METHODOLOGY OF PHILOSOPHY

CORE COURSE

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CORE COURSE
METHODOLOGY OF PHILOSOPHY

Prepared by:

Unit I  Dr. V. Prabhakaran,
        Principal,
        EKNM Govt. College,
        Elaritthattu,
        Kasargod.

Unit II Dr. Smitha T.M.,
        Assistant Professor,
        Department of Philosophy,
        Maharajas College,
        Ernakulam

Unit III Dr. Biju K.P.,
        Assistant Professor,
        Department of Philosophy,
        Sree Kerala Varma College,
        Thrissur

Unit IV Dr. Babu M.N.,
        Assistant Professor,
        Department of Philosophy,
        Sree Sankaracharya University of Sanskrit,
        Kalady

Unit V Y. Saji,
        Assistant Professor,
        Department of Philosophy,
        Govt. College, Chittur.

Unit VI Dr. V. Prabhakaran,
        Principal,
        EKNM Govt. College,
        Elaritthattu,
        Kasargod

Edited and Scrutinised by
Dr. V. Prabhakaran,
Principal,
EKNM Govt. College,
Elaritthattu,
Kasargod

Layout & Settings
Computer Section, SDE
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UNIT I

INTRODUCTION

Definition, Nature and scope of philosophical method, Importance of philosophical methods.

Objective:- To introduce methodology, it’s aim, importance; and to introduce philosophical method, it’s aim, importance.

Introduction

Methodology is an important instrument for the growth and development of knowledge. The general acceptability of any branch of knowledge depends upon the method which is being used. Philosophers, scientists and others have developed certain methods. Methodology has an important place in every science and art. Methodology is a theory of methods. Method is a way, a procedure, to attain knowledge. Any branch of knowledge presupposes a method. The word method is used to describe the way in which procedures are determined, and the study of methods is called methodology.

Methodology is defined as that science in which we think over all those procedures and techniques by which the establishment of the validity of previous knowledge and the establishment of new knowledge is possible. Methodology is concerned with those procedures and techniques which have been devised to aid us in extending our knowledge, in clarifying and justifying what we already know and in discovering what is still unknown. Methodology is the science of methods. It is a theory of methods. The aim of methodology is to find out what the different methods are, why they are accepted and how they are interconnected.

From the historical point of view, there are three important types of methodology: first the methodology of arts, secondly the methodology of sciences, thirdly the methodology of philosophy. Socrates (platonic dialogues) was the source of the methodology of arts. Aristotle was the source of the methodology of sciences. Methodology of philosophy means the philosophical aspect of methodology. Collingwood in his book, “An Essay on philosophical Method” states that it is possible to answer the question, what is philosophy, by giving an account of philosophical method. Methodology is an inseparable and important part of philosophy. A.J. Ayer has recognized the importance of philosophical method. A philosophical method is contemplative in nature. It differs from the method of teaching or demonstrative method. Philosophy deals with certain problems and it applies it’s methods to solve them.

Thomas J. Blakeley writes “By method we mean procedure and it is obvious that the principles according to which a procedure is carried out are rules, imperatives which tell us not what is but what should be done. His definition of method succeeds
in explaining the true nature of method. First, a method is a rational or speculative procedure. We may also call it a thinking procedure. Secondly, this procedure is carried out according to certain principles. Thirdly, these principles are ‘rules’ which govern the direction of our thinking and keep it in order. Fourthly, these rules belong to the category of imperatives or commands. Lastly, being imperatives they are concerned with “what should be done”, not with “what is”.

For idealists, method is a set of principles arbitrarily established by human reason for convenience in knowing. Method is regarded by the idealists as a purely subjective category. According to them, method is ‘arbitrarily established’, which means everyone has his own method. In fact, reason is the source of method. And secondly, that we establish method for the sake of convenience, but not for individual’s convenience.

The Marxists present method as a procedure used for studying a reality, ie phenomena of the objective world. This is a physical or scientific interpretation of method. This is the definition of scientific method, not of method as such or of philosophical method.

Nature, Scope and Importance of philosophical method

Philosophical methods are methods of rational inquiry, because, philosophy is concerned with something rational. The pragmatists take philosophical method as the method of determining the meaning of ideas and of clarifying them. William James took it as the method of settling philosophical disputes. For him, the end of philosophical method is some utilitarian end. Descartes held that philosophical method should be a method of rightly conducting the reason and seeking the truth in the sciences. But he could not make a distinction between a philosophical and scientific method. The common factor of both science and philosophy is that the methods they adopt are methods of rightly conducting the reason and seeking the truth; but there is a difference between philosophical method and a method of science. Truths of science are not truths of philosophy. Secondly, science is rational, where as philosophy is more than rational; it is speculative also.

The basic metaphor of method is that of “a way leading somewhere”. There are two types of methods in any branch of knowledge; method as a way of knowing and, method as a way of teaching, contemplative and demonstrative methods. Philosophy has two types of methods. Thinkers of medieval period had recognized them. They expressed their knowledge of these methods in the following manner:

i) Only the man who has the method can be said to have sound knowledge of an art.

ii) And it is this method which enables him to teach the art to others.

Some thinkers define contemplative method as a method of gaining valid and useful knowledge, and demonstrative method as the method of transmitting an already established art.
The words technique, pattern, style, art, theory, and syllogism are to be distinguished from the word method. For an understanding of the exact nature of philosophical method, a knowledge of the meaning of these words is necessary because these words are often confused with the word method.

‘Order’ is a necessary condition for ‘method’, but not a sufficient one. It means method is more than an order. Method includes order, but it is not the same as order. A method involves a continued effort sustained through the successive stages of a long process. The general idea of “orderly progression” is closely connected with the idea of method.

Method is confused with theory. Theory means a particular explanation of something. Rationalism, Empiricism are not philosophical methods, but epistemological theories. Theory is an account of a group of facts or phenomena, and method is a systematic procedure of rules or principles to be followed. With the help of method we come to a theory. A theory is a conclusion, whereas a method is a procedure or way.

Style and method are different. Method always preceded style. Style means a manner of expression characteristic of particular philosopher or individual. A style is a manner of expressing our thoughts in writing and in speaking. Method is different from style because it is a manner of thinking or procedure of thinking over some problem- Chintana prakriya. By method we achieve true knowledge of something and, afterwards, we express our achieved knowledge in a particular manner which is called style. Style is subjective, whereas method is objective. Every individual has his own style. Demonstrative methods in philosophy are not methods but philosophical styles.

Method and syllogism are not the same. Syllogism is an instrument of reasoning. Syllogism is an argument expressed in the form of two premises containing a common middle term, with a conclusion resulting necessarily from the other two. Syllogism is a way of demonstration. It is a demonstrative method, not a philosophical method.

Method is confused with ‘system’ of philosophy. System means an organized or connected group of objects interdependent so as to form a complex unity, a whole composed of parts in an orderly arrangement according to some scheme or plan. The word philosophical system indicates the co-ordinate doctrines of philosophy. For example, the system of Descartes, Spinoza etc. A philosophical system includes principles of ontology, of epistemology, and of ethics. Method is a way or procedure to attain these principles. These principles are the end of a particular thinking process.

Art is different from method. Art is the perfect manner of doing something. Art is concerned with practice. Method is a process of thinking, not of doing. Every art or science has it’s method. Art tends towards permanent knowledge, but method towards changing procedure.

Manner and philosophical method are not identical. Manner is the way in which a thing happens, or a person’s style of doing something. Philosophical method is more than a manner, it includes manner, order etc.
Technique and method are to be distinguished. There may be technical methods but method cannot be a technique because technical means something peculiar or specially belonging to the art or subject referred to. Philosophical methods are the technical methods of philosophy which are different from the technical methods of science. But they are not techniques.

Method is different from pattern. Pattern is an example or model deserving of imitation. Pattern is a perfect or an ideal model. But method in itself is not merely a pattern.

A procedure cannot be called a method. The difference between a philosophical method and procedure is that the procedure is a mode of action while philosophical method is a mode of thinking over philosophical problems.

An important characteristic of a method is that it is something which can be ‘formulated’ and ‘applied’. It is something more than a personal style of thinking. The term method is used in two senses in philosophy. According to the first, the term denotes the way of dealing with philosophical problems. In this sense, method means, the method of thinking or pure philosophical method. In it’s second sense, the term denotes the way of demonstrating theories or doctrines. Thus in it’s latter sense it means demonstrative method. Demonstrative methods are those methods with the help of which philosophers express their thoughts over a subject or problem in a discourse or in teaching or writing. Thus there are two types of philosophical method, philosophical method as a way of thinking, and philosophical method as a way of demonstrating. Dialectic, Analysis, Logico-mathematical method, Intuitive method, pragmatic method, Critical or Transcendental method, phenomenological method, all are examples of the first type. Explanatory, synthetic and Analytic, Mystical, Poetical, etc come under the class of demonstrative method. The first category of methods are truly philosophical, and with the help of these we can distinguish philosophy from other branches of knowledge. The demonstrative methods are philosophical ‘styles’ rather than philosophical methods.

Philosophy is primarily concerned with the fundamental problems of experience, such as existence, reality, soul, god etc. To attain this goal the philosopher adopts certain rules on which he proceeds. The aggregation and integration of such rules make a method. Thus a philosophical method is a means or instrument of attaining a philosophical end, that is, categorical and comprehensive knowledge of fundamental notions.

There is no single definition of philosophy which can be universally accepted. There is a relation of reciprocity between a philosophical system and it’s method. The structure of a particular philosophical system and it’s method depends upon the mental attitude of the thinker. For example, if sense- perception is regarded as the ultimate source of knowledge, the method of induction or some other empirical method is adopted, and it will be a system of empiricism. This is the case with idealism, logical positivism, existentialism etc. Being a mathematician, Descartes adopted mathematical method. Thus, there is a close relation between the mental attitude of a thinker, his conception of philosophy, his philosophical method and the philosophical system.
Every philosophical method has two sides, negative and positive, or the constructive and destructive. A thinker attempts to construct his own philosophy after refuting his predecessor’s view. For example, Logical Positivists, with the help of their method eliminate metaphysics and refute metaphysical theories. Thus they destroy the metaphysical system of their predecessors. Contemporary thinkers, and then they construct their own philosophical theory with the help of their method. The adequate method for destruction or refutation is the exhibition of inconsistency. It means to show the self-contradictoriness of a thought because “self-contradiction” is considered as the most important weakness in philosophical thinking. But there is no universal method of construction. There is no single philosophical method which can be accepted universally. And it is also necessary that there should not be a single universal philosophical method. A single universal method is an obstacle in the way of comprehensive philosophical thinking.

Questions

A-Short Answer Questions (1 weightage)

1. Define methodology

   Methodology is defined as that science in which we think over all those procedures and techniques by which the establishment of the validity of previous knowledge and the establishment of new knowledge is possible.

2. State the three types of methodology from the historical point of view.

   From the historical point of view, there are three important types of methodology: first the methodology of arts, secondly the methodology of sciences, thirdly the methodology of philosophy.

3. Give the idealist definition of method

   For idealists, method is a set of principles arbitrarily established by human reason for convenience in knowing. Method is regarded by the idealists as a purely subjective category.

4. Define philosophical method

   Philosophical methods are methods of rational inquiry, because, philosophy is concerned with something rational.

5. Give the definition of philosophical method given by pragmatists.

   The pragmatists take philosophical method as the method of determining the meaning of ideas and of clarifying them.

6. Give examples of pure philosophical methods

   Dialectic, Analysis, Logico-mathematical method, Intuitive method, pragmatic method, Critical or Transcendental method, phenomenological method
B-Short Answer Questions (2weightages)

1. Explain methodology

Methodology is defined as that science in which we think over all those procedures and techniques by which the establishment of the validity of previous knowledge and the establishment of new knowledge is possible.

Methodology is an important instrument for the growth and development of knowledge. The general acceptability of any branch of knowledge depends upon the method which is being used. Philosophers, scientists and others have developed certain methods. Methodology has an important place in every science and art. Methodology is a theory of methods. Method is a way, a procedure, to attain knowledge. Any branch of knowledge presupposes a method. The word method is used to describe the way in which procedures are determined and the study of methods is called methodology.

2. Distinguish between Idealist and Marxist concept of method

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3. Distinguish between Order and Method

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from style because it is a manner of thinking or procedure of thinking over some problem—Chintana prakriya. By method we achieve true knowledge of something and, afterwards, we express our achieved knowledge in a particular manner which is called style. Style is subjective, whereas method is objective. Every individual has his own style. Demonstrative methods in philosophy are not methods but philosophical styles.

6. Distinguish between method and syllogism

Method and syllogism are not the same. Syllogism is an instrument of reasoning. Syllogism is an argument expressed in the form of two premises containing a common middle term, with a conclusion resulting necessarily from the other two. Syllogism is a way of demonstration. It is a demonstrative method, not a philosophical method.

7. Distinguish between method and system

Method is confused with ‘system’ of philosophy. System means an organized or connected group of objects interdependent so as to form a complex unity, a whole composed of parts in an orderly arrangement according to some scheme or plan. The word philosophical system indicates the co-ordinate doctrines of philosophy. For example, the system of Descartes, Spinoza etc. A philosophical system includes principles of ontology, of epistemology, and of ethics. Method is a way or procedure to attain these principles. These principles are the end of a particular thinking process.

8. Distinguish between technique and method

Technique and method are to be distinguished. There may be technical methods but method cannot be a technique because technical means something peculiar or specially belonging to the art or subject referred to. Philosophical methods are the technical methods of philosophy which are different from the technical methods of science. But they are not techniques.

8. Explain the two functions of philosophical method.

Every philosophical method has two sides, negative and positive, or the constructive and destructive. A thinker attempts to construct his own philosophy after refuting his predecessor’s view. For example, Logical Positivists, with the help of their method eliminate metaphysics and refute metaphysical theories. Thus they destroy the metaphysical system of their predecessors and of contemporary thinkers, and then they construct their own philosophical theory with the help of their method. The adequate method for destruction or refutation is the exhibition of inconsistency. It means to show the self-contradictoriness of a thought because “self-contradiction” is considered as the most important weakness in philosophical thinking. But there is no universal method of construction. There is no single philosophical method which can be accepted universally. And it is also necessary that there should not be a single universal philosophical method. A single universal method is an obstacle in the way of comprehensive philosophical thinking.
C- Essay Question.

1. Define philosophical method. Explain the nature, scope and importance of philosophical method.

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UNIT II

LOGICO-MATHEMATICAL METHOD

Cartesian method; Critical method - method of Kant

Objectives:-

1. To introduce Logico- Mathematical method- Cartesian Method
2. To introduce Critical Method –Method of Kant
3. To explain the importance of mathematical method in philosophy
4. To analyse the rules of Cartesian Method
5. To describe the importance of Cartesian Method In the field of philosophy
6. To explain the features of Transcendental or Critical method of Kant
7. To evaluate Kant’s method

Logico-mathematical Method

Introduction:-

Mathematics made a great influence in philosophy from the early ages of Western philosophy. That influence continues through Descartes, Spinoza, Leibnitz and Russell. Mathematics is a body of certain and self-evident truths. In order to attain certainty and clarity in philosophy many philosophers recommended mathematical method.

In mathematical method we begin with axioms or self evident principles. These self-evident principles are always the starting points of mathematical method. In the mathematical method we deduce other principles and propositions from these self-evident principles. This deduction must always be a logical-deduction. The mathematical method always includes logical method i.e. deduction and therefore called “Logico- Mathematical method”.

According to Descartes mathematical method consists in discovering the difference between the clear and distinct apprehension of the understanding of the reason and the obscure ideas of the sense and imagination. It selects simple, clear, self evident and innate ideas of truths from them. According to him mathematical method must be extended to philosophy and in philosophy we should proceeded from absolutely certain first principles, or from clear and self-evident propositions, to new and unknown truths are equally certain. Mathematical method refuses to aspect any authority. So Descartes also refutes to take help from authority in the pursuit of knowledge. He doubts everything. Including sense experience, scientific knowledge and even mathematical knowledge and arrives at the conclusion that there is only one thing which is certain i.e. the “cogito ergo sum”. It is the first and most certain knowledge. Thus “cogito ergo sum” constitutes a definite and self-evident starting point for the Cartesian philosophy.
Demonstration plays an important role in mathematical method. Descartes distinguishes two types of demonstration. The first is called analytic method. He tells that the analytic method shows the true way by which a thing is methodically discovered and derived as it were from effect to cause. The second type of demonstration is called ‘synthetic method’. This employs a long series of definitions, postulates, axioms, theorems and problems.

Spinoza also used mathematical method especially ‘geometrical method’. Spinoza takes geometrical method as a method of reaching the truth. He applied geometrical method is both a philosophical method and a demonstrative method. In Spinoza’s philosophy everything is said to follow from the first principle or ground of universe as necessarily as the propositions of geometry follow from their logical presuppositions.

Leibnitz was also attracted to geometrical method. Mathematics provides Leibnitz with a chief source of analogy to the metaphysics of existence. In contemporary period Russell was influenced by mathematical method. He developed ‘mathematical or symbolic logic’ on the basis of mathematical method. And his method is known as logico-mathematical method.

**Cartesian Method**

Descartes discovered a new philosophical method. He was much dissatisfied and worried by the uncertain state of philosophy and being a great mathematician, he especially delighted in mathematics because of the certainty and self-evidence of its reasoning. He was surprised to find that philosophers had not constructed their philosophies on such a solid foundation. He expected that philosophical knowledge must attain certitude equal to that of the demonstrations of arithmetic and geometry and he thought that such knowledge could be attained if we use an appropriate method of enquiry. According to him there must be only one way of acquiring theoretical knowledge and that is through mathematical method.

Descartes believed that it is in mathematics alone that the human mind has reached self-evidence and certainty. Therefore he formed his method by putting together the best of what he had found in the ‘three arts or sciences’, viz., logic, analysis of the ancients and algebra of moderns. He observed that these three as separate methods will not help us to reach distinct and clear knowledge. This made him feel that some other method must be found which should comprise the advantage of the three, yet exempt from their faults. Gradually Descartes convinced that the method of mathematics could be extended to other branches of knowledge including philosophy. The problem of method was of paramount importance in the philosophy of Descartes and it is because of this that this problem was intimately related to this thinking throughout the cause of his philosophical development. He refused to adopt scholastic method because it depends on authorities and did not encourage independent research in thought. His genius was essentially mathematical and in mathematics the question of authority did not arise. He believed that error can be humanly possible and it is much
difficult to eradicate it. According to him error has its source in our animal nature as well as in our possession of the faculty of will. He told that error can also be possible by parents and teachers.

According to him, we have to get rid of all our ideas, to renounce all our options, to make ourselves free of all blindly accepted tradition, to reject all existing authorities: only thus, can we hope to regain the native purity of our reason and to reach the certainty of truth.

Descartes was deeply concerned with general principles of method. He had a vision of a new method of attaining knowledge of everything that his mind could grasp. In his opinion, the multitude of laws often gives occasion for vices and therefore we must have some definite laws for the direction of our thinking. So Descartes presents only four rules. In his ‘Discourse on The Method’ he states four rules of his method. The rules are:-

1. Never to accept anything as true unless we clearly know it as such: that is, carefully to avoid prejudice and to embrace only what presents itself to our mind clearly and distinctly that we have no occasion to doubt it.

2. To divide each problem in to as many parts as possible.

3. To direct our thoughts in an orderly way: commence with the simplest objects and proceed step by step to the more complex.

4. To make such complete enumeration that might be sure of leaving nothing out.

In geometry we start with few self evident principles and then reach the whole body of its conclusions by means of simple deduction. Now how can we find something self-evident in philosophy? According to him only doubt will reveal in the end something which is indubitable. Therefore, let us doubt all that can be doubted. The only thing to be done is to reject everything that is merely probable. Thus the thing which will resist the doubt will constitute an ‘indubitable’ certainty, from which we may able to deduce other certainties.

This doubt of Descartes should not be confused with psychological doubt. The two may be distinguished by their different characteristics. The Cartesian doubt is not a thing of direct feeling and experience. It is a deliberate and dispassionate attitude towards human experience in general while psychological doubt is directly felt and experienced. Secondly logical doubt of Descartes depends on the will, but psychological doubt is independent of our will. Thirdly the Cartesian doubt is concerned with attitude towards total things or ultimate things; while psychological doubt is concerned with particular things of daily life. Again, the doubt of Descartes should not be confused with scepticism. The Cartesian doubt is only a starting point to seek out certain indubitable truth. Thus his doubt is not an unhappy and purely passive state of indecision, but it is a free and voluntary action that we should pursue to its limits. The sceptic submits to doubt as its slave through weakness, while Descartes employs it as his instrument and becomes the master of it.
Descartes method also includes intuition and deduction. “Cogito ergo sum” is an intuition and not an inference. According to Descartes if method rightly explains how by making use way of deduction we can reach a knowledge.

Thus his method is sceptical: it is positive in use and in aim. It is the method by which Descartes selects those truths which, as being both clear and distinct, are intuitively known. His methodical doubt is indented to serve as a severe test for whatever may claim to serve as a definite starting point in the pursuit of knowledge. At first everything seems to merge into it, but at the end he finds an ultimate certainty, i.e., cogito ergo sum. But why is accepted as certain? The reply of Descartes is because it is so clearly and distinctly realized. Thus he furnishes two criteria of true knowledge, viz., clearness and distinctiveness.

His method of doubt is a part of his rationalistic or mathematical method. So it is a part of his rationalistic or mathematical method. So it should not be confused with the whole of Cartesian method. Besides methodical doubt there are other features, viz. intuition, deduction and enumeration in his method. Descartes has given a detailed account of his method in his earlier work ‘The Rules for the Direction of Mind’. His distinction between clear and distinct is the most important one. According to him, “clear is that which is present and manifest to an attentive mind, just as we are said to see objects clearly when, being is present to the intuitive eye, they operate upon sufficiently, strongly and manifestly”. He defines distinct as that which is so precise and so different from all other objects that it contains within itself only what appears manifestly to him who considerers it. Descartes title for distinct objects is simple natures. He further describes them as being absolutes not derivative.

His notion of intuition and deduction are also important for an accurate understanding of his method. In his opinion, indubitable knowledge can only be achieved through these alone. He gave primacy to intuition. By intuition he meant a conception formed by unclouded mental attention. So it is easy and distinct as to leave no room for doubts. For him, it is more certain even than deduction, because it is simpler. The knowledge of our existence of our thoughts, of triangle and circle comes under this faculty.

By deduction he means any necessary conclusion from other things known with certainty. Descartes says that the act of deduction involves a movement of the mind in which we infer one thing from the other. But if we take deduction as something already accomplished, then the term ‘deduction’ designates the result of the movement. In this sense, as he assumes a deduction is something intuitively seen. Descartes says that we call it ‘simple deduction’, and when deduction is ‘complex and involved’ it may be termed ‘enumeration’ or ‘induction’.

According to Descartes “in order to complete our knowledge, we must scrutinise all the several points pertinent to our aim in a continuous and uninterrupted movement of thought and comprise them all in an adequate and orderly enumeration”. He informs that enumeration is required in order to ‘complete’ our knowledge, since it is
enumeration that enables us to form a true and certain judgement about anything: it seems to give us ‘some’ knowledge of everything. Secondly, enumeration makes an inquiry so careful and accurate that it always reaches a certain and evident conclusion. The third characteristic is that with the help of it we can see with certainty the impossibility of our finding something by any other way. Fourthly, it must be observed that by adequate enumeration, Descartes mean exclusively the sort that makes the truth of conclusions more certain that any other type of proof apart from simple intuition.

In *Discourse on Method* Descartes explains how these two activities, i.e. intuition and enumeration, cooperate and supplement each other. He states two advantages of this co-relation. First is the greater certainty in our knowledge of the conclusion, and second is the greater aptitude of our mind for machining further discoveries. From these, he concludes that there are no ways of attaining truth expect self-evident intuition and necessary inference. At the end, he urges the need of long use and practice in acquiring this technique for those who wish to have a perfect mastery of method.

Cartesian method is logico mathematical in nature and it must not be confused with syllogistic method, since Descartes himself refuted syllogism as a philosophical method. His method includes three main processes of doubt, intuition and deduction respectively. In these three deductions is a logical process, intuition and methodical doubt are the process of knowledge as such. Enumeration, order, systematisation etc are found in mathematical procedure.

**Evaluation of Cartesian method.**

The influence of Descartes, as far as question of method is concerned was very wide. Descartes thought that the great merit of his method as opposed to the traditional logic, was precisely that it was method of discovery and not merely a device for the presentation of discoveries already made. With the help of this method Descartes solved some problems which he had formally considered very difficult. There are various criticisms up on his method from different points of view. A D Lindsay criticise that Descartes professes to be applying the mathematical method to other enquiries, but that method is inapplicable to problems involving existence. Some thinkers argued that, the great mistake of Descartes’ methodological thought is in his identification of the feeling of certainty with self evidence. Intuition and deduction play important roles in methodology of Descartes, Descartes did not attempt to explain in detail the kind of deductive procedure which is presupposed in his methodology. The term intuition owning to the mystical claims which from time to time have been made on its behalf is itself of doubtful reputation. On account of this his method cannot be accepted as the sole philosophical method.

**Transcendental or Critical Method of Kant.**

Immanuel Kant’s transcendental method is treated as first attempt in modern philosophy to device a distinctively philosophical method. Hobbs, Descartes, Spinoza, Leibnitz and the empiricists were all enthusiastic methodologists before Kant, but the great draw back with them was that they were satisfied in applying the methods of
special sciences to the sphere of philosophy. As for example, Bacon accepted the inductive method of natural sciences. Hobbs and Descartes professed the mathematical method. Spinoza prescribed the geometrical method. Thus they cannot be called, in the true sense of the term, the inventors of any new and unique methods and philosophical enquiry. Kant’s claim to have devised a new technique of philosophical inquiry is usually implicit rather than explicit. Kant clarifies his methodological view by intending to show that the method of transcendental philosophy is a peculiar one and not the mere application of any of the prevailing methods of the sciences. He writes “mathematical method is unattended in the sphere of philosophy by the least advantage – except perhaps that it more plainly exhibits it’s on inadequacy. Geometry and philosophy two quite different things and consequently, the procedure of the one can never be imitated by the other”.

Kant was familiar with the preceding methods, with their merits, and yet was convinced that all of them were insufficient. He was especially disturbed by the extreme of analytic or empirical method of Hume, and believed that Hume’s scepticism undermined the sciences. Kant speaks three traditional methods of philosophy. They are dogmatism, scepticism, and criticism. According to Kant dogmatism has two forms viz. rationalism and empiricism. Descartes, Spinoza, Leibnitz were dogmatic procedure whereby they constructed their philosophical system by rational deduction from certain so-called self-evident truths. Descartes started with the certitude of self and deduced the existence of God from the innate idea of God. Spinoza started with the definition of substance, i.e. God. Leibnitz also started with the definition of the most perfect being, i.e. God. Thus they all used the same philosophical method, but reached, at the end to different philosophical conclusions, viz. dualism, monism, pluralism respectively. This shows inadequacy and failure of their professed methods. Kant observed that, such contradictory dogmatic philosophies inevitably lead to scepticism. On the other side, the dogmatic empiricist procedure dogmatically assumes ‘experience’ as the only source of true knowledge as against the dogmatic rationalists’ assumption that ‘reason’ is the only source of knowledge. As for example, Locke holds that all knowledge is derived from sensation and reflection. Berkeley argues that all knowledge derived from ‘ideas’. And Hume says that all knowledge derived from ‘impressions’. But this procedure, if carried out logically, also leads to scepticism, such as Hume’s scepticism. Nevertheless, he accepts the value of sceptical procedure, but merely as a means of awakening reason from its dogmatic dreams and exciting it to a more careful investigation into its own powers and retentions. He says that scepticism appears to be the shortest road to a permanent peace in the domain of philosophy. He writes metaphorically “scepticisms a resting place for reason, in which it may reflect on its dogmatically wonderings and gain some knowledge of the region in which it happens to be; that it may peruse its way with great certainty; but it cannot be its permanent duelling-place”. Hence according to him scepticism cannot be a rational method of philosophy. He was correct in accreting that scepticism doubted and denied man’s capacity for knowledge just as ‘uncritically as the dogmatism believed and presupposed it. Thus both are extremes and, being so, none of them can be a proper philosophical
method. After examining these existing philosophical methods, he felt the need for a new philosophical method. Thus failure of traditional methods compelled Kant to introduce a new method and he proposed criticism as a philosophical method.

Kant’s critical method should not be confused with the criticism in the usual sense, for it is not an ordinary criterion of the faculty of knowledge. Instead of asserting or denying, Kant investigates into the origin and extent of knowledge, into its sources and its limits, into the grounds of its existence and of its legitimacy. It is an enquiry into the ‘a priori’ conditions of knowledge, which are necessary and indispensable for it. Kant’s method was to start with the assumption of the truth of the basic sciences of his age, viz. of Euclidean mathematics and Newtonian physics, and then to inquire what is necessarily presupposed by those sciences. These presuppositions are the forms of the sensibility viz. space and time, and the categories of understanding. Kant’s method guided the reason to self contemplation, to a methodological examination of its capacity to know. With the help of his method he distinguished between the ‘matter’ and the ‘a priori forms’ of knowledge.

Kant called his critical method by the name of Transcendental method also, since he used this term as synonymous to ‘a priori’, in this sense of universal and necessary. For Kant the terms ‘a priori’ and ‘non-empirical’ have one and the same meaning. He also used the word ‘pure’ to designate ‘a priori’ and, therefore, in his terminology alone, we can speak of his method as a ‘non-empirical method’. Empirical methods proceeds inductively from experimental facts to hypotheses and generalisations grounded on those facts, where as Kant argue demonstratively from the facts to necessary conditions of their possibility. The advocates of empirical methods appeal to the faculty of experience, while Kant to its essential nature. So he says that “although all our knowledge begins with experience it does not follow that it arises out of experience”. Again he clarified the nature of his professed method by declaring that “our critique is not opposed to the dogmatic method; for scientific knowledge must rest on strict demonstration from safe ‘principles’.

In R. G. Kollingwood’s opinion, criticism was not the whole of Kant’s philosophy. Here Kollingwood takes criticism not in the sense of a philosophical method, but in an ordinary sense. While for Kant ordinary criticism not the aim of his Transcendental philosophy or method. He invented transcendental method or critical method for achieving other ends, which are more valuable than mere criticism. Thus for the true understanding of Kant’s notion of philosophical method we must distinguish between two sense of the word ‘critical method’. A method can be called critical when it destroys the false view without asserting or implying true ones. We should call it criticism rather than critical method for the sake of distinguishing it from the Kantian method. The Kantian method is not a bare criticism, but it is a way of thinking or a way of inquiry.
Evaluation of Kant’s Method.

Kant’s methodology had a great influence on subsequent philosophers. Critical method as a search for the essential presuppositions of any body of knowledge is very fruitful. Kant becomes able to reconcile empiricism with rationalism, due to his method. Kant’s critical method faces number of criticisms. Many scholars observe ‘agnosticism’ is a result of the application of his critical method. This agnostic element compels us to classify his philosophy as dogmatism. Copleston writes that “the critical philosophy, which is the outcome of his critical method, led somewhat paradoxically to a fresh outburst of metaphysical speculation. Some thinkers observe that Kant’s ‘Transcendental method’ lacks intellectual dynamism and it holds only psychological dynamism. Even though transcendental method has many drawbacks, Kant’s contribution to philosophical methodology cannot be denied.

Questions

A-Short Answer Questions (1 weightage)

1. Logico- Mathematical method

   In mathematical method we begin with axioms or self evident principles. In the mathematical method we deduce other principles and propositions from these self-evident principles. This deduction must always be a logical-deduction. The mathematical method always includes logical method i.e. deduction and therefore called “Logico- Mathematical method”.

2. Enumeration

   Descartes says that the act of deduction involves a movement of the mind in which we infer one thing from the other. He assumes a deduction is something intuitively seen. Descartes says that we call it ‘simple deduction’, and when deduction is ‘complex and involved’ it may be termed ‘enumeration’ or ‘induction’.

3. Critical method

   Kant’s philosophical method is known as critical method because it always investigates into the origin and extent of knowledge, into its sources and its limits, into the grounds of its existence and of its legitimacy Instead of asserting or denying.

B-Short Answer Questions (2 weightages)

1. State the four rules of Cartesian method.

   Descartes was deeply concerned with general principles of method. He had a vision of a new method of attaining knowledge of everything that his mind could grasp. In his opinion, the multitude of laws often gives occasion for vices and therefore we must have some definite laws for the direction of our thinking. So Descartes presents only four rules. In his ‘Discourse on The Method’ he states four rules of his method. The rules are:-
i. Never to accept anything as true unless we clearly know it as such: that is, carefully to avoid prejudice and to embrace only what presents itself to our mind clearly and distinctly that we have no occasion to doubt it.

ii. To divide each problem into as many parts as possible.

iii. To direct our thoughts in an orderly way: commence with the simplest objects and proceed step by step to the more complex.

iv. To make such complete enumeration that might be sure of leaving nothing out.

2. **Kant’s Transcendental method**

Immanuel Kant’s transcendental method is treated as first attempt in modern philosophy to device a distinctively philosophical method. After examining the existing philosophical methods, he felt the need for a new philosophical method. Kant’s critical method should not be confused with the criticism in the usual sense, for it is not an ordinary criterion of the faculty of knowledge. Instead of asserting or denying, Kant investigates into the origin and extent of knowledge, into its sources and its limits, into the grounds of its existence and of its legitimacy. It is an enquiry into the ‘a priori’ conditions of knowledge, which are necessary and indispensable for it. Empirical methods proceeds inductively from experimental facts to hypotheses and generalisations grounded on those facts, whereas Kant argue demonstratively from the facts to necessary conditions of their possibility. The advocates of empirical methods appeal to the faculty of experience, while Kant to its essential nature. So he says that “although all our knowledge begins with experience it does not follow that it arises out of experience”.

**C-Essay (4 weightages)**

1. Critically evaluate Cartesian method.
2. Give a detailed analysis upon transcendental method of Kant
UNIT- III

DIALECTICAL METHOD


FEATURES OF DIALECTICAL METHOD

Dialogue, Dialectics and Material Dialectics

Two distinguishing common features of dialectic are its discursive form and the place of contradiction in it. They are overlapping: they are not inter-exclusive. In fact, “dialectic is at once the consciousness of the interminable and total conflict in reason and the attempt to resolve it”. Due to this fact dialectic is a universal conflict, implicit also in philosophy. Opposition is the basis of dialectic. The most prominent and essential characteristic of dialectic is the place of ‘contradiction’ in it. In fact, contradiction is not a defect from the dialectical point of view, but it plays an important role in it. Zeno had presented at least two groups of antinomies: the first group concerns the antinomies of the continuous motion: the second group concerns antinomies of a purely logical character, of example, those of equality and similarity. Thus there are two types of antinomies, viz physical and logical in his dialectic. For Heraclitus everything was continually changing into its opposite. For him the flux of things becomes transformed into a ceaseless “strife of opposites”. Thus the law of opposition, the primary law of dialectic, is found in Heraclitus’ philosophy. Contradiction plays a great role both in traditional modern dialecticians.

The word ‘dialectic’ originated from the Greek word dialektos meaning conversation or discourse. In the ancient Greek period Zeno’s dialectic was a method of refutation by examining logical consequences. For Sophists, dialectic became a mere instrument for winning a dispute. Dialectic regained its purity in the Socratic Method. In the philosophy of Plato, dialectic was transformed into the theory of ideas. For Plato, dialectic came to mean the “art of methodical scientific inquiry by question and answer, akin to, though differing from, logic. Aristotle takes it as the argumentative process, whereby a comprehensive theory of first principles is constructed through the criticism and modification of other man’s conflicting doctrines. Later, formal logic came to be called dialectic by the stoic logicians. Kant takes dialectic as the criticism or the logic of transcendental illusion. For Hegel, dialectic is the process of the logical development of thought and reality through thesis and antithesis into a synthesis. The Hegelian dialectic is the method of “synthesis” of opposites, but the Kantian dialectic is not so. Marx views dialectic as the law of becoming and change according to which social events take place.
Traditional Dialectical Method- Method of Socrates

In the hands of Socrates, dialectic became the art of eliciting a satisfactory definition or, of rejecting an unsatisfactory definition of some ethical or other term by the systematic use of question and answer. Thus he stands in contrast to Sophist, since his professed aim was to seek the truth or to gain the knowledge. The main characteristic of Socratic Method is its “conversational form”. It is to be noted that the Socratic Method was not only a dialectic device but at the same time a technique for the actual discovery of truth. The assumption behind such device is Socrates’ firm conviction that despite the diversity of opinions there are universal truths upon which all men can agree. Due to such conviction he proceeds to unfold such truths by discussions. Socrates did not directly criticise the opponent’s position but by conversation he helped him to find out contradictions in his positions, recognised its inadequacy and amended his position. His method is known as art of intellectual midwifery. Intellectual midwifery means to bring to light that knowledge which the mind already possesses. Knowledge is to be sought within the mind and brought to birth by a process of questioning. He regarded ‘thinking’ as the discovery of what is within. In a philosophical inquiry what we are trying to do is not to discover something of which until now we have been ignorant; but to know ‘better’ something, which is in some sense we know already.

Socratic dialectic is ‘conceptual or definitional’. The immediate goal of Socratic dialectic is the acquisition of correct definitions of concepts, such as the ethical concepts of justice, virtue, etc. and the philosophical concepts of knowledge, wisdom etc., to clarify these notions. It is rememberable that definition according to Socrates includes precision, distinction, consistency and knowledge.

Socratic dialectic begins with his real or professed ignorance of truth of the matter under discussion. Socrates begins conversation with so-called wise men with a humble confession of his own ignorance and with an expression of his desire to learn something from them. And when in the course of discourse, they make some very positive assertion, he poses himself as much impressed by it, but questions them to exposed the hollowness of their answers. This is known as Socratic irony or sceptical nature. According to some historians of philosophy he shared the scepticism with the sophists. But there is a difference between their attitudes. The Sophistic scepticism was definitive and final, whereas Socratic scepticism is tentative and provisional. It is the first step in the pursuit of knowledge, grounded on some positive faith.

The next characteristic of his dialectic is “criticism”. He put searching questions to his philosophical opponent and helped him to find out contradictions and dogmas, fallacies and errors in his position. Thus he forced his adversary to accept the true view and ascertain the nature of truth by himself through “self-criticism”. The Socratic dialectical method consists in continuing “self-criticism” of a position, i.e., definition or principle, until a non-contradictory position is reached. Socratic dialogues at the end lead us to a surprising conclusion which is absolutely opposite to the assumed starting point.
The next characteristic of his method is that it is, in some sense, ‘empirical or inductive’. This consisted in leading the opponent on to a generalization by getting him to accept the truth of a series of propositions about particular cases. In the Socratic Method the process of induction evolves definitions. Thus his method of forming concepts or definitions was by induction. For example, in seeking the definition of ‘prudence’, he would take common examples of actions which are universally admitted to be prudent and then, would attempt to find the quality which they all have in common, and by virtue of which they are all classed together. We would again bring up fresh examples and see whether the concept agreed with the new cases, if not, the concept might have to be corrected in the light of new example. It is sometimes said that the Socratic dialectic is, at the same time, deductive. The reason is because in it a given definition is tested by deducing its consequences. We find in the Socratic dialogues that sometimes Socrates tests the given statements by going back at once to the first principles, sometimes by examining and criticising statements in the light of basic definitions, assumed to be correct. Here the procedure is deductive.

The dialectical method as employed by Socrates clearly displays the characteristics of (i) Conversational or Question and Answer form (ii) Conceptual (iii) Contradiction (iv) Methodological doubt or Socratic irony (v) Critical (vi) Inductive and Deductive determination of truth.

A dialogue is a process of conversation, argumentation and mutual supplementation of ideas between two individuals. With dialogue, a method has evolved in which the encounters with other thinkers are essential. It is just opposed to a monologue, which can formulate nothing but a dogma. As speaker, I am successful when my words elicit a response. Total silence or applause interrupts or ends my speaking. The listener who assimilates what I have said can produce an answer, which can stimulate me in return. My listener becomes speaker and vice-versa. Master and pupil exchange took places. In Socrates (470 -399 BC) dialogues, consensus and contradiction are the two operative terms for the possibility and development of ideas under the method of dialogue. Absolute consensus is nothing but a dogma. Absolute contradiction leads us nowhere. In dialogue two or more than two thinkers exchange their ideas through argumentation with the aim of the search for truth. It is only under certain degree of consensus that certain amount of contradiction is entertained and thinking is thus stimulated.

In Plato’s Theaetetus Socrates is often portrayed as seeking definition of particular excellence: courage in the Laches, soundness of mind in the Charmides, piety in the Euthyphro, or excellence in general in the Meno. The only method which is followed here is dialogue. Professing perplexity in the process of dialogue, Socrates goes another person into offering an account of an excellence, but refuses to be satisfied with examples, insisting on a general characterization that can be used to tell whether something is, indeed, an example of that excellence. When an account is offered, Socrates presses the other party with questions requiring a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ answer, and by means of inferences drawn from the statements to which the other party is committed,
Socrates drives him into contradiction. Another definition may be tried, or occasionally the other party may be given a chance to change his answer to one of Socrates’ questions. In either case another contradiction results and the dialogue eventually ends with the participants in the same state of perplexity as Socrates.

The essence of dialogue is its conversational or argumentative form. This characteristic of dialogue, which was explicitly expressed in Ancient Greek Dialectic, became implicit in the modern version of dialectic. Modern logicians accept “discursiveness” as the essence of different types of dialectic. According to Plato, if no one is willing to answer, dialectic cannot occur, except a man can play both parts at once. Modern logicians accept the second alternative and “play both parts at once”. We, therefore, cannot see conversation or discourse in modern dialectic but discursiveness which is the transformation of its original quality viz, conversation or discourse as its essential characteristic. In dialogue, both the speakers are related to each other like the subject and the predicate in a proposition; in dialectic, reason is both the subject and the predicate of the critique. Dialectic is inherent in the nature of reason itself.

**Modern Dialectical Method - Method of Hegel**

Hegel (1711-1776) emphasized the moments of consensus in his dialectic. Dialectic, in Hegel, is a process of change and development in which not only contradictions are identified but also they are overcome. In Socrates, human thought develops by the elimination of contradictions in the process of dialogue; but for Hegel, contradiction is internal to each term. Hegel recognizes the significance of identity in every moment of contradiction. The strikingly new interpretation of Hegel’s dialectic consists in his attempt to incorporate logic into it. It requires two lines of argument: first, showing that a given category is indispensable; and second, showing that it leads us to a characterization of reality which is somehow contradictory. Hegel, in fact, fuses these together. *Sublation*, in Hegel’s dialectic, means to resolve into a higher unity or to bring into the wholeness that which is fragmentary. This unity is not a permanent and fixed substratum, but a process wherein everything copes with its inherent contradictions and unfolds itself as a result. Unity contains its difference and involves self-differentiation and an ensuing unification. Every existence precipitates itself into negativity and remains what it is only by negating this negativity. Hegel calls it – “the negation of the negation”. It is a process in which the lower form is not rejected but assimilated in a higher form. And this process goes on, until it reaches to the “Absolute Spirit” which presents the “Truth” of the whole of reality.

It goes to the credit of Hegel to recognize the significance of identity in every moment of contradiction. The strikingly new interpretation of Hegel’s dialectic consists in his attempt to incorporate logic into it. It requires two lines of argument: first, showing that a given category is indispensable; the second, showing that it leads us to a characterization of reality which is somehow contradictory. Hegel, in fact, fuses these together. For Hegel, the operative terms for dialectic are ‘sublation’ and ‘contradiction’. Sublation, in Hegel’s dialectic, means to resolve into a higher unity or to bring into the
wholeness that which is fragmentary. The deduction of categories from one another in the *Science of Logic* shows that all lower categories are sublated into the higher ones and they have a direct reference to the wholeness.

According to Hegel dialectic is not merely a property of all our “thoughts” in virtue of which each particular thought necessarily passes over into another; but also a property of “things”, due to which every finite things necessarily belongs to all other things. Hence the way in which thought reaches truth is also the immediate expression of the innermost life of existence: when we think existence, existence thinks in us.

According to Plato every concept is dialectical. The same view is advocated by Hegel. According to him every concept as such is antinomical. Hegel, the greatest dialectician of modern period, was eager to stress that dialectic, together with its contradictions, was nothing accidental and subjective. For him, contradiction is necessary as a component of dialectic. Hegel believed that thesis, by rational necessity, gives rise to its opposite and so to contradiction. But reason cannot rest in what is self-contradictory and is, therefore, forced onwards to the synthesis. For Hegel what was thought to be a contradiction was necessary in the development of Reason and also of the Universe. Hegel himself speaks of ‘contradiction’ as ‘the root of all movement and life’. Every determination, every ‘concrete’, every concept is essentially a union of distinguished and distinguishable moments, which pass over through determinate and essential difference into contradictory moments. From the Hegelian point of view, Understanding is the cause of contradictions, and the function of Reason is to integrate or unite contradictory notions into new unities, where they will be shown to be necessary conditions of each other. But these unities or harmonies, in his view, do not involve mere rejection of the disharmonies and contradictions of dialectical thought.

The concise Encyclopaedia of Western Philosophy and Philosophers indicates that “Hegel gave a new turn to dialectic, which he regarded as a process, not merely of reasoning, but also found in history and in the universe as a whole, consisting of necessary movements from thesis to antithesis, and then to synthesis”. The basis of this conviction of Hegel is his assumption that “real is rational and rational is real”. He conceived both thought and reality as “dynamic” and developing according to dialectic. For Hegel, thought proceeds from the most simple, most abstract and empty concepts to the more complex, concrete and richer ones. These new concepts suggest new problems and contradictions which, in their turn, must be resolved in other concepts. This dialectical process continues until we reach the ultimate concepts. i.e., Absolute Idea. He says, “Whenever there is movement, wherever there is life; whenever anything is carried into effect in the actual world, there dialectic is at work.

The simplest way of explaining Hegelian dialectic will be to give a concrete example. For the sake of illustration we may take the following triad of categories of Hegelian logic.

i. Being - Thesis
ii. Nothing - Anti-thesis
iii. Becoming - Synthesis
Fichte for the first time introduced into German philosophy the famed triad of thesis, antithesis and synthesis. But he did not believe that antithesis could be deduced from the thesis. And, in his view, synthesis achieves nothing more than “uniting” what both thesis and antithesis already established. For Hegel the thesis or ‘Being’ means ‘pure’ being or entirely abstract idea of being, or being-as-such. Such a ‘being’ has in it no determinations. It is therefore, absolutely indeterminate, completely empty or a pure vacuum. The “Being” is the same as ‘nothing’. It means that the concept of “pure being” contains the idea of ‘nothing’. Consequently, we have a third category namely, the “idea of passage” or “Becoming”. The category of “Becoming” deduced from the relation between the two categories of “Being” and “Nothing”. The remarkable thing about Hegelian dialectic is that the first category in each triad is always an affirmative category; the second is always a negative or opposite of the first. This second is always contained in the first and the first category produces it out of itself. The first category contains its own ‘opposite’ and is ‘identical’ with it. This implies that the opposite categories are applicable to the same thing at the same time. But it is impossible to rest on this contradiction. The third category, therefore, resolves the contradiction. It contains within itself the “opposition” of the other two: but, at the same time, contains their underlying harmony and unity. This third category or synthesis presents itself as a new affirmative category, which thereby becomes the thesis of a new triad. The next point is that the ‘thesis’ is always regarded by Hegel as characterised ‘immediacy’. The second term is “mediate”. The third term is the merging of mediation in a new “immediacy”. Hegel believes in the two-fold activity of ‘syntheses’. viz., abolishment and preservation. In this way, as the dialectic proceeds nothing is ever lost. The higher category contains the lower categories “explicitly”, while the lower categories contain the higher ‘implicitly’. Thus his dialectical is of logical nature. Hegel distinguishes between ‘Intellect’ or ‘Understanding’ and ‘Reason’. According to him, the intellect can do nothing but distinguish, oppose and relate; it cannot conceive the unity of opposites. Understanding deals with the static law of non-contradiction. Hegel says that “Speculative Reason” can proceed ahead due to the contradictions towards an all-harmonious Absolute, which is an “identity of opposites”.

Bradley criticizes the Hegelian concept of dialectical triad and says that dialectic does not necessarily involve the identity of opposites.

The Marxian Dialectical Method

Marx (1818-1883) rejected the idealist interpretation of Hegel’s dialectics—“as a self development of thought”. Marx took from Hegel the principles and laws of dialectics, reworked it critically and applied to the materialist view of the world and history. Marx discovered the rational kernel with Hegel’s mystical shell by turning it right side up and placed it, on a materialistic foundation. The Marxian dialectic, contrary to the Hegelian one, aims at showing the mind-independent character of nature as well as the autonomy of the historical laws of development of social forms. While Hegel inverts the mind-nature relationship, making nature an idea of mind, Marx inverts Hegel’s inversion, purporting to show that it is mind which (dialectically)
emerges out of nature. It is inversion of inversion. The infinite mind or God is a creation of the alienated finite mind of man. Marx highlights the point that nothing in nature or society is isolated or self-contained. Everything depends upon and is influenced by other things. Beings and things themselves are interdependent or dialectically related. In Marx law of negation of negation is not flat negation, observes Lenin, but negation as a moment of conjunction, as a moment of development, in which the positive is conserved. Marx’s material dialectics rejects Hegel’s stress on the ontological primacy of spirit and consequently his confinement within idealism. For Marx, the dialectic movement in thought is derived from the actual movement of the real world.

Karl Marx gave up the idealism of Hegel; but preserved Hegelian dialectic, and made it a part of his own dialectical materialism by substituting “matter” for Hegel’s spirit. Thus, “with an upside down in metaphysics, Hegelian dialectic has become the foundation of the dialectical materialism of Marx”. Marx’s aim was to point out that all social events take place according to the laws of dialectic. He saw whole history from the point of view of a class-conflict which is based on material and economic conditions. We may present his dialectic in following triadic form

i. Thesis - Bourgeois
ii. Antithesis - Proletariat
iii. Synthesis - Classless Society

The distinguishing factor of Marx’s dialectic is that we get only one triad in it, while in Hegelian dialectic there are so many triads.

Negation is the basis of Marx’s dialectic as contradiction is of Hegelian dialectic. In his “Poverty of Philosophy”, Marx writes, “the existence of two mutually contradictory aspects, their flowing together into a new category, comprises the essence of dialectical progress”. Marxists define dialectic in terms of “negation of negation”. An important feature of Marx’s dialectic is the place and status of man in it. It is positive and temporal dialectic. For Marxist, negation of negation, dialectic, is an extremely general law of development of nature, history and thought; a law which holds good in the animal and plant kingdom, in geology, in mathematics and in philosophy.

Dialectical Materialism, the philosophy of Marxism is the world-view of the working class. It is the science which studies the relationship of knowledge to the objective material world, as well as the most general laws of the movement and development of nature, society and thought. The philosophy of Marxism is called Dialectical Materialism because it represents the organic unity of materialism and dialectic. It is called materialism because it begins with the recognition of matter as the unique basis of the world, while it seems consciousness as a property of highly organized matter, as a function of the brain, as a reflection of the objective world. It is called Dialectical because it recognizes the general interconnection of objects and phenomena in the world, as well as the movement and development of the world as the result of the internal contradictions at work therein. Dialectical Materialism reflects the
most general laws of being and knowledge in a system of categories. Its essence lies in its application of the principles and laws of ‘Dialectics’ to the materialist view of the world and history.

Conclusion

In Socrates’ dialogues, there are two characteristic features; namely, consensus and contradiction. Socrates believed that one can arrive at the truth only by the process of exposing contradictions through the method of discussion. Having taken a cue from Socrates Hegel argued that absolute Idea or the Spirit, in search of self-realisation moves from Being to non-being to becoming. Marx took from Hegel’s idealistic principles and laws of dialectics, reworked it critically and applied to materialist view of the world and history.

A-Short Answer Type Questions – (1 Weightage)

Briefly explain the following.

1. Dialectic

   1. The oppositional, contradictory character of reality (Heraclitus, Plato, Hegel, Marx);

   2. A method for understanding reality by the triadic movement from thesis to antithesis to synthesis (Hegel, Marx);

   3. The highest level of knowledge, the construction of a totalizing philosophy in which all aspects of reality are synthesized into a rational conceptual whole (Plato, Hegel)

   The most admirable characteristic of dialectic is that it recognizes no authority. Therefore, it is a method of discovery and is essential to every type of philosophical enquiry.

2. Idealism

   Any metaphysical theory which holds that reality is mental, spiritual, or has the nature of mind, thought, or consciousness. Subjective idealism claims that the knowing subject or self is ultimate reality. Objective or absolute idealism claims that reality is objective or absolute mind, consisting of the totality of conceptual truth, manifesting itself in human belief, knowledge, art and philosophy.

3. Materialism

   Any monistic metaphysical theory which holds that ultimate reality is matter and that all seemingly nonmaterial things such as minds and thoughts are reducible to the motions of particles of matter. By contrast, idealism holds that ultimate reality is mental and that seemingly non-metal things such as material objects are reducible to the ideas of consciousness or mind.
B. -Short Essay or Paragraph Questions - (2 Weightage)

4. Explain the Salient Features of the Method of Dialectic

Two distinguishing common features of dialectic are its discursive form and the place of contradiction in it. They are overlapping: they are not inter-exclusive. In fact, “dialectic is at once the consciousness of the interminable and total conflict in reason and the attempt to resolve it”. Due to this fact dialectic is a universal conflict, implicit also in philosophy. Opposition is the basis of dialectic. The most prominent and essential characteristic of dialectic is the place of ‘contradiction’ in it. In fact, contradiction is not a defect from the dialectical point of view, but it plays an important role in it. Zeno had presented at least two groups of antinomies: the first group concerns the antinomies of the continuous motion: the second group concerns antinomies of a purely logical character, of example, those of equality and similarity. Thus there are two types of antinomies, viz physical and logical in his dialectic. For Heraclitus everything was continually changing into its opposite. For him the flux of things becomes transformed into a ceaseless “strife of opposites”. Thus the law of opposition, the primary law of dialectic, is found in Heraclitus’ philosophy. Contradiction plays a great role both in traditional modern dialecticians.

5. Discuss ‘Dialectical Materialism’

Dialectical Materialism, the philosophy of Marxism is the world-view of the working class. It is the science which studies the relationship of knowledge to the objective material world, as well as the most general laws of the movement and development of nature, society and thought. The philosophy of Marxism is called Dialectical Materialism because it represents the organic unity of materialism and dialectic. It is called materialism because it begins with the recognition of matter as the unique basis of the world, while it seems consciousness as a property of highly organized matter, as a function of the brain, as a reflection of the objective world. It is called Dialectical because it recognizes the general interconnection of objects and phenomena in the world, as well as the movement and development of the world as the result of the internal contradictions at work therein. Dialectical Materialism reflects the most general laws of being and knowledge in a system of categories. Its essence lies in its application of the principles and laws of ‘Dialectics’ to the materialist view of the world and history.

6. Explain Marxian Dialectics

Karl Marx gave up the idealism of Hegel; but preserved Hegelian dialectic, and made it a part of his own dialectical materialism by substituting “matter” for Hegel’s spirit. Thus, “with an upside down in metaphysics, Hegelian dialectic has become the foundation of the dialectical materialism of Marx”. Marx’s aim was to point out that all social events take place according to the laws of dialectic. He saw whole history from the point of view of a class-conflict which is based on material and economic conditions. We may present his dialectic in following triadic form
iv. Thesis - Bourgeois
v. Antithesis - Proletariat
vi. Synthesis - Classless Society

The distinguishing factor of Marx’s dialectic is that we get only one triad in it, while in Hegelian dialectic there are so many triads.

Negation is the basis of Marx’s dialectic as contradiction is of Hegelian dialectic. In his “Poverty of Philosophy”, Marx writes, “the existence of two mutually contradictory aspects, their flowing together into a new category, comprises the essence of dialectical progress”. Marxists define dialectic in terms of “negation of negation”. An important feature of Marx’s dialectic is the place and status of man in it. It is positive and temporal dialectic. For Marxist, negation of negation, dialectic, is an extremely general law of development of nature, history and thought; a law which holds good in the animal and plant kingdom, in geology, in mathematics and in philosophy.

C-Essay Questions – (4 Weightage)

7. Examine the salient features of the method of dialectics with reference to Socrates
8. Explain Hegelian dialectic

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UNIT – IV

METHOD OF ANALYSIS

Historical introduction to the method of analysis - Analytic method of Russell and Wittgenstein.

Historical introduction to the method of analysis

In 20th-century philosophical movement, Analytic Philosophy dominant in Britain and the United States. The main aim is to clarify language and analyze the concepts expressed in it. The movement has been given a variety of designations, including linguistic analysis, logical empiricism, logical positivism, Cambridge analysis, and Oxford philosophy. The last two labels are derived from the universities in England where this philosophical method has been particularly influential. Analytic and linguistic philosophers agree that the proper activity of philosophy is clarifying language, or clarifying concepts. Russell describes his method as the logical-analytic method of philosophy.

Diversity of views exists among analytic and linguistic philosophers regarding the nature of conceptual or linguistic analysis. Some have been primarily concerned with clarifying the meaning of specific words or phrases as an essential step in making philosophical assertions clear and unambiguous. Others have been more concerned with determining the general conditions that must be met for any linguistic utterance to be meaningful; their intent is to establish a criterion that will distinguish between meaningful and nonsensical sentences. Still other analysts have been interested in creating formal, symbolic languages that are mathematical in nature. Their claim is that philosophical problems can be more effectively dealt with once they are formulated in a rigorous logical language.

Russell, strongly influenced by the precision of mathematics, was concerned with developing an ideal logical language that would accurately reflect the nature of the world. Russell maintained that complex propositions can be resolved into their simplest components, which he called atomic propositions. These propositions refer to atomic facts; the ultimate constituents of the universe. The key figures of the movement were British philosopher and mathematician Bertrand Russell and Austrian-born British philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein.

Russell’s philosophy of pluralism (logical atomism) has important connection with his work in logic. He chooses the expression logical atomism as a label for his philosophy. His philosophy may be looked at as two themes, ontology and theory of knowledge. By ontology he meant what there is- some account of what are taken to be
basic as fundamental types of reality. By theory of knowledge he is meaning a critical examination of ways to justify our claims to know the truth about something- by what types of argument and methods, using what types of premises and rules of inference we might undertake to uphold our conclusions. One important link in Russell’s writings between these two themes concern with formulating a theory of truth. For Russell, logic in one sense is the essence of philosophy.

Ludwig Wittgenstein, Austrian-British philosopher, was one of the most influential thinkers of the 20th century. He is noted for his contribution to the movement known as analytic and linguistic philosophy. Wittgenstein’s philosophical life may be divided into two distinct phases: an early period, represented by the Tractatus, and a later period, represented by the Philosophical Investigations. Wittgenstein consistently viewed philosophy as linguistic or conceptual analysis. In the Tractatus he argued that philosophy aims at the logical clarification of thoughts. In the Philosophical Investigations, he maintained that philosophy is a battle against the fascination of our intelligence by means of language.

ANALYTIC METHOD OF RUSSELL

Bertrand Russell (1872-1970)

British philosopher, mathematician, social critic and writer who had a profound influence on the development of symbolic logic and 20th-century analytic philosophy. Born in Trelleck, Wales, on May 18, 1872, Russell was educated at Trinity College, University of Cambridge. After graduation in 1894, he traveled in France, Germany, and the United States and was then made a fellow of Trinity College. From an early age he developed a strong sense of social consciousness. At the same time, he involved himself in the study of logical and mathematical questions. He had made his special fields and on which he was called to lecture at many institutions throughout the world. He achieved prominence with his first major work, The Principles of Mathematics (1902), in which he attempted to remove mathematics from the realm of abstract philosophical notions and to give it a precise scientific framework.

Russell then collaborated for eight years with the British philosopher and mathematician Alfred North Whitehead to produce the monumental work Principia Mathematica (3 vols, 1910-1913). This work showed that mathematics can be stated in terms of the concepts of general logic, such as class and membership in a class. It became a masterpiece of rational thought. Russell and Whitehead proved that numbers can be defined as classes of a certain type, and in the process they developed logic concepts and a logic notation that established symbolic logic as an important specialization within the field of philosophy. In his next major work, The Problems of Philosophy (1912), Russell borrowed from the fields of sociology, psychology, physics, and mathematics to refute the tenets of idealism, the dominant philosophical school of the period, which held that all objects and experiences are the product of the intellect. Russell, a realist, believed that objects perceived by the senses have an inherent reality independent of the mind.
Russell condemned both sides in World War I (1914-1918), and for his uncompromising stand he was fined, imprisoned, and deprived of his teaching post at Cambridge. In prison he wrote *Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy* (1919), combining the two areas of knowledge he regarded as inseparable. After the war he visited the Russia, and in his book *Practice and Theory of Bolshevism* (1920) he expressed his disappointment with the form of socialism practiced there.

Russell received the 1950 Nobel Prize for Literature and was cited as the champion of humanity and freedom of thought. He led a movement in the late 1950s advocating unilateral nuclear disarmament by Britain, and at the age of 89 he was imprisoned after an antinuclear demonstration. He died on February 2, 1970.

Russell also made a major contribution to the development of logical positivism, a strong philosophical movement of the 1930s and 1940s. Austrian philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein, Russell's student at Cambridge, was strongly influenced by his original concept of logical atomism. In his search for the nature and limits of knowledge, Russell was a leader in the revival of the philosophy of empiricism in the larger field of epistemology. In *Our Knowledge of the External World* (1926) and *Inquiry into Meaning and Truth* (1962), he attempted to explain all factual knowledge as constructed out of immediate experiences. Among his other books are *A History of Western Philosophy* (1945), *My Philosophical Development* (1959), and *The Autobiography of Bertrand Russell* (3 vols, 1967-1969) are the other works.

**Logical Atomism**

The theory of logical atomism is a crucial tool in Russell’s philosophical method. Logical atomism contends that, through rigorous and exacting analysis, language—like physical matter—can be broken down into smaller constituent parts. When a sentence can be broken down no further, we are left with its logical atoms. By examining the atoms of a given statement, we expose its underlying assumptions and can then better judge its truth or validity. Take, for example, the following sentence: “The King of America is bald.” Even this deceptively simple sentence can be broken down into three logical components:

1. There exists a King of America.
2. There is only one King of America.
3. The King of America has no hair.

We know, of course, that there is no King of America. Thus the first assumption, or atom, is false. The complete statement “The King of America is bald” is untrue, but it isn’t properly false because the opposite isn’t true either. “The King of America has hair” is just as untrue as the original statement, because it continues to assume that there is, in fact, a King of America. If the sentence is neither true nor false, what kind of claim on the truth can it make? Philosophers have debated whether the sentence, in fact, has any meaning at all. What is clear is that applying the concepts of logical atomism to language reveals the complexity of the concepts truth and validity.
The Theory of Descriptions

The theory of descriptions represents Russell’s most significant contribution to linguistic theory. Russell believed that everyday language is too misleading and ambiguous to properly represent the truth. If philosophy was to rid itself of mistakes and assumptions, a purer, more rigorous language would be required. This formal, idealized language would be based on mathematical logic and would look more like a string of math equations than anything ordinary people might recognize as a language.

Russell’s theory offers a method for understanding statements that include definite descriptions. A definite description is a word, name, or phrase that denotes a particular, individual object. That chair, Bill Clinton, and Malaysia are all examples of definite descriptions. The theory of descriptions was created to deal with sentences such as “The King of America is bald,” where the object to which the definite description refers is ambiguous or nonexistent. Russell calls these expressions incomplete symbols. Russell showed how these statements can be broken down into their logical atoms, as demonstrated in the previous section. A sentence involving definite descriptions is, in fact, just a shorthand notation for a series of claims. The true, logical form of the statement is obscured by the grammatical form. Thus, application of the theory allows philosophers and linguists to expose the logical structures hidden in ordinary language—and, it is hoped, to avoid ambiguity and paradox when making claims of their own.

Set Theory

The ability to define the world in terms of sets is crucial to Russell’s project of logicism, or the attempt to reduce all mathematics to formal logic. A set is defined as a collection of objects, called members. We can speak of the set of all teaspoons in the world, the set of all letters in the alphabet, or the set of all Americans. We can also define a set negatively, as in “the set of all things that are not teaspoons.” This set would include pencils, cell phones, kangaroos, China, and anything else that’s not a teaspoon. Sets can have subsets (e.g., the set of all Californians is a subset of the set of all Americans) and can be added and subtracted from one another. In early set theory, any collection of objects could properly be called a set.

Set theory was invented by Gottlob Frege at the end of the nineteenth century and has become a major foundation of modern mathematical thought. The paradox discovered by Bertrand Russell in the early twentieth century, however, led to a major reconsideration of its founding principles. Russell’s Paradox showed that allowing any collection of objects to be termed a set sometimes creates logically impossible situations—a fact that threatens to undermine Russell’s greater logic’s project.

Russell’s Paradox

Russell’s Paradox, which Russell discovered in 1901, reveals a problem in set theory as it had existed up to that point. The paradox in its true form is very abstract and somewhat difficult to grasp. It concerns the set of all sets that are not members of
themselves. To understand what that refers to, consider the example of the set containing all the teaspoons that have ever existed. This set is not a member of itself, because the set of all teaspoons is not itself a teaspoon. Other sets may, in fact, be members of themselves. The set of everything that is not a teaspoon does contain itself because the set is not a teaspoon. The paradox arises if you try to consider the set of all the sets that are not members of themselves. This meatiest would include the set of all teaspoons, the set of all forks, the set of all lobsters, and many other sets. Russell poses the question of whether that set includes itself. Because it is defined as the set of all sets that are not members of themselves, it must include itself because by definition it does not include itself. But if it includes itself, by definition it must not include itself. The definition of this set contradicts itself.

One of the most famous examples is the barber paradox. In a certain town, there is a barber who shaves the men who do not shave themselves. The paradox arises when we consider whether the barber shaves himself. On one hand, he can’t shave himself because he’s the barber, and the barber only shaves men who don’t shave themselves. But if he doesn’t shave himself, he must shave himself, because he shaves all the men who don’t shave themselves. This paradox resembles Russell’s in that the way the set is defined makes it impossible to say whether a certain thing belongs to it or not.

Russell’s Paradox is significant because it exposes a flaw in set theory. If any collection of objects can be called a set, then certain situations arise that are logically impossible. Paradoxical situations such as that referred to in the paradox threaten the entire logical project. Russell argued for a stricter version of set theory, in which only certain collections can officially be called sets. These sets would have to satisfy certain axioms to avoid impossible or contradictory scenarios. Set theory before Russell is generally called naïve set theory, while post-Russell set theory is termed axiomatic set theory.

Short answer question

1   Describe logical atomism(2 weightages)

Ans:
The term was used in an essay by Russell in the year 1911. The term became widely known when Russell gave a series of lectures in 1918 entitled *The Philosophy of Logical Atomism*.

Russell says that the World contains facts. The facts are complex structures consisting of objects (Particulars). This he defines as objects' relations in terms of atomic facts. It is a fact either from an object with a simple property or from different objects in relation to each. In addition, there are judgments (beliefs), which are in a relationship to the facts, and by this relationship either true or false.

According to this theory, even ordinary objects of daily life are apparently complex entities. According to Russell, words like this and that are word used to denote particulars. In contrast, ordinary names such as Socrates actually are definitive
descriptions. In the analysis of "Plato talks with his pupils", "Plato" needs to be replaced with something like "the man that was the teacher of Aristotle talks to his pupils". Russell had already in 1905 criticized Alexius Meinong whose theories led to the paradox of the simultaneous existence and non-existence of fictional objects. This theory of descriptions was crucial to logical atomism as Russell believed that language mirrored reality.

**ANALYTIC METHOD OF WITTGENSTEIN**

**Wittgenstein, Ludwig** (1889-1951)

Austrian-British philosopher, who was one of the most influential thinkers of the 20th century. He is noted for his contribution to the movement known as analytic and linguistic philosophy. Born in Vienna on April 26, 1889, Wittgenstein was brought up in a wealthy and cultured family. After attending schools in Linz and Berlin, he went to England to study engineering at the University of Manchester. His interest in pure mathematics led him to Trinity College, University of Cambridge, to study with Bertrand Russell. There he turned his attention to philosophy. In 1918 Wittgenstein had completed his *Tractatus Logico-philosophicus* (1921). Subsequently, he turned from philosophy and for several years taught elementary school in an Austrian village. In 1929 he returned to Cambridge to resume his work in philosophy and was appointed to the faculty of Trinity College. Soon he began to reject certain conclusions of the *Tractatus* and to develop the position reflected in his *Philosophical Investigations* (pub. posthumously 1953). Wittgenstein retired in 1947; he died in Cambridge on April 29, 1951. A sensitive, intense philosopher often sought solitude and was frequently depressed; Wittgenstein was noted for his simple style of life and dress.

Wittgenstein’s philosophical life may be divided into two distinct phases: an early period, represented by the *Tractatus*, and a later period, represented by the *Philosophical Investigations*. Wittgenstein consistently viewed philosophy as linguistic or conceptual analysis. In the *Tractatus* he argued that philosophy aims at the logical clarification of thoughts. In the *Philosophical Investigations*, he maintained that philosophy is a battle against the fascination of our intelligence by means of language.

**A. The Tractatus**

In his first period *Tractatus* he developed his concept of meaning through the logical analysis of language and experience. According to him, philosophy is nothing but analysis and discussion of language and he gives two components (1) the picture theory and (2) truth function theory. Wittgenstein was very much influenced by Russell and German philosopher Frege and the traces can be seen in many of the basic views of the *Tractatus*. *Tractatus* consists of comments, criticisms, suggestions and dogmatic declarations. It also includes metaphysical, logical and semantic discussion with Frege and Russell. The *Tractatus* offers an extreme scientism and according to which only the natural sciences are cable of making meaningful statements. The Vienna Circle also influenced and it took *Tractatus* as the condemnation of metaphysics. Wittgenstein
suggested that all the sentences of the language are truth functions of atomic sentences like logical proposition. *Tractatus* contains reflections on questions in logic the philosophy of mathematics, the philosophy of physics, ethics and so on. Things and situations are the fundamental ontological categories in the *Tractatus*. According to Wittgenstein, everything which one can speak about /think of, is either a thing or a situation

**Picture theory of meaning**

Wittgenstein says language is a picture of reality. The simple names in language correspond to the simple things in the world. The elementary sentences in the language correspond to the state of affairs. Wittgenstein states that language containing indicative sentences and designed solely for an objective scientific description of reality. He says the name signifies the objects of which it is the name. So every name designates exactly one object.

The central feature of the *Tractatus* is the distinction Wittgenstein draws between "showing" and "saying." On the one hand, in a sequence of numbered sentences Wittgenstein develops his picture theory of meaning. This picture theory defines the limits of what can be said But it is a consequence of the theory that the sentences of the *Tractatus* itself cannot sensibly be said. Instead, the limits they describe can only be shown. Wittgenstein's distinction between saying and showing turns the book from a treatise on the logical foundations of language to a work on metaphysics and, Wittgenstein himself claimed, ethics. The basic intuition behind the *Tractatus* is Wittgenstein's conviction that all languages share a common logical form, a form they also share with the world. In fact, this shared form makes it possible for sentences to "say" something. What a sentence says is just the logical picture it presents of the world. It is the understanding that sentences are pictures that leads to the distinction between showing and saying. Sentences give pictures of the world but they cannot give pictures of themselves. They show the logical form they share with the world, but they cannot say it. Sentences can only show their logical form, because trying to make them say it pushes language beyond the limits of sense. The term truth function plays a dominant role in Wittgenstein’s theory of language. He says that all propositions are truth functions of elementary propositions. Since language represents the facts of experience the relationship between facts and the linguistic expression, therefore, must indeed be very close. He states that proposition may be true or false. If the proposition is correspondence to the fact, then it is true, otherwise false.

According to the *Tractatus*, sentences like tautologies are not really sentences at all. They are pseudo-sentences. Pseudo-sentences transgress the bounds of sense because instead of just showing their sense in a picture of a possible state of affairs, they try to say something necessary about the forms and limits of sense. But if sentences say something and have sense only by presenting pictures of the world, then pseudo-sentences, which do not present such pictures, say nothing. They are nonsense. Like tautologies and contradictions, all of the sentences in the *Tractatus* lack sense. By
describing the limits of what can be said, they go beyond them. Wittgenstein's attempt
to describe the limits of language from within marks his project as Kantian.
Wittgenstein recognized that there is no vantage point outside language from which to
describe the limits of language, just as Kant had tried to show that there is no vantage
point outside experience from which one can describe the limits of all possible
experience. And just as Kant emphasized that reason constantly and inevitably seeks to
transgress its limits, so Wittgenstein believed that we constantly try to say what cannot
be said. According to Wittgenstein’s early view of sense and meaning, most
philosophical theories, and in particular ethical discussions, come out as nonsense. It
was for this reason that he thought he had solved philosophy's problems. However,
calling them nonsense did not for Wittgenstein mean that they are unimportant. On the
contrary, Wittgenstein thought that some nonsense, like the Tractatus, could be
illuminating. This is the source of Wittgenstein's so-called mysticism.

B. Philosophical Investigations

Ludwig Wittgenstein is distinguished among philosophers for developing two
very different philosophical theories. Wittgenstein sought to define the limits of
thought. He took language as his starting point. In his early work, Wittgenstein argued
that sentences picture the world by reflecting its logical structure, that is, the
arrangement of simple objects in a state of affairs. According to the theory of meaning
developed in this period, most traditional philosophical problems lie outside the limits
of what can be sensibly said. Wittgenstein's later work rejects the systematic aspirations
of his early theory. A new understanding of language as first and foremost a product of
social convention replaces the early realism. This new understanding of language in
turn implies a new conception of meaning and philosophical method, both of which are
perhaps most prominently displayed in what has come to be known as the private
language argument.

Language consists of language games that reflect forms of life. For many
expressions, the meaning is the use: To grasp the meaning of such an expression is to
know how to use it.

Wittgenstein's major works are notoriously obscure and dense. His writing style
is austere, almost epigrammatic. Two works in particular represent Wittgenstein's two
distinct conceptions of philosophy. Philosophical Investigations contains the core of
Wittgenstein's refutation of his own early theory. In addition to these two authorized
works, collections drawn from Wittgenstein’s lectures and notebooks have been
published by colleagues and friends. In contrast with the Tractatus, we find a
challenging element in the early, middle and later philosophy in Wittgenstein. In his
later philosophy language has a multiple use.

The analogy of a chess game is often used to illustrate what Wittgenstein saw as
the problem with thinking we learn a language by way of ostensive definitions.
Someone who just knows that the king is the tallest piece on the board does not yet
understand the meaning of the king. He does not understand even if he knows in
addition how the king moves. To understand the meaning of the king is to understand its function in the game as a whole. Similarly, Wittgenstein argued in the investigations, to grasp the meaning of a word is to know how to use it in a given context, that is, a particular language game, a linguistic procedure. Meaning is use. Learning a language is like learning a game or, more accurately, multitude of related games. In the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein asserted that the sentences of a language reflect the logical structure of the world in a kind of systematic unity. The investigations reject this view.

Language is, instead, made up of interrelated language games that reflect forms of life. It is not as though each game has definite boundaries and a distinct identity. It is not even possible to say precisely what a game is. Rather, language games are brought together by resemblances like those that mark the members of a family. The rules of the games are embedded in the grammar of the language. By grammar, Wittgenstein meant more than just how words are combined correctly in a sentence. He also meant to refer to the kinds of contexts in which certain words and sentences make sense. In the *Tractatus*, philosophical problems arise when language transgresses the limits of sense. In the Investigations, they arise when philosophers transgress the limits of grammar by confusing the limits of a language game. For instance, one speaks of having an understanding as though this were like having an apple, and one may then begin to wonder where the understanding is located (thus confusing the game of mental processes with that of material objects). In such situations, Wittgenstein claimed, meaning is lost, language is idling. The new purpose of philosophy is to combat such confusion. The *Philosophical Investigations* is a kind of dialogue. The author speculates and raises questions designed to show an opponent where he or she has gone astray. This is nowhere more true than in the passages of the private language argument, where Wittgenstein argues against the sophist, who believes it is possible, and even unavoidable, to speak a language and live in a world of one’s own. The author of the Investigations corrects the sophist of the *Tractatus*.

**Short answer questions (2 weightages)**

1. Explain the Picture theory of meaning

   Ans:

   Wittgenstein says language is a picture of reality. The simple names in language correspond to the simple things in the world. The elementary sentences in the language correspond to the state of affairs. Wittgenstein states that language containing indicative sentences and designed solely for an objective scientific description of reality. He says the name signifies the objects of which it is the name. So every name designates exactly one object.

   The term truth function plays a dominant role in Wittgenstein’s theory of language. He says that all propositions are truth functions of elementary propositions. Since language represents the facts of experience the relationship between facts and the linguistic expression, therefore, must indeed be very close. He states that proposition may be true or false. If the proposition is correspondence to the fact, then it is true, otherwise false.
2. Distinguish between ‘showing’ and ‘saying’

Ans:

The central feature of the *Tractatus* is the distinction Wittgenstein draws between "showing" and "saying." On the one hand, in a sequence of numbered sentences Wittgenstein develops his picture theory of meaning. This picture theory defines the limits of what can be said. But it is a consequence of the theory that the sentences of the *Tractatus* itself cannot sensibly be said. Instead, the limits they describe can only be shown. What a sentence says is just the logical picture it presents of the world. It is the understanding that sentences are pictures that leads to the distinction between showing and saying. Sentences give pictures of the world but they cannot give pictures of themselves. Sentences can only show their logical form, because trying to make them say it pushes language beyond the limits of sense.

3. Describe the language game

Ans:

Wittgenstein believed that the narrow view of language reflected in the *Tractatus* was mistaken. In the Philosophical Investigations he argued that if one actually looks to see how language is used, the variety of linguistic usage becomes clear. Words are like tools, and just as tools serve different functions, so linguistic expressions serve many functions. Although some propositions are used to picture facts, others are used to command, question, pray, thank, curse, and so on. This recognition of linguistic flexibility and variety led to Wittgenstein’s concept of a language game and to the conclusion that people play different language games. The scientist, for example, is involved in a different language game than the theologian. Moreover, the meaning of a proposition must be understood in terms of its context, that is, in terms of the rules of the game of which that proposition is a part. The key to the resolution of philosophical puzzles is the therapeutic process of examining and describing language in use.

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UNIT -V

PRAGMATIC METHOD

Pierce and William James

INTRODUCTION

Pragmatism is essentially an American philosophical movement that came to prominence during the last hundred years. It has been called “a new name for an old way of thinking.” It strongly reflects some of the characteristics of American life. It spread through America and Europe as the fashionable philosophy for more than twenty years. Pragmatism is connected with such names as Charles S. Peirce (1839–1914), William James (1842–1910), and John Dewey (1859–1952). Pragmatism seeks to mediate between the empirical and idealist traditions and to combine what is most significant in each of them. Pragmatism is an attitude, a method, and a philosophy that uses the practical consequences of ideas and beliefs as a standard for determining their value and truth. William James defined pragmatism as “the attitude of looking away from first things, principles, ‘categories,’ supposed necessities; and of looking towards last things, fruits, consequences, facts.”

Pragmatism places great emphasis on method and attitude than on a systematic philosophical doctrine. It is the method of experimental inquiry extended into all realms of human experience. Pragmatism uses the modern scientific method as the basis of a philosophy. It has close resemblance with the sciences, especially the biological and social sciences, and it aims to make use of the scientific spirit and scientific knowledge to deal with all human problems, including those of ethics and religion.

As a movement in philosophy, pragmatism was founded for the purpose of mediating between two opposing tendencies in nineteenth century thought. Firstly there was empiricism and science, to which Darwin’s theory of evolution had contributed the most recent description of who human beings are. This tradition looked at the world and humans as parts of a mechanical or biological process in which the mind was an observer. Secondly there was also the tradition coming from Descartes and his rationalism and moving through the critical idealism of Kant, the absolute idealism of Hegel, and later romantic thought. In this stream, the human mind had enormous power, so that philosophers proceeded to construct theories about the whole nature of things.

Between these two traditions there was a gulf. From the scientific point of view, rationalist and idealist philosophies lacked objective evidence to support their claims. From the rational and idealist points of view, the assumptions of science were a threat to the humanistic side and the moral and religious beliefs of human beings. Pragmatism sought to mediate between these two traditions.
The pragmatists said that philosophy in the past had made the mistake of looking for ultimates, absolutes, eternal essences, substances, fixed principles, and metaphysical systems. The pragmatists stressed on empirical science and the problems of the material world and on nature as the only reality beyond which we cannot go. Experience is central to the Pragmatists and it is the result of the interaction of the organism with its environment. Although the idea of experience for the pragmatists was not limited to “sense experience,” they agreed with the empirical tradition that we have no conception of the whole of reality, that we know things from many perspectives, and that we must settle for a pluralistic approach to knowledge.

**HISTORY**

Pragmatic method is as old as the history of mankind. During the 5th century B.C. most of the Greek thinkers began to lose interest in the metaphysical quest to discover objective truth and absolute reality. The ontological suppositions and epistemological methods, that were laid down by the early Greek thinkers were found inadequate in solving human problems. During this period, the Sophists dominated the philosophical world. They asserted that the test of any philosophy was its ability to explain the world of our senses. They recognized sense – experience as different from person to person and thus were compelled to conclude that “Man is the measure of all things.” The Sophists were criticized for their subjectivism and relativism. In general from the Protagorean point of view, it can be seen that the Sophist’s test of truth was similar to the Pragmatic claim.

The Socratic – Platonic and Aristotelian traditions were the hindrances to all forms of subjectivism and relativism and thereby to the essential features of pragmatism. Nevertheless, both Plato and Aristotle contributed much to the background of Pragmatism. Plato anticipated the role of prediction in knowledge, which is much stressed in contemporary pragmatism. Epicureans believe that truth always practically improves the lot of its believer by minimizing pain and maximizing pleasure. Thus they showed their practical mental attitude towards philosophical problems like truth, knowledge etc. The tradition of pragmatism is also closely related to the Augustinian tradition, with its treatment of the faith-reason relationship. Here the role of faith in knowing is highlighted. But the basic difference between Augustine and the modern pragmatists is that the objects of knowledge for Augustine were universal and eternal, whereas Pragmatists objects of knowledge are particular and temporal.

We find several themes of modern pragmatism clearly expressed in Bacon’s philosophy. Bacon was convinced that the deductive, intuitive and primitive empirical approaches to philosophy were productive of mere pseudo-knowledge. He emphasized the role of observation in the achievement of knowledge. The main point where Bacon differs from modern pragmatism is that he believes an observer to be a passive agent in the acquisition of knowledge.
Kant was a precursor of pragmatism in many ways. His distinction between the activities of pure reason and of practical reason indicates his pragmatic attitude. Charles Pierce himself admits that the idea of pragmatism was suggested to him by Kant’s Critique of pure reason, and the term by his critique of practical reason. The pragmatists acknowledge the major Kantian insight of the importance of mind as an active agent in the interpretation of experience. The Pragmatists also acknowledges the Kantian critique of speculative metaphysics. In the opinion of some historians, Auguste Comte was important as a forerunner of pragmatism in that he suggested thought and reason to be unified.

Many thinkers have contributed to the general climate in which pragmatism was to develop. The actual foundations were laid by the American mathematician philosopher C S Pierce (1839-1914).

**IMPORTANT FEATURES OF PRAGMATISM**

Pragmatism is unique in many ways. Some of the main features of pragmatism may be examined.

Pragmatism is not interested in traditional philosophy. The pragmatists believe that it is futile to discuss ultimate questions and the view of reality having no relevance to concrete problems.

Pragmatism is inspired by actual human experiences. The pragmatists derive their doctrines from concrete realities of life. They do not start with presuppositions, eternal truth and apriori knowledge. Truth is a belief evolved through the test of experience.

Pragmatism is opposed to absolutism, absolute truth, absolute good, absolute reality. Everything is relative to time, needs and utility. Workability and usefulness determine the relevance of a belief. A belief helps us in achieving success and in forming useful habits.

Pragmatism is not a systematic theory or doctrine. It is a way of looking at life and its problems. It is a humanistic point of view which considers man as the centre of all knowledge.

Pragmatism is a philosophy of life that gives hope of a better future if human considerations govern our attitude and beliefs.

**PRAGMATIC METHOD-EXPOSITION**

Pragmatism is an attitude, a method, and a philosophy that uses the practical consequences of ideas and beliefs as a standard for determining their value and truth. It places great emphasis on method and attitude than on a systematic philosophical doctrine. It is the method of experimental inquiry which can be extended into all realms of human experience. It uses the modern scientific method as the basis of a philosophy. Its affinity is with the sciences, especially the biological and social sciences, and it aims to utilize the scientific spirit and knowledge to deal with all human problems.
The pragmatists criticize the older systems of philosophy such as materialism, idealism and realism. They opine that philosophy in the past had made the mistake of looking for absolutes, ultimates, eternal essences, fixed principles and metaphysical systems. The pragmatists emphasize empirical science and the changing world and its problems, and nature as the all inclusive reality. Experience is central to the pragmatists, and it is the result of the interaction of the organism and its environment.

The core of pragmatism was the “pragmatist maxim”, a rule for clarifying the contents of hypotheses by tracing their practical consequences. The most influential application of the pragmatist maxim was to the concept of truth. The pragmatists have also tended to share a distinctive epistemological outlook to the norms that govern inquiry.

Pragmatism is a method for making the way through the tangle of facts and data that confront us in science, metaphysics and everyday experience. It is an empirical attitude that turns away from the problematic abstract, absolutist, apriori attitudes of traditional philosophy and towards facts, practicality, and action.

CHARLES SANDERS PEIRCE

Charles S. Peirce, sometimes called the founder of pragmatism, was influenced by Kant and Hegel. Peirce believed that problems, including those of metaphysics, could be solved if one gave careful attention to the practical consequences of adherence to various ideas. Pragmatism is said to have originated in 1878, when Peirce published the article “How To Make Our Ideas Clear.”

The philosophical writings of Peirce consist of essays and manuscripts, many of which are fragmentary or incomplete. He was the rare combination of a natural scientist with a “laboratory habit of mind,” a careful student of philosophy, and a man with strong moral convictions. He is sometimes referred to as a philosopher’s philosopher, rather than a public or popular philosopher. Peirce was primarily a logician concerned with the more technical problems of logic and epistemology, and the methods of the laboratory sciences. He was interested in deductive systems, methodology in the empirical sciences, and the philosophy behind the various methods and techniques. His logic included a theory of signs and symbols, a field in which he did pioneer work. He viewed logic as a means of communication and a cooperative or public venture. His approach was to invite critical examination and seek aid from others in a continuous quest for the clarification of ideas. Peirce wished to establish philosophy on a scientific basis and to treat theories as working hypotheses. He called his approach pragmaticism.

The main problem before C S Peirce was: what method of inquiry is more effective? He reviewed various methods. He dismissed “the method of tenacity” in which we meet the future by blindly adhering to inherited convictions. He also rejected “the method of authority”, since it is a method in which we submit to an institutionally regulated set of beliefs. He also refused to accept the “apriori method”, a method
whereby we seek to base our beliefs on a few so called self evident principles. He accepts only the “general method of science”, a method that employs hypotheses, but require their empirical verification. It guides us to relevant and objective solutions to our concrete problems. Furthermore, scientific method alone is self corrective in the sense that it tests its claim on the continuing maxim of pragmatism rather than with its use and justification.

The earliest statement of Peirce’s pragmatism comes from his 1878 paper “How to make our Ideas clear”. In this paper Pierce introduces a maxim or principle which allows us to achieve the highest grade of clarity about the concepts we use. Peirce introduces this principle as a development of the rationalistic notion of “clear and distinct ideas”. There are three grades of clarity or understanding. The first grade of clarity about a concept is to have an unreflective grasp of it in everyday experience. The second grade of clarity is to be capable of providing a definition of the concept. This definition should also be taken from any particular experience. These two grades of clarity are only part way to a full understanding of reality. Peirce introduces his own third grade of clarity. Then to have a full understanding of some concept we must not only be familiar with it in day to day encounters, and to offer a definition of it, we must also know what effects to expect from holding that concept to be true.

One of Peirce’s main contributions to philosophy is his theory of meaning. He coined the word **pragmatism** from the Greek word **pragma** (“act” or “deed”) to emphasize the fact that words derive their meanings from actions. He set forth one of the first modern theories of meaning by proposing a technique for the clarification of ideas. The meaning of many ideas, Peirce said, is best discovered by putting them to an experimental test and observing the results. His criterion of meaningfulness was to appeal to the way an object **would** behave if it had a certain character or were of a certain kind. If an object were “hard” it would scratch other objects; if it were “volatile,” it would evaporate rapidly, and the like. Peirce argued that thinking always occurs in a context, not in isolation. Meanings are derived not by intuition but by experience or experiment. For these reasons, meanings are not individual or private but are social and public. If there is no way of testing an idea by its effects or public consequences, it is meaningless. To be able to distinguish between meaningful and meaningless is particularly important, Peirce thought, when you are considering opposing systems of thought.

Peirce’s empiricism is intellectualistic rather than voluntaristic; that is, emphasis is on the intellect and understanding rather than on will and activity. The irritation of doubt leads to the struggle to attain belief. The end of this inquiry, which aims to dispel doubt, is knowledge. Thus he does not stress sensation or volition as much as do later forms of popular pragmatism. Peirce is critical of positivism and mechanistic determinism, on the one hand, and intuitionism and a priori principles, on the other hand. Although he shares some of the positivists’ views, he does not share with them the idea that empiricism requires a denial of the possibility of metaphysics. In the field
of metaphysics as well as in all other areas of discourse, we must avoid the belief that we have attained finality. Peirce supports “fallibilism”; even the most intelligent people are apt to be mistaken. Progressive inquiry leads to constant modification. There is chance (tychism) because, Peirce maintained, although nature behaves in a lawlike way, that regularity is never exact. Chance, as well as habit, plays a real part in the occurrence of events in the world. Pragmatism replaces fixed systems of belief in philosophy and in science. Although Peirce gave his major attention to logic and methodology, his writings make clear that he left a place for an evolutionary idealism that stresses the need for a principle of love opposed to any narrow individualism in human affairs.

WILLIAM JAMES

The rapid development of pragmatism was due largely to the fertile soil it found in America and to the brilliant exposition made by William James. In his book Pragmatism, James contrasts the tender-minded rationalist, who usually has an idealistic and optimistic outlook, with the tough-minded empiricist, the lover of facts, who is often a materialist and a pessimist. James offers pragmatism as a philosophy that can satisfy both kinds of demands. It can remain religious like the rationalisms, but at the same time, like the empiricisms, it can preserve the richest intimacy with facts.”

RADICAL EMPIRICISM

James defines the term radical empiricism this way: “I say ‘empiricism’ because it is contented to regard its most assured conclusions concerning matters of fact as hypotheses liable to modification in the course of future experience.” He says, “To be radical, an empiricism must neither admit into its constructions any element that is not directly experienced, nor exclude from them any element that is directly experienced.” James includes relations, such as greater than, among the latter (directly experienced) elements.

Pragmatism, as we have seen, is the practice of looking toward results and facts instead of toward first principles and categories. It accepts the experiences and facts of everyday life as fundamental. Reality is just what it is experienced as being—flux or change. Because experience is fragmentary, pragmatists find things partly joined and partly disjoined, and accept them as they are. Consequently, they insist that reality is pluralistic rather than monistic or dualistic. There is the given—the data of the senses—which is brought in as stimuli from the region beyond us. Added to this is the interpretative element, which the conscious being supplies. The creative whole of experience, which includes both the given and the interpretative element, is the one reality we know. Knowledge is thus based directly on sense perception, or experience, which constitutes the continuous, flowing stream of consciousness.
JAMES’ THEORY OF TRUTH

William James said, “Truth happens to an idea.” What was so startling about this statement was that the more traditional theories of truth took virtually the opposite view—namely, that truth was a fixed or static relation. When James examined the traditional theories of truth, he demanded to know what “truth” means in operation. Truth must be the cash value of an idea. What other motive could there be for saying that something is true or not than to provide guides for practical behavior? James would ask, “What concrete difference will it make in life?” “A difference that makes no difference is no difference,” but only a matter of words. An idea becomes true or is made true by events. An idea is true if it works or if it has satisfactory consequences.

Truth is relative; it also grows. The true is “the expedient in the way of our thinking,” just as the right is “the expedient in the way of our behaving.” Ideas, doctrines, and theories become instruments to help us meet life situations; doctrines are not answers to riddles. A theory is created to suit some human purpose, and the only satisfactory criterion of the truth of a theory is that it leads to beneficial results. Workability, satisfactions, consequences, and results are the key words in the pragmatic conception of truth.

Summary

- Pragmatism is an attitude, a method, and a philosophy that uses the practical consequences of ideas and beliefs as a standard for determining their value and truth.
- Essentially an American philosophical movement, pragmatism has come to prominence in the last one hundred years.
- Pragmatism is essentially empirical in method. However, experience for the pragmatists is not limited to “sense experience.” We have no conception of the whole of reality; we know things from many perspectives and we must settle for a pluralistic approach to knowledge.
- Peirce is often credited with founding pragmatism in 1878, when he published an early essay.
- Concerned with logic, epistemology, and the methods of the laboratory sciences, he contributed an early modern theory of meaning to philosophy.
- He proposed that by putting ideas to an experimental test and observing the results, we can discover their meaning.
- James’ “radical empiricism” broadened the base of empiricism from the laboratory to human experiences and facts of daily life.
- James’ theory of truth stressed the criteria of satisfactory consequences, the difference an idea makes in life, the idea’s workability.
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QUESTIONS
A. Short answer (1 weightage)
1. Pragmatic Method.

   The pragmatists said that philosophy in the past had made the mistake of looking for ultimates, absolutes, eternal essences, substances, fixed principles, and metaphysical systems. The pragmatists stressed on empirical science and the problems of the material world and on nature as the only reality beyond which we cannot go. Experience is central to the Pragmatists and it is the result of the interaction of the organism with its environment.

2. Radical Empiricism.

   James defines the term radical empiricism as that which is contented to regard its most assured conclusions concerning matters of fact as hypotheses liable to modification in the course of future experience.” He says, “To be radical, an empiricism must neither admit into its constructions any element that is not directly experienced, nor exclude from them any element that is directly experienced.”

3. Pragmatic method of truth according to William James.

   William James said, “Truth happens to an idea.” What was so startling about this statement was that the more traditional theories of truth took virtually the opposite view—namely, that truth was a fixed or static relation. When James examined the traditional theories of truth, he demanded to know what “truth” means in operation. Truth must be the cash value of an idea. An idea becomes true or is made true by events. An idea is true if it works or if it has satisfactory consequences. *Workability, satisfactions, consequences, and results* are the key words in the pragmatic conception of truth.

B. Short Answer (2 weightages)
1. Pragmatism of William James

   The rapid development of pragmatism was due largely to the fertile soil it found in America and to the brilliant exposition made by William James. In his book *Pragmatism*, James contrasts the tender-minded rationalist, who usually has an idealistic
and optimistic outlook, with the tough-minded empiricist, the lover of facts, who is often a materialist and a pessimist. James offers pragmatism as a philosophy that can satisfy both kinds of demands. It can remain religious like the rationalisms, but at the same time, like the empiricisms, it can preserve the richest intimacy with facts.”

James defines the term *radical empiricism* this way: “I say ‘empiricism’ because it is contented to regard its most assured conclusions concerning matters of fact as hypotheses liable to modification in the course of future experience.” He says, “To be radical, an empiricism must neither admit into its constructions any element that is not directly experienced, nor exclude from them any element that is directly experienced.”

2. Pragmaticism.

Pierce was the rare combination of a natural scientist with a “laboratory habit of mind,” a careful student of philosophy, and a man with strong moral convictions. He was interested in deductive systems, methodology in the empirical sciences, and the philosophy behind the various methods and techniques. His logic included a theory of signs and symbols, a field in which he did pioneer work. He viewed logic as a means of communication and a cooperative or public venture. His approach was to invite critical examination and seek aid from others in a continuous quest for the clarification of ideas. Peirce wished to establish philosophy on a scientific basis and to treat theories as working hypotheses. He called his approach **pragmaticism**.

**Essay (4weightages)**

1. Briefly describe the historical development of Pragmatism.
2. Explain Pragmatism as explained by C.S.Pierce.
3. Elucidate the concept of Radical Empiricism according to William James.
UNIT – VI
PHENOMENOLOGICAL METHOD

Aims and characteristics of Phenomenological method – Husserl’s Phenomenological method.

Objective: To introduce phenomenology and phenomenological method, the essential characteristics of phenomenological method and the aim, justification and evaluation of phenomenological method.

Phenomenological Method-aims and characteristics of phenomenological method

Phenomenology is a method. Edmund Husserl is the founder of phenomenology. Phenomenology originated with the creative criticism of British Empiricism by Brentano and Husserl. For others, phenomenology is a philosophical movement, but for Husserl it is the only correct way of philosophizing.

Husserl was the first to use it as the name of a way of doing philosophy. Husserl used the term phenomenology to state a doctrine as well as a method. After the foundation of phenomenology, it is still impossible to define this method in a simple manner. It is a special cognitive procedure which is based on intuition. Intuition refers to the phenomena. It is an intellectual observation of phenomena.

Phenomena here means the object of phenomenological observation. The term phenomena has been used in many different senses by different thinkers. Therefore these meanings are to be distinguished from it’s phenomenological meaning in order to clarify the exact nature of phenomenological method.

Generally, ‘phenomena’ is contrasted with reality, because it is taken to be an appearance. But, this is not the phenomenological sense. The leading rule of phenomenological method is “Back to things themselves” whereby “things” are taken to mean just the ‘given’. Phenomenon is that which gives itself. It is a name for whatever appears to us in “immediate experience”. Phenomena are “essences” and are “intuited”. They are revealed by “bracketing experience”, and are intentional. The proper business of philosophy is the examination and description of all kinds of objects in a particular way that reveals them as phenomena.

By the slogan Zu den Sachen (to the things themselves) phenomenologist express his opposition to all reductionism. A phenomenologist attacks reductive procedure on the ground that it accepts certain statements without any careful examination. For example, “psychological atomism”, according to which consciousness is a set of contents, viz, sensations, feelings etc. overlooked the essential characteristic of consciousness which phenomenologist’s called “intentionality”. The
phenomenologist also opposes “scientism” which takes scientific or empirical statements as premises in philosophical arguments, for to consider philosophy as a branch of existing science is also an example of reductionism.

The process of reduction is an essential feature of this method, and it should not be confused with reductionism, because here “reduction” means “exclusion”. To reduce does not mean to eliminate or to put in doubt. The method of phenomenological reduction requires a threefold exclusion or reduction. First, the exclusion of all subjectivity, because it needs purely objective standpoint. Secondly, the exclusion of all theoretical knowledge. Thirdly, the exclusion of all tradition. The existence of the thing must be disregarded. Everything inessential must be excluded. Excluded elements are only overlooked or set aside, not denied. The phenomenological reduction is applied only for the duration of phenomenological method.

Exclusion of Subjectivity

Thought should be concentrated exclusively on the object to the complete elimination of everything subjective. The method means the exclusion of feelings, desires, personal attitudes etc. of the inquirer. The investigator should adopt a purely detached observation. It requires a contemplative attitude. This can be called the rule of objectivism. This rule shows that phenomenology is neither a science of objects nor a science of the subject. It is a science of ‘experience’ or what is given in immediate experience. It does not concentrate exclusively on either the objects of experience or on the subject of experience, but on the point of contact where being and consciousness meet. It is a study of consciousness as intentional, i.e., as directed towards objects. It is transcendental in the sense that it aims at disclosing the structures of consciousness. Phenomenological analysis is not the psychological analysis of consciousness; it is the analysis of transcendental consciousness.

Exclusion of Theory and Tradition

All the theories, deductions, hypotheses etc should be excluded. The phenomenologist should refuse to take help from any authoritative method. Only things as they are before our intellectual eye should be described. Husserl’s cry “To the things themselves” was a summon towards a more concrete and adequate description of experience. To free ourselves from preconceptions and abstractions is the first requirement of this method. One of the aims of phenomenological description is the possibility of a completely “original” description.

The Exclusion of Existence (Bracketing Existence)

A pure phenomenological method also demands the exclusion of the existence of the object. It is called “Bracketing Existence”, suspension of our belief in the existence of objects. Husserl calls this the “phenomenological epoche”. This characteristic shows the fundamental difference between the phenomenological and the empirical methods. In empirical methods we proceed from the ascertaining of facts i.e. from the ascertainment
of their existence. But there is no such ascertainment needed in the phenomenological procedure. The phenomenological method consists in describing objects as pure and simple intentions of consciousness, as meanings. The essence is neither “ideal reality” nor “psychological reality”, but ideal intention, intentional object of consciousness. To bracket existence is not to eliminate existence in general. It only means that even if the object does exist, it’s existence can be ignored. It is also possible to deal with those objects which are merely imagined. To view phenomenology as a kind of “essentialism” which is the direct opposite of “existentialism” is wrong since existence itself can be the object of phenomenological study. A phenomenologist is interested in essential relations and structures, not in particular facts or events as such. It is a purely descriptive study of the given without any metaphysical postulate like realism and idealism. Such metaphysical speculations are to be bracketed (simply set aside, though not declared meaningless. Such bracketing means the suspension of commonsense belief in a world of objects, existing independently and externally to consciousness as well as the suspension of belief in the existence of other minds. Husserl distinguished “suspending belief in the existence of objects” from Descartes’ method of doubt. Descartes’ method of doubt is the predecessor of the phenomenological method.

The Exclusion of Inessential

Essence is the real object of phenomenological inquiry. The phenomenological ‘essence’ is a phenomenon, which reveals itself. It excludes two things; Existence and everything contingent, i.e. inessential. By discovering the method of phenomenological reduction, Husserl emphasized the philosophical position which is neither objectivistic, nor naturalistic, nor metaphysical; neither psychologistic nor subjectivistic. A new field is opened up, the transcendental field. The essential purpose of the reduction is to bring to light the essential intentional contract between consciousness and the world. Marvin Farber views phenomenological reduction as the suspension of the natural world, both physical and psychological; of all works of the technical and fine arts; of works of the sciences; of practical and aesthetic values of all kinds. The essence in phenomenology is the fundamental structure of the object, the whole underlying Content including qualities etc. For an empiricist, essence is relative., i.e. what is essential to a thing from a particular point of view may be inessential from another point of view. The phenomenologist reject this view. In phenomenology “whatness of the object can be called the essence. Phenomena are such essences and they are intuited.

“Back to the Things Themselves”(The Observation of essences)

Phenomenological method is a method of intuition, i.e.’ intellectual observation’. A phenomenologist must study only that which is’ given’. This” given” is what Husserl calls the phenomenon. Phenomenon means that which lies clearly before us. Intuition in phenomenology is seeing of some extraordinary kind. Intuition is not psychological, but it is epistemological. Knowledge of essences is a self-evident knowledge which is based on intuition. This is eidetic intuition, intuition of eidos or essences.
Phenomenological Description

Phenomenology is a descriptive program. The phenomenological description as essential description is held to be valid with unconditioned necessity. The corresponding “noetic” side of categorical intuition must be described. Consciousness must not be merely described, it must be apprehended and described eidetically or essentially i.e. intentionally.

The Ideal of Presuppositionless inquiry.

The claim of presuppositionless implies that in the phenomenological way of thinking we have to avoid all unexamined assumptions, and to hold the belief that such assumptions are unnecessary.

Presuppositionless does not mean to begin in complete ignorance. A presuppositionless philosophy is one which will reach what is absolutely primary or most fundamental in experience. This ideal was first provided by the method of phenomenological reduction. It was recognized by Husserl as the acid test of a truly critical philosophy. The aim of Husserl’s phenomenological inquiry was always the radicalism of method, and for achieving this aim he proposed freedom from presuppositions as an” ideal “. The phenomenological way of philosophizing requires that there should be no presuppositions.

Phenomenological method is intended to be free from all prejudices, and dogmas. It is freedom from the metaphysical, natural, scientific and psychological presuppositions. In phenomenology nothing is presupposed except “givenness simply”. Nothing is assumed, not the spatio-temporal world, none of the scientific theories which are used to interpret the world of existence, no independent or continuous existence, no other human beings, not one’s own bodily existence or empirically conditioned ego, not the ideal science of pure logic, nor any of the idealizations of theoretical knowledge. There is only the self-validating consciousness itself.

Radical

The term “radical” is very popular among phenomenologists. Negatively it means freedom from presuppositions or beliefs. Positively, it is meant the insightful establishment of all elements of knowledge. It requires that theoretically all scientific and prescientific assertions concerning nature must be eliminated. This procedure also includes the elimination of the existence of the investigator himself or of his psychical faculties. This procedure is radical in the sense that no existence is assumed. In essential intuition an essence is grasped without positing any existence. The phenomenological method requires a radical or absolute beginning by means of reduction to pure consciousness. The phenomenologist claims that philosophy is a “rigorous science” in the sense that it is an investigation of the most radical, fundamental, primitive, original evidences of conscious experience.
Intentionality

Intentionality is a technical phenomenological term used by Husserl which refers to the state of being intentional. Husserl used the term intentional primarily for an objective modifying act. All the activities which are reflectively described and clarified after bracketing of existence are intentional activities. An intentional act has four elements: subject, act, intentional object, and description. Husserl had borrowed from Brentano, the idea that consciousness was essentially intentional, i.e., it is always consciousness of something, that it always intends or points towards some object.

The Aims of Phenomenological Method

1. To function as a critique of knowledge for providing a clarification of basic ideas, and for providing a solid foundation for logic.
2. To describe essential structures of experience.
3. To give as complete an account as possible of the part played by the mind in experience.
4. To provide a unified theory of science or knowledge.
5. To define explicitly the universal field for philosophical inquiry, and thus prepare the foundation for descriptive analysis. This universal field is given by defining the realm of pure consciousness without any presuppositions of the naturalistic view of the world.
6. To help in realizing the idea of a complete descriptive philosophy.
7. To establish philosophy as a rigorous science.
8. To clarify the different sorts of horizons, i.e. conditions for intelligibility.

Justifications of the phenomenological method

Phenomenological observation is necessary because man is so constituted that his observation of an object is always affected by his subjective emotional attitude, or by his already acquired knowledge. The aim of eidetic or phenomenological reduction is to see the ‘given object’ and nothing else at all. To attain the stage of an impartial seeing, a carefully developed method is necessary. The phenomenologists justify their claim that there must be a phenomenological method, and it is necessary to master it in order to see correctly.

Evaluation

Phenomenological method is criticized on the following grounds:
1. Methodological circle- the method itself must be used to clarify what the method itself consists of. But phenomenology is reflective. It does not presuppose anything.
2. Epistemological circle- it confirms it’s statements by reference to examples and the examples by reference to statements derived from them. No epistemological circle. The phenomenological reflection begins with our recognition of the examples.

3. Intuitionism- it turns out to be a species of intuitionism. But phenomenological notion of intuition is not of this kind. Argument and justification for intuition is given.

4. solipsism- the ideal of presuppositionless leads to solipsism. It would seem that solipsism is the unavoidable beginning. The phenomenological method undertakes to meet this problem.

   The phenomenological method with it’s technique of reduction and essential analysis may be the most radical of all the methods, if used correctly. Husserl opened a new direction in the analysis of consciousness with the help of his new method.

Questions

A-Short Answer Questions(1weightage)

1. Define’ phenomenon’ in phenomenology

   Phenomenon is that which gives itself.

   It is a name for whatever appears to us in “immediate experience”. Phenomena are “essences” and are “intuited”. They are revealed by “bracketing experience”, and are intentional.

2. Define ‘essence’ in phenomenology

   The essence in phenomenology is the fundamental structure of the object, the whole underlying Content including qualities etc. In phenomenology “whatness of the object can be called the essence. Phenomena are such essences and they are intuited.

3. What is meant by the term “intuition” in phenomenology?

   Intuition in phenomenology is seeing of some extraordinary kind. Intuition is not psychological, but it is epistemological. Knowledge of essences is a self-evident knowledge which is based on intuition. This is eidetic intuition, intuition of eidos or essences.

4. What is phenomenological description?

   Phenomenology is a descriptive program. The phenomenological description as essential description is held to be valid with unconditioned necessity. The corresponding “noetic” side of categorical intuition must be described. Consciousness must not be merely described, it must be apprehended and described eidetically or essentially i.e. intentionally.
B-Short Answer Questions (2 weightages)

1. Give an account of phenomenological method

Phenomenology is a method. Edmund Husserl is the founder of phenomenology. Phenomenology originated with the creative criticism of British Empiricism by Brentano and Husserl. For others, phenomenology is a philosophical movement, but for Husserl it is the only correct way of philosophizing. Husserl was the first to use it as the name of a way of doing philosophy. Husserl used the term phenomenology to state a doctrine as well as a method. After the foundation of phenomenology, it is still impossible to define this method in a simple manner. It is a special cognitive procedure which is based on intuition. Intuition refers to the phenomena. It is an intellectual observation of phenomena. Phenomena here means the object of phenomenological observation. The term phenomena has been used in many different senses by different thinkers. Therefore these meanings are to be distinguished from it’s phenomenological meaning inorder to clarify the exact nature of phenomenological method.

Generally, ‘phenomena’ is contrasted with reality, because it is taken to be an appearance. But, this is not the phenomenological sense. The leading rule of phenomenological method is “Back to things themselves ”whereby “things” are taken to mean just the ‘given’. Phenomenon is that which gives itself. It is a name for whatever appears to us in “immediate experience”. Phenomena are “essences” and are “intuited”. They are revealed by “bracketing experience”, and are intentional. The proper business of philosophy is the examination and description of all kinds of objects in a particular way that reveals them as phenomena.

2. Distinguish between reductionism and phenomenological reduction.

By the slogan Zu den Sachen (to the things themselves) phenomenologist express his opposition to all reductionism. A phenomenologist attacks reductive procedure on the ground that it accepts certain statements without any careful examination. For example, “psychological atomism”, according to which consciousness is a set of contents, viz, sensations, feelings etc overlooked the essential characteristic of consciousness which phenomenologists called “intentionality”. The phenomenologist also opposes “scientism” which takes scientific or empirical statements as premises in philosophical arguments, for to consider philosophy as a branch of existing science is also an example of reductionism.

The process of reduction is an essential feature of this method, and it should not be confused with reductionism, because here “reduction” means “exclusion”. To reduce does not mean to eliminate or to put in doubt.

3. Explain the ideal of presuppositionlessness in phenomenology

The claim of presuppositionless implies that in the phenomenological way of thinking we have to avoid all unexamined assumptions, and to hold the belief that such assumptions are unnecessary. Presuppositionless does not mean to begin in complete ignorance. A presuppositionless philosophy is one which will reach what is absolutely
primary or most fundamental in experience. This ideal was first provided by the method of phenomenological reduction. It was recognized by Husserl as the acid test of a truly critical philosophy. The aim of Husserl’s phenomenological inquiry was always the radicalism of method, and for achieving this aim he proposed freedom from presuppositions as an ideal. The phenomenological way of philosophizing requires that there should be no presuppositions. Phenomenological method is intended to be free from all prejudices, and dogmas. It is freedom from the metaphysical, natural, scientific and psychological presuppositions. In phenomenology nothing is presupposed except “givenness simply”. Nothing is assumed, not the spatio-temporal world, none of the scientific theories which are used to interpret the world of existence, no independent or continuous existence, no other human beings, not one’s own bodily existence or empirically conditioned ego, not the ideal science of pure logic, nor any of the idealizations of theoretical knowledge. There is only the self-validating consciousness itself.

C-Essay Question (4 weightages)

1. Explain phenomenology as a method of philosophy elucidating the characteristics of the method.

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