticism by Kant and others have been modified or rejected by more recent philosophers. But to this day the agenda for the discussion of the causal relationship is the one set by Hume.

Given Hume's theory of causation we may wonder what right 'give rise to' has to appear in this definition. Yet if we replace 'we knowingly give rise to any new motion, with any new motion is observed to arise' the definition no longer looks at all plausible. Given Hume's official philosophy of mind and his official account of causation, there seems to be no room for talking of 'secret springs' of action. In fact, his thesis that the will is causally necessitated is difficult to make consistent either with his own definition of the free will of with his own theory of causation.

Hume's doubts about causation, induction and the self can also be directed to the "laws" of logic and to the sanctity of the individual. The exact status of logical laws vexed Empiricists. They should regard them as generalizations from actual thought processes which are frequently flawed, but logic's certainty seems more deeply rooted than this. Skepticism about the foundations of logic also threatens the legitimacy of scientific reasoning. Also, since causation is essential to the mechanistic world-view, Hume's skepticism threatened this as well. Similarly, Hume's doubts about the existence of distinct personal selves threaten the legitimacy of individual rights and the entire first-person standpoint.

Hume has been much studied and imitated in the twentieth century. His hostility to religion and metaphysics, in particular, has made him many admirers. But his importance in the history of philosophy depends on his analysis of causation, and on the intrepidity with which he followed the presuppositions of empiricism wheresoever they led.

Hume's vague philosophy has a very modern sound: a collection of impressions collected nowhere; contents of a mind which is not a container. Here we have the smug unintelligibility of the modern antirealist's definition of mind as "a cross-section of the environment." Hume holds that the only thing that can be said, with full certainty, to exist is our perceptions (impressions and ideas). In and among these perceptions there is no causal connection; indeed, there is no knowable causality anywhere. If things outside us really do exist, there is no proof of their existence available to us. His theoretical empiricism concludes with the collapse of all rational

understanding; it lead inevitably to Skepticism and, of course Subjectivism and Relativism, the twin scourges of modern and recent philosophy.

Check Your Progress II

Note: a) Use the space provided for the answer.

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit.

1) Write an evaluation on Berkeley's Theory of Knowledge

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2) What is David Hume's Theory of causation?

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4.7. LET US SUM UP

Empiricism defended the assumptions of and methods of science and developed a complimentary theory of mind. Oddly, as scientists made significant strides in explaining nature, empiricist philosophers became more skeptical about the foundations of scientific thought. Hume, for example, came to doubt whether causes really exist and whether induction could be legitimated. He believed that humans attribute causation to regularly recurring events that are constantly conjoined. The only defensible empirical claim is that one event typically follows another (rather than being caused by it). Similarly, there could be no experimental assurance that future conjunctions of sensations will resemble past ones. At best, this could only be contingent fact. Likewise, he came to doubt the existence of a self that unifies experiences because he could not discover it in experience. (Later Hume reversed himself, suggesting that experience does not always speak with one voice.) Hume's skepticism epitomizes the entire Empiricist movement.

Three claims define empiricism: all knowledge derives from experience- typically from sensory experience; the mind is a "blank slate" prior to experience so that concepts emerge via abstraction from and association among sensations; and sensations are atomic and simple or at least can be reduced to atomic and simple elements. By grounding all knowledge in sensory experience and suggesting that experience may only represent or mirror the external world, empiricism reinforced Descartes' first-person stand point and his conception that persons have privileged access to their own sensations. However, by denying the existence of innate ideas, Empiricism departs from Descartes by limiting the importance of reason. "Concepts" derive from associations of similar experiences. If certain concepts-such as causality or the self – are not directly experienced, then they may have no genuine application. Empiricism generally

assumes that the mind's structure derives from experience; since it lacks structure prior to experience, different cognitive organizations may result from different arrays of experience. Different cultures and civilizations thus may acquire different concepts because they interact with different environments. The only explanation for similarities in cross-cultural concepts is a common material world that engenders experience. If this common world were lacking, then intercultural and even interpersonal understanding might become impossible. The third claim – concerning simple, atomic "ideas" (raw elements of experience) – denies that experience possesses any organic wholeness. Relationships among experiences must be established externally by comparison with previous experiences. Close attention to experience, however, may reveal essential interconnections, especially when experience is broadened to include imagination, desire, emotion and volition. This atomistic analysis is often extended to social theory by interpreting individuals to be the fundamental social atoms of society and taking all social relationships to be the result of explicit contracts. Although this individualistic position can ground fundamental human rights, it often remains oblivious to the need for strong institutions to guarantee such rights.

Continental philosophers often claim that Empiricists overlook the temporal unity of and internal relations among experiences, and that they presuppose an arbitrarily limited conception of experience and of their possible combinations. Phenomenologists, for example, discover a directedness (or intentionality) in experience and a complex nested structure among conscious states. These features are rarely acknowledged in Empiricism. They also insist on examining the full range of experiences, including emotions, intentions, valuations, and imagination, and on exploring the inter-subjective sources of experiential unity which are only minimally foreseen in Hume's notion of custom.

Because Empiricism produces skepticism about its own greatest achievement, science, some continental philosophers develop an alternative to conception of systematic knowledge. Hegel, Marx, phenomenologists, structuralists and others explore alternative conceptions of a "scientific System", requiring an expanded rationality and revealing structural relations among phenomena that are neither causal nor conceptual. Continental philosophers also resist the sharp Empiricist posture that appearances represent reality and thus actual things in themselves cannot be directly known, many continental philosophers reject this division. They insist that experience reveals reality as it is, or at least genuine features of and perspectives on it.

4.8. KEY WORDS

Phantasm: Ghost, Spirit or apparition.
Oracle: Prophecy, revelation or vision
Muddle: jumble or mess up

4.9. FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

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4.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answers to Check Your Progress I

1) Empiricism is the position according to which experience is the only source of warrant for our claims about the world. Having assigned experience this exclusive role in justification, empiricists then have a range of views concerning the character of experience, the semantics of our claims about unobservable entities, the nature of empirical confirmation, and the possibility of non-empirical warrant for some further class of claims, such as those accepted on the basis of linguistic or logical rules. Given the definitive principle of their position, empiricists can allow that we have knowledge independent of experience only where what is known is not some objective fact about the world, but something about our way of conceptualizing or describing things. Some empiricists say we have knowledge of verbal equivalences or trivialities; some argue that any non-empirical tenets are not even properly called knowledge, but should be seen as notions accepted on pragmatic rather than properly epistemic grounds. What no empiricist will allow is substantive a priori knowledge: according to empiricism we have no pure rational insight into real necessities or the inner structure of nature, but must rely on the deliverances of our senses for all of our information about external reality. Some versions of empiricism argue against the very notion of real necessities or metaphysical structure behind the phenomena; other versions take a more agnostic approach, arguing that if there is a metaphysical structure behind the phenomena it is either out of our epistemic reach, or known only to the extent that it can be grasped through experience, rather than through rational reflection.

2) Locke states there are three degrees available to the human mind, intuitive knowledge, demonstrative knowledge, and sensitive knowledge. The first type, compounding, is simply the combination of two or more simple ideas to form a more complex idea. John Locke's work An Essay Concerning Human Understanding was said to usher in the Enlightenment. It is important to realize that he did not claim that his philosophy could discover all certainties, but that it could discover those things that were certainly beyond our comprehension. For Locke this type of knowledge is the most certain, and provides the foundation of all other knowledge. For Locke all ideas are classified as either simple or complex. These are formed by comparing one idea to another. Locke answers this question by stating that, ideas will only resemble external objects in the world to the degree God wills it. Demonstrative knowledge is the degree of knowledge we can know by revealing through a process of logical steps, certain certainties. These ideas are formed by three different activities of the mind, compounding, relating, and abstracting.

Answers to check your progress II

1) George Berkeley is perhaps one of the most unique and intriguing figures in the history of modern philosophy. Dissatisfied with and angered by the materialist philosophies of his contemporaries, especially the ideas of John Locke, Berkeley called for a return to "common sense." But "common sense," for Berkeley, involved not just a skeptical view of materialism, but the assertion that the material world does not exist at all! Berkeley utilizes persuasive logical arguments and empiricist principles in order to refute the existence of matter. However, when he attempts to account for what *does* exist, he makes a startling claim which does not hold up to his own rigorous logical standards. Berkeley's argument is as follows:

1. We have established that only ideas exist and that reality is comprised of ideas.
2. For an idea to be existing, it must be perceived by someone or something.
3. But real things continue to exist even when no person is perceiving them. (For example, when everyone leaves the room, the room does not disappear.)
4. Therefore, ideas which are unperceived by people must still be perceived by *something*.
5. That something else is the infinite mind of God.

2) In his ground-breaking *A Treatise of Human Nature* David Hume made the scientific hunt for causes possible, by freeing the concept of causality from the metaphysical chains that his predecessors had used to pin it down. For Hume, causality, as it is in the world, is a regular succession of event-types: one thing invariably following another. His famous first definition of causality runs as follows: "We may define a CAUSE to be 'An object precedent and contiguous to another, and where all the objects resembling the former are placed in like relations of precedence and contiguity to those objects, that resemble the latter'" Taking a cue from Malebranche, Hume argued that there was no perception of the supposed necessary connection between the cause and the effect. Being an empiricist, Hume argued that all causal knowledge stems from experience. He revolted against the traditional view that the necessity that links cause and effect is the same as the logical necessity of a demonstrative argument. He argued that there can be no a priori demonstration of any causal connection, since the cause can be conceived without its effect and conversely. His far-reaching observation was that the alleged necessity of causal connection cannot be proved empirically either.

BLOCK-4 INTRODUCTION

Idealism holds the view that everyday world of things and people are not the world as it really is but simply as it appears to be. In Idealism, concepts are often viewed as being real. Thus 'humankind' is seen to have a reality beyond being just an idea. Perhaps the most influential Idealist was Immanuel Kant. After Kant, Hegel concluded that the finite world is a reflection of the mind, which alone is truly real. Truth is just the coherence between thoughts. Idealism is opposed to many philosophies that stress material outlook, including empiricism, skepticism, atheism, materialism and positivism. Positivism holds that the only authentic knowledge is that which is based on actual sense experience. The positivist perspective, however, has been associated with 'scientism,' which is of the view that the methods of the natural sciences may be applied to all areas of investigation, be it philosophical, social, scientific, or otherwise. It has also been welcomed by 'technocrats' who believe in the inevitability of social progress through science and technology. This block consists of 4 units that deal with Kant (I&II), Hegel and positivism.

Unit 1, "Kant-I," explains that Immanuel Kant, through his masterpiece *Critique of Pure Reason*, has made an attempt to resolve the issues emerging from the conflict between rationalistic and empiricist approaches by proposing a system that was fundamentally *a priori* but without sacrificing the value of the phenomenal reality. According to his approach, the reality that human beings know is basically the reality constituted or constructed by human beings themselves. In a nutshell, with the help of a set of *a priori* forms and the phenomenal data, the world – all sciences and all forms of knowledge – is shaped.

Unit 2, "Kant-II," aims at exposing Kant's practical philosophy in the light of his two major ethical works: *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals* (*GM*) and *Critique of Practical Reason* (*CPrR*). After a brief and general introduction to Kant's practical philosophy, the study presents two kinds of imperatives in Kant's ethical works: hypothetical and categorical imperatives. The categorical imperative is identified as Kant's concept of moral law for all empirical rational beings. The exposition proceeds to show that *a priori* moral law poses freedom, God and immortality as postulates of morality.

Unit 3, "Hegel," highlights the philosophical thought of Georg Hegel who devoted his life wholly to academic pursuit. His science of logic, dialectical reasoning, encyclopaedia of philosophical sciences, Philosophy of Right – all provide an intellectual foundation for modern nationalism. He was an idealist who methodically constructed a comprehensive system of thought.

Unit 4 is on "Positivism," which is one of the important philosophical movements originated in the nineteenth century and shaped the thinking of scientists and scholars in the 20th century too. The aim of this unit is to make the students acquaint with the background, origin and development of positivism, especially the contribution of Auguste Comte, its later development and continued relevance for an understanding of natural and social sciences today.

As we have seen above, idealism views concepts as real. After the most influential critical idealist, Immanuel Kant, Hegel concluded that the finite world is a reflection of the mind, which alone is truly real. According to Kant, the reality that human beings know is basically the reality

constituted or constructed by human beings themselves; such a construction is manifest in their ethical behaviour too, in the "categorical imperative" identified as Kant's concept of moral law for all. For Hegel, "the real is the rational and the rational is the real." Even as he methodically constructed a comprehensive system of thought deductively, positivism, especially the one developed by Auguste Comte in the 19th century inductively, influenced the thinking of scientists and scholars.

UNIT 1 **KANT-1**

Contents

1.0 OBJECTIVES

As you study this unit, you will have to pay special attention to:

- The ongoing philosophical debate between rationalism and empiricism
- The paradigm of knowledge, which according to an empiricist is to acquire knowledge through the senses and to a rationalist is to acquire knowledge through the reason or understanding.

1. 1. INTRODUCTION

Immanuel Kant, through his philosophical enterprise known as critical idealism or transcendental idealism, has made an attempt to resolve the issues emerging from the conflict between rationalistic and empiricist approaches by proposing a system that was fundamentally *a priori* but without sacrificing the value of the phenomenal reality. According to his approach, the reality that human beings know is basically the reality constituted or constructed by human beings themselves. In a nutshell, with the help of a set of *a priori* forms and the phenomenal data, the world – all sciences and all forms of knowledge – is shaped. The same is the case with regard to the practical sphere: the autonomous individual, through the proper exercise of the will, constructs the moral world. So, the Kantian approach to theoretical as well as practical knowledge is centred on the individual agent.

Kant's definitive insistence that we can have *a priori* knowledge, which is necessary and universal, however, does not blind him to the contributions of the senses. He holds that all our

knowledge is ultimately rooted in sense intuitions as well as in concepts; all the same, he categorically denies that we could have theoretical knowledge about anything that lies beyond the bounds of *possible experience*. Thus, in the *Prolegomena*, Kant claims that "the word 'transcendental' ... does not signify something passing beyond all experience but something that indeed precedes it *a priori*, but that is intended to make cognition of experience possible" (*Prolegomena*, Appendix, Ak. 4:373n). It is in this sense that he calls his philosophy transcendental.

An inquiry into the nature of knowledge is, therefore, an inquiry into the cognitive constitution of the subject, and not into the nature of the objects, but concerns only what makes it possible. Hence, he defines his philosophy as "a science of the mere examination of reason, its sources and limits" (CPR A11/B25). Understood negatively, according to Beck, it highlights the 'police' function of the *Critique* "in preventing or exposing the dialectical illusions of speculative metaphysics" (Beck, 44), while, understood positively, it secures to reason the "sure path of science" in the wake of the challenges from rationalism and empiricism. Thus, practically speaking, the *Critique* becomes the final court of appeal for Kant, even to the extent of becoming a limiting factor in his further philosophical endeavour.

The unifying thought that runs through the whole of the *Critique* is his self-proclaimed novel question "How is synthetic *a priori* knowledge possible?" (CPR B19). To begin with, Kant assumes that synthetic *a priori* propositions exist both in pure mathematics and physics, and his conviction about the success of these branches of knowledge impels him to invest himself in critical inquiry with a view to justify the possibility of such propositions in the realms of knowledge and morality. Thus, the critical problem, which he formulates against the backdrop of dogmatic and empiricist philosophies, unravels in the first *Critique* by posing the problem of whether and to what extent can we find *a priori* principles of knowledge in the respective faculties of reason, understanding, and judgment. As for the claims of the *Critique* itself, the apparent transcendent nature of *a priori* knowledge is rectified, and its concreteness safeguarded by Kant, by his incessant insistence that "we come to know of *a priori* ideas, like all other ideas, only through experience ... [and] that this *a priori* knowledge nevertheless must apply to object of experience..." (Paton, 1:563-64). This is possible, he claims, not as a result of the independent nature of the things, but due to the nature of the intellectual faculties. This step, according to Kant, ensures both the purity and validity of transcendental knowledge, which "entitles him to develop the entire system of pure speculative reason without reference to anything other than the abstract principles" and "without reference to any specific empirical object" (Van De Pitte, 1024).

1.2. THE STRUCTURE OF THE *CRITIQUE OF PURE REASON*

The centrality of the first *Critique* for Kant is achieved in the architectonic plan of his work where the triad of the Aesthetic-Analytic-Dialectic attempts to unveil the nature and function of different faculties in acquiring knowledge, each, in turn, addressing the contributions of sensibility, understanding, and reason, respectively. Stated in general, while the Aesthetic answers the question "How are synthetic *a priori* judgments possible in mathematics?" the Analytic takes up the question "How are these judgments possible in natural science?" Finally, the Dialectic addresses the issue of the impossibility of synthetic *a priori* judgments in metaphysics.

The Transcendental Aesthetic, as concerned with sensibility or intuition, and identified by Kant as the faculty of sensing objects, provides the primary data for knowledge. In this section he addresses the issue of the determination of space and time, the only *a priori* intuitions we possess, which provide the sensible form of experience. Space and time are the pure forms of sensibility, which are imposed by the human mind on to the world of experience, as the elements of our subjective cognitive constitution. The nature of space and time, for Kant, is very much Euclidean. In the Aesthetic Kant assumes that Euclidean geometry is a body of *a priori* knowledge, although the regressive method that he has adopted in this section does not attempt to prove its validity.

In the second section, Transcendental Analytic, Kant goes one step further by showing that any meaningful claim to theoretical knowledge requires not only sensibility, but the spontaneous faculty of understanding too. In order to show that synthetic *a priori* judgments are possible, it is necessary that apart from the contribution of intuition, there must be the element of conception, whereby the mind contributes its vital share. Kant asserts that there are three subjective sources of knowledge, such as sense, imagination, and apperception, on which the process of synthesis is grounded. Hence, Kant undertakes an explication of the generation of the categories in the knowing process, and attempts to deduce their validity. The finding that the categories of the understanding are *a priori* implies that they do not depend on the nature of the things, but on the nature of our thought, though, at the same time, they are meaningless and empty apart from their application to spatial and temporal things given in intuition.

Proceeding further, and applying the results of the Transcendental Aesthetic and Analytic, Kant identifies in the Transcendental Dialectic the excesses in the employment of reason, which tends to apply its own ideas in the realms that lie beyond the reach of sensibility and understanding. The intellectual capacities, namely, the capacity of referring to objects by experiencing them within a spatio-temporal framework, and the capacity of bringing objects under general concepts set the limits of our valid knowledge. When these limits are transgressed, it results in transcendental illusion, and the basic source of this illusion is reason's illegitimate pursuit for completeness and unity, i.e., advancing "towards completeness by an ascent to ever higher conditions and so to give our knowledge the greatest possible unity of reason" (CPR A309/B365). Thus, in the Dialectic, he establishes that purely rational knowledge is impossible, which explicitly denies that the aim of the rationalist philosophy, and the content of dogmatic metaphysics are attainable. However, it must be borne in mind that Kant does not prove that the dogmas of the rationalist metaphysics are false, but only that they cannot be known to be true in the mental framework adopted in the Transcendental Aesthetic and Analytic. In short, according to the Transcendental Dialectic, although reason can conceive of the unconditioned and employ it (only as an ideal) for some of its own purposes, it can have no theoretical knowledge of it.

Thus, the perspective of the critical philosophy, which shapes the argument of the *Critique*, holds that the ideas of reason are necessary, though they have only a regulative purpose. Their constitutive function is rejected outright, saying that they cannot be given in objective experience according to the yardsticks of the Transcendental Aesthetic and Analytic. Later, in the critical endeavour, we find Kant taking this conclusion to new heights both in the second and third *Critiques*, i.e., in the moral, and aesthetic and teleological realms, through which he attempts to pave the way for an integrated philosophy of the theoretical and the practical.

Check Your Progress I

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit

1) What does Kant mean by transcendental?

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1. 3. CHALLENGE TO METAPHYSICS

Kant proposes a "change in point of view" (CPR Bxxii note) to reform metaphysics from the shackles of dogmatism and scepticism. While dogmatism, according to Kant, trusts in the principles of metaphysics "without a previous critique of the faculty of reason itself, merely with a view to their success," scepticism holds a "general mistrust in pure reason," again, "without a previous critique, merely with a view to the failure of its assertions" (Kant, *On a Discovery*, 159 [Ak VIII, 226-27]). In the second edition Preface of the first *Critique*, he holds that "metaphysics is a completely isolated speculative science of reason, which soars far above the teachings of experience, and in which reason is indeed meant to be its own pupil. Metaphysics has hitherto been a merely random groping ..., a groping among mere concepts" (CPR Bxv).

In spite of his strictures on the traditional metaphysics, he is ready to admit that "the idea of [metaphysics] is as old as speculative human reason," and is "what rational being does not speculate either in scholastic or in popular fashion?" (CPR A842/B871). Interestingly, Kant opens the first *Critique* with a statement of the inevitability of metaphysics, indicating that it is "prescribed by the very nature of reason itself" (CPR Avii). Articulating this problem further, later in the *Critique*, he compares it to a constantly repeated act of ever returning "to a beloved one with whom we have had a quarrel" (CPR A850/B878), and in the *Prolegomena* to a "favourite child" (*Prolegomena* §57, Ak. IV, 353). He considers the human tendency towards metaphysics as quite natural or inherent to the faculty of reason, and holds that it is impossible to conceive of reason to be devoid of the same, despite the illusion resulting from it.

Dogmatic metaphysics attempts to have *a priori* knowledge of reality independent of sensibility and experience. The pure intellectual method through which metaphysicians arrive at indisputable knowledge of the ultimate nature of objects, however, is radically mistaken and empty, as Kant shows in the *Critique*. This, as Kemp Smith puts it, "transgresses the limits of possible experience, and contains only pretended knowledge" (Smith, 70), and Kant refutes it in the Transcendental Aesthetic, Analytic, and Dialectic of the *Critique*.

The new metaphysics, which, for Kant, is only worthy of the name, is metaphysics as a science, "a system of *a priori* knowledge from mere concepts" (*Metaphysic of Morals*, Ak. VI, 216), "the inventory of all our possessions through pure reason, systematically arranged" (CPR Axx). This science adopts a constructive procedure, or Schematism, and fuses the empirical and the formal. As it is impossible to give any of the ideas of reason in sensible intuition to which no application of categories is admissible, Kant rejects the possibility of having any knowledge of

them, whereby, from the perspective of theoretical reason, also rejecting their reality altogether. However, he has been able to show that "one kind of metaphysics is possible, which is enough to save the conception of cognition as a rational phenomenon, and of ourselves, correlatively, as rational beings" (Gardner, 307). Though the thrust of Kant is more about the limits of our knowledge, he positively maintains that the *Critique* lays the foundation for the metaphysics of nature and morality – of physics with respect to the material order (phenomenal realm), and of morality with respect to the intelligible order (noumenal realm).

Assuming that the quest of human reason for metaphysics is inherent to human nature ("natural disposition"), he looks for a justification of its ideas in the practical realm. Metaphysics of morals is indirectly a concession Kant gives to fulfil the natural quest of human reason for the realization of its ultimate ideals, which he rejects as untenable on the basis of the principles enshrined in the *Critique* itself. The primacy of the practical, which is the hallmark of transcendental philosophy, however, indicates that this move is not only justifiable, but warranted for developing the complete system of critical philosophy. Kant tailors human natural disposition for metaphysics into the new metaphysics.

1.4. FACULTIES AND NATURE OF KNOWLEDGE

It is at the foundation of Kant's transcendental programme to identify and examine the nature of the powers of human knowing; only then can we be equipped to determine the extent of our knowledge "that is absolutely objective" (CPR A249). His philosophical thrust to limit the extent of the application of the intellectual faculties is central to his metaphysical thesis, and accordingly, he holds that the human intellect lacks the power of intellectual intuition. This limitation leads Kant to conclude that knowledge of objects is possible only if they are given through a faculty distinct from the intellect itself. Assigning a legitimate role to sensibility, he identifies three closely interrelated faculties of the human mind. They are (i) sensibility (*Sinnlichkeit*) which conforms our perceptions to human forms of intuition, viz., space and time; (ii) understanding (*Verstand*) which conforms our individual judgments regarding objects to the categories of thought; and (iii) reason (*Vernunft*) which conforms the collective totality of our judgments regarding objects to certain structural requirements of systematic unity, by regulating the use of the concepts and rules of the understanding, and thus organizing coherent experiences. At the initial level, sensibility is equipped with receptivity and the understanding with spontaneity. Or, it can be expressed in terms of *givenness* and the *consciousness of the given*: "the aspect of having something given to one, and the aspect of making the given intelligible to oneself" (Cassirer, 53). Kant holds that all order and system in nature are due to the mind, and they are classified into two types of concepts. The first kind, space and time, originate in sensibility, and, the other, the categories originate in the understanding. Throughout the *Critique* Kant insists that these concepts are not derived from experience, but experience to be experience at all, it presupposes them: objects must be spatial and temporal, and must possess categorial features. This leads Kant to show that these concepts are pure in nature and *a priori* in origin.

In the case of sensibility and understanding we find them balancing the operation and validation of each other: experience validating categories, and, in their turn, the categories making experience possible. However, in the case of reason, although it acts on the results of the understanding, it creates no objects, but only postulates theoretical unities. This is an unacceptable procedure according to the Aesthetic and the Analytic. If applied, it is difficult to find anything 'objective' within these ideas of reason, which makes Buchdahl claim that the

autonomy of reason "is purchased at a price" (Buchdahl, 171). The stress on the spontaneity and autonomy of reason (and also of understanding, in this case), and the source of the ideas being the same reason indicate that nature is constrained by reason's own determining operation, which is restricted to the parameters of reason itself. The claim that reason has insight only into what it produces can also be looked at from a different, but an *a posteriori* perspective, where it may be said that, perhaps, we gradually learn by postulation and hypotheses to tune our reason according to the inherent structure of nature that is not obvious at all, but is being progressively revealed to us.

The unity of apperception which is so central to the *Critique* is not a unity for its own sake, but a unity that leads to a synthesis of representations, and thus to a unity in experience. All faculties work together with a goal of producing synthetic knowledge, which, for Kant, is *a priori* in origin. He shows that the content of sensible intuition by itself is individual in nature, and the formation of any combination cannot ensue from sensibility itself, but from the activity of the intellect. In transcendental logic, he names this process synthesis, which is so central to give rise to any valid knowledge *a priori*. The spontaneous process of this synthesis is characterized by Kant as one of literally laying hold of, or grasping or gripping together (*begreifen*) all elementary representations of our experience.

Kant's dictum, "thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind" (CPR A51/B75), indicates that left to each of them, they cannot give rise to coherent experience or knowledge. Synthesis is the central and fundamental process that is operative in the activities of experiencing and knowing, starting with perception in which appearances are combined together. Kant chiefly speaks in terms of two different kinds of synthesis: empirical synthesis and transcendental synthesis. Transcendental synthesis is performed by productive imagination through a manifold of pure intuition, while empirical synthesis is performed through perception or representations by reproductive imagination, where the activity of imagination is identified as understanding: the former results in the objective phenomenal world through the application of categories, and the latter in our knowledge of this phenomenal world.

The upward moving synthesis of various components of knowledge reaches a new level of cohesion and systematic unity in the synthetic activity of the final and ultimate intellectual faculty called reason (*Vernunft*). Armed with transcendental ideas, and the quest for the completion of the systematic knowledge, reason aims at the ultimate level of knowledge possible for us as human beings. Moreover, this positive approach of explicating the nature and functions of reason is overshadowed by the major task of the Dialectic to analyse the transcendental illusions to which reason naturally leads.

Lack of absolute unity in understanding paves the way for necessity of the ideas of pure reason, which are "not arbitrarily invented," but "are imposed by the very nature of reason itself" (CPR A327/B384). Pure reason operates with its pure concepts, which are otherwise known as "transcendental ideas." These are derived "from the nature of our reason" (CPR A336/B393); they are "not merely reflected but inferred concepts." Concepts of the understanding result from a 'reflection' on the manifold of appearances, leading to conceptualisation; they are pure or *a priori* because "they contain nothing more than the unity of reflection upon appearances, insofar as these appearances must necessarily belong to a possible empirical consciousness" (CPR A310/B367). Reason, on the other hand, through its pure concepts or ideas, does not merely reflect on the given, rather extends beyond anything that could be given in an act of assembling or *inferring* on which it has to operate. This obviates the fundamental nature of these concepts: their origin itself is in aloofness, and indirectness (through the lack of mediation with intuition)

exists in their relation to objects of experience. The concepts of reason, according to Kant, "have, in fact, no relation to any object that could be given as coinciding with them" (CPR A336/B393), whereby Kant brings to the fore their transcendental nature, and calls them "*transcendental ideas*" (CPR A321/B378).

The transcendental ideas of reason are regulative because they direct or regulate the operation of the understanding by leading it to systematic and absolute unity which it cannot achieve by employing its own categories. Three characteristics of regulative principles, which are integral to Kantian employment, are as follows: (i) they lack *constitutive* force; (ii) they have only a *methodological* function; and, finally, (iii) they possess a *transcendental* status. Kant considers the regulative employment of reason to be transcendentally valid because it leads both the receptive and spontaneous faculties to their completion in postulating the ideas of totality and the unconditioned unity.

The system of thought developed in the *Critique* is known as transcendental philosophy, and it deals with the system of necessary conditions of experience. For Kant, those conditions constitute knowledge of what is logically prior to experience, or of "what goes before all experience," i.e., *a priori*. The characteristic transcendental twist, is reflected in his crucial move from the question "What *is* something?" to "What *do we know* about something without primarily appealing to experience?" Or, in other words, instead of bringing reality into consideration, the purpose of the *Critique* is to explain how knowledge about reality is possible. In his attempt to initiate a transcendental inquiry, Kant's first concern is "to investigate the possibility of concepts *a priori*" (CPR A65-66/B90-91), by way of determining the sources of knowledge, and their valid application. With regard to these sources, the *a priori* concepts and ideas, it may be said that their transcendental use is possible as long as they are employed as regulative principles in the pursuit of knowledge, while a constitutive application of the same in pursuit of representing absolute realities is transcendent, and, hence, dialectical in nature.

When an inference is made "from transcendental concept of the subject, which contains nothing manifold, to the absolute unity of this subject itself..." (CPR A340/B397-98) it gives rise to transcendental paralogism. In formal logic paralogism is used to designate a formally fallacious syllogism with which one deceives oneself. Along this line Kant defines transcendental syllogism as "one in which there is a transcendental ground, constraining us to draw a formally invalid conclusion" (CPR A341/B399). It is an inevitable illusion, or a self-deception transcendentally motivated having its ground in the nature of human reason itself. A paralogism arises when the regulative idea of the self is illegitimately treated as constituting a self-subsistent entity. The indirect, but primary motive involved in the move of rational psychology is to prove the immortality of the soul, by misapplying the categories to the 'I' that is given only in inner intuition. Transcendental analysis of the paralogism shows that the fundamental aim of rational psychology cannot be achieved as the pure concept of the self – being completely indeterminate (in apperception) – onto which the categories are applied is empty of content, and, hence, beyond the application of schematised categories. This calls for a disciplining of the theoretical application of reason in the realms which are beyond the access of our human intellectual capabilities.

Further, an antinomy is a pair of mutually contradictory statements, both of which can be supported by formally valid, though transcendentally inconsistent, arguments. The lack of absolute synthetic unity in the operations of sensibility and understanding motivates reason to demand a totality of all conditions. On the part of the understanding, however, it is impossible to go beyond the phenomenal series as it is intrinsically bound to the data of sensibility and its own

forms in the categories; hence, in its search for absolute unity reason speculates beyond any possible experience, and finds the unconditioned by negating its categorial restrictions. This standpoint of reason, which may be equated to "God's point of view" with regard to the phenomenal world, acts in such a way that the complete series of conditions for every conditioned is at hand in the unconditioned. This is termed as a cosmological idea in the *Critique*, in which the totality of the phenomenally given is assumed and accepted by reason to press forward to the absolute unity of the phenomenal world. Such a conflict is caused by the fact that reason seeks a unity which transcends the understanding, and which nevertheless is meant to conform to the conditions of the understanding. In this process reason attempts to employ its ideas which transcend understanding, i.e., beyond the legitimate reaches of categories, which, in turn, results in the generation of the antinomies of reason. Kant identifies four categories the employment of which generates cosmological ideas, and with them antinomies. They are quantity, reality, causality, and necessity. These antinomies express the underlying conflict of reason with itself, the ideas of which are generated by an illicit extension of the categories.

Kant attempts in the *Critique* to solve this – to grant reason its legitimate rule over understanding, by appealing to the transcendental perspective of distinguishing appearance and the thing-in-itself. Taking all the four antinomies together, what Kant has in mind in their resolution is to show the role of transcendental philosophy in attaining the final synthesis of the conflicting positions of rationalism and empiricism in pure reason. Strictly speaking, the principles of the Aesthetic and Analytic are transcended in the Dialectic by introducing the distinction between appearance and thing-in-itself, although the resolution of the antinomies is made possible only by maintaining this distinction. This also indicates the importance of the ideas of reason in critical philosophy, and paves the way for introducing the primacy of practical reason in it. Although antinomies result from the speculative flights of theoretical reason and its conflict with itself and the understanding, their resolution in transcendental philosophy guarantees a continued mutual criticism, which should constantly aid us in furthering our knowledge of the world.

Check Your Progress II

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit

1) What do you understand by antinomy?

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1.5. TRANSCENDENTAL FREEDOM

Reason being the autonomous faculty, it "admits of no conditions antecedent to itself" (CPR A554/B582) whereby the conceivability of an intelligible causality of freedom opens its avenues for "the absolute spontaneity of an action" (CPR A448/B476). Theoretical philosophy as

enshrined in the Aesthetic and the Analytic considers man as part of the phenomenal world, subjected to the causal sequence of events in space and time. Yet, as an intelligible being, whose self-consciousness makes him aware of his noumenal existence, he can intervene in the causal system of natural events by an act of freedom and begin an original new series, thus initiating a new causality through freedom. It features a spontaneous and intelligent causality of freedom as opposed to receptivity.

This facilitates belief in the freedom of the will, laying the foundation of morality, establishing the subject's independence (i.e., freedom *from*) and power to legislate for itself (i.e., freedom *to*). However, it must be borne in mind that Kant's intention "has not been to establish the *reality* of freedom" (CPR A558/B586), but only to show that there involves no contradiction in thinking about freedom in the case of man who is a noumenal agent. Owing to his conviction that yielding to transcendental realism would save "neither nature nor freedom" (CPR A543/B571), Kant's resolution of the conflict between freedom and determinism is to see the entire domain of natural events as determined by efficient causes, but the *formal* presupposition of free acts as determined by intelligent causes. In this sense we are able to conceive the intelligible character as an explanation of the empirical, but ourselves being unable to conceive an explanation for the same, that is, how does this intelligible operate in relation to the empirical. Our intelligible faculties are such that we can conceive only spatial and temporal relations, and any determinate concept of a non-temporal agency, as called for here by Kant's explanation, is beyond us, or, in other words, at least, we have no understanding as to how noumenal causality operates with its transcendental freedom.

1.6. THE TRANSCENDENTAL IDEAL FOR SYSTEMATIC UNITY

Reason's search for the unconditioned, the dialectical inference from contingent existence to the existence of a necessary being is an effective drive to advance beyond experience to the transcendental ideal. Reason does not suppose that the ideal, *ens realissimum*, actually exists, but only posits it as the archetype for the complete determination of all other beings. This may be appropriately called the primordial being (*Urwesen*) or *ens originarium*, and having nothing above or beyond it may also be called the highest being, *ens summum*. It is also the *ens entium*, the being of all beings, or the ground of all beings, which in the transcendental sense is God, and the ideal of pure reason. Being the highest and the most perfect being of beings, its nature is further posited: "[This Divine Being] must be omnipotent, in order that the whole of nature and its relation to morality … may be subject to his will; omniscient, that he may know our innermost sentiments and their moral worth; omnipresent, that he may be immediately present for the satisfying of every need which the highest good demands; eternal, that this harmony of nature and freedom may never fail, etc." (CPR A815/B843). Here it must be borne in mind that what is being considered by Kant is the objective reality of the concept of God, and not the objective reality of God, as it is beyond the critical philosophy to consider it, as God cannot be given in intuition. It is also not necessary to presuppose the existence of a being to correspond to the ideal, but requires only the idea of such a being, so that at one stroke both the limits of reason and the purpose of ultimate unity can be achieved.

Kant insists that the transcendental ideal, or the concept of God can have the valid employment only as a regulative principle of reason; any attempt to employ the same to be constitutive of the existence of God would be dialectical and detrimental to the nature of human reason itself. The only possible proof for the existence of God, for Kant, must use moral

premises; his insistence to rule out speculative theology gives way to the possibility of moral theology, and an initial attempt is made in this regard in the "Canon of Pure Reason" (CPR A795/B823ff), which is elaborated in his later ethical works. Kant's analysis of speculative theology, seen positively, consistently protests against a metaphysic which claims to determine the necessary characteristics of the ultimate reality only by the exercise of pure reason, while at the same time, it must be said that his attempt to deny any reality beyond the employment of categories, and a synthesizing activity of sensibility and understanding, is intrinsically questionable.

The schema of God is only a human way of conceiving the ground of nature, for the purpose of employing our cognitive faculties, in order to arrive at the unified understanding of the world of sensibility and understanding. Therefore, theoretical philosophy, in fact, does not address the question of the belief in the existence of God (it being set apart for moral theology), but deals only about thinking of the world *as if* it were created by God, with a view to purposive unity of nature. Thus, for Kant, God seems to be a mere *device* to superimpose transcendental unity on nature and, thus, to make it systematic, purposive, and intelligible.

1. 7. PHENOMENON VS. NOUMENON

Transcendental philosophy is said to have at its basis a perspective on reality that, by necessity, has to oscillate between phenomena and noumena. In his fight against rationalism and empiricism, Kant does squarely meet their fundamental opposition and formulates the transcendental vision of reality in his famous statement "Thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind" (CPR A51/B75). The articulation and application of this vision to the varied realms of experience makes it necessary for Kant to distinguish between approaching reality from two fundamentally different viewpoints of phenomena and noumena. The world of experience or the object of experience given through sensibility and understanding is phenomena, i.e., objects of actual and possible sense experience, the knowledge of which is made possible through the application of the categories. Although Kant denies throughout the *Critique* any knowledge beyond the application of the categories, i.e., any metaphysical knowledge in the dogmatic sense, he does hold that that which appears has something beyond appearance, which he calls noumenon.

Check Your Progress III

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit

1) What is the difference between phenomenon and noumenon?

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1. 8. SYNTHETIC *A PRIORI* CHARACTER OF KNOWLEDGE

Assuming that empirical experience is contingent and non-pure in nature, Kant concludes that pure *a priori* principles are indispensable in the process of knowing. If, for example, causality is a concept that we use, not because our experience has a certain character, but because it makes objects of a certain sort, and their relations possible for us, then it has necessity for us; it is what we use to constitute an objective world, and so necessarily relative to our standpoint. It is this necessity and universality, and the objective sufficiency ensuing from them that constitute the certainty associated with *a priori* in the *Critique*. All synthetic *a priori* propositions for Kant rest on the structure of the human mind, which, as he *believes*, has the basic function of synthesising what is given in sense experience; this is a process of ordering the given according to the forms of perception (space and time) and the categories of thinking, both of them being the contributions of the mind. Given this structure of the mind, it can formulate concepts and statements, which are synthetic (ampliative) and *a priori* (in advance to sense experience) in relation to the forms of thought. Kant's thrust on the synthetic *a priori* is motivated by his ultimate aim of transcendental philosophy, namely, establishing the *a priori* and unchanging elements of morality.

1.9. LET US SUM UP

Thus, Kant's search for absolute certainty, in terms of necessity and universality of the *a priori* knowledge that the *Critique* aims at achieving, results from a perspective which is ultimately possible only for God, the reality of which itself is an unknowable according to the critical philosophy. It is, then, either contradictory, or simply impossible. In spite of the validating reference to possible experience, it is a perspective of gaining unbounded knowledge of reality, which is beyond the prowess of human beings. Transcendental claim of having *a priori* principles in order to make experience possible is to put the cart before the horse; the claim of purity and certainty being necessarily and universally part of the synthetic *a priori* is to begin philosophising upon something that which is not present at all. Finally, to quote from the *Critique* itself, "transcendental ... is ... necessarily unknown to me" (CPR A496/B524). Hence, there is a need to look further among the Kantian *Critiques*, especially in the *Critique of Practical Reason*, how the critical philosophy conceives an answer to its unresolved issues from the perspective of practical philosophy and into the *Critique of Judgment* to see how the most fundamental process of synthesis is effected in the human processes of knowing.

1.10. KEY WORDS

A Posteriori and Priori: The terms ***a priori*** ("*prior to*") and ***a posteriori*** ("*subsequent to*") are used to distinguish two types of knowledge, justifications or arguments. *A priori* knowledge or justification is independent of experience (for example 'All bachelors are unmarried'); *a posteriori* knowledge or justification is dependent on experience or empirical evidence (for example 'Some bachelors are very happy').

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1.12. ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answers to Check Your Progress I

1 Kant claims that "the word 'transcendental' ... does not signify something passing beyond all experience but something that indeed precedes it *a priori*, but that is intended to make cognition of experience possible" (*Prolegomena*, Appendix, Ak. 4:373n). It is in this sense that he calls his philosophy transcendental.

Answers to Check Your Progress II

1. An antinomy is a pair of mutually contradictory statements, both of which can be supported by formally valid, though transcendentally inconsistent, arguments. The lack of absolute synthetic unity in the operations of sensibility and understanding motivates reason to demand a totality of all conditions.

Answers to Check Your Progress III

1. The world of experience or the object of experience given through sensibility and understanding is phenomena, i.e., objects of actual and possible sense experience, the knowledge of which is made possible through the application of the categories. Although Kant denies throughout the *Critique* any knowledge beyond the application of the categories, i.e., any metaphysical knowledge in the dogmatic sense, he does hold that that which appears has something beyond appearance, which he calls noumenon.

UNIT 2 **KANT-2**

Contents

2.0. OBJECTIVES

This unit of study aims at exposing Kant's practical philosophy in the light of his two major ethical works, namely *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals* (*GM*) and *Critique of Practical Reason* (*CPrR*). After a brief and general introduction to Kant's practical philosophy, the study presents two kinds of imperatives in Kant's ethical works, namely hypothetical and categorical imperatives. The categorical imperative is identified as Kant's concept of moral law for all empirical rational beings. The exposition proceeds to show that *a priori* moral law poses freedom, God and immortality as postulates of morality.

2.1. INTRODUCTION

Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), a philosopher of enlightenment, though famous mainly for his epistemology and metaphysics, is outstanding and influential in the field of ethics too till the present era. In every field of human enquiry Kant believes that the human reason has the responsibility of determining the source, extent and bounds of its own principles. Living in an era when the emergence of science and secular society and the bloody religious conflicts of the reformation affected human life alarmingly, he suggested a critical approach to every sphere of human thought and submitted everything to the "test of criticism". In the field of morality, he was looking for a secure basis that would be independent of the specific religious creeds and traditions that had divided society and culture throughout the modern era, and could limit the control of religious and political powers on our moral lives. Thus, of his two major ethical works, *GM* (1785) would attempt to give a precise and strong foundation to morals, and *CPrR* (1788) would take up the task of investigating the nature of human reason employed in morality and highlighting the moral aspects that touched the human conduct. He believed that human reason has the capacity to determine *a priori* and independently of sensibility the realm of freedom and of what ought to be, and therefore our moral determinations are *a priori, i.e.,* their justifications do not depend on any particular course of experience.

2.2. THE CONCEPT OF IMPERATIVES

Imperatives are understood as rules that we impose in matters of conduct upon our active powers (*Critique of Pure Reason* (hereafter *CPR*), A 547/B 575, 472). They are the conclusions of a practical reasoning which state that one has reason to act in a certain way. They necessitate the will to do or to refrain from something. In *GM* Kant says: "The representation of an objective principle in so far as it necessitates the will is called a command (of reason), and the formula of the command is called an imperative." (*GM*, Ak 4: 413, 24). "All imperatives are expressed by an ought." (*GM*, Ak 4: 413, 24). The imperatives express the oughtness of an action either for its own sake or for some other end, for example, one ought to do physical exercises for the sake of health, or one ought to keep one's agreements. A finite rational being is ought to obey only those commands which are presented to the will as practically good by means of a representation of reason and not by the subjective causes or sensuous inclinations (*GM*, Ak 4: 413, 24). The necessitation of reason does not guarantee that the right actions will necessarily take place in those beings, but only that the reason gives laws which are imperatives in the form of necessitation and which can only tell what ought to take place in a rational being in moral determinations.

Kant identifies two kinds of imperatives that are commonly held to be applied in human conduct (*GM*, Ak 4: 414-419, 25-29). He says that all imperatives command either hypothetically or categorically. These two kinds of imperatives, namely **the hypothetical and categorical imperatives**, stand for two aspects of practical reason, namely empirical and pure respectively. A hypothetical imperative represents an action as good or necessary as a means to some desired end or interest (*GM*, Ak 4: 414, 25). It says that one ought to perform some action, if one wants to fulfill a particular interest. For example, 'if you want to maintain your good reputation, you should be honest'. Here we may note two parts: the 'if' part which expresses the particular desire of an agent and the part which expresses the means that is required of him to acquire the desired goal. The means are the required actions that take a person to the desired goal. They are required to be carried out only by those who have an interest in the said-goal. If a person is not interested in maintaining a good reputation, then he is exempted, or at least is not obliged by this imperative to be honest. Therefore the hypothetical imperatives are held to be imperatives and are relevant only for those who have an interest in the goal. In hypothetical imperatives, a relevant question is: why should a person be obliged, if there is no reason to perform an action or to follow a means? The validity of a hypothetical imperative is conditioned by having certain ends or interests that are rationally optional. In other words, a hypothetical imperative has only a conditional validity.

What makes an imperative hypothetical is not the appearance of the 'if' clause in its formulation. For example, "Eat whenever you are hungry", where there is no 'if' clause, yet which provides an obligation to an agent, who, whenever has a desire for satisfying the hunger, should oblige himself for a particular action, namely eating. Therefore the sole determining feature of a hypothetical imperative is that it obliges the agent to an action only on condition that the agent has a desire for something that the action could bring about. You ought to do a certain act *if* you

will a certain end. Kant puts it: "whoever wills the end wills also the means that are indispensably necessary to his actions and that lie in his power." (*GM*, Ak 4: 417, 27).

One can hold a hypothetical imperative either by performing the prescribed action or by giving up the end. In the example stated above, when a person has the interest of maintaining his good reputation he follows the means prescribed by the imperative and thus satisfies the hypothetical imperative. On the other hand, a person who has no interest in maintaining his good reputation – non-interestedness of a person for the end can be either due to his incapacity of being honest or because of the mere disinterestedness in the end itself – need not follow the demands of the hypothetical imperative, because he is not obliged by this imperative as he has no reason to follow the means. Nevertheless such a person does not necessarily neglect the hypothetical imperative. The giving up of the action that is prescribed by a hypothetical imperative is not in itself a case of the negligence of that imperative. However, the hypothetical imperative so expressed has nothing to do with those hypothetical imperatives where one does the same action with another motive/end in view, or where one uses some other means for the same end. For example, those cases, where a person who practices honesty with the intention of becoming a holy person, or a person who aims a good reputation through unjust means, etc., do not come under the same hypothetical imperative.

A hypothetical imperative does not necessarily imply a sure or absolute means for the desired end. There is no necessary connection between the means proposed and the desire expressed in a hypothetical imperative. In the example given above, being honest need not necessarily secure a person with good reputation, but only suggests that the means given is at least good or necessary, though it cannot absolutely guarantee one with good reputation. The hypothetical imperative, 'if you want to maintain your good reputation, you should be honest' is not the same as a conditional proposition which states, 'if you are honest, you will be reputed'; in the latter there is a necessary consequence from the antecedent clause which expresses the condition. One of the rules of logic states: in a true conditional proposition, if the antecedent part is affirmed, the consequent part should also be affirmed, even though the affirmation of the consequent part need not necessarily imply the affirmation of the given antecedent part. Now what we are assured by a hypothetical imperative is that the proposed means is in anyway congenial to the realization of the end. In other words, the means suggested in a hypothetical imperative is both not inimical and good and expresses some relation, in which some may express necessary relations while some others may not be so necessary, but express at least some form of validity or usefulness for the end or ends to be achieved.

Kant distinguishes **two kinds of hypothetical imperatives: rules of skill and counsels of prudence**. (*GM*, Ak 4: 415-417, 25-27). In the rules of skill, there is no question at all of whether the end is reasonable or good. The point of interest is what must be done to attain the end or whether the prescribed means is efficacious to carry out the end. Kant gives the example of a doctor who uses his own prescriptions to cure a patient, and a prisoner who uses his own means to kill a victim. From the point of view of the rules of skill, both these actions are of equal value in so far as each serves to bring about its purpose perfectly. Moreover, a significant factor about the rules of skill is that these rules are not always relevant for all because one may or may not have occasions to use those rules and to accomplish the things that one has learned. Let us take the hypothetical imperative, 'if you want to be a good music teacher, learn music properly.'

In this example, even if one learns music properly, he may not get an opportunity to teach or to conduct music. Later due to some reasons, he may be engaged not in the field of music but in some other field, for example, medicine. Whether a person uses his skills that he has learned depends on what he chooses to do. Sometimes some of our choices are arbitrary also. Therefore the imperatives involved in the rules of skill, Kant calls, 'problematic', because the ends they propose to secure are ends that one may or may not pursue (*GM*, Ak 4: 415, 25). In short the means and the ends that the rules of skill propose concern only some people, some times and the value of the action depends mainly on the effectiveness of the proposed means to bring about the end.

Counsels of prudence are different from the rules of skill. There is no uncertainty of usefulness in the counsels of prudence as is the case with the rules of skill. Kant gives the example of happiness. Though there are many ways in which a person can find his happiness, and that the means chosen and the interests of the people may also vary in the course of time and place and also from person to person, the proposition that 'every one wants to be happy' remains valid; and everyone pursues the end that one is fitted to secure. Prudence, for Kant, is the skill in the choice of means to one's own greatest well being. The word 'prudence' is used in a double sense: worldly wisdom and private wisdom. The former is the skill to influence others so as to use them for one's own purpose[s], and the latter is the sagacity to combine these purposes for one's own lasting advantage. The value of the former is reduced to the value of the latter. If one has the former and lacks the latter, then he is called clever and cunning but on the whole imprudent. The counsels of prudence, as opposed to the 'problematic' nature of the rules of skill, are expressed in principles that are assertoric, and are pursued by all (*GM*, Ak 4: 414-416, 25-26).

Having seen the nature and kinds of hypotheical imperatives, let us now look at another type of imperative, namely categorical imperaitve. **Categorical imperatives are clearily distinguished from hyothetical imperatives**. A categorical imperative "declares an action to be of itself objectively necessary without any reference to any purpose (*Absicht*), i.e., without any end (*Zweck*)." (*GM*, Ak 4: 415, 25). Unlike the hypothetical imperatives, the basic features of a categorical imperative are its absolute, unconditional and universal nature. The categorical imperative affirms an action to be rationally necessary and inescapable regardless of the specific interest of the agent. It commands absolutely even without presupposing empirical ends, which in turn is the case with the hypothetical imperatives. A few examples of categorical imperative are: one ought to help a certain person in need; one ought not to press one's advantage; one should not withhold the information; one ought to make amends for what one has done. Let us analyze the first categorical imperative. The reason for helping a person in need does not presuppose a prior interest in helping or in some further end outside one's action. It comes from the fact that as a rational agent one necessarily wills the relevant principle of benevolence. If a person acts because of his prior interest in helping a person, then in the absence of that interest he will not be finding a reason for helping the other and so can refrain from the benevolent act of helping the other, and hence becomes a hypothetical imperative, and not a moral imperative. Thus the moral imperatives are pure morals, which command actions from a sense of duty alone, and are different from the hypothetical imperatives that recommend actions from inclinations or for particular ends.

Kant identifies his concept of moral law with categorical imperative. The basic factor of moral law is not the matter or the object of action but only the form of the law, namely universality. The moral worth of the action is to be found "in the *principle* of the will, with no regard to the ends that can be brought about through such an action." (*GM*, Ak 4: 400, 13). The moral law holds an action as good or necessary in itself, without reference to any end *outside* the action. The interest of the agent is in the performance *of* the action itself. One ought to perform an action for its own sake, regardless of one's desires and interests which stay outside the action. The value of the moral action is unconditional. That is to say, the moral law as categorical imperative places an unconditional inviolable requirement of action on an empirical rational agent.

According to Kant, means-ends relation in a hypothetical imperative is not only inadequate but inimical to the demands of the principles of morality. A hypothetical imperative can only show some reason for some action which in some way may be related to morality but not to the moral principles as such. It shows only that the means suggested and the ends intended are two different aspects of a system of law and that the ends can be achieved or at least aimed at through the means proposed. Kant does not allow these kinds of means-end differences to be present in the determination of the moral imperatives. He believes that the supreme principle of morality should be universal, necessary, unconditional and absolute and is expressed as 'categorical imperative.'

Check Your Progress I

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer.
b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit.

1) Explain the difference between Categorical and Hypothetical Imperatives

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2.3. THE CONCEPT OF MORAL LAW

From infancy Kant was always been struck by 'the starry heavens above and the moral law within', the two orders, the physical and the moral. In the moral order, his interest was to find out "What should be the nature of morality?" for all empirical rational beings including human beings. In his search, he finds the nature of morality or the moral law as categorical imperative. In the history of philosophy we ascribe the term 'categorical imperative' in moral philosophy to Kant. One cannot understand Kant's practical philosophy apart from this well articulated central term of his moral theory called categorical imperative. Kant argues in *GM* that any moral argument for finite rational beings must be understood as an argument based on the categorical imperative (*GM*, Ak 4: 420, 29). Behind every sound moral judgment should there be the

principle of categorical imperative. For, reason demands that the moral law for every empirical rational agent be categorical and imperative.

Moral law for Kant is a synthetic *a priori* proposition. A proposition is synthetic if its predicate is not already contained in the concept of the subject; otherwise it is analytic. A proposition is *a priori* if it can be known independently of experience and is *a posteriori* if it can be known only through experience. Now the problem that Kant places before us is that the moral principles are synthetic *a priori* propositions. Kant formulates the question in this way: "How are synthetic *a priori* judgments possible?" (Kant *CPR*, B 73, 91).

Kant believes that a moral law for all empirical rational beings can be derived only when it is rooted in the autonomous freedom of the agent. The source of morality should be traced in the rational agent's capacity of freedom to legislate himself without any determination of the empirical factors in which he may be found. Such a moral law alone could be objective, holding absolute and necessary obligations on all rational beings. Any conjunction with the empirical nature of the agent for the determination of the moral law affects its purity. The moral law must be foundationally rational, i.e., *a priori* and should have the form of universality. The general formula of the moral law is called **the formula of universal law**, which reads as, "Act only according to that maxim whereby you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law." (*GM*, Ak 4: 421, 30). Kant's *a priori* moral law has universal application. He calls a rational moral being universal law-giver as well. The obliging universal validity of a maxim is a sufficient ground to determine the morality of an action. Whatever maxims are permissible or impermissible or obligatory for one person must likewise be for any another rational agent in similar circumstances. The deliberations of a moral agent have to be based on pure practical reason. They do not admit partiality. In practical principles, our canon is, "we must be able to will that a maxim of our action become a universal law." (Kant, *GM*, Ak 4: 424, 32) The precise work of pure practical reason is to assume the basic universal nature of the freedom of rational beings for self-legislation and to present it in the form of a categorical imperative. The moral law asserts the universal nature of rational beings and the consequent rational obligation of a will that expresses itself as free yet morally obliged. All empirical rational beings who are affected by sensual impulses have to be obliged by the moral law and should act from duty, allowing no sensual impulse to take control over them. To Kant, a rational being is the author of his moral principles and so if he acts according to them, he obeys the laws of his own autonomous reason.

Kant does not admit any empirical factor to be the determining basis of moral duty. Only pure practical reason has the capacity to provide universal, objective and absolute morals for rational beings. The empirical factors of human nature are contingent, and any dependence would affect the reason's power of being practical by itself. Therefore, they should not be the basis of the moral law of rational beings. The empirical and sensible features of human being are unable to state what should be for a rational being. From what *is* of human being does not come out what *should be* of rational being. The moral principles should have the pure practical reason as their determining basis. The moral law as categorical imperative must be the duty-bound *a priori* general principle of action and therefore the law *of* action for all situations. In human situations, when the will stands in conflict between the choice of moral duty and the appealing sensible good, the pure reason presents the *a priori* rational possibility of an objective and absolute moral law, that is valid for everyone, everywhere and at all times.

A good will, for Kant, is nothing but a will determined by the pure practical power of reason. It is good in itself. It demands action from duty alone and all other factors are irrelevant in matters of moral determination. The concept of duty does not come under the concept of good of human sensibility. If one forsakes duty for the sake of an empirical good, then it is, for Kant, a deviation from one's autonomy of reason. Any inalienable dependence on empirical factors brings forth only heteronomous and conditional laws of action (Kant, *CPrR*, Ak 5: 33, 48). Kant says, "If we assume, prior to the moral law, any object-under the name of a good-as the determining basis of the will and then to derive the supreme practical principle from it, this would always bring about heteronomy and displace the moral principle." (Kant, *CPrR*, Ak 5: 109, p. 140). Kant is not for a stupid good will. A good considered without a reference to reason is not acceptable to him. It does not at the same time mean that a good will is the only good thing in Kant's practical philosophy. Kant says in *GM* that intelligence, wit, judgement, gifts of fortune, power, riches, honour, even health, etc., are good, but only if the will, that corrects their influence on the mind, is good (Kant, *GM*, Ak 4: 393, 7). Kant suggests that we judge our pleasure and sorrow by a higher satisfaction or dissatisfaction within ourselves namely, the moral. The moral law has to decide whether we ought to indulge or refrain from actions in the conflicting situations of the will. As an ethicist, Kant is interested mainly in cases where one's inclinations and duty are at conflict. In the conflicts between duty and inclinations, reason has to determine the will so that the will may seek not the sensual pleasure but act according to duty.

Kant believes that, whereas the moral law as such, as an idea of reason, is valid for God, angels, human beings and all other rational beings, if there are any elsewhere, the imperative nature of the moral law is valid only for those rational beings which are finites, with reason and sensibility. To such empirical rational beings, moral law is an imperative, for they experience constraints in the observation of the moral law. The categorical imperative specifies the nature of moral law for them. To a perfect rational being, the moral law is not an imperative but 'the law of holiness', because they possess unlimited reason. Kant writes, "… for the will of a maximally perfect being, the moral law is a law of *holiness*, but for the will of every finite rational being it is a law of duty, of moral necessitation, and of the determination of his actions through *respect* for that law and from reverence for his duty." (Kant, *CPrR*, Ak 5: 82, 106). As different from a pure will, the human will does not necessarily identify with the moral law. We finite beings do not have a *holy will* so fully determined by its inner lawful constitution that it acts spontaneously and without struggle. The human will is not independent of sensuous affections. As empirical beings we are pathologically affected by our sensible features. We are affected 'through the moving-causes of sensibility'. We have a tendency to pursue what we have found in our sense experience as pleasure giving. An independence from such sensuous affections or tendency would be impossible for all empirical beings including human beings. We, however, have the freedom of will to determine ourselves independently of the influence of those sensuous affections. Moral law is the expression of this autonomy of the human will, the freedom to determine oneself independently of sensuous influences. The moral law, thus, is categorical imperative for those rational beings that are affected by sensual impulses.

2.4. THE POSTULATES OF MORALITY

By reflecting on the implications of moral duty, for example on issues like: 'What is the real outcome of moral action?', 'What is the destiny of moral life?' 'How can the conditions of being good be fulfilled?', 'What is the possibility of a finite being like human being to the complete fulfilment of moral demands?', etc., Kant arrives at certain postulates of pure practical reason. These postulates are, besides freedom which is the only necessary basis as far as the pure reason's determination of moral law is concerned, immortality of the soul and existence of God. Kant discusses these postulates in *CPrR*'s 'dialectic of pure practical reason'. He says, "These postulates are not theoretical dogmas but *presuppositions* from a necessary practical point of view." (Kant, *CPrR*, Ak 5: 132, 167). In the postulates of pure practical reason, human beings find certain answers to the issues of moral duty to which the speculative reason has no access. The postulates are justified through the moral law and for its sake, and do not make any expansion of theoretical cognition (Kant, *CPrR*, Ak 5: 138, 175). Let us proceed to expose these postulates to see their significance in Kant's practical philosophy.

According to Kant a theoretical proof that a rational being is free is impossible for the human reason. We cannot collect any empirical data about freedom for cognitive knowledge, since freedom transcends anything that the senses can reveal. The impossibility of an experience of freedom as an object present in the external empirical world does not negate, for Kant, the very possibility of freedom. He asserts that the freedom of the will and our membership of the intelligible world are legitimate assumptions from the practical point of view (Kant, *GM*, Ak 4: 447, 452, 49, 53). Freedom can be proved only *a priori* by methods of pure practical reason. It is established on an insight of reason into its own necessary activity. Kant claims, "We must necessarily attribute to every rational being who has a will also the idea of freedom, under which only can such a being act…. We cannot possibly think of a reason that consciously lets itself be directed from outside as regards its judgments…. Reason must regard itself as the author of its principles independent of foreign influences." (Kant, *GM*, Ak 4: 448, 50). The significance of the concept of freedom for the moral law and moral action necessitates him to postulate freedom from the pure practical use of reason. The pure practical postulate of freedom is acceptable to theoretical reason as well, since the latter is unable to disprove the possibility of freedom and the pure reason's assuming of freedom from a practical point of view is neither self-contradictory nor negation of our world of sensible experience.

The knowledge about the possibility of freedom is to be derived from moral law. It is the moral law which offers us the notion of freedom. Kant says that our knowledge of morality precedes the knowledge of freedom (Kant, *CPrR*, Ak 5: 29, 43). Our moral consciousness may be regarded as 'the ground of our knowledge of freedom'. The freedom is to be understood as 'the reason for the being' (*ratio essendi*) of moral law, while the moral law is seen as 'the reason for the cognition' (*ratio cognoscendi*) of this freedom (Kant, *CPrR*, Ak 5: 4, 5). Freedom may be also considered further as the third term that Kant introduces to synthesize the rational agent and the moral action, the will and the object of the will. That is, besides the presupposition of the freedom as the *ratio essendi* of moral law, freedom is presupposed also in moral action where the free will, obliged by the moral law, chooses to act morally (Kant, *Lectures on Ethics*, notes prepared by Johann Friedrich Vigilantius, 1793, Ak 27: 506-508, 272-273) One could trace the source of moral law and the moral action in the subject's freedom which expresses itself in moral law as autonomy and obligation, which, in turn, demands moral action from the subject. Thus the freedom of the will is justified on morality.

The ideas of God and immortality are the other two pure practical postulates besides the postulate of freedom that Kant gives in *CPrR*. Having postulated freedom as the only foundation or the reason for the being of moral law, Kant assumes or justifies one's beliefs in immortality and God on the foundation of morality. Like the concept of freedom, the ideas of God and immortality cannot be proved or disproved by the speculative reason. They lack theoretical grounds to substantiate their objective realities. According to Kant, the only possible way to deal with them is to take them as postulates of pure practical reason. It is morality that leads one to have beliefs in God and immortality. The moral law as such does not need the postulates of immortality and God. These ideas are postulated by the pure practical reason because of their relevance in moral life. They ensure the possibility of one's reverence for the moral law. The moral endeavors receive vitality and efficacy through these necessary presuppositions. The beliefs in God and immortality provide an empirical agent with a supreme head and a required time respectively to live his virtuous dispositions fully and to work for the establishment of a moral world. An empirical rational being necessarily assumes that there exists a supreme being to guarantee the totality of all objects of his permissible desires (Kant, *CPrR*, Ak 5: 132-133, 168), as well as an everlasting state of reward for the moral dispositions. It does not at the same time mean that one pursues the moral law because of one's desire for complete good, i.e., the highest possible combination of morality and happiness, which otherwise would destroy the purity of the moral law. The idea of complete good is a practical necessity for human beings. As the possibility for such a totality or the highest unity of virtues and happiness is not empirically evident, or at least remains as a contingent factor in this world, it is practically necessary that we convince ourselves that our moral endeavours somehow are not in vain but lead to the complete good. Such reflections on practical grounds help us to make progress in our moral duties. At the same time, God cannot be thought of in moral theory as a law-giver or as a power that forces moral law on anyone with the threat of punishment because any external compulsion would destroy the moral autonomy of the agent. For Kant, the moral law is the law of autonomy and so it should be a self-legislative law. Kant's position would be that a rational being like human being should obey the commands of moral law, and a moral life would be the best way to please God. Kant does not believe that we can please God in any other way than a good moral disposition. "Apart from a good life-conduct, anything which the human being supposes that he can do to become pleasing to God is a mere religious delusion and counterfeit service of God." (Kant, *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*, Ak 6: 170, 166). Kant, however, agrees with the concept of a supreme being whose will is a law for all, without his being thought of as the author of the law (Kant, *Metaphysics of Morals*, Ak 6: 227, 19). In other words, the moral law may be considered as the will of God, but the rational agent should be obliged by the moral law not because it is the will of God, but because it is founded on the autonomy of pure reason. What Kant advocates in morality is a practical theism. His idea of God agrees also with the idea of a creator who has so ordered the universe that there be unity, interconnectedness and purpose for this world. The idea of such a supreme being is also an impetus for the advancement of knowledge. The ideas of unity, interconnectedness and purpose of this world, together with the above stated conceptions about God would provide impetus and fervour for leading a moral life.

Kant believes that our beliefs are bound up with our acceptance of the moral law. He has not opposed one's belief in God or immortality but only denied the theoretical possibility for proving the existence of God and the attempts to found morality on religious beliefs. Actually, Kant's

argument for belief in God and immortality is so powerfully made that one cannot overlook them in the daily life. Kant might claim that he could strengthen the beliefs in God and immortality by separating them from metaphysical illusions and by re-introducing them on their practical necessity. He would regard religious beliefs as possible components of morality. For him, morality does not rest on religion, but religious faith is founded on morality. The requirements of morality necessitate the postulation of the religious beliefs such as the immortality of the soul and the existence of God for human beings. These postulates are necessary ideas that make the reception of moral law possible, and are reasonable beliefs arising from moral dispositions. The freedom poses nothing contradictory but favours them so that the moral law may continue to exist as the law of all empirical rational beings. Kant thus shows that morality, which is fundamentally independent of religious belief, leads to religion. In short, the ideas of God and immortality are postulated by pure reason for our practical purposes. Kant says that 'it is morally necessary' to assume their existence. (Kant, *CPrR*, Ak 5: 124-125, 157-159.). They are the necessary practical presuppositions for establishing the reverence for the moral law or for assuring morality in the empirical rational beings. In the absence of such postulates one might land up in absurdities causing one's forsaking of moral duty. Even though Kant speaks of the different practical usefulness of the beliefs in God and immortality, his primary interest with the postulates seems to be to find the truth of morality. At the same time the ideas of God and immortality as necessary practical postulates could support the possibility of an autonomous moral law.

2.5. LET US SUM UP

Kant's practical philosophy tries to present the nature of morality for all empirical rational beings. Here Kant highlights the capacity of rational agents for self-legislation. The autonomous freedom of the rational agent is the reason for the being of moral law. Moral law is shown to be a synthetic *a priori* proposition. The moral law, so conceived, is nothing but a categorical imperative. It gives unconditional, universal and absolute principles, applicable to every one, everywhere and always. Unlike the hypothetical imperative, which commands an action for the sake of an end in view, the moral imperatives demand action for its own sake without any interest in its end. The reflections on morality include not only its *a priori* foundation but also the implications for empirical rational beings. Thus morality takes us to the postulates of pure practical reason, namely freedom, on which alone the moral law is founded, God and immortality. These are necessary practical presuppositions for the sake of moral agents who are not only rational but empirical as well.

Check Your Progress II

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer.
b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit.

1) Explain the difference between synthetic and analytic propositions.
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2.6. KEY WORDS

Imperatives: Imperatives are understood as rules that we impose in matters of conduct upon our active powers.

Categorical Imperative: A categorical imperative declares an action to be of itself objectively necessary without any reference to any purpose, i.e., without any end.

Synthetic A priori: That which is not contained in the very concept of subject but at the same time is known independently of experience.

Postulates: Postulates are the presuppositions of reason from a pure practical point of view. In Kant's practical philosophy, they are freedom, God and immortality.

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2.8. ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answers to Check Your Progress I

1. Kant identifies two kinds of imperatives that are commonly held to be applied in human conduct (*GM*, Ak 4: 414-419, 25-29). He says that all imperatives command either hypothetically or categorically. These two kinds of imperatives, namely **the hypothetical and categorical imperatives**, stand for two aspects of practical reason, namely empirical and pure

respectively. A hypothetical imperative represents an action as good or necessary as a means to some desired end or interest (*GM*, Ak 4: 414, 25).

Answers to Check Your Progress II

1. Moral law for Kant is a synthetic *a priori* proposition. A proposition is synthetic if its predicate is not already contained in the concept of the subject; otherwise it is analytic. A proposition is *a priori* if it can be known independently of experience and is *a posteriori* if it can be known only through experience. Now the problem that Kant places before us is that the moral principles are synthetic *a priori* propositions.

UNIT 3 **HEGEL**

CONTENTS

3.0. OBJECTIVES

In this Unit you are expected to know:

- Explanation of the Absolute Idea of Hegel
- Evolution of reality – Organic theory
- Dialectic method
- Hegel, an idealist

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Hegel is a German thinker who devoted his life wholly to academic purists. His science of logic, dialectical reasoning, encyclopaedia of philosophical sciences, philosophy of Right – all provide an intellectual foundation for modern nationalism. Hegel was an idealist who methodically constructed a comprehensive system of thought about the world. He took a much more systematic approach than Kant by making absolute consciousness as the key source of ultimate connections among all other things. Hegel held that Reality must be Rational and that its ultimate structure is revealed in the structure of our thought. He attempts to give an elaborate, comprehensive and systematic ontology from a logical standpoint.

As Kant has noted in antinomies that one general description of the world commonly leads us into a contemplation of the opposite, Hegel made a further supposition that the two concepts so held in opposition can always be united by a shift to some higher level of thought. Thus, the human mind invariably moves from thesis to anti-thesis and then to synthesis, employing each synthesis as the thesis for a new opposition to be transcended by yet a higher level continuing, in a perpetual walk of intellectual achievement.

Compared to other philosophers, it is rather very difficult and harder to understand Hegel. He differs from Parmenides and Spinoza in conceiving the whole, not as a simple substance, but as as complex system like an organism. In Hegel's view, world is not an illusion. The apparently separate things of the world have a greater or a lesser degree of reality and their reality exists in the aspect of the whole. Hegel calls, 'The Whole', in all its complexity as 'The Absolute'.

3.2 CONCEPT OF THE ABSOLUTE

This Absolute is not a Being separate from the world, nature or even individual persons, thus not making a sharp distinction between appearance and reality as in Plato's philosophy. In Hegel's view, nothing is unrelated and whatever we experience as separate things, will upon careful reflection, lead us to the other things to which they are related, until at last, the process of dialectical thought will end in the knowledge of the Absolute. Still, the Absolute is not a unity of separate things. He never accepted Spinoza's view that, everything is one, a single substance, with various modes and attributes. But, Hegel describes the Absolute as a dynamic process, as an organism having parts but nevertheless, unified into a complex system. Therefore, the Absolute is not an entity which is separate from the world as Kant's Noumena, but it is in the world in a special way.

3.3 ORGANIC THEORY

The relation of the Absolute, the Whole to its parts like an organism – is the basic conception of Hegel's philosophy. The conception of the relation between the parts and the whole in an organism is extended by Hegel to all truth and reality. Every truth or fact is dependent on and in turn helps to determine every other truth or fact. Since, everything is internally determined by its relation to every other thing, as opposed to Locke's doctrine of externality of relations, this theory is called, '**Organic theory of Truth and Reality**'

Hegel explains this organic theory of Truth and Reality with an example of a work of art. The meaning of a painting can be understood not by analysing the chemical constitution of the canvas, though the painting cannot exist without it. Nor, can we appreciate it by studying its each part, though each part has an artistic relation to the rest. It is part of a whole and the true significance of this whole is more than the addition of these different parts. The whole logically determines the character of each of the parts and in turn each part contributes to the whole. In the same way, the personality of man is determined not by what he is at present, but by the biologically inherited traits of his parents, influences of his relatives, teachers, playmates, associates, other individuals and human race itself. Not only that, even the planets on which he lives, which in turn is conditioned by the other heavenly bodies in the universe. Life as a whole is conditioned by human society, which in turn is related to the entire universe. Thus Hegel concluded that universe becomes conscious of itself in the individual and considers the Absolute as the world in its unity and completeness. Hence, he opines that this Absolute is not beyond space and time, but it is in space and time, in its infinite, all embracing thought.

Hegel's uniqueness is exhibited in the use of the terms – 'Abstract' and 'Concrete'. He explains that understanding the functioning of a leaf in its relation to the tree or viewing the individual's experiences as a member of the society is more 'concrete', while getting knowledge of a leaf by examining it under a microscope or regarding individual's experiences depending on separate instances as 'abstract'. That means, if we look at anything by itself apart from its relationship, we are looking at it 'abstractly' and on the contrary, if we consider it in its organic relationship, we view it 'concretely'. Hegel claims that the absolute is wholly concrete Reality comprehended within a whole and not something apart from other things.

This reality is Absolute, Divine and Abstract, but it is Concretized through different types of expressions in nature and humans. It is 'thought - thinking' itself, 'a unity of the subjective and objective Idea'. According to Hegel, there is no truth except the whole truth. So, Absolute is

the synthesis of Subjective Spirit and Objective Spirit because, Reality is Rationality. Man's knowledge of the Absolute is actually the Absolute, knowing itself through the finite spirit of man.

Hegel believes that this Absolute is the ultimate reality, which passes through the different stages of development in time and becomes conscious of itself in human reason. Yet, this absolute is timeless, eternal, all embracing, self completed whole.

By his logical method called **Dialectic**, he shows how everything is connected in principal with everything else and helps to constitute this whole. His method of reasoning is not linear like that of Descartes because, he does not start with some undoubted simple proposition and then proving each successive step in a mathematical way. Rather, he adopts an implicative system where in each phase of argument is shown to imply the rest. This mutual interdependence of all details and the comprehensiveness without ambiguities and inconsistencies prove the truth of the system as a whole. Thus, a system in which all is explained in a clear and consistent manner must be true. For, '**the truth is the whole**'. Everything of it is internally systematically related having reason for its existence at its basement.

The basic theme of Hegel's metaphysics is to demonstrate the unity of the opposites like, one and many, nature and culture, individual and society. The sense of fragmentation and discreteness is alien to the spirit of Hegel's philosophy. The self positing and self negating spirit of wholeness is the very nature of Hegelian reality.

In his metaphysical system, he wants to achieve two objectives:

a. Man's unity with nature
b. Man's unity with his own self and other selves

According to Hegel world is intelligible, reason being at the heart of things. Man can understand this truth through its faculty of reason. Hegel directly throws out a challenge to Hume and insists that there are things beyond our sense experiences which have equally real existence and one can know them through reason, even going beyond one's senses. Pure reason, as opposed to practical reason has formal existence, as opposed to material existence. Pure reason though is beyond space and time, it exists in the abstract sense with as much reality as the existence as the other concrete things. For example, the proposition 'two' and 'two' equals 'four' has a formal existence and remains true though we have never seen the abstract quantity 'two' through our senses. Without the existence of an abstract measure of quantity, we would never be able to distinguish between the concrete quantities of things in experience.

It is Hume's view that, we can never discover a first cause for the world or indeed a cause for anything, while Hegel argues that even if we cannot find a cause, we can at least find a reason for it. A cause is an active force that produces an effect in time. A reason is a logical necessity which has nothing to do with time. The reason for the world has a logical temporal priority to the world, just as a mathematical problem has a logical non-temporal priority for its solution. The 'logical' exists as truly as the 'physical'. Therefore, he argues that '**the Real is the Rational**'. For Hegel, 'the Real' does not mean the real in an empiricist's sense. He means by it that, every thing that is, is knowable and this view gave a new basis for thinking about the very structure of reality and about it's manifestation in morality, law, religion, art, history and above all thought itself.

Hegel calls this Absolute – 'The Idea', 'The Spirit', 'The Mind' etc. Here, the word 'Idea' should always be spelled with an initial capital letter 'I' and prefixed by 'the'. In his opinion, 'Idea' means not the subjective creation of one's mind or an idea of this mind or that mind, a resultant or a faded out image. It has a special meaning. Nothing is so real for him as

'The Idea'. This view may be compared with Plato's conception of 'Idea' to the extent that, ideas are realities that human mind may discover, but do not create. In other respects, Hegel differs from Plato. In his opinion, Idea exists by itself and is independent of its being expressed in different particular forms. 'The Idea' is not static and self subsistent. But, has in it a force or power which makes its expression not only possible but also necessary. It's self expressive power which is natural to it, is inherent in it. In and through, all forms of dialectical development, progress as well as regress, 'The Idea' preserves its organic and purposive character.

Hegel laid great stress upon logic believing that knowing and being coincide. His view is that we can know the essence of reality by moving logically step by step, avoiding all self contradictions along the way. Since the rationality and actuality are identified by him, he agrees that, thought must follow the inner logic of reality itself. That means, logical connections must be discovered in the actual and not in some 'Empty Ratiocination'. Logic then is a process by which we deduce from our experience of the actual, the categories that describe the Absolute. This process of deduction is at the very heart of Hegel's dialectic philosophy.

Check Your Progress I

Note: a) Use the space provided for the answer.

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit.

1. Explain Hegel's concept of Absolute

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3.4 DIALECTIC METHOD

Existence is all inclusive, it comprises within it the state of 'not being' as well as 'being'. Everything contains within itself, its own opposite. It is impossible to conceive of anything without conceiving at the same time its opposite. We cannot think of finiteness without thinking of the infinity, or the time without thinking of the timelessness. Every thesis for an argument has its anti thesis as life and death, love and hate, day and night, youth and old age.

Whole nature is a reconciliation of opposites and Hegel's dialectic shows that any thesis implies its anti thesis and that the two are united in a higher synthesis in which the opposition between the two is reconciled and overcome in a lager unity. The Absolute Idea passes through a dialectic of many triads – each of which has its own Thesis, Anti Thesis and Synthesis. In the thesis, a certain aspect of reality is revealed and in the anti thesis, a contrasting aspect appears and the two are synthesised in a higher synthesis. The synthesis again gives rise to a new triad and that too another in turn. Thus, there are triads within triads and still other triads within there. Hegel tries to prove this by a logical deduction. Hence, the order of the dialectic is considered to be purely logical.

Hegelian dialectic, usually presented in a threefold manner comprising of three stages of development – A thesis giving rise to its reaction, anti thesis which contradicts or negates the thesis and the tension between the two being resolved by means of a synthesis. Hegel uses the term *Abstract* or *Immediate* to thesis and *Negative* or *Mediate* to anti thesis and *Concrete* to synthesis. If a particular moment of thought or what it is about is regarded as a *position,* time and

reflection show that it is incomplete and has its *opposition*. In due logical course, this opposition emerges further reflection and time and again shows that it is incomplete. In spite of their incompleteness and negative features, i.e. what they lack, both position and opposition have in them some positive promising and complementary features. These features and expressions in a higher composition in which position (thesis) and opposition (anti thesis) are sublimated and creatively reproduced is called synthesis. Thus, Hegel's dialectic method exhibits a systematic tri-rhythmic process until it culminates in the Absolute Idea.

The first basic triad of this logic is *Being Nothing and Becoming*. Hegel observes that our mind always moves from the more general and abstract to the specific and concrete. The most general concept that we can form about things is that – 'They are'. Although various things have specific and different qualities, they all have one thing in common. i.e their Being. So, Being is the most general concept that our mind can formulate. For, being must be logically prior to any specific thing, for things represent determinations or the shaping of what is originally without features. Hegel's concept begins with the concept of *being* and this is the thesis. 'Absolute is pure Being', which means that 'it just is', without assigning any qualities to it. But, 'pure Being' without any qualities is *Nothing*. Thus pure being alone suggests its own opposite, Nothing. Therefore Nothing is the anti thesis and we are lead to say that *Absolute is Nothing*.

But, both being and nothing are incomplete as they are opposed to each other. Therefore, this opposition must be reconciled in a higher concept called becoming. Hence, we can say that the 'Absolute is Becoming'. Thus, the higher concept 'Becoming' is a union of 'Being' and 'Nothing'. These three stages must be present at every stage of development in reality. The nature of reasoning must therefore be the same as the nature of reality. Reasoning and reality are never passive and static, but always dynamic. Thus both the method and nature of reasoning are applicable to reality which means that what is true of thought is true of reality, without any dualism between them.

Hegel believed that the inner essence of the absolute could be reached by human reason because the Absolute is disclosed in nature as well as in the working of the human mind. What connects these three – the Absolute, nature and man's mind is thought itself. Nature is the *objective self*, as opposed to the *conscious self*. If we wish to obtain the truth, we must not only view the world from the stand point of our inner selves, but we must view our inner selves from the stand point of the world. This is the supreme test we must pass, if we have to follow the highest law of reason. We must regard ourselves with complete objectivity as our own opposite, anti-thesis and then we are ready for the synthesis known to human experience. By withdrawing from our imperfect and fragile consciousness, we will achieve a far greater, sublime, perfect consciousness of self. It is only then that we will be able to realise that this self is completely aware of its own organic unity in all its inclusiveness. In this way, nature rises to self consciousness in man and man rises to self consciousness in freedom. Thus *the Absolute Idea* in itself as pure reason (logic) acts a the thesis and the *nature* becomes the anti thesis and the grand synthesis of the two is *the spirit or the mind*, the self knowing.

The second basic triad of nature is matter, life and mind. In matter, the thesis we do find that parts are related mechanically and in life, the anti thesis, they are united organically. Therefore, every living being is an organism and every part in it is controlled by the central life principle. That means, a living organism is not only mechanical and physical in its constitution, but something more. That is, it has life in it. The higher concept, mind is a union of matter and life. Mind or the subjective spirit is the synthesis of the evolution of matter and life. Therefore, the presence of a well developed mind or ego constitutes the distinguishing feature of human

existence, which cannot be found at the lower level of nature. This mind in man is capable of controlling both the material body and the principle of life in man. In fact, the mind is the union of both matter and life in man who can reason with self-consciousness. Hegel calls this self consciousness – mind or spirit. So, the Absolute mind which is in a world external to itself in nature, returns to itself in finite individuals which participate in its own rational thought. In this way, the opposition between matter (thesis) and life (anti-thesis) is overcome at a higher level called, the subjective mind (synthesis). This brings him to the third part of the system called the philosophy of mind.

In this third part, the philosophy of mind, Hegel deals with the cultural experiences of mankind which sets forth the elements of his dialectic in a clear exquisite manner. The basic triad of this part are subjective spirit (thesis), which refer to the inner working of the human mind and the objective spirit which represents the mind in its external embodiment in the social and political institutions become the anti-thesis and at the apex of knowledge stands the absolute as its synthesis.

Hegel has pointed out that there are triads within triads, even in the understanding of the subjective spirit. We can try to understand this subjective spirit through different branches of knowledge. Anthropology, which deals with the structure of human body and the cultural developments through generation, provides the thesis, while phenomenology which deals with ego, which is opposite to body and other objects of the world provide the anti thesis. This opposition can be overcome by the higher consciousness of mind which is the subject matter of psychology as synthesis. Thus, in this triad, we are having Anthropology as thesis, Phenomenology as anti-thesis and Psychology as its synthesis.

The objective spirit is explained by Hegel with reference to the social consciousness or the society in general. The society in which man lives is not a mere collection of people, but has got a consciousness of its own called social consciousness which is characterised by a set of psychological attitudes, traditions, beliefs, cultural patterns etc. This doctrine of objective spirit can be analysed in three sub parts, called the concept of right, the concept of morality and the concept of social morality.

Right means that which gives security and protection of life to everyone who lives in that society. This concept of right has three implications – Right to property (Thesis), Right to contract (Anti-Thesis) and Right to punish (Synthesis) respectively. Right to property promises everyman the right to possess some property for the sustenance of his own life and his family. At the same time, everyman should recognise that the other persons also should have the same right like him. So, he enters into a contract with which other's right is recognised. Thus the right to contract becomes the anti-thesis of his right triad. To unite the above thesis and anti-thesis, a higher level of concept called, right to punish arrives as a synthesis. When a person's property is encroached upon by others, it becomes necessary to punish them. To restore the right to property of each individual against its laws finds an important place in social life and thus emerges the right of punishment.

If, claiming certain rights from the society called the concept of right becomes the thesis, then discharging certain duties to the society with duty consciousness called the *concept of morality* becomes the anti-thesis. Man being conscious of his rights and duties becomes aware of the fact that his own happiness is tied up with social happiness. If the society as a whole prospers, then the individual in that society also prospers. Therefore, must work for the progress of the society as a whole which may be termed, the concept of social morality as the synthesis. The principle triad of the objective spirit consists of law in the sense of abstract right which

Hegel defines as 'Be a person and respect others as persons' which is similar to Kant's second "Categorical Imperative' – 'Treat every human being, including yourself as an end in himself and not a means to the advantage of anyone else'. In other words, 'Respect yourself and respect others impartially and exploit no one'.

Though, there is an apparent distinction between man and society, Hegel tries to show that man finds his fullness of being in and through individuals and the relations obtaining between them. The unity of reality finds richest expression at the man-society level. Society is not a mere construct for Hegel, but has an organic character since it expresses and fulfils itself through the lives of the individuals. Man being a self-conscious person has some moral capacities and the corresponding obligations to his fellow humans. When the subjective rights and inward conscience becomes objectified in social institutions like family and state, social ethics emerges. The whole sphere of human behaviour – both individual and collective is described by him as a part of the actual and therefore is essentially rational. Hegel looks upon the social institutions not as the creation of man, but as the product of the dialectical movement of history, of the objective manifestation of rational reality.

Our consciousness of the absolute, says Hegel is achieved progressively as the mind moves from art to philosophy through religion. Art provides a conscious semblance of the Idea by providing the mind, with an object of statue, building, music or poetry. In the object of art, mind apprehends the absolute as beauty. In other words, man sees through these sensuous medium the manifestation of the divine beauty. Art thus becomes the thesis of his dialectic method.

Since no sensuous form can convey adequately the profound spiritual truth, the dialectic passes from art to its anti-thesis in religion. Religion occupies an intermediate position between art and philosophy. The content of religion is representation of pure thought clothed in imagery of some kind that is God. So, Hegel does not reject the representation of religion as mere delusions, but sees in them the actual revelations of the absolute which expresses the truth as adequately as the popular mind has been able to grasp it.

Man feels the presence of divine within himself in his internal consciousness and he expresses beauty seen through the sense organs and felt religious content by means of well cultivated expression through which the highest truth comes to be expressed called philosophy. Religion and philosophy having basically the same subject matter represent the knowledge of 'That', which is eternal, of what God is and what flows out of nature. But, philosophy leaves behind the pictorial form of religion and rises to the level of pure thought.

In philosophy, the Absolute thinks about itself through the medium of philosopher's mind. At this level, there will be no distinction between the finite and the infinite, as finite becomes one with the infinite, which is the highest level of development that an individual can attain. Ultimately, in philosophy, according to Hegel – the thinker is the Absolute, the subject matter of thinking is the Absolute and the medium through which the absolute thinks is also the absolute. Thus Hegel places philosophy as the highest point of development of human knowledge. Hence, it is often said that western philosophical thinking which started from Plato passed through several stages, reached its culmination in Hegel's philosophy.

According to Hegel, philosophy does not offer man the knowledge of the Absolute, at any particular moment, because, that knowledge is the product of the dialectical process. The history of philosophy is for him, the development of the absolute self consciousness in the mind of man. The philosophical mind discovers the absolute in all stages of the dialectic and in so

doing man becomes rational. Self conscious and appreciates his position in the universe, which is organic and rational.

Dialectic, according to Hegel means no longer the art of argumentation. Rather it is the method of overcoming the limitations and rising to the level of the absolute. Each stage of the dialectic occupies an important position which has a proper place as a moment in the whole. It is possible to reach the truth only by going through all the steps in the dialectic. In this specific sense, logic becomes metaphysics and thus the fulfilment of all knowledge.

3.5 HEGEL'S IDEALISM

Hegel gave the world a more plausible and comprehensive system of idealism. His sole concern was to understand the world as it is and to explain everything logically. He explains adequately, the rational constitution of the universe. Even God as has been remarked, does not seem to be permitted any secrets which Hegel's reason is unable to disclose.

Like Berkeley, though Hegel is an idealist, his idealism differs very much from Berkeley. Berkeley being an empirical theistic idealist believes that, God created this world and has His own existence, independent of His creation. While, Hegel being a rationalistic pantheistic idealist opines that Absolute is the world in its organic unity and not the creator of it. For Hegel, world is real although its various parts are dependent upon the unity of the whole. The whole is not a blank, unknowable unity, but it is rational and knowable in its organic interrelatedness.

3.6 LET US SUM UP

Hegel points out that the Absolute first manifests itself in the categories of logic and then externalised in the physical nature, subjective mind and objective mind. Final culmination is reached in the absolute mind in which the whole reality is apprehended in its organic unity and completeness. In art, this is done through the medium of sensuous form, in religion through worship and in philosophy the absolute is disclosed in the conception of pure thought. Hegel criticises the traditional epistemological distinction of the objective from the subjective and offers his own dialectical account of the development of consciousness from individual sensation through social concern with ethics and politics to the pure consciousness, the spirit. The result is a comprehensive world view that encompasses the historical development of civilization in all its sources.

Check Your Progress II

Note: a) Use the space provided for the answer.
b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit.

1. Give an account of dialectic method

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3.7. KEY WORDS

Absolute: Etymology: Middle English *absolut*, from Anglo-French, from Latin *absolutus*, from past participle of *absolvere* to set free, absolve. The following are some of its developed meanings: free from imperfection (PERFECT); free or relatively free from mixture (PURE); being, governed by, or characteristic of a ruler or authority completely free from constitutional or other restraint (absolute power).

Absolute Mind (Hegel): Absolute mind is the state in which mind rises above all the limitations of nature and institutions, and is subjected to itself alone in art, religion, and philosophy. For the essence of mind is freedom, and its development must consist in breaking away from the restrictions imposed on it by nature and human institutions.

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3.9. ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answers to Check Your Progress I

Absolute, according to Hegel is the idea, the spirit or the mind which is infinite, timeless, eternal, all embracing ultimate reality – union of a self positing and a self negating spirit, which is a self completed whole – Exists by itself and independently of its being expressed in different particular forms - Dynamic and having parts unified into a complex system, like an organism – Unity of opposites expressing in a dialectical method –realised by human reason and the highest point of development of human knowledge – ultimately, it is the thinker thinking subject and the medium of thinking

Explanation of the relation of the absolute – the whole to its parts – that is nature, humans, subjective spirit and objective spirit like an organism having an internal inseparable relationship like a piece of work of art and its part – Explanation of the relation of the absolute and the world following the dialectic method

Reality is rational means its ultimate structure is revealed in the structure of our thought – Concretised in nature and humans and a synthesis of subjective spirit and objective spirit – Becomes conscious of itself in human reason – Pure reason having formal existence, exists in the abstract sense with as much reality as the existence of concrete things – The logical exists as truly as physical. Therefore, real is rational – Reality is knowable through different manifestations – Knowledge of it can be attained through dialectical process – Explanation of how rationality and actuality are identified.

Answer to Check Your Progress II

Triadic structure of dialectic method having thesis , anti thesis and synthesis – Explanation of the triads – Being, Nothing and Becoming – Matter, Life and Mind – Subjective Spirit , Objective Spirit and the Absolute – Anthropology, Phenomenology and Psychology – Concept of right, morality and social morality – Right to property, contract and of punishment – Art, religion and philosophy – Philosophy being the culmination of all thought.

UNIT 4 **POSITIVISM**

Contents

4.0 OBJECTIVES

One of the important philosophical movements which originated in the nineteenth century and shaped the thinking of scientists and scholars in the 20th century also is positivism. The aim of this paper is to make the students acquaint with the background, origin and development of Positivism, especially the contribution of Auguste Comte, the later development of positivism and its continued relevance to the understanding of natural and social sciences today.

4.1. INRTRODUCTION

Positivism means the doctrine and movement founded by the French philosopher Auguste Comte in the nineteenth century and also the general philosophical view of knowledge proposed by Francis Bacon, John Locke, Isaac Newton and contemporary thinkers life Mortiz Schlick, Ernst Mach, Rudolf Carnap and others which assert that genuine knowledge should be based on observation and advanced by experiment. In the social sciences positivism is associated with three assumptions; first that knowledge should be founded on experience alone; secondly the belief that the methods of natural sciences are directly applicable to the social world and on the basis of it laws about social phenomena can be established; and thirdly the axiological principle that normative statements do not have the status of knowledge and maintains a rigid separation between facts and values. Bacon believed that philosophers should not attempt to wander beyond the 'limits of nature'. He held that there are ultimate facts that should be accepted on the basis of experience, and he applied the adjective 'positive' to these inexplicable facts and to the doctrine based on them. Gradually the method of natural sciences which relied on observation and experience came to be termed positive. Saint–Simon applied the term positive in his *Essay on the Science of Man* to the sciences which were based on facts which have been observed and analyzed. Comte believed that the function of theories in science is to co-ordinate observed facts rather than to explain them in terms of causes and to

emphasize this view he used the term positive. His Positive Philosophy later cane to be called Positivism. In the following sections we shall concentrate on the positivism of Comte

4.2. LIFE AND WORKS OF AUGESTE COMTE

Isidore Auguste Marie Francois Xavier Comte, the founder of Positivism was born at Montpellier, France in 1798 to a devout Catholic family with royalist sympathies. However, when he was fourteen he had ceased to believe in God and also abandoned the royalist sympathies of the family. He studied in the Ecole Polytechnique of Paris and later became a teacher there. In 1817 Comte became secretary to the French utopian socialist Saint-Simon, from whom Comte got certain radical ideas of social reform which animated his entire life. In April 1826, Comte began teaching a Course of Positive Philosophy. About this time he had a temporary mental breakdown. After recovering, he was appointed instructor and examiner in mathematics at the Ecole polytechnique. He resumed the Course of Positive Philosophy in 1829. Comte also published an Elementary Treatise on Analytic Geometry (1843), the Philosophical Treatise on Popular Astronomy (1844) and The Discourse on the Positive Spirit. In 1845, Comte met Clothilde de Vaux and fell madly in love with her and married her, but within a short time she died. Following Clothilde's death, an event which brought him close to insanity, Comte began to idolize her. The next year, Comte chose the Evolution of Humanity as the new topic for his public discourse; this was an occasion to lay down the premises of what would become the new Religion of Humanity. In 1848 he founded the Positivist Society, and published the General View of Positivism, as well as the Positivist Calendar. In 1849, he founded the Religion of Humanity. Between the years 1851and 1854 he published the four-volume System of Positive Polity, and the Catechism of Positive Religion. On Sept 5, 1857, worn out from his intellectual labors and personal tragedies Comte died surrounded by his followers. He was buried in the Père-Lachaise cemetery, where his Brazilian followers erected a statue of Humanity in 1983. The inscription on his tombstone reads '*Love as the Principle, Order as the Means, Progress as the Goal'*.

4.3. COMTE'S CONCERN AND AIM

The point of departure for Comte's thought was the experience of the internal contradictions of the society of his age. The French revolution had fractured the unity that existed in the French Society. So Comte's main concern throughout his life was resolving the political social and moral problems caused by the French Revolution. He believed that many of the contradictions were because of the transition that was taking place from the theological-military past in its Catholic feudal form towards an inevitable scientific-industrial type of society. So far the scientific mode of thought has not completely triumphed over its main rivals and so there was intellectual anarchy, which in turn produces social anarchy. Comte believed that the only way to put an end to the crisis was to bring together the 'positive ideas' of the time that are scientific, free from the bonds of traditional theology and metaphysics. He believed that a system of scientific ideas should govern the new social order which will provide unity and cohesion to modern society just as the system of theological ideas governed the social order of the past.

Comte's ambition was to found a naturalistic science of society capable of explaining the past of humankind and to predict its future by applying the same methods of enquiry which had

proved successful in the study of nature, namely observation, experimentation and comparison. Comte coined the term 'sociology' to designate the science which would synthesize all positive knowledge, explain the dynamics of society, and guide the formation of the positivist society.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit

1) What is the meaning of positivism?

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2) What are the important works of Auguste Comte?

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3) What was the main concern and goal of Comte's thinking?

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4.4. PHILOSOPHY OF COMTE

According to Comte in order to understand the true value and character of the positive philosophy, we must take a general view of the progress that human history has made so far. This development has followed a definite pattern and a fundamental law. The law is that each branch of knowledge progresses successively through three different theoretical conditions: the theological, or fictitious; the metaphysical or abstract; and the scientific or positive. These three methods of philosophizing, that is making reality comprehensible are incompatible[1].

The necessary starting-point of the development of human understanding is the theological stage. It searches for first and final causes and absolute knowledge. Phenomena are explained by reference to the acts of supernatural agencies. The highest point of development of the theological stage is reached when all phenomena are conceived as the effect of a single deity. Comte divides the theological stage into three:

(a) Animism- in which everyday objects were turned into items of religious purpose and worship, with godlike qualities.

[1] Ted Benton, *Philosophical Foundations of the Three sociologist* .London: Routledge and Kegan Paul,1978,pp.28-36.

(b). Polytheism - Explanation of things through the use of many gods.
(c). Monotheism - Attributing all to a single, supreme deity.

This period started with the beginning of human history and was dominated by priests and the military and the dominant social unit was the family.

In the metaphysical stage the supernatural beings are replaced by abstract forces and underlying entities to which all phenomena are referred. The highest form of development of this stage was when all phenomena were referred to one single entity: Nature. It is a speculative doctrine on the 'essences' and 'causes' of phenomena. The middle ages were predominantly metaphysical; the basic social unit was the state and was dominated by churchmen and lawyers.

At the third stage, the positive stage, the human mind recognizes the impossibility of acquiring absolute knowledge concerning the origin and purpose of the universe, and applies itself to the study of the laws of the invariable relations of succession and resemblance of phenomena. This science takes reasoning and observation as the means of knowledge. What is now meant by an explanation of facts is simply the establishment of a connection. This is the modern industrial society and the social unit is the whole of humanity and should be guided by industrial administrators and scientists.

4.5. THE CLASSIFICATION OF THE SCIENCES AND PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE

In *The Positive Philosophy* Comte examines the different sciences and their logical relations to one another. His position is that the most general and inclusive sciences were required first, as the logically necessary preparation for the more particular ones. Mathematics, as the abstract or fundamental study of the forms of existence common to all things, is presupposed for the successful study of astronomy and physics, and physics is needed for the development of chemistry. Biology, in like manner, depends upon chemistry for its emergence as a lawful science. Biology, though logically depending upon chemistry, has laws of its own because living beings behave very differently from nonliving chemical entities. In the same way, human society is far less general than the biological realm as a whole, though society clearly presupposes and depends on the biological laws. Thus Comte rejected methodological reductionism of higher sciences to the lower, despite the fact that the former presuppose the latter. This means that despite the complete grounding of sociology in biology, the laws of human society will inevitably have their own autonomy. The positive scientific study of society is what he calls "sociology," which he believed would be the "final science." Each higher level science adds to the knowledge content of the science or sciences on the levels below, thus enriching this content by successive specialization. This ordering provides first of all for the unity of the sciences, as successive branches from a common stem, and secondly for the recognition of the historical emergence of the distinctive methods of different empirical subjects. According to Comte's classification of the sciences sociology had to wait for the maturing of all prior disciplines to emerge as an independent science. The crowning science, the most complex and consequently the last to emerge as an empirical domain of invariant lawfulness, is sociology. Sociology and positive philosophy finally will provide the much needed reorganization of politics, ethics, and religion.

Comte, because of the classification of sciences he makes, could also be considered the founder of philosophy of science in the modern sense. Comte's philosophy of science is based on a systematic difference between method and doctrine. Method is superior to doctrine: scientific doctrines change but the value of science lies in its methods. The positive method of different

sciences depends on the nature of the sciences to which it is applied: in astronomy it is observation, in physics experimentation, in biology comparison. Finally, his classification also holds the key to a theory of technology. According to Comte there is a systematic connection between complexity and modifiability: the more complex a phenomenon is, the more modifiable it is. The order of nature is a modifiable order. Human action takes place within the limits fixed by nature and consists in replacing the natural order by an artificial one. Comte's education as an engineer had made him quite aware of the links between science and its applications, which he summarized in an oft-quoted slogan: 'From science comes prevision, from prevision comes action'.

"There will be few students of the social sciences now who have even read Comte or know much about him. But the number of those who have absorbed most of the important elements of his system through the intermediation of a few very influential representatives of his tradition is very high indeed."[2]

4.6. SOCIOLOGY OF COMTE

The goal of Comte's intellectual endeavor was to develop a science of society that could explain the past, organize the present and predict the future. Initially, he called this new science social physics, and later, 'sociology.' Comte stressed the necessity of separating facts from values during the course of scientific inquiry and dreamed about the ideal society ruled by scientists with decisions made on the basis of scientific evidence. Comte wanted his new science, sociology, not only be of academic interest, but also something that should benefit society and contribute to the improvement of the quality of life. Comte saw unity of humanity as the fundamental necessity of the time. And the first condition for this unity is the subordination of the intellect to the heart. The desired and required unity requires an objective basis, existing independently in the external world. This basis consists according to him is in the laws or order of the phenomena by which humanity is regulated. As soon as the human intellect is capable of grasping these laws, it becomes possible for the feeling of love to exercise a controlling influence over our discordant tendencies. The order existing in the external world is objective in that it is not an order we can choose; it exists independently of ourselves. In short, realizing the existence of this order as a pre-condition is what enables us to overcome our "discordant tendencies". A purely subjective unity, without any objective basis, would be simply impossible. Self-love is deeply implanted in our nature, and when left to itself is far stronger than feeling for fellow human beings. The social instincts can gain mastery over selfishness only by the factors that exist independently of us in the external world. They exert an influence which at the same time checks the power of the selfish instincts.

Comte wanted sociology to be the integrating science of all other sciences that deal with the external nature of human life in society. The possibility of moral unity of individuals and society depends upon the necessity of recognizing our subjection to an external power which can discipline our instincts. The recognition of an external power that limits our possibilities is what makes a society possible. Absolute freedom is anarchy, and it is unworkable. The true path of human progress lies in diminishing the vacillation, inconsistency, and discordance of our designs by furnishing external motives for our intellectual, moral and practical powers. An important

[2] F.A. Hayek, The Counter Revolution of Science: Studies in the Abuse reason. New York The Free Pr3ess of Glencol, 1964. p.188 quoted in Gertrud Lenzer, ed., *Auguste Comte and Positivism: The Essential Writings* (New York: Harper, 1975) .p. xi.

function of philosophy is to criticize nature in a positive spirit which would help in our struggle to become more perfect.

Check Your Progress II

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit

1) Describe Comte's law of three stages

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2) Describe the salient features of Comte's classification of sconces.

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3) Explain the important aspects of Comte's sociology

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4.7. THE RELIGION OF HUMANITY

At the heart of Auguste Comte's program for resolving the 'crisis' of industrial society was a project for 'positivising' religion by instituting a religion of humanity. There was an urgent need for a fundamental consensus in the post revolutionary industrial society for a new form of spiritual power with a new ideal as an object of devotion to bind the society together. In other words there was a need for a new religion. Comte believed that the positive religion would provide the scientific-humanist equivalent to the systematic theology of the Middle Ages and could serve as the intellectually unifying basis of the new industrial order.

During what he termed as his second career Comte the historian and philosopher of positivism became the high priest of the 'Religion of Humanity'. His passionate love for Clothilde de Vaux and her death had profound influence on his life and gave an insight into the true source of happiness and changed his whole conception of life. The change in his personal life manifested in his desire to transform his philosophy into a new religion. The function of religion is to gather up and organize human life. So it must deal equally with all parts of human nature; namely, thought activity and feeling. Thus religion requires first of all a scheme or synthesis as a basis of belief, i.e. a creed, secondly a set of institutions and principles to discipline and guide one's action, a code of conduct; and thirdly a set of habits to cultivate the emotions and educate the heart, a cult. A creed is a set of beliefs dealing with the meaning, purpose and destiny of human life. The code of conduct obligates the believers to behave in a

certain manner because of what they believe. There must be an object of devotion and duty capable of being invoked and worshiped, which can bring forth in the believer feelings of security and providence. The human race itself, real and ideal at the same time, including the past, present and future was Comte's object of worship and devotion. This grand existence, "*Grand Etre'* as he termed it is capable of invoking devotion. Now if the object of one's worship is humanity itself, Comte believes that this ideal can impel the believer to love and sacrifice for the sake of humanity. Humanity as the great ideal and object of worship needs our help unlike the ideal beings/Being of traditional religions which are omnipotent and thus does not need human beings.

We in the present live in close proximity with the great minds of the dead who served humanity and in the company of the great human beings to come whom we shall never meet. When we honor those who have served humankind in extraordinary ways in the past, we realize that we too are working for the same ideals for which they devoted and gave their lives. The grand conception, that the whole of humanity lives in communion with all the great human beings who have died and yet to come, has great ennobling power. Comte regards the *Grand Etre*, Humanity or Mankind as composed solely of those who, in every age and in variety of position have played their part worthily in life. The *Grand Etre* in its completeness includes not only great human beings but also all sentient beings which have helped and contributed to humanity.

For Comte the good of human race is the ultimate standard of right and wrong and moral discipline consists in avoiding all conduct injurious to the general good. In every religion there must be cult, prayer and ritual. Comte advocates 'prayer' as a mere outpouring of feeling; it is not addressed to the *Grand Etre* or collective humanity. The honor to collective Humanity is reserved for the public celebrations. The objects of private adoration are the mother the wife and the daughter, representing the past, the present and the future and calling to exercise the social sentiments, veneration, attachment, and kindness. The public cult that Comte advocates is meant to honor and glorify Humanity itself; to celebrate the various ties among human beings, and the various stages in the evolution of humankind. He named the months in his calendar after the great benefactors of humanity like Moses, Homer, Aristotle, Archimedes, and Caesar. He also prescribes nine sacraments to mark the different transitions in life like Presentation, initiation, admission, destination, marriage, transformation and incorporation. Death he considers to be a transformation a passage from objective existence on this earth to living in the memory of our fellow humans. The last incorporation into the *Grand Etre* would come after death following a favorable judgment for those worthy of remembrance. He also envisaged a clergy for the positivist religion who will exercise spiritual power in the positive society.

All philosophy and science, all human activity in general should help human beings to live in harmony with the true nature and real conditions of humanity. Hence Religion simply means development on the true lines of the real facts; in other words, Progress on the basis of Order. This is the meaning of Auguste Comte's profound aphorism: "Man grows more and more religious."

Check Your Progress III

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit

1) What is the meaning and function of religion according to Comte?

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2) Describe the salient features of Comte's religion of Humanity

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4.8. LATER DEVELOPMENTS OF POSITIVISM

Historically speaking Comte's philosophy failed to reform society the way he envisaged because it was too idealistic, and his dream of merging science, morality and government was unrealistic. However positivist ideas continued to influence thinking. The later development of positivism in France is best exemplified in the sociology of Emile Durkheim. Durkheim which extended scientific rationalism to human conduct and proposed a set of methodological principles encapsulated by the famous injunction to 'treat social facts as things'; reject common preconceptions in favor of objective definitions, explain a social fact by another social fact only another social fact, distinguish efficient cause from function and normal from pathological social states, etc.

John Stuart Mill, the 19th-century English philosopher could be considered as one of the outstanding Positivists of his century. In his System of Logic he developed a thoroughly empiricist theory of knowledge and of scientific reasoning. British philosopher and sociologist Herbert Spencer is considered the systematizer of Positivism according to the principles of evolution.

4.9. LOGICAL POSITIVISM

Positivism later made its reappearance under the title 'logical positivism', which arose during the 1920's mainly in the universities of Vienna in Austria in a group called the Vienna Circle. The Vienna Circle consisted of philosophers, mathematicians and scientists like Mortiz Schlick, Ernst Mach, Rudolf Carnap, Carl Hempel and Otto Neurah. The Logical positivists and Logical Empiricists tried a synthesis of Humean empiricism, Comtean positivism and logical analysis in an effort to get rid of metaphysics for ever. The logical positivists wanted to unify all science under a framework of physical laws and scientific method for analyzing the world and gaining knowledge. They incorporated David Hume's argument that there are only two types of meaningful propositions which are either about "relations of ideas" or "matters of fact". This along with Ludwig Wittgenstein's claim in *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* that a proposition is a picture of reality gave rise to the verifiability principle. According to Positivists the verifiability test would determine whether statements were meaningful or not by judging whether they were factual.

The dominance of positivism met with oppositions of two kinds, antipositivisit and post-positivist. Anti-positivists argue that the natural and the human senesces are ontologically and logically incompatible and so the very idea of an explanatory science of society is impossible. Proponents of hermeneutics, interpretative sociology, postmodernism, deconstruction and Feminism maintain that human practices, institutions and belief are inherently meaningful, meanings constituted by the understandings that participants have of them so causal accounts social behavior cannot be constructed. The task of human studies therefore cannot be to specify universal laws of human behavior but to make the behavior intelligible by interpreting in relation to subjective intentions.

Check Your Progress IV

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit

1) What were the drawbacks of Comte's sociological project?

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2) Explain the later development of Positivism.

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4.10. LET US SUM UP

Today there are not many proponents of the positivism of Comte or who share in his belief that society can be improved through positive science or that all sciences can be unified under the umbrella of what he called sociology. However the methodology of positivism, its reliance on facts and the attempt to explain the *how* rather than the *why* are still the guiding principles of contemporary science. In spite of the drawbacks his ideal of the well being of humanity and commitment to altruism is worth preserving today when people seem to be forgetting human solidarity because of sectarian manipulations and private agenda. According to Isaiah Berlin Comte is worthy of commemoration and praise because of the fact that …he has done his work too well. For Comte's views have affected the categories of our thought more deeply than is commonly supposed. Our view of the natural sciences, of the material basis of cultural evolution, of all that we call progressive, rational, enlightened, Western; our view of the relationship of intuitions and of public symbolism and ceremonial to the emotional life of the individual and societies are consequently our views of history itself, owes a good deal to his teaching and his influence.

4.11. KEY WORDS

Deconstruction is an approach which rigorously pursues the meaning of a text to the point of undoing the oppositions on which it is apparently founded, and to the point of showing that those foundations are irreducibly complex, unstable or impossible. The term was introduced by French philosopher Jacques Derrida.

Feminism: Feminism describes a political, cultural or economic movement aimed at establishing equal rights and legal protection for women.

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4.13. ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answers to Check Your Progress 1

1. Positivism means the doctrine and movement founded in the nineteenth century by the French philosopher Auguste Comte and also the general philosophical view of knowledge proposed by Francis Bacon, John Locke, Isaac Newton and other empirical philosophers which assert that genuine knowledge should be based on observation and advanced by experiment.

2.The Positive Philosophy (6 vols.)
The System of Positive Polity (4 vols.)
The Catechism of Positive Religion

3. Comte's main concern throughout his life was resolving the political social and moral problems caused by the French Revolution. He believed that many of the contradictions were because of the transition from the theological-military past in its Catholic feudal form towards an inevitable scientific-industrial type of society. Comte believed that the only way to put an end to the crisis was to bring together the 'positive ideas' of the time that are scientific, free from the bonds of traditional theology and metaphysics.

Answers to Check Your Progress II

The key to understanding Comte's ideas is the law of the three stages.
1. The theological stage. The necessary starting-point of the development of human understanding is the theological stage. During this stage phenomena are explained by reference to the acts of supernatural agencies.
2. The metaphysical stage. In the metaphysical stage the supernatural beings are replaced by abstract forces and underlying entities to which all phenomena are referred.
3. The Positive stage. At the third stage the human mind recognizes the impossibility of acquiring absolute knowledge concerning the origin and purpose of the universe, and applies itself to the study of the laws of the invariable relations of succession and resemblance of phenomena. This science takes reasoning and observation as the means of knowledge.

Answers to Check Your Progress III

1. In his Positive Philosophy, Comte examines the different sciences and their logical relations to one another. His position is that the most general and inclusive sciences were required first, as the logically necessary preparation for the more particular ones. Mathematics, as the abstract or fundamental study of the forms of existence common to all things, is presupposed for the successful study of astronomy and physics, and physics is needed for the development of chemistry. Biology, in like manner, depends upon chemistry for its emergence as a lawful science. The positive scientific study of society is what he calls "sociology," which he believed would be the "final science."

2. The goal of Comte's intellectual endeavor was to develop a science of society that could explain the past and predict the future. Initially, he called this new science social physics, and, later, 'sociology.' Comte stressed the necessity of separating facts and values during the course of scientific inquiry and dreamed about the ideal society ruled by scientists who would make decisions on the basis of scientific evidence. Comte wanted his new science, sociology, not only be of academic interest, but also something that should benefit society and contribute to the improvement of the quality of life. Comte wanted sociology to be the integrating science of all other sciences that deal with the external nature of human life in society. Following the law of the three stages and his classification of sciences Sociology was the last science to emerge. This crowning science is the most complex and the last to emerge. This will usher in an era of social, political and moral regeneration.

Answers to Check Your Progress IV

1) The function of religion is to gather up and organize human life. So it must deal equally with all parts of human nature; namely, thought activity and feeling. Thus religion requires first of all a scheme or synthesis as a basis of belief, i.e. a creed, secondly a set of institutions and principles to discipline and guide one's action, a code of conduct; and thirdly a set of habits to cultivate the emotions and educate the heart, a cult. A creed is a set of beliefs dealing with the meaning, purpose and destiny of human life. The code of conduct obligates the believers to behave in a certain manner because of what they believe. There must be an object of devotion capable of being invoked and worshiped, which can bring forth in the believer feelings of security and providence.

2. For Comte the human race, real and ideal at the same time, including the past, present and future is the object of worship and devotion. This grand existence, *"Grand Etre'* as he termed it is capable of invoking devotion. The *Grand Etre* in its completeness includes not only great human beings but also all sentient beings which have helped and contributed to humanity. To honor collective Humanity he advocated public celebrations. The objects of private adoration are the mother, the wife and the daughter, calling into active exercise the three social sentiments, veneration, attachment, and kindness. He also prescribes nine sacraments to mark the different transitions in life and also envisaged a priesthood consisting of scientists sand scholars.