Early Modern Philosophy
PHI 306

University of Ibadan Distance Learning Centre
Open and Distance Learning Course Series Development

General Editor: Prof. Bayo Okunade

Vice-Chancellor's Message

The Distance Learning Centre is building on a solid tradition of over two decades of service in the provision of External Studies Programme and now Distance Learning Education in Nigeria and beyond. The Distance Learning mode to which we are committed is providing access to many deserving Nigerians in having access to higher education especially those who by the nature of their engagement do not have the luxury of full time education. Recently, it is contributing in no small measure to providing places for teeming Nigerian youths who for one reason or the other could not get admission into the conventional universities.

These course materials have been written by writers specially trained in ODL course delivery. The writers have made great efforts to provide up to date information, knowledge and skills in the different disciplines and ensure that the materials are user-friendly.

In addition to provision of course materials in print and e-format, a lot of Information Technology input has also gone into the deployment of course materials. Most of them can be downloaded from the DLC website and are available in audio format which you can also download into your mobile phones, IPod, MP3 among other devices to allow you listen to the audio study sessions. Some of the study session materials have been scripted and are being broadcast on the university's Diamond Radio FM 101.1, while others have been delivered and captured in audio-visual format in a classroom environment for use by our students. Detailed information on availability and access is available on the website. We will continue in our efforts to provide and review course materials for our courses.

However, for you to take advantage of these formats, you will need to improve on your I.T. skills and develop requisite distance learning Culture. It is well known that, for efficient and effective provision of Distance learning education, availability of appropriate and relevant course materials is a *sine qua non*. So also, is the availability of multiple plat form for the convenience of our students. It is in fulfilment of this, that series of course materials are being written to enable our students study at their own pace and convenience.

It is our hope that you will put these course materials to the best use.

Prof. Abel Idowu Olayinka
Vice-Chancellor

Foreword

As part of its vision of providing education for "Liberty and Development" for Nigerians and the International Community, the University of Ibadan, Distance Learning Centre has recently embarked on a vigorous repositioning agenda which aimed at embracing a holistic and all encompassing approach to the delivery of its Open Distance Learning (ODL) programmes. Thus we are committed to global best practices in distance learning provision. Apart from providing an efficient administrative and academic support for our students, we are committed to providing educational resource materials for the use of our students. We are convinced that, without an up-to-date, learner-friendly and distance learning compliant course materials, there cannot be any basis to lay claim to being a provider of distance learning education. Indeed, availability of appropriate course materials in multiple formats is the hub of any distance learning provision worldwide.

In view of the above, we are vigorously pursuing as a matter of priority, the provision of credible, learner-friendly and interactive course materials for all our courses. We commissioned the authoring of, and review of course materials to teams of experts and their outputs were subjected to rigorous peer review to ensure standard. The approach not only emphasizes cognitive knowledge, but also skills and humane values which are at the core of education, even in an ICT age.

The development of the materials which is on-going also had input from experienced editors and illustrators who have ensured that they are accurate, current and learner-friendly. They are specially written with distance learners in mind. This is very important because, distance learning involves non-residential students who can often feel isolated from the community of learners.

It is important to note that, for a distance learner to excel there is the need to source and read relevant materials apart from this course material. Therefore, adequate supplementary reading materials as well as other information sources are suggested in the course materials.

Apart from the responsibility for you to read this course material with others, you are also advised to seek assistance from your course facilitators especially academic advisors during your study even before the interactive session which is by design for revision. Your academic advisors will assist you using convenient technology including Google Hang Out, You Tube, Talk Fusion, etc. but you have to take advantage of these. It is also going to be of immense advantage if you complete assignments as at when due so as to have necessary feedbacks as a guide.
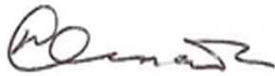
The implication of the above is that, a distance learner has a responsibility to develop requisite distance learning culture which includes diligent and disciplined self-study, seeking available administrative and academic support and acquisition of basic information technology skills. This is why you are encouraged to develop your computer skills by availing yourself the opportunity of training that the Centre's provide and put these into use.

In conclusion, it is envisaged that the course materials would also be useful for the regular students of tertiary institutions in Nigeria who are faced with a dearth of high quality textbooks. We are therefore, delighted to present these titles to both our distance learning students and the university's regular students. We are confident that the materials will be an invaluable resource to all.

We would like to thank all our authors, reviewers and production staff for the high quality of work.

Best wishes.

Professor Bayo Okunade
Director

Course Development Team

Course Writer	Ipadeola, Abosede Pricscilla Ph.D
Content Editor	Prof. Remi Raji-Oyelade
Production Editor	Dr. Gloria O. Adedoja
Learning Design & Technologist	SkulPortal Technology
Managing Editor General Editor	Ogunmefun Oladele Abiodun
	Prof. Bayo Okunade

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Study Session 1   Rise of Modern Philosophy

Introduction

Overtime the study of philosophy is divided into different periods. At this level of your study, you should have been familiar with the 'Ancient period' when you are in your the first year (100Level). In addition, in the second year (200Level) of your study, you have studied the medieval period.

In this study session, you will study Early Modern Philosopher; this study session is an attempt to explain the trajectory that the history of philosophy followed from the ancient period down to the modern period.

This study session will also attempt to examine the conditions that gave rise to the distinct features of philosophy as practiced in the modern period of philosophy. You will learn the ways in which philosophy in the modern period influence the discourse of philosophy in later periods.

Learning Outcomes for Study Session 1

At the end of this study session, you should be able to:
1.1   Explain what give birth to the rise of Modern Philosophy
1.2   Describe the Copernican discovery and the Contribution of Galileo
1.3   Explain Rationalism and Empiricism
1.4   Describe the contribution of the Modern Philosopher to Political philosophy

1.1   The Rise of Modern Philosophy

The modern era spans over the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries. Philosophy in the modern period began as a reaction. It was a reaction against the scholasticism and dogmatism of the middle Ages. Philosophy in the modern period also had a major break from the pattern followed by the earlier periods of philosophy. It raised a new set of problems and employed a different method of enquiry.

In the middle Ages, for instance, most philosophers established a sort of affinity between heaven and earth, and this greatly influenced the type of philosophical problems, which were raised as well as the postulations that were made. Philosophy at this time was to depend on theology.

In fact, 'philosophy in the Middle Ages was virtually the handmaiden of theology, supplying religious thought with a reasoned account of its various doctrines.… The synthesis of philosophy and theology was a precarious one.' (**Stumpf, 1982:197**)

Although, in the ancient period of philosophy, **Plato** and **Aristotle** did not actually base their

philosophical ideas on God or religions, yet the medieval scholars did this with interpretations and re-interpretations of their ideas.

For example, the ideas of Plato is use by **St**. **Augustine** either to buttress or to explain some of his philosophic-religious ideas; **Aquinas** did a similar thing with **Aristotle's** ideas.

Figure 1.1: Plato and Aristotle
Source: http://www.wga.hu/frames-e.html?/html/r/raphael/4stanze/1segnatu/1/athens1.html

Overtime in the Middle Ages, the idea of philosophy playing a subservient role to religions and doctrines became a sort of intellectual tyranny and oppression. Religious and doctrinal relevance became the yardstick by which philosophical and other intellectual ideas were measured.

Hence, theories and ideas were opposed as heresies if found to deviate from religious interests, and proponents of such ideas were seriously sanctioned. Although, in the ancient period, **Socrates** was killed because of his philosophy and **Aristotle** was almost killed by the Athenians for the same reason, yet philosophy and philosophers were still much freer in the ancient period in comparison with the medieval period.

In the ancient period, thinkers could philosophise on different issues ranging from man to the nature of the universe and to God. In the medieval period, however, philosophy did not enjoy this autonomy. According to **Stumpf** (1982)

> *"The spirit of medieval philosophy was different in that its starting point was now virtually fixed by the doctrines of Christian theology. In addition, the whole cultural atmosphere was affected by the predominance of the church so that moral theory, political doctrine, the institutions of society such as the family and work, the arts and literature, and much of science – all these bore the imprint of theology."*

The Middle Ages was seen as an "Age of Faith" when religion reigned, and so as a period contrary to reason and contrary to the spirit of the Enlightenment. For them the Middle Ages was barbaric and priest-ridden. Modern Philosophy referred to "these dark times", the centuries of ignorance

Meanwhile, in the modern period, philosophy did not just become free again; philosophy actually became free like it had never before been. The doors of rational enquiries and reflections were eternally flung open. This invariably affected many things and activities of the modern era; it opened up a new range of possibilities.

For example, it was at this time that people began to have direct access to books, when Gutenberg in the mid fifteenth century made books small enough to be affordable and portable and printing presses were open in London, Paris, Madrid and so on.

- ■ Mention some of the contribution of philosophy in the modern era
- ❑ People could then have direct access to information in books, which they could not personally own, keep and read in the medieval period. Language was also affected in no small measure at this time. Rather than writing in only Greek and Latin, people became to write and express their ideas in their indigenous languages.

This accounts for the reason why it was possible for the modern philosophers to write their philosophical postulations in their own indigenous languages. For example, this made it possible that '**Locke** and **Hume** would write in English, Voltaire and Rousseau in French, and **Kant** in German.' (Stumpf, 1982: 200)

Figure 1.2: Modern Philosopher
Source: http://www.thegreatcourses.com/courses/reason-faith-philosophy-in-the-middle-ages.html

There was a notable severance between philosophy in the modern period and philosophy practiced in the earlier periods of philosophy. As a matter of fact, both Rene **Descartes** and Francis Bacon that are renowned pioneers of modern philosophy started their postulations on a clean note after rejecting earlier authorities and assumptions.

- ■ What is the contribution of Science to rise of modern philosophy?
- ❑ Science was a very prominent factor in the birth of modern philosophy. 'Both the conclusions of the scientists and their methods of procedure, particularly the latter, made a strong impact upon modern philosophical speculations and raised new problems which now received the attention formerly given to traditional issues of the ancient and medieval worlds.
  Scientific discoveries give the modern philosophy fresh strength, material for broad generalisations. Every major scientific discovery gives philosophy a step forward in the development of the philosophical world-view and methodology.

1.2   The Copernican Discovery and the Contribution of Galileo

Discoveries made by scientists like **Copernicus** and **Galileo** stimulated philosophers to begin to ask and reflect on new problems.
- Copernicus contributed to modern thought an epoch-making hypothesis.
- Galileo contributed something less definite, but even more germinal-a new method.

It would be safer to say that he represented two methods, the method of *discovery,* and the method of *exact or mathematical description.*
This, perhaps, gave rise to the question of the source of knowledge, which became a prominent discourse that agitated a considerable number of the modern philosophers. Also, the triumph of science starting from the sixteenth century dampened interest in certain philosophical concerns of the earlier times.

'This development gradually undermined, for example, the notions of a hierarchy of being, of a distinction of kind between celestial and terrestrial motions, and of the kindred distinction between the perfection and regularity of the heavens on the one hand and the imperfection and irregularity of earthly changes on the other.
The entire physical universe, according to the new science, was subject to one set of uniform laws of nature which could be stated with precision in mathematical terms'. (**Lamprecht**, 1955: 218-219)

1.3   Epistemology

Epistemology is the study of the nature and scope of knowledge and justified belief. It analyses the nature of knowledge, how it relates to similar notions such as truth, belief and justification. It also deals with the means of production of knowledge, as well as skepticism about different knowledge claims. It is essentially about issues having to do with the creation and dissemination of knowledge in particular areas of inquiry
Epistemology is an area of philosophy that was very prominent in the modern period of philosophy was epistemology. Most of the prominent philosophers of the modern period were agitated by the question of how knowledge is acquired. This question divided the philosophers into two distinct schools of thought - rationalism and empiricism.

1.3.1   Rationalism
Rationalism is a school of thought that holds that the main source of acquiring knowledge is reason. It is held by the rationalists that it is possible to attain knowledge prior to an experience of the known object in the external world. Rationalists are also of the view that it is even possible to know certain concepts, which do not have any correlates in the external world. It is in this wise that the knowledge of God and abstract concepts is possible.

1.3.2   Empiricism
Empiricism is a school of thought that contends that sense experience is the principal source of human knowledge. It argues that at birth, the human mind is never born with knowledge of any

object or idea. Whatever the mind knows or will ever know, therefore, is known through sense experience.

The foregoing shows clearly that knowledge and acquisition of knowledge was a celebrated idea in modern philosophy. This, perhaps, explains the reason for the revolutionary postulations of the era.

1.4   Political Philosophy

Political philosophy was another notable aspect of philosophy that modern philosophers were interested in. The modern era witnessed an intense advocacy for distinction between political authority and religious allegiance.

Box 1.1   Political Philosophy
Political philosophy is philosophical reflection on how best to arrange collective life - political institutions and social practices, such as economic system and pattern of family life.

Political philosophers seek to establish basic principles that will, for instance, justify a particular form of state, show that individuals have certain inalienable rights, or tell how a society's material resources should be share among its members. This usually involves analysing and interpreting ideas like freedom, justice, authority and democracy and then applying them in a critical way to the social and political

Some political philosophers have tried primarily to justify the prevailing arrangements of their society; others have painted pictures of an ideal state or an ideal social world that is very different from anything we have so far experienced

This accounts for the reason why the social contract theory interested a number of modern philosophers. For example, Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau developed versions of social contract theory in the early modern period of philosophy.

- ■ What is Social Contract Theory
- ▢ Social contract theory 'sees principles of justice as the outcome of a contract people make for mutual advantage, to leave the state of nature and govern themselves by law.'

Nussbaum, (2005).This type of government evidently leaves God and the church out of civil governance, claiming that civil and religious issues have different domain of concerns.

Activity 1.1 Social Contract Theory

Allowed Time: 1hr

Make a research on Social Contract Theory and state it examples

Summary of Study Session 1

In Study Session 1, you have learnt that:

1. This study session has examined the conditions that gave rise to modern philosophy. It shown that philosophy in the medieval period, the period, which precedes the modern period in the history of philosophy, philosophy, was a handmaiden of religion and the church fixed virtually all the rules that guided research in philosophy as well as in some other disciplines.

2. The freedom which scholarship, especially philosophy, lacked in the medieval period was one significant factor responsible for the emergence of modern philosophy. Science also played a dominant role in the rise of modern philosophy.

3. Two prominent schools of thought who attempted to respond to the question of how knowledge acquired differently championed the cause of epistemology in the modern period.

4. The rationalists claim that reason is the principal source of knowledge. On the other hand, however, the empiricists argue that human knowledge is a product of sense experience.

5. Lastly, the trend of political theorisation, which was informed by the newfound freedom of expression of ideas, affected in no small measure, the socio-political ideas of the modern period. Social contract theory, one of the dominant political theories of the time, put a clear distinction between political authority and religious allegiance.

Self-Assessment Question (SAQs) for Study Session 1

Now that you have completed this study session, you can assess how well you have achieved its Learning outcomes by answering the following questions. Write your answers in your study Diary and discuss them with your Tutor at the next study Support Meeting. You can check your answers with the Notes on the Self-Assessment questions at the end of this Module.

SAQ 1.1 (Tests Learning Outcome 1.1)
1. Give a brief account of the periods, which preceded the modern period of philosophy.
2. In your own idea, what would you consider as the main flaw of the medieval period, which necessitated the rise of modern philosophy?

SAQ 1.2 (Tests Learning Outcome 1.2)
1. Discuss some of the main features of philosophy in the modern era.
2. How did science help in the rise of modern philosophy?

SAQ 1.3 (Tests Learning Outcome 1.3)
1. What is Epistemology?
2. Explain the distinct features of Rationalism and Empiricism

SAQ 1.4 (Tests Learning Outcome 1.4)
Explain the interest of philosopher in Political Philosophy

Study Session 2   Rene Descartes ' Epistemology

Introduction

René Descartes' approach to the theory of knowledge plays a prominent role in shaping the agenda of early modern philosophy. It continues to affect (some would say "infect") the way problems in epistemology are conceive today.

Students of philosophy (in his own day, and in the history since) have found the distinctive features of his epistemology to be attractive and troubling: features such as the emphasis on method, the role of epistemic foundations, and the conception of the doubtful as contrasting with the warranted.

This Study Session will introduce you to the history of the renowned father of modern philosophy, **Rene Descartes**. His contribution to Philosophy in the areas of epistemology, philosophy of mind and metaphysics

Learning Outcomes for Study Session 2

At the end of this study session, you should be able to:
 2.1   Write a brief biography of Rene Descartes, the father of Modern Philosophy.
 2.2   Explain the methodical doubt that forms the core of the epistemological idea of Rene Descartes.
 2.3   Explain Cartesian Dualism
 2.4   Explain the Foundationalism an important part of Descartes' epistemology.

2.1   Rene Descartes Life History and Biography

Rene Descartes was born in a village called Touraine, now known as **La-Haye**-**Descartes**, in the year 1596. His father's name was Joachim **Descartes**, who was a councillor of the Parliament in Brittany. **Descartes** was sickly and so he was exempted from early morning exercises in school. This enabled **Descartes** to have ample time for reading and meditation.
At the age of eleven, **Descartes** began a study of Philosophy, Mathematics, Logic and Classics at the Jesuit College of La Fleche. However, **Descartes** was impressed by the precision, exactitude and certainty of Mathematics, qualities which he observed as being generally lacking in Philosophy.

Figure 2.1: Rene Descartes
Source: http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Frans_Hals_-
_Portret_van_Ren%C3%A9_Descartes.jpg

His popular works include *Discourse on Method; Meditations on First Philosophy; Principles of Philosophy; Treatise on the Universe* and *The Passions of the Soul.* **Descartes** died in 1650 in Sweden.

In spite of the popularity of **Descartes**' school, **Descartes** was greatly disappointed with the education that he received there. **Descartes** was especially disappointed with the philosophy that he learnt, which was observed to be lacking the type of certainty, precision and accuracy observable in mathematics.

The main project of **Descartes**' philosophy was a search for certainty and true knowledge. '**Descartes**' lifelong passion was to find certainty. He felt as though his education had given him a collection of ideas based on little else but tradition.' (**Lawhead**, 2003: 59)

2.2   Descartes' Methical Doubt

Descartes emphasises the importance of clear and precise thinking. According to **Descartes**, method lies in discovering a clear and coherent pattern or process by which knowledge is attain. For **Descartes**, method presupposes that the '*mind must begin with a simple and absolutely clear truth and must move step by step without losing clarity and certainty along the way.*'

Stumpf (1982: 232) **Descartes** contends that reasoning must begin at the basis – from clear and unambiguous knowledge – that serves to validate knowledge of all other things that we claim to know. In the process of getting to the basis, **Descartes** employed ad hoc doubt and used that method to arrive at many of his ideas.

Descartes posits that apart from beginning his process of reasoning from a clear and unambiguous idea, he must not accept as true, any idea, which he does not know to be true, or an idea that is taint with any iota of doubt.

In addition, **Descartes** recommends that issues or ideas be broken down into small and manageable bits for the purpose of adequate scrutiny. **Descartes** employs the methodic doubt to arrive at the knowledge that is certain and cannot be doubt, which can serve as the basis or starting point for all our other forms of knowledge.

By the method of doubt, **Descartes** tried to doubt everything so that only that whose existence could not be doubt would remain. In this way, **Descartes** proves that even knowledge about most evident ideas is not always reliable. In the first place, **Descartes** points out that there is no clear-cut distinction between our sleeping state and our waking life.

He cites the example of times when he thought he was sitting in front of the fireplace with paper in hand, only to wake up and find himself naked in bed. Since, it is difficult to distinguish between dream and real life situations;

Descartes concludes that our supposed knowledge of the body is unreliable. **Descartes'** position of rationalism is emphasised on this point. In his idea, only knowledge of Arithmetic and Geometry is fool proof in this regard. This, for **Descartes** is because even if he were sleeping, two plus three would still be five.

This shows that **Descartes'** commitment to the rationalist project made him disprove knowledge gained by the senses and leave knowledge gained by reason intact.
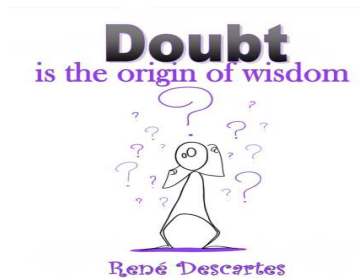
Figure 2.2 Doubt the origin of wisdom
Source: http://taolifestudio.com/category/Descartes/

In addition, **Descartes** reasons further that even the knowledge of the external world is not certain since it is possible that there is a particular evil genius that makes it seem as if there is an external world when in the actual fact there is none.

According to him, it is possible that there is no sky, no mountains, no earth and no extended bodies; but that there is an evil genius that is working on our senses to perceive those things while they are not actually in existence.
Because of the workings of the evil genius, then, it is possible that all that we experience are mere illusions. On this note, therefore, knowledge of the external world which experience gives to us is unreliable; and **Descartes**, thereby, advocates for its rejection.

After doubting the certainty of knowing the extended body as well as knowledge of the external world, **Descartes** reached a point that he could not proceed in his sceptical activities. According to **Descartes**, although it is possible to doubt that one's body and the external world exist, it is certain that there is at least one thing that exists – the thing that is doing the doubting.

Descartes avers that to doubt is to think, therefore, even if one doubts one's existence, it already implied that one exists for one to be able to doubt or think in the first place. **Descartes** argues,

based on this that the thinking self necessarily exists. For **Descartes**, therefore, the truth of ***cogito ergo sum*** ('I think, therefore I exist' or 'I think, therefore I am') strikes one with unparalleled clarity, such that it could not be consistently doubted.

Descartes avers that the mind, which thinks, is also the one, which doubts, desires, wills, affirms, denies, refuses, imagines and wills. Having established the existence of the thinking self, **Descartes** was able to reverse his earlier doubt of his extended body and the external world by inferring the existence of those other things from the certainty that he discovered, that is, the existence of the mind or the thinking self.

Descartes goes by way of identifying a criterion for distinguishing reality from mere appearances. For him, what is true is what the mind is able to perceive clearly and distinctly.

> In this context, *clear* means "that which is present and apparent to an attentive mind," in the same way that objects are clear to our eyes and *distinct* refers to "that which is so precise and different from all other objects that it contains within itself nothing but what is clear." (**Stumpf**, 1982: 235)

For **Descartes**, our clear and distinct ideas are true because God makes them so. Furthermore, **Descartes** posits that God exists and he cannot deceive us. **Descartes** argues that whenever he thinks about God, he immediately has an idea of a perfect and infinite being. This idea, according to **Descartes** could not have emanated from him being a finite and imperfect being.

He, therefore, concludes that this idea comes from the perfect being, which is God. Therefore, the fact that the existence of the body and the external world is clear and distinct to our mind suffices to prove that those things exist because God cannot deceive us into believing that they exist if they did not actually exist.

2.3   Descartes on the Mind-Body Problem

In spite of assigning different categorical substances to the thinking mind and the extended body, **Descartes** maintains that the two substances relate in a mutual manner. Apart from being a thinking substance, the mind, for instance as **Descartes** holds, is also an incorporeal entity, which means that it is immaterial. In addition, he sees the mind as being un-extended
The body, however, possesses attributes that are exact opposites of the ones possessed by the mind. For **Descartes**, the body is material, extended and corporeal in nature.

> The whole drift of **Descartes**' thought is in the direction of dualism – the notion that there are two different kinds of substances in nature. We know a substance by its attribute, and since we clearly and distinctly know two quite different attributes, namely, *thought* and *extension,* there must be two different substances, the spiritual and the corporeal, mind and body. (**Stumpf,** 1982: 237)
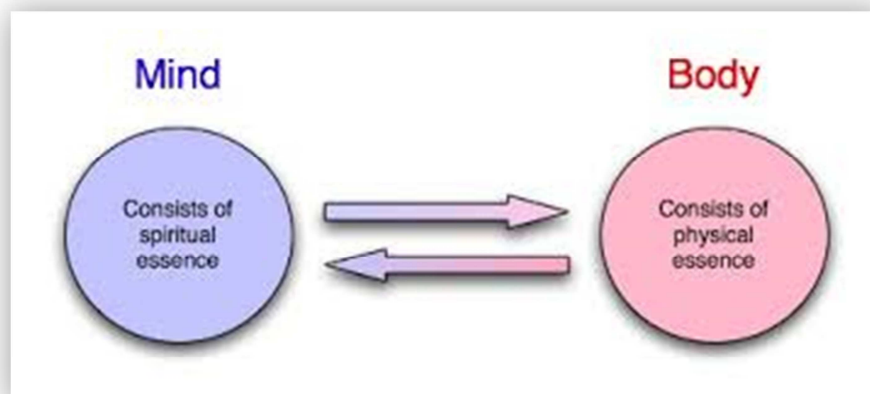
Figure 2.3: The Mind-Body Problem
Source: http://sccpsy101.com/home/chapter-2/section-13/

Descartes contends that the fact that the sensations of pain, hunger, thirst and so on which are felt by the mind are either brought about by the body or ended by doing something to the body shows that the two substances actually relate in a very profound way.

What **Descartes** means by this is that when someone is thirsty, for example, although the mouth and the throat are dry, yet the awareness is not in the body for so many other things are equally capable of making the mouth and the throat dry. In fact, this is a particular state of consciousness.

Another example is if someone is frightened, the person is like to be shaking all over, although, the sensation or experience of fright occurs in the person's consciousness, which is the mental realm so the body that begins to shake shows that the mind has sparked off an effect in the body.

2.3.1   Cartesian Interactionism

Interactionism is a dualist position in the philosophy of mind, which argues that (1) mind and body are separate, but that (2) there is causal interaction between the two.

Cartesian dualism, the position of René **Descartes** is the most famous example of interactionism.

Descartes was an interactionist, and a substance dualist who believed that the mind and body had a causal link. However, a problem arises when interactionalism and substance dualism are coupled — namely, how can an immaterial entity with no extension in the physical world cause changes in a physical body, and how can a physical body cause changes, moods or feelings in a non-physical mind?

Descartes at one point suggested that the pineal gland in the brain may be the link between the soul and the body, but later abandoned the idea admitting that he did not have an answer to the problem.

2.3.2   Critics of Descartes Mind – Body Interaction

Descartes started the age long problem of the mind-body interaction by his position on the natures of body and mind. He has been severally questioned on how it could be possible for two substantially different entities to interact. Critics have pointed out that if body and mind were so

distinct from each other that they had opposing qualities as if **Descartes** claimed, how could they relate not to talk of having causal effect on each other?

> Nevertheless, **Descartes** himself clearly felt that his notion of the "substantial union" of mind and body presented problems.
> For mind and body, as defined throughout his writings, are not just different, but utterly incompatible substances: in terms of their essential characteristics, they mutually exclude one another, since mind is, define as non-extended and indivisible, whereas matter is by its nature extended and divisible. (**Cottingham**, 1993: 222)

Having taken into cognizance the apparent inconsistencies in his conception of the mind-body relation, **Descartes** introduced the idea of pineal gland to address the problem. According to him, mind and body relate through the pineal gland that is located at the base of the brain. Meanwhile, **Descartes**' introduction of the pineal gland compounds the problem of the mind-body interaction rather than solving it.

This is because the nature of the pineal gland becomes another problem for **Descartes** to contend. In other words, if the pineal gland were material, then it would not be able to relate with the mind. If, however, the pineal gland were a spiritual entity, then it could not relate with the body.
If the nature of the pineal gland is neither material nor spiritual, then one problem is that of knowing what it is; and another problem is that the dualism of **Descartes** becomes pluralism and the consistency of his idea is thereby challenge.

2.4   Descartes' Foundationalism

Descartes' theory of knowledge defines knowledge in terms of a structure in which some foundational or basic beliefs serve to justify our knowledge of the other non-basic beliefs. This is observed to follow directly from **Descartes**' metaphysical idea of inferring the existence of the world from that of the thinking self, which is distinct, clear and basic.

Descartes strived to arrive at the fundamental truth or basis for knowledge, which he deemed evident and incorrigible. In a bid to achieve this, **Descartes** sees the importance of tracing the trajectory of justification all the way back until one reaches the most fundamental belief that serves as the basic justification for the entire pyramidal structure of knowledge.

Descartes, therefore, sees the need to "halt the regress of justification of beliefs at some foundational layer of knowledge which is self-evident or self-justifying and thus not in need of further reasoned explanation." (**Alcoff**, 1998: 167)

- ■ How does Descartes define Knowledge?
- □ Descartes defines knowledge in terms of a structure in which some foundational or basic beliefs serve to justify our knowledge of the other non-basic beliefs.

2.4.1 Objections to Foundationalism and Descartes' Method of Doubt

Critics have raised a number of objections to **Descartes**' way of setting up the problem of knowledge. For example:

1. Just because some of our sense experiences are mistaken, that is not reason enough to suspect (even hypothetically) all of them. Besides, we know that some of our experiences are wrong only because we are able to know some of them are correct, and for that, we have to rely on other sense experiences.

2. Even to raise the possibility that our experiences might not accurately describe a world that exists apart from our experience is already to assume that the distinction of world vs. experience makes sense. But what if the things we experience are not in fact ideas at all, but are rather things in the world themselves?

   The method of doubt proposes that it makes sense to think of ideas or beliefs apart from how they are ideas or beliefs about a world. But apart from the assumption of an external world, it makes no sense to think of ideas as distinct from that world.

3. If we doubt everything, we also must doubt whether we truly doubt. However, that gets us into an endless regress. Therefore, the effort to reach an indubitable principle through doubt is doomed from the outset. The only way to find out that we are correct in doubting is to appeal to a public understanding of what doubt means, and that means assuming that there is an existing world.

4. **Descartes**' claim that one should limit knowledge only to that about which one are absolutely certain is much too limited. It makes perfect sense to say that we *know* things without having to guarantee that what we know is based on an indubitable foundation.

Summary of Study Session 2

In Study Session 2, you have learnt that:

1. **Rene Descartes** employed the method of doubt to get to know the reality whose existence cannot be doubt. For him what necessarily exists, whose existence cannot be consistently doubt, is the thing that does the doubting. This, for **Descartes**, is the thinking self or the mind.

2. **Descartes** argues that although it is possible to doubt the existence of one's body or even the reality of the external world as a whole, yet it is impossible to doubt the existence of the underlying entity that doubts.

3. It is from the existence of the mind that **Descartes** infers the reality of the external world by pointing out that whatever the mind is able to perceive clearly and distinctly exists.

4. **Descartes** holds that in the course of his investigation into the nature of reality, he discovered that there exist two substances with categorically different attributes.

5. The mind, according to **Descartes**, is characterised by thought and in corporeality, while body is characterised by extension and materiality.

6. The position of **Descartes** on the nature of mind and body launched the mind-body problem – the problem of how to account for how it is possible for two categorically different substances to interact.

7. Foundationalism holds that beliefs are of two types – there are basic beliefs that are infallible and non-basic beliefs that are fallible. To justify the non-basic beliefs, **Descartes** holds that they must be based upon the foundational basic beliefs.

Self-Assessment Question (SAQs) for Study Session 2

Now that you have completed this study session, you can assess how well you have achieved its Learning outcomes by answering the following questions. Write your answers in your study Diary and discuss them with your Tutor at the next study Support Meeting. You can check your answers with the Notes on the Self-Assessment questions at the end of this Module.

SAQ 2.1 (Tests Learning Outcome 2.1)
Describe the early life of René **Descartes**

SAQ 2.2 (Tests Learning Outcome 2.2)
Attempt a critique of **Descartes**' methodic doubt.

SAQ 2.3 (Tests Learning Outcome 2.3)
Write a critical note on Cartesian interactionism.

SAQ 2.4 (Tests Learning Outcome 2.4)
Attempt a critical analysis of **Descartes**' foundationalist theory of epistemic justification.

Study Session 3   Baruch De Spinoza Metaphysical Idea

Introduction

Spinoza's first work was a systematic presentation of the philosophy of Descartes, to which he added his own suggestions for its improvement. Descartes believed that by establishing a sure epistemic foundation for one's own existence through a method of systematic doubt, one could derive a set of sure metaphysical truths about not only the distinctness of the mind from the brain, but also about the existence and nature of God also.

Spinoza utilised a similar kind of critical method not for philosophy but rather to the disciple of theology. Baruch Spinoza took this rationalistic appreciation even further, developing and expressing his mature philosophical views "in the geometrical manner

This study session will introduce you to Life and Works of Baruch Spinoza and His Contribution to Philosophy for example his Idea of Substance, Theory of Knowledge, Mind-Body Problem and Morality

Learning Outcomes for Study Session 3

At the end of this study session, you should be able to:
3.1   Give account of life and work of Baruch de Spinoza
3.2   Explain the metaphysical idea of Spinoza, with particular emphases on his notions of Substance, Attributes, and Modes.
3.3   Highlight the levels of Knowledge in Spinoza's Epistemology.
3.4   Describe Spinoza's postulation on the mind-body problem.
3.5   Explain Spinoza's notion of Morality within the milieu of his deterministic view of nature.

3.1   Life and works of Baruch de Spinoza

Baruch de Spinoza was born in Amsterdam 1632. He was born into a Jewish family, who first migrated to Portugal and later moved on to the Netherlands. Initially, he was trained in the study of the Old Testament and the Talmud; and it was believed that after his training, he would go on to become a rabbi.
This never came to be as he picked interest in philosophy. **Spinoza** began to study philosophy at the age of twenty. The Ecclesiastical Council later expelled him from the synagogue of Amsterdam when he was twenty-four years old.

Figure 3.1: Baruch de Spinoza
Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baruch_Spinoza

Spinoza was immensely influence by the philosophy of **Rene Descartes**; and would have become a professor of philosophy at the University of Heidelberg, if not that, he rejected the offer. He did this because he had the desire to have the freedom to pursue his ideas.

He led a life of great hardship and penury, earning his living by grinding lenses for scientific instruments. Among his important works are: *Tractatus de Intellectus Emendatione; Brief Treatise on God; Man and His Happiness; Tractatus Politicus; Cogitata Metaphysica* and *Ethica Ordine Geometrico Demostrata.* He died of consumption in 1677, when he was forty-five years old.

Spinoza was influence by many philosophical traditions. In the first place, his philosophy takes after that of **Descartes**. **Spinoza** was also greatly influenced by scholasticism. Lastly, as a scholar with great ties with Jewish religions, the Bible and Talmud also had great effect on **Spinoza**. **Spinoza**'s idea of substance is one of his most notable contributions to philosophy.

- ■ Why do you think **Spinoza reject the offer** become a professor of philosophy at the University of Heidelberg
- ❑ He refused it because of the possibility that it would compromise his independence and tranquillity

3.2   Spinoza's Idea of Substance

Descartes holds that there are two substances in nature, namely, thought and extension. **Spinoza** agrees with **Descartes** that substance exists on its own without being in need of another thing, he however disagrees with **Descartes** on the fact that there is more than only one substance. For **Spinoza**, there is one substance that is not in need of another substance or thing to exist.

The substance, for **Spinoza**, is infinite and it is the ultimate reality. **Spinoza** also contends that the substance causes itself and, therefore, is not caused by any other external thing. According to **Spinoza**, only God fits that description and that self-existing substance is God. **Spinoza** adopts a method that is very similar to the idea employed by **Descartes**. He argues that the idea of substance is clear and distinct to the mind.
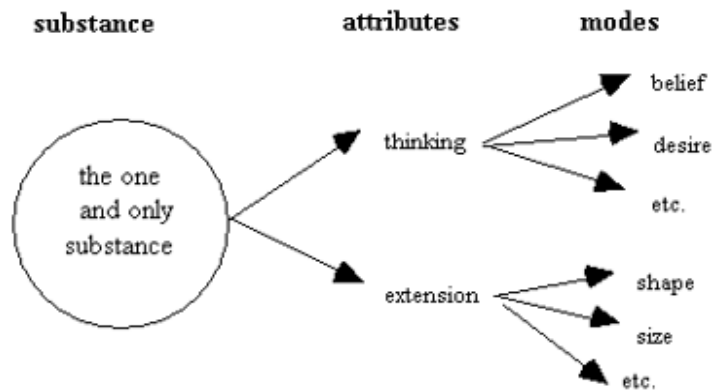
Figure 3.2 Spinoza ideal of substance
Source: https://www.trinity.edu/cbrown/modern/**Spinoza**PartI.html

Spinoza uses God and Nature interchangeably to show that the two refer to one and the same substance. According to **Spinoza**, God is nature in two ways. On the one hand, God is the source of everything that exists and in this sense, **Spinoza** calls God *natura naturans.* On the other hand, **Spinoza** defines God as that which did not create anything apart from himself and in this sense, he calls God *natura naturata.*

Spinoza argues further that apart from the one and infinite substance, there are some other things, which are attributes of the substance. Meanwhile, in **Spinoza**'s view, the independent substance has infinite attributes. **Spinoza** maintains that the substance expresses the attributes and not necessarily that the attributes are parts of the substance like hands are parts of the body. According to **Parkinson**,

> *Spinoza never calls an attribute an "aspect" of substance; however, he often describes the relation between substance and attribute in terms of expression ... he says expressly that a mode of extension and the corresponding mode of thought are "one and the same thing but expressed in two ways"* (**Parkinson**, 1993)

- ■ Whom does **Spinoza** refer as "self-existing" substance?
- □ God

Spinoza argues that although substance, which is God or Nature, possesses infinite attributes, yet only two of the attributes can be known. The two attributes, according to **Spinoza**, are thought and extension. It is probably because only **Descartes** that made him conclude that the two are different and independent substances perceived these two clearly and distinctly. For **Spinoza**, thought and extension are just two attributes – or expressions of the activities – of the same substance.

In addition to the attributes, **Spinoza** also identifies modes, which explain the idea of determinism in **Spinoza**'s philosophy. 'As the *world* consists of the modes of God's attributes, everything in the world acts in accordance with necessity, that is, everything is determined.' (Stumpf, 1982: 242)

- ▪ God or Nature possesses infinite attributes, but only two of the attributes can be known. Mention the two attribute **Spinoza** identify.
- ▫ The two attributes of God or Nature, according to **Spinoza**, are thought and extension.

Although, **Spinoza** sees God as a self-caused substance, yet he also defines God as the efficient cause of his modes. The idea of efficient cause dates back to Aristotle in the ancient period of philosophy. Aristotle identifies four different kinds of causes – the formal cause, the material cause, the efficient cause and the final cause.

He, however, defines the efficient cause as the agent that is responsible for the making of a thing, like a potter is responsible for the making of a pot. **Spinoza**, however, rejects the idea of a creative God. God as an efficient cause, for **Spinoza**, is not a creative substance, but rather that God is an imminent or internal efficient cause.

- ▪ The idea of modes in **Spinoza**'s philosophy shows that God as_____?
- ▫ The idea of modes in **Spinoza**'s philosophy also shows God as a cause.

3.3   Spinoza's Theory of Knowledge

Spinoza holds that there are levels of knowledge. In his idea, the levels are three in all. He explains that the levels of knowledge range from the lowest to the highest. The lowest level of knowledge is imagination; the second level is reason and the highest level of knowledge is intuition.
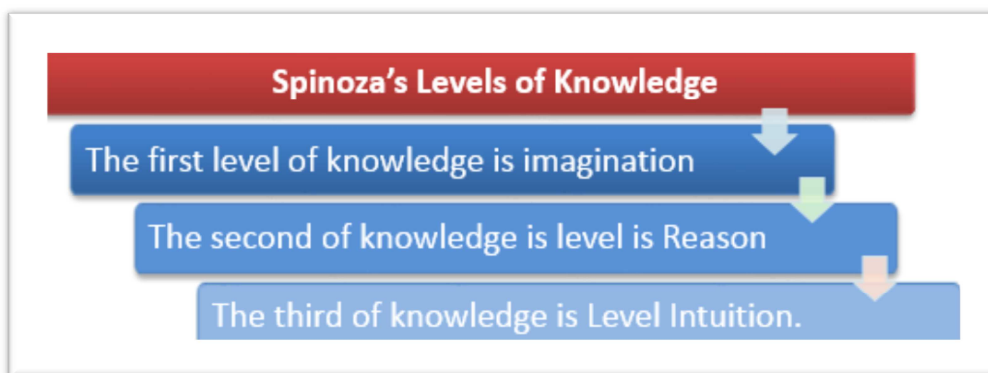
Figure 3.3 Spinoza's Level of knowledge
Source: SchulPortals Inc.©

Knowledge, for **Spinoza**, ascends from knowledge of individual objects, which is the lowest form of knowledge, to knowledge of God or nature, which is the highest level of knowledge.

- • **Imagination** The first level of knowledge, which **Spinoza** calls imagination, is the type that is acquire through sense experience. Knowledge, at this level, is very crude because when we come across an entity, we see it as an individuated and specific object but are not immediately aware of its essential nature.

  Spinoza argues that imagination cannot give true knowledge because if someone is only

familiar with individual objects of everyday experience, the person can only use this for ideas about daily life but will be ignorant of the true nature of things.

- **Reason** The second level of knowledge, which **Spinoza** expects that someone at the level of imagination move up to is the level of reason. This level, according to **Spinoza**, is where the knowledge of science is found.

  Spinoza holds that all men can reach this level of knowledge since all that is required to get to this level is mind; and since every human, as a mode of the ultimate substance has the attribute of mind, and then it is possible for every human to get to this level.

  It is at this level that the mind of man is able to ascend beyond individual concrete entities to grasp the knowledge of abstract things. **Spinoza's** assessment of knowledge at the level of reason is that it is true and valid; and that its truth is immediately evident and beyond doubt.

- **Intuition** The third and ultimate Level of knowledge. It is through intuition that **Spinoza** holds that we can know the whole of nature. 'At this level, we can understand the particular things we encountered on the first level in a new way, for at the first level we saw other bodies in a disconnected way, and now we see them as part of the whole scheme.' (**Stumpf, 1982: 243**)

  Spinoza explains that this type of knowledge enables us to move from the knowledge of the essence of God or nature to the knowledge of the essence of the other objects and entities in nature. This is the highest level of knowledge, for at this point; humans have a full understanding of nature and their place in it.

3.4   Spinoza on the Mind-Body Problem

After using his method of doubt to know the truth that is self-evident and infallible, **Descartes** claims that he identifies two substances that exist independent of each other; but that the two substances relate or interact.

This position of **Descartes** triggered the mind-body problem, as he could not account for the nature of the interaction between the two categorically different substances, which he identified. **Spinoza** sees the problem of mind-body interaction as a false problem, which does not exist at all. This is because, in **Spinoza's** idea, what we refer to as mind and body, or thought and extension, are just two attributes of a single substance, which is God or Nature.

Spinoza maintains that body and mind are just two expressions of the same substance And that in the case of a man, he is a single mode and that when we consider him as a physical mode, then we talk about his body; but when we see him as a thinking mode, then we talk about his mind. This does not mean, however, that man is composed of two separate or independent entities like **Descartes** claims.

For **Spinoza**, it is not possible to sever the mind from the body, and vice versa. Therefore, for everybody, there is a mind, and for every mind, there is a body. **Spinoza** contends that the 'structure within which the mind and body operate is the same. Thus, man is a finite version of God, for he is a mode of God's attributes of thought and extension.' (**Stumpf**, 1982: 244)

- ■ What is Spinoza conclusion on Body-Mind Problem?
- ◻ Spinoza sees the problem of mind-body interaction as a false problem, which does not exist at all. This is because, in Spinoza's idea, what we refer to as mind and body, or thought and extension, are just two attributes of a single substance, which is God or Nature

3.5   Spinoza's Idea of Morality

Spinoza's idea about human behaviour follows from his view of nature. For him, human behaviour is part of nature. In his idea, 'human behaviour can be explained just as precisely in terms of causes, effects, and mathematics as any other natural phenomenon.' (Stumpf, 1982: 244)

For **Spinoza**, the belief that human beings are independent, free and capable of making moral choices is illusory. In fact, **Spinoza** argues that the ignorance of the workings of nature that make humans think that they are free and are able to decide on the course of action to take without any external influence.

Spinoza derided the notion that humans mostly have which makes them claim that they possess free will to decide on what to do and that their decision causes an action to take place, while neither they themselves nor their wills are part of the determined course of nature; for **Spinoza**, there is nothing farther from the truth!

Spinoza argues that all of nature, whether physical, mental or behavioural, is one; all events in the world are caused and human actions are not excluded from the primary universal cause, which in Spinoza's idea is God or Nature.

Spinoza posits further that human beings possess the attempt or endeavour to exist perpetually. When the endeavour relates to the mind and body, it is referred to as appetite. However, at the level of consciousness, Spinoza holds that appetite is called desire. At the level of consciousness also, Spinoza holds that we can experience pleasure or pain. When we come across a situation that promotes preservation of existence, then we experience pleasure.

However, if we come across a situation that tends to jeopardise preservation or frustrate our desire for perfection, then we feel pain. For Spinoza, therefore, human conceptions of good and evil are tied to the ideas of pleasure and pain. Spinoza's idea of morality is teleological or consequentiality. Spinoza rejects the idea that actions can be good or bad in themselves regardless of their consequences.

- ■ What is Spinoza notion of human freewill and their decision to cause an action?
- ◻ Spinoza ridiculed the notion that humans mostly possess what makes them claim that they have free will to decide on what to do and that their decision causes an action to take place.

In Spinoza's idea, what determine the moral worth of any moral action are its likely consequences. If it contributes to our desires as humans and thereby enhances pleasure, then it is a good action; however, if it thwarts our desires and thereby produces pain, then it is a bad action.

It may appear as if Spinoza accommodates the notions of choice and freedom in his conception of moral judgment, however, this is not the case because Spinoza holds that the same way our moral actions are determined, so are our moral judgment because the whole of nature is ultimately determined and is one.

The idea of Spinoza on morality conflicts with the idea of moral responsibility. Meanwhile, Spinoza would not encourage resignation to fate like the stoics in the ancient period of philosophy. For him, the way out is to develop a knowledge of God.

> *Only knowledge can lead us to happiness, for only through knowledge can we be liberated from the bondage of our passions? We are enslaved by passions when our desires are attached to perishable things and when we do not fully understand our emotions. The more we understand our emotions, the less excessive will be our appetites and desires.* (**Stumpf,** 1982: 245)

In order to be able to attain the kind of knowledge that Spinoza proposes as the liberating force, Spinoza holds that human beings should study the whole of nature, rather than their emotions alone. Therefore, Spinoza holds that a good understanding of God or the whole of nature will help one to lead a moral life.

Summary of Study Session 3

In Study Session 3, you have learnt that:

1. Spinoza holds that the whole of nature is composed of only one single substance, which is express as two known attributes of thought and extension.

2. Spinoza argues, contrary to Descartes's position, that thought and extension are merely two expressions or attributes of the same substance.

3. The problem of interaction between two categorically distinct substances does not arise at all.

4. Spinoza solves the monstrous problem of the mind and body, which Descartes created unintentionally when he claimed that he discovered two substances by his method of doubt. Spinoza discusses three levels of knowledge – imagination, reason and intuition.

5. According to Spinoza, the ultimate level of knowledge is intuition and it is at the level of intuition that the mind is able to understand or know the whole of reality, which is God or Nature.

6. Spinoza holds that the whole of reality is cause and determined. This, in Spinoza's idea, also affects the issue of morality.

7. As a result, human beings are incapable of free moral choices. The way out, is to acquire knowledge about God or Nature, which means that one reaches the level of intuition in the realm of knowledge. At this level, a person is free from the passions and is able to behave in perfect union with the ultimate substance, which is Nature or God.

Self-Assessment Question (SAQs) for Study Session 3

Now that you have completed this study session, you can assess how well you have achieved its Learning outcomes by answering the following questions. Write your answers in your study Diary and discuss them with your Tutor at the next study Support Meeting. You can check your answers with the Notes on the Self-Assessment questions at the end of this Module.

SAQ 3.1 (Tests Learning Outcome 3.1)
Write short on Life and Works of Baruch de Spinoza

SAQ 3.2 (Tests Learning Outcome 3.2)
Discuss critically the idea of Baruch Spinoza on the mind-body problem.

SAQ 3.3 (Tests Learning Outcome 3.3)
Attempt a critique of the ideas of imagination, reason and intuition in Spinoza's epistemology.

SAQ 3.4 (Tests Learning Outcome 3.4)
Discuss critically the idea of Baruch Spinoza on the mind-body problem.

SAQ 3.5 (Tests Learning Outcome 3.5)
How did Spinoza attempt to reconcile the ideas of determinism and moral responsibility in his ethics?

Study Session 4   Gottfried Leibniz

Introduction

Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz uses his predicate in subject theory of truth to develop a remarkable philosophical system that provides an intricate and thorough account of reality. As consequences of his metaphysics, Leibniz proposes solutions to several deep philosophical problems, such as the problem of free will, the problem of evil, and the nature of space and time.

This study session will focus on Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz contribution to the notion of Substance, Mind-Body Problem, Problem of Evil and Theory of Knowledge

Learning Outcomes for Study Session 4

At the end of this study session, you should be able to:
- 4.1   Give account of life and work of Leibniz
- 4.2   Explain study Leibniz's notion of substance.
- 4.3   Describe Leibniz's contribution to the mind-body problem.
- 4.4   Explain Leibniz's position on the problem of evil.
- 4.5   Describe Leibniz's Theory of Knowledge

4.1   Early Life and Contribution Leibniz to Philosophy

Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz was born in Leipzig in 1646. He was admitted to the University of Leipzig at the age of fifteen. It was there that he began his study of philosophy, he later moved on to Jena to study mathematics and he also studied law to the level of Doctorate in Altdorf.

He actively participated in the leading discourse of his day and he discovered the infinitesimal calculus, which was also simultaneously discovered by Isaac Newton. Leibniz authored a number of works, among which are: *New Essays on Human Understanding; Essays in Theodicy; Discourse on Metaphysics; New System of Nature and the Interaction of Substances* and *Monadology.* Leibniz died in Hanover in 1716, at the age of seventy.

Figure 4.1   Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz
Source: http://www.theguardian.com/books/2013/may/10/my-hero-leibniz-lee-smolin

Leibniz is the last major philosopher in the rationalist tradition; other philosophers in this tradition being **Descartes**, Spinoza and Malebranche. However, apart from sharing rationalist outlook with the philosophers examined in previous Study Sessions, his metaphysical orientation is clearly different from theirs.

For example, **Descartes** is a dualist, for he holds that reality is made up of two substances; while Spinoza argues that the whole of reality is one substance, and this places him in the camp of the monists. Meanwhile, Leibniz is a pluralist, for he is of the view that although reality is of one type of substance, yet the substances are many and that no one basic substance is exactly like another.

4.2   Leibniz's Idea of Substance

Leibniz rejects the conceptions of substance in the ideas of **Descartes** and **Spinoza**. **Leibniz** argues that the ideas of substance in **Descartes** and Spinoza do not give true ideas of the nature of man, of God and of freedom. For example, **Leibniz** contends that the idea of **Descartes** that there are two substances created the problem of explaining how the two substances could relate with each other.

Leibniz equally repudiates the idea of **Spinoza** that there is only one substance with two knowable attributes. For **Leibniz**, this conception of reality is not adequate because its reduction of the whole of reality to one single entity loses sight of the distinctions that exist among the various entities in the world.

Leibniz disagrees with **Spinoza** on the fusion that his idea of substance foists on God, man and nature. For **Leibniz**, these should be separated as distinct entities. He, however, agrees with **Spinoza** on his theory of single substance and the mechanical view of the world.

Nevertheless, **Leibniz** as a pluralist worked on the idea and presented it in such a way that 'the individuality of persons, the transcendence of God, and the reality of purpose and freedom in the universe' (**Stumpf**, 1982: 246) are guaranteed.

Both **Descartes** and **Spinoza** defined extension as that which is not divisible. **Leibniz** rejects this worldview. He contends that the bodies that we see can be divided into bits or smaller parts. For him, things that we perceive are aggregates or collection of simple substances.

An idea similar to that of the collection of simple substances was put forward by Democritus in the ancient period, **Leibniz**, however, rejected this idea on the claim that such a substance, since it is a material entity, would be lifeless, and therefore in need of an external force to initiate its movement.

Leibniz argues that this is contrary to his idea of a substance. **Leibniz** maintains that matter is not the primary substance; but that the monads, which are forces of energy, are the primary or essential substance of the things in the world.

- ■ If Descartes and **Spinoza** view extension as what is divisible. Why Leibniz did rejects this view?
- ◻ Leibniz reject this view because he contends that the bodies that we see can be divided into bits or smaller parts. For him, things that we perceive are aggregates or collection of simple substances.

4.3   Leibniz's Monadology and the Mind-Body Problem

Leibniz stresses the fact that substance is active and self-moving. **Leibniz** argues that unlike the atoms of Democritus, which are in need of some external force to set them in motion or to bring them, together to form an aggregate or a cluster, monads are dynamic, active and full of life.

The monads, according to **Leibniz**, are independent of each other and therefore, do not interact. Each monad lives or behaves according to its internal mechanism and not because another has influenced it to behave the way, it has behaved.

Therefore, if someone hits another and the other feels pain, it is not the hitting that causes the pain, each one is just working according to its mechanism or the law of its being; even though, a harmony is observed which makes people erroneously assume that there is a connection or interaction between the two. This assumption is erroneous because, in **Leibniz's** view, there 'is no external influence which ever does come into contact with any soul.

Every experience of every monad arises in the life of that monad "through an entire spontaneity relatively to itself, and yet with an entire conformity relatively to other things."' (**Lamprecht**, 1955: 263)

In fact, **Leibniz** even describes the monads as windowless entities. In line with his conception of monads as complete and independent entities, **Leibniz** states his position on the   problem of mind-body interaction, which began with Rene **Descartes**. Leibniz uses his theory of pre-established harmony to explain 'the means by which countless monads entirely without interaction, so unfold in mutual adjustment as to seem to interact.' (**Lamprecht**, 1955: 263)

- ■ Point out Leibniz critic on Descartes mind and body interaction
- ☐ According to Leibniz, mind and body do not interact and therefore do not exert causal influences on each other, like Descartes claims; that each one works according to its internal mechanism or the law of its being.

Leibniz holds that the mind and the body is a complete substance each – an independent and self-moving energy force. Therefore, there is no basis for assuming that one is caused to move by another or that what takes place in one has any effect on or any relation to what takes place in the other.

Leibniz explains that the order or harmony observed in nature, which makes people assume that there is a causal relation between mind and body, is not a function of what is going on at the moment but what has been pre-set or pre-established in each of the substances observed.

Leibniz conceives of the mind as a substance, but the body is an aggregate of substances. He uses the analogy of orchestras or choirs to illustrate his idea of pre-established harmony between body and mind.

For **Leibniz**, if an instrumentalist in an orchestra follows his note without hearing what the other instrumentalists are playing, an uninformed spectator would think that there is a sort of interaction between the instrumentalists in the orchestra. This is similar to the assumption that there is an interaction between the body and the mind.

 In the case of the body and mind, **Leibniz** holds that 'my mind and my body have been so programmed by God that, when I form the volition to raise my hat, my arm is ready to execute the appropriate movement.' (**Jolley**, 1993: 407) Leibniz argues, therefore, that it is ignorance of

the workings of the mind and body that make people claim that one causes an effect in the other and vice versa.

4.4   Leibniz on the Problem of Evil

The problem of evil is a longstanding problem in philosophy. The problem revolves around the claim that God is good and he is the most powerful being. Critics have variously challenged these positions. It is usually asked that if God is indeed good, then he would not will evil; if God is powerful, then he should be able to rid the world of evil; however, if God is both good and powerful, then why is there evil in the world?

Leibniz's reaction to the problem of evil is that the world, as we know it, even with all its imperfections, is the best of all possible worlds. For Leibniz, God, being very benevolent, must have considered all the possible worlds that he could create and must have decided to create one with the greatest good; although, this does not mean that such a world would be absolutely perfect.
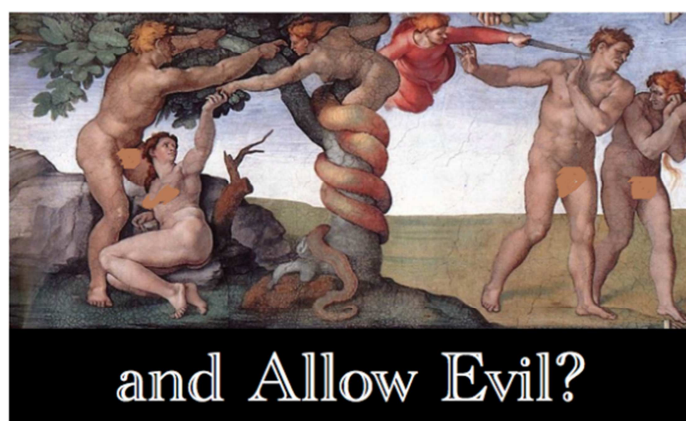
Figure 4.2: Problem of Evil
Source: https://aaronaiken.wordpress.com/tag/natural-evil/

Leibniz also points out that the imperfection in the world is because of the fact that God could not have made perfect beings without making Gods like himself. Therefore, the evil and discomforts in the world are not from God but are because of the fact that the beings in the world are imperfect.

In the same vein, Leibniz also explains that sometimes, our finiteness as humans does not allow us to have a complete view or knowledge of issues. This is the reason why we call some issues evil, when in the actual fact, they are ultimately for good.

It is necessary for some issues to contain some pains and discomfort even though their end is for good. Therefore, Leibniz advocates that humans should admit their limited understanding of universal events; rather than putting blame on God who ultimately wills the best for all his creatures.

- What is the view of Leibniz on the Problem of Evil?
- Leibniz points out that the evil and discomforts in the world are not from God but are because of the fact that the beings in the world are imperfect. The imperfection in the world is because of the fact that God could not have made perfect beings without making Gods like himself.

4.5   Leibniz's Theory of Knowledge

Leibniz is the third of the most popular rationalists in the early modern period of philosophy. As a rationalist, **Leibniz** also 'believes that it is possible to know substantive truths about the world *a priori*, by reason alone.' (**Jolley**, 1993: 410) **Leibniz** argues that idea is psychological in nature. He sees it as a disposition. It is in the light of idea as a disposition that **Leibniz** is able to defend the idea of innateness.

For **Leibniz**, to say that a particular idea is present with the mind at birth is not just to say that the mind is capable of thinking about such an issue. Rather, in **Leibniz's** idea, 'mental dispositions cannot be basic properties; they need to be grounded in fully actual non-dispositional properties of the mind.'(**Jolley**, 1993: 412)

In addition to an analysis of idea, **Leibniz's** also examines the idea of truth. Leibniz identifies two types of truth. According to him, there are truths of reason and truths of fact. In his idea, logic is the method of knowing truth of reason; while experience is the means by which truths of fact are known.

The law of contradiction, which is a law of thought in logic, is the law that backs up truths of reason. However, the law of sufficient reason supports truths of fact. In this wise, therefore, **Leibniz** argues that it is not possible to deny a truth of reason without being involved in self-contradiction. For a truth of fact, however, it is possible to show that the proposition that it states is false; it is possible to state their opposites without being self-contradictory.

According to Leibniz, the reason why truths of reason are infallible is that the predicate of the proposition that states a truth of reason is already implied or contained in the meaning of the subject. For the truth of fact, however, because the truth of the predicate is not contained in the subject, it is possible to state their opposite without being involved in self-contradiction.

This, perhaps, explains the reason why **Leibniz** holds that knowledge that is acquired through reason is superior to knowledge that is acquired through experience. This is the main proposition of the rationalists – that valid knowledge is, that which is acquired through reason, rather than experience.

- Mention the two types of Truth Leibniz identifies
- The two types of Truth Leibniz identifies are:
    1. Truths of Reason and
    2. Truths of Fact

Summary of Study Session 4

In Study Session 4, you have learnt that:

1. Leibniz's idea of substance differs considerably from **Descartes**'s idea. While **Descartes** identifies two substances which interact, Leibniz posits that substance is of one kind but is many in number, rather than being one single entity like **Spinoza** claims; but that the many substance corpuscles do not interact.

2. Leibniz calls the basic substance monads and he describes them as windowless but pre-established or programmed by God to act in certain ways. Leibniz argues that it is because monads do not interact that the problem of the basis of an interaction between body and mind becomes a pseudo problem.

3. Leibniz contends that the world as we know it, in spite of its imperfections, is still the best of all possible worlds of the worlds that God could make.

Self-Assessment Question (SAQs) for Study Session 4

Now that you have completed this study session, you can assess how well you have achieved its Learning outcomes by answering the following questions. Write your answers in your study Diary and discuss them with your Tutor at the next study Support Meeting. You can check your answers with the Notes on the Self-Assessment questions at the end of this Module.

SAQ 4.1 (Tests Learning Outcome 4.1)
Give account of Gottfried Leibniz early life

SAQ 4.2 (Tests Learning Outcome 4.2)
In what ways is Leibniz's idea of substance different from Descartes?

SAQ 4.3 (Tests Learning Outcome 4.3)
1. Discuss the basic features of monads in Leibniz's metaphysics.
2. Attempt an analysis of Leibniz's idea of pre-established harmony as a solution to the mind- body problem.

SAQ 4.4 (Tests Learning Outcome 4.4)
How did Leibniz attempt to address the problem of evil?

SAQ 4.5 (Tests Learning Outcome 4.5)
Explain the two types of truth, which Leibniz identifies

Study Session 5   John Locke

Introduction

John Locke as an Early Modern Philosopher contributes to philosophy. Regarding epistemology, Locke disagreed with Descartes 'rationalist theory that knowledge is any idea that seems clear and distinct to us. Instead, Locke claimed that knowledge is direct awareness of facts concerning the agreement or disagreement among our ideas.

By "ideas," he meant mental objects, and by assuming that some of these mental objects represent non-mental objects, he inferred that this is why we can have knowledge of a world external to our minds

This study session will help you to understand the contribution of John Locke to philosophy in area such as Theory of Knowledge, Rejection of Innate Ideas, Moral Idea and Political Idea.

Learning Outcomes for Study Session 5

At the end of this study session, you should be able to:
  5.1   Discuss the life and time of John Locke.
  5.2   Discuss Locke's Idea on Knowledge.
  5.3   Explain Locke's idea on the question of Innate Ideas.
  5.4   Discuss Locke's notion of morality.
  5.5   Analyse Locke's Political Ideas.

5.1   The Life and Time of John Locke.

John Locke was born in 1632 in Wrington, Somerset near Bristol in England. He grew up in a Puritan home. His father was captain of horse in the Parliamentary army. **Locke** was trained in the Westminster School and Christ Church College in Oxford. He had his Bachelor of Arts degree and Master of Arts degree in Oxford University. It was in the university that he was appointed Censor of Moral Philosophy.
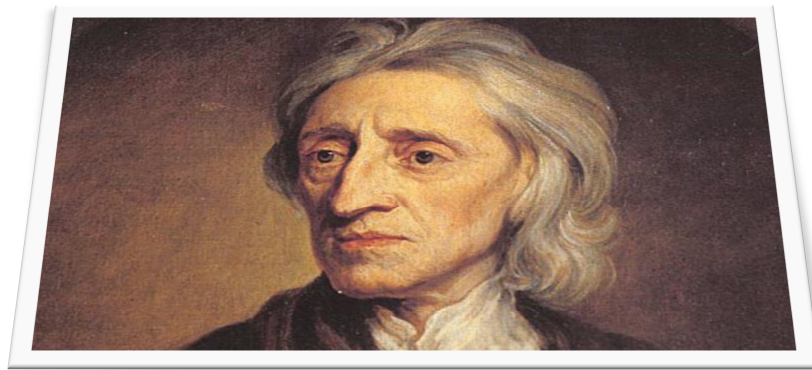
Figure 5.1:   John Locke
Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Locke

He studied **Aristotle's** logic and metaphysics and later picked interest in medicine. He studied medicine and in 1674, he had his degree in medicine and was licensed to practice as a doctor. Later, he became the personal Doctor and Adviser to Anthony Ashley Cooper, who later on became the Earl of Shaftsbury.

The most popular of his works include *An Essay Concerning Toleration, Two Treatises of Government, An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* and *The Reasonableness of Christianity.* **Locke** died in Oates, twenty miles north of London in 1704.

5.2   John Locke's Theory of Knowledge

John Locke, like **Descartes** and the other philosophers considered in the previous study sessions, also agrees that it is possible to attain knowledge. Meanwhile, Locke differs from the previous philosophers on the method or the nature of human knowledge.

According to **Locke**, ideas are the building blocks of knowledge. However, what idea meant to **Locke** is different from what we commonly refer to as idea in our current understanding of the term. Similarly, **Locke's** notion of idea is also different from Plato's conception of ideas as universal entities in the world of forms. For **Locke**, an idea is anything that is the immediate object of perception, thought or understanding.

In addition, **Locke** argues that the most basic components of human knowledge are simple ideas. In other words, if thoughts are broken down to the most fundamental level at such basis, are simple ideas, which are used by the mind to construct complex ideas.

Locke holds further that it is not possible for the mind to come up with a new idea, which it has never experienced. For example, thoughts and knowledge come because of the mind coming in contact (experiencing) simple ideas like the primary colours or the basic shapes.

Locke holds that simple ideas are of two types. In the first place, there are ideas of sensation and there are ideas of reflection.
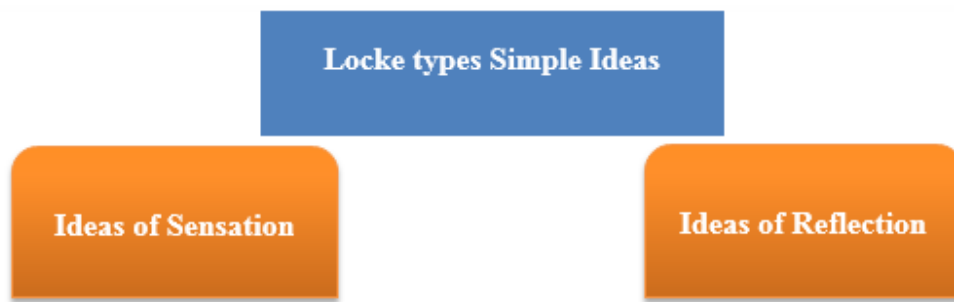
Figure 5.2 Locke types of simple ideas
Source: SchulPortals Inc.©

1. **Ideas of Sensation:** are those that enable us to have a direct experience of events and occurrences through our senses. For example, it is through this form of ideas that we experience cold, warmth, sweet, bitter, soft, hard, and so on. Hence, sensation, for Locke, refers to the observation or perception of external objects.

2. **Ideas of Reflection** are those ideas that the mind generate from considering ideas of sensation given by the experience. Reflection is the observation or perception of the internal operations of the mind, which include doubting, believing, thinking willing, perceiving, reasoning and knowing.

For Locke, all our ideas, and hence our knowledge, necessarily stem from sensation or reflection. Whatever cannot be trace to sensation and reflection, according to Locke, is meaningless and likely comes to be only because of a misuse of language. Nevertheless, Locke views sensation as being more fundamental than reflection.

In fact, Locke holds that we cannot have the experience of reflection until we have had the experience of sensation. In all, Locke sees the senses as the bedrock of human knowledge. Whatever we claim to know is made possible only because we have experienced such through our senses, which have served as the channel by which the mind becomes aware of the external objects of knowledge.

Furthermore, ideas, according to Locke, are of two types. There are simple ideas and there are compound ideas. In Locke's view, simple ideas are objects of immediate perception or reflection by the mind. In other words, a simple idea is that which the mind perceives directly or which comes to be as a result of the act of reflection by the mind. Locke holds that there is another type of ideas known as the compound ideas.

- ■ According to Locke, what is Compound Ideas?
- ☐ Compound ideas are the ideas that result from a combination of simple ideas by the mind; an example of this is the idea of a golden mountain. Having come to perceive the simple ideas of an object of a particular shape called mountain, and of golden colour, the mind can combine the two simple ideas to form the compound idea of a golden mountain.

5.3   Locke's Rejection of Innate Ideas

For Locke to push his argument that all human ideas and knowledge emanate from experience to a logical conclusion, he also argue against the notion of innateness or the idea that some or all of human knowledge has been in the mind before the mind meet the objects of knowledge in the external world.

Locke explains that it is believe by some people that, there are certain innate principles impose upon the human mind from the beginning, which the soul comes to the world with. Locke denies this idea and argues that it is a false idea, which the truth cannot be ascertain. Locke also rejects the idea of innateness because, according to him, it is possible for some persons to employ it in subjecting other people and keep them under them.

- Explain Locke point of view concerning 'innate'
- On the subject of innate ideas, Locke points to the variety of human experience, and to the difficulty of forming general and abstract ideas, and he ridicules the view that any such ideas can be antecedent to experience.

All the parts of our knowledge, he insists, have the same rank and the same history regarding their origin in experience. It is in its most extreme form that the doctrine of innate ideas is attacked; but he cannot seen any middle ground between that extreme doctrine and his own view that all ideas have their origin in experience

In other words, apart from the fact that Locke holds that the idea of innateness is erroneous; he also contends that it could be use as the justification for a ruler to rule as lord over the other people. If a ruler could convince people that certain assumptions are innate, then he would justify his right to rule them without them having to examine his authority or using their own reason, intellect or judgment.

5.4   Locke's Moral Idea

Locke categorises thought about morality into the category of demonstrative knowledge. In his idea, morality could have the exactness of mathematics. Morality could be so precise that it would be demonstrated like mathematics because the real essence of the entities, which moral words stand for and can be perfectly known.

In **Locke's** view, the principal word in ethics, which is the word good, is knowable. We describe things as being good or evil, depending on whether they bring pleasure or pain.

Locke further argues that moral good or evil refers to either conformity or deviation of our voluntary actions to certain laws. **Locke** talks about three laws, which are: the law of opinion, the civil law and the divine law. On whether one could easily know the definition of good or evil by the laws alluded to by **Locke**, he is of the opinion that just like the laws of mathematics are evident and incontestable, so are the laws that state the rules of morality to rational beings.

Box 5.1: Locke's Moral Law
1. The Law of Opinion
2. The Civil Law
3. The Divine Law

Locke, therefore, holds that it is possible to discover moral rules that conform to God's law by our reason; although he did not state the relationship between the three laws. For Locke,

1. **The law of Opinion** refers to a community's judgment or what the community adopts as a form of behaviour that would lead to happiness conformity to the law of opinion is called virtue.

2. **The civil law:** according to Locke, is set by the commonwealth and it is enforced by the courts. This is the instance when the state adjudicates between persons in matters of right and wrong and the divine law could be known either through reason or through revelation.

3. **The Divine law** Locke defines this law as the standard of moral uprightness. Hence, the other laws – the law of opinion and the civil law – must conform to the divine law.

The discrepancies between these three laws, argues Locke, usually arise from the fact that human beings in most cases choose immediate pleasure rather than pleasures of long-lasting value. For Locke, these moral rules are eternally true.

5.5 Locke's Political Idea

In his renowned political writing, *Second Treatise of Government,* **Locke** begins his political idea with a thought experiment of a state that people would be in the absence of a civil or political authority.

In **Locke's** view, the state of nature is not the same as **Hobbes's** state of war of all against all. However, the main feature of the state of nature, in **Locke's** idea, is that of men living together guided by the law of nature but lacking a judge or authority to adjudicate between them.

> According to **Locke***, men in the state of nature know the moral law through reason. The natural moral law states that since men are equal and independent, no one should harm another in his life, health, liberty or estate. This law derives from the importance and worth of individuals as creatures of God. This is the basis of each person fundamental rights to possesses.*

Figure 5.3 State of Nature
Source: http://stefanjbecket.tumblr.com/post/1540878703/today-in-hobbesian-state-of-
nature-news

A very essential right, Locke argued, is the right to private property ownership. Locke holds that the right to private property predates the enactment of social contract or the advent of civil society. This is because this right is ground in the natural moral law. For Locke, nature gave the world and all the goods in it to men generally. Therefore, at the level of that which nature gave there is joint ownership of the earthly resources.

However, what confers justification on anyone to claim a particular property as being exclusively his is if he mixes his labour with the natural common property, at that point, the property ceases to be common property but becomes his private property. Also, by way of natural right, **Locke** holds that a man may inherit property from his father; he is born with such natural right.

However, in spite of the natural rights and the knowledge of natural moral law by those in the state of nature, Locke contends that people would be willing and even take steps to leave the state of nature and form a civil society.

- ▪ Explain the reason why people will want to leave the state of nature to form a civil society
- ☐ According to Locke, the main reason why people would desire to leave the state of nature and unite to form a commonwealth or civil society is essentially to protect or preserve their property – that is their lives, liberty and estate.

Apart from this, it would also be imperative to form a civil society because although it is possible for every man to know the natural moral law, yet many people would not know or apply the moral law because of deliberate deception or indifference.

Figure 5.4 Civil Society
Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Age_of_Enlightenment

In addition, in case there is a dispute, it is very likely that everyone would decide in his favour if made a judge in his own case. Hence, there is need for a neutral and independent judge that is able to adjudicate between persons in case there is dispute, especially with regard to private property. It is for these reasons, according to **Locke**, that men form civil society.

Locke argues that the fundamental rights of humans are inalienable – that is, they cannot be taking, transfer or forfeited. It is for this reason that **Locke** grounds the formation of civil society in consent and agreement.

No government is legitimate and no man has the right to govern another man, unless the consent of the ruled is obtained. The reason is that, as central to Locke's idea, all men are free, independent and equal. "No government is legitimate, Locke sternly insisted, unless founded through mutual consent of its subject. No government has moral claims to obedience if established by conquest or by brute force of the strong over the weak." (**Lamprecht** 1955: 297)

The agreement reached in the state of nature to form the civil society has certain underlying assumptions. In the first place, men "consent to have laws made and enforced by society." (**Stumpf**, 1982: 264) The laws made by society should however, be such as would promote or confirm the natural rights that men possess. Furthermore, men consent to be bound by the wish of the majority. This is the reason why Locke opposes absolute monarchy.

Locke argues that the reins of government must not be place in the hands of a monarch. This, for him is not a form of civil government. Political authority, which originally belongs to the majority, should rather be entrust to the legislature. The idea of separation of power is very germane to Locke's political postulation.

According to him, it is very important to ensure that those who enforce and administer the laws are not also the persons who make them. This is need to give room for checks and balances in government.

- What was the reason why Locke opposes absolute monarchy?

- Locke contends that a government by absolute monarchy is not a civil society because when there is "no such decisive power (or judge) to appeal to, there they are still in the

state of nature". In other words, a prince with absolute power, holding both legislative and executive power, has no judge over him; therefore, an absolute monarchy cannot be a civil society.

The key link for Locke is that in a civil society a judge must always be present when disputes occur, which not the case is in an absolute monarchy.

Therefore, it is clear that in Locke's political theory, the law, rather than a sovereign, is regarded to be supreme. Hence, in case the government does not discharge its duties as expected by the people, Locke holds that the people would be justified if they revolted against such government.

Locke strongly contends that 'if a government, even one legitimately set up, exceeds its designated functions and invades the personal rights that its citizens have retained within their individual jurisdiction, it is once at war with its own subjects and may rightfully be overthrown.' (**Lamprecht** 1955: 297) In such case, the government is dissolve and the people re-make a civil society.

Summary of Study Session 5

In Study Session 5, you have learnt that:

1. John Locke is one of the most renowned philosophers of the early modern period of philosophy

2. Locke, as an empiricist, argues that our knowledge is ideas that we acquire through sense perception. He identifies two types of ideas – simple ideas and compound ideas. In addition to his notion of ideas, he rejects innateness – the idea that the mind has always had certain knowledge from the beginning and before it has the experience of such entities or ideas.

3. Locke contends that morality can have the preciseness of mathematics, and he identifies three types of laws that guide morality. These are law of opinion, civil law and divine law. The divine law is the basic and most important of the three types of laws.

4. Locke posits that the origin of an acceptable civil society and of a legitimate government is the consent of the people to be govern and if, at any time, a government deviates from the purpose of its establishment, then it could be rightfully revolt against and topple. Locke places authority in the hands of the legislature.

5. Locke rejects absolute monarchy and advocates for checks and balances in government in order to ensure individual freedom and protect individual rights – especially, the natural right to private property ownership.

Self-Assessment Question (SAQs) for Study Session 5

Now that you have completed this study session, you can assess how well you have achieved its Learning outcomes by answering the following questions. Write your answers in your study Diary and discuss them with your Tutor at the next study Support Meeting. You can check your answers with the Notes on the Self-Assessment questions at the end of this Module.

SAQ 5.1 (Tests Learning Outcome 5.1)
Give account of John Locke Life and Time

SAQ 5.2 (Tests Learning Outcome 5.2)
Discuss critically, Locke's notion of simple and compound ideas.

SAQ 5.3 (Tests Learning Outcome 5.3)
Attempt a critical analysis of Locke's rejection of innateness.

SAQ 5.4 (Tests Learning Outcome 5.4)
Attempt a critique of the divine law in Locke's moral idea.

SAQ 5.5 (Tests Learning Outcome 5.5)
Discuss the process of the formation of civil society in Locke's political philosophy.

Study Session 6   George Berkeley

Introduction

George Berkeley was a brilliant critic of his predecessors, particularly **Descartes**, **Locke** and **Hobbes**, and a talented metaphysician capable of defending the apparently counter-intuitive theory of Immaterialism. He also had some minor influence on the development of mathematics (and calculus in particular).**George Berkeley** believed that Locke's Essay did not carry the principles of empiricism far enough

This Study Session will focus on George Berkeley biography and contributions to philosophy and His view on Perception and Existence, Epistemology and the Mind-Body Problem

Learning Outcomes for Study Session 6

At the end of this study session, you should be able to:
- 6.1   Describe George Berkeley's biography.
- 6.2   Explain the idea of perception in Berkeley's philosophy.
- 6.3   Describe Berkeley's Epistemology
- 6.4   Explain Berkeley's position on the mind-body problem.

6.1   Early Life and Contribution George Berkeley to Philosophy

George **Berkeley** was born on 12 March 1685 in the county of Kilkenny in southern Ireland. He studied Philosophy, Mathematics, Logic and Languages in Dublin at Trinity College. He was in the college for about twenty years – as a student, master and a Fellow. He was ordained a clergyman in the Church of England, and became a bishop in 1734. **Berkeley** travelled extensively on missionary trips.

Figure 6.1 George **Berkeley**
Source: http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:George_**Berkeley**_by_John_Smibert.jpg

The notebooks, which **Berkeley** kept, show very clearly that he was greatly inspire by Locke and the Cartesians, especially, Nicolas Malebranche. Among his most popular works are *Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous, An Essay towards a New Theory of Vision* and *A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge*. **Berkeley** died in Oxford on 14 January 1753.

6.2 Berkeley on Perception and Existence

On the question of what is real in contradistinction to what only appears to be real, **Berkeley** disagrees with **Descartes** and Locke that material entities are real. The best-known doctrine of **Berkeley** is *esse est percipi aut percipere,* which means that to be is to be perceived or to perceive; this summarises the core of **Berkeley**'s philosophy.

In **Descartes**' philosophy, although the mind is accorded a superior or the primary position in that, its existence is that which validates the existence of the body and other material entities, yet it is evident that the philosophical idea of **Descartes** accommodates the idea that material entities are also real in their own right. This position is, however refuted by **Berkeley** who argues that only ideas and the immaterial minds that perceive them are real.

Similarly, this position of **Berkeley** contradicts the idea of an unknown independently existing material entity which is at the base of an object's properties and which causes our idea of such object, which is prominent in Locke's philosophy. **Berkeley** rejects the idea of the existence of material entities as inconceivable. For **Berkeley**,

We can have no intelligible (i.e. non-contradictory) conception of such a substance and even if we could form such a conception, we could have no reason (or evidence) for believing that such a substance existed.

Such a substance cannot be conceive, because it is contradictory to talk of conceiving of thing that is unconceived. (Material substance must be "unconceived" insofar as, by

definition, it exists independently of any mind.) Even if we could form an idea of such a substance, we have no reason to accept that such a substance exists since all we ever directly perceive are our ideas as opposed to material substance. (**Ariew** and **Watkins**, 2009)

In **Berkeley**'s view, things exist only in the mind. Hence, perception is a necessary condition for any claim for existence. Things that seem to be concrete and self-existent are mere ideas or mental perceptions. Hence, nothing can claim to exist on its own safe the existence made possible by the mind, which perceives such object or entity.

> For **Berkeley**, ostensibly physical objects like tables and chairs are nothing more than collections of sensible ideas. Because no idea can exist outside a mind, it follows that tables and chairs, as well as all the other furniture of the physical world, exist only insofar as they are in the mind of someone (i.e. only insofar as they are being perceived). (**Duignan**, 2011: 113)

Berkeley's idea would ordinarily strike one as being strange, bizarre and false. Meanwhile, he also realised the seeming contradiction and implicit objection in his idea and immediately provided answers to counter his potential critics.

On the question of whether objects exist when they are being perceive, **Berkeley** would answer in the affirmative because this is what his idea actually states. However, on the question of whether things would vanish or simply go out of existence when no human is nearby to perceive him or her, **Berkeley** had to do a bit of explanation.

According to **Berkeley**, whether humans are around or not, things would exist but their existence would still be dependent on perception. This is because, 'when no human is perceiving a table or other such object, God is ; and it is God's thinking that keeps the otherwise unperceived object in existence.' (**Duignan**, 2011: 114)

- ■ Mention the two types of spirits or minds that Berkeley contends
- ☐ Finite spirit, which is the spirit of man and Infinite spirit, which is the spirit of God.

The infinite spirit enables the finite spirit to be able to perceive ideas.

6.3   Berkeley's Epistemology

In his work, *New Theory of Vision,* **Berkeley** argues that 'knowledge depends upon actual vision and other sensory experiences.' (**Stumpf**, 1982: 266) This position of **Berkeley**'s places him in the empiricist school of thought in which **Locke** and **Hume** are also belong.

Berkeley's epistemological position is known as phenomenalism. This refers to 'a view that denies that we should think of perception as involving mind-independent objects at all. Rather, "external" objects are identify in some way with our sensations…. It claims that all we are ever directly aware of are our own sensations.' (**Crumley**, 2009: 284)

The most fundamental questions of epistemology include 'Can we know anything?', 'What can we know?' and 'How can we know?' **Berkeley** considers these questions and he offered answers that are consistent with his other philosophical ideas.

Berkeley argues that knowledge is possible, although the objects of our knowledge are ideas rather than the external objects in the physical world. In **Berkeley**'s idea, objects in the world are a collection of ideas.

- What is Epistemology?
  - Epistemology is the branch of philosophy that studies knowledge. It attempts to answer the basic question: what distinguishes true knowledge from false knowledge. Can also Epistemology be define as the philosophical study of knowledge and belief

Berkeley was, however, aware of the fact that critics could raise the question that if material entities do not exist in their own right, like **Berkeley** claimed, how it could be possible to gain knowledge through an experience or perception of something that is not there on its own.

In addition, could it be possible for two persons to have very similar experiences when considering the same thing if the thing does not exist on its own? In answer to this question, '**Berkeley** proposed that God plants certain ideas in our minds on an on-going basis and makes sure to coordinate different people's ideas (so that you and I can both see a table at the same time, for instance).' (**Huemer**, 2002: 29)

Berkeley proposed three main points in support of his epistemological position that it is only possible to know ideas only. In the first place, **Berkeley** pointed out that there is no reason whatsoever for believing in the independent existence of external objects.

In addition, he maintained that it could not be possible for us to have a consistent idea of what external objects were, even if there were such objects. Lastly, **Berkeley** argued that the idea or a conception of an external object existing on its own and independent of the mind is self-contradictory. In other words,

> Roughly, he argued that one could not conceive of anything existing outside the mind, because if one tried to conceive of such a thing, then the thing would then, by the very fact that one was conceiving of it, be in one's own mind. (**Huemer**, 2002: 29)

6.4   Berkeley on the Mind-Body Problem

Theorists' attempts to define reality with regard to consciousness have affirmed three positions in all. The first is physical monism – the idea that only the physical objects and entities are real; mental-physical dualism the idea that both the physical world and the mental world are real; and mental monism, which argues that only the mental world constitutes the primary reality and that the physical world is merely a construct of the mental world.

The father of modern philosophy, **Rene Descartes**, brought the mind-body problem, which has elicited the three positions, to the fore. **Descartes** argues that both the body and the mind constitute separate realities, each with its distinct features and that the two interact. The basis of the interaction is the principal starting point of the mind-body problem.

Descartes was also aware of this and he explained that the two interacted through the pineal gland, which, according to him, was situated at the base of the brain. The nature of the pineal gland was, however, an intractable problem for **Descartes**. Although, he did not proffer a satisfactory solution, yet he passed the problem on.

In addressing this problem, **Berkeley** adopts the mental monist position popularly called idealism. In **Berkeley**'s view, 'the only reality is that which exists in the mind.' (**Wilde** 2010: 87) The idealism of **Berkeley** is a step further in his argument of the dependence of existence upon perception.

Berkeley's argument necessitated that he refute the reality of the body. This is because the initial premise of his philosophy denies the existence of matter when he contended that all that there is

to reality is the thinking mind and its perception.

Hence, contrary to the position of **Descartes** that apart from the thinking mind, there is also an external world out there that exists independent of the mind, **Berkeley** maintains that only the thinking mind is real.

The only other thing, which **Berkeley** identified apart from the mind and its perception, is God. For **Berkeley**, God is the source or originator of the mind and he too is not a material being, hence, there is no place for matter or the extended body in the philosophy of **Berkeley**. In this way, **Berkeley**'s philosophy is in a way exculpated from the problem of the interaction of the mind as a substance that is categorically different from the body.

Summary of Study Session 6

In Study Session 6, you have learnt that:

1. The core of **Berkeley**'s position is that existence of entities depends on a perception of them by the human mind or the Divine mind of God, which keeps things in existence by constantly perceiving them.

2. The idea of **Berkeley**, which in his own words, is to be perceived' greatly influenced his other philosophical postulations. For example, **Berkeley**'s epistemology sees knowledge as perceiving sensations rather than actual external objects, which exist, independent of the mind.

3. **Berkeley**'s contribution to the discourse on the mind-body problem suggests that the min-body puzzle is a pseudo-problem because there is nothing like matter or material entity that exists on its own and which we need to explain its interaction with the mind.

Self-Assessment Question (SAQs) for Study Session 6

Now that you have completed this study session, you can assess how well you have achieved its Learning outcomes by answering the following questions. Write your answers in your study Diary and discuss them with your Tutor at the next study Support Meeting. You can check your answers with the Notes on the Self-Assessment questions at the end of this Module.

SAQ 6.1 (Tests Learning Outcome 6.1)
Give account of George Berkeley's early life

SAQ 6.2 (Tests Learning Outcome 6.2
Write a critical note on **Berkeley**'s idea of "To be is to be perceived."

SAQ 6.3 (Tests Learning Outcome 6.3)
Attempt a critique of George Berkeley's epistemological idea.

SAQ 6.4 (Tests Learning Outcome 6.4)

1. What role does God play in Berkeley's metaphysics?
2. In what way does Berkeley's philosophy attempt to address the mind-body problem?

Study Session 7   David Hume

Introduction

David Hume skeptical approach to a range of philosophical subjects. In epistemology, he questioned common notions of personal identity, and argued that there is no permanent "self" that continues over time.

He dismissed standard accounts of causality and argued that our conceptions of cause-effect relations are ground in habits of thinking, rather than in the perception of causal forces in the external world itself. He defended the skeptical position that human reason is inherently contradictory, and it is only through naturally instilled beliefs that we can navigate our way through common life.

This study session will expose you to David Hume's methods of physical science, ideas of impression, notion of causality, idea of the self, view of Scepticism and Moral Theory

Learning Outcomes for Study Session 7

At the end of this study session, you should be able to:
 7.1   Describe the life and time of David Hume.
 7.2   Explain Hume's methods of physical science
 7.3   Examine the ideas of impressions and ideas in Hume's philosophy.
 7.4   Explain Hume's notion of causality
 7.5   Describe Hume's idea of the self.
 7.6   Describe Hume's view of Scepticism
 7.7   Explain Hume's moral theory

7.1 The life and time of David Hume.

David Hume was born in Edinburgh in 1711. His parents were Scottish and they wanted him to study law. Meanwhile, he developed keen interest in literature very early in life and this indicated that the desire of his family to become a lawyer might never come to be. He was admit to the University of Edinburgh, though he did not graduate. Apart from living in Edinburgh, he also lived some of his years in France.

Figure 7.1 David Hume
Source:http://people1973.com/david-hume/david-hume-6.html

He wrote his work, *A Treatise of Human Nature,* while in France, although the work, at first, had a very poor reception when he published it in 1739. **Hume**, as a result, revised it and gave it the title, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding.*

This is the title that the work is known by today. **Hume**'s other works include *Essays Moral and Political, Principles of Morals, Political Discourses* and *Dialogues on Natural Religion.* David **Hume** died in Edinburgh in 1776.

7.2   Hume's methods of physical science

Hume's main aim was to study the human nature using the methods of physical science. **Hume**'s familiarity with literature made him realise that different and even conflicting opinions are usually present to the human mind and all views so presented are present under the presumption that they are all equally valid.

Hume noticed that even philosophy was not exempt from this problem. He, therefore, asked himself how he could know the true nature of things. **Hume** saw an answer to this in science.

Science, in **Hume**'s day, was to answers to so many questions about humans and their world. **Hume** shared this idea, as he believed he could understand the true nature of things using the methods of science. He was optimistic that the methods of science would enable a clear understanding of human nature and especially of the workings of the human mind. (**Stumpf**, 1982: 271)

Hume could not justify his conviction about the idea of using scientific methods for understanding the workings of the human mind and thoughts. He, rather, found out how limited the range of human thought could be and this made him to resort to scepticism. Like Locke and **Berkeley** who were empiricists, **Hume** also held the premise that all our ideas come from experience. Meanwhile, he eventually saw scepticism as an inevitable conclusion of this premise.

7.3   Hume's Theory of Impressions and Ideas

David Hume's employment of science as the basis for understanding human nature begins with a theory of the understanding and the theory of the understanding begins with the theory of ideas. For **Hume**, the theory of ideas is the theory of perceptions. By perception, however, **Hume** means feelings like sensations, emotions and passions; these feelings, according to **Hume** are impressions.

Hume identifies two forms of mental contents. According to him, the first level of mental contents is impression, while the second level of mental contents is idea.
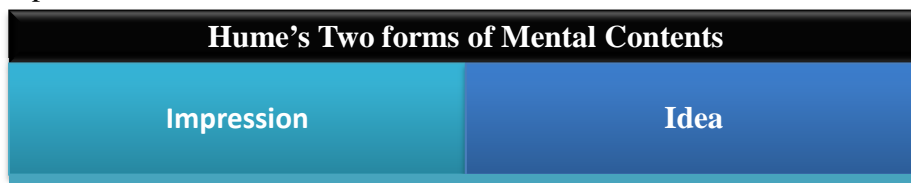
Hume's Two forms of Mental Contents	
Impression	**Idea**

Figure 7.1 Hume's two forms of Mental Contents
Source:

In Hume**'s** idea, impressions are experience directly by sensation or reflection. Reflection includes emotions, passions, willing and desires. However, the two sources of ideas, for Hume, are memory and imagination.

The original material of the mental content, in **Hume's** opinion, is an impression; however, an idea is a copy of an impression. This, perhaps, accounts for the reason why ideas are not usually as vivid or as clear as impressions.

When we have impressions, like when we see, hear, love, hate, feel, desire or are angry, we have clear perceptions of those feelings and events. Meanwhile, when we reflect upon the feelings and events, we have an idea of them. On the question of drawing a distinction between an idea and an impression, **Hume** did not say much on this. According to **Jacobson**,

> **Hume** does not tell us much at all about how to draw the distinction or decide a problem case, though he thinks that, in a few cases, we can have ideas nearly as vivid as impressions or impressions nearly as faint as ideas. None the less, he thinks the distinction is in general obvious and thus it is not "very necessary to employ many words in explaining it." (**Jacobson**, 1996: 152)

In addition, **Hume** argues that without an impression, there can be no idea. This, for him, is because ideas are copies of impressions. 'For if an idea is simply a copy of an impression, it follows that for every idea there must be a prior impression.' (Stumpf, 1982: 272)

Nevertheless, **Hume** explains that not every idea is a direct reflection of an impression. This is the reason why it is possible to have an idea of a flying horse or a golden mountain. It is in this respect that **Hume** distinguishes between a simple idea and a complex idea. In the case of a flying horse or that of a golden mountain,

Hume holds that those are the functions of the mind's faculty of compounding; transposing or diminishing the materials afforded us by the senses and experience. What **Hume** means by this is that it is possible for the mind to combine two simple ideas, which directly resulted from perception through the senses and experiences to form a complex idea. In other words,

> When we think of a flying horse, our imagination joins two ideas, wings and horse,

which we originally acquired as impressions through our senses. If we have any suspicion that a philosophical term is employed without any meaning or idea, we need, says **Hume**, "but enquire *from what impression is that supposed idea derived?* And if it be impossible to assign any, this will serve to confirm our suspicion." (**Stumpf**, 1982: 272)

7.4   Hume on Causality

Hume's treatment of the notion of causality is sequential to his arguments on impressions and ideas. This is about the most original and influential idea of **Hume**. This is because even the other philosophers in the empiricist school – Locke and **Berkeley** – did not raise critical questions on the basic principles of causality.

Hume argues, however, that the idea of causality is not clear. This, for him, is because the origin of causality is not evident. **Hume** asks that if our ideas are copies of impressions, then what impressions give us the idea of causality. He responds by stating that no impression is correspondent to the idea of causality. Hence, it is suspicious how the whole idea began in the mind.

Hume suspects that the idea arose out of our observation of events. If events have been known to usually go together, say A and B, we conclude that A causes B because it has been observed that A has preceded B in the cases observed. **Hume** explains that when we observe these events together, experience suggests to us that there are three relations between them.

The three relations are:

1. The relation of *contiguity*, for A and B are always close together
2. There is *priority in time*, for A, the "cause" always precedes B, the "effect"; and
3. There is *constant conjunction*, for we always see a followed by B. but there is still another relation that the idea of causality suggests to common sense, namely, that between A and B there is a "necessary connexion." But neither contiguity, priority, nor constant conjunction implies "necessary" connection between objects. (**Stumpf**, 1982: 273-274)

Hume, therefore, concludes that there is nothing in the objects observed, which ascertains causality. Rather, we usually offer causality as explanation of events that is observe to follow each other just because of what **Hume** calls 'habit of association'.

7.5   Hume's Idea of the Self

Hume denies the reality of any enduring self that is fundamentally different from the different perceptions that we experience. He argues that there is no impression that the idea of the self-emanated from.

In addition, he contends that since there is no such impression that is basically associated with the idea of the self, the idea cannot be a real idea. **Hume** observes that all that we know or encounter from day to day are perceptions – of love and hate; of pleasure and pain; of joy and sorrow; of heat and cold, and so on. **Hume** therefore concludes that a human being is nothing but a bundle of collection of perceptions.

7.6   Hume's Skepticism

In some of his arguments, **Hume** examines what we can know about the world. **Hume** argues that it is not possible for us to know anything about the things outside the subjective contents of our experiences. In **Hume**'s idea, in most cases, our perception of the world is based on our idea of causes and effects.

Meanwhile, our notion of causality is usually ground in inductive reasoning, or induction. Induction refers to a view of the world or a pattern of reasoning, which holds that the future will always be like the past.

However, belief in induction is in turn, grounded the idea of uniformity of nature, which holds that if a law, event or phenomenon has occur in a place in the universe. If the conditions that gave rise to it were present, it would also happen exactly the same way at any other time and in any other place in the universe

The problem of induction is, however, that of ascertaining that the future will indeed resemble the past. It is on this note that **Hume** doubts that we can acquire adequate knowledge about the universe, since experience is our main source of knowledge about the universe.

> For all inferences from experience, suppose, as their foundation, that the future will resemble the past, and that similar powers will be conjoin with similar sensible qualities. If there were any suspicion that the course of nature may change, and that the past may be no rule for the future, all experience becomes useless, and can give rise to no inference or conclusion. …
>
> In vain, do you pretend to have learned the nature of bodies from your experience? Their secret nature and consequently all their effects and influence, may change, without any change in their sensible qualities. This happens sometimes, and with regard to some objects: Why may it not happen always, and with regard to all objects? What logic, what process or argument secures you against this supposition? (**Lawhead**, 2003: 69)

Hume stretched his scepticism to a level that he doubted the external world. The reason is that **Hume** is an empiricist and this means that he sees sense experience or sense impression as the basic source of our knowledge.

This also means that, for **Hume**, our knowledge of the external world must be ground in experience. Meanwhile, although we seem to have experiences of the objects in the world; the problem, however, is that we cannot really know that such experiences are connected to the external world.

- ■ Which school of thought does David Hume belongs?
- ☐ David Hume belong to the Empiricist School of Thoughts

7.7   Hume on Morality

In spite of **Hume**'s scepticism, he still considered ethics to be very important. The aim of **Hume** in his work titled *Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* was to do for ethics what **Galileo** and **Newton** did for science, when they introduced experimental method to science, and thereby

overthrew the abstract general hypothetical method in practice before them. According to **Hume**, it is true that reason is important in making moral judgments; however, reason alone cannot produce moral blame or commendation.

Hume considers reason alone to be very deficient in making moral judgment because, in his idea, reason can only help to make judgment about matters of fact and relations. Meanwhile, moral statements of good and evil are not just about matters of fact and relations alone.

For example, when we say theft is a crime, how do we come to that conclusion? What is the matter of fact that we refer to as crime in this instance? If one describes or analyses the action or event, reason will not be able to single out the part of the action that we can call crime.

Hume likens moral judgment to aesthetical judgment, in which although, it is possible to describe a particular object, judgment about its beauty cannot be part of the description because that is not a quality of the object. Rather, for **Hume**, beauty of an object is the effect, which that object, produces on the mind.

Hume argues that it is rather impossible to identify vice or virtue by mere matter of fact. In his opinion, an analysis of an action will only bring to the fore certain passions, volitions, thoughts and motives. For **Hume**, therefore, one cannot find the basis for apportioning blame or praise until one looks within. **Hume** immediately realised the danger inherent in basing the matters of morality on feelings – he knew that that would imply that morality is subjective or relative.

He therefore quickly points out that the sentiment of sympathy is in everybody. In fact, for **Hume**, there is no feeling as general as this. He holds that fellow feeling is a capacity in everyone that is beyond the individuals themselves. This, in **Hume**'s view, explains the reason why even a virtuous act done by our enemy is applaud or praise by us, in spite of our hatred for the person

Hume's conception of virtue and vice is dissimilar to the idea of determining virtue and vice in traditional ethics. Traditional ethics holds that there are rules that distinguish between virtue and vice, which must be follow while apportioning blame or praise to a moral act.

For **Hume**, however, the assumption that there are intelligible moral rules is absurd. This is because even if there were such rules, they would be recondite and inaccessible to humans. Rather, what defines morality, however, is a certain inner, albeit general, quality that gives a spectator, the pleasing sense of commendation or the displeasing feeling of blame.

Hume gives a list of those qualities that would be praiseworthy when viewed in the light of the sentiment of sympathy. This includes discretion, caution, enterprise, industry, economy, good-sense, prudence, discernment, temperance, sobriety, patience, constancy, considerateness, and presence of mind, quickness of conception and felicity of expression.

For **Hume**, we praise these qualities because they are generally useful and agreeable. Usefulness, for **Hume**, does not only connote what serves an individual's interest, but it is also what contributes to the happiness of the society. (Stumpf, 1982: 279)

Hence, in **Hume**'s view, whatever promotes the wellbeing of the society is distinctly obvious to us and is naturally approve by us. This should be accepted by us rather than searching in vain for some unintelligible and remote moral rules, like traditional ethics advocates. In all, **Hume**'s theory of morality can be understand as an attempt to strike a balance between the individual's interest and society's wellbeing, without alluding to moral rules that are not immediately available to the individual.

Summary of Study Session 7

In Study Session 7, you have learnt that:

1. **Hume** distinguishes between our sensory perceptions, or what he calls impressions and ideas, which are result of the mind acting on the impression gotten by experience

2. **Hume** holds that impressions are very fundamental and without them, there cannot be ideas.

3. In addition, **Hume** proceeds a step further in the idea that our knowledge emanate from sense experience.

4. He argues that scepticism is a necessary conclusion of the idea that knowledge is from experience.

5. **Hume** refutes the idea of an enduring self. In his idea, what is refer to as an enduring self is nothing other than successions of impressions.

6. On the issue of morality, **Hume** grounds his idea of morality in sentiment of sympathy, which in his idea, is immediately available to us rather than some rules that are remote and unknown. In this wise, **Hume** balances an individual's interest with the interests of her society.

Self-Assessment Question (SAQs) for Study Session 7

Now that you have completed this study session, you can assess how well you have achieved its Learning outcomes by answering the following questions. Write your answers in your study Diary and discuss them with your Tutor at the next study Support Meeting. You can check your answers with the Notes on the Self-Assessment questions at the end of this Module.

SAQ 7.1 (Tests Learning Outcome 7.1)
Give account of David Hume life and time

SAQ 7.2 (Tests Learning Outcome 7.2)
Describe Hume methods of physical science

SAQ 7.3 (Tests Learning Outcome 7.3)
Attempt conceptual analyses of sense impressions and ideas in Hume's philosophy.

SAQ 7.4 (Tests Learning Outcome 7.4)
Attempt a critique of the idea of causality in Hume's metaphysics.
SAQ 7.5 (Tests Learning Outcome 7.5)
Is there an enduring self? Answer this in the light of Hume's idea.

SAQ 7.6 (Tests Learning Outcome 7.6)
Examine David Hume's Skepticism

SAQ 7.7 (Tests Learning Outcome 7.7)
Critically discuss the idea of morality in David Hume philosophy.

Study Session 8   Immanuel Kant

Introduction

The life of the brilliant intellectual, **Immanuel Kant**, was a routine and quotidian one; such that the time he woke up in the morning, the time for drinking coffee, the time for writing, the time for reading college lectures, the time for eating and the time for taking a walk were all fixed and meticulously observed.

He postulated many exciting and innovative ideas. Although, **Kant**'s political idea is conservative, yet his epistemology was revolutionary.

This study session will introduce you to the Life and works of **Immanuel Kant** such as **Kant**'s Epistemology, Notion of Synthetic a Priori Knowledge, Distinction between Noumena and Phenomena and His idea of Morality and Categorical Imperative

Learning Outcomes for Study Session 8

At the end of this study session, you should be able to:
- 8.1   Describe the biography of Immanuel Kant.
- 8.2   Explain Kant's view of Epistemology
- 8.3   Analyse Kant's notion of Synthetic a priori knowledge.
- 8.4   Explain Kant's distinction between Noumena and Phenomena.
- 8.5   Examine Kant's Idea of Morality
- 8.6   Describe Kant's opinion on Categorical Imperative

8.1   The life and works of Immanuel Kant

Immanuel Kant was born in the small provincial town of Konigsberg, East Prussia, in 1724. His parents were poor but very religious; they belonged to a sect known as Pietism, an undogmatic form of Christianity that stresses inner purity and moral integrity over reason and theological doctrines. This greatly influenced Kant all through his life and even reflects a lot in his thoughts and ideas.

He was admitted into the University of Konigsberg in 1740. He later became a teacher in the University.

In 1770, he became a Professor of Logic and Metaphysics. In his later years, he was troubled by loss of energy, sight and memory. He died in Konigsberg in the year 1804.

His most popular works include *Critique of Pure Reason; Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysic of Ethics; Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics; Theory of the Heavens; Theory of Winds; Critique of Judgment; Critique of Practical Reason; Perpetual Peace* and *Religion within the Bounds of Reason Alone.*

Figure 8.1: Immanuel Kant
Source: http://www.philosophers.co.uk/immanuel-**Kant** .html

Kant was struck by two things which he observed in nature, which in his own words: "two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and awe … the starry heavens above and the moral law within."

These, for Kant are representational of the fact that on the one hand, science seems to have answers for so many questions about the universe; and on the other hand, there seem to be actuality of moral freedom and moral responsibility in the world. Meanwhile, the course of science shows that it is

> An attempt to include *all* of reality, including human nature, in its mechanical model. This would mean that all events, being parts of a unified mechanism, could be explain in terms of cause and effect.
>
> Moreover, this scientific approach would eliminate from consideration any elements that could not fit into its method, a method that placed greatest emphasis upon limiting knowledge to the realm of actual sense experience and to generalizations that could be derive by induction from such experience.
>
> Pursuing this method, science would have no need for, nor could it account for, such notions as freedom and God. (**Stumpf**, 1982: 290)

In spite of the constant progress, which **Kant** observes in science, **Kant** also, observes that every man seems to have a sense of moral duty. This, for **Kant**, clearly shows that human beings, unlike the other things in the universe, are free to choose any course of action that they want.

The problem in this, for **Kant**, 'was how to reconcile the two seemingly contradictory interpretations of events, one holding that all events are the product of *necessity* and the other holding that in certain aspects of human behaviour, there is *freedom.*' (**Stumpf**, 1982: 290)

8.2 Kant's Epistemology

Kant, unlike **Descartes**, did not start his epistemology from the stance of scepticism. Rather, he 'began his epistemology with the conviction that we *do* have knowledge.' (**Lawhead**, 2003: 113)

Kant was of the opinion that disciplines as if Arithmetic, Geometry and Physics give us information about the world.

For instance, **Kant** posits that no matter what we come to experience or know in the future, certain universal truths that have been discover through those disciplines would remain.

In **Kant's** view, no matter what future events are experience, for example, the following

statements would continue to hold as true:
- The shortest distance between two points is a straight line.
- Every event has a cause.

The second statement affirmed by **Kant** had earlier been refuted by **David Hume**. According to **Hume**, that every event has a cause is contestable. The reason is that experience is the sole source of our knowledge as humans. However, no matter how much we observe events, we cannot see a causal relation between the event or entity that we usually term a cause and the one we usually refer to as an effect.

Similarly, he argues that we cannot observe a causal relation between two events that have always been known to follow each other based on our past observations.

Kant was, faced with the task of explaining how a universal knowledge of causality is possible. **Kant**, in explaining the possibility of causality and other necessary and universal forms of knowledge, argues that both the empiricist view and the rationalist position have each given partial answer to the issue of knowledge of universal truths. According to **Lawhead**, Kant concluded that both reason and experience play a role in constructing our knowledge.

> Accordingly, **Kant**'s epistemology could justifiably be call "rational-empiricism" or "empirical-rationalism." He himself called it "critical philosophy" because he wanted to analyse reason, which means that he wanted to sort out the legitimate claims of reason from groundless ones. (**Lawhead**, 2003: 113)

Kant is of the opinion that while rationalism is dogmatic, empiricism is sceptic. On the one hand, the arguments of the rationalists, that human reason can attain knowledge beyond experience just by moving from one idea to the other or by forming a connection of ideas as is done in Mathematics, was called 'rotten dogmatism' by **Immanuel Kant**.

On the other hand also, the position of **Hume** and the other empiricists, that knowledge is not attainable because knowledge can only be derive from subjective sense impression, which cannot guarantee that the past will be like the future, is unacceptable to **Kant**.

- Why do Hume believe that every event has a cause is contestable?
- The reason is that experience is the sole source of our knowledge as humans. However, no matter how much we observe events, we cannot see a causal relation between the event or entity that we usually term a cause and the one we usually refer to as an effect.

Kant agrees with the initial premise of **Hume** that knowledge is gotten from experience nevertheless; he rejects his conclusion that this confirms a fact that knowledge is unattainable. For **Kant**, even if it is not particularly easy to state when, where or how knowledge began, it is, however, possible and important for us to state the nature of our knowledge.

It is important to note that **Kant** did not just combine his predecessors' ideas; he rather embarked on what he calls 'critical philosophy', which means, he actually subjected his predecessors' ideas to critical analyses before arriving at his conclusion.

Kant's critical philosophy raises question about whether it is possible for pure reason to gain knowledge independently of experience; or that how much is it possible for reason to know prior to experience.

Box 8.1 Difference Between Kant And Other Metaphysician Before Him
Metaphysicians before **Kant** had engaged in disputes about the nature of God and other ideas that took them beyond the realm of immediate experience. **Kant** asked the critical question whether the human reason possessed the powers to undertake such inquiries. **Kant** considers it important, in his critical philosophy, to ask how such knowledge, that is prior to experience, is possible.

8.3   The Synthetic a Priori Knowledge

Kant made a distinction between two types of judgments: The analytic and the synthetic judgments. A judgment, for **Kant**, is a proposition whereby we have a subject and a predicate. The predicate qualifies the subject in some way. When we make a statement or state a proposition, the subject and the predicate are connect in some way and this enables the mind to make a judgment in about the proposition.

Box 8.2   Two type of judgement the mind can make (Kant)
1. The analytic judgment and
2. The synthetic judgment.

1. **The analytic kind of judgment**. In this type of propositional judgment, the meaning of the predicate term is already included or implied by the meaning of the subject term. This is the type of judgment that David **Hume** referred to as 'relation of ideas'

   Examples of such statements include 'All sisters are females', 'A bachelor is an unmarried man', 'a triangle has three sides' and 'A circle is a round figure'. It is clear from the statements that there is a form of logical relation between the subject term and the predicate term, such that it is impossible to accept the subject and reject the predicate without being guilty of self-contradiction.
   This is because the statements are tautologies, which means the predicate of each is merely a repetition of the idea of the subject. This type of judgment is also known as **a priori** because it is had prior to experience.
2. **Synthetic type of judgment**. This refers to statements one has to recourse to sense experience in order to verify whether they are true or not.; this is the type of statement referred to as 'statements of fact' by **Hume**. In the case of a synthetic proposition, the truth of the predicate term is not implicit in the subject term; hence, one has to go beyond the statement to verify the truth of the statement.

   Examples of a synthetic proposition include: 'Human Immuno-deficiency Virus causes Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome'; 'It rained earlier today'; 'Cassava is edible'; 'Taye is married'; 'Natural disasters inflict hardship' and so on.

   It should be note that the predicate term, in a synthetic proposition, is not repetitive of the fact that the subject term states. In this wise, therefore, it is possible to accept the subject and reject the predicate without being involved in logical contradiction. This type of judgment is

a posteriori form of knowledge because this a type of knowledge that one has only after one has experienced it

Kant's project of synthetic a priori is to show the point at which the rationalists and the empiricists are wrong with regard to their conceptions of knowledge. Prior to **Kant**, the rationalists and the empiricists viewed reason and experience as two mutually exclusive means of acquiring knowledge.

Philosophers in the two schools of thought – rationalism and empiricism – could not conceptualise the possibility of the two sources of knowledge, that is: reason and experience, occurring together or both serving as bases for our knowledge-claim. **Kant** saw the possibility of this and it is the idea of his synthetic a priori knowledge.

What the synthetic a priori knowledge stands for is a form of knowledge that is gotten as a universal judgment, like any other analytic judgment although it can also be verified through sense experience.

According to **Kant**, arithmetic truths are an example of synthetic a priori knowledge. **Kant** gave the example of $5 + 7 = 12$. If one looks at the cited mathematical statement, it would be observed that this can be demonstrated in experience, and at the same time, provided that one knows the meaning of each figure as well as what the symbols of 'plus' and 'equals to' mean, one would agree that without verifying the statement in experience, it is always true.

Kant describes his contribution to epistemology as being revolutionary. Just as Copernicus brought about a monumental revolution in astronomy, **Kant**'s postulation in epistemology is also believed to be a landmark. In other words,

> **Kant** famously, described this insight as constituting a kind of "Copernican revolution" in philosophy just as Copernicus set cosmology on a new path by suggesting that the Earth orbits the Sun and not the other way around.
>
> **Kant** wanted to breathe new life into philosophy by suggesting that, rather than assuming that "all our knowledge must conform to objects" we might instead suppose that objects must conform to our knowledge.
>
> That is, rather than merely passively representing mind-independent objects in a "real" world, **Kant** held that the mind actively constitutes its objects by imposing the categories of time, space, and causation into our sensory experience, the subject actually creates the only kind of reality to which it has access. (**Bailey**: 107)

- ▪ What was the bases of Kant synthetic a priori project?
- ◻ **Kant**'s project of synthetic a priori is to show the point at which the rationalists and the empiricists are wrong with regard to their conceptions of knowledge

8.4 Kant on Noumena and Phenomena

One main aspect of **Kant's** critical philosophy is his argument on the scope and limitations of human knowledge. In **Kant's** idea, human knowledge is greatly limited in its scope. According to him, this limitation takes two forms. 'In the first place, knowledge is limited to the world of experience. Secondly, our knowledge is limited by the manner in which our faculties of perception and thinking organize the raw data of experience.' (**Stumpf**, 1982: 299)

Kant distinguishes between noumena reality or things as they are in themselves, and phenomenal reality, that is things as they appear to us. **Kant** does not argue that the knowledge

that we derive from our perception of things as they appear to us is not knowledge.

However, he contends that when the mind meets an object, it imposes its categories or ideas on the object, according to its experience of the object in question. What the mind perceives or experiences is the phenomena of the object, or the object as it seems to the mind. That is all that the mind can know.

Nevertheless, there is another form of reality, which is the noumena of the object, or the object as it is in itself. The mind cannot grasp the noumena of an entity, but this does not in any way, mean that knowledge is unattainable or that the form of knowledge that is available to the mind is inferior; this, rather stresses the limitation of human knowledge.

8.5   Kant's Idea of Morality

Kant's critique of pure reason resulted in a sort of commendation and approval for the scientific enterprise. Morality and religion were not that lucky, however, as the outcome of the critique put into serious question the ideas of freedom of choice and God. 'But **Kant** did not mean his *critique* to be an attack upon morality and religion.

Though he meant it to be a rejection of traditional presuppositions on which many people base their religious ideas, he wished to go on to establish new grounds for morality and religion, which would be superior to the old presuppositions' (**Lamprecht**, 1955: 373)

Kant admitted at the beginning of his postulation that apart from the *starry sky above*, which represents the world of sensory experience, another awe-inspiring fact is *the moral law within* him. This means, therefore, that both the world of sensory experience and the freedom to make moral choice are present with human beings.

However, since **Kant's** critique of pure reason had established that the world of sensory experience is real because it conforms to the methods of science, **Kant** had to embark on some reconstruction in order to be able to accommodate the idea of morality in his scheme of reality or existence.

In his attempt to reconstruct morality and moral ideals, **Kant** begins by asking that 'what conditions are requisite to make conduct genuinely moral?' **Kant** is of the opinion that only the answer to that question can enable us to know whether human beings are capable of morality or not. In a bid to answer this question, **Kant** considered it important to look within and not to an external idea like the consequences of our moral actions.

- ■ Do all persons have the same moral duties?
- □ According to **Kant**, only rational beings can be said to act morally. Reason for **Kant** (as for all the Enlightenment thinkers) is the same for all persons; in other words, there is not a poor man's reason versus a rich man's reason or a white man's reason versus a black man's reason. All persons are equal as potentially rational beings.

Some moral philosophers before **Kant** had tried to answer the question of what makes an action a moral one, by considering the likely results or consequences of such actions. For example, certain desirable effects like happiness and pleasure are as factors that define morality. **Kant** did not view morality as what is external to humans. in his idea, the moral law is within.

Although, **Kant** had a strong religious background, yet he did not view morality in the light of God's commands. **Kant** says 'our ability to identify God with the highest well and to attribute

goodness to the greatest religious figures in history requires that we already have a prior conception of moral perfection.' (**Lawhead**, 2003: 470)

Kant is convinced that morality cannot be based on feelings. This for him is because our feelings come and go; whereas, morality has to be based on something constant. In addition, because **Kant** sees humans as rational beings, he argues that the requirements of morality must be in accordance with what rationality demands. In other words, what is moral, for **Kant**, is what is rational.

Kant's Idea of Morality as Duty

Kant argues that what makes an action a moral action is if such action emanates from a good will. For **Kant**, a good will is that which is good in itself and not good as a means to a particular end. In other words, a good will is:

> … A will, which is esteem as good of itself without regard to anything else. It dwells already in the natural sound understanding and does not need so much to be taught as only is to be brought to light. In the estimation of the total worth of our actions, it always takes first place and is the condition of everything else. (**Lawhead**, 2003: 473)

Kant argues that even though, there are also some other good things like intelligence, courage, judgment and perseverance, yet none of them is good in itself. In fact, those traits can only be regard as good if, and only if, the will that gives rise to them is good.

A good will, according to **Kant**, will prompt a person to do a moral act because it is the person's duty to do so, and not particularly, because it is in the person's interest to do so. In other words, a good will enables a person to look beyond the gains or benefits that are likely to accompany the performance of an act; rather, it motivates one to examine the intrinsic worth of the act and to do it if it is in accord with duty.

- ■ What does **Kant** mean by "good without qualification"?
- ❑ In order for something to be good "without qualification", it must not be merely "good" as means to one end but "bad" as means to some other end. It must be as good totally independently of serving as a means to something else; it must be "good in-itself." Furthermore, while one thing may be good as means relative to a particular end, that "end" becomes a "means" relative to some other "end".

An important question, however, is how one could determine what one's duty would be when faced with a moral issue. This question is answer when one considers the theory of categorical imperative of **Kant**.

8.6 Kant's Categorical Imperative

Kant's did not based moral theory on religion or God. For him, everyone should have the autonomy of the will to decide for himself or herself what moral law they would follow. He argues, however, that acting autonomously does not mean that a person just acts without any caution or guide.

For **Kant**, a moral act is an act that is perform with a sense of duty. 'To be motivated by duty, according to **Kant**, is to be motivated to do something because one believes it is the way that all human beings ought to behave. Acting morally, then, is acting only on those maxims or reasons

that you believe everyone – universally – ought to live up to' (**Velasquez**, 1999: 525)

- ▪ What is a Categorical Imperative?
- □ "The Categorical Imperative" refers to the principle that all principles of our action (maxims) could consistently become universal laws. The Categorical Imperative is a principle about principles, or a "second order" principle.

In **Kant's** view, a will is good if it follows the rule that the course of action chosen by one should be such as one would wish that all people everywhere followed, especially when faced with a similar decision. What **Kant** means by this is that a good will would choose to act only on a rule that one could will to become a universal law, regardless of its consequence every time it is employed

In his renowned work, *Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysic of Ethics,* **Kant** goes further by identifying perfect and imperfect duties and categorising actions under each of the types of duties.
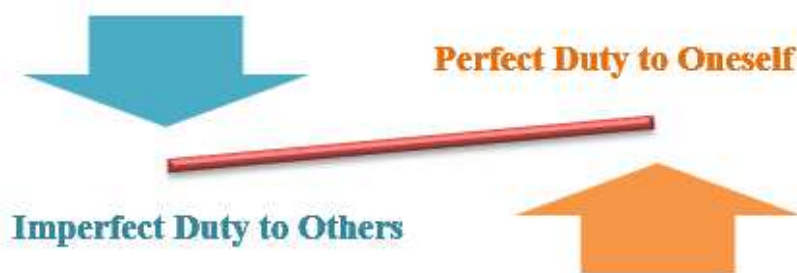

Figure 8.3: Kant Types of Duties.
Source: SchulPortals Inc.©

1. **Perfect Duty to Oneself:** According to **Kant**, one should imagine that a person decides to commit suicide after being convinced that her life contains more evil than good. **Kant** argues that if the person would subject the rule: 'You should take your life whenever it contains more pain than pleasure', to the test of categorical imperative, then one would find it to contradict itself.

   This is because if one examined the maxim or rule stated above, one would find it to base its conclusion on feeling. Therefore, if feeling that is supposed to sustain life is use as reason for destroying life, then the rule becomes self-contradictory. It is based on this argument of perfect duty to oneself that **Kant** rejects suicide and contends that life should be preserved no matter how pleasant or unpleasant it is.

2. **Perfect Duty to Others:** Another type of duty considered by **Kant** is "Perfect Duty to Others". In this instance, **Kant** considers the act of promise keeping. He considers that if a person that borrows some money and promises to repay at a particular time decides to break her promise because it is not convenient to repay at the said time, could she will that this be made a universal principle?

According to **Kant**, if one should subject this to the test of universalising it, one would realise that at a time, the word 'promise' would lose its meaning and nobody would accept anyone's promises any longer because it would become clear that the person would not keep the promise since everybody broke promises at will.

For **Kant**, at this time, it would become self-contradictory to make a promise, and since no one would will that this be made a universal principle for everyone, then it would be wrong for anyone to act upon the maxim as a single individual.

In addition, **Kant** examines "Imperfect Duty to Oneself". **Kant** considers the case of someone who is endow with talents and abilities, but prefers to sit in idleness and allow the abilities to waste away.

Kant says if the person should ask whether that could be conceive of as a universal law: whereby it would be like a natural instinct in everyone to indulge in pleasure rather than developing his or her natural abilities, **Kant** argues that although, this could be imagined, yet the person would not will that this be made a universal law. This is because our natural abilities help us to achieve our goals, and no rational person would watch her abilities rot away.

- What is required of a "universal law"?
- Any principle, which can be "universalized", is one, which can be to apply to all persons without involving inconsistency. Presumably, **Kant** reaches this conclusion because what it is to be a "rational being" is to act in a way to avoid "inconsistency.

Finally, **Kant** considers "Imperfect Duty to Others". In this case, **Kant** considers that if someone is affluent and comfortable but decides not to help the poor who are in need, could she will that be made a universal law?

According to **Kant**, if the person should reason that since she worked for her wealth and would not steal from others, then everyone should keep to whatever God or nature gave them; although, such reasoning could consistently be universalised, yet nobody would will that that become a universal law. This is because there would also be a time when the person would also need people's love, sympathy and assistance; at this time, the person would not will that people should ignore her.

Kant's moral idea is deontological. Hence, unlike the teleologists – for example egoists and utilitarian's – **Kant** bases his position on logical consistency rather than on the likely consequences of our actions. This means that, for **Kant**, the intrinsic worth of an action determines whether it is moral or not and not the potential gain or loss that it has.

Based on the categorical imperative. **Kant** argues that apart from asking ourselves whether the maxim of our actions is a universal law, another way of acting in conformity with the dictates of duty is to ask ourselves whether we are treating human beings as an end in themselves or we are using them as a means to our own end.

For **Kant**, humanity should be treat with dignity; hence, we should not use any human being to achieve our purpose or end. Rather we should always treat each person as someone who has self-worth. It is on this note that **Kant** repudiates forced sex. According to **Velasquez**,

> **Kant**'s theory is clearly very useful for helping us see what our moral obligations are. In fact, in some respects, it sheds more light on common dilemmas in sexual matters than do other approaches to the morality of sex. For **Kant**'s theory identifies the central importance of showing respect for the dignity of our sexual partners and the key

significance of consent in morally legitimate sexual interactions. (Velasquez, 1999: 531)

Summary of Study Session 8

In Study Session 8, you have learnt that:

1. **Kant** does not totally agree with the rationalists against the empiricists, does he totally agree with the empiricists against the rationalists neither on the question of the source or origin of knowledge.
2. For **Kant**, there are instances of knowledge that could be categorised as synthetic a priori knowledge. This type of knowledge is demonstrable in experience, even though its truth or judgment goes beyond experience.

3. With regard to existence and reality, **Kant** identifies noumena, which is a thing in itself and phenomena, which is a thing as it appears to us.

4. **Kant** argues that it is not possible to know what a thing is in itself; all there is to know is a thing as it appears to us. **Kant** posits, however, that knowledge of phenomena is not in any way inferior to the knowledge of noumena.

5. On the question of what makes an action a moral action, **Kant** contends that a good action can only emanate from a good will. A good will is that which is good in itself and always does things in conformity with duty.

6. An action that emanates from a good will, according to **Kant**, would pass the test of categorical imperative.

7. Categorical imperative states that actions should be done only when they are consistent with the maxim that the rule of such an action could be universalised without involving oneself in self-contradiction or being illogical.

8. The other part of the categorical imperative, in **Kant**'s opinion, requires that a human being be treat as an end in herself and not as a means to an end. Humanity, for **Kant**, has inherent dignity and worth, and hence, each individual human being should be accord with the necessary respect.

Self-Assessment Question (SAQs) for Study Session 8

Now that you have completed this study session, you can assess how well you have achieved its Learning outcomes by answering the following questions. Write your answers in your study Diary and discuss them with your Tutor at the next study Support Meeting. You can check your answers with the Notes on the Self-Assessment questions at the end of this Module.

SAQ 8.1 (Tests Learning Outcome 8.1)
Give account of Immanuel Kant Life and Time

SAQ 8.2 (Tests Learning Outcome 8.2)
Explain Kant Epistemology

SAQ 8.3 (Tests Learning Outcome 8.3)
Attempt a critique of **Kant**'s synthetic a priori knowledge.

SAQ 8.4 (Tests Learning Outcome 8.4)
Discuss the distinctions drawn by Kant between things in themselves and things, as they seem to us.

SAQ 8.5 (Tests Learning Outcome 8.5)
Explain Kant's Idea of Morality

SAQ 8.6 (Tests Learning Outcome 8.6)
1. Write a short, but critical note, on the categorical imperative in Kant's ethics.
2. Would you consider the attempt of **Kant** to mediate between the rationalists and the empiricists successful? Justify your position with relevant arguments.

Study Session 9   Thomas Hobbes

Introduction

Hobbes is an empiricist who holds that knowledge is a product of experience. Apart from being an empiricist, Hobbes is also a nominalist. This means that for Hobbes, universals are not in the mind and do not exist outside of the mind either. Rather, they do not mean any other thing than the names, which things bear, which are mere signs or symbols that stand for the things that they represent.

This study session will focus on Thomas Hobbes's contribution to the study of philosophy in area such as Materialism, Political Philosophy, State of Nature, Social Contract and emergence of civil society.

Learning Outcomes for Study Session 9

At the end of this study session, you should be able to:

9.1   Give account of Thomas Hobbes's life
9.2   Examine the materialism of Thomas Hobbes.
9.3   Analyse Hobbes's idea of Political Philosophy.
9.4   Describe the significance of the state of nature to the whole materialistic philosophy of Hobbes
9.5   Explain Thomas Hobbes's view on social contract

9.1   The Life and Time Thomas Hobbes

Thomas Hobbes was born in Westport near Malmesbury in Wiltshire, England in 1588. His father was a vicar. His mother gave birth to him a bit prematurely, and he later remarked that she gave birth to twins – he and fear. Hobbes began his studies in Oxford at the age of fourteen, and this exposed him to classical literature and Aristotelian logic.

In 1608, he became the private teacher of young sons of the Earl of Devonshire, William Cavendish, as well as an adviser, confidant and friend. He served sequent generations of the family for a very long time.

His work in the Cavendish family, however, gave him the opportunity to travel with the family and thereby meet the influential thinkers of his time, especially the famous astronomer, Galileo; and to write.
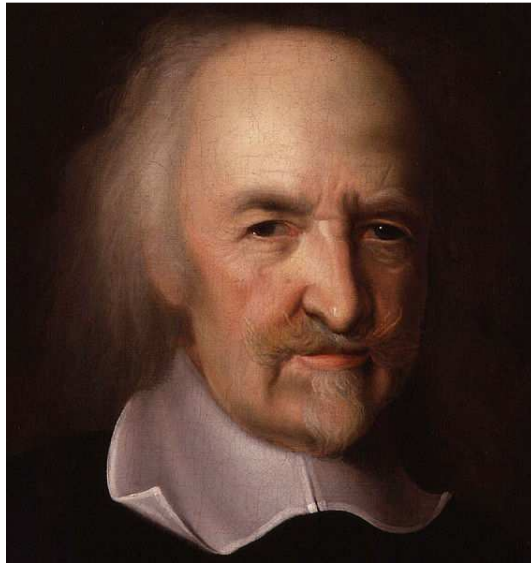
Figure 9.1   Thomas Hobbes
Source: http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Thomas_Hobbes_(portrait).jpg

His famous works include: *Human Nature; Leviathan; Of Liberty and Necessity; Behemoth: The History of Civil Wars in England; Mr **Thomas Hobbes** Considered in his Loyalty, Religion, Reputation, and Manners; Thomae Hobbes Malmesburiensis Vita Carmine Expressa; De Corpore Politico; De Corpore*, and *De Homine.* Hobbes died in 1679.

9.2   Hobbes's Materialism

According to **Hobbes**, the main objective of philosophy is to study the nature and causes of bodies. For him, there are three types of such bodies. Hobbes identifies 'the physical bodies such as stones, the human body, and the body politic. Philosophy is concerned with all three types inquiring into their causes and characteristics.' (**Stumpf**, 1982: 220)

In Hobbes's idea, motion is the main feature that is common to all these bodies – that is motion is what characterises nature, humans and the state. Motion occupies a central position in Hobbes's philosophy. In Hobbes's opinion, the whole of reality and all that could be known is bodies.

Accordingly, the philosophy of Hobbes denies the existence of incorporeal, spiritual or bodiless beings. Hence, substance, for Hobbes, is essentially material; and the goal or task of philosophy is to study matter in motion.

Since for Hobbes, the whole of existence is material, one would wonder how Hobbes could account for mental events, especially the seeming influence that the mind seems to exert on the body and vice versa. For Hobbes, all that seem like mental events are just cases of matter in motion.

■   _____ characterises Nature, Human and State?
□   Motion

In **Hobbes's** view, the characteristics and activities of all objects, including human beings, can be explained in purely mechanical terms.' (**Velasquez**, 1999: 249) According to **Hobbes**, what **Descartes** and some other theorists refer to as mental activities – thinking, willing, doubting, perceiving and imagining – are purely material activities.

For **Hobbes**, all our thoughts begin from sense experiences, which are taken to our brains through the nerves. When the motion experienced by us reaches the brain, the brain is able to hold it in and this is what we refer to as memory.

When the brain causes a further movement in the body, we wrongly assume that it is immaterial mind elicited the movement in the body. This, contends **Hobbes**, is not the case. It is not that an immaterial substance is causing a physical substance to move rather, when a body moves, the movement of another body can only explain its movement. It takes a moving body to trigger a movement in a resting body.

Therefore, all the series of movements that could be observe in the world are just cases of one body moving another. In the same way, a moving body continues to move, unless it is perhaps cause to stop by another body.

Hobbes's idea of politics is also included in his mechanistic view of reality. **Hobbes** argues that the desires of human beings, which are purely material because they are caused by material events or objects, set them against each other in the state of nature. These desires make the people pounce down on or grab what do not belong to them, thereby turning the state into a state of war of all against all.

However, for **Hobbes**, it is the desire for peace that would cause the people to enact a social contract to put an end to the state of nature and form a civil society.

9.3   Hobbes's Political Philosophy

In modern political philosophy, **Thomas Hobbes**'s discourse attempted to give an account of the origin of human society and thereby, justify the authority of the state vested in a sovereign. His popular analogy of the hypothetical state of people before the advent of human society – the state of nature – is the basis of the methodical account of the social contract of **Thomas Hobbes**.

Thomas Hobbes, a seventeenth century philosopher, in his discourse on the type of government, which he deems acceptable, also explains the origin of civil society.

The importance of his beginning is the account of the inception of human society from the state of nature analogy owing to the fact that **Hobbes** needed to refute a popular opinion of his day. That Robert Filmer's *Patriarcha* or The Divine Right of King represented, according to which a king's authority is derivable from that conferred on Adam by God and which was handed down to the king.

The Divine Right of Kings or The Theological socio-political theory sees no important difference between political obligation and religious allegiance. **Hobbes** rejects this position in his classic, *Leviathan*.

Howbeit, **Hobbes** agrees with a part of the traditional idea of the absolute sovereignty of kings in that, he also holds that subjects possess no right whatsoever to challenge the authority of the Sovereign; although he systematically argues this out by showing that the unquestionable authority of the sovereign emanated from the people themselves, and not from any external source. In the chapter entitled "Of the Liberty of Subjects" in *Leviathan,* **Hobbes** says:

> For if, we take Liberty in the proper sense, for all corporal Liberty; that is to say freedom from chains, and prison, it were very absurd for men to clamour as they does

for the Liberty they so manifestly enjoy. Again if we take Liberty, for an exemption from Lawes, it is no lesse absurd, for men to demand as they does that Liberty, by which all other men may be masters of their lives.

And yet as absurd as it is, this is it they demand; not knowing that the Laws are of no power to protect them, without a Sword in the hands of a man, or men, to cause those laws to be put in execution. The Liberty of a Subject, lyeth therefore, only in those things, which in regulating their actions, the Sovereign hath pretermitted...

Nevertheless, we are not to understand, that by such Liberty, the Sovereign Power of life, and death is either, abolished or limited. (**Hobbes**, 1996: 147-148)

It is pertinent to note that in the **Hobbes's** idea of the social contract between people and the King, the form that the handing of power to the Sovereign adopts is that of total surrender of their rights and authority as a people. For **Hobbes**, this is consider preferable to the state of nature. This is because in **Hobbes**'s view the only alternative to an absolute Sovereign is a state of "war of all against all".

9.4   Thomas Hobbes's Account of the State of Nature

Hobbes's renowned dictum "And the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short" (Hobbes, 1996: 89) is a succinct caption of the condition of humans in the state of nature, in Hobbes's idea. **Thomas Hobbes** begins his account of the social contract by showing what an alternative to social order – the hypothetical state that he calls the state of nature - is like.

The English civil war that began in 1642 had immense influence on the work of **Hobbes** and that probably is the reason why **Hobbes** holds a pessimistic view of man in the absence of social order. For **Hobbes**, humans, in the pre-civil society existence, were selfish and self-seeking.

Apart from the fact that the people in the state of nature were selfish, it is observe by **Hobbes** that another factor that gives rise to ceaseless chaos and unrest in the state of nature is the fact that "the things which men desire are generally available in only limited quantities. Thus their quest for the satisfaction of their appetites leads to competition and conflict." (**Ake,** 1970: 464)

He holds further that apart from the fact that the people in the state of nature were selfish and self-seeking, one other feature of the state of nature is that it is a state of lawlessness, what he terms a state of "war of all against all".

There is also continual fear because "in the state of nature, there is no impartial judge to rule on the reasonableness of actions and so the right of nature will always tend to "trump" the laws; in civil society, this relationship is reversed**." (Mill,** 1995: 453**)** These conditions of the state of nature make it necessary, in **Hobbes**'s view, for those in the state of nature to come together to put an end to the state of nature.

- According to Thomas Hobbes, what leads man to competition and conflict?
- The quest for the satisfaction of appetites leads man to competition and conflict

9.5   Social Contract and the Emergence of Civil Society in Hobbes

Hobbes sees the enactment of a social contract as being very necessary because of the unbearable condition that is the way of life in the state of nature. His view of the social contract

as a necessity stems from his cynical view of human nature. **Hobbes**'s conception of humans is that of selfish, greedy, acquisitive and avaricious beings.

However, **Hobbes** posits that it is that selfish nature of humans, given that they are rational, that will propel them into wanting to put an end to the state of nature. However, to move from the state of nature into civil society, **Hobbes** holds that there has to be an agreement or a social pact between the people in the state of nature to end the state of nature and form a civil society.

The social pact, for **Hobbes**, is comprised of the free consent of the individuals in the state of nature, freely given to form a civil society.

It should be noted that one important way in which the account of social contract has given by **Hobbes** is different from that of **Socrates** in the ancient period of philosophy is that

Hobbes conceives of a social contract which has been enacted once and among those people who experienced the state of nature, and which is binding on every member of a society; while **Socrates**' notion is that of contract between the state or its laws, on the one hand, and every individual of every age or epoch, on the other hand.

Hobbes theorises further that it takes a Sovereign or an authoritarian ruler to maintain the social contract or the civil society that has been form. Moreover, like the laws of Athens, in the social contract of **Socrates**, the Leviathan or the Sovereign should not, for any reason whatsoever be resisted.

> A covenant of every man with every man sets up a supreme sovereign, himself not a party to the covenant and therefore incapable of breaching it. Such a sovereign is the source of law and property rights, and it is his function to enforce, not just the original covenant that constitutes the state, but individual covenants that his subjects make with each other. (Kenny, 2006: 45)

This means that **Hobbes** is of the opinion that the sovereign is regarded as "first among equals", even if all other members of the civil society are equal, because of the significance of each individual's consent to the formation of the society.

Hobbes's idea of the sovereign is greatly in support of monarchy. For him, "unless the sovereign power finds concrete expression in a monarch, it neither commands the allegiance of the citizen nor supports the cohesion of the state." (**Scruton**, 1995: 194)

Summary of Study Session 9

In Study Session 9, you have learnt that:

1. Hobbes sees the whole of knowable reality as matter in motion.

2. In **Hobbes's** idea, the main task of philosophy is to study the nature and causes of matter.

3. **Hobbes**, motion is what defines nature, humans and the state. On the question of the mind-body relations, which constitutes a huge problem in the metaphysics of **Descartes**, **Hobbes** addresses the problem by collapsing the seeming distinction between the substantial composition of body and mind.

4. **Hobbes** contends that only matter exists and that there is no mental or spiritual existence if such are conceive as lacking bodily or spatial-temporal existence. In his attempt to justify his argument that the power that the monarch exercises comes from the people, **Hobbes** gives a hypothetical situation of people in the state of nature.

5. According to **Thomas Hobbes**, because people lacked a sovereign to enforce laws in the state of nature, they would prey on each other's possessions and persons. This would make the state of nature inconvenient and prompt the people in the state of nature to agree to form a civil society.

6. To sustain the society, **Hobbes** maintains that there is a need for an absolute ruler called a sovereign, who could maintain law and order and sustain the society that has resulted from the people's contract.

Self-Assessment Question (SAQs) for Study Session 9

Now that you have completed this study session, you can assess how well you have achieved its Learning outcomes by answering the following questions. Write your answers in your study Diary and discuss them with your Tutor at the next study Support Meeting. You can check your answers with the Notes on the Self-Assessment questions at the end of this Module.

SAQ 9.1 (Tests Learning Outcome 9.1)
Give account of Thomas Hobbes Life and Time

SAQ 9.2 (Tests Learning Outcome 9.2)
1. Attempt a conceptual analysis of the idea of matter in motion in Hobbes's philosophy.
2. Would you consider Hobbes's idea on the problem of mental-physical dualism a plausible one?

SAQ 9.3 (Tests Learning Outcome 9.3)
What would you consider as the importance of the analogy of the state of nature to the political idea of Thomas Hobbes?

SAQ 9.4 (Tests Learning Outcome 9.4)
Describe people in state of nature

SAQ 9.5 (Tests Learning Outcome 9.5)
Discuss critically the idea of monarchical sovereignty in Hobbes's political philosophy.

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