



NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA

FACULTY OF ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

COURSE CODE: PHL 442

COURSE TITLE: LATE MODERN PHILOSOPHY



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**COURSE
GUIDE**

PHL 442: LATE MODERN PHILOSOPHY

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NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA (NOUN)

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Course Guide for PHL442 – Late Modern Philosophy

Introduction

This is PHL442 – Late Modern Philosophy. PHL442 is a two-credit unit course which has minimum duration of one semester. It is a compulsory course for all undergraduate students in National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN). The course will expose the students to Late modern thoughts in the history of Philosophy. While this period was characterized by idealism, some scholars, however, questioned the relevance of the speculative thought to the existence of man. This period, therefore, laid foundation for existentialism. Hence, the late modern period was also

a preparatory ground for a humanistic approach to philosophy through the emergence of existentialism.

Course Objectives

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

- Understand the currents underlying Late Modern philosophical thoughts in the history of Philosophy.
- Discuss the critical and moral philosophies of Kant.
- Know what accounted for the rise of German Idealism
- Understand the emergence of interest in the Discipline of History
- Appraise the notion of Human Progress
- Assess the thesis of Historicism

Working Through this Course

To successfully complete this course, read the study units, do all the assignments, open the links and read, participate in discussion forums, read the recommended books and other materials provided and participate in the online facilitation.

Each study unit has introduction, intended learning outcomes, the main content, conclusion, summary and references/further readings. The introduction will tell you the expectations in the study unit. Read and note the intended learning outcomes (ILOs). The intended learning outcomes tell you what you should be able to do at the completion of each study unit. So, you can evaluate your learning at the end of each unit to ensure you have achieved the intended learning outcomes. To meet the intended learning outcomes, knowledge is presented in texts, and links arranged into modules and units. Click on the links where provided as the case may be to either read or download texts, pictures etc. the conclusion gives you the theme of the knowledge you are taking away from the unit. Unit summaries are also presented for proper articulation of the salient points made in unit.

There are two main forms of assessments – the formative and the summative. The formative assessments will help you monitor your learning. This is presented as in-text questions, discussion forums and self-Assessment Exercises. The summative assessments would be used by the university to evaluate your academic performance. This will be given as computer Based test (CBT) which serves as continuous assessment and final examinations. A minimum of two or maximum of three Computer Based Tests will be given with only one final examination.

Study units

There are 3 Modules with a total of 12 units. They are presented as follows:

Module 1

Unit 1: Introduction

Unit 2: Background to Late Modern Philosophy

Unit 3: Immanuel Kant: The Critical Philosophy

Unit 4: Immanuel Kant: The Moral Philosophy

Module 2

Unit 1 Mary Wollstonecraft

Unit 2: J. G. Fichte

Unit 3: G. W. F. Hegel

Unit 4: Arthur Schopenhauer

Module 3

Unit 1 Soren Kierkegaard

Unit 2 Karl Marx

Unit 3 Fredrich Nietzsche

Unit 4 John Dewey

References and Further Readings

Copleston, Frederick (1993) *A History of Philosophy*. New York: Image Books.

Lawhead, William (2002) *The Voyage of Discovery*. Belmont, USA:Wadsworth.

O'Connor, D.J (1985) *A Critical History of Western Philosophy*. New York: The Free Press.

Omeregbe, Joseph (1997) *A Simplified History of Western Philosophy*. Lagos: Joja Educational Research and Publishers Limited.

Russell, Bertrand (1986) *The History of Western Philosophy*. New York: Simon and Schuster Inc.

Rusk, R. and Scotland, J. (1979). *The doctrines of the great educators*. Macmillan publishers.

Stumpf, S. E. and Fieser, J. (2003). *Socrates to Sartre and beyond: a history of philosophy*. 7th ed. McGraw Hill.

Presentation Schedule

The presentation schedule gives you the important dates for the completion of your computer-based tests, participation in forum discussions and participation at facilitation. Remember, you are

to submit all your assignments at the appropriate time. You should guard against delays and plagiarisms in your work. Plagiarism is a criminal offence in academics and is highly penalized.

Assessment

There are two main forms of assessments in this course that will be scored. The Continuous Assessments and the final examination. The continuous assessment shall be in three-fold. There will be two computer Based Assessment. The computer-based assessments will be given in accordance to university academic calendar. The timing must be strictly adhered to. The Computer Based Assessments shall be scored a maximum of 10% each, while your participation in discussion forums and your portfolio presentation shall be scored maximum of 10% if you meet 75% participation. Therefore, the maximum score for continuous assessment shall be 30% which shall form part of the final grade.

The final examination for PHL will be maximum of three hours and it takes 70 percent of the total course grade. The examination will consist of 5 questions out of which you are expected to answer 4.

Note: you will earn 10% score if you meet a minimum of 75% participation in the course forum discussions and in your portfolios otherwise you will lose 10% in your total score. You will be required to upload your portfolio using google Doc. What are you expected to do in your portfolio? Your portfolio should be note or jottings you made on each study unit and activities. This will include the time you spent on each unit or activity.

How to get the Most from the Course

To get the most in this course, you need to have a personal laptop and internet facility. This will give you adequate opportunity to learn anywhere you are in the world. Use the Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) to guide your self-study in the course. At the end of every unit, examine yourself with the ILOs and see if you have achieved what you need to achieve.

Carefully work through each unit and make your notes. Join the online real time facilitation as scheduled. Where you missed the scheduled online real time facilitation, go through the recorded facilitation session at your own free time. Each real time facilitation session will be video recorded and posted on the platform.

Work through all self-assessment exercises. Finally, obey the rules in the class.

Facilitation

You will receive online facilitation. The facilitation is learner centered. The mode of facilitation shall be asynchronous and synchronous. For the asynchronous facilitation, your facilitator will:

- Present the theme for the week
- Direct and summarize forum discussions
- Coordinate activities in the platform
- Score and grade activities in the platform
- Score and grade activities when need be

- Upload scores into the university recommended platform
- Support you to learn. In this regard personal mails may be sent.
- Send you videos and audio lectures; and podcast

For the Synchronous:

There will be a minimum of eight hours and a maximum of twelve online real time contact in the course. This will be through video conferencing in the Learning Management System. The sessions are going to be run at an hour per session. At the end of each one- hour video conferencing, the video will be uploaded for view at your pace.

The facilitator will concentrate on main themes that are must know in the course. The facilitator is to present the online real time video facilitation time table at the beginning of the course.

The facilitator will take you through the course guide in the first lecture at the start date of facilitation.

Do not hesitate to contact your facilitator. contact your facilitator if you:

- Do not understand any part of the study unit or the assignment
- Have difficulty with the self-assessment exercises
- Have a question or problem with an assignment or with your tutor's comments on an assignment.

Also, use the contact provided for technical support.

Read assignment, participate in the forums and discussions. This gives you opportunity to socialize with others in the programme. You can raise any problem encountered during your study. To gain the maximum benefit from course facilitation, prepare a list of questions before the discussion session. You will learn a lot from participating actively in the discussions.

Module 1

Unit 1: Introduction

Unit 2: Background to Late Modern Philosophy

Unit 3: Immanuel Kant: The Critical Philosophy

Unit 4: Immanuel Kant: The Moral Philosophy

Module 1: Unit 1: Introduction

Contents

1.1. Introduction

- 1.2. Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)
- 1.3. Recap of the Early Modern Period
- 1.4. Conclusion
- 1.5. Summary
- 1.6. References/Further Readings

1.1 Introduction

The people who have engaged seriously in philosophizing have had varying aims. Some have been religious leaders, like St. Augustine, and have tried to explain and justify certain religious points of view. Some have been scientists, like René Descartes, and have attempted to interpret the meaning and importance of various scientific discoveries and theories. Others, like John Locke and Karl Marx, have philosophized in order to effect certain changes in the political organization of society. Many have been interested in justifying or promulgating some set of ideas which they thought might aid mankind. Others have had no such grandiose purpose, but merely wished to understand certain features of the world in which they lived and certain beliefs that people held.

Regardless of these various conceptions of the role of the philosopher, and regardless of how remote we may think his/her activities are from our immediate concerns, the philosopher has been engaged in considering problems that are of importance to all of us, either directly or indirectly. Through careful critical examination, he/she has tried to evaluate the information and beliefs we have about the universe at large and the world of human affairs. From this investigation, the philosopher has attempted to work out some general, systematic, coherent, and consistent picture of all that we know and think. As we gain more information about the world through the sciences, new interpretations of accepted pictures need to be considered. This sort of understanding has provided an outlook or framework in which the ordinary person can place his/her own—possibly more limited—conception of the world and human affairs (Popkin and Stroll 1). It has provided as well a focus through which we can see our own roles and activities, and determine if they have any significance. Through such an examination and evaluation, we may all be better able to assess our ideals and aspirations, as well as understand better why we accept these, and possibly whether we ought to.

From the very beginnings of philosophy in ancient Greece, over two and a half millennia ago, it has been the conviction of the serious thinkers who have engaged in this pursuit that it is necessary to scrutinize the views that we accept about our world and ourselves to see if they are rationally defensible. We have all acquired much information and many opinions about the natural and human universe. But few of us have ever considered whether these are reliable or important. We are usually willing to accept without question reported scientific discoveries, certain traditional beliefs, and various views based upon our personal experiences. The philosopher, however, insists upon subjecting all this to intensive critical examination in order to discover if these views and beliefs are based upon adequate evidence and if a reasonable person may be justified in adhering to them (Popkin and Stroll 1).

Philosophy, in a less dangerous way, also makes a person think—think about the basic foundations of his/her outlook, his/her knowledge, his/her beliefs. It makes one inquire into the reasons for what one accepts and does, and into the importance of one's ideas and ideals, in the hope that one's final convictions, whether they remain the same or whether they change as a result of this examination, will at least be rationally held ones.

1.2 Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

By the end of this unit, you will be able to have insight as to some of the scholars that will be treated in this course.

1.3 Recap of the Early Modern Period

In the first part of this course, you studied factors that gave rise the modern period philosophy To refresh your memory, it was learnt that modern period of Philosophy is marked by the declining authority of the church and the increasing authority of reason and science. During this period, philosophy ceased to be a handmaid of theology and started enjoying the freedom of reason that characterizes the discipline. And because of the new found freedom of reason, the period witnessed an unprecedented development in scientific discoveries and inventions. Hence, the modern period is often described as the period of the unfolding world of science.

The following were taught as factors that precluded the modern period:

1.3.1 The Renaissance

The modern period as opposed to the medieval outlook began in Italy with the movement called the Renaissance (Russell, 1945: 495). The term Renaissance literally means "rebirth." The Renaissance, therefore, was a time of rebirth and renewal; a time of release and discovery. It was a rebirth of learning in the letters, humanism and philosophy (Essien, 2011: 184). During this period, men began, once again, to emphasize the natural abilities of the human person to reason independently of faith. The Renaissance marked the age of humanism-the focus on man.

1.3.2 The Reformation

The Reformation or Protestant Reformation, was another important wave that played a significant role in the rise of modern philosophy. The Protestant Reformation, spearheaded by a young Austinian monk, Martin Luther (1483-1546), started in Germany. The reformation started as a form of rebellion against the authority of the Pope and the Catholic Church which was the seat of Christianity in Europe. This rebellion arose as a result of the political and spiritual decline of the church's influence. Political battles in the church brought about the Great Schism (division), which lasted between 1378 to 1417. This led to the division of the church into two opposing factions with each having its own Pope and college of Cardinals. As noted by Lawhead (2002: 204), secular rulers seized the opportunity to jump into the battle, supporting whichever side that would serve their interests, thereby resulting in massive corruption in the church.

1.3.3 The Rise of Modern Science

According to Stumpf and Fieser (2012), there are two distinct components to the rise of modern scientific revolution. First is the the new scientific discoveries and (2) new methods of conducting scientific inquiry. As to new discoveries, to enhance the exactness of their observations, scientists invented various scientific instruments. In 1590 the first compound microscope was created. In 1608 the telescope was invented. The principle of the barometer was discovered by Evangelista Torricelli (1608-1647). Otto von Guericke (1602-1686) invented the air pump, which was so important in creating a vacuum for the experiment that proved that all bodies, regardless of their weight or size, fall at the same rate when there is no air resistance. With the use of instruments and imaginative hypotheses, fresh knowledge began to unfold. Galileo Galilei (1564-1642) discovered the moons around Jupiter; and Anton Leeuwenhoek (1632-1723) discovered spermatozoa, protozoa, and bacteria, and William Harvey (1578-1657) discovered the circulation of the blood. William Gilbert (1540-1603) wrote a major work on the magnet, and

Robert Boyle (1627-1691), the father of chemistry, formulated his famous law concerning the relation of temperature, volume, and pressure of gases.

The second contribution of the scientific revolution involved the development of new scientific methods. Medieval approaches to science were grounded in Aristotle's system of deductive logic. Several Renaissance and early modern scientists proposed alternative systems, often quite different from each other. The scientific methods that we follow today; though, are in many respects the direct descendants of these early theories, particularly those of Francis Bacon (1561-1626), which stress the importance of observation and inductive reasoning. Scientific methodology made further progress as new fields of mathematics were opened. Copernicus had employed a twofold method: first, the observation of moving bodies, and, second, the mathematical calculation of the motion of bodies in space.

The conflict between rationalism and empiricism resulted in an attempt by Immanuel Kant, to synthesize these opposing schools of thought. Following from his synthesis, the modern period experienced a radical change which was ushered in by Kant's philosophy, thereby paving way for a new wave of thought in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. While this period was characterized by idealism, some scholars, however, questioned the relevance of the speculative thought to the existence of man. This period, therefore, laid foundation for existentialism. Hence, the late modern period was also a preparing ground for a humanistic approach to philosophy through the emergence of existentialism.

1.3.4. Social and Political Changes

In the political realm, the growing spirit of nationalism was partially fueled by the Protestant Reformation. Indeed, as kings turned away from Rome it was questionable whether their motives were theological or political. This destroyed the religious unity of Europe and inevitably led to outbreaks of religious-political wars. Ultimately, however, this resulted in a spirit of skepticism and tolerance in reaction to the counterproductive strife and confusion produced by theological fanaticism. As the essayist Michel de Montaigne (1533–1592) declared, “It is rating one's conjectures at a very high price to roast a man on the strength of them.” As people grew weary of theological battles, they turned to secular learning, especially mathematics and science (Lawhead 219).

The world of commerce was undergoing a rapid expansion. A money economy replaced the crude barter and exchange economy of the early Middle Ages. The rise of banking and emerging capitalism created a need for firm and stable governments. Taking advantage of the vacuum of authority, the middle-class commercial interests became the dominant political and social power. All this caused, of course, an increased interest in life on earth. However, it was not yet time for culture to become fully secularized. Instead, the culture united the life of the flesh and the spirit, abandoning the medieval dualism of heaven and earth. The forces at work in this era did not operate in separate compartments (Lawhead 219).

1.3.5 The Copernican Revolution

Nicolaus Copernicus (1473–1543) was a Catholic, Polish clergyman, and scientist of unimpeachable theological orthodoxy. However, his 1543 book *The Revolutions of the Heavenly Bodies*, challenged the prevailing orthodoxy in astronomy. Using both observations and mathematics, he revolutionized astronomy with his heliocentric theory. This theory placed the sun at the center of things and supposed that the earth, like the other planets, revolves on its own axis while also revolving around the sun. Copernicus's theory was not based on any new factual discovery as much as it was rooted in his Neoplatonism, which dictated that perfect motion is a uniform circular motion around a center. By placing the sun at the center of the earth's and planets' orbits, he radically reduced, by more than one-half, the number of epicycles required to picture the solar system. In this way, he replaced most of the messy, bumpy orbits with aesthetically and intellectually pleasing circular motions. Even though his motives were based on Neoplatonic superstitions about the virtues of circularity, Copernicus was scientifically correct in preferring a simpler and more elegant explanation to a complicated and awkward one. However, this new position did not go well with the church, but it is important to understand that the scientific objections were just as formidable as any theological problems.

This course a continuation of what we did last semester. We shall be concerned with the wave of thought that arose from the two basic schools and how their thoughts impacted other scholars. The course is divided into three modules. Each module has four units. Module one, unit one covers the introduction of the course, outlining the different scholars that shall be considered. In unit two, we shall focus on the background to late modern philosophy. Units three and four shall discuss the critical and moral philosophies of Kant, respectively. The course is a three unit course

and you shall have a continuous assessment at the end of each unit. However, there is no need to panic as the manual is presented in a simple, down to earth English for your easy assimilation.

Self Assessment Exercise 1

1. Mention at least three factors that gave birth to the rise of the modern period as you previously learnt.
2. Mention the two opposing schools of thought in the modern period and their positions.

1.4 Conclusion

Late Modern philosophy is a wave of thought that continues from the early modern philosophy. However, we shall see the dichotomy between the thinkers of this era as we progress in this study.

1.5 Summary

In this unit, you have been refreshed on the basic features that gave birth to early modern philosophy.

1.6 References/Further Readings

Lawhead, William. *The Voyage of Discovery: A Historical Introduction to Philosophy*. 4th ed. Cengage Advantage Books, 2015

Stumpf, Samuel and James Fieser. *Socrates to Sartre and Beyond: A History of Philosophy*. 8th Ed. McGraw hill Education, 2012.

Essien, Ephraim. *Summa philosophica: an introduction to philosophy and logic*. Lulu press, 2011.

Russell, Bertrand. *The history of Western philosophy*. Simon and Schuster, 1945.

Popkin, Richard and Avrum Stroll. *Philosophy Made Simple*. 2nd Ed. Made Simple Books, 1993.

1.6 Possible Answers to SAE

Answers to SAE 1

1. Three factors that gave birth to the modern period were: (a) The renaissance (b) The reformation and (c) the rise of modern science.

2. The Two opposing schools of the modern period are rationalism and empiricism. The tenet of rationalism sees reason as the source of knowledge whereas, empiricism sees experience as the foundation of human knowledge.

Module 1: Unit 2: Background to Late Modern Philosophy

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- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)
- 2.3 Background to late modern thought
- 2.4 General Character of the Late Modern Period
 - 2.4.1 The Influence of Immanuel Kant
 - 2.4.2 The Rise of German Idealism
 - 2.4.3 The Rise of German Idealism
 - 2.4.4 Emergence of Interest in the Discipline of History
 - 2.4.5 The Development in Evolution Theory
 - 2.4.6 The Thesis of Historicism
 - 2.4.7 The Notion of Human Progress
- 2.5 Questions About Reason and Subjectivity
- 2.6 Conclusion
- 2.7 Summary
- 2.8 References/Further Readings
- 2.9 Possible Answers to SAEs

2.1 Introduction

In this unit, we shall look at factors that gave impetus to the rise of late modern philosophy. This is necessary as it will help us to properly understand the various stages of progress in the late modern era.

2.2 Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

At the end of this unit, you will learn:

1. The influence of Kant in ushering in the late modern period
2. The unique character of the late modern period.

2.3 Background to late modern thought

The late modern period of western philosophy came into effect in the nineteenth century. It has been argued among contemporary researchers, what characterized the central tenet of the age. This is because it is difficult to classify the thought of the scholars of this era into any single, unified theme. According to Lawhead (378), the philosophies of this period could be viewed as a number of streams moving in diverging directions. However, if we trace these streams back to their point of origin, we will find that, with two exceptions, they all flow out from the system of Immanuel Kant. After Kant, philosophy could never be the same again. His impact was so great that it is common to label philosophical outlooks as “pre-Kantian” or “post-Kantian.”

Because Kant’s system was so comprehensive and complex as well as riddled with numerous conflicting tendencies, it was difficult to embrace it as a whole. Thus, later philosophers were content to make complete philosophies out of selected parts of the Kantian system, while discarding those parts they found incoherent. Even those who most fully inherited Kant’s ideas carried them in directions he never anticipated and would not have approved. The primary nineteenth-century movements and thinkers that followed after Kant were German idealism, romanticism, the positivism of Auguste Comte, the utilitarianism of Bentham and Mill, the historical materialism of Karl Marx, and the existentialism of Soren Kierkegaard and Friedrich Nietzsche.

Self Assessment Exercise 1

1. Why do scholars argue about the general character of the late modern period?

2. Kant influence was so great that it brings about philosophical outlooks called _____ or _____

3.4 General Character of the Late Modern Period

2.4.1 The Influence of Immanuel Kant

The major influence of the late modern thinkers was the shadow of Kant's philosophy. On the one hand, Kant limited rational knowledge to the world of spatial-temporal experience called the phenomena. The phenomenal world gives us reality, not naked and unadorned, but as it appears after being structured by the categories of the mind. Nevertheless, it is the only world we know and it is the world science studies. The major problem that all these thinkers had with Kant's system was its objectionable dualism. On the one hand, Kant limited rational knowledge to the world of spatial-temporal experience called the phenomena. The phenomenal world gives us reality, not naked and unadorned, but as it appears after being structured by the categories of the mind. Nevertheless, it is the only world we know and it is the world science studies. On the other hand, Kant could not free himself from the conviction that beyond the phenomenal world, beyond the world as it appears to us, is reality as it is in itself—the noumenal realm. Kant's critics were quick to point out that it makes no sense for Kant to say we can know only what appears in experience at the same time he claims to know there is a reality that transcends experience. Furthermore, although Kant's suggestion that the real world "causes" the world of phenomena has a certain commonsense appeal, it is not consistent with his claim that causality is a category that the mind imposes on experience and cannot be applied outside of what is empirically given.

The post-Kantian movements sought to resolve this problem in a number of ways. The German idealists and the romantics denied that we were cut off from ultimate reality, as Kant had claimed. Although they agreed the world of the empirical sciences is merely a system of appearances, they did not draw the Kantian conclusion that reality-in-itself is a mysterious, unapproachable region. Instead, they claimed, reality is exactly what we encounter in experience when we approach it in the proper way. However, they described the world of experience as being broader and richer than Kant ever imagined, for they included moral, aesthetic, and religious experience within its scope. Both the idealists and the romantics believed the mind has intuitive powers that transcend the limitations of science and reveal the heart of reality to us. Others, such as the positivists and the utilitarians, claimed the world described by science (Kant's phenomenal

realm) was the only world worth talking about. Thus, they avoided the sort of problematic dualism found in Kant by dismissing the meaningfulness of talking about a transcendent reality altogether. Since the only reality we experience is sense data, they claimed, science can describe only the regularities that occur within experience, but it cannot speculate about ultimate causes or any other metaphysical entities.

2.4.2 The Rise of German Idealism

The immediate heirs of Kantian philosophy were the German idealists. Idealism is the theory that everything must be understood as intrinsically dependent on some sort of mental or spiritual reality. Although they were influenced by Kant, the idealists who followed after him were impatient with Kant's narrow definition of knowledge and his obsession with the limitations of the mind. According to their outlook, Kant's unnecessarily cautious approach condemned human knowledge to dwell in a sterile, minuscule, and trivial domain with nothing to give it spiritual nourishment.

The idealists had a yearning for infinity (which provoked their critics to label them "fanatics for totality"). Accordingly, the idealists sought to burst through the epistemological walls Kant had so painstakingly built. In doing so, they hoped to show that reality itself, not just the world of appearances, could be encompassed by the mind. The word "encompassed" may be misleading, for it suggests an independently existing reality to which the mind may or may not be related. However, this is exactly what idealism denied. The idealists charged that Kant had limited the range of experience too severely. According to the idealists, the real world is not apprehended through a scientific analysis of bits of sense data but by some sort of intellectual intuition provoked by moral or aesthetic experience. Since ultimate reality is spiritual and not material, it can support the highest aspirations of the human spirit as manifested in morals, art, and religion.

2.4.3 Romanticism Movement

The philosophical vision of the German idealists had much in common with the broader movement of romanticism. Romanticism was a quasi-philosophical literary and artistic movement that reacted against the Enlightenment picture of the universe as a machine that could best be studied by the analytical techniques of the sciences. For the romantics, the scientific vision of the world was too alienating, for it threatened to turn our moral, aesthetic, and religious longings into

isolated aberrations within an otherwise mathematically ordered cosmos. As the romantics looked out on nature, they did not see atomistic particles in motion. Instead, they felt they were in the mystical presence of an organic unity that resonated with the human spirit. Furthermore, they were convinced that logic and telescopes missed what was most important about reality.

Rather than reason and science revealing the secrets of this world to us, they fragmented nature and turned it into a catalogue of abstractions. In place of the banquet table of life, full of rich colors, tastes, and textures, science offered us only a cookbook of recipes. To be sure, every savory dish present at the banquet of nature was represented in the scientists' recipes. But to mistake the scientists' calculations for the fullness of reality would lead to spiritual starvation. The physicist could summarize the sunset and rainbow in optical equations, and the physiologist could describe the body of one's lover as a machine made up of organic pumps, tubing, levers, and pulleys. However, in each case the scientific account missed the beauty and the mystery of these realities. Because its adherents were disdainful of logic and doctrines, romanticism was not a sharply defined movement. It is better understood as a mood or temperament, giving rise to many "romanticisms," rather than a single set of commonly held doctrines. Nevertheless, some themes were common to the romantics, such as intuition as a source of truth, distrust of logic and the sciences, the value of the emotions, love of nature, the view of nature as spiritual, the quest for new experience, and an adoration of classical antiquity.

Because of their suspicion of reason, the romantics had a more direct impact on art and literature than on philosophy. Nevertheless, the movement inspired philosophers to expand their vision of the world, and in turn philosophers did influence the romantics. Although romanticism was not a direct offshoot of German idealism, the romantics were influenced by these philosophers' description of nature as spiritual and dynamic. Furthermore, the two movements agreed that through the emotions, intuition, and aesthetic experience we could penetrate to the core of reality and experience a spiritual oneness with the world.

2.4.4 Emergence of Interest in the Discipline of History

With the exception of Augustine, it is significant that very little has been said so far about the role of history in our understanding of human experience. From the very beginning, most philosophers, particularly the rationalists, were concerned with the search for eternal, timeless truths. Even though Augustine thought historical change was important, its significance to him lay

in the way it mirrored eternal principles. Likewise, even though the British empiricists emphasized the changing world of the senses as the primary source of our knowledge, they found within the mind and nature alike, an established pattern impervious to historical changes. Furthermore, the empiricists and the rationalists alike assumed human nature could be defined in terms of a singular, unchanging essence. Kant exploited these assumptions when he declared that the ground of universal and necessary knowledge lies in the universal and static structure of the human mind. This outlook changed dramatically in the nineteenth century.

To the philosophers of this time, history was all-important to philosophy. Hence, a unique feature of this century was that history was regarded from a philosophical viewpoint, and even more importantly, philosophy was regarded from a historical point of view. That this was a time of enormous historical change helped fuel this outlook. Living in the aftermath of the American and French Revolutions, facing social ferment, feeling the pressures for social reform and more revolutions, watching the rise of the Industrial Revolution, and marveling at the rapid development of the sciences, the thinkers of this century were persuaded that every tradition and idea eventually runs its course and is replaced by new ways of thinking and living. However, the observation that ideas and cultures change and are replaced by new ones was certainly not original to this century. The newly-found historical era came with three unique characteristic themes. These are evolution, historicism and the theme of human progress.

2.4.5 The Development in Evolution Theory

The idea of evolutionary development was, of course, employed by Charles Darwin in his groundbreaking *On the Origin of Species* (1859) to explain how totally new species emerged from previous biological forms. His theory showed that even the categories of nature were not fixed for all time but were in continual flux. Although Darwin himself had little interest in the philosophical applications of his theory of evolution, it served as a powerful metaphor for philosophers who wanted to understand humanity as moving toward progressively higher stages of intellectual, moral, and social development. Before Darwin comes up with his scientific research, the idea of evolutionary or dialectical development had been applied in Germany by the Hegelians and the Marxists to explain all reality, including the course history had taken in the past and would take in the future. For these philosophers, the new approach to biology seemed to provide scientific confirmation of the dynamic view of reality they had already arrived at in their studies.

2.4.6 The Thesis of Historicism

The thesis of historicism was built on this view of historical change. Historicism claims that everything human is affected by the processes of history, such that any truth claim only has validity in terms of its place and role in this historical development. As Hegel expressed it, “Whatever happens, every individual is a child of his time; so philosophy is its own time apprehended in thoughts.” No idea has a single, fixed meaning, and no form of understanding has an eternal, unchanging relationship to the truth. This outlook was based on the Kantian insight that the mind is not passive in its encounter with the world, but is active and creative in structuring how the world appears to us. Consequently, Kant claimed, the world we experience reflects not the structure of reality in itself but rather the form of human understanding. Although apparently introducing human subjectivity into cognition, Kant could still preserve the notion of universal and objective knowledge because he insisted that the categories of the mind are the same for all. However, once we abandon this thesis, we end up with the possibility that the world can be structured and experienced in many ways.

Hegel and Marx illustrate this move to a multiplicity of perspectives. According to them, different historical eras have different conceptual structures and different rational ideals. This is because reason itself undergoes historical evolution as it is continually affected by the changing conditions of individual and social life. Nevertheless, for both of them, the historical emergence of new social and conceptual structures was not accidental but conformed to an identifiable rational pattern.

2.4.7 The Notion of Human Progress

The nineteenth century’s understanding of history was permeated with the notion of progress. A pessimist could look at the restless changes of human history and conclude that the world is a dismal and endless parade of failed cultural experiments. However, the majority opinion among nineteenth-century philosophers reflected an unrestrained optimism. To them, it was easy for the discerning philosopher to find within the apparent chaos of history a clear linear development that pointed toward some sort of fulfillment. This idea came out most clearly in Hegel’s and Marx’s philosophies of history. Even though they both thought reason took different forms in different historical periods, they resisted a total relativism that would rob reason of any significance. As

each era gives way to its successor, they claimed, it follows a logical pattern that gives intelligibility to the process and moves history closer to its culmination.

2.5 Questions About Reason and Subjectivity

This issue came to the fore in the eighteenth century when Hume argued that reason had very little relevance to our knowledge of the world and to how we live our lives. In all our practical engagements, he claimed, “Reason is and ought to be the slave of the passions (Lawhead 388). Although Kant agreed that reason has its limitations, he thought it had an a priori structure that provided a basis for our scientific and ethical endeavors. The German idealists were not happy with the boundaries of reason marked out by Kant and thought that the route to escape these limits could be found in the self’s inner experience. Building on their ideas, but taking a turn back toward rationalism, Hegel argued there was no separation between reason, the self, and reality because our concepts, self-consciousness, and reality were manifestations of one, all-encompassing Spirit that was developing in history.

Self Assessment Exercise 2

1. Who argued against the relevance of our knowledge of the world?
2. The questions about reason and subjectivity first came up in which century?

2.6 Conclusion

In this unit, you have learnt some of the major factors that led to the emergence of the late modern period. This unit discussed eight major factors to include; the impact of Kant’s synthesis, the predominance of German thought, the evolutionary theory of Darwin, development of interest in philosophy of history, among others. Taking these factors into consideration, it is very certain that the late modern period was bound to enrich the intellectual world with various ideas. We shall study some of these ideas as the work progresses.

2.7 Summary

In this unit you have learnt that the late modern period of western philosophy came into effect in the nineteenth century and that the dominant scholars of this era were the German idealists. You also learnt that this period witnessed a growing interest in historicism and laid the foundation for existential philosophy.

2.8 References/Further Readings

Lawhead, William. *The Voyage of Discovery: A Historical Introduction to Philosophy*. 4th ed. Cengage Advantage Books, 2015

Stumpf, Samuel and James Fieser. *Socrates to Sartre and Beyond: A History of Philosophy*. 8th Ed. McGraw hill Education, 2012.

2.9 Possible Answers to SAEs

Answers to SAE 1

1. It has been argued among contemporary researchers, what characterized the central tenet of the age because it is difficult to classify the thought of the scholars of this era into any single, unified theme.
2. Pre-Kantian or Post-Kantian

Answers to SAE 2

1. David Hume
2. Eighteenth century

Module 1: Unit 3: Immanuel Kant: The Critical Philosophy

Contents

- 3.1. Introduction
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- 3.5 Kant's Copernican Revolution
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- 3.8 Transcendental Idealism
- 3.9 Conclusion
- 3.10 Summary
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3.1 Introduction

In our introduction, we mentioned that Immanuel Kant's philosophy greatly influenced the line of thought in the late modern period. In fact, it will not be out of context to posit that Kant changed the face of philosophy. Recall how we had earlier learnt that the argument between empiricism and rationalism was fierce and their thought dominated the modern world. It was Immanuel Kant who made a concerted effort to unite their views. In this unit, we shall discuss Kant's critical philosophy and how it actually addressed the ratio-empirico argument

3.2 Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

At the end of this unit, you will learn the following:

1. The varieties of judgment in Kant's philosophy
2. Kant's Copernican revolution
3. The difference between noumenal and phenomenal reality
4. His concept of space and time
5. The transcendental idealism of Kant

3.3 A Brief Biography of Immanuel Kant

Immanuel Kant was born in Königsberg, East Prussia, on April 22, 1724. His parents were Pietists, a sect of Protestants who lived severe, puritanical lives and emphasized faith and religious feelings over reason and theological doctrines. Although Kant's later religious thought was hardly orthodox, he was always sensitive to the longings of the heart that cannot be met by the cold dictates of theoretical reason. He went to school at the University of Königsberg and later ended up becoming a professor there himself. Virtually no area of knowledge remained untouched by Kant, for he lectured on metaphysics, logic, ethics, aesthetics, and philosophical theology, as well as mathematics, physics, geography, and anthropology. In addition to his groundbreaking work in philosophy, he also made significant contributions in some of the sciences. Despite the fact that Kant was very rigid and strict in his personal lifestyle, his contemporaries describe his lectures as humorous, entertaining, and even playful. Although his intellectual stature was imposing, his physical size was diminutive. By most people's standards, Kant lived a very limited existence. He was well acquainted with geography and current events, yet he never traveled more than sixty miles from the place of his birth. Although he helped out his family members financially, he never felt very close to his sisters and brother. He did have a close circle of friends, but Kant gradually became more of a recluse as he grew older. In 1797 he retired from public lecturing and, after a period of illness, died on February 12, 1804.

Self Assessment Exercise 1

1. Kant was on _____ and died on _____
2. How did his contemporaries describe his lectures?

3.4 The Critical Philosophy: The Nature of Knowledge

Kant referred to his own thought as "critical philosophy." Accordingly, his major work took the form of three critiques. His most important work, dealing with epistemology and metaphysics, was the Critique of Pure Reason. By calling his approach a "critical philosophy," Kant was not calling for a mean-spirited, negative attitude in philosophy that rejects everything. On the contrary, the word critique comes from a Greek word that means "to sort" or "to sift out." Thus, Kant's goal was to set out the legitimate claims of reason and filter out all groundless claims (Lawhead 357-8).

Kant's early philosophical inspiration had been the system of Leibniz, as expounded by Wolff. But despite this influence—which is everywhere apparent in the Critique of Pure Reason—Kant's philosophy is unique, both in its methods and in its aims. In order to understand those aims we must again consider the impact, during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, of the rise of science. Science presented itself as a universal discipline, the premises of which were certain, and the methods of which were disputable only by the adoption of a stance of philosophical skepticism. No one could engage in science without accepting both the established results of his predecessors, and also the empirical methods that led to their discovery. Science presented a picture of unanimity and objectivity which no system of metaphysics could rival. Forced by this fact into unnatural self-consciousness, philosophy found itself with no results that it could offer as its own peculiar contribution to the fund of human knowledge. The very possibility of metaphysics was thrown in doubt, and this doubt was only exacerbated by Hume's radical skepticism—a skepticism which, according to Kant, aroused him from his 'dogmatic (by which he meant Leibnizian) slumbers'. All philosophy, then, for Kant, must begin from the question 'How is metaphysics possible?'

In answer to that question, Kant attempted a systematic critique of human thought and reason. He tried to explore not just scientific beliefs, but all beliefs, in order to establish exactly what is presupposed in the act of belief as such. He wished to describe the nature and limits of knowledge, not just in respect of scientific discovery, but absolutely: his metaphysics was designed, not as a postscript to physics, but as the very foundation of discursive thought. He hoped to show three things:

1 That there is a legitimate employment of the understanding, the rules of which can be laid bare, and that limits can be set to this legitimate employment. (It is a striking conclusion of Kant's thought that rational theology is not just unbelievable, but unthinkable.)

2 That Humean skepticism is impossible, since the rules of the understanding are already sufficient to establish the existence of an objective world obedient to a law of causal connection.

3 That certain fundamental principles of science—such as the principle of the conservation of substance, the principle that every event has a cause, the principle that objects exist in space and time, can be established a priori.

Kant's proof of these contentions begins from the theory of 'synthetic a priori' knowledge. According to Kant, scientific knowledge is a posteriori: it arises from, and is based in, actual experience. Science, therefore, deals not with necessary truths but with matters of contingent fact. However, it rests upon certain universal axioms and principles, which, because their truth is presupposed at the start of any empirical enquiry, cannot themselves be empirically proved. These axioms are, therefore, a priori, and while some of them are 'analytic' (true by virtue of the meanings of the words used to formulate them), others are 'synthetic', saying something substantial about the empirical world.

Moreover, these synthetic a priori truths, since they cannot be established empirically, are justifiable, if at all, through reflection, and reflection will confer on them the only kind of truth that is within its gift: necessary truth. They must be true in any conceivable world. (Kant's idea of necessity is here weaker than that of Leibniz, for whom necessity meant truth in every possible world; see pp. 69–70.) These truths, then, form the proper subject matter of metaphysics; the original question of metaphysics has become: 'How is synthetic a priori knowledge possible?'

Kant believed that neither the empiricists nor the rationalists could provide a coherent theory of knowledge. The first, who elevate experience over understanding, deprive themselves of the concepts with which experience might be described (for no concept can be derived as a mere 'abstraction' from experience); while the second, who emphasize understanding at the expense of experience, deprive themselves of the very subject matter of knowledge. Knowledge is achieved through a synthesis of concept and experience, and Kant called this synthesis 'transcendental', meaning that it could never be observed as a process, but must always be presupposed as a result. Synthetic a priori knowledge is possible because we can establish that experience, if it is to be subject to this synthesis, must conform to the 'categories' of the understanding.

These categories are the basic forms of thought, or a priori concepts, under which all merely empirical concepts are subsumed. (For example, the concept 'table' is subsumed under 'artifact', which in turn is subsumed under 'object' and hence under 'substance'; the concept of 'killing' is subsumed under 'action', which falls under 'cause'. The categories are the end-points of these chains of subsumption, points beyond which one cannot proceed, since they represent the most basic operations of human thought.) Thus we can know a priori that our world (if it is to be our

world) must obey certain principles, principles implicit in such concepts as substance, object and cause, and that it must fall under the general order of space and time.

Kant's critical philosophy, therefore, consists of an analysis of the components of human reason, by which he meant "a critical inquiry into the faculty of reason with reference to all the knowledge which it may strive to attain independently of all experience" (Stumpf and Fieser 274). The way of critical philosophy is to ask the question "What and how much can understanding and reason know, apart from all experience?" Earlier metaphysicians engaged in disputes about the nature of the Supreme Being and other subjects that took them beyond the realm of immediate experience. Kant, though, asked the principal question whether human reason possessed the powers to undertake such inquiries. From this point of view he thought it foolish for metaphysicians to construct systems of knowledge even before they had determined whether, by pure reason alone, we can apprehend what is not given to us in experience. Critical philosophy for Kant was, therefore, not the negation of metaphysics but rather a preparation for it. For Kant, if metaphysics has to do with knowledge as developed by reason alone, that is, prior to experience, or apriori, then how such apriori knowledge is possible? Kant therefore, began a new task in philosophy similar to what Copernicus did in astronomy. But for us to properly understand this project, there is need to investigate the nature of knowledge in Kant's philosophy.

Self Assessment Exercise 2

1. What is the way of critical philosophy?
2. According to Kant, knowledge is achieved through a _____ and _____
3. According to Kant, is critical philosophy a negation of metaphysics?

3.5 The Varieties of Judgments: Analytic and Synthetic Judgments vis a vis Apriori and Synthetic Apriori Knowledge

Kant maintains that knowledge appears in the form of judgment where we come to either affirm or deny something. Because of this, therefore, to lay claim to knowledge requires that we clearly examine our kinds of judgments that we make. Accordingly, Kant identifies two kinds of judgments – analytic and synthetic.

3.5.1 Analytic Judgment

Analytic judgments are based on the principle of contradiction. For example, “all bachelors are unmarried” is a true analytic judgment because the contradiction of this statement is necessarily false. We can confirm the truth of this judgment not by going out and gathering facts but merely by analyzing the meaning of the terms. The predicate “unmarried” is already contained within the subject “bachelors.” Furthermore, because the truth of this judgment is independent of any particular facts, it does not give any new knowledge about the world.

3.5.2 Synthetic Judgment

A synthetic judgment differs from the analytic in that its predicate is not contained in the subject. Thus, in a synthetic judgment the predicate adds something new to our concept of the subject. To say that "the apple is red" joins two independent concepts, for the concept apple does not contain the idea of redness. Similarly, for Kant, "all bodies are heavy" is an example of a synthetic judgment, for the idea of heaviness is not contained in the concept of body; that is, the predicate is not contained in the subject. Corresponding to these two kinds of judgments are two kinds of knowledge – apriori knowledge and aposteriori knowledge. A priori knowledge is knowledge that can be obtained independently of experience. Clearly, all analytic judgments are cases of a priori knowledge. To know “all bachelors are unmarried” I do not need any empirical data. A posteriori knowledge, in contrast, is knowledge obtained from experience. “All the bachelors in this class are six feet tall” cannot be known to be true apart from experience. Hence, it is an example of a posteriori knowledge. Thus, while all analytic judgments are a priori, most synthetic judgments are a posteriori (Stumpf and Fieser 276).

3.5.3 The Synthetic Apriori Judgments

Having identified two kinds of judgments and their corresponding knowledge, Kant directed his epistemological quest to establishing a kind of knowledge that is synthetic apriori (Essien 239). He was able to locate synthetic or aposteriori propositions in the empiricists programme, and apriori propositions in the rationalist programme. Hence, Kant maintains that there is another form of judgment besides the analytic apriori and the synthetic aposteriori, and this is the synthetic a priori. This is the kind of judgment Kant was most concerned about because he was certain that we make these judgments, yet there was the persistent question of how such judgments are possible. The question arises because by definition synthetic judgments are based

on experience, but if that is the case, how can they be called apriori, since this implies independence of experience?

Kant showed that in mathematics, physics, ethics, and metaphysics we do make judgments that are not only a priori but also synthetic. For example, the judgment 7 plus 5 equal 12 is certainly a priori because it contains the marks of necessity and universality; that is, 7 plus 5 has to equal 12, and it always has to do so. At the same time, this judgment is synthetic and not analytic because 12 cannot be derived by a mere analysis of the numbers 7 and 5. The act of intuition is necessary in order to achieve a synthesis of the concepts 7, 5, and plus. Kant shows that in propositions of geometry also the predicate is not contained in the subject even though there is a necessary and universal connection between subject and predicate. Thus, propositions of geometry are at once a priori and synthetic. But how are synthetic apriori knowledge possible? This became the central concern of Kant that later revolutionizes epistemology and settles the dispute between rationalism and empiricism.

Self Assessment Exercise 3

1. Analytic judgments are based on the principle of _____
2. How does synthetic judgments differ from analytic judgments?
3. Propositions of geometry are both _____ and _____

3.6 Kant's Copernican Revolution

To explain the nature of knowledge, Kant did something in epistemology similar to what Copernicus did in astronomy. Before Copernicus, it was generally believed that the earth was at the centre of the universe, and the sun and all other planets revolves around the earth. However, Copernicus reversed this view by showing that it was the opposite, that it was the sun that was at the centre of the universe and that the earth and other planets revolves round the sun (Omoregbe 93). In a similar way, Kant proposes a “Copernican revolution” in epistemology.

Kant solved the problem of the synthetic a priori judgment by substituting a new hypothesis concerning the relation between the mind and its objects. Before Kant, the general believe was that in the process of acquiring knowledge, the human mind was passive while objects of perception imposed themselves on the mind. Hence, we can only have knowledge of things as the mind impresses them on us. But Kant reversed this position and argued that it was the opposite. It is not

things that impose themselves on the mind, instead, it is the mind that imposes itself on things, forcing the things we perceive to conform to its own structure. In other words, Kant argues that it is the mind that imposes its own categories on objects of sense perception, forcing them to conform to these categories. The outcome is that things appear to us not as they are but as the mind makes them appear to us (Essien 240).

Kant did not mean that the mind creates objects, nor did he mean that the mind possesses innate ideas. His Copernican revolution consisted rather in his saying that the mind brings something to the objects it experiences. Kant agreed with Hume that our knowledge begins with experience, but unlike Hume, Kant saw the mind as an active agent doing something with the objects it experiences. The mind, Kant says, is structured in such a way that it imposes its way of knowing on its objects. By its very nature the mind actively organizes our experiences. That is, thinking involves not only receiving impressions through our senses but also making judgments about what we experience. Just as a person who wears colored glasses sees everything in that color, so every human being, having the faculty of thought, inevitably thinks about things in accordance with the natural structure of the mind (Stumpf and Fieser 278).

Self Assessment Exercise 4

1. How did Kant solve the problem of synthetic-apriori judgment?
2. What was the general believe of knowledge acquisition before Kant and how did he change that?

3.7 Noumena and Phenomena

A major aspect of Kant's critical philosophy was his insistence that human knowledge is forever limited in its scope. This limitation takes two forms. First, knowledge is limited to the world of experience. Second, our knowledge is limited by the manner in which our faculties of perception and thinking organize the raw data of experience. Kant did not doubt that the world as it appears to us is not the ultimate reality (Stumpf and Fieser 280). At this point, Kant makes a distinction between the noumena and the phenomena. According to Omoregbe, Kant's skepticism

is derived from his Copernican Revolution and his distinction between things as they are in themselves and things as they appear to us (Omoregbe 13). The noumena are things as they are in themselves and the phenomena are things as they appear to us.

According to Kant, the noumenal reality is beyond the scope of human knowledge. The implication of this is that we cannot know things as they are, but we can only have knowledge of things as they appear to us. However, the way they appear is different from the way they are. For Kant, therefore, we can only know appearances of things and not realities themselves. The problem there, is that Kant's philosophy leads to skepticism.

Self Assessment Exercise 5

- 1. A major aspect of Kant's critical philosophy was his insistence that _____**
- 2. What do you understand by noumena?**
- 3. What do you understand by phenomena?**
- 4. Which of the two realities, according to Kant, is beyond the scope of human knowledge and what is its implication to knowledge?**

3.8 Kant on Space and Time

Immanuel Kant believes that for us to be able to know the world it is important to understand how we are able to experience things spatially and temporally. For Kant, therefore, space and time are not mysterious sorts of "things" within experience but are fundamental frames of reference in terms of which objects appear to us (Lawhead 261). Kant calls them the "apriori forms of intuition." The first point Kant raises about space and time is that it is not an empirical concept derived from our experience of things outside us. This means that space, then, is nothing but form of all appearance of outer sense. Kant sees it as the necessary condition of all outer objects as they appear to us, but does not necessarily underlie things as they are in themselves (Essien 241).

Kant argues that we cannot could not have form the concept of time from our observation or experience of events happening successively or simultaneously, because the notions of succession and simultaneity themselves presuppose time (Kemp 18). According to him, succession

and simultaneity are temporal concepts and we must therefore already have the concept of time before we can grasp the existence of successive or simultaneous events.

Like space, Kant also maintains that time is not a general concept, for even though we can talk about different times, they are not different instances of one concept, but different parts of one and the same time. Time, then, like space, is an a priori form of intuition. However, it differs from space in that time is a form of our intuition or perception of ourselves and our inner state, and not our intuition of objects around us. Time, then, is a necessary formal conditions of all appearances. All objects outside us appear to us as extended in space, but all representations, whatsoever, whether of inner states or of outer objects, appear to us as succeeding or simultaneous with one another in time. Therefore, according to Kant, we cannot say that things as they are in themselves exist in time, anymore than we can say that they are spatially extended. But all things as they appear to us in our human condition are in time-relation (Kemp 18).

Self Assessment Exercise 6

1. How does Kant conceives space and time?
2. What is Kant's definition of time?
3. What is Kant's idea of succession and simultaneity?

3.9 Transcendental Idealism

Kant describes his thought as formal, critical or transcendental Idealism. Transcendental idealism, therefore, describes Kant's view that space and time and the categories are conditions of the possibility of experience rather than features of things as they are in themselves (Essien 238). For Kant, we do not know whether things-in-themselves are in space and time or whether they form a causally interacting system, but unless we were so constituted as to place everything in spatiotemporal context and to synthesize our sensations according to the categories of the understanding, we cannot claim knowledge of objective world.

Kant doubts the possibility of empiricism to perform this synthesis of ourselves and others. Instead, he believes that a transcendental self should be postulated as doing this, however, nothing could be known of this transcendental self since is a condition of knowledge and not an objective knowledge. Kant maintains that the natural world or the world of appearances, somehow depends on transcendental self of which we can know nothing except that it is (Essien 238). Whereas at the

empirical level selves and material things are equally real, the knowledge we have at this level presupposes the synthesizing activities of a transcendental self of which we can know nothing.

Self Assessment Exercise 7

1. What do you understand by Kantian transcendental idealism?
2. What is the role of transcendental idealism in knowledge acquisition, according to Kant?

3.10 Conclusion

In this unit, you have learnt how Kant, in his critical philosophy, made an attempt to reconcile rationalism and empiricism. In his analysis of forms of judgment, Kant came up with the possibility of the synthetic a priori judgment. Again, Kant limit our understanding to the phenomena and emphasizes the working human mind in knowledge acquisition. Through his transcendental idealism, Kant successfully transformed philosophy, thereby arousing a different system of thought among his contemporaries.

3.11 Summary

In this unit, you have learnt that the human mind plays an active role in knowledge acquisition. There are two basic kinds of reality, the noumena and the phenomena in Kant's philosophy. According to him, we can only know appearances and not things as they are. We also learnt that space and time and the categories, according to Kant, are conditions of the possibility of experience rather than features of things as they are in themselves. Kant was able to locate synthetic or a posteriori propositions in the empiricists programme, and a priori propositions in the rationalist programme.

3.12 References/Further Readings

Essien Ephraim. *Summa Philosophica: An Introduction to Philosophy and Logic*. Lulu Press, 2011.

Lawhead, William. *The Voyage of Discovery: A Historical Introduction to Philosophy*. 4th ed. Cengage Advantage Books, 2015

Stumpf, Samuel and James Fieser. *Socrates to Sartre and Beyond: A History of Philosophy*. 8th Ed. McGraw hill Education, 2012.

3.13 Possible Answers to SAEs

Answers to SAE 1

1. Kant was born on April 22, 1724 and died on February 12, 1804
2. His contemporaries describe his lectures as humorous, entertaining, and even playful.

Answers to SAE 2

1. The way of critical philosophy is to ask the question "What and how much can understanding and reason know, apart from all experience?"
2. Knowledge is achieved through a synthesis of concept and experience.
3. No

Answers to SAE 3

1. Contradiction
2. A synthetic judgment differs from the analytic in that its predicate is not contained in the subject. Thus, in a synthetic judgment the predicate adds something new to our concept of the subject.
3. Apriori and synthetic

Answers to SAE 4

1. Kant did not mean that the mind creates objects, nor did he mean that the mind possesses innate ideas.
2. Before Kant, the general belief was that in the process of acquiring knowledge, the human mind was passive while objects of perception imposed themselves on the mind. Hence, we can only have knowledge of things as the mind impresses them on us. But Kant reversed this position and argued that it was the opposite. It is not things that impose themselves on the mind, instead, it is the mind that imposes itself on things, forcing the things we perceive to conform to its own structure.

Answers to SAE 5

1. A major aspect of Kant's critical philosophy was his insistence that human knowledge is forever limited in its scope.
2. The noumena are things as they are in themselves
3. The phenomena are things as they appear to us.

4. Noumena is beyond the scope of human knowledge. The implication of this is that we cannot know things as they are, but we can only have knowledge of things as they appear to us.

Answers to SAE 6

1. Kant conceives space and time as fundamental frames of reference in terms of which objects appear to us.
2. Time, according to him, is an apriori form of intuition.
3. For Kant, succession and simultaneity are temporal concepts and we must therefore already have the concept of time before we can grasp the existence of successive or simultaneous events.

Answers to SAE 7

1. Transcendental idealism, describes Kant's view that space and time and the categories are conditions of the possibility of experience rather than features of things as they are in themselves.
2. At the level of transcendental idealism, according to Kant, the knowledge we have at this level presupposes the synthesizing activities of a transcendental self.

Module 1: Unit 4: Immanuel Kant: The Moral Philosophy

Contents

- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)
- 4.3 The Basis of Kant's Moral Philosophy
- 4.4 The Good Will
- 4.5 The Categorical Imperative

4.6 Conclusion

4.7 Summary

4.8 References/Further Readings

4.9 Possible Answers to SAEs

4.1 Introduction

In the last unit, you were introduced into the metaphysics and epistemology of Kant. But how does critical philosophy answer the question of morality? In this unit, we shall assess how Kant addresses the question of morality with reference to his critical philosophy.

4.2 Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

The following are what you will learn at the end of this unit:

1. The basis of Kant's moral philosophy.
2. The concept of Good and Good Will.
3. The categorical imperative.

4.3 The Basis of Kant's Moral Philosophy

Reason constitutes the basis of Kant's Moral philosophy. For Kant, reason is concerned with theory about things and with practical behaviour, that is, moral behavior. The task of moral philosophy, according to Kant, is to discover how we are able to arrive at principles of behavior that are binding upon all people. He was sure that we cannot discover these principles simply by studying the actual behaviour of people, for although such a study would give us interesting anthropological information about how people do behave, it would not tell us how they ought to behave. Still, we do make moral judgments when we say, for example, that we ought to tell the truth, and the question is how we arrive at such a rule of behavior. For Kant the moral judgment that "we ought to tell the truth" is in principle the same as the scientific judgment that "every change must have a cause." What makes them similar is that both of these judgments come from our reason and not from the objects we experience. Just as our theoretical reason brings the category of causality to visible objects, and thereby explains the process of change, so also the practical reason brings to any given moral situation the concept of duty, or "ought." Both in science

and in moral philosophy; we use concepts that go beyond particular facts we experience at any one time.

Experience in both cases is the occasion for triggering the mind to think in universal terms. When we experience a given example of change, our minds bring to this event the category of causality. This makes it possible to explain the relation of cause and effect not only in this case but in all cases of change. Similarly, in the context of human relations, the practical reason is able to determine not only how we should behave at this moment but also what should be the principle of our behavior at all times. Like scientific knowledge, moral knowledge is based on a priori judgments. Kant discovered earlier that scientific knowledge is possible because of the a priori categories that the mind brings to experience.

Morality for Kant is, therefore, an aspect of rationality and has to do with our consciousness of rules or "laws" of behavior, which we consider both universal and necessary. The qualities of universality and necessity are the marks of a priori judgments, and this further confirms Kant's view that the principles of behavior are derived by the practical reason a priori. Instead of searching for the quality of "goodness" in the effects of our actions, Kant focuses on the rational aspect of our behavior (Stumpf and Fieser 286). For Kant, moral philosophy, then, is the quest for those principles that apply to all rational beings and which will eventually lead to actions that are good.

Self Assessment Exercise 1

1. What is the goal of moral philosophy, according to Kant?
2. What is Kant's conception of morality?
3. Justify Kant's idea of reason as the basis of morality.

4.5 The Good Will

In the *Groundwork of Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant says that nothing can possibly be conceived in the world, or even out of it, which can be called good, without qualification, except the goodwill (Kant 12). Kant identifies other qualities we can also call good; intelligence, wit, judgment and other talents of the mind etc., as undoubtedly good and desirable in many respects, but these gifts of nature, according to him, may also become extremely bad and mischievous if the

will which is to make use of them, and which, therefore, constitutes what is called character, is not good. Kant argues that a good will is good not because of what it performs or effects, not by its aptness for the attainment of some proposed end, but simply by virtue of the volition; that is, it is good in itself, and considered by itself to be esteemed much higher than all that can be brought about by it in favour of any inclination (Kant 13).

For Kant, the seat of moral worth is in the will, and the good will is one that acts out of a sense of duty. According to him, an action done from duty must wholly exclude the influence of inclination, and with it every object of the will, so that nothing remains which can determine the will except objectively the law and subjective pure respect for this practical law. Duty, then, implies that we are under some kind of obligation, a moral law. And Kant says that as rational beings we are aware of this obligation as it comes to us in the form of an imperative. With his focus in duty, the ethics of Immanuel Kant is deontological.

Self Assessment Exercise 2

1. What is Kant's argument for the good will?
2. What is the place of duty in Kant's moral theory?

4.6 The Categorical Imperative

For Kant, a moral law is a rule for guiding behavior. Hence, it is a kind of command or imperative. Kant makes a distinction between two kinds of imperatives. The first sort is a hypothetical imperative. It says, "If you want X then do Y." This rule tells me what I "ought" to do, but the ought is contingent on my desiring the goal following the "if." For example, I may be told, "If you want a nice lawn, then you must fertilize your grass." Kant calls this type of hypothetical statement a technical imperative. It tells me what means I must use to achieve an end I may desire. Kant, therefore, argues that most hypothetical imperatives fall under the heading of pragmatic imperatives or counsels of prudence and offer advice on how to enhance one's own welfare and happiness.

Kant says that a genuinely moral command is not a hypothetical imperative. According to him, the moral law is presented to us as a categorical imperative. It tells you what you ought, should, or must do, but it does not depend on any prior conditions, or subjective wants and wishes, and it contains no qualifications. It takes the form "Do X" (Lawhead 372). It is not preceded by an

if clause for it tells you what you are morally commanded to do under all conditions and at all times. However, if such a moral law does not come from some external lawgiver such as God, who issues such commands to you? The lawgiver for Kant is reason itself (Lawhead 372). A rational rule is one that is universal and consistent. It is universal in that it is a rule that applies to all people, at all times, and in all circumstances. It is consistent in that it does not lead to any contradictions (Lawhead 372). Kant says that categorical imperative has three postulate.

The first imperative states that as moral agents, we should “Act on the maxim which we can wish it becomes universal law.” A maxim is a general rule that tells us what we should and should not do. However, notice that Kant has not given us any specific maxims. Instead, he has given us the principle that we use to decide which maxims establish our actual moral obligations and which ones do not. This law, therefore, entails universality of human moral actions. The second imperative states that we should “Act not to treat another as a means to an end, but always as an end in themselves.” The individual human being as possessing absolute worth becomes the basis for the supreme principle of morality. According to him, the foundation of this imperative is that:

Rational nature exists as an end in itself. All men everywhere want to be considered persons instead of things for the same reason that I do, and this affirmation of the absolute worth of the individual leads to a second formulation of the categorical imperative which says: So act as to treat humanity, whether in your own person or in that of any other, in every case as an end withal, never as a means only (Kant in Stumpf and Fieser 288).

This means that each person has intrinsic worth and dignity and that we should not use people or treat them like things. Kant’s argument for this principle could be paraphrased in the following manner. Mere things such as cars, jewels, works of art, or tools have value only if persons endow them with value.

An important feature of this formulation of the moral imperative is that Kant explicitly claims that we should treat ourselves with respect and not merely as a means to some end. Many ethical theorists (the utilitarians, for example) believe that ethics only governs our relations with others. However, one implication that follows from Kantian ethics is that we have moral duties to ourselves and not just to others. For this reason, Kant condemns suicide. If I decide to terminate my life in order to escape my pains and disappointments, I am treating myself as though I were a thing that is determined by external circumstances. Instead, I should respect the dignity and worth

of my own personhood and treat it as having a value that transcends every other consideration (Lawhead 374).

Kant's claim that the three principles given are simply separate versions of a single principle is difficult to understand: the principles do not seem the same, and indeed involve different terms in their formulation. However, Kant clearly thought that any philosophical justification of the one would be adequate to ground the others too, perhaps because they each involve some fundamental aspect of a single cluster of concepts: rational agency, autonomy, will, end. These concepts could plausibly be considered to provide the basic ideas of practical reason. It is clear that the three principles (and the various modifications of them which Kant from time to time gave) contain the seeds of a powerful and also common-sensical moral point of view. They enjoin respect for others; they forbid slavery, fraud, theft, violence and sexual misuse; they provide a systematic and plausible test against which the pretensions of any particular morality could be measured. Kant's claim, therefore, to have discovered the fundamental presuppositions of morality may not be entirely unfounded.

Self Assessment Exercise 3

1. Another name for imperative is _____?
2. Mention the two types of imperatives according to Kant.
3. The moral law is presented to us as what kind of imperative?
4. State the first categorical imperative of Kant.
5. What is a maxim?

4.7 The Objective Necessity of the Categorical Imperative

The objectivity of the categorical imperative consists in three separate properties. First, it makes no reference to individual desires or needs, indeed to nothing except the concept of rationality as such. Hence it makes no distinctions among rational agents, but applies, if at all, universally, to all who can understand reasons for action (It therefore governs reasoning about ends and not about means.) Secondly, the rational agent is constrained by reason to accept the

categorical imperative: this imperative is as much a fundamental law of practical reason as the law of non-contradiction is a law of thought. Not to accept it is not to reason practically. Like the law of non-contradiction, therefore, it cannot be rationally rejected. Thirdly, to accept such a principle is to acquire a motive to act—it is to be persuaded to obedience. Since the imperative makes no reference to any desire, but only to the faculty of reasoning as such, it follows that, if all those three claims can be upheld, practical reason alone can provide a motive for action. Hence the ground of Hume's scepticism—which is that reason is inert, and that all practical reasoning is subservient to desire—is cut away. The moral law becomes not just universal, but necessary, for there is no way of thinking practically that will not involve its explicit or implicit affirmation. The categorical imperative has 'objective necessity', and achieves this by abstracting from all needs and desires, all 'empirical determinations'. It represents the agent as bound by his rational nature alone.

How can this claim to objectivity be upheld? It is here that Kant's moral philosophy becomes difficult and obscure. While he affirms that we know the validity of the categorical imperative a priori, he recognizes that it is no more sufficient in the case of practical reasoning than it is in the case of scientific understanding to make such a claim. It also stands in need of proof—the kind of proof that the Transcendental Deduction was supposed to provide in the case of the presuppositions of scientific thinking. But Kant did not provide this Transcendental Deduction; instead, he devoted the second Critique to an examination of metaphysical questions which, while enormously influential, left the gap between his metaphysics and his morals unclosed. This examination, perhaps intended as a kind of substitute for a Transcendental Deduction, concerns the concepts of freedom, reason and autonomy.

4.7.1 Freedom and reason

Kant argued that no moral law, and indeed no practical reasoning, is intelligible without the postulate of freedom; he also argued that only a rational being could be free in the sense that morality requires. In what then does freedom consist? Not, as Spinoza, Hume and many others had adequately proved, in mere randomness, nor in freedom from those laws that govern the universe.

The free agent, as soon as we examine the question, we see to be distinguished, not by his lack of constraint, but by the peculiar nature of the constraint which governs him. He is constrained by reason, in its reception of the moral law. Freedom is subjection to the moral law, and is never more vivid than in the recognition of the necessity of that law and its absolute authority over the actions of the moral agent.

To clarify this thought we must distinguish action in accordance with the law from action from the law. A person might act in accordance with the law out of terror or coercion, or in the hope of reward. In these cases the law is not his motive, and the maxim governing his action, while it may seem to be categorical, is in fact hypothetical. To act from the law is to act out of an acceptance of the categorical imperative itself, and to be motivated by that acceptance. Since this motivation is itself intrinsic to the categorical imperative, it arises from the exercise of reason alone; in acting from the law, therefore, a rational agent at the same time expresses what Kant called 'the autonomy of the will'. His action stems from his own rational reflection, which suffices to generate the motive of his act. His act is, in a deep sense, his own, and the decision from which it springs reflects his whole existence as a rational being, and not the arbitrary (empirical) determination of this or that desire.

Opposed to this autonomy is the 'heteronomy' of the agent who acts not in obedience to the commands of reason, but, for example, out of passion, fear, or the hope of reward. The 'heteronomous' agent is the one who has withdrawn from the exactions of pure morality and taken refuge in slavery. He acts in subjection, either to nature or to some superior force. He may disguise his a-morality by religious scruples, which lead him to act in accordance with the moral law out of hope or fear. But in himself, having failed to achieve the autonomy which alone commands the respect of rational beings, he stands outside the moral order, unfree, subservient, diminished in his very personhood, and in his respect for himself.

4.7.2 The Antinomy of Freedom

Having established a connection between freedom, reason and autonomy, Kant approaches the problem of free will. In the course of doing so he, begins the partial retraction of his strictures against speculative metaphysics. In the 'Antinomy of Pure Reason', contained in the Dialectic of

the first Critique, Kant had purported to show the various ways in which pure reason tries to reach beyond the limited, 'conditioned', time-dominated world of empirical observation, so as to embrace the unconditioned, eternal world of 'noumena'. Kant sought to demonstrate that each of these ways of pursuing the 'unconditioned', 'intelligible' order generates a contradiction.

One of the 'cosmological' contradictions seemed to him, however, to demand a resolution. This was the contradiction between free will and determinism. The category of cause, and its attendant principle that every event has a cause, orders the empirical world in such a way as to leave no room for the unconditioned event. And yet human freedom seems to require us to think of ourselves as in some sense the 'originators' of our actions, standing outside the course of nature. This freedom is something of which we have an indubitable intuition. The antinomy troubled Kant. He could not accept Hume's view, that there is, here, no genuine contradiction. Nor could he accept his own official theory, that such antinomies are the inevitable result of human reason's attempt to think beyond nature, to aspire towards the absolute and unconditioned, instead of confining itself to the phenomenal world. He therefore sought to develop, both here, and in the second Critique, a solution to the problem of free will. The solution took the following form: The intuitive knowledge of our freedom is primitive and original. It is the presupposition of any practical problem and of any practical reasoning that might be brought to solve it. It stands to practical reason much as the Transcendental Unity of Apperception stands to the theoretical understanding: it is the unquestionable premise without which there would be neither problem nor solution. But practical knowledge is not like theoretical knowledge. It aims not to understand nature, not to explain and predict, but to find reasons for action, and to lay down laws of rational conduct. In thinking of myself as free I am thinking of myself, so to speak, 'under the aspect of agency'. That entails seeing myself, not as an object in a world of objects, obedient to causal laws, but as a subject, creator of my world, whose stance is active, and whose laws are the laws of freedom, knowable to reason alone. (To some extent, this distinction can be understood through another that we all intuitively grasp, that between predicting and deciding. It is one thing to predict that I will get drunk tonight, another to decide to do it. In the first case I look on myself from outside, in the context of the laws of nature to which I am subject, and I observe myself as I would another, trying to arrive at a prediction of my likely behaviour. In the second case I respond as determining agent, and make it my responsibility to bring a future event into being. In one case I give myself reasons

for believing something about my future behaviour (theoretical reasons), in the other I give myself reasons for acting (practical reasons).)

According to Kant, it seems then that I know myself in two ways, theoretically, as part of nature, and practically, as agent. And bound up with these two forms of knowledge are two forms of law which I discover through them: the laws of nature and the laws of freedom, the latter being, not surprisingly, the versions of the categorical imperatives. Kant then took the step which was both to undo the conclusions of the first Critique and also to inspire succeeding generations of German philosophers to do likewise. He asserted that in the first form of knowledge I know myself as phenomenon, in the second, practical knowledge, I know myself as noumenon. Despite Kant's seemingly established theory that noumena are in essence unknowable to the understanding, he has, through invoking the ancient idea of 'practical' knowledge, presented a picture of how they might nevertheless be known: the will of a rational being, as belonging to the sensuous world, recognizes itself to be, like all other efficient causes, necessarily subject to laws of causality, while in practical matters, in its other aspects as a being-in-itself, it is conscious of its experience as determinable in an intelligible order of things.

In other words, the world of noumena is made open to reason after all, but reason not in its theoretical employment, but in its legitimate form, the form of practical reason. Kant goes on to argue that, even in this form, it provides us with knowledge. Whether or not the postulation of the self as noumenon resolves the problem of free will I leave for the reader to judge. The question we must now consider is the status and content of this knowledge which practical reason yields.

Self Assessment Exercise 4

1. Discuss any objectivity necessity of the categorical imperative.
2. Distinguish between acting in accordance with the law and acting from the law.
3. In his discussion on the antinomy of freedom, Kant says we know ourselves in two ways. Name these two ways according to Kant.

4.8 The Three Postulates of Morality

Kant gave three postulates of morality to include freedom, immortality and the existence of God.

4.8.1 Freedom

Freedom is an idea that it is necessary to assume because of our experience of moral obligation—that is, "because I must, I can" (Stumpf and Fieser 289). Though we cannot demonstrate that our wills are free, we are intellectually compelled to assume such freedom, for freedom and morality are so inseparably united that one might define practical freedom as independence of the will of anything but the moral law alone. How could people be responsible or have a duty if they were not able or free to fulfill their duty or respond to the moral command? Freedom, according to Kant, must be assumed, and as such it is the first postulate of morality.

4.8.2 Immortality

A second moral postulate for Kant is immortality. The line of reasoning by which Kant was led to postulate immortality begins with his conception of the highest good, or the *summum bonum*. Although virtue is the highest conceivable good, we as rational beings are fully satisfied only when there is a union between virtue and happiness. Though it does not always happen so, we all assume that virtue ought to produce happiness. Kant had rigorously maintained that the moral law commands us to act not so that we be happy, but so that our actions will be right. Still, the full realization of a rational being requires that we think of the supreme good as including both virtue and happiness. But our experience shows that there is no necessary connection between virtue and happiness. If we were to limit human experience to this world, it would then appear impossible to achieve the supreme good in its fullness. Still, the moral law does command us to strive for perfect good, and this implies an indefinite progress toward this ideal, but this endless progress is possible only on the supposition of the unending duration of the existence and personality of the same rational being, which is called the immortality of the soul.

4.8.3 The Existence of God

According to Kant, moral universe also compels us to postulate the existence of God as the grounds for the necessary connection between virtue and happiness. If we mean by happiness the state of a rational being in the world with whom in the totality of his experience everything goes according to his wish and will, then happiness implies a harmony between a person's will and physical nature. But a person is not the author of the world, nor is he or she capable of ordering nature so as to effect a necessary connection between virtue and happiness. But we do conclude from our conception of the supreme good that virtue and happiness must go together.

Consequently, we must postulate the existence of a cause of the whole of nature which is distinct from nature and which contains the ground of this connection, namely; of the exact harmony of happiness with morality. And thus, it is morally necessary to assume the existence of God (Stumpf and Fieser 290).

Self Assessment Exercise 5

1. Mention the three postulates of morality.
2. What role of explanation does the existence of God plays in Kant's postulates of morality?

4.9 Conclusion

In this unit, you have learnt Kant's moral philosophy. Kant sees practical reason as the foundation of morality. accordingly, reason is conceived as duty. Hence, his moral theory is deontological. A truly ethical duty, then, is categorical and not hypothetical. Believing in the universality of reason, Kant moral philosophy appeals for universalization of moral values.

4.10 Summary

In this unit, you have learnt the following:

1. The basis of Kant's moral philosophy is reason.
2. The seat of moral worth in the moral philosophy of Kant, is the will.
3. A true moral law is presented to us as a categorical imperative.
4. Kant is an ethical deontologist because his theory appeals to duty.

4.11 References/Further Readings

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Stumpf, Samuel and James Fieser. *Socrates to Sartre and Beyond: A History of Philosophy*. 8th Ed. McGraw hill Education, 2012.

Scruton, Roger. *A Short History of Modern Philosophy From Descartes to Wittgenstein*. 2nd ed. Routledge, 1995.

4.12 Possible Answers to SAEs

Answers to SAE 1

1. The task of moral philosophy, according to Kant, is to discover how we are able to arrive at principles of behavior that are binding upon all people.
2. For Kant, moral philosophy, then, is the quest for those principles that apply to all rational beings and which will eventually lead to actions that are good.
3. For Kant, reason is concerned with theory about things and with practical behaviour, that is, moral behavior. Just as our theoretical reason brings the category of causality to visible objects, and thereby explains the process of change, so also the practical reason brings to any given moral situation the concept of duty, or "ought."

Answers to SAE 2

1. Kant argues that a good will is good not because of what it performs or effects, not by its aptness for the attainment of some proposed end, but simply by virtue of the volition; that is, it is good in itself, and considered by itself to be esteemed much higher than all that can be brought about by it in favour of any inclination.
2. Duty, in Kant's moral theory implies that we are under some kind of obligation, a moral law.

Answers to SAE 3

1. Command
2. Hypothetical and categorical
3. Categorical imperative
4. The first imperative states that as moral agents, we should "Act on the maxim which we can wish it becomes universal law."
5. A maxim is a general rule that tells us what we should and should not do.

Answers to SAE 4

1. The rational agent is constrained by reason to accept the categorical imperative: this imperative is as much a fundamental law of practical reason as the law of non-contradiction is a law of thought. Not to accept it is not to reason practically. Like the law of non-contradiction, therefore, it cannot be rationally rejected.

2. A person might act in accordance with the law out of terror or coercion, or in the hope of reward. In these cases the law is not his motive, and the maxim governing his action, while it may seem to be categorical, is in fact hypothetical. To act from the law is to act out of an acceptance of the categorical imperative itself, and to be motivated by that acceptance.
3. According to Kant, we know ourselves as part of nature, and practically, as agent.

Answers to SAE 5

1. The three postulates of morality are freedom, immortality and the existence of God.
2. The role of explanation played by the existence is that of cause. According to Kant, we must postulate the existence of a cause of the whole of nature which is distinct from nature and which contains the ground of this connection, namely; of the exact harmony of happiness with morality.

Module 2

Unit 1 Mary Wollstonecraft

Unit 2: J. G. Fichte

Unit 3: G. W. F. Hegel

Unit 4: Arthur Schopenhauer

Unit 1: Mary Wollstonecraft

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1.12 Possible Answers to SAEs

1.1 Introduction

Mary Wollstonecraft conceived her philosophy out of her own experience. She joined the results of her own history and observations of society of her time with ideas gained from conversation and the critical reading necessary to a professional book reviewer. Although she believed in the importance and power of reason, she subjected every idea to the test of everyday experience. Having felt the force of paternal oppression, the might of the established Church, the monarchy and the non-productive upper classes, she writes with a passion and a logic typical of reformers and revolutionaries on both sides of the Atlantic. Some might find her advocacy of motherhood as the norm for women or her statement that, from the constitution of their bodies, men seem to be designated by Providence to attain a greater degree of virtue (Wardle 473), too

conservative for contemporary times, but for the eighteenth century she offered a vision of an egalitarian, democratic, productive society.

1.2 Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

At the end of the this unit, you will learn the following:

1. Mary Wollstonecraft defense of women right.
2. Her philosophy of education
3. Her ethical theory
4. Wollstonecraft's contribution to socio-political philosophy

1.3 A Brief Biography of Mary Wollstonecraft

Mary Wollstonecraft was born April 27, 1759, the second child but eldest daughter in a family fraught with difficulties. Her mother, Elizabeth Dickson Wollstonecraft, bore seven children. She was submissive to her husband but over-demanding of these children (Flexner 23). In 1770 the family moved to Beverly and Mary met Jane Arden, whose friendship provided "another family" full of warmth as well as the intellectual influence of Jane's father, John Arden, a teacher and philosopher. In 1774 the family moved to Huxton, and Mary again sought mentors outside her home (Flexner 27). As she matured, Wollstonecraft decided to make her own way in the world and progressed through a series of positions as companion, governess and founder of a day school. At the same time she continued to "rescue" brothers and sisters, nursed her dying mother and suffered the loss of her closest friend, Fanny Blood, in childbirth.⁹ In 1785 she took the suggestion of John Hewett and began to write. She composed *Thought on the Education of Daughters: with Reflections on Female Conduct, in the More Important Duties of Life*.

In April of 1786 Hewett's publisher, Joseph Johnson, accepted the work with payment of ten guineas. Within a year she joined Johnson's publishing house as a writer and reviewer. In Joseph Johnson she found a caring 'father figure' who offered sound and careful criticism of her writing. Wollstonecraft blossomed and soon produced a sizable corpus of translations and original works (Sunstein 114). In 1797 while she was pregnant with their second child she worked on a book of reading lessons. She planned another on pregnancy and the care of infants but never wrote it. Mary Wollstonecraft died of puerperal fever ten days after giving birth (Ravetz 436). Some of works are: *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman, Historical and Moral View of the Origin and*

Progress of the French Revolution, Original Stories from Real Life; with Conversations, Calculated to Regulate the Affections, and Form the Mind to Truth and Goodness, among others.

Self Assessment Exercise 1

1. When was Mary Wollstonecraft born?
2. Mention any work of Mary Wollstonecraft.

1.4 The Defense of Women Right

Mary Wollstonecraft is considered the founder of an influential current of feminist thought. Her difference from other early authors in defense of women's rights is that she demanded to use political means (legislation) to change the subordinate position of women. Unlike the rebellious women of aristocratic descent, Wollstonecraft acted on behalf of the vast majority with a whole programmatic demand for women's rights. Wollstonecraft argued that institutions could not be created out of nothing: they must grow through gradual evolution. To destroy existing institutions because they do not conform to a preconceived scheme is to be guilty of "fatal presumption" which the writer witnessed when she was in France. Wollstonecraft was offended by the way that the Jacobins refused to grant Frenchwomen equal rights, denounced "amazons", and made it clear the role of women was to conform to Rousseau's ideal of as a helper to men. Jean-Jack Rousseau's political philosophy heavily influenced the French Revolution and much of his work was agreed by Wollstonecraft. However, she asks why French philosopher's theories about education of the whole person can not be also expanded for women. She questions Rousseau's writings on the place of women and why their natural potential is not allowed to unfold. Arguing against this position, Wollstonecraft holds that the woman, who has only been taught to please, will soon find that her charms are oblique sun- beams and that they cannot have much effect on her husband's heart when they are seen every day. If pleasing is all that a woman is meant to do in society then this society is not at the level it could be.

Wollstonecraft argues that the home, family life narrows women's horizons, constricts their affections and restricts their sense of public responsibility. This woman cannot be virtuous, vigorous citizen. In *A Vindication*, she denotes that a housewife becomes a mere like a blind horse in a mill which bored husband drifts away every evening to search out more piquant society. The writer adds a real life example. According to her, poorer women, who must earn money to help

support their families, are spared this fate since gainful employment always bestows self-respect and dignity; but a middle-class woman, wholly supported by her husband is in a truly deplorable state, becoming either a frivolous parasite. Wollstonecraft feels that Rousseau's theories attack the female sex, claiming that women are weak and artificial and not capable of reasoning.

Self Assessment Exercise 2

1. What was her contribution to the liberation of women?
2. According to Wollstonecraft arguments, what limits women?
3. What was her attack on Rousseau's philosophy of education?

1.5 Her Thought on Women Education

The focus of Mary Wollstonecraft in *Rights of Woman* is the reformation of women without a precedent demands for both sexes to be educated together, at the same level. She makes the argument that women are rational beings and not as delicate as society believed them to be. Previously, Condorcet, an influential French philosopher, argued the same point. However, Wollstonecraft believes that some women will resist being given more rights, which can be traced to social conditioning during childhood to become wives and mothers (Berges 2013: 56). Wollstonecraft compares women to flowers to convey that the strength women possess has been sacrificed for their beauty. She believes women are disregarded before they mature and explains that "One cause of this barren blooming I attribute to a false system of education, gathered from the books written on this subject by men, who, considering females rather as women than human creatures, have been more anxious to make them alluring mistresses than rational wives" (Wollstonecraft 20).

This claim is a blatant challenge of conventional societal expectations of women. Wollstonecraft enjoys playing on the word 'barren' throughout *Rights of Woman*. She uses 'barren' to indicate an absence, instead of the word's tradition meaning, the inability to have children. She draws attention to the fact that education is structured by only men, including explanations of women's minds. Hence, she places great importance on education and calls for reform of education, especially regarding women. She claims the rationality of some women is not obvious, due to their lack of education, which prevents them from them from realizing their rights to an education (Berges 2013: 56). Wollstonecraft lays out her philosophy in the introduction of

Rights of Woman. However, she does not elaborate on some of her claims later in her four-hundred-page text, possibly because she was not used to academic writing or she was swept up in her impassioned defense of women. Some of Wollstonecraft's arguments do not fully embrace modern feminist values because she either knew her philosophy would be dismissed outright if she claimed women should be given other life options than to be wives and mothers or could not open her mind to such possibilities.

She implores women to think for themselves and to develop a sense of curiosity. She believes most women are unable to do so without an education. In the last chapter of *Rights of Woman*, she clarifies the statement by saying that the little early education offered to some girls, in the 18th century, only trains them to become malleable and diminutive, thereby crushing whatever innate 'animal spirit' they may have originally possessed (Wollstonecraft 39). She addresses the issue that women are provided a different set of societal standards than men, most of which demean them. While boys are encouraged to go to school and develop into an intelligent man, women are sent instead to dress fittings and etiquette classes so that they may find a husband to support and bear children for.

In *Rights of Woman*, she outlines two key demands: one, for girls to be educated alongside boys and two, for the education curriculum to be changed. She states, "only that education deserves emphatically to be termed cultivation of the mind which teaches young people how to begin to think" (Wollstonecraft 217). Wollstonecraft aims for education to be wholesome and comprehensive. She wants both genders and all social classes to be educated together in order to diminish inequalities. She proposes children live at home and go to the school during the day only. Therefore, instead of having boarding schools for the rich, the timings for school would be similar to country day school (Wollstonecraft, 1792: 132-134). She believes that day schools would also be beneficial as there should be a balance between home and school; a good home life equates to success in school (Berges 122-123).

Wollstonecraft links the success of a child's education to the success their parents' relationship. This concept directly correlates to her claim that girls should receive the same education as their male counterparts in order to be the ideal spouse. She claims "by cementing the matrimonial tie, secures to the pledges of a warmer passion the necessary parental attention; for children will never be properly educated till friendship subsists between parents" (Wollstonecraft

256). Thus, a healthy relationship between parents is vital. Wollstonecraft emphasizing that children look to their parents as examples. Hence, Wollstonecraft's logic is a father treating a mother as an equal will theoretically perpetuate with the son, his wife and their children. In addition, she places a high value on the bond between mother and child, which was disregarded in the upper echelons. Reiterating that a stronger bond between a mother and child equates to mother who provides a better example for her child to look up to. Thus, Wollstonecraft subtly implies that knowledge and behavior is cyclic. She uses patriotism as another example by posing a rhetorical question, "If children are to be educated to understand the true principle of patriotism, their mother must be a patriot" (Wollstonecraft 9). She aims to convince men that education for women is vital by claiming it will further two important topics: patriotism and successful marriages.

In her perception, women are not true patriots because they have not received a comprehensive education that teaches them about patriotism. She also asserts that girls being educated alongside boys during their formative years will allow them to "learn to interact with each other, therefore, it is more likely that, as adults, they will be able to sustain relationships of mutual respect and friendship" (Berges 165). In *Rights of Woman*, she insists that it is beneficial to educate all children together, regardless of socio-economic status or gender. To bridge the gender gap, Wollstonecraft demands that the government should establish co-education day schools. To bridge the economic gap, Wollstonecraft demands that schooling should be compulsory and free for all children between the ages of five to nine. She proposes the use of identical clothing, uniforms, to prevent differentiation between both gender and class. She places emphasis on the comfort of children, theorizing that children cannot absorb information if they are not comfortable. As a result, the children's uniforms should be comfortable and allow them to play outside. Wollstonecraft believes that fresh air and exercise, being able to run freely is detrimental to a child's wellbeing. She associates women's fragility and dependence on men to their confinement since childhood (Berges 164).

Wollstonecraft agrees that naturally female are the weaker sex but the socially accepted role of a woman is not because it is the tried and true method but through oppression and the lack of aspiration to change. Well educated women will be good wives, mothers, friends and not the humble dependent of her husband and they will ultimately contribute positively to society; "Let women share the rights and she will emulate the virtues". Wollstonecraft maintained that if girls

were encouraged from an early age to develop their minds, it would be seen that they were rational creatures and there was no reason for them not to be given the same opportunities as boys with regard to education and training. Women could obtain the professions and have careers just the same as men.

In proposing the same type of education for girls as for boys, she also presumed that they may be educated together. Her idea on women education was considered more radical than anything proposed before. The idea of co-educational schooling was simply regarded as nonsense by many educational thinkers of that time. It was fashionable to contend that if women were educated, they would lose any power they had over their husband. Wollstonecraft was furious about it and maintained that she did not wish women to have power over men but over themselves. She had a picture of an ideal family where the babies were nourished by an intelligent mother and not sent away to nurses. And fathers were friends to their children rather than tyrants. Essentially family members were all regarded as rational beings and children should be able to judge their parents like anyone else. Family relationships therefore, became educational ones.

Self Assessment Exercise 3

1. According to Wollstonecraft, why are women not true patriots?
2. How was her idea on education of women considered in her time?
3. What is the focus of Mary Wollstonecraft's thought on women's right?
4. Why is it important to educate women, according to her?

1.6 Philosophy of Education

While some thinkers portray Wollstonecraft as only a reformer for women's education, it is apparent that her proposals for educational reform are far wider in scope. Like much of Western educational theory, Wollstonecraft's proposals for reform are grounded in a clear philosophical psychology, ethics and social philosophy. In addition they benefit from Wollstonecraft's experience as founder and teacher of a children's day school and from her first-hand acquaintance with the tasks and daily preoccupations of the varied classes in eighteenth-century England. Her criticism of both British and European schools is direct and sharp (Lindemann, 1991: 161). She attacks both public and private schools for their subversion of children's inquisitive minds and the

corruption of moral character. She critiques dogmatism and the classism endemic to the system (Lindemann 161).

Wollstonecraft argues for national, co-educational schools . According to her, Teachers should be chosen by a committee and held accountable for the performance of their duties. Children should "dress alike" and be subject to the same discipline so as to root out unnatural distinctions by class (Wollstonecraft, 1960: 168). The school should be surrounded by open property and children be granted "gymnastic play" after each hour of sedentary occupation. They should be encouraged in every form of peer inquiry, and nature should be the occasion for theoretical learnings. Above all, the curriculum should emphasize thinking and the formation of character so that graduates will be good citizens (Wollstonecraft 168).

In her thought, she refuses to eliminate all remnants of class or gender distinctions, however, since after the age of nine, separate curricula are proposed. Vocational students should be separated from those destined for the liberal arts. All vocational students should continue to share co-education in the morning but separate training in "women's trades" and "men's trades" in the afternoon (Wollstonecraft 168). As for those who by superior ability or family wealth are destined for the liberal arts, they should study the dead and living languages, the elements of science, history and politics polite literature in co-educational settings.

Self Assessment Exercise 4

1. What sets Wollstonecraft's philosophy of educational reforms apart from others?
2. What kind of school does she advocates for?

1.7 Ethics

Given that both sexes are equal in everything but physical strength; given that human nature is distinguished by reason and that the daily struggle with passion results in truly human knowledge, both men and women ought to strive for the same human virtues . And what are those virtues? They can be summarized: To act reasonably, to use one's own freedom and respect the freedom of others, to do productive work and to parent wisely. To fail in these virtues is to fail one's duty as a human being (Lindemann 159). She critiques both groups and individuals for their failure to meet these human duties. She criticizes men as a group and specific thinkers individually

for employing "their reason to justify prejudices" and for avoiding "close investigation" of their vices or the partiality of European civilization (Lindemann, 1990: 159).

She also criticizes all rulers who set themselves above and limit the freedom of common citizen. She criticizes the upper classes, ladies and gentlemen, as unproductive parasites and she criticizes parent(s) who fail "to form the heart and enlarge the understanding of his child" or who fail(s) to raise children as independent, productive citizens. In this last case she argues that the duty of adult children to care for their aging parents is abrogated in those cases where parents failed to meet their duties when the children were young (Wollstonecraft 153).

Self Assessment Exercise 5

1. According to Wollstonecraft, what are the virtues that both men and women ought to strive for?
2. Why did she criticize the upper class of the society?

1.8 Social and Political Philosophy

The basis of Wollstonecraft's social and political thought is that the society is formed in the wisest manner, whose constitution is founded on the nature of man (Lindemann 1990: 160). Thus, it is not surprising that she favours an egalitarian society and is critical of every institutionalization of privilege. Elissa Guralnick notes that it is a social/political theory that drives much of Wollstonecraft's work (Guralnick 308).

The social critique in *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* is wide-ranging. Wollstonecraft critiques the monarchy. She maintains that regal power, in a few generations introduces idiotism into the noble stem. She criticizes the army. According to her, standing army, for instance, is incompatible with freedom, because subordination and rigour are the very sinews of military discipline. Again, she says that despotism is necessary to give vigour to enterprises that one will direct. She criticizes upper classes, ladies and gentlemen as parasitical. In fact, she criticizes every non-egalitarian social form. Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, is a work of feminism, but it is also a cogent exposition of radical social philosophy, and as such it belongs in all presentations of the British radical tradition (Lindemann 162).

Self Assessment Exercise 6

1. What is the basis of Wollstonecraft's social and political philosophy?
2. According to her, why is army not compatible with freedom?
3. What is her perception of regal power?

1.9 Conclusion

Mary Wollstonecraft's advanced thoughts superseded her time. Although Wollstonecraft poses radical theories, such as women are slaves to men, her ideas were well received during the Enlightenment. Unfortunately, her death prevented further promotion and implementation of her philosophy on women and education. No one made significant reforms based on her philosophy because her theories were rejected after Godwin revealed her salacious lifestyle. In *Rights of Woman*, she does not presume that women will gain rights and equal education in the near future, citing that the behavior prevalent in the 18th century has been ingrained in men and women for centuries. This presumption has proved to be true, the journey to equality of women has been a slow process. *Rights of Woman* remains relevant today as equal rights for women has not yet been achieved. In developing countries, even education for women remains to be an issue (Field and Ambrus 886). Wollstonecraft's egalitarian philosophies on education, similar to the ideals for 21st century educational philosophy, should be compulsory and free for both gender and all social classes. Wollstonecraft's work establishes a strong foundation for women's rights and education. Her most universal theory, women will be emancipated through education, will continue to inspire and appeal to people.

1.10 Summary

In this unit, you have learnt that Mary Wollstonecraft advocated for education of women. In her political thought, she appeals for human based constitutional government. For Mary Wollstonecraft, virtue is a necessity for living a good life.

1.11 References/Further Readings

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1.12 Possible Answers to SAEs

Answers to SAE 1

1. She was born on April 27, 1759
2. Thought of the education of daughters; A vindication of women.

Answers to SAE 2

1. Wollstonecraft is considered the founder of an influential current of feminist thought.
2. Wollstonecraft argues that the home, family life, narrows women's horizons, constricts their affection and restricts their sense of public responsibility.
3. She questions Rousseau's writings on the place of women and why their natural potential is not allowed to unfold.

Answers to SAE 3

1. In her perception, women are not true patriots because they have not received a comprehensive education that teaches them about patriotism.
2. Her idea on women education was considered more radical than anything proposed before.
3. The focus of Mary Wollstonecraft in *Rights of Woman* is the reformation of women without a precedent demands for both sexes to be educated together, at the same level.
4. It is important to educate women because well educated women will be good wives, mothers, friends and not the humble dependent of her husband and they will ultimately contribute positively to society.

Answers to SAE 4

1. Wollstonecraft's proposals for reform are grounded in a clear philosophical psychology, ethics and social philosophy.
2. She advocates for national, co-educational schools where teachers are chosen by a committee and held accountable for the performance of their duties.

Answers to SAE 5

1. To act reasonably, to use one's own freedom and respect the freedom of others, to do productive work and to parent wisely.
2. She criticizes the upper classes, ladies and gentlemen, as unproductive parasites and she criticizes parent(s) who fail to form the heart and enlarge the understanding of his child or who fail(s) to raise children as independent, productive citizens.

Answers to SAE 6

1. The basis of Wollstonecraft's social and political thought is that the society is formed in the wisest manner, whose constitution is founded on the nature of man.
2. Army is incompatible with freedom, because subordination and rigour are the very sinews of military discipline.
3. She maintains that regal power, in a few generations introduces idiotism into the noble stem.

Unit 2: Johann Gottlieb Fichte

Contents

- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)
- 2.3 A Brief Biography of Johann Gottlieb Fichte
- 2.4 The Denial of Kantian Noumena
- 2.5 The Ego and the Infinite (Pure) Ego
- 2.6 Conclusion
- 2.7 Summary
- 2.8 References/Further Readings
- 2.9 Possible Answers to SAEs

2.1 Introduction

Fichte was an ardent follower of Kant. However, he disagreed with Kant's theory of noumena and phenomena. From there, he creates his own system based on the theory of the Ego. In this unit, you will learn about how he criticized Kant and his attempt at escaping the Kantian problem.

2.2 Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

In this unit, you will learn the following:

1. Fichte's denial of Kant's idealism.
2. His idea of the Ego and Pure Ego.

2.3 A Brief Biography of Johann Gottlieb Fichte

Fichte was born on May 19, 1762 in the village of Rammenau in the Oberlausitz area of Saxony. He was the eldest son in a family of poor and pious ribbon weavers. His extraordinary intellectual talent soon brought him to the attention of a local baron, who sponsored his education, first in the home of a local pastor, then at the famous Pforta boarding school, and finally at the

universities of Jena and Leipzig. With the death of his patron, Fichte was forced to discontinue his studies and seek his livelihood as a private tutor, a profession he quickly came to detest (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy).

Following a lengthy sojourn in Zurich, where he met his future wife, Johanna Rahn, Fichte returned to Leipzig with the intention of pursuing a literary career. When his projects failed, he was again forced to survive as a tutor. It was in this capacity that he began giving lessons on the Kantian philosophy in the summer of 1790. This first encounter with Kant's writings produced what Fichte himself described as a "revolution" in his manner of thinking. In February and March of 1794 he gave a series of private lectures on his conception of philosophy before a small circle of influential clerics and intellectuals in Zurich. It was at this moment that he received an invitation to assume the recently vacated chair of Critical Philosophy at the University of Jena, which was rapidly emerging as the capital of the new German philosophy. Fichte arrived in Jena in May of 1794, and enjoyed tremendous popular success there for the next six years, during which time he laid the foundations and developed the first systematic articulations of his new system.

Johann Gottlieb Fichte was appointed to the chair of philosophy in Jena at the age of 32. His lectures were immensely popular, and he published them in 1794. Known as the *Wissenschaftslehre* (Science of Knowledge), they were reworked in later editions, and were prefaced by Fichte with the claim that 'my system is nothing other than the Kantian.' In 1813 Fichte canceled his lectures so that his students could enlist in the "War of Liberation" against Napoleon, of which Fichte himself proved to be an indirect casualty. From his wife, who was serving as a volunteer nurse in a Berlin military hospital, he contracted a fatal infection of which he died on January 29, 1814 (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy).

Some of his works are: *Attempt at a Critique of All Revelation* (1792), *Reclamation of the Freedom of Thought from the Princes of Europe, who have hitherto Suppressed it* (1793), *Some Lectures concerning the Scholar's Vocation* (1794), *Concerning the Concept of the Wissenschaftslehre* (1794), *Foundation of the Entire Wissenschaftslehre* (1794/95), *Outline of the Distinctive Character of the Wissenschaftslehre with Respect to the Theoretical Faculty* (1795), among others.

Self Assessment Exercise 1

1. When was Fichte born?
2. At what age was Fichte appointed to the chair of philosophy at Jena?

2.4 The Denial of Kantian Noumena

Johann Gottlieb Fichte was one of the first to overhaul Kantian philosophy. In a 1793 letter, Fichte stated his assessment of Kant:

My conviction is that Kant has only indicated the truth but neither unfolded nor proved it. This singular man has a power of divining truth, without being himself conscious of the grounds on which he rests (Fichte qtd in Jaki 128).

Although Fichte saw himself as carrying out Kant's ideas, it angered Kant that Fichte considered Kantian philosophy to be incomplete. Accordingly, Kant denied that there was any similarity between his ideas and Fichte's.

But how did Fichte propose to "unfold" the insights of Kant? He did it by beginning with the notion of freedom. Whereas Kant had made freedom a postulate of morality, Fichte moved it to the center stage of his philosophy. In his view, freedom is a presupposition not only of action but of human cognition as well. Kant had said that there is only one universal set of categories that structure experience and thus we have no choice as to how we shall view the world. For Fichte there are many different ways to understand the world. The effect of this modification is to personalize Kant's Copernican revolution. The world is my world. The categories I employ are those necessary to make my world meaningful. Thus philosophy begins with the choice between ultimate principles, and this commitment is made on the basis of temperament and not objective evidence (Lawhead 380).

In section 4 of the First Introduction (1797), he takes the position that the thing in itself is a mere dogmatic concept, produced by thought alone, a pure invention without any reality, but that every philosophy necessarily refers to objects outside experience. Fichte rejects this concept on the basis of the distinction between objects of experience and objects in themselves, where experience is defined as thinking accompanied by the feeling of necessity. In other words, Fichte is distinguishing between what is given to us and by which we are constrained and what we freely think up. In locating the thing in itself in the latter category, he in effect accuses Kant of uncritically

going beyond the limits of experience he himself fixed for the critical philosophy. Any attempt, including Kant's, to ground philosophy in an indemonstrable object goes beyond the limits of critical thinking in falling into dogmatism. The moral of this view is that the thing in itself is no more than a dogmatic concept invoked to ground philosophy that cannot be grounded.

Fichte develops this idea in the Second Introduction, where he contrasts Kant's denial of intellectual intuition as forbidding any claim to immediate consciousness of the thing in itself with his own claim that since all existence is given in experience, there is no need to appeal to a thing in itself (Fichte 45). The Second Introduction innovates with respect to the First Introduction in taking a position on the ongoing debate about the thing in itself. Fichte here claims that Kant does not base his position on the thing in itself. Fichte suggests that interpretations that base the critical philosophy on the thing in itself erroneously take passages out of context because of a failure to master the wider position. A direct consequence of this interpretation is to commit Kant simultaneously to dogmatism and to idealism (Rockmore 17).

According to Fichte, Kant had shown that there are but two possible philosophies: idealism and dogmatism. The idealist looks for the explanation of experience in intelligence, the dogmatist in the 'thing-in-itself'. Kant had shown that idealism can explain everything that dogmatism explains, while making no assumptions beyond the reach of observation. The dispute between the two concerns whether 'the independence of the thing should be sacrificed to that of the self, or, conversely, the independence of the self to that of the thing'. The starting-point of idealist philosophy is therefore the "self." Dogmatism, on the other hand, is the view that thing in itself—or things in themselves if this term takes a plural—affect(s) us, and idealism is the contrary view that all existence is explained solely through the thinking of the intellect (Fichte 56). For an idealist, we do not need to invoke an unknown world as the source of phenomena, which, since they do not refer beyond themselves, are not appearances.

Fichte argues for his reading of Kant's position by maintaining that Kant cannot himself base the critical philosophy on a thing in itself standing outside experience unless he expressly claims to do so (Fichte 58). For Kant, as Fichte interprets him, our »knowledge all proceeds from an affection, but not affection by an object (Fichte 60). In conceding there is an input in knowledge but denying any effort to accord it an ontological status, Fichte reads Kant as not invoking an unknown and unknowable world, hence as avoiding Platonism. According to Fichte, Kant is

already a post-Kantian, the author of the theory that explains the general possibility of knowledge without any appeal to the thing in itself (Rockmore 18).

Self Assessment Exercise 2

1. How did Fichte propose to unfold the insights of Kant?
2. Fichte classified Kant's philosophy into two possible philosophies, namely, _____ and _____
3. What was his central argument of the critical philosophy?

2.5 The Ego and the Infinite (Pure) Ego

One important question that strikes many philosophers is how should we think of ourselves and our world? For Fichte, this is not a theoretical question, but an intensely practical one. Like the twentieth century pragmatists (who were influenced by Fichte), he thought that our beliefs cannot be proven by means of metaphysical arguments. Instead, what makes a belief viable is the way it affects our lives and serves our interests. For example, the scientific method is not written in the sky and the "facts" do not shout their own interpretation. If we choose to approach nature scientifically, it is because we believe this method serves our interests and makes our world meaningful. In the final analysis, even science is based on subjective commitments and acts of practical faith. Thus, idealism, for Fichte, reigns supreme, for the world I live in is always a world structured by the way I approach it. Hence, Fichte makes the self (herein also refers to as "I" or "Ego"), the foundation of experience.

Fichte provides further motives for making the self the foundation of experience. First, we know the inner world better than the outer one, so this is where philosophy should begin. Second, if we start with a plurality of matter in motion, we will never be able to derive a unified mind and consciousness from this. But if we begin with our inner experience of being a unified, creative self, we will have the basis for giving meaning to everything else. Thus, the items within your world come and go, but behind all its reality is the constant activity of the self. To illustrate the fact that the self stands behind all manifestations of the world, Fichte once said to his students, "Gentlemen, think the wall." He then said, "Gentlemen, think him who thought the wall." In other words, behind everything that appears is the self that grounds those appearances. Look about you. The world you experience is not a collection of meaningless bits of sense data at which you, like

a camera lens, passively glare. Instead, the world of your experience is structured by your interests and values and is an arena in which you make choices and realize your moral ideals

The task of idealism in philosophy is to discover the ‘absolutely unconditioned first principle of human knowledge’. Logicians offer an instance of necessary and indisputable truth in the law of identity: $A = A$. But even in that law something is presupposed that we have yet to justify, namely the existence of A . I can advance to the truth of $A = A$, once A has been ‘posited’ as an object of thought. But what justifies me in positing A ? There is no answer. Only if we can find something that is posited in the act of thinking itself will we arrive at a self-justifying basis for our claims to knowledge. This thing that is posited absolutely is the I ; for when the self is the object of thought, that which is ‘posited’ is identical with that which ‘posits’. In the statement that $I = I$ we have therefore reached bedrock. Here is a necessary truth that presupposes nothing. The self-positing of the self is the true ground of the law of identity, and hence of logic itself.

To this first principle of knowledge, which he calls the principle of identity, Fichte adds a second. The positing of the self is also a positing of the not-self. For what I posit is always an object of knowledge, and an object is not a subject. That which comes before my intuition in the act of self-knowledge is intuited as not-self. This is the principle of counter-positing (or opposition). From which, in conjunction with the first principle, a third can be derived, namely, that the not-self is divisible in thought and opposed to a ‘divisible self. This third principle (the ‘grounding principle’) is supposedly derived by a ‘synthesis’ of the other two. It is the ground of transcendental philosophy, which explores the ‘division’ of the self by concepts, whereby the world is constituted as an object of knowledge.

The self is ‘determined’ or ‘limited’ by the not-self, which in turn is limited by the self. It is as though self-consciousness were traversed by a movable barrier: whatever lies in the not-self has been transferred there from the self. But since the origin of both self and not-self is the act of self-positing, nothing on either side of the barrier is anything, in the last analysis, but self. In the not-self, however, the self is passive. There is no contradiction in bringing this passive object under such concepts as space, time and causality, so situating it in the natural order. As subject, on the other hand, the self is active, spontaneously positing the objects of knowledge. The self is therefore free, since the concepts of the natural world (including causality) apply only to that which is posited as object, and not to the positing subject.

All activity in the not-self (including that which we should describe as causation) is transferred there from the self. But transference of activity is also an 'alienation' of the self in the not-self, and a determination of the self by the not-self. This self-determination is the realisation of freedom, since the not-self that determines me is only the self made objective in the act of self-awareness.

Fichte is not only concerned with the phenomenology of consciousness, that is, with a descriptive analysis of consciousness. He is concerned also, with developing a system of idealist metaphysics. And this point has an important bearing on his theory of the transcendental ego (Coplestone 43).

Following Kant, Fichte maintains that the phenomenal world, that is, the physical world of sense perception, is the product of the human mind. Fichte called the human mind "Ego" (Essien 247). He rejected Kant's position that the noumena is unknowable. According to him, the ego can penetrate or can know the thing-in-itself. By ego, Fichte refers to the human mind. However, this human mind, according to him, is only but a representation or the manifestation of a higher mind, the Infinite Ego, which is God. For Fichte, therefore, the entire universe is simply an expression of the Infinite (Absolute) Ego or God. But in Fichte's account this Infinite lacks the anthropomorphic qualities of the traditional Western concept of deity. Instead, it is more like an impersonal but rational moral order that is in the process of evolving. Like our own consciousness, it strives to realize itself in perfect self-awareness. In fact, the human will or consciousness is an expression of the Absolute Spirit. The real world is not a world of dead things, arranged in a spatial-temporal order, but is a dynamic, spiritual process in which we participate. In our moral experience the innermost center of this reality is opened up to us.

Fichte argues that the spontaneous activity of the pure ego in grounding consciousness is not itself conscious. As spontaneous activity, the pure ego does not exist 'for itself'. It comes to exist for itself, as an ego, only in the intellectual intuition by which the philosopher in transcendental reflection apprehends the ego's spontaneous activity. It is through the act of the philosopher, 'through an activity directed towards an activity that the ego first comes to be originally for itself' (Fichte 305).

In intellectual intuition, therefore, the pure ego is said to posit itself (sich setzen). And the fundamental proposition of philosophy is that 'the ego simply posits in an original way its own being' (Fichte 92). In transcendental reflection the philosopher goes back, as it were, to the ultimate ground of consciousness. And in his intellectual intuition the pure ego affirms itself. But though

by means of what Fichte calls an activity directed towards an activity, the pure ego is made to affirm itself, however, the ego's original spontaneous activity is not in itself conscious. Rather it is the ultimate ground of consciousness, that is, of ordinary consciousness; one's natural awareness of oneself in a world. But this consciousness cannot arise unless the non-ego is opposed to the ego. Hence the second basic proposition of philosophy is that 'a non-ego is simply opposite to the ego' (Fichte 98). This opposition, according to Fichte, must, be done by the ego itself. Otherwise pure idealism would have to be abandoned. Hegel was opposed to Fichte's idea as being insufficiently speculative, that is, philosophical. In Hegel's opinion it was unworthy of a philosopher to offer a deduction which was admittedly no strict theoretical deduction and to introduce, like a *deus ex machina*, undeduced activities of the ego to make possible the transition from one proposition to another.

According to Coplestone, it can hardly be denied, that Fichte's actual procedure does not square very well with his initial account of the nature of philosophy as a deductive science (Coplestone 48). For Fichte, the philosopher is engaged in consciously reconstructing, as it were, an active process, namely the grounding of consciousness, which in itself takes place unconsciously. In doing so the philosopher has his point of departure, the self-positing of the absolute ego, and his point of arrival, human consciousness as we know it. And if it is impossible to proceed from one step to another in the reconstruction of the productive activity of the ego without attributing to the ego a certain function or mode of activity, then this must be done. Thus, even if the concept of limitation is not obtained through strict logical analysis of the first two basic propositions, it is none the less required, from Fichte's point of view, to clarify their meaning (Coplestone 48).

Self Assessment Exercise 3

1. According to Fichte, what is the task of idealism?
2. Fichte based his theory of consciousness on what he calls the _____
3. What determines or limits the "self?"
4. How does the pure ego comes to exists for itself?

2.6 Conclusion

In this unit, you have learnt Fichte's attempt to demolish the Kantian bifurcation of reality. Through his own dialectics, Fichte moves on to propose the ego and the pure ego as the seat of consciousness. Accordingly, you have learnt that in Fichte's philosophy, the ego posits itself.

2.7 Summary

In this unit, you have learnt that Fichte committed Kant to dogmatism and skepticism. For him, the spontaneous activity of the pure ego in grounding consciousness is not itself conscious. The entire universe, in Fichte's philosophy is simply an expression of the Pure Ego.

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2.9 Possible Answers to SAEs

Answers to SAE 1

1. Fichte was born on May 19, 1762
2. Fichte was appointed to the chair of philosophy in Jena at the age of 32.

Answers to SAE 2

1. He did it by beginning with the notion of freedom. Whereas Kant had made freedom a postulate of morality, Fichte moved it to the center stage of his philosophy.
2. Dogmatism and idealism.

3. Fichte argues that Kant cannot himself base the critical philosophy on a thing in itself standing outside experience unless he expressly claims to do so.

Answers to SAE 3

1. The task of idealism in philosophy, according to Fichte, is to discover the ‘absolutely unconditioned first principle of human knowledge.’
2. The Ego or I or Self
3. The “not self” also called the non-ego.
4. The pure ego comes to exist for itself, as an ego, only in the intellectual intuition by which the philosopher in transcendental reflection apprehends the ego's spontaneous activity.

Unit 3: Georg Wilhelm Fredrich Hegel

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3.1 Introduction

Hegel built on the foundation laid by Johann Gottlieb Fichte and Friedrich Wilhelm Schelling, to developed his own speculative system practically unrivaled in the scope of its ambition. Hegel’s highly systematic philosophy has been characterized as a form of panlogism. Panlogism is system

which portrays rational thought as the ultimate reality as well as the instrument to explain all reality. In the Hegelian system, the Absolute, considered by Schelling to be beyond the grasp of reason, is described in its development as Spirit through a dialectical process.

Hegel described his method as speculative, in the sense that it unveiled the hidden dimensions of reality through an analysis of the thought process of the dialectic. Being and non-being, for instance, are usually considered opposites that destroy each other. For Hegel, their mutual negation leads to the third element of a triad, in which both earlier elements are sublated, absent as such, yet included in a higher form. This formula was applied by Hegel to all aspects of thought and nature, leading to a comprehensive system where the Absolute's development is explained through its own internal mechanism. In this unit, therefore, we shall learn about Hegel's philosophy of the Absolute Spirit.

3.2 Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

In this unit, you will learn the following:

1. The concept of the Absolute Spirit.
2. The dialectics of Hegel.
3. Hegel's theory of the state
4. The development of historical idea in Hegel's philosophy.

3.3 A Brief Biography of Hegel

G. F. W. Hegel was born in Stuttgart in southern Germany in 1770. In the same year, Beethoven was born and Kant was made a professor at Königsberg. Napoleon had been born one year earlier. Hegel's father was a minor civil servant, and his mother was a well-educated and intelligent woman who taught her young son Latin. Taking advantage of the opportunity for a state-sponsored education, he entered the Protestant theological seminary at the University of Tübingen in 1788 where he made friends with the poet Holderlin and with a young, brilliant philosophy student named Friedrich Schelling. After graduation, Hegel spent several years as a tutor to a succession of wealthy families. During this period, his interest in philosophy blossomed and he began to read and write extensively. In 1801 he became an instructor at the University of

Jena, where his friend Schelling had succeeded Fichte as professor of philosophy and was becoming quite well known.

Because Hegel did not yet have any reputation, he could only lecture privately to a small handful of students, who paid him modest fees. At Jena, Hegel began to write his first major work, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*. When Napoleon's forces invaded Jena on October 13, 1806, Hegel quickly sent off the only copy of his manuscript, while the battle raged, to meet his publisher's deadline. Fortunately, it survived the confusion intact and was published in 1807. As a result of the French occupation, the university was closed down. Hegel went on to work for a year as a newspaper editor and then from 1808 to 1816 he was headmaster of a Gymnasium (high school) in Nuremberg. In 1811 he married the daughter of an old Nuremberg family, and she gave him two sons, one of whom became a well-known historian. While still at Nuremberg, he published his three-volume *Science of Logic*. Having begun to achieve a reputation in philosophy, he was invited to become professor of philosophy at Heidelberg, where he served from 1816 to 1818 and published his *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences*. Finally, at the high point of his career, he was appointed to a prestigious chair of philosophy at the University of Berlin, where his lectures and writings made him a legend in his own time. A devoted following of students kept careful copies of his notes and published his philosophical lectures on history, art, religion, and the history of philosophy after his death. In 1831, Georg W. F. Hegel died in a cholera epidemic.

Self Assessment Exercise 1

1. What special events happened during Hegel's year of birth?
2. Hegel's marriage was blessed with how many sons?
3. Which of Hegel's friend was a poet?

3.4 The Absolute Spirit

In Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, German idealism reached its apogee. Having been influenced by his predecessors – Kant, Fichte and Shelling – Hegel says that the world and all that is in it, is a culmination of one ultimate reality which he called the Absolute Spirit or Mind. According to him, the history of mind (spirit) involves a sort of development toward a more enlightened consciousness, which he views as one that is essentially based on reason. Hegel's philosophy has its culmination in our knowledge of the Absolute. In the process of dialectic,

knowledge of the Absolute is the synthesis of subjective spirit and objective spirit. Because reality is rationality (Thought, Idea), it followed for Hegel that our knowledge of the Absolute is actually the Absolute knowing itself through the finite spirit of human beings (Stumpf and Fieser 308). Hegel described the Absolute as a dynamic process, as an organism having parts but nevertheless unified into a complex system. The Absolute is, therefore, not some entity separate from the world; rather, it is the world when viewed in a special way.

Hegel conceives of the whole world as a single great organism through which an external uniformity manifests itself (Darty 367). This uniformity expresses itself both as a spirit and as an external nature. This means that for Hegel, reality is a fusion of both the spiritual and the material. Without mind or spirit, matter is lifeless, it remains formless and becomes a mere chaos. Therefore, Hegel maintains that it is only through the entrance of the spirit into the material that the cosmos originates (Rusk and Scotland 83). Hegel sees the central idea of reality as the whole which is the absolute. The absolute, for him, then, is the infinite creative totality in which all finite distractions are unified. This absolute is a necessary process of self-development from potentiality to actuality. This means that the absolute spirit by its nature undergoes self-projection, self-expression, self-externalization, and self-manifestation.

In his *Phenomenology of spirit*, he sets out to show the various processes in which the mind undergoes in order to get to absolute knowing. Hegel identifies these processes as consciousness, self-consciousness, reason, religion and absolute knowing, where knowledge of a thing is known mainly through the standpoint of its essence as the element of existence or the form of objective for consciousness where the spirit externalizes itself. Hegel believes that our consciousness of the Absolute, is achieved progressively as we move through the three stages from art, to religion, and finally to philosophy. Art provides "a sensuous semblance of the Idea" by providing us with an object of sense. In the object of art, the mind apprehends the Absolute as beauty. The object of art, moreover, is the creation of Spirit and, as such, contains some aspect of the Idea. There is an ever-deepening insight into the Absolute as we move from Asian symbolic art, to classical Greek art, and finally to romantic Christian art.

Self Assessment Exercise 2

1. How does Hegel describes the Absolute?
2. Following from his description of the Absolute, how does Hegel conceives of the world

3. What is Hegel's view of the whole of reality?
4. How is our consciousness of the Absolute achieved?
5. Hegel's philosophy has its culmination in our knowledge of the _____

3.5 Hegelian Dialectics

Hegel maintains that the manifestation of the absolute spirit involves a movement that occurs through a dialectical process, where different ideas are counterposed to each other at any given point. In fact, for Hegel, reality as absolute reason is revealed objectively in the dialectic processes of nature through the reasoning processes of individual human minds (Harrison-Barbet 8). Hegel's dialectic process exhibits a triadic movement. Usually; this triadic structure of the dialectic process is described as a movement from thesis to antithesis and finally to synthesis, after which the synthesis becomes a new thesis, and this process continues until it ends in the Absolute Idea. What Hegel emphasized in his dialectic logic was that thought moves. Contradiction does not bring knowledge to a halt but acts as a positive moving force in human reasoning.

To illustrate Hegel's dialectic method, we can take the first basic triad of his logic, namely, the triad of being, nothing, and becoming. In the movement of the absolute spirit, he sees being as the thesis, non-being or nothing, as the antithesis and becoming as the synthesis. The movement of the mind from being to nothing produces becoming. According to Hegel, the concept of becoming is formed by the mind when it understands that being, for the reasons already mentioned, is the same as nothing. Becoming, Hegel says, is the unity of being and nothing" and constitutes singular idea." Becoming is, therefore, the synthesis of being and nothing. If we ask how something can both be and not be, Hegel would answer that it can both be and not be when it becomes (Stumpf and Fieser 301). Hegel believes that the mind must always move from the more general and abstract to the specific and concrete. The most general concept we can form about things is what they are. The process, according to Hegel, is essential to the understanding of the result. Each later stage of the dialectic contains all the earlier stages, as it were in solution; none of them is wholly superseded, but is given its proper place as a moment in the Whole. It is therefore impossible to reach the truth except by going through all the steps of the dialectic.

Knowledge as a whole has its triadic movement. It begins with sense perception, in which there is only awareness of the object. Then, through skeptical criticism of the senses, it becomes purely subjective. At last, it reaches the stage of self-knowledge, in which subject and object are

no longer distinct. Thus, self-consciousness is the highest form of knowledge. This, of course, must be the case in Hegel's system, for the highest kind of knowledge must be that possessed by the Absolute, and as the Absolute is the Whole there is nothing outside itself for it to know. In the best thinking, according to Hegel, thoughts become fluent and interfuse. Truth and falsehood are not sharply defined opposites, as is commonly supposed; nothing is wholly false, and nothing that we can know is wholly true. 'We can know in a way that is false'; this happens when we attribute absolute truth to some detached piece of information. Such a question as 'Where was Caesar born?' has a straightforward answer, which is true in a sense, but not in the philosophical sense. For philosophy, 'the truth is the whole', and nothing partial is quite true. 'Reason,' Hegel says, 'is the conscious certainty of being all reality.' This does not mean that a separate person is all reality; in his separateness he is not quite real, but what is real in him is his participation in Reality as a whole. In proportion as we become more rational, this participation is increased. The Absolute Idea, with which the Logic ends, is something like Aristotle's God. It is thought thinking about itself. Clearly the Absolute cannot think about anything but itself, since there is nothing else, except to our partial and erroneous ways of apprehending reality (Stumpf and Fieser 301).

Self Assessment Exercise 3

1. How does the Absolute manifests itself?
2. Outline the triadic movement of Hegel's dialectics.
3. How is the concept of becoming formed, according to Hegel?
4. According to Hegel, how does knowledge begins?

3.6 Philosophy of History

A crucial feature of Hegel's philosophy is his commitment to historicism. Historicism is the claim that ideas are not eternal objects but are products of their time and that the truth of any idea cannot be understood apart from its origin and role in its historical setting. In Hegel's view, the history of the world is the history of nations. The dynamic unfolding of history represents the "progress in the consciousness of freedom" (Stumpf and Fieser 307). This progress is not a matter of mere chance but is rather a rational process. Hegel maintains that reason dominates the world, therefore, world history is a manifestation of rational process. However, Hegel argues that the state is the bearer of reason, and because of this, the state is "the Idea of Spirit" in external form and "the Divine Idea as it exists on earth." But the dialectic of the historical process consists in the

opposition between states. Each state expresses a national spirit and, indeed, the world spirit in its own collective consciousness. To be sure, only individual minds are capable of consciousness. Still, the minds of a particular people develop a spirit of unity, and for this reason it is possible to speak of a national spirit. According to Hegel, each national spirit represents a moment in the development of the world spirit, and the interplay between national spirits represents the dialectic in history.

Hegel says that the conflict between nations is inevitable inasmuch as the historical process is the very stuff of reality and is the gradual working out of the Idea of Freedom (Stumpf and Fieser 307). Nations are carried along by the wave of history, so that in each epoch a particular nation is the dominant people in world history for this epoch. As Hegel points out, a nation cannot choose when it will be great, for it is only once that it can make its hour strike. Hegel refers to this as a decisive point in history. Hegel holds that at decisive points in history, special world-historical people emerge as agents of the world spirit. These persons lift nations to a new level of development and perfection. For Hegel, such individuals could hardly be judged in terms of a morality that belonged to the epoch out of which a nation is being led. Instead, the value of such people consists in their creative responsiveness to the unfolding Idea of Freedom.

Self Assessment Exercise 4

1. What is historicism?
2. What does the dynamic unfolding of history represents for Hegel?
3. What is Hegel's description of national spirit?

3.7 Social/Political Philosophy

Hegel's social and political philosophy, as articulated in his *Philosophy of Right* presents a vision of the rational social order that, despite certain obvious archaisms, is still of relevance to anyone interested in reconciling the best aspects of liberal social thought, including its concern for the rights and dignity of individuals, with the human need for deep and enduring communal attachments (Neuhausser 204). Hegel's fundamental claim is that a single idea, properly understood – the idea of freedom – provides the philosophical resources needed to ground a comprehensive account of the good society: what makes social institutions good, on Hegel's view, is that they play an indispensable role in “realizing” freedom (Neuhausser 204).

Hegel's political theory stems directly from his main philosophy, his metaphysics. Hegel argues that human beings constantly strive for freedom. However, he holds that the individual's freedom can only be realized in the state. Hegel sees the state as the highest form of human society in which the spirit objectifies and actualizes itself (Omorgbe 86). Below the state, we have the family and the civil society. The spirit first objectifies itself in the family, then in the civil society and finally in the State. Civil society is a stage in the development of the State, a stage between the family and the State. The State is itself the synthesis of the unity of the family and the diversity of the civil society. The family is characterized by unity, but this unity i.e., thesis of the family is negated by the diversity of the civil society which stands to it as an antithesis. The State then develops as the synthesis in which the thesis and the antithesis (the unity of the family and the diversity of civil society) are resolved, and preserved. In this way, the negation of the unity of the family by the individuality and diversity of civil society is in turn negated by the unity of the State which develops from the negation of the negation. Hegel emphasizes the unity and supremacy of the State. The will of the State is the universal will; it is the will of the absolute and consequently the authentic will of the individual citizens. Every individual citizen should therefore endeavour to bring his will in conformity with the will of the state (Omorgbe 87).

Although Hegel talks of individual freedom, he certainly does not mean the freedom to differ from the will of the State (which is the 'universal will' or the will of the absolute which has objectified itself in the State). The State, according to Hegel, is not a human construction freely and deliberately set up by some kind of social contract. Human beings did not decide to form a State to provide their needs, as we are told by philosophers like Thomas Hobbes and John Locke. These philosophers tell us that the State is the product of the conscious, deliberate and free action of men who decided to organize themselves into a political society so that in it they may find the satisfaction of their needs which they cannot satisfy individually. But in Hegel's philosophy, it is not a question of human beings deciding to organize themselves into a State for whatever end in view (Omorgbe 87). For the origin of the State and the purpose for which it exists is beyond them. It is not men who decide to form a State; it is the absolute which objectifies itself in the state through the instrumentality of human beings and their activities.

The appearance of the State in its proper time is part of the necessary and dialectical process of the self-objectification and self-development of the absolute spirit. The State therefore, in

Hegel's philosophy, does not exist for the purpose of serving the individual citizens and providing their needs as we are told by men like Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas. On the contrary, it is the individual citizens that exist to fulfill the universal will of the State, that is, the will of the absolute which has objectified itself in the State for the purpose of its own self-development (Omoregbe 88).

Self Assessment Exercise 5

1. What is Hegel's conception of the state?
2. In Hegel's political thought, how did the state come to be?
3. What is the purpose of the state in Hegel's philosophy?

3.8 Conclusion

The idealist metaphysics of Hegel which subsumes matter into spirit sees the absolute spirit as the only medium through which matter can have life and form. It was this understanding of reality that the materialistic conception of reality championed by the logical positivists was basically opposed to. Redding (8) writes that with its dark mystical roots, and its overtly religious content, it is hardly surprising that Hegel's philosophy so understood, is regarded as being very confrontational to the largely secular and scientific conceptions of reality that have been dominant from the twentieth century till now. It is true that Hegel's metaphysical system which presages the final stage in German idealism was an extraordinary achievement. This is why Hegel ranks as one of the greatest and most influential Western thinkers. His thought greatly inspired other thinkers like Marx and Sartre while it negatively influenced others like Schopenhauer and Kierkegaard.

3.9 Summary

In this unit, you have learnt that Hegel's philosophy hangs on his doctrine of the Absolute Spirit. That the Absolute Spirit manifests itself in a dialectical process. You also learnt that in his theory of the state, the state is the objectification of the Absolute Spirit.

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3.11 Possible Answers to SAEs

Answers to SAE 1

1. Hegel was born in Stuttgart in southern Germany in 1770. In the same year, Beethoven was born and Kant was made a professor at Königsberg.
2. His marriage was blessed with two sons.
3. Hegel's friend that was a poet was Holderlin.

Answers to SAE 2

1. Hegel described the Absolute as a dynamic process, as an organism having parts but nevertheless unified into a complex system. The Absolute is, therefore, not some entity separate from the world; rather, it is the world when viewed in a special way.
2. Hegel conceives of the whole world as a single great organism through which an external uniformity manifests itself.
3. Hegel sees the central idea of reality as the whole which is the absolute. The absolute, for him, then, us the infinite creative totality in which all finite distractions are unified. This absolute is a necessary process of self-development from potentiality to actuality.
4. Hegel believes that our consciousness of the Absolute, is achieved progressively as we move through the three stages from art, to religion, and finally to philosophy.
5. The Absolute.

Answers to SAE 3

1. Hegel maintains that the manifestation of the absolute spirit involves a movement that occurs through a dialectical process, where different ideas are counterposed to each other at any given point.
2. The triadic movement of Hegel's dialectical process are the thesis, the antithesis and the synthesis.
3. According to Hegel, the concept of becoming is formed by the mind when it understands that being is the same as nothing.
4. Knowledge, according to Hegel, begins with sense perception, in which there is only awareness of the object.

Answers to SAE 4

1. Historicism is the claim that ideas are not eternal objects but are products of their time and that the truth of any idea cannot be understood apart from its origin and role in its historical setting.
2. For Hegel, the dynamic unfolding of history represents the "progress in the consciousness of freedom."
3. According to Hegel, each national spirit represents a moment in the development of the world spirit, and the interplay between national spirits represents the dialectic in history.

Answers to SAE 5

1. Hegel sees the state as the highest form of human society in which the spirit objectifies and actualizes itself
2. The appearance of the State in its proper time is part of the necessary and dialectical process of the self-objectification and self-development of the absolute spirit.
3. In Hegel's philosophy, the state does not exist for the purpose of serving the individual citizens and providing their needs as we are told by men like Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas. On the contrary, it is the individual citizens that exist to fulfill the universal will of the State, that is, the will of the absolute which has objectified itself in the State for the purpose of its own self-development. In other words, for Hegel, the state exists for itself.

Unit 4: Arthur Schopenhauer

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- 4.6 Ethics and Aesthetics
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- 4.10 Possible Answers to SAEs

4.1 Introduction

Schopenhauer is sometimes termed an irrationality philosopher. His philosophy attacked most of his contemporaries, notably Hegel. He transformed Hegel's Absolute Spirit to the Will. Schopenhauer refused to acknowledge that Hegel was an appropriate or adequate successor to Kant. Schopenhauer had great disrespect for Hegel that he believed there was no philosophy in the period between Kant and himself; but only mere University charlatanism. This criticism aimed at Hegel accompanied by another of his comment that "out of every page of Hume's there is more to be learned than out of (all) of the philosophical works of Hegel (Stumpf and Fieser 309). But Hegel was not the only target of Schopenhauer's withering criticism. He expressed his broader disdain in the judgment that "I should like to see the man who could boast of a more miserable set of contemporaries than mine." In this unit, therefore, we will learn the philosopher of this critical philosopher.

4.2 Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

In this unit, you will learn the following:

1. The theory of consciousness in Schopenhauer's thought.
2. His notion of reality.
3. Understand his notion of the will
4. Have an insight into his ethics and aesthetics theory.

4.3 A Brief Biography of Arthur Schopenhauer

Arthur Schopenhauer was born at Danzig on February 22nd, 1788. His father, a wealthy merchant, hoped that his son would follow in his footsteps, and he allowed the boy to spend the years 1803-4 in visiting England, France and other countries on the understanding that at the conclusion of the tour he would take up work in a business house. The young Schopenhauer fulfilled his promise, but he had no relish for a business career and on his father's death in 1803 he obtained his mother's consent to his lecture. The enterprise was a complete failure, and Schopenhauer left off lecturing after one semester. His doctrine was scarcely representative of the dominant Zeitgeist or spirit of the time. After some wanderings Schopenhauer settled at Frankfurt on the Main in 1833. He read widely in European literature, consulted scientific books and journals, being quick to notice points which would serve as illustrations or empirical confirmation of his philosophical theories, visited the theatre and continues writing.

In 1836 he published *On the Will in Nature* (Ueber den Willen in der Natur), and in 1839 he won a prize from the Scientific Society of Drontheim in Norway for an essay on freedom. He failed, however, to obtain a similar prize from the Royal Danish Academy of the Sciences for an essay on the foundations of ethics. One of the reasons given for the refusal of the prize was the writer's disrespectful references to leading philosophers. Schopenhauer had a great admiration for Kant, but he had the habit of referring to thinkers such as Fichte, Schelling and Hegel in terms which were, to put it mildly, unconventional, however amusing his expressions may be to later generations. The two essays were published together in 1841 under the title *The Two Fundamental Problems of Ethics* (Die beiden Grundprobleme der Ethik).

In 1844 Schopenhauer published a second edition of *The World as Will and Idea* with fifty supplementary chapters. In the preface to this edition he took the opportunity of making quite clear his views about German university professors of philosophy, just in case his attitude might not

have been sufficiently indicated already. In 1851 he published a successful collection of essays entitled *Parerga and Paralipomena*, dealing with a wide variety of topics. Finally, in 1859 he published a third and augmented edition of his magnum opus. After the failure of the Revolution of 1848, a revolution for which Schopenhauer had no sympathy at all, people were more ready to pay attention to a philosophy which emphasized the evil in the world and the vanity of life and preached a turning away from life to aesthetic contemplation and asceticism. And in the last decade of his life Schopenhauer became a famous man. Visitors came to see him from all sides and were entertained by his brilliant conversational powers. And though the German professors had not forgotten his sarcasm and abuse, lectures were delivered on his system in several universities, a sure sign that he had at last arrived. He died in September 1860.

Self Assessment Exercise 1

1. When was Schopenhauer born?
2. When did he die?
3. Mention two of his works.

4.4 On Consciousness and the Nature of Reality

Schopenhauer maintains a simple and an uncluttered view about the nature of reality. According to Schopenhauer, individual material things exist in space and time. He conceives of material thing as something capable of interacting to causally with other material things. Again, he believes that every change that occurs to a material thing is the necessary result of some preceding change that occurs to a material thing (Janaway 21). For him, material things would not exist without the mind.

Sharing in the thought of Kant, Schopenhauer holds that that the whole structure we have just described exists only as something presented to us as subjects, not in itself. When Schopenhauer says that empirical things in space and time are objects, he means that they are objects for a subject. 'Object' in his parlance means something met with in experience, or in the subject's consciousness. Space and time are the fundamental forms brought to experience by us. So the material occupants of space and time would not exist if it were not for the subject, and the causal connections which obtain between the states of material things are connections which we, as subjects, impose. In his work, *On the Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason*,

Schopenhauer sets out to answer the questions “What can I know?” and “What is the nature of things?” From these questions, he intends to embark on a thorough investigation of the whole scope of reality. The term, sufficient reason, simply is the view that nothing is without a reason. Schopenhauer sets out four basic forms of the principle of sufficient reason which corresponds to the four different kinds of ideas comprised in the whole range of human thought. Accordingly, he identifies these as:

1. Physical objects. These refers to the causal relationship between what exist in space and time, which we come to have knowledge of through our ordinary experience of things. According to Schopenhauer, physical objects provide the subject matter of the material sciences, such as, for example, physics. At this point Schopenhauer closely follows Kant’s basic theory that knowledge begins with experience but is not limited, as Hume thought, to what is empirically given or presented to us. Instead, the elements of our experience are organized by our human minds, which brings to our experience a priori categories of space, time, and causality as though these categories are lenses through which we look at objects (Stumpf and Fieser 312). In this realm of phenomena, the principle of sufficient reason explains becoming or change.

2. Abstract concepts. These objects take the form of conclusions that we draw from other concepts, as when we apply the rules of inference or implication. The relationship between concepts and the conclusions they infer or imply is governed by the Principle of Sufficient Reason. This is the realm of logic, and here the Principle of Sufficient Reason is applied to the ways of knowing.

3. Mathematical objects. Here we encounter, for example, arithmetic and geometry as they are related to space and time. Geometry is grounded in the principle that governs the various positions of the parts of space. Arithmetic, on the other hand, involves the parts of time, for as Schopenhauer says on the connection of the parts of time rests all counting. He concludes that the principle of sufficient reason of being is the law according to which the parts of space and time determine one another.

4. The self: Schopenhauer maintains that the self is the subject that wills and because it is a willing subject, it is also the object for the knowing subject. This is what he calls self-consciousness. The principle of sufficient reason, therefore, acts as the law of motivation which governs our knowledge of the relationship between the self and its acts of will.

From these four forms of the principle of sufficient reason, Schopenhauer draws the striking conclusion that necessity or determinism is present everywhere. He stresses the fact of necessity through the whole range of objects, whether they are physical objects, the abstract concepts of logic, mathematical objects, or the self as the object of a knowing subject. Thus, we encounter physical necessity, logical necessity, mathematical necessity, and moral necessity. This element of necessity in the very nature of things is what led Schopenhauer to hold that people behave in daily life by necessity (Stumpf and Fieser 313).

Self Assessment Exercise 2

1. What is Schopenhauer's idea of space and time?
2. List the four basic forms of the principle of sufficient reason which corresponds to the four different kinds of ideas comprised in the whole range of human thought.

4.5 The World as Will and Representation

Schopenhauer's philosophy takes the transcendental idealism of Kant as its starting-point. Like most of his contemporaries Schopenhauer construed this theory in what I have called the 'subjective' version (Schopenhauer 141). He held that Kant had proved that the world we experience through the senses is a construction out of appearances (or 'representations', as he called them), and, while ostensibly repudiating the Kantian idea of a category, he nevertheless saw these 'representations' as the creative embodiment of the intellect, which orders the world of knowledge in accordance with concepts of space, time and causality. It was this simplified Transcendental Idealism that Schopenhauer opposed to the elaborate system of Kant. As the title of his principal work - *The World as Will and Representation* (1818) - implies, he thought that there is more to the world than the system of appearance. The world contains not only representations and their systematic relationships, but also will; and it is on account of his philosophy of will that Schopenhauer is now principally studied. This philosophy bears a relation to that of Fichte. It is, however, extraordinarily ambitious, deriving from the single dichotomy between will and representation the whole of metaphysics, epistemology, ethics and the philosophy of mind, and providing both new answers to old problems, and a new consciousness of the problems themselves.

The philosophy of will begins from the well-known paradox of the thing-in-itself. Transcendental idealism, Schopenhauer argues, implies that the empirical world exists only as representation: 'every object, whatever its origin, is, as object, already conditioned by the subject, and thus is essentially only the subject's representation.' A representation is a subjective state that has been ordered according to space, time and causality - the primary forms of sensibility and understanding. So long as we turn our thoughts towards the natural world, the search for the thing-in-itself behind the representation is futile. Every argument and every experience leads only to the same end: the system of representations, standing like a veil between the subject and the thing-in-itself. No scientific investigation can penetrate the veil; and yet it is only a veil, Schopenhauer affirms, a tissue of illusions which we can, if we choose, penetrate by another means. He lavishly praises the Hindu writers for perceiving this (Scruton 177).

The way to penetrate the veil, according to Schopenhauer, was stumbled upon by Kant, though he did not see the significance of his own arguments. In self-knowledge, we are confronted precisely with that which cannot be known as appearance, since it is the source of all appearances: the transcendental subject. To know this subject as object is precisely not to know it, but to confront once again the veil of representation. But we can know it as subject through the immediate and non-conceptual awareness that we have of the will - in short, through practical reason.

Schopenhauer says that the world and all that exist is nothing but a manifestation of the "Will" and whatever becomes of our conscious as representations of the will. This will, according to him, is a clear guide to the way the world is. Therefore, the will must be understood in terms of its application to human actions; however, we must enlarge its sense at least far enough to avoid the barbarity of thinking that every process in the world has a mind, a consciousness, or a purpose behind it (Janaway 35). For the most part, Schopenhauer assures us, the world operates blindly and in a dull, one-sided, and unalterable manner - and the same is true of many manifestations of the will within each human individual. The world, then, is a representation. In other words, the world is what presents itself in a subject's experience, and this subject's experience is the will. He asserts thus:

Only the will is thing in itself. It is that of which all representation, all object, is the phenomenon, the visibility, the objectivity. It is the innermost essence, the kernel, of every particular thing and also of the whole. It appears in every blindly acting force of nature, and also in the deliberate

conduct of man, and the great difference between the two concerns only the degree of the manifestation, not the inner nature of what is manifested (Schopenhauer 110).

This means that the will is a force which permeates everything in nature, both those that are conscious and the ones that are unconscious. The will, therefore, must be understood as end-directed. For Schopenhauer, space and time are the principle of individuation, whereas the thing in itself (the will), cannot be split up into separate individuals. He argues that beyond representation, space and time, it is simply the world as a whole that is to be conceived as will. Secondly, there can be no causal interaction between the will, as thing in itself, and events in the ordinary empirical world.(Janaway 37-38).

But what then is the relation of the will to the individual subject? Schopenhauer's answer is framed in terms taken from Leibniz. I am an individual, and identified as such by means of a principium individuationis (a principle of individuation). It is only in the world of representation that such a principle can be found: things can be individuated only in space and time, and only when understood in terms of the web of causal connection. The thing-in-itself, which has neither spatial nor temporal nor causal relations, is therefore without a principle of identity. In no sense, therefore, am I identical with the will. All we can say is that will is manifest in me, trapped, as it were, into a condition of individual existence by its restless desire to embody itself in the world of representation. The will in itself is timeless and imperishable. It is the universal substratum from which every individual arises into the world of appearances, only to sink again after a brief and futile struggle for existence (Scruton 178)..

Will manifests itself among phenomena in two ways: as individual striving and as Idea. An Idea is something like a complete conception of the will, in so far as this can be grasped in the world of representation - it corresponds to the universal, not the particular, and it is therefore only in the species that the Idea is truly present to our perception. In the natural world, therefore, the species is favoured over the individual, since in the species the will to live finds a durable embodiment, while the individual, judged in himself, is a passing and dispensable aberration.

Schopenhauer derives a masterly portrait of nature's indifference to the individual, in terms that anticipate evolutionary biology. His pessimism, which keenly inserts itself into every niche where people seek comfort and consolation, stems in part from his sociobiology. And it is in sociobiological terms that he spells out one of the most impressive theories of sexual love in the

philosophical literature. However, Schopenhauer's pessimism has other and more metaphysical roots. According to Schopenhauer individual existence is really a kind of mistake, yet one into which the will to live is constantly tempted by its need to show itself to itself as Idea. The will falls into individuality and exists for a while trapped in the world of representation, sundered from the calm ocean of eternity that is its home. Its life as an individual (my life) is really an expiation of original sin, 'the crime of existence itself (Scruton 179).

Although intellect is in most things the slave of the will, helplessly commenting on processes that it cannot control, it has one gift within its power—the gift of renunciation. The intellect can overcome the will's resistance to death, by showing that we have nothing to fear from death, which cannot extinguish the will, but only the veil that covers it. And though the thing which survives death is not an individual but the universal, this should not worry us, since it was the mistake of existing as an individual which caused all our suffering in the first place. In such a way Schopenhauer justifies suicide, a step that he himself showed no inclination to take.

Self Assessment Exercise 3

1. Schopenhauer's philosophy of will begins from the well-known paradox of Kant's _____
2. How does Schopenhauer see the world and all that exists?
3. Mention two ways in which Schopenhauer's will manifests.
4. How does Schopenhauer justify suicide?

4.6 Ethics and Aesthetics

Schopenhauer's concept of the will sees the whole of nature as moving in response to the driving force in all things. Everything in nature, for him, is constantly in a motion and driven by the same force, the will. Because of this, he rejects the assumption that human beings are superior to animals. He argues that though human beings are guided by intellect and animals by instinct, however, the intellect is fashioned by the universal will so that the human intellect is on the same level as the instincts of animals. However, Schopenhauer believes that the will has an overpowering force that pervades everything in nature. It will infect all our thoughts and actions. Nevertheless, we can stand back from it, hold it in abeyance and see things objectively, independently of our transient goals. Then and only then can we be content with the world, having freed ourselves from the restless desire to change it. How then, is it possible for human beings to

escape the overpowering effect of the will? Schopenhauer proposes two ways, a moral and aesthetic perspectives.

From a moral perspective we can deny passions and desire; from an aesthetic standpoint we can contemplate artistic beauty. There is, of course, the question of whether the power of the universal will is so strong that any escape from it can only be temporary. What complicates a person's life and causes pain is the continuous will to live, which expresses itself in the form of endless desires. Desire produces aggressiveness, striving, destruction, and self-centeredness. If there could be some way to reduce the intensity of human desire, a person could achieve at least periodic moments of happiness. To be sure, Schopenhauer always reminds us that "man is at bottom a dreadful wild animal... in no way inferior to the tiger or hyena." Still, we are able from time to time to rise to a level of thought and consciousness that is above the realm of things. Problems arise when we desire things and other people, for these objects of desire stimulate our inner will to live at the level of both hunger and procreation. But when these biological functions are satisfied, there still remains the aim of physical survival against violence and conquest.

Beyond even this level, a person can, Schopenhauer says, understand the difference between the specific individual objects of his desire and certain general or universal objects. That is, we are capable of knowing not only the individuals John and Mary but also universal humanity. This should enable us to move from an intense desire for a person to a sense of sympathy for all humankind. To this extent desire can give way to an ethics of a more disinterested love. At this point we recognize that we all share the same nature, and this awareness can produce an ethics of gentleness. Or, as Schopenhauer says, "My true inner being exists in every living creature as immediately as in my own consciousness. It is this confession that breaks forth as pity, on which every unselfish virtue rests, and whose practical expression is every good deed. It is this conviction to which every appeal to gentleness, love and mercy is directed; for these remind us of the respect in which we are all the same being."

In a similar way aesthetic enjoyment can shift our attention away from those objects that stimulate our aggressive will to live and focus attention instead on objects of contemplation that are unrelated to passion and desire. When we contemplate a work of art, we become a pure knowing subject—as opposed to a willing subject. What we observe in art, whether in painting or even music, is the general or universal element. We see in a painting of a person not some specific

person but a representation of some aspect of humanity that we all share. Here Schopenhauer expresses views very similar to Plato's concept of Forms and shows the strong influence of the philosophy of India. Here, too, Schopenhauer's ethics and aesthetics have a similar function, for they both attempt to raise our consciousness above earthly; passion-filled striving to a level beyond the activity of the will where the supreme act is restful contemplation.

In spite of these attempts through ethics and aesthetics to escape from the restricting and directing power of the universal will, Schopenhauer simply does not succeed in discovering a truly free individual will in human beings. His last word on the subject of human behavior is that "our individual actions are . . . in no way free . . . so that every individual... can absolutely never do anything other than precisely what he does at that particular moment

Self Assessment Exercise 4

1. How is it possible for human beings to escape the overpowering effect of the will, according to Schopenhauer?
2. In what way can aesthetic experience assist us to overcome the will?

4.7 Conclusion

Schopenhauer did not only present the Kantian system in easily digestible Form, but he also made it coincide with the prevailing mood of nineteenth-century Germany, which was one of baffled hope and romantic resignation. By his philosophy of will and renunciation he gave new forms of life (or at any rate new forms of death) to Christian culture. Without Schopenhauer there would have been neither Wagner nor Nietzsche as we know them, and it was Nietzsche's final choice of will against renunciation that brought German romantic philosophy to an end.

4.8 Summary

In this unit, you have learnt that Schopenhauer conceives of material thing as something capable of interacting causally with other material things. Everything in nature, for him, is constantly in motion and driven by the same force, the will. Schopenhauer says that the world and all that exist is nothing but a manifestation of the "Will" and whatever becomes of our conscious as representations of the will.

4.9 References/Further Readings

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4.10 Possible Answers to SAEs

Answers to SAE 1

1. Arthur Schopenhauer was born at Danzig on February 22nd, 1788.
2. He died in September 1860.
3. His works are: *On the Will in Nature* and *The Two Fundamental Problems of Ethics* and *On the Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason*

Answers to SAE 2

1. Space and time are the fundamental forms brought to experience by us. So the material occupants of space and time would not exist if it were not for the subject, and the causal connections which obtain between the states of material things are connections which we, as subjects, impose.
2. The four basic forms of the principle of sufficient reason which corresponds to the four different kinds of ideas comprised in the whole range of human thought are (a) Physical objects (b) Abstract concepts(c) Mathematical objects, and (d) The Self.

Answers to SAE 3

1. Schopenhauer's philosophy of will begins from the well-known paradox of Kant's thing-in-itself.
2. Schopenhauer says that the world and all that exist is nothing but a manifestation of the "Will" and whatever becomes of our conscious as representations of the will. This will, according to him, is a clear guide to the way the world is.

3. Will manifests itself among phenomena in two ways: as individual striving and as Idea.
4. Schopenhauer justifies suicide through his view that it is the mistake of existing as an individual which cause all our suffering in the first place.

Answers to SAE 4

1. Schopenhauer proposes two ways, a moral and aesthetic perspectives, as the means through which we can escape the overpowering actions of the will.
2. Aesthetic enjoyment can shift our attention away from those objects that stimulate our aggressive will to live and focus attention instead on objects of contemplation that are unrelated to passion and desire.

Module 3

Unit 1 Soren Kierkegaard

Unit 2 Karl Marx

Unit 3 Fredrich Nietzsche

Unit 4 John Dewey

Unit 1: Soren Kierkegaard

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1.10 Possible Answers to SAEs

1.1 Introduction

It is generally acknowledged that if existentialism is a “movement” at all, Kierkegaard is its prime mover (Solomon 1). Kierkegaard’s philosophy is a quick diversion from the argument on the possibility of absolute knowledge. Soren Kierkegaard whose philosophy laid the foundation for existentialist school of thoughts could be described as a passionate anti-metaphysician. Describing metaphysics as an abstract discipline, Kierkegaard says that looking for guidance from such a philosophy is synonymous to "travelling in Denmark with the help of a small map of Europe, on which Denmark shows no larger than a steel pen-point" (Kierkegaard, 1941, p.275). Kierkegaard, therefore, turned his attention to a more practical form of philosophy, the form of existence.

1.2 Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

In this unit, you will learn the following:

1. The notion of truth as subjectivity in the philosophy of Kierkegaard.
2. The theme of existentialism in his thought
3. Know the various stages of existence, according to Kierkegaard.

1.3 A Brief Biography of Soren Kierkegaard

Soren Kierkegaard was born on May 5, 1813, in Copenhagen. When he was seventeen, he entered Copenhagen University. Initially, at his father's insistence he majored in theology, but he later changed to philosophy. Although his academic studies influenced his thought, the spirit of his writings arose from four turning points in his life. These were two relationships (with his father and his only female love affair) and two battles (with the press and with the Danish Church). Kierkegaard's father had grown up as a poor peasant but through hard work and good luck became so successful in business that he was able to retire at age forty. He was a deeply religious Protestant, but his life was tortured by a morbid sense of guilt for all his moral failures. The result was that he gave his son a very stern, oppressive religious upbringing. As a university student, Kierkegaard rebelled against the religious pressures of his childhood.

Just before his father's death, Kierkegaard became reconciled to him. The son realized that his father's harsh religious training was actually a loving attempt to spare him from the melancholy and guilt his father had experienced. With this new realization of his father's love, Kierkegaard began to understand God's love and turned back toward Christianity. Finally, Kierkegaard entered into a battle with the Danish State Church. His complaint was that to be a Christian in Denmark was a taken-for-granted, cultural event. In his view, the Church was a comfortable institution that had abandoned authentic Christianity long ago. He satirized the churchgoers of Denmark as bloated geese that met every Sunday to praise the Creator for giving them wings, but who had grown too fat to fly and reviled those that did use their wings. Although he was still battling "Christendom" in the name of Christianity, his health began to fail and he died on November 5, 1855 (Lawhead 433).

Self Assessment Exercise 1

1. When was Kierkegaard born and when did he die?
2. Mention the four turning points in Kierkegaard's life.

1.4 Laying a Foundation for Philosophy of Existence.

Kierkegaard's interest lies not in the properties of the individual, nor in the knowledge of the world that might be derived from them, but in the sheer fact of individual existence, conceived independently of all our attempts to bring it under concepts. Kierkegaard's first and principal target was Hegel. He attacked the idea of 'universal or absolute' spirit, and the associated Hegelian attempt to describe the nature and development of spirit in abstraction, without reference to the individual. It is in the individual, according to Kierkegaard, that the true essence of spirit—its essence as 'subjectivity'—is revealed. He was particularly hostile to the Hegelian philosophy of history, which he rightly saw as inviting both the deification of history and the loss of the sense of individual responsibility towards events. This sense he sometimes describes as 'subjectivity', sometimes as 'existential pathos', and sometimes as 'anxiety'; without it, all freedom, all ethical life, and all hope of religious salvation are cancelled.

Kierkegaard's philosophy begins and ends with the individual. This individual is, very crudely, the Cartesian subject; his predicament is described by Kierkegaard as one of 'subjectivity'. In order to characterize it more completely, Kierkegaard thinks it is necessary to develop a philosophy of existence. But, as he argues, an existential system is impossible, since any system, in abstracting from the individuality of what it describes, must ignore that which is important, namely existence itself. Like almost every philosopher who has located his subject in the unsayable, Kierkegaard goes on to say a great deal about it. He seems to accept at one point, the Hegelian conception of the 'moment of consciousness'. There he argues that the essence of the individual is temporal, but that this existence in time is conditioned by an ineradicable longing for the eternal.

Existence was for Kierkegaard, a category relating to the free individual. In his use of the term, to exist means realizing oneself through free choice between alternatives, through self-commitment. To exist, therefore, means becoming more and more an individual and less and less a mere member of a group. It means, one can say, transcending universality in favour of individuality. Hence Kierkegaard has scant sympathy with what he took to be Hegel's view, that a man realizes his true self or essence in proportion as he transcends his particularity and becomes

a spectator of all time and existence as a moment in the life of universal thought. Hegelianism, in Kierkegaard's opinion, had no place for the existing individual: it could only universalize him in a fantastic manner. And what could not be universalized it dismissed as unimportant, whereas in point of fact it is that which is most important and significant. To merge or sink oneself in the universal, whether this is conceived as the State or as universal thought, is to reject personal responsibility and authentic existence.

Kierkegaard's emphasis on self-commitment through free choice, a self-commitment whereby the individual resolutely chooses one alternative and rejects another, is an aspect of his general tendency to underline antitheses and distinctions rather than to gloss them over. For example, God is not man, and man is not God. And the gulf between them cannot be bridged by dialectical thinking. It can be bridged only by the leap of faith, by a voluntary act by which man relates himself to God and freely appropriates, as it were, his relation as creature to the Creator, as a finite individual to the transcendent Absolute. Kierkegaard argues that Hegel confounds what ought to be distinguished. According to him, Hegel's dialectical mediation between the infinite and the finite, between God and man, leaves us in the end with neither God nor man but only with the pale ghost of hypostatized thought, dignified by the name of absolute Spirit (Coplestone 336).

With this emphasis on the individual, on choice, on self-commitment, Kierkegaard's philosophical thought tends to become a clarification of issues and an appeal to choose, an attempt to get men to see their existential situation and the great alternatives with which they are faced. It is certainly not an attempt to master all reality by thought and to exhibit it as a necessary system of concepts. In his view, speculative systematic philosophy, the greatest example of which was for him absolute idealism, radically misrepresented human existence (Coplestone 336).

Kierkegaard is often described as an anti-metaphysician, for with Kant he did not believe we can have logical, speculative knowledge of reality. Although he always expresses respect for Hegel's great mind, Kierkegaard concludes rather ironically, that Hegel's magnificent metaphysical system was not only intellectually mistaken, but also that it was a comedy of errors. In his disapproval of Hegel's thought, Kierkegaard says that If Hegel had written his whole logic and had written in the preface that it was only a thought-experiment, he undoubtedly would have been the greatest thinker who has ever lived. But for failing to do so, he describes Hegel as merely comic (Kierkegaard 217). Kierkegaard emphasizes that the really important problems, that is, the

problems which are of real importance for man as the existing individual, are not solved by thought or by adopting the absolute standpoint of the speculative philosopher, but by the act of choice, on the level of existence rather than on that of detached, objective reflection.

Self Assessment Exercise 2

1. What constitutes the beginning and ending of Kierkegaard's philosophy?
2. What does existence mean for Kierkegaard?
3. Why is Kierkegaard often referred to as anti-metaphysician?
4. According to Kierkegaard, how are the real problems that is of importance to man solved?

1.5 Spheres of Human Existence

Kierkegaard distinguishes three spheres of existence: the aesthetic, the ethical, and the religious. According to his analysis of human experience, every individual faces the option of choosing between these three fundamental kinds of commitments. Kierkegaard also refers to these spheres as the stages on life's way.

1.5.1 The Aesthetic Stage

According to Kierkegaard, the first stage, the aesthetic stage is characterized by self-dispersal on the level of sense. The aesthetic man is governed by sense, impulse and emotion. But we must not conceive him as being simply and solely the grossly sensual man. The aesthetic stage can also be exemplified, for instance, in the poet who transmutes the world into an imaginative realm and in the romantic. The essential features of the aesthetic consciousness are the absence of fixed universal moral standards and of determinate religious faith and the presence of a desire to enjoy the whole range of emotive and sense experience. True, there can be discrimination. But the principle of discrimination is aesthetic rather than obedience to a universal moral law considered as the dictate of impersonal reason. The aesthetic man strives after infinity, but in the sense of a bad infinity which is nothing else but the absence of all limitations other than those imposed by his own tastes. Open to all emotional and sense experience, sampling the nectar from every flower, he hates all that would limit his field of choice and he never gives definite form to his life. Or, rather, the form of his life is its very formlessness, self-dispersal on the level of sense (Coplestone 342). To the aesthetic man sees his existence as an expression of freedom but in actual sense, they

are simply organism, endowed with emotive and imaginative power and the capacity for sense enjoyment.

1.5.2 The Ethical Stage

The ethical stage is described as a stage where man comes to accept a determinate moral standards and obligations, the voice of universal reason, and thus gives form and consistency to his life. What makes this a new stage different from the first is that the morality of one's choices is even considered at all. In the ethical stage, the world is divided into the dichotomy of good and bad. Lawhead (441), argues that although the decision to live in the ethical sphere is not one based on reason, once a person decides to be moral she can derive ethical principles rationally, just as Kant claimed we could.

Kierkegaard's ethical stage, however, is not simply a theorizing about ethics, this is because a person could play with ethical philosophies the way one might with a coin collection and still live life aesthetically. Instead, achieving the ethical means that one's existence is dominated by ethical concerns. Because existence in the ethical stage is characterized by ethical concerns, Kierkegaard says that this stage has its own heroism. It can produce what Kierkegaard calls the tragic hero. The tragic hero renounces himself in order to express the universal (Kierkegaard 109). This is what Socrates did, and Antigone was prepared to give her life in defense of the unwritten natural law.

1.5.3 The Religious Stage

At the religious stage a person discovers what it means to be a self. This stage is not characterized by the adoption of a set of religious doctrines, but is nothing less than an encounter with the living God. In the aesthetic and ethical spheres, I try to find fulfillment in terms of what I can control. However, in the religious sphere I give up my need to be autonomous and in control and my stance is one of simply being open to what I can't control, which is God's initiative. The sense of self within the ethical sphere is always measured by the standard of other finite persons, which gives one a limited understanding of selfhood. Only when an individual stands before an infinite God does she obtain a true sense of her authentic self (Lawhead 443).

The relationship between God and each individual is a unique and subjective experience. There is no way; prior to the actual relationship, to get any knowledge about it. Any attempt to get

objective knowledge about it is entirely an approximation process. Only an act of faith can assure me of my personal relation to God. As I discover the inadequacy of my existence at the aesthetic and ethical levels, self-fulfillment in God becomes clear to me. Through despair and guilt I am brought to the decisive moment in life when I confront the final either-or of faith (Stumpf and Fieser 345).

Kierkegaard believes that the more conception we have of God, the more we recognize our self and the more self, the more conception of God (Kierkegaard 211). An important factor here is that our individuality is only fully realized with the highest degree of self-honesty and this is possible only when confronted with our individual inadequacy. Kierkegaard sees this as an explanation for why Christianity begins with the doctrine of sin, and therefore with the individual (Kierkegaard 251). When we encounter the living God, we stand naked, free of our socially defined roles and free of our masks. Stripped of every possibility of self-deception, we are able to know our individual self for the first time.

Self Assessment Exercise 3

1. Mention the three spheres of existence.
2. Another name for the spheres of existence, according to Kierkegaard, is _____
3. How does Kierkegaard describe the relationship between God and each individual?
4. Briefly describe the religious sphere of existence

1.6 Truth as Subjectivity

According to Kierkegaard, reason, which produces only abstractions, negates our individual essence. This essence is subjectivity, and subjectivity exists only in the 'leap of faith,' or 'leap into the unknown', whereby the individual casts in his lot with eternity in the only manner that will also guarantee his present being. Kierkegaard sees truth as subjectivity. By this, he meant that for existing, stirring, deciding persons, there is nothing like an available out-there, a pre-fabricated truth. Citing the pragmatism of William James who said that truth is made by an act of the will, Kierkegaard argues that what is out there is an objective uncertainty. He argued that the highest attainable truth for an existing individual is an objective uncertainty held just in the passionate personal experience. For Kierkegaard, therefore, the cultivation of mind is not

important or decisive thing in life. But of more consequence is the development of maturity of personality (Essien 275).

Kierkegaard was a convinced Christian, despite his lifelong reaction against the mingled bleakness and hypocrisy of his native Protestant church. He therefore devoted much of his writing to the somewhat self-defeating task of showing that the Christian faith is precisely the one which best calls forth this existential leap. In his efforts to establish this he came up with the doctrine that 'truth is subjectivity'. The traditional conceptions of truth - either as correspondence with reality or as coherence with the system of true ideas - he regarded as equally empty, not because false, but because tautologous. Truth, like everything else, ceased to be empty only when related to the subject. And 'for a subjective reflection the truth becomes a matter of appropriation, of inwardness, of subjectivity, and thought must probe more and more deeply into the subject and his subjectivity.'

However, as a literary idea, and as an invitation to exalt the individual to a position of eminence that he had never achieved before, Kierkegaard's notion of truth is fairly comprehensible. But as a philosophical theory it has the obvious weakness that the distinction between appearance and reality disappears. For truth, the concept in terms of which that distinction has ultimately to be made, has been absorbed into the realm of appearance, resulting in the following obscure definition: truth is 'an objective uncertainty held fast in an appropriation-process of the most passionate inwardness,' hence 'the mode of apprehension of the truth is precisely the truth.' We could put this more simply by saying that there is, for Kierkegaard, no longer any distinction between subject and object. The leap into subjectivity and the leap of faith are ultimately one and the same, and while Kierkegaard supposes that the individual finds him/herself, at the end of this vertiginous process, emerging into the full reality of the 'ethical life', certain of his/her own eternity, and yet living in time with true 'existential pathos,' it is difficult to see how he/she is supposed to achieve this. The best that we can do, in our state of subjectivity, is to believe that the world is larger than ourselves.

Self Assessment Exercise 4

1. According to Kierkegaard, where does subjectivity exist?
2. In Kierkegaard's view of the world, what is out there?
3. What is his doctrine of truth?

1.7 Conclusion

Kierkegaard's philosophy adopts a new approach from other philosophers before him. He simply refuses to take over traditional problems or the problems most discussed in contemporary philosophical circles but instead made a radical attempt to solve them in a purely objective and disinterested spirit. However, his problems arise out of his own ideas, in the sense in the development of his ideas, he encounters a form of alternatives presented for his own personal choice, a choice involving a radical self-commitment. His philosophy is a lived philosophy. However, one criticism against Kierkegaard's philosophy is its lack of universalization as he constantly advocates subjectivity. As argued by Coplestone (337), universalization of thought is important in philosophy because without it, there would only be autobiography. At the same time it is abundantly clear that it is the actor who speaks rather than the spectator. In fact, it has been argued further that this feature of his philosophy constitutes a weakness because it makes his thought appear too subjective, too hostile to objectivity. In fact, some would refuse it the name of philosophy at all.

But despite the objections, the intensely personal character of Kierkegaard's thought constitutes its strength. For it gives to his writing a degree of seriousness and depth which sets it entirely outside the concept of philosophy as a game or as an academic pastime for those who have the requisite aptitude and inclination. Conclusively, Kierkegaard gave existentialism its framework as he was the first to address all the basic tenets of existentialism. Kierkegaard has been a unique figure in the sense that he has been thought to play a role in so many different academic fields. Given his ideas about the different modes of existence, it is perhaps not surprising that readers continue to return to him for insight in the areas of philosophy, theology, literature, the social sciences, and social-political thought. However, the complexity does not end here, since there are also a number of different methodological approaches to interpreting his ideas in these different fields. These approaches are not in any strict way tied to a specific field and thus can be applied equally to all of them.

1.8 Summary

In this unit, you have learnt that Kierkegaard questions the relevance of the various systems of knowledge to human existence. He made human existence the centre piece of his philosophy. Kierkegaard identifies three stages of existence. For him, there is no objective truth, the world is

only characterized by subjectivity. According, Kierkegaard laid the foundation to the philosophy of human existence by making an individual the starting point of his philosophy.

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1.10 Possible Answers to SAEs

Answers to SAE 1

1. Soren Kierkegaard was born on May 5, 1813 and he died on November 5, 1855
2. The four relationships that marked a turning point in Kierkegaard's life were two relationships with his father and his only female love affair, and two battles with the press and with the Danish Church.

Answers to SAE 2

1. Kierkegaard's philosophy begins and ends with the individual.
2. Existence was for Kierkegaard, a category relating to the free individual. In his use of the term, to exist means realizing oneself through free choice between alternatives, through self-commitment. To exist, therefore, means becoming more and more an individual and less and less a mere member of a group.

3. Kierkegaard is often described as an anti-metaphysician, because like Kant, he did not believe we can have logical, speculative knowledge of reality.
4. Kierkegaard emphasizes that the really important problems, that is, the problems which are of real importance for man as the existing individual, are not solved by thought or by adopting the absolute standpoint of the speculative philosopher, but by the act of choice, on the level of existence rather than on that of detached, objective reflection.

Answers to SAE 3

1. The three spheres of existence are the aesthetic, the ethical, and the religious.
2. Stages on life's way
3. Kierkegaard describes the relationship between God and each individual as a unique and subjective experience.
4. At the religious stage a person discovers what it means to be a self. This stage is not characterized by the adoption of a set of religious doctrines, but is nothing less than an encounter with the living God.

Answers to SAE 4

1. According to Kierkegaard, subjectivity exists only in the 'leap of faith,' or 'leap into the unknown', whereby the individual casts in his lot with eternity in the only manner that will also guarantee his present being.
2. Kierkegaard argues that what is out there is an objective uncertainty.
3. Kierkegaard's doctrine of truth is that truth is subjective.

Unit 2: Karl Marx

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2.1 Introduction

Marxism provided the official philosophical point of view for at least one-third of the world's population in the second half of the twentieth century. When we consider that Marx spent a considerable portion of his adult life in relative obscurity, it is all the more remarkable that his views should have achieved such immense influence for several generations. People debate the credibility of Marx's theories, but no one disputes their influence. It is not possible to conceive of a philosopher in history who can claim to have had an international, organized, and activist following of such proportion as Marx. In this unit, we shall discuss his philosophy.

2.2 Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

In this unit, you will learn the following:

1. How a civil society grows as a result of material conflict.

2. Understand Marx's historical and dialectical materialism.
3. Apply Marx's dialectical materialism to the dynamics of change in the society.
4. Differentiate between forces of production and relations of production.
5. Explain the concept of alienation in Marx's philosophy.

2.3 A Brief Biography of Karl Marx

Karl Marx was born in 1818. When Hegel died he was thus just in his early teens. Still, the influence of Hegel was still dominant at German universities, particularly at the university of Berlin where Hegel had taught and Marx concluded his studies; after receiving his doctorate, not from the university of Berlin, where one found his views too controversial, but from the more liberal university at Jena, for a dissertation on “The Difference Between the Democritean and Epicurean Philosophy of Nature,” he ended up writing for a radical newspaper in Cologne. In 1843 he married and moved to Paris, where revolution was in the air. It was here that here he met his life-long collaborator, Friedrich Engels, who co-authored the Communist Manifesto.

In Paris, too, Marx wrote for a radical newspaper that in 1845, was closed by the French authorities, under pressure from the Prussian king. Marx had to leave Paris. Some restless years followed, that brought him to Brussels, then back to Cologne, where he was tried for treason and acquitted, then briefly again to Paris and finally to London, where he settled in 1849 and died in 1883.

Self Assessment Exercise 1

1. Who was Marx life-long collaborator?
2. Which year was Marx born?
3. Which year did he die?

2.4 Historical/Dialectical Materialism

The basis of Karl Marx's philosophy is the thesis that the prevailing mode of economic production and exchange determines the political and intellectual history of society. According to Marx, the mode of production of material life conditions the social, political, and intellectual life-process in general. It is not the consciousness of human beings that determines their being; on the

contrary it is their social being that determines their consciousness' (Marx, p. x). There were two elements that determined the course of history: the forces and the relations of production.

By the forces of production Marx meant the raw materials, the technology, and the labour that are necessary to make a finished product; as wheat, a mill, and a millworker are all needed to produce flour. The relations of production, on the other hand, are the economic arrangements governing these forces, such as the ownership of the mill and the hiring of the worker. Relations of production are not static; they alter as technology develops. In the age of the hand-mill, for instance, the worker is the serf of a feudal lord, tied to the land; in the age of the steam-mill he is the mobile employee of the capitalist. Relations of production are not matters of free choice; they are determined by the interplay of the productive forces. If, at any time, they become inappropriate to the productive forces, then a social revolution takes place (Kenny 281).

In his theory of historical/dialectical materialism, Marx says that the history of the society is the history of class struggle. He distinguished five such phases or epochs: (1) primitive communal, (2) slave, (3) feudal, (4) capitalist, and, as a prediction of things to come, (5) socialist and communist (Stumpf and Fieser, 350). Marx believed that in the earliest stages of history, human beings had been organized into primitive communist tribes, holding land in common, owning no private property, and ruled by a matriarchy. In the Iron Age, however, society became patriarchal, it became possible to accumulate private wealth, and slavery was introduced. Slavery was the dominant economic feature of classical antiquity. Society was to be divided into classes: patrician and plebeian, freemen and slaves. Thus, there began the story of class antagonism which was, henceforth, to be the fundamental feature of human history. The splendour of the classical culture of Greece and Rome was merely an ideological superstructure built upon the relations of production between the classes. The ancient world gave way to the feudal system, with its relationships between lord and serf, and between guildsmen and journeymen. Once again, the philosophy and religion of the Middle Ages were an ideological superstructure sustained by the economic system of the age. From the serfs of the Middle Ages sprang the chartered burghers of the earliest towns: these were the first bourgeois, a middle class between the servile labourers and the aristocratic landowners. Since the time of the French Revolution the bourgeoisie had been gaining the upper hand over the aristocrats (Kenny 281).

The modern bourgeois society that has sprouted from the ruins of feudal society has not done away with class antagonisms. It has but established new classes, new conditions of oppression, new forms of struggle in place of the old ones. The next epoch, the epoch of capitalism, possesses, however, this distinctive feature: it has simplified the class antagonisms. Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other; Bourgeoisie and Proletariat. (Marx 3). Marx believed that the capitalist society in which he lived had reached a state of crisis. The opposition between bourgeoisie and proletariat would become steadily stronger and lead to a revolutionary change which would usher in the final stages, first of socialism, in which all property would pass to the state, and finally to communism, after the state had withered away. The crisis which capitalism had reached, Marx maintained, was not a contingent fact of history; it was something entailed by the nature of capitalism itself.

Self Assessment Exercise 2

1. What is the basis of Karl Marx's philosophy?
2. What does Marx mean by the forces of production and relations of production?
3. How does Marx describes the history of the society?
4. Enumerate the different phases that the society has undergone, according to Marx.
5. The capitalist system has divided the society into two classes namely, the _____ and _____

2.5 Marx's Criticism of Capitalism

Marx's chief criticisms of capitalism revolve around his theory of surplus labor. He begins with what is known as the "labor theory of value," which was held by many of the economists of his day. This theory states that the value of any commodity is a function of the amount of labor that it took to produce it. In capitalism the worker's labor is a commodity, so the value of that labor is determined by its cost. What it takes to produce a worker's labor is what it takes to sustain him. Giving what he thinks is the most charitable account of capitalism, Marx assumes the product will be sold for its just price. However, this alone would leave the capitalist without any profit. So the capitalist must find some way to work profit into this scenario. He does so by forcing the worker to labor more hours than is necessary for his own survival.

Marx theorizes that the worker's day can be divided into two parts. First, there are the hours that he spends producing products whose total value are equivalent to his wages (wages that are

equal to what it takes to sustain the worker). The second part of the workday consists of the hours he spends producing commodities whose value is expropriated by the capitalist. Thus the capitalist makes a profit on this “surplus value.” For these reasons, Marx describes the capitalist as having a “vampire thirst for the living blood of labour” (Marx 367).

2.6 On the Emergence of Communism

After capitalism has become yet one more obsolete system to join the junk pile of dialectical history, there will be a stage of transition that Marx calls “the dictatorship of the proletariat.” This will be a necessarily grim time when the proletariat will use their political power to clean out the last remnants of capitalism. Next will come the first stage of communism, the stage now known as “socialism.” Here the state takes over the means of production. However, this will eventually give way to the final stage of ultimate communism. At this stage, the people will control not only political decisions but also the economic life of the country (Lawhead 427).

Marx says that thus far, history has been moved forward by a continual succession of class conflicts. In each era, it has been the same ball game, only the teams have been changed. Under communism, Marx says, the nature of the game will have changed altogether. With no more private ownership of the means of production, society will no longer have the tensions and contradictions produced by class divisions. Without class conflict, history will change from a vicious competitive game to one of mutual cooperation, where there will no longer be winners and losers. Hence, the dialectical struggles of history will come to rest, for the driving force of history, the struggle to achieve a rational society, will have achieved its goal (Lawhead 427).

Self Assessment Exercise 3

1. What moves history forward, according to Karl Marx?
2. What is the function of class conflict in shaping history?
3. What do you understand by the term, dictatorship of the proletariat?

2.7 The Dialectics of Marx

As earlier stated, Marx's philosophy believes that history is shaped by conflicts between the relations of production and the forces of production. To convert the study of history into a science, therefore, Marx needed a general law that would enable him to explain past events and predict

future ones. Hegel's notion that history follows a dialectical development provided Marx with the solution he needed. Even though he sharply criticizes Hegel's idealism, Marx learned from Feuerbach that Hegel could be salvaged. Hegel's only problem was that he had turned things upside down with his mystical view that the world is the external unfolding of a rational, spiritual Idea. Instead, the opposite is true, Marx says, for the ideal world is nothing more than the material world as reflected in human consciousness.

According to the dialectical view of history, an internal logic to events guides their development. Marx saw that if one purged Hegel's dialectic of its spiritual fluff and replaced Hegel's struggle and opposition of ideas with the conflict of classes, Hegel's model could be taken over. In the Marxist dialectic, an initial state of affairs (called the thesis) develops to a point where it produces its own contradiction (the antithesis). The two remain in tension until another state of affairs supersedes them (the synthesis). In each round of the dialectic, the deficiencies of one stage bring forth opposing forces to balance out what is lacking. Thus, conflict and struggle are an inevitable part of history (Lawhead 419).

Marx was convinced that the dialectic process inevitably involves tragic conflicts. He saw in history the deep tension between forces that are incompatible, each exerting its power to overcome the other. The use of revolutionary force could hardly be avoided, but force could not bring into being simply any desired utopian system. Only the relations of production toward which the inner logic of the material order was driving in a determined way could be the objective of revolution. Even when a society is aware of its ultimate direction, this society can neither clear by bold leaps, nor remove by legal enactments, the obstacles offered by the successive phases of its normal development" (Stumpf and Fieser 358).

Self Assessment Exercise 4

1. Describe, in few words, the Marxist dialectic.
2. For Marx, the force of dialectical antagonism is purely _____
3. The tripartite nature of Marx's dialectics take the form of _____, _____ and _____

2.8 The Theory of Alienation

The Marxist theory of alienation can only be understood if we also add to it a second Kantian idea, one with which we are already familiar. According to one formulation of the Kantian

categorical imperative, a rational being is constrained to treat all others of his kind as ends and never as means only. We have seen, in Hegel, the attempt to found this imperative in an analysis of lordship and bondage as necessary ‘moments’ in the self-consciousness of a rational being. To the extent that a man treats another as a means, so does he become a means to himself. In exploiting the other he exploits himself, losing his freedom in a form of subservience all the greater for his inability to recognize it as such. It is this theory that lends support to Marx’s contention that alienation, being a form of isolation from social life, is experienced as alienation from self.

We might put the developed forms of the two original ideas thus:

1. A man is an object for himself to the extent that he invests objects with human powers, and so ceases to see those powers as having their origin in himself.
- 2 A man becomes an object for himself to the extent that others are objects for him (where X is an object for Y = X is only a means for Y).

The combination of 1 and 2 is the state of self-alienation. The true realization of oneself as subject requires and is required by two things: first, the recognition of others as ends, and secondly the rediscovery through social life of one’s actual human potential. But any lapse into self-alienation must also precipitate an alienation from species-life, and vice versa.

The difficult philosophical claim, never properly established by Marx, and in itself contentious, is that this state of alienation is directly connected with the institution of property. Marx hoped to make the connection in the following way. Under the rule of private property, objects become the focus of individual rights, and thus take on the character of human life. There is a sense in which, through the institution of property, we endow objects with a soul. Since the only origin of this soul must be in us, it follows that there is an element of systematic ‘fetishism’ in the process. This fetishism develops as property develops from use-value (which is intelligibly related to human need) to exchange-value, in which the commodity begins to acquire life and autonomy of its own. With the arrival of pure exchange-value in the form of money, the transformation of objects into fetishes is complete; and with this transformation - effected only under the rule of the free market, which is itself the consummation of property relations—we have the establishment of capitalism. Under capitalism it is not only objects, but also men, who are bought and sold. And in this buying and selling, under the regime of which one party has nothing

to dispose of but his labour power, we reach the ultimate point in the treatment of men as means. Men have become objects for each other, and whatever remnants of their human (social) life remain will be dissipated, being projected outwards onto the world of commodities.

The major problem that Marx discovered in a capitalist system concerns the alienation of human labour. The term, alienation, simply refers to separation. It is a state of being separated from one's true self. What concrete conditions make us fulfilled human beings? Marx says we differ from animals because we produce the means of our subsistence. Not only do humans engage in work to fulfill their needs, they do so in conscious, creative ways. The bee constructs a honeycomb by blind instinct, but the architect conceives her creation in the imagination before building it. Furthermore, our creativity goes beyond merely meeting our immediate, physical needs. The human species "forms things in accordance with the laws of beauty" (EPM, T 76). In other words, to be human is to engage in productive work and, by doing so, experiencing the fulfillment that comes from free, spontaneous, and creative activity.

Although Marx was by no means the first to develop a theory of alienation, his views were unique because they were based on his particular economic and philosophical assumptions, which formed the basis of his criticism of capitalism. For Marx there is something crucial within our human nature from which we can be alienated, namely; our work. Marx describes four aspects of alienation. We are alienated (1) from nature, (2) from ourselves, (3) from our species-being, and (4) from other people (Stumpf and Fieser 356).

According to him, our relation to the product of our labour was quite intimate. We took things from the material world, shaped them, and made them our own. Capitalism, though, breaks this relationship by forcing us to forfeit the products of our labour in exchange for money. In the productive process our labor becomes as much an object as the physical material that is worked upon, since labor is now bought and sold. The more objects we produce, the fewer we can personally possess and therefore the greater is our loss. To the extent that we are embodied in our labour, we become alienated from the natural world in which we work. As Marx sees it, the worker puts his life into the object, and his life then belongs no longer to himself but to the object. The object is appropriated and owned by someone else. In this way the original relation between people and nature is destroyed.

Next, we are alienated from ourselves by participating in capitalist labour. This comes about because work is external to us and not part of our nature. Work is not voluntary but is imposed upon us. We have a feeling of misery instead of well-being. Rather than fulfilling ourselves, we must deny ourselves. We do not freely develop our physical and mental capacities but are instead physically exhausted and mentally debased. As a consequence, we feel like human beings only during our leisure hours. Most important of all, we are alienated from our work because it is not our own work but rather work for someone else. In this sense, as workers, we do not belong to ourselves but to someone else, and we have more or less become prostitutes. The result is that a worker feels himself to be freely active only in his animal functions—eating, drinking and procreating— at most also in his dwelling and personal adornment—while in his human functions he is reduced to an animal. Although eating, drinking and procreating are genuine human functions, even these become animal functions when separated from our other human functions.

At still another level, we are alienated from our species-being, that is, from our truly human nature. The character of any species resides in the type of activity it expresses. The species-character of human beings is "free, conscious activity."inner logic of the material order was driving in a determined way could be the objective of revolution. Even when a society is aware of its ultimate direction, this society can neither clear by bold leaps, nor remove by legal enactments, the obstacles offered by the successive phases of its normal development. By contrast, an animal cannot distinguish itself from its activity; the animal is its activity. But, Marx says, a person makes his life activity itself an This leads to our alienation from other people. The breakdown in our relations to other people is similar to our alienation from the objects of our labour. In an environment of alienated labour, we look upon other people from the point of view of workers. We see other workers as objects whose labour is bought and sold, and not as full members of the human species. To say, then, that our species-being species' nature is alienated or estranged from ourselves means that we are estranged from other people.

Marx asks, "If the product of labour is alien to me, to whom does it belong? According to him, in an earlier age, when temples were built in Egypt and India, people thought that the product belonged to the gods. But, Marx says, the alienated product of labor can belong only to some human being. If it does not belong to the worker, it must belong to a person other than the worker. Thus, as a result of alienated labor, workers produce a new relationship between themselves and

another person, and this other person is the capitalist. The final product of alienated labor is private property. Private property, in the form of capitalist business, is both a product of alienated labor and the means by which labor is alienated. In the wage system entailed by private property; labor finds itself not as an end but as the servant of wages. Nor would a forced increase in wages restore to either the workers or to their work their human significance or value. As a statement of eventual liberation, Marx concludes that the freeing of society from private property involves the emancipation of the workers, which in turn will lead to the emancipation of humanity as a whole (Stumpf and Fieser 357).

Self Assessment Exercise 5

1. What do you understand by the term, alienation?
2. Identify four aspects of alienation, according to Marx.

2.9 Philosophy of History

In the later development of his thought, Marx made a sharp deviation from Hegel's heritage. Part of the reason for this shift of emphasis was the important insight that Marx was able to obtain into the theory of history, once he had replaced the Hegelian representation of its movement by a theory that was more scientifically inspired. This new theory of history, in a version due partly to Friedrich Engels, has been called 'dialectical materialism.' It is unclear whether the word 'dialectical' is correctly used to describe it: for this seems to imply that Marx, like Hegel, believed that history proceeds by the successive resolution of 'contradictions.'

Hegel had seen history as the development of consciousness. Marx argued that the fundamental things that develop, and so bring about the movement of history, are not features of consciousness at all, but 'material' forces. The development of consciousness is to be explained in terms of the material reality, and does not explain it. Thus, in the famous phrase of Engels (Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy) quoted above, Marx's theory of history 'sets Hegel on his feet'. Moreover, the theory was held to validate, as a prediction, the original view that capitalism would be superseded by a more humane social arrangement. Having faith in this prediction, it seemed less important to Marx to provide a description of man's unhappiness. For it is redundant to give reasons for bringing about what is inevitable.

The theory of history begins from the distinction between ‘base’ and ‘superstructure’. Marxist philosophers who have wished to hold on to the Hegelian antecedents of the theory (for example, George Lukács and certain philosophers of ‘Frankfurt School’) have criticized or underplayed this distinction, believing that a truly philosophical Marxism must find itself, like the theory of alienation, in an understanding of human consciousness. The purpose of Marx’s distinction, on the other hand, was to show human consciousness as an offshoot of a deeper social and economic reality. Consciousness is something to be explained, in terms that may not be recognizable to the conscious being himself. One may say that, in moving to the scientific theory of history, Marx also takes a step from the first-person to the third-person point of view, a step which inevitably takes him away from the standpoint of the agent, towards that of the observer.

The base of all human institutions is that upon which the forms of consciousness are built, and in terms of which institutions (and the consciousness which derives from them) are to be explained. This base consists, for Marx, in two parts: first, a system of economic relations, secondly, certain active ‘productive forces’. The existence of any particular system of economic relations is explained in terms of the level of development of the productive forces. These forces consist of labour power, and accumulated knowledge. As man’s mastery over nature increases, the productive forces will inevitably develop. At each level of development a particular system of economic relations will be most suited to contain and facilitate their operation. Hence we can explain, rather in the manner of Darwin (with whose theory of evolution early Marxists compared the theory of Marx), the existence of any given economic system in terms of its suitability to the productive forces which, were they at a different stage of development, would either not require, or else actively destroy it.

Upon the system of economic relations rises the superstructure of legal and political institutions. These serve to consolidate and protect the economic base, and are therefore similarly explicable in terms of their sustaining and protective function. Finally, the political institutions generate their own peculiar ‘ideology’. This is the system of beliefs, perceptions, values and prejudices, which together consolidate the entire structure, and serve both to conceal the changeability, and to dignify the actuality, of each particular arrangement.

Self Assessment Exercise 6

1. Marxist theory of history starts from the distinction between _____ and _____

2. The base structure, according to Marx, consists of two parts. Name these parts.
3. According to Marx, the superstructure of legal and political institutions are influenced by

2.10 Conclusion

In this unit, we have discussed the key elements of Marx's philosophy. We have seen how he changed the idealism in Hegel to come up with economic materialism as the force of progress in the society. Marx's philosophy recognized as the basis of all political thought the intuition that man is both object and subject for himself. From this intuition came the doctrine of 'praxis', according to which theory and practice must be one.

2.11 Summary

In this unit, you have learnt that Marx sees economy as what drives changes in the society. Whenever there is a class division, a new society is formed. Capitalist system leads to alienation of human beings. Marx maintains that oppression will end the moment the society attain the stage of communism.

2.12 References/Further Readings

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2.13 Possible Answers to SAEs

Answers to SAE 1

1. Friedrich Engels
2. He was born in 1818
3. He died in 1883

Answers to SAE 2

1. The basis of Karl Marx's philosophy is the thesis that the prevailing mode of economic production and exchange determines the political and intellectual history of society.
2. By the forces of production Marx meant the raw materials, the technology, and the labour that are necessary to make a finished product; as wheat, a mill, and a millworker are all needed to produce flour. The relations of production, on the other hand, are the economic arrangements governing these forces, such as the ownership of the mill and the hiring of the worker.
3. Marx says that the history of the society is the history of class struggle.
4. (1) primitive communal, (2) slave, (3) feudal, (4) capitalist, and, as a prediction of things to come, (5) socialist and communist.
5. Bourgeoisie and Proletariat.

Answers to SAE 3

1. Marx says that history has been moved forward by a continual succession of class conflicts.
2. Without class conflict, history will change from a vicious competitive game to one of mutual cooperation, where there will no longer be winners and losers.
3. This is a necessarily grim time when the proletariat will use their political power to clean out the last remnants of capitalism.

Answers to SAE 4

1. In the Marxist dialectic, an initial state of affairs (called the thesis) develops to a point where it produces its own contradiction (the antithesis). The two remain in tension until another state of affairs supersedes them (the synthesis). In each round of the dialectic, the deficiencies of one stage bring forth opposing forces to balance out what is lacking. Thus, conflict and struggle are an inevitable part of history.
2. Materialistic.
3. Thesis, antithesis and synthesis

Answers to SAE 5

1. The term, alienation , simply refers to separation. It is a state of being separated from one's true self.
2. We are alienated (1) from nature, (2) from ourselves, (3) from our species-being, and (4) from other people

Answers to SAE 6

1. Base' and 'superstructure.
2. A system of economic relations and an active productive forces.
3. The system of economic relations.

Unit 3: Fredrich Nietzsche

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- 3.2 Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)
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- 3.4 A Critique of Greek Culture
- 3.3 The Two Types of Morality
- 3.5 The Will to Power
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- 3.7 The Nature of Knowledge and Truth
- 3.8 The Dead of God
- 3.9 Conclusion
- 3.10 Summary
- 3.11 References/Further Readings

3.12 Possible Answers to SAEs

3.1 Introduction

Friedrich Nietzsche is considered as one of the most controversial thinkers in the history of Western philosophy. His powerful and provocative ideas have had a widespread impact upon twentieth century culture. This pervasive influence can be explained in part by the powerful and provocative nature of his writings, but perhaps even more so because of the sense in which his thought seemed to have anticipated the twentieth century. In a time when European culture was still confident of achieving its Enlightenment ideal of the progress of human society, progress towards unlocking the secrets of nature and progress towards founding society upon universal foundation of reason, Nietzsche's writings anticipated a cataclysmic crisis. As the confidence of European culture was shattered in the cataclysms of two world wars and the atomic age which seemed to place the future of human civilization in question, Nietzsche's vision seems to have been prophetic.

3.2 Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

At the end of this unit, you will learn the following:

1. Nietzsche's idea of truth as perspective.
2. The two types of morality in Nietzsche's philosophy.
3. The concept of the Will to Power
4. The concept of the Superman.
5. Nietzsche's announcement of the the dead of God

3.3 A Brief Biography of Fredrich Nietzsche

Friedrich Nietzsche was born in 1844 in Prussian Saxony. His father and both his grandfathers were Lutheran ministers. However, his father died when Nietzsche was four, leaving him to be brought up by his sister, mother, grandmother, and two aunts. He was a brilliant student and distinguished himself at the universities of Bonn and Leipzig, where he studied classics and philology. Nietzsche was religiously devout in his younger years (we even have a number of examples of his devotional poetry). However, he gradually drifted away from his earlier piety and

by the time he reached his early twenties he had embraced the spirited atheism that was one of the most distinguishing features of his philosophy.

At the early age of twenty-five, he was appointed professor of classical philology at the University of Basel. He had not yet completed his doctoral degree, but had already attracted the attention of scholars through his published papers. In 1879, tired of academic life and suffering from the ill health that plagued him the rest of his life, he retired from teaching. Struggling with migraine headaches, nausea, insomnia, and bad eyesight, he traveled from one resort to another throughout Switzerland and Italy in an attempt to regain his health. Despite these problems, he wrote eighteen books and a lengthy unfinished manuscript during the years 1872 to 1888.

His final years were a time of deep loneliness. Eventually, both his physical and mental health deteriorated from what appeared to be a neurological disorder. In January 1889, he collapsed in the street while protecting a horse being beaten by its owner. For the remaining twelve years of his life, he was physically disabled and pathetically insane. After an unsuccessful treatment in a clinic, he was taken home to be cared for by his mother and later by his sister. By now, his writings were receiving a great deal of attention, but he was not lucid enough to enjoy his fame. Nietzsche spent his life forecasting the future cultural crises just over the horizon at a time when most in his century were oblivious to what lay ahead. Appropriately, as the twentieth century was coming into place, Nietzsche handed the torch over to his cultural offspring and died on August 25, 1900.

Self Assessment Exercise 1

1. How would you describe the final years of Nietzsche?
2. According to this section, what was Nietzsche's life-time task?

3.4 A Critique of Greek Culture

Nietzsche's view involves a critique of 19th century culture. He said Europe is sick and cannot be healed by prosperity or technology. He claims that culture has no unity of outlook and it is too eclectic. In his work, *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche says that the Greeks knew very well that life is terrible, inexplicable, dangerous. But though they were alive to the real character of the world and of human life, they did not surrender to pessimism by turning their backs on life. What they did was to transmute the world and human life through the medium of art. And they were then able to say 'yes' to the world as an aesthetic phenomenon. There were, however, two ways of

doing this, corresponding respectively to the Dionysian and Apollonian attitudes or mentalities. Dionysus is for Nietzsche the symbol of the stream of life itself, breaking down all barriers and ignoring all restraints .. In the Dionysian or Bacchic rites we can see the intoxicated votaries becoming, as it were, one with life.

Nietzsche's philosophy begins, like Kierkegaard's, in the individual; but unlike his predecessor, Nietzsche remained profoundly skeptical that anything significant remained to the individual when the veil of appearance had been torn away. He accepted the doctrine that all description, being conceptual, abstracts from the individuality of what it describes. Moreover, he regarded the description and classification of the individual as peculiarly pernicious, in that it attributed to each individual only that 'common nature' which it was his duty to 'overcome'. Nietzsche tried to avoid the paradoxes involved in this stance by adopting a skepticism towards all forms of objective knowledge. He repeated Hume's arguments concerning causality, and Kant's rejection of the thing-in-itself. (The thing-in-itself is a fabrication of that vulgar common sense with which every true philosopher must be at war.) Nietzsche sought for a 'life-affirming skepticism' which would transcend all the doctrines that stemmed from the 'herd instinct', and so allow the individual to emerge as master, and not as slave, of the experience to which he is condemned.

Self Assessment Exercise 2

1. How did Nietzsche describe the Europe of his time?
2. What is the central focus of Nietzsche's philosophy?
3. According to this section, what was Nietzsche skeptical about?

3.5 The Two Types of Morality

In *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886) Nietzsche argued that there are no moral facts, only different ways of representing the world. Nevertheless one can represent the world in, ways that express and enhance one's strength, just as one can represent it under the aspect of an inner weakness. Clearly it is appropriate for a person to engage in the first of these activities, rather than the second. Only then will he be in command of his experience and so fulfilled by it. This thought led Nietzsche to expound again the Aristotelian philosophy of virtue, or excellence, but in a peculiarly modern form. Like Aristotle, Nietzsche found the aim of life in 'flourishing'; excellence

resides in the qualities that contribute to that aim. Nietzsche's style is of course very different from Aristotle's, being poetic and exhortatory (as in the famous pastiche of Old Testament prophecy entitled *Thus Spake Zarathustra* (1892)). But there are arguments concealed within his rhetoric, and they are so Aristotelian as to demand restatement as such.

First, Nietzsche rejects the distinction between 'good' and 'evil' as encapsulating a theological morality inappropriate to an age without religious belief. The word 'good' has a clear sense when contrasted with 'bad', where the good and the bad are the good and bad specimens of humanity. It lacks a clear sense, however, when contrasted with the term 'evil'. The good specimen is the one whose power is maintained, and who therefore flourishes. The capacity to flourish resides not in the 'good will' of Kant (whom Nietzsche described as a 'catastrophic spider') nor in the universal aim of the utilitarians. ('As for happiness, only the Englishman wants that.') It is to be found in those dispositions of character which permit the exercise of will: dispositions like courage, pride and firmness. Such dispositions, which have their place, too, among the Aristotelian virtues, constitute self-mastery. They also permit the mastery of others, and prevent the great 'badness' of self-abasement. One does not arrive at these dispositions by killing the passions—on the contrary the passions enter into the virtuous character in a constitutive way. The Nietzschean man is able to 'will his own desire as a law unto himself.

Nietzsche rejected the notion that there is a universal and absolute system of morality that everyone must equally obey. According to Nietzsche, all morality is a manifestation of the will to power. However, it exhibits itself through two kinds of temperaments. One is driven by the will to power and revels in it, the other is driven by the will to power but attempts to deny this. Christianity is the supreme example of the latter, dishonest approach. The two main types of morality are what he calls "master morality" and "slave morality." Historically, they developed out of literal master-slave relationships (the Egyptians versus the Jews, or the Romans versus the early Christians, for example). Despite their historical origins, however, the terms "master" and "slave" actually represent two ideal types of personalities. For example, even though the proper, nineteenth-century European socialites were anything but literal slaves, Nietzsche viewed them as living examples of slave morality.

The term "master morality" refers to the values of psychologically powerful and strong-willed people. Nietzsche identifies these people as the higher, more noble, aristocratic, or elite

segment of humanity. These adjectives do not refer to their actual social status, but to their abilities as creative achievers, whether their accomplishments are in art, politics, philosophy, or war. The noble types are characterized by a spontaneous overflowing of power. They are moral legislators or commanders in the sense that they determine their own values and are never at the mercy of the approval of others. Instead of resting comfortably on social convention, authority, metaphysical principles, or revelation, the only sanction they need for their values is the confidence to say, "My judgment is my judgment" (Nietzsche 43).

For such people "good" refers to whatever leads to self-fulfillment and affirms one's sense of personal power. Thus, what they pronounce "good" are such values as nobility, strength, courage, power, and pride. In contrast, the notion of "bad" is defined relative to their good. They have no notion of "sin" (for this assumes something higher to which they are subject). Instead, "bad" designates what is contemptible, common, banal, pathetic, cowardly, timid, petty, and humble. In short, it is anything that restricts growth or accomplishment, and everything born of weakness. The antithesis of master morality is slave morality. It is the morality that appeals to those who are downtrodden, uncertain of themselves, and weak-willed. Lacking the power to be creatively assertive, they have no values of their own. Their values arise out of a fearful, resentful reaction to the values of the strong. Since the weak lack the psychological resources of the noble person, they turn the tables and make the latter's strengths into vices. In turn, they define "good" as what makes life easier, safer, and justifies the existence of the weak. Thus, such qualities as patience, humility, pity, charity, abstinence, modesty, compassion, resignation, and submissiveness are considered virtuous. Slave morality is a "sour grapes" morality, a way of getting even. In an aphorism, Nietzsche sums up the hidden motive behind most traditional morality as "I don't like him." - Why? - "I am not equal to him"(Nietzsche 185).

Behind the gentle facade of slave morality really lies a desire for power. For example, these types comfort themselves with the notion "the meek shall inherit the earth." We could imagine Nietzsche replying, "Maybe so, but they will not be creative artists, leaders, philosophers, or even great lovers." Moral values are neither true nor false; we can classify them according to whether they diminish our humanity or enhance it. Despite their mediocrity, however, Nietzsche says that the slaves have the strength of numbers and through this they have been able to dominate the culture, leaving the master morality to be lived out by isolated individuals and social outcasts. For

example, slave morality took root among oppressed people such as the ancient Jews and early Christians. Motivated by resentment, they made their weakness a virtue and viewed anyone who was powerful as evil. With the spread of Christianity and the conversion of the Romans under Constantine, the weak got their revenge and took control. They were so skillful at this that eventually the strong came to accept the slave morality, and became apologetic and disdainful of their own powers and excellence.

Self Assessment Exercise 3

1. What reason would you offer on why Nietzsche rejected the notion that there is a universal and absolute system of morality that everyone must equally obey?
2. What is Nietzsche's perception of man as a moral agent?
3. What are the two types of morality in Nietzsche's moral theory?
4. What do you understand by the term, master morality?
5. The antithesis of master morality is _____

3.6 The Will to Power

Nietzsche transforms Schopenhauer's concept of the will to live or will to existence to the Will to Power. According to him, the world and all that exists in it is nothing but the Will to Power manifesting itself. Nietzsche does not see the world as an illusion. Nor does the Will to Power exist in a state of transcendence. Instead, he conceives the world, the universe, as a unity, a process of becoming; and it is the Will to Power in the sense that this Will is its intelligible character. This will to power expresses itself everywhere and in everything. However, though Nietzsche argues the Will to Power is the inner reality of the universe, he argues that this reality exists only in its manifestations.

Nietzsche's theory of the Will to Power is thus an interpretation of the universe, a way of looking at it and describing it, rather than a metaphysical doctrine about a reality which lies behind the visible world and transcends it (Coplestone 407). In *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche says that we are compelled by logical method to inquire whether we can find one principle of explanation, one fundamental form of causal activity, through which we can unify vital phenomena. And he finds this principle in the Will to Power. Nietzsche then proceeds to extend this principle of explanation to the world as a whole. The world as seen from within, the world as

defined and characterized according to its "intelligible character", would be precisely "Will to Power" and nothing else.

According to Coplestone (408), Nietzsche's theory of the Will to Power should not be seen as a priori metaphysical thesis but as a sweeping empirical hypothesis. As Nietzsche envisioned, if we believe in the causality of the will, a belief which is really belief in causality itself, we must make the attempt to posit hypothetically the causality of the will as the only form of causality. In Nietzsche's intention, therefore, the theory of the will to power is an explanatory hypothesis, and in his projected works, he applied the principle to different classes of phenomena, showing how they could be unified in terms of this hypothesis.

Self Assessment Exercise 4

1. How does Nietzsche conceive of the world?
2. What do you understand by Nietzsche's theory of the will to power?
3. What role does the theory of will to power play in Nietzsche's philosophy?

3.7 The Superman

Like Aristotle, Nietzsche did not draw back from the consequences of his anti-theological stance. Since the aim of the good life is excellence, the moral philosopher must lay before us the ideal of human excellence. Moral development requires the refining away of what is common, herdlike, 'all too human'. Hence this ideal lies, of its nature, outside the reach of the common man. Moreover the ideal may be (Aristotle), or even ought to be (Nietzsche), repulsive to those whose weakness of spirit deprives them of sympathy for anything which is not more feeble than themselves. Aristotle called this ideal creature the 'great-souled man' (*megalopsuchos*); Nietzsche called it the 'Übermensch' ('Superman'). In each case, pride, self-confidence, disdain for the trivial and the ineffectual, together with a lofty cheerfulness of outlook and a desire always to dominate and never to be beholden were regarded as essential attributes of the self-fulfilled man. It is easy to scoff at this picture, but in each case strong arguments are presented for the view that there is no coherent view of human nature (other than a theological one) which does not have some such ideal of excellence as its corollary.

The essence of the 'new man' whom Nietzsche thus announced to the world was 'joyful wisdom': the ability to make choices with the whole self, and so not to be at variance with the

motives of one's action. The aim is success, not just for this or that desire but for the will which underlies them (In Nietzsche we find the Schopenhauerian will reemerging as something positive and individual, with a specific aim: that of personal dominion over the world. Nietzsche's early admiration for and subsequent passionate attack on Richard Wagner express the same ambivalent relationship to Schopenhauer.) This success is essentially the success of the individual. There is no place in Nietzsche's picture of the ideal man for pity: pity is nothing more than a morbid fascination with failure. It is the great weakener of the will, and forms the bond between slaves which perpetuates their bondage. Nietzsche's principal complaint against Christianity was that it had elevated this morbid feeling into a single criterion of virtue; thus it had prepared the way for the 'slave' morality which, being founded in pity, must inevitably reject the available possibilities of human flourishing.

Nietzsche's notion of the Will to Power is most clearly represented in the attitudes and behavior of the Superperson. We have already seen that Nietzsche rejected the concept of equality. He also showed that morality must suit each rank. Even after the revaluation of all values, the "common herd" will not be intellectually capable of reaching the heights of the "free spirits. In short, there can be no "common good." Great things, Nietzsche says, remain for the great, everything rare for the rare. The Superperson will be rare but is the next stage in human evolution. History is moving not toward some abstract developed "humanity" but toward the emergence of some exceptional people; the Superman is the goal.

However, Nietzsche maintains that the Superperson will not be the product of a mechanical process of evolution. The next stage can be reached only when superior people have the courage to revalue all values and respond with freedom to their internal Will to Power. Human beings need to be surpassed, and it is the Superman who represents the highest level of development and expression of physical, intellectual, and emotional strength. The Superman will be the truly free person for whom nothing is forbidden except what obstructs the Will to Power. The Superman will be the very embodiment of the spontaneous affirmation of life. Nietzsche did not think that his Superman would be a tyrant. To be sure, there would be much of the Dionysian element within the Superman. But these passions would be controlled, thereby harmonizing the animal nature with the intellect, and giving style to his or her behavior.

Self Assessment Exercise 5

1. Identify some of the characters of the Superman.
2. What is the essence of Nietzsche's new man (the Superman)?
3. What does the Superman represents?

3.8 The Nature of Knowledge and Truth

In the thought of Nietzsche, knowledge works as an instrument of power. This, therefore, makes it an obvious fact that it grows with every increase of power. For Nietzsche, The desire of knowledge, the will to know, depends on the will to power, that is, on a given kind of being's impulse to master a certain field of reality and to enlist it in its service. The aim of knowledge is not to know, in the sense of grasping absolute truth for its own sake, but to master. Reality as Nietzsche sees it, as becoming. For Nietzsche, it is we who turn it into Being, imposing stable patterns on the flux of Becoming. And this activity is an expression of the Will to Power.

Knowledge, for Nietzsche, is a process of interpretation. However, he sees this process as being grounded on vital needs and expressing the will to master the otherwise unintelligible flux of Becoming. And it is a question of reading an interpretation into reality rather than of reading it, so to speak, off or in reality. For instance, the concept of the ego or self as a permanent substance is an interpretation imposed upon the flux of Becoming: it is our creation for practical purposes. To be sure, the idea that 'we' interpret psychical states as similar and attribute them to a permanent subject involves Nietzsche in obvious and, in the opinion of the present writer, insoluble difficulties. His general contention is, however, that we cannot legitimately argue from the utility of an interpretation to its objectivity. For a useful fiction, an interpretation which was devoid of objectivity in the sense in which believers in absolute truth would understand objectivity, might be required and thereby justified by our needs.

Nietzsche denies the possibility of any absolute truth. The possibility of absolute truth. Truth, according to him, is an invention of philosophers who are dissatisfied with the world of Becoming and seek an abiding world of Being. 'Truth is that sort of error without which a particular type of living being could not live. The value for life is ultimately decisive. Nietzsche believes the issue of knowledge and truth is obscured by language. In his view, we may be misled by our language and imagination that our way of speaking about the world necessarily mirrors reality. Nietzsche says that in our attempts to grasp any idea about reality, we are still being constantly led astray by words and concepts into thinking things are simpler than they are, as separate from one

another, indivisible and existing each on its own. According to Nietzsche, a philosophical mythology lies hidden in language, and it breaks out at every moment, however careful one may be (Coplestone 410).

Nietzsche sees truth as perspective. According to him, truths' are 'fictions'; all such fictions are interpretations, and so also our interpretations are based on perspectives. Even every instinct has its perspective, its point of view, which it endeavours to impose on other instincts. And the categories of reason are also logical fictions and perspectives, not necessary truths, nor a priori forms. But the perspectival view of truth admits, of course, of differences. The obvious comment on Nietzsche's general view of truth is that it presupposes the possibility of occupying an absolute standpoint from which the relativity of all truth or its fictional character can be asserted, and that this presupposition is at variance with the relativist interpretation of truth.

Self Assessment Exercise 6

1. According to Nietzsche, how does knowledge works?
2. In relationship to other philosophers, how does Nietzsche sees truth?
3. What is his idea of truth?
4. What is knowledge, according to Nietzsche?

3.9 The Dead of God

Nietzsche boldly prophesied that power politics and bloody wars were in store for the future. He sensed an approaching period of nihilism, the seeds of which had already been sown. He did not base this either on the military power of Germany or on the unfolding advances of science. Instead, he was influenced by the incontrovertible fact that belief in the Christian God had drastically declined to the point where he could confidently say that God is dead.

Although Nietzsche was an atheist, he reflected on the "death" of God with mixed reactions. He was appalled at the consequences that would follow once everyone became fully aware of all the implications of the death of God. He thought about both the collapse of religious faith and the mounting belief in the Darwinian notion of a relentless evolution of the species. He could see in this combination the destruction of any basic distinction between human and animal. If this is what we are asked to believe he said, then we should not be surprised when the future brings us colossal wars such as we have never seen before on earth. At the same time, the death of

God meant for Nietzsche the dawn of a new day—a day when the essentially life-denying ethics of Christianity could be replaced with a life-affirming philosophy. For Nietzsche, man has lost his dignity since he lost faith in God and now has lost faith in himself.

Self Assessment Exercise 7

1. What was Nietzsche's thought on the collapse of religious faith and the mounting belief in evolution?
2. What did the death of God mean for Nietzsche?
3. What is the implication of the death of God to man?

3.10 Conclusion

Nietzsche began the building of his intellectual personality to complete the circle of nineteenth – century European skepticism and pessimism. He took a different path to create a name for himself. Over the years, scholars have assessed him from the perspective of his views which, of course, is still very relevant in our contemporary society. Though a professed atheist, his thought is more prophetic than atheistic.

3.11 Summary

In this unit, you have learnt that Nietzsche was a moralist who maintains that there there are two types of morality. For him, the world and all that exists in it is nothing but the Will to Power manifesting itself. You have also learnt that reality, for Nietzsche, exist as becoming. Nietzsche develops a theory of truth as perspective. The highlight of his philosophy is in his announcement of the dead of God.

3.12 References/Further Readings

Coplestone, Frederick. *A History of Philosophy: Modern Philosophy: From the Post-Kantian Idealists to Marx, Kierkegaard, and Nietzsche*. Image Books, 1962

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Nietzsche, Friedrich. The Birth of Tragedy. In *The Birth of Tragedy and Other Writings*. edited and translated by Ronald Speirs. Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Scruton, Roger. *A Short History of Modern Philosophy From Descartes to Wittgenstein*. 2nd ed. Routledge, 1995.

3.13 Possible Answers to SAEs

Answers to SAE 1

1. His final years were a time of deep loneliness. Eventually, both his physical and mental health deteriorated from what appeared to be a neurological disorder.
2. Nietzsche spent his life forecasting the future cultural crises just over the horizon at a time when most in his century were oblivious to what lay ahead.

Answers to SAE 2

1. Nietzsche described Europe of his time as sick and that which cannot be healed by prosperity or technology.
2. The central focus of Nietzsche's philosophy is the individual.
3. Nietzsche remained profoundly skeptical that anything significant remained to the individual when the veil of appearance had been torn away. He accepted the doctrine that all description, being conceptual, abstracts from the individuality of what it describes.

Answers to SAE 3

1. Nietzsche rejected the notion that there is a universal and absolute system of morality that everyone must equally obey because for him, all morality is a manifestation of the will to power.
2. According to Nietzsche, man is able to 'will his own desire as a law unto himself.
3. The two types of morality, according to Nietzsche, are the slave morality and the master morality.
4. The term "master morality" refers to the values of psychologically powerful and strong-willed people.
5. The antithesis of master morality is slave morality.

Answers to SAE 4

1. He conceives the world, the universe, as a unity, a process of becoming; and it is the Will to Power in the sense that this Will is its intelligible character.
2. Nietzsche's theory of the Will to Power is thus an interpretation of the universe, a way of looking at it and describing it, rather than a metaphysical doctrine about a reality which lies behind the visible world and transcends it.
3. The theory of the will to power is an explanatory hypothesis in Nietzsche's philosophy and in his projected works, he applied the principle to different classes of phenomena, showing how they could be unified in terms of this hypothesis.

Answers to SAE 5

1. Pride, self-confidence, disdain for the trivial and the ineffectual, together with a lofty cheerfulness of outlook and a desire always to dominate and never to be beholden are regarded as essential attributes of the Superman.
2. The essence of the 'new man' whom Nietzsche announced to the world was 'joyful wisdom': the ability to make choices with the whole self, and so not to be at variance with the motives of one's action.
3. The Superman represents the very embodiment of the spontaneous affirmation of life.

Answers to SAE 6

1. In the thought of Nietzsche, knowledge works as an instrument of power.
2. Truth, according to him, is an invention of philosophers who are dissatisfied with the world of Becoming and seek an abiding world of Being.
3. Nietzsche sees truth as perspective.
4. Knowledge, for Nietzsche, is a process of interpretation. However, he sees this process as being grounded on vital needs and expressing the will to master the otherwise unintelligible flux of Becoming.

Answers to SAE 7

1. He could see in this combination the destruction of any basic distinction between human and animal.

2. The death of God meant for Nietzsche, the dawn of a new day—a day when the essentially life-denying ethics of Christianity could be replaced with a life-affirming philosophy. He also sees it as the death of morality.
3. For Nietzsche, man has lost his dignity since he lost faith in God and now has lost faith in himself.

Unit 4: John Dewey

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4.1 Introduction

Dewey's philosophy, known as experimentalism, or instrumentalism, largely centered on human experience. Rejecting the more rigid ideas of transcendentalism as which started from the ancient epoch, he viewed ideas as tools for experimenting, with the goal of improving the human

experience. As one of the influential proponents of pragmatism, his philosophy centres on knowledge as a useful tool in the society. In what follows, we shall explore his thought.

4.2 Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

1. Know Dewey's idea of what consists the central task of philosophy.
2. Explain Dewey's notion of knowledge as instrument.
3. Explain his reconstruction of philosophy and
4. Identify the pragmatic element in Dewey's thought.

4.3 A Brief Biography of John Dewey

John Dewey was Born in Burlington, Vermont, in 1859, Dewey was educated at the University of Vermont and at Johns Hopkins University; where he received his Ph.D. in philosophy in 1884. For the next ten years, except for one year when he was at Minnesota, he taught at the University of Michigan, and for the decade after that at the University of Chicago, where he gained renown for his pragmatic concepts of education. As director of the Laboratory School for children at the University of Chicago, he experimented with a more permissive and creative atmosphere for learning. He set aside the more traditional and formal method of learning—that is listening and taking notes—and instead encouraged students to become directly involved with educational projects. From 1904 to 1929 he was a member of the faculty at Columbia University. He produced an enormous number of writings even after his retirement in 1929. His interests covered a wide range, and he wrote on logic, metaphysics, and the theory of knowledge. But as Dewey's chief expression of pragmatism was in the social rather than individual realm, his most influential works related to education, democracy, ethics, religion, and art. He died in 1952, aged 92.

Self Assessment Exercise 1

1. Dewey's chief expression of pragmatism covers _____ realm
2. Mention at least four areas that Dewey's philosophy related to.

4.4 The Task of Philosophy: Revisiting the History of Thought

In beginning his philosophy, Dewey revisits the origin of philosophy with a sense of dissatisfaction. His chief quarrel with earlier philosophy was that it confused the true nature and function of knowledge. The reason for this hierarchy was a longing for absolute, immutable certainty, and the recognition that such certainty could not be found in the domain of action (Dewey 1929a, 5-6). The identification of what is absolutely certain with what is immutable led philosophers such as Plato to a metaphysics, a philosophy about reality, in which it was maintained that only what is fixed, immutable, and unchangeable can be real, and to an epistemology in which it was argued that certain knowledge “must relate to that which has antecedent existence or essential being” (Dewey 1929a, 18).

One implication of these assumptions is that true knowledge can only be acquired if the process of acquiring knowledge does not exert any influence on the object of knowledge (Dewey 1929a, 19). For this reason the process of the acquisition of knowledge was cut off from action and was understood in terms of visual perception - a theory that Dewey called the “spectator theory of knowledge” (Dewey 19). He makes the following point: “The notion which has ruled philosophy ever since the time of the Greeks, is that the office of knowledge is to uncover the antecedently real, rather than, as is the case with our practical judgments, to gain the kind of understanding which is necessary to deal with the problems as they arise” (Dewey 14).

Such ideas deepened the gap between theory and practice. According to this view, theory has to find out how reality is. Although practical action is based on the knowledge provided by theory, it is completely disconnected from its acquisition. Practice is “a mere external follower upon knowledge, having no part in its determination. . . . [I]t is supposed to conform to what is fixed in the antecedent structure of things” (Dewey 58).

One of the interesting aspects of the Greek worldview was an assumption that values were part of the world. The Greeks assumed, in other words, that reality was purposeful. Everything strives to become what it has in potential: An acorn strives to become an oak tree; a human being strives to become rational. This meant that true, objective knowledge about reality would at the very same time provide guidelines for the direction of human action. It is not too difficult to see the kind of problems that arose when the mechanical worldview of modern science, the worldview of Copernicus, Galileo, and Newton, emerged. Until then, it had been possible to derive aims and values from the knowledge of reality. But with the emergence of the scientific worldview “science

ceased to disclose in the objects of knowledge the possession of any such properties” (Dewey 34). This led to the question of how the results of the new science could be accepted and the domain of values maintained (Dewey 33).

Dewey argued that, given the available philosophical framework, there was only one possible solution-that values had to be relegated to a separate domain. This resulted in the fundamental distinction between the domain of nature and the domain of values (a distinction still with us, for example, in the dictum that “the is must be separate from the ought”). In order to safeguard the domain of values, it further had to be shown that this domain was superior to the domain of factual knowledge about nature. According to Dewey, this is precisely what Descartes and Kant tried to do-argue that the possibility of scientific knowledge has its ultimate foundation in an immaterial human mind (Dewey 33-34). As a result, Dewey wrote, the “opposition and yet necessary connection of nature and spirit” (Dewey 43) became part of what was conceived to be the nature of human beings themselves. It resulted in the dualistic worldview of the material and the spiritual, and in the assumption that the material constitutes “outer” nature, while the spiritual is the realm of “inner” mind.

Dewey’s main point in his reading of the development of Western philosophy was to make clear that the distinction between mind and matter, between the subjective and the objective, and between facts and values is not the inevitable or necessary point of departure for all philosophy. It rather was a particular solution that the inaugurators of modern philosophy came up with to tackle the problem of accepting the conclusions of modern science while at the same time maintaining the realm of values. What Dewey’s reconstruction also makes clear is that this problem was, in a sense, an artificial problem from the very start, since it was the product of assumptions inherited from Greek philosophy (Dewey 34). When, against this background, Dewey looks favourably at modern science, it is to emphasize that modern science has not only given us a different view about reality, but that this view has been brought about by an approach-the experimental method-in which the division between knowing and acting has completely disappeared (Dewey 80). In practice, modern science was therefore from its very inception already in contradiction with the spectator theory of knowledge.

Self Assessment Exercise 2

1. How did Dewey revisits the origin of philosophy?

2. According to Dewey, what is the notion that has ruled philosophy since the time of the Greeks?
3. Mention one of the interesting aspect of the Greeks worldview as you have learnt in this section.
4. What is Dewey's conception of modern science in practice?

4.5 Knowledge as Instrument

According to Dewey, what constitutes our brute experience is the interaction between a biological organism and its environment. Experience is not an object known but, rather, an action performed. In the course of the organism's activities, it encounters situations in which it can no longer act. Thinking arises as a means of dealing with these disturbing situations by working out hypotheses, or guides to future actions. The merits of these intellectual acts are determined by a practical criterion, by whether the organism can now function satisfactorily again. Thought, especially scientific thought, is instrumental in problem solving. The occurrence of problems sets off a chain reaction of mental activity directed toward discovering a functional solution to the difficulties that confront the organism.

Much of earlier philosophizing, Dewey claimed, is actually a hindrance to the task of problem solving. In separating theorizing from practical concerns, and searching for absolute solutions to philosophical questions, philosophers have got away almost completely from the human needs that give rise to thought, and have also tried rigidly to impose certain preconceived schemes upon human thought, and have refused to allow any new beliefs and new solutions in human affairs. What is needed nowadays, Dewey insisted, is a reconstruction of philosophy in terms of the problems that now confront us. In this role, philosophy will no longer be an abstruse subject, of little or no value in the immediate concerns of the day, but will, instead, be the overall directive force in developing new instrumental techniques for assisting the human organism in its struggles with its environment, and in building a better world in which some of the problems now confronting us will gradually be resolved.

Dewey called his theory of knowledge "instrumentalism," to distinguish it from the other versions of pragmatism. The term captures Dewey's emphasis that ideas are tools for solving problems and for shaping our environment to our ends. Throughout his works he battled the spectator view of knowledge, which presents the mind as a closed room detached from the world,

containing ideas the way a museum contains pictures. This image of the mind and its contents existing in isolation from the external world led philosophers such as Descartes to wonder whether these pictures (ideas) correctly represented what was outside or even whether anything was outside the mind at all (Lawhead 504). According to Dewey, the Cartesian kind of account completely misconstrues our situation. In the historical evolution of the species as well as in a person's development from infancy to adulthood, our cognitive skills develop in response to a world that makes demands on us. Hence, when we begin to reason we do so as biological organisms that have already wrestled with our environment (Lawhead 504).

Dewey characterized knowledge as the mode of experience that supports action. Knowing has to do with the relationship between our actions and their consequences. It is because of this that knowledge can help us to get a better control over our actions, at least better than in the case of blind trial and error. "Where there is the possibility of control," Dewey wrote, "knowledge is the sole agency of its realization" (Dewey 29). "Control" here does not mean complete mastery, but the ability to intelligently plan and direct our actions and their likely consequences. This ability is first of all important in those situations in which we are not sure how to act-which is expressed in one of Dewey's descriptions of knowing as having to do with "the transformation of disturbed and unsettled situations into those more controlled and more significant" (Dewey 236).

Dewey typically explains the idea of knowledge in terms of the notion of warranted assertibility. This notion captures Dewey's conviction that there is no final end of inquiry where our ideas will be perfectly adequate and immune from the need for revision. Whether our knowledge is complete or adequate is always a relative matter. Dewey's understanding of experience and action provides us with all the main elements of Dewey's theory of knowledge. Dewey's view of knowledge is about reflection and action, and about the reflective transformation of experience understood as transactional. Education for him, therefore, is an instrument through which we gain knowledge to direct our lives.

Self Assessment Exercise 3

1. What constitutes our brute experience, according to Dewey?
2. What is Dewey's view on the claims of much of earlier philosophizing?
3. Describes Dewey's characterization of knowledge.
4. What do you understand by Dewey's notion of warranted assertibility?

4.6 The Quest for Human Rationality

Dewey argued that the crisis in culture-which is a crisis of rationality was an effect of the way in which the mechanistic worldview of modern science was interpreted, namely, as an account of what reality “really” is. It is this specific interpretation that has brought about the crisis of rationality, the situation of the two equally unattractive options of inhuman rationality and human irrationality. Dewey’s reconstruction of the development of Western philosophy shows that this problem was caused by the fact that the findings of modern science were mistakenly characterized in terms of philosophical categories and dualities that were developed long before the emergence of modern science, in a completely different context and for totally different purposes (Biesta and Burbules 22).

When modern science gained prominence, there were, in principle, two options for philosophy. The one that was chosen was to use the existing philosophical framework to make sense of the findings of modern science. This created the problem of how these findings could be accepted while still maintaining the realm of values. The attempt to solve this problem eventually led to the dualistic assumptions that lie at the basis of modern philosophy. Dewey’s reconstruction makes clear, however, that these assumptions are just one possible answer to the problems that arose with the emergence of modern science. Dewey’s reconstruction suggests that there is another option. Instead of using the Greek framework to interpret the emergence of modern science, philosophers could also have asked what would follow if we would amend our understanding of knowledge and reality according to the findings and methods of modern science itself- which Dewey believed demonstrated the inseparability of knowledge and action, fact and value. But, to repeat in conclusion, his reason for exploring this road was not simply to come up with a more adequate theory of knowledge, but to overcome the dilemma of inhuman rationality versus human irrationality (Biesta and Burbules, 92). This is a quest, in other words, for a new and different understanding of human rationality, a theme that ultimately motivates all of Dewey’s writings.

Self Assessment Exercise 4

1. What is Dewey’s argument against cultural crisis?
2. According to Dewey, what were the two options for philosophy when modern science gained prominence?

4.7 Relevance of Dewey

Dewey's philosophy is attractive because of its power to illuminate all areas of human experience. For example, Dewey's perspective has had an enormous influence on American education. In his day, education consisted of the rote memorization of a mass of factual information and historical classics. Dewey, however, says the goal of education should be to help students develop effective problem-solving methods and skills for social interaction. Hence, the emphasis is on process and not content, on learning by doing. With Socrates, Dewey says that the role of the teacher is not to provide information but to bring the students to the point of discovering truths for themselves.

Dewey's pragmatism also has many implications for social philosophy. With Peirce, he believes inquiry cannot be an individual, subjective project, but will succeed most as a community effort. Science can only succeed in the context of free communication, free action, and mutual dialogue that includes as many points of view as possible. Thus this sort of structure will be valued in a society founded on scientific principles in the broadest sense. Accordingly, Dewey gives a pragmatic defense of the American ideal of a democracy dominated by the values of freedom, participation, and inclusiveness. Furthermore, the biological, organic model that guides all his thought implies that the health of the whole organism is a function of the health of its parts. Hence, his educational philosophy supports his social philosophy, for society has the need as well as the responsibility to help each member become an effective decision maker in a changing world.

Self Assessment Exercise 5

1. What makes Dewey's philosophy attractive?
2. What should be the goal of education according to Dewey?
3. What is the implication of his thought to social philosophy

4.8 Conclusion

In this unit, we have discussed the pragmatic philosophy of John Dewey. In his pragmatic thought, knowledge is an instrument for solving problems. In his system, there is nothing like final end in life.

4.9. Summary

In this unit, you have learnt that John Dewey's philosophy is called instrumentalism. Dewey was dissatisfied with Greek philosophy on the ground that these scholars confused the true nature and function of knowledge. His theory of instrumentalism sees knowledge/education as an instrument for solving problems. Dewey characterized knowledge as the mode of experience that supports action. His philosophy is distinguished by his conviction that there is no final end of inquiry where our ideas will be perfectly adequate and immune from the need for revision.

4.10 References/Further Readings

Dewey, John. *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry*. Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1938.

Biesta, Gert and Burbules, Nicholas. *Pragmatism and Educational Research*. Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2003.

Stumpf, Samuel and James Fieser. *Socrates to Sartre and Beyond: A History of Philosophy*. 8th Ed. McGraw hill Education, 2012.

Lawhead, William. *The Voyage of Discovery: A Historical Introduction to Philosophy*. 4th ed. Cengage Advantage Books, 2015

Scruton, Roger. *A Short History of Modern Philosophy From Descartes to Wittgenstein*. 2nd ed. Routledge, 1995.

4.11 Possible Answers to SAEs

Answers to SAE 1

- 1. Social**
2. his most influential works related to education, democracy, ethics, religion, and art.

Answers to SAE 2

1. Dewey revisits the origin of philosophy with a sense of dissatisfaction.
2. According to Dewey, the notion which has ruled philosophy ever since the time of the Greeks, is that the office of knowledge is to uncover the antecedently real, rather than, as is the case with our practical judgments, to gain the kind of understanding which is necessary to deal with the problems as they arise.

3. One of the interesting aspects of the Greek worldview was an assumption that values were part of the world. The Greeks assumed, in other words, that reality was purposeful.
4. In practice, modern science was from its very inception, already in contradiction with the spectator theory of knowledge.

Answers to SAE 3

1. According to Dewey, what constitutes our brute experience is the interaction between a biological organism and its environment.
2. Much of earlier philosophizing, according to Dewey, is actually a hindrance to the task of problem solving.
3. Dewey characterized knowledge as the mode of experience that supports action.
4. The notion of warranted assertibility captures Dewey's conviction that there is no final end of inquiry where our ideas will be perfectly adequate and immune from the need for revision.

Answers to SAE 4

1. Dewey argued that the crisis in culture is a crisis of rationality and it is an effect of a mechanistic worldview.
2. **They options available for philosophy were:** (a) to use the existing philosophical framework to make sense of the findings of modern science and (b) instead of using the Greek framework to interpret the emergence of modern science, philosophers could also ask what would follow if we would amend our understanding of knowledge and reality according to the findings and methods of modern science itself.

Answers to SAE 5

1. Dewey's philosophy is attractive because of its power to illuminate all areas of human experience.
2. According to Dewey, the goal of education should be to help students develop effective problem-solving methods and skills for social interaction.
3. The relevance of his thought to social philosophy can be seen in his believe **that** inquiry cannot be an individual, subjective project, but will succeed most as a community effort.