



INDRA GANDHI NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSISTY

**MA Philosophy (MAPY)
Assignments
(First Year)
(JULY SESSION-2017)**

PROGRAMME.....

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Assignment – 4
MPYE – 003: Epistemology

Notes:

- i) Answer all five questions
- ii) All questions carry equal marks
- iii) For every question, refer to the texts and write down the assignment-responses in your own words.
- iv) Answers to question no.1 and 2 should be in about **500 words** each

1. Define certitude. Explain various kinds of certitudes possible. 20

OR

Write an essay on the types of Khyati-vada or theories of error. 20

Certitude is the state of the mind in which it gives a *firm assent* to a judgment *without fear of the possibility of error due to recognized valid reasons*.

Three elements, therefore, enter into the concept of certitude: the firm assent to the judgment, the absence of fear of possible error, and the understanding of the valid reasons which exclude this fear.

The absence of the fear of possible error is the *negative* factor which distinguishes certitude from doubt and opinion, while the consciously apprehend valid reasons for the firm assent of the mind are the *positive* factor of conviction or certitude. This, of course, does not mean that the mind is really infallible in these convictions and that error is impossible in all these judgments.

What it does mean, though, is that the mind is subjectively certain of its grounds and does not fear the possibility of error; it is convinced that it is in possession of knowledge which is true and valid.

The educated man and the savage alike are convinced that the sun is an existing reality in the sky. The savage, furthermore, is convinced that the sun actually travels through the sky from east to west in the course of the day, while the educated man is certain that it does not; one of these two (subjective) certitudes must be wrong, because they are contradictory and mutually exclusive and cannot be true at the same time.

LOGICAL CERTITUDE : Here we are in the field of 'formal' field of knowledge, the realm of pure ideas and the relationships between them - as in Logic and mathematics. The evidence of the truth of the propositions is obtained by analysis of the terms and the definitions used. No other means of verification is needed – or indeed possible. Here the truth is expressed in analytical propositions which are therefore 'necessary true' propositions (or 'tautologies') and can be seen to be such even before ('a-priori') their application to other fields of knowledge. And the certitude thus based on such kind of evidence, admitting of no possible or conceivable exception, can be called 'absolute'. I am absolutely certain (by a kind of 'logical certitude') that if $A = B$, and $B = C$, then $A = C$. I am similarly certain that $2 + 2 = 4$. Again I am similarly certain that it is either raining or not raining. Similarly with definitions: I am certain, in the same way, that if I define a 'rational animal' as man, then that man is a rational animal is for me absolutely certain.

ONTOLOGICAL CERTITUDE : Here we are in the field of the 'informal' knowledge of being as being, the realm of visible and tangible realities but considered from the point of view of those characteristics which they have in common to the extent that they are beings, existents. This realm could be considered as the counterpart, as it were, of the Logical realm – if we are prepared to admit, as we pointed out before, that the 'laws of the mind' (the logical realm) are based on the 'laws of being itself' (the ontological realm).

PHYSICAL CERTITUDE : Here we are in the field of the knowledge of the things, of their properties and ways of acting, the realm therefore of Science. The evidence of the truth of the laws of Nature is obtained by, first of all, sense-perception, verification or falsification by laboratory-conducted experiments of hypotheses formed, etc. here, the opposite of a given law is not, at least theoretically inconceivable. Its truth is subject to our further understanding of how nature works, so to say. In this field the only possible certitude we can have – and the only one to be expected is 'physical certitude'.

MORAL CERTITUDE : Please note that here we have to be careful for unlike the previous usages of the term ‘certain’ (or sure) which is a philosophical technical one, the usage of the term ‘to be morally sure’ is also an everyday common one. We often use such expressions as, “I am morally sure that the exam is postponed till next month” – by which is meant that “I am pretty sure that...”, “I have good strong reasons to believe that ...”, etc. So we have distinguished between at least three meanings of ‘moral certitude’ :

RELIGIOUS CERTITUDE : Here we are in the field of religious knowledge. But a lot have first to be said before we can adequately tackle the nature of religious certitude, the kind of evidence on which it is based, how we go about obtaining such evidence, the nature of religious truth and the kind of language it is expressed in. All we have said so far in this section is meant to clear the ground for the religious epistemological question.

2. Discuss how various schools of Indian thought approach the method of perception. 20

OR

How does one argue for the impossibility of Epistemology from the theory-leadness of observations?
Explain different ways of answering such criticisms. 20

Most classical Indian philosophical schools accept perception as the primary means of knowledge, but differ on the nature, kinds and objects of perceptual knowledge. Here we first survey Buddhist and orthodox Hindu schools' definitions of perception (excluding Vaiśeṣika and Yoga schools since they simply take on board Nyāya and Sāṃkhya ideas, respectively) and note the issues raised by these definitions. As mentioned above, the orthodox schools generally accept both non-conceptualized (indeterminate) and conceptualized (determinate) perceptual states in sharp contrast to the Buddhist view that perception is always non-conceptualized or indeterminate awareness

Buddhist nominalism

The oldest preserved definition of perception in the Buddhist tradition is the one by Vasubandhu (c. 4th century CE), “Perception is a cognition [that arises] from that object [which is represented therein]” (Frauwallner, 1957, p. 120). However, the more influential and much discussed view is that of later Buddhist Yogācāra philosopher Dīnāga (c. 480–540 CE) for whom perception is simply a cognition “devoid of conceptual construction (*kalpanāpodham*)”. Taber (2005, p. 8) notes two important implications of this definition. First, perception is non-conceptual in nature; no seeing is seeing-as, because that necessarily involves intervention of conceptual constructs, which contaminate the pristine given. Perception is mere awareness of bare particulars without any identification or association with words for, according to Dīnāga, such association always results in falsification of the object.

Nyāya realism

The most comprehensive, and the most influential, definition of perception in classical Indian philosophy is offered in Gautama's *Nyāya-sūtra* 1.1.4:

Perception is a cognition which arises from the contact of the sense organ and object and is not impregnated by words, is unerring, and well-ascertained.

Expectedly, each part of this definition has raised controversy and criticism. If perception is a cognition (and non-erroneous), then it is a state of knowledge, rather than a means to knowing! How does that constitute a primary means of knowledge? Some Naiyāyika commentators, Vācaspati Miśra (c. 900–980 CE) and Jayanta Bhaṭṭa (c. 9th century CE) among them, suggest that the *sūtra* is to be understood by adding to it the term ‘from which (*yataḥ*),’ since the preceding *sūtra-s* indicates that Gautama's formulation of this *sūtra* was intended to define the instrument of a valid perceptual cognition. Another issue has been the interpretation of the word “contact”. In what sense are the eye and the ear, the sense organs for vision and auditory perception, respectively, in contact with their objects? Here a careful look at the term “sannikarṣa,” generally translated as contact, helps resolve the issue; “Sannikarṣa” literally means ‘drawing near,’ and can be interpreted as being in *close* connection with or in the *vicinity of*. Thus perception is that which arises out of a close connection between the sense organ and its object.

Mīmāṃsā realism

The *Purva Mīmāṃsā-sūtra* (MS) were originally composed by Jamiṇi around 200 BCE. The fourth MS 1.1.4 says:

The arising of a cognition when there is a connection of the sense faculties of a person with an existing (*sat*) object—that (*tat*) is perception; it is not the basis of the knowledge of *Dharma*, because it is the apprehension of that which is present. (Taber, 2005:44)

There is no consensus among Mīmāṃsā commentators on whether this is intended as a definition of perception, even while an initial reading of it suggests that it may be. Kumārila, the noted Mīmāṃsā commentator argues that the first part of the *sūtra* is *not* intended as a definition because of the context in which it figures; the *sūtra*-s preceding it are concerned with an inquiry into righteousness (*Dharma*). Moreover, the *sūtra* construed as a definition of perception, results in too wide, and not too accurate, a definition, because it only says that perception arises from a connection between the sense faculty and an existing object and does not exclude perceptual error or inferential cognition. Taber (2005, 16), on the other hand, suggests that it is possible to construe MS 1.1.4 as a valid definition, and indeed such a construal was proposed by an earlier commentator, the so-called *Vṛttikāra* quoted at length by Śābara in his *Śābarabhāṣyam*. This, the most extensive commentary on the *Mīmāṃsā-sūtra*, suggests that the words of the *sūtra* (*tat* = ‘that’ and *sat* = ‘existing’) be switched around for a different reading for the first part of the *sūtra*, which would then state that, “a cognition that results from connection of the sense faculties of a person with that (*tat*) [same object that appears in the cognition] is true (*sat*) perception”. This switch rules out perceptual error and inference; both these present objects other than those that are the cause of the perception.

Sāṃkhya definition

In the oldest Sāṃkhya tradition, perception is the functioning of a sense organ. This is clearly inadequate, as the ancient skeptic Jayarāṣi Bhaṭṭa (c. 8th century CE) is quick to point out. Perception in this sense cannot be a means of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) as it does not distinguish between proper and improper functioning of sense organs and, therefore, between valid and erroneous perceptions. A more sophisticated definition is later devised wherein perception is “an ascertainment [of *buddhi* or intellect] in regard to a sense faculty (*Sāṃkhyakārikā* 5 in *Yuktīdipikā*)”. This implies that perception is a modification of the intellect in the form of selective ascertainment of an object, brought about by the activity or functioning of a sense faculty. In some respects, this characterization of perception as an “ascertainment” of the intellect neatly captures the idea that perception, being an instrument of knowledge, is the primary means of knowledge. Ascertainment residing in the intellect is regarded as the instrument of perception, while residing in the self it is regarded as the result of the process of perception. Furthermore, the *Sāṃkhyakārikā* states that the function of the senses with regard to the objects is “a mere seeing” (*Sāṃkhyakārikā*, 28b), and the function of the intellect, referred to as ascertainment, can be thought of as “identification” of the object as in “this is a cow”, etc. (*Sāṃkhyakārikā* 5ab). This suggests a two-stage process: first the functioning of the sense faculty results in “mere seeing” of the object (non-conceptualized awareness) and, later this mere seeing is acted upon by the intellect or mind and results in a conceptual identification of the object. This two-stage process is very similar to the detailed account of conceptual (*savikalpaka*) perception offered by the Mīmāṃsakas and the Naiyāyikas.

Advaita Vedānta: direct knowledge

According to Advaita Vedānta the defining characteristic of perception is the directness of knowledge acquired through perception (Bilimoria, 1980:35). In highlighting the directness of the perceptual process, the Advaitin differs from Nyāya and Mīmāṃsā proponents for whom the contact of the sense faculty with its object is central to the perceptual process. Vedānta Paribhāṣā (ed. 1972: 30) cites pleasure and pain as instances of perception that are directly intuited without any sense object contact. For the Advaitin perception is simply the immediacy of consciousness; knowledge not mediated by any instrument (Gupta et. al., 1991, p. 40). It is worth noting that this definition is very close to that accepted by Navya-Naiyāyikas. Like the latter, the Advaitins regard the role of the sensory connection as accidental, rather than essential, to the perceptual process. The Neo-Advaitins accept the distinction between conceptual or determinate perception (they refer to it as *viśayagata pratyakṣa*) and non-conceptual or indeterminate perception (*nirvikalpaka pratyakṣa*), but do not think of non-conceptual perception as simply a prior stage of conceptualized perception, as other Hindu schools do.

3. Answer *any two* of the following questions in about **250 words** each:

a) What do you know about Ideal Language Philosophy and Ordinary Language Philosophy? Explain. 10

Ideal language, in [analytic philosophy](#), a [language](#) that is precise, free of [ambiguity](#), and clear in structure, on the model of [symbolic logic](#), as contrasted with ordinary language, which is vague, misleading, and sometimes contradictory. In the [Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus](#) (1922), the Viennese-born philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein viewed the role of language as providing a “picture of reality.” Truth was seen as making logical propositions that correspond to reality. An

ideal language was thus seen as the necessary [criterion](#) for determining the [meaning](#), or meaningfulness, of statements about the world.

Ordinary Language philosophy, sometimes referred to as 'Oxford' philosophy, is a kind of 'linguistic' philosophy. Linguistic philosophy may be characterized as the view that a focus on language is key to both the content and method proper to the discipline of philosophy as a whole (and so is distinct from the [Philosophy of Language](#)). Linguistic philosophy includes both Ordinary Language philosophy and Logical Positivism, developed by the philosophers of the [Vienna Circle](#) (for more detail see [Analytic Philosophy](#) section 3). These two schools are inextricably linked historically and theoretically, and one of the keys to understanding Ordinary Language philosophy is, indeed, understanding the relationship it bears to Logical Positivism.

Ordinary Language philosophy is generally associated with the (later) views of [Ludwig Wittgenstein](#), and with the work done by the philosophers of Oxford University between approximately 1945-1970. The origins of Ordinary Language philosophy reach back, however, much earlier than 1945 to work done at Cambridge University, usually marked as beginning in 1929 with the return of Wittgenstein, after some time away, to the Cambridge faculty

b) What is the relation existing between epistemic justification and truth? Discuss various theories of justification. 10

Theory of justification is a part of [epistemology](#) that attempts to understand the justification of [propositions](#) and [beliefs](#). Epistemologists are concerned with various epistemic features of belief, which include the ideas of justification, warrant, [rationality](#), and [probability](#). Loosely speaking, justification is the reason that someone (properly) holds a belief. Justification focuses on beliefs. This is in part because of the influence of the definition of knowledge as "[justified true belief](#)" often associated with a theory discussed near the end of the Plato's dialogues *Meno* and *Theaetetus*. More generally, theories of justification focus on the justification of statements or [propositions](#).

There are several different views as to what entails justification, mostly focusing on the question "How sure do we need to be that our beliefs correspond to the actual world?" Different theories of justification require different amounts and types of evidence before a belief can be considered justified. Interestingly, theories of justification generally include other aspects of epistemology, such as knowledge.

Popular theories of justification include:

- [Coherentism](#) – Beliefs are justified if they cohere with other beliefs a person holds, each belief is justified if it coheres with the overall system of beliefs.
 - [Externalism](#) – Outside sources of knowledge can be used to justify a belief.
 - [Foundationalism](#) – Basic beliefs justify other, non-basic beliefs.
 - [Foundherentism](#) – A combination of foundationalism and coherentism, proposed by [Susan Haack](#).
 - [Infinitism](#) – Beliefs are justified by infinite chains of reasons.
 - [Internalism](#) – The believer must be able to justify a belief through internal knowledge.
 - [Reformed epistemology](#) – Beliefs are warranted by proper cognitive function, proposed by [Alvin Plantinga](#).
 - [Skepticism](#) – A variety of viewpoints questioning the possibility of knowledge. truth skepticism – Questions the possibility of true knowledge, but not of justified knowledge
- [epistemological skepticism](#) – Questions the possibility of justified knowledge, but not true knowledge
- [Evidentialism](#) – Beliefs depend solely on the evidence for them

c) How comparison (*Upamana*) is used as a means of valid knowledge? 10

d) Discuss the three components of hermeneutical enterprise. 10

The Greek word Hermeneutic meant to express, explain, translate or interpret the sacred message. Originally, it was discussed in the Greek philosophy, later was used extensively in the interpretation of the Bible. As science of interpretation it became an important part of Christian theology in the West. This resulted in various schools of interpretations such as literal, allegorical, analogical, and anagogical (spiritual / mystical) etc. Beginning

with scriptural interpretation, it was limited to the domain of Sacred Texts only. However, today it has grown into different domains of human life. It has come out of the theological domain and has entered into the spheres such as art, aesthetics, literature, architecture and to all the notions that govern human life. Hermeneutics through its methods and principles sees the text or the object of interpretation in the present context. Traditionally, hermeneutics has been divided into two categories. They are a. General Hermeneutics – concerned with generalities such as context, language, history, and culture; and b. Special Hermeneutics concerned with specifics such as figures of speech, symbols, poetry, prophecy, typology, doctrinal teachings and various literary forms. The growth of hermeneutics attests that there is a movement from the interpretations of the text to the understanding of ‘understanding’, existence and life-world. Therefore, the author, the text and the reader are the three basic components of any hermeneutical enterprise. However, language, culture, and other elements cannot be ignored in the hermeneutics.

The Capacity of The Text: The text in the strict sense of hermeneutics is the key component. Text generally understood as that stretch of written language which has a beginning and end. In a metaphorical sense text can be extended even to include messages generated by sign-systems of various religious, economic, social etc. structures, non-verbal body indicators etc. Text is the basis on which the operations of hermeneutics take place. One of the definition states that, “A text is a group of entities, used as signs, selected, arranged, and intended by an author to convey a specific meaning to an audience in a certain context”. It can be a written, printed text or the text of mental images too. Text has many uses such as expressing emotions, issuing commands, eliciting answers, making requests, causing actions etc. Texts cause understandings. Hermeneutics therefore, entails a study of the processes and operative conditions of transforming texts.

The Capacity of The Reader / Interpreter : Like the text, the reader too has an impact on the text: being influenced by the text and influencing the text. Every reader brings a horizon of expectation to the text. Horizon of expectation is a mind-set, or system of references, which characterizes the reader’s finite view-point amidst his or her situatedness in time and history. From the reader’s point of view, there is always an attempt to understand the intentions of the author at the same time, and to understand the text in itself. However, the reader cannot undo the situation or background on which he bases his reading. This interplay exists in understanding the text always. There are six different levels where the reader influences the text and its meaning. They are: Inter-textual, situational, horizontal, semiotic, hermeneutical, and theoretical frameworks. The interpreter in four ways changes the object of interpretation be it text or anything that can be interpreted. They are done through idealizing the object of interpretation, re-segmenting the object of interpretation, reconceiving the object of interpretation and through recovering an underlying object.

The Capacity of The Author: The author cannot be ignored in the hermeneutics. It is his worldview, unconsciously comes into the text and affects the text. An author cannot dispatch himself fully from his historical condition. He feeds both the actual meaning and intended meaning into the text. However, the text has traces of his world view and his times, which can be traced through hermeneutics.

4. Answer **any four** of the following in about **150 words** each:

a) What is a paradigm? 5

Pragmatism (from Greek ‘*pragma*’, deed) is that doctrine, or trend of thought, according to which the value of an assertion lies solely in its practical bearing upon human interests. In this sense, it can also be called utilitarianism . A paradigm is "a world view, a way of ordering and simplifying the perceptual world's stunning complexity by making certain fundamental assumptions about the nature of the universe, of the individual, and of society. Paradigms are normative; they determine what the practitioner views as important and unimportant, reasonable and unreasonable, legitimate and illegitimate, possible and impossible, and what to attend to and what to ignore. In learning a paradigm, theory, method, and standards are acquired together, typically in an inextricable mixture. Moreover, through the theories they embody, paradigms prove to be constitutive of all normal scientific activity, including underlying assumptions made, problem definition, areas of investigation, questions posed and, particularly, data interpretation, conclusions drawn and policy recommendations made at the end of the research process (Kuhn, 1970). Thus all theories as well as the methods generated by them are, ultimately, paradigm based."

b) What are the main streams that helped in the development of the linguistic turn in Philosophy? 5

Answer: In the philosophical attempt to understand the world, man and the transcendent, there are various attempts to answer the fundamental questions. The history of philosophy shows the evidence that there are shifts in understanding the reality from various perspectives. It was from speculation through reason, to analysis of knowledge that the philosophy has grown into. On the way, it has accommodated various insights from various sciences in its attempt to understand the world. However, one of the drastic shifts in understanding the reality is through the focus on language. It can be traced to the long history but evidently, it became prominent during the 19th and 20th centuries. This major shift we are going to discuss is the linguistic turn in understanding the reality. The linguistic turn in philosophy aims at arriving at truth through the analysis of language. Initially, the language philosophy school was anti-metaphysical in its outlook. It is influenced by the Logical Positivism of the Vienna Circle and their scientific bent on verification. Another important presupposition in linguistic philosophy is the shift of discussion from reality to that which describes the reality, namely the language. Language philosophy assumes that the language reflects the reality. Hence, the language is the efficient tool to know, to understand the reality through its description and through the analysis of its logical syntax. Hence, the linguistic turn aims at describing the world by describing a suitable language. Language is a method according to this school of philosophy.

c) Distinguish between nirvikalpaka and savikalpaka perceptions. 5

In perception there is sense-object contact. When we look at an object for the first time, it is cognized by us as having some form, *rupa*, and some qualities, *guna*. This is called *nirvikalpaka pratyaksa* or indeterminate perception; because in this cognition our knowledge is restricted to that one object before us and to the qualities that inhere in it. At that moment there is no thought in our mind whether there are other objects similar to that and belonging to that species. That the qualities do appear along with the object even in this first cognition, *nirvikalpaka pratyaksha*, has to be accepted since, if it is knowledge it is always experienced in the following form – ‘this is thus’, *idam ittham*. The term ‘this’ refers to the object cognized, and ‘thus’ to the qualities and form that are inseparately connected with it. In *savikalpaka pratyaksha* or determinate perception the object is cognized along with its specific form and qualities. The difference between the two perception lies in the fact that in the former, *nirvikalpaka*, only that one object is cognized whereas in the latter, *savikalpaka*, the thought that the object is similar to the one that was seen already and therefore the object is one of the several objects belonging to that particular species. Thus whether the perception is determinate or indeterminate an object is cognized is being invariably qualified by some inseparable attributes, but never as a mere something devoid of form or qualities.

d) Briefly explain Spota Theory. 5

Bhartrihari's theory occupies an interesting place in the ongoing Hindu-Buddhist debates about meaning and reference. For the Buddhists, meaning is a function of social and linguistic convention and reference is ultimately a projection of imaginative consciousness. For the Brahminic Nyâyas or Logicians, words have meaning because they refer to external objects; words can be combined in sentences just like things exist in relation to one another in external reality. With Advaita Vedânta, words mask the meaning of the Absolute Self (*Âtman*) which is *Brahman*, so that, when a person predicates categories to their identity such as in the sentence "I am tall," this predication masks the all-inclusive nature of the eternal Self, which is beyond categorization. Bhartrihari puts forth a theory of language which, rather than starting by taking fundamental ontological, epistemological or social sides in these well-established debates, starts from the question of how meaning happens, how it emerges from the acts of both speaker and audience, and, constructing this theory first, what he believes to be appropriate metaphysical, epistemological and soteriological implications are drawn from it.

For Bhartrihari, linguistic meaning cannot be conveyed or accounted for by the physical utterance and perception of sounds, so he puts forth the *sphota theory*: the theory which posits the meaning-unit, which for him is the sentence, as a single entity. The term "*sphota*" dates back to Pânini's reference to "*sphotâyana*" in his treatise *Ashtâdhyâyî*, however it was Patanjali who explicitly discusses *sphota* in his *Mahâbhâshya*. According to him *sphota* signifies spoken language, with the audible sound (*dhvani*) as its special quality. In Bhartrihari's treatment of this concept, while the audible noise may vary depending on the speaker's mode of utterance, *sphota* as the meaning unit of speech is not subject to such variations. This is so because for Bhartrihari, meaning is conveyed by the sentence. To explicate this theory, Bhartrihari depends on the root of *sphota*, namely *sphut*, meaning "to burst forth..." as in the "idea that spews forth" (in an internal mental state) when a meaningful sound, the sentence as a whole, is uttered.

The meaning of the sentence, the speech-unit, is one entire cognitive content (*samvit*). The sentence is indivisible (*akhandâ*) and owes its cognitive value to the meaning-whole. Thus, its meaning is not reducible to its parts, the individual words which are distinguished only for the purposes of convention or expression. The differentiated word-meanings, which are also ontological categories, are the abstracted "pieces" we produce using imaginative construction, or *vikalpa*. *Sphota* entails a kind of mental perception which is described as a moment of recognition, an instantaneous flash (*pratibhâ*), whereby the hearer is made conscious, through hearing sounds, of the latent meaning unit already present in his consciousness (unconscious). The sentence employs analyzable units to express its meaning, but that meaning emerges out of the particular concatenation of those units, not because those units are meaningful in themselves. We analyze language by splitting it up into words, prefixes, suffixes, etc....but this is indicative of the fact that we "misunderstand" the fundamental oneness of the speech-unit. Words are only abstracted meaning possibilities in this sense, whereas the uttered sentence is the realization of a meaning-whole irreducible to those parts in themselves. This fundamental unity seems to apply, also, to any language taken as a whole. Matilal explains: "it is only those who do not know the language thoroughly who analyze it into words, in order to get a connected meaning." As this scholar suggests, it is rather remarkable that Bhartrihari's recognition of the theoretical indivisibility of the sentence resonates with the contemporary linguistic view of learning sentences as wholes (at a later stage of development we build new sentences from learned first sentences through analogical reasoning).

e) What is Rorty's argument against Epistemology? 5

Epistemology is the attempt to legitimate a philosophical domain, which Rorty believes we can no longer maintain. With the advent of the new science of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, philosophy's role, in terms of access to theoretical knowledge about the world, was displaced. In addition to providing knowledge based on empirical experience and observed fact, new science also carried apparently uncontroversial norms of progress. It thus represented a serious legitimation challenge to the formerly uncontested domain of philosophical reflection. Rorty argues that Cartesian epistemology was tailor-made to meet this challenge, arguing the line that doubts can be raised about any empirical claim whatsoever as well as claiming that doubt cannot be alleviated by experience. Thus, the philosophical domain of epistemology was preserved. In order to get beyond this conception, with its concomitant consequences for knowledge of the world and other people, Rorty believes that we have to break the picture of the mind as a mirror of reality once and for all.

The core of the argument behind representational epistemology is that vocabulary is optional and mutable. Rorty sets out to show that this is not the case. His primary challenge and arguments are against mirroring through an extension of arguments from Sellars, Quine, Kuhn, Wittgenstein and Davidson towards a general critique of the concept of the mind inherited from seventeenth and eighteenth century philosophy. Kant is a specific target for Rorty, for it is through the Kantian picture of concepts and intuitions 'getting together to produce knowledge' that the idea of epistemology is confirmed as a specifically philosophical endeavour. If we do not have a distinction between what is contingent and what is necessary then, Rorty claims, 'we will not know what would count as a "rational reconstruction" of our knowledge. We will not know what epistemology's goal or method could be'.

The Kantian concept of the mind works on the picture of a mind's structure producing thoughts or representations through working on empirical content. These representations are judged according to how accurately they mirror reality.

Rorty combines Sellars and Quine in order to challenge the notion that epistemology is at the core of philosophy. He argues that neither philosopher took their own arguments to the logical limit, and so both end

up attacking the same distinction: Quine from the position of anti-linguisticism (mental entities are replaced by notions of meaning or structure) and Sellars from the attack on the myth of the given. As Rorty notes, 'Sellars and Quine invoke the same argument, one which bears equally against the given-versus-nongiven and the necessary-versus-contingent distinctions. The crucial premise of this argument is that we understand knowledge when we understand the social justification of belief, and thus have no need to view it as accuracy of representation'.

The upshot of pursuing Sellars and Quine's arguments is that we see knowledge as a 'conversation...[a] social practice, rather than an attempt to mirror nature'. Rorty terms this 'epistemological behaviourism'. In epistemological behaviourism, legitimation of our practices (and claims) is no longer achieved through reference to a set of context-transcendent standards, but through conversation. Relinquishing the limits of knowledge to what is purely conversational marks a point of departure between Rorty and many of his 'friendly' critics such as Putnam, McDowell and Dennett, who, would balk at going so far though approve of Rorty's historical scepticism towards the context-transcending ambitions of philosophy.

From his claim about the conversational standard of knowledge, Rorty has also drawn the charges of relativism and subjectivism. He defends his position in *Truth and Progress*, stating that his 'strategy for escaping the self-referential difficulties into which "the Relativist" keeps getting himself is to move everything over from epistemology and metaphysics into cultural politics, from claims to knowledge and appeals to self-evidence to suggestions about what we should try'.

The difference between epistemological behaviourism and relativism or subjectivism is further demonstrated in light of Rorty's criticism of the notion of representation. Both relativism and subjectivism are products of the representationalist paradigm. Rorty makes use of Davidson's criticism of the scheme-content distinction and of the correspondence theory of truth in order to back up his rejection of any philosophical project that upholds distinctions between what is made and what is found, the subjective and the objective, appearance and reality. He does not deny that these distinctions do not have an application, but he maintains that the application is always bound by context and interests; as such, there is nothing useful or interesting to be said about truth in general.

Epistemological behaviourism is also distinct from a strand of idealism that asserts the primacy of language or thought over an unmediated world. This follows from his appropriation of Davidson's theory of meaning. Conversationalism does not give priority to the subjective or the objective; it is rather the other side of his anti-representationalism, which denies that we are related to the world in anything other than causal terms. There is nothing useful that we can say with respect to the view that the world limits our ways of coping with it.

By attacking the notion that the world constrains rational agents' thoughts and behaviours, Rorty has raised criticism from those who take the natural sciences as their primary reference point. The first claims that, by denying the chief process of science i.e. the effort to learn the truth of things by allowing ourselves to be constrained in our beliefs about the world, Rorty is denying the very idea of Science. The second, internal, criticism, tries to show that scientists would not be motivated to continue in their work if Rorty's view of science were to prevail because it would cease to be the useful thing that Rorty thinks that it is.

Rorty's relationship with natural science is more complex than it sometimes appears. He says, for example, that he tends to view natural science 'as in the business of controlling and predicting things, and as largely useless for philosophical purposes' and yet he spends a great deal of time elaborating on an alternative view of intellectual virtue that draws on the virtues embodied in good science. Good science here is not linked to better and better representations, but rather success is predicated on the model of rationality that scientific practice espouses, which leads to democratic exchange of view. In this sense, then, we can see how/why Rorty eschews science as philosophically significant.

Rorty is not denying that there are any uses at all of notions like truth, knowledge or objectivity. His point is that these notions always demonstrate particular features of their varying contexts of application. When we abstract from these contexts, we are left with hypostatizations, which are incapable of providing us with any guide to action at all. Thus, we do not have a concept of objective reality that can be invoked to explain the success of some set of norms of warrant, or to justify some set of standards over another.

The linking of truth with justification is perhaps Rorty's clearest statement about a theory of truth. As late as 1982, he was still attempting to articulate a view of truth derived from James, namely that true is what is good or useful for us to believe. After this, following Davidson, he rejects all attempts to explicate truth in terms of other concepts. These days, Rorty's position has evolved again; truth has various important uses, but it does not itself name a goal towards which we can strive, over and above warrant and justification. That is not to say that truth is reducible to warrant, but rather to say

that there is nothing deep or substantial that we can say about the concept. We have only semantic explanations for why it is the case that a sentence is true when its truth conditions are satisfied. We have no measure for truth apart from increasing warrant, which for Rorty is a key element of why the concept is so useful. Like goodness, sentences can only ever be analytically certified as true by virtue of its possession of some other property.

f) Differentiate between internalism and externalism. 5

The internalism-externalism (I-E) debate lies near the center of contemporary discussion about [epistemology](#). The basic idea of internalism is that justification is solely determined by factors that are *internal* to a person. Externalists deny this, asserting that justification depends on additional factors that are *external* to a person. A significant aspect of the I-E debate involves setting out exactly what counts as *internal* to a person.

5. Write short notes on **any five** of the following in about **100 words** each:

a) Postulation (Arthapati) 4

b) Syadvada 4

Syādvāda, in Jaina [metaphysics](#), the doctrine that all judgments are conditional, holding good only in certain conditions, circumstances, or senses, expressed by the word *syāt* (Sanskrit: “may be”). The ways of looking at a thing (called *naya*) are [infinite](#) in number.

The Jainas hold that to interpret experience from only one *naya*, or point of view, to the exclusion of others is an error comparable to that of the seven blind men feeling an elephant, each of whom concluded that the part he was holding represented the elephant’s true form. The relative [pluralism](#) of this position is [implicit](#) in the Jaina doctrine of [anekāntavāda](#), or the “many-sidedness of reality.” According to this doctrine, all statements can be judged as true or not true or as both true and not true and thus inexpressible, depending on the point of view. The combinations of these possibilities can be stated in seven logical [alternatives](#) called *saptabhaṅgī*.

c) Fallibilism 4

Fallibilism is the [epistemological](#) thesis that no belief (theory, view, thesis, and so on) can ever be rationally supported or justified in a conclusive way. Always, there remains a possible doubt as to the truth of the belief. Fallibilism applies that assessment even to science’s best-entrenched claims and to people’s best-loved commonsense views. Some epistemologists have taken fallibilism to imply skepticism, according to which none of those claims or views are ever well justified or knowledge. In fact, though, it is fallibilist epistemologists (which is to say, the majority of epistemologists) who tend not to be skeptics about the existence of knowledge or justified belief. Generally, those epistemologists see themselves as thinking about knowledge and justification in a comparatively realistic way — by recognizing the fallibilist realities of human cognitive capacities, even while accommodating those fallibilities within a theory that allows perpetually fallible people to have knowledge and justified beliefs. Still, although that is the aim of most epistemologists, the question arises of whether it is a coherent aim. Are they pursuing a coherent way of thinking about knowledge and justification? Much current philosophical debate is centered upon that question. Epistemologists generally seek to understand knowledge and justification in a way that permits fallibilism to be describing a benign truth about how we can gain knowledge and justified beliefs. One way of encapsulating that project is by asking whether it is possible for a person ever to have fallible knowledge and justification.

d) Nescience 4

e) Language game 4

Wittgenstein used the term "language-game" to designate forms of language simpler than the entirety of a language itself, "consisting of language and the actions into which it is woven" (PI 7) and connected by [family resemblance](#) (*Familienähnlichkeit*). The concept was intended "to bring into prominence the fact that the speaking of language is part of an activity, or a form of life," (PI 23) which gives language its meaning.

The term 'language-game' is used to refer to:

- Fictional examples of language use that are simpler than our own everyday language. (e.g. PI 2)
- Simple uses of language with which children are first taught language (training in language).
- Specific regions of our language with their own grammars and relations to other language-games.
- All of a [natural language](#) seen as comprising a family of language-games.

These meanings are not separated from each other by sharp boundaries, but blend into one another (as suggested by the idea of family resemblance). The concept is based on the following analogy: The [rules of language](#) are analogous to the rules of games; thus saying something in a language is analogous to making a move in a game. The analogy between a language and a game demonstrates that words have meaning depending on the uses made of them in the various and multiform activities of human life. (The concept is not meant to suggest that there is anything trivial about language, or that language is "just a game".)

f) Dhvani 4

g) God's eye view 4

God's eye view is a name for a [point of view](#) where the speaker or writer assumes they have [knowledge](#) only [God](#) would have. It appears several ways:

- In [religion](#), when an [institution](#) claims to speak for a [divine being](#).
- In [writing](#), when an [author](#) leaves the [point of view](#) of the [main actor](#) to start writing about things they could not know if the story were in real life.
- In [science](#), when a [scientist](#) ignores the way a [subject-object problem](#) affects [statistics](#) or an [observer effect](#) affects [experiment](#).
- In [medicine](#) when the [doctor](#) makes a claim that [The Gaze](#) he uses on a patient, actually sees the problem, rather than making a guess at a problem.
- In [ethics](#) when a statement is made about who or what is right, without an honest attempt to make the [process](#) of deciding this consider all points of view.

A special case of the last is in a [wiki](#) with a [GodKing](#). Often this person can get others to believe what they say about what is right, without making any special effort to be fair to other views.

Many people think [Rene Descartes](#) took a God's eye view when he said [cogito ergo sum](#). [George Berkeley](#) argued that [optics](#) from [Isaac Newton](#) and [Johannes Kepler](#) also had this problem.

h) Naturalized Epistemology 4

Naturalized epistemology, coined by [W. V. O. Quine](#), is a collection of [philosophic](#) views concerned with the [theory of knowledge](#) that emphasize the role of natural scientific methods. This shared emphasis on scientific methods of studying knowledge shifts focus to the [empirical](#) processes of [knowledge acquisition](#) and away from many traditional philosophical questions. There are noteworthy distinctions within naturalized [epistemology](#). Replacement naturalism maintains that traditional [epistemology](#) should be abandoned and replaced with the methodologies of the natural sciences. The general thesis of cooperative naturalism is that traditional epistemology can benefit in its inquiry by using the knowledge we have gained from the [cognitive sciences](#). Substantive naturalism focuses on an asserted equality of facts of knowledge and natural facts.

Objections to naturalized epistemology have targeted features of the general project as well as characteristics of specific versions. Some objectors suggest that natural scientific knowledge cannot be circularly grounded by the knowledge obtained through cognitive science, which is itself a natural science. This objection from circularity has been aimed specifically at strict replacement naturalism. There are similar challenges to substance naturalism that maintain that the substance naturalists' thesis that all facts of knowledge are natural facts is not only circular but fails to accommodate certain facts. Several other objectors have found fault in the inability of naturalized methods to adequately address questions about what value forms of potential knowledge have or lack. Naturalized epistemology is generally opposed to the anti-psychologism of [Immanuel Kant](#), [Gottlob Frege](#), [Karl Popper](#), [Edmund Husserl](#) and others.