UNIT 15: WITTGENSTEIN ON CERTAINTY

UNIT STRUCTURE

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15.1. LEARNING OJECTIVES

After going through this unit you will be able to know.

- explain the Concepts of a world picture
- discuss briefly about the epistemological investigation of On Certainity.
- discuss the relation between Moore and Wittgenstein
- explain the relation between knowledge and Certainty
- discuss the position of Wittgenstein on Cetainty
- explain the problems of Certainty in Knowledge
- discuss ostensive definition
- explain picture theory

15.2. INTRODUCTION

Philosophy is preoccupied with the problem of Certainty. Modern philosophy, which begun with Descartes is concerned with the discovery of a solid foundation of knowledge. Philosophy does not want to remain satisfied with probable knowledge. It attempts to discover that knowledge

with which can't be assailed by doubt what ordinarily passes for knowledge seldom satisfies a metaphysician.

On Certainty is a series of notes Wittgenstein took toward the end of his life on matters related to knowledge, doubt, scepticism and certainty. Although the notes are not organised into any coherent whole, certain themes and preoccupations recur throughout.

15.3. GENERAL DISCUSSION ON CERTAINTY

A metaphysician generally discovers self-contradictions in ordinary knowledge and as a result a metaphysician always seeks to go beyond ordinary knowledge. The discovery of the limitations of ordinary knowledge then goes hand in hand with the quest for certainty.

In one sense the quest for certainty begin with Plato. Plato distinguished among four levels of knowledge or thought. Among these four levels the first two are called by him opinion and the last two knowledge. Opinion is constituted of conjecture and belief. Conjecture is the so called knowledge of reflections, shadows, dream objects, images etc. Belief is the so called knowledge obtained by the senses. Plato did not consider the senses to be capable of providing the necessary certainty which is the mark of true knowledge. Understanding and the rational insight were called by Plato, knowledge proper. Knowledge proper is the knowledge of the essences or the ideas or the forms. Such knowledge is characterised by certainty and stability. The quest for certainty has thus played a very significant part in the history of philosophy. Many philosophers assume that without a claim of certainty all our knowledge must be suspect.



LET US KNOW

Plato(427-347 BCE): Greek philosopher who draw a strict distinction between appearance and reality, developed the histry of forms as an account of immutable truth, and argued that only the wisest member of a society should be trusted to rule.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: What are the four levels of knowledge according to Plato?

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15.4. Certainties of a world-picture: The epistemological investigation of On Certainty

In his philosophical writings Wittgenstein was mainly concerned with questions concerning language and its various uses. But he was also always aware of the fact that any account concerning the limits and / or the foundations of what can be known (compare, for instance, TLP, 5.5561, 5.6,51, 6.53 with OC, 80, 114, 369-70, 514, 528). As he never questioned the possibility of knowledge, his critical attitude toward traditional philosophical theories and problems included a sceptical attitude toward scepticism as well. This became obvious in particular in his notes of 1949-51 which have been compiled and published under the title On Certainty.

Due to an unhappily written preface by the editors of that text, many readers have come to believe that Wittgenstein admired G.E. Moore's Defense of Common Sense and Proof of an External World and that he was commenting in his notes on these two papers with intention of showing Moore to have been right in his philosophical attitude, but wrong in the way he argued for it. This is, however, not the case. Norman Malcolm reports' that while Wittgenstein liked Moore as a decent man and felt stimulated by "Moore's Paradox" (PI, pp.190-91), he was not at all impressed by Moore's attempts to refute or reject idealism and / or scepticism. It is true that the two discussed these subjects after Wittgenstein's return to Cambridge in 1929, but these issues were scarcely mentioned, even less scrutinized in Wittgenstein's writings. He hardly ever read the works of other philosophers carefully (Russell and W. James any have been the only exceptions), and this certainly was the case with Moore's papers. While Wittgenstein was

visiting Malcolm in Ithaca, New York, in 1949, the two were discussing portions of Malcolm's recently completed paper Defending Common Sense, and it was these discussions which caused Wittgenstein to think about scepticism and the foundations of knowledge again. It can be shown that examples in On Certainty which are not invented by Wittgenstein himself were all taken from Malcolm's paper rather than directly from Moore's essays. In criticism of Moore, for example, Wittgenstein emphatically points out that it is not only Moore who knows that the earth has existed for millions of years, but that we all know it (OC, 84, 93, 100, 116, 137, 389, 440, 462), while Moore made this one of his main theses, that is not mentioned anywhere in Malcolm's paper. It is, of course, true that especially the beginning of On Certainty echoes Malcolm's account of Moore and scepticism, however, Wittgenstein's remark "Anyone who is unable to imagine a case in which one might say 'I know that this my hand' (and such cases are certainly rare might say that these words were nonsense," which undoubtedly aims at Malcolm's way of arguing, citizens this kind of approach very well.

Many interpreters believe that Wittgenstein actually dissolves scepticism in On Certainty along lines he had adumbrated in the Tractates and in the Philosophical Investigations. Whether or not that is correct depends on what kind of scepticism one has in mind, but with regard to a 'strong' version of scepticism that is simply wrong. It seems to me, indeed, hopeless to try to refute a 'strong' scepticism by means of Wittgenstein's philosophy. I want to show here that the main outcome of On Certainty is not dissolution of scepticism, but a philosophically illuminating picture of the epistemic structure of language-games and their epistemically relevant settings.

After indicating which aspects of knowledge and certainty concerned Wittgenstein and combining several epistemologically relevant concepts into one systematic account, it is elucidated Wittgenstein's notion of "world-picture" and show that it is a label for all the kinds of knowledge a community

may share. Wittgenstein's approach to the acquisition of knowledge, which is supposed to explain why we hold fast to our certainties and knowledge claims, will then be laid out. After that, what is taken to be certain has normative force, insofar as it sets up truth-and rationality-standards. It is also important to discuss Wittgenstein's conception of truth and its idealistic consequences. The problems of understanding alien culture and how a world-picture can change will then be discussed with the assessment of Wittgenstein's fully developed epistemological account in the face of scepticism.

LET US KNOW



Scepticism: Belief that some or all human knowledge is impossible. Since even our best methods for learning about the world sometimes fall short of perfect certainty, sceptics argue, it is better to suspend belief than to rely on the dubitable products of reason. Classical sceptics include Pyrrho and Sextus Epmpiricus. In the modern era, Montaigne, Bayle and Hume, all advocated some form of sceptical philosophy. Fallibilism is a more moderate response to the lack of certainty.

G.E. More (1873-1958): English philosopher who developed the practice of philosophical analysis as a method for preserving the dictates of common sense against the absurd claims of professional philosophers.

Russell, Bertrand (1872-1970): English mathematician and philosopher whose work ranged widely, including attention to formal logic and the philosophy of mathematics, epistemology and metaphysics, and vigorous commitment to unpopular political cause.

James, William (1842-1910): American psychologist and philosopher. James was born in a wealthy New York family and surrounded frm an early age by a humanitarian, literary and scholarly family life(his father was a theologician, and his brother the novalist Henry James). James had already spent years in Europe and began an education as an artist

when he entered Harvard medical school in 1863 and he travelled in Brazil and Europe before he graduated with a medical degree in 1869. There followed years lecturing both on psychology and philosophy. James's first major work was the two-volume Principles of Psychology(1890), a work that does justice both to the scientific, laboratory study of experimental psychology and the importance of a sound phenomenology of experience.



ACTIVITY 15.1

Try to find out the difference between Moore and Wittgenstein's view on Certainty

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CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 2:- Who is the author of TLP?

Ans:……

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Q 3:- Who is the author of PI?

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Q 4:- what is scepticism?

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Q 5:- Who is the author of "On Certainty"?

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Q 6: Who is the author of both the books " Defense of Common Sense" and " Proof of an External World"

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15.5. KNOWLEDGE AND CERTAINTY

Different philosophers have meant different things by 'metaphysical'. Kant also attacked metaphysics: but Kant would not have called 'Every rod has a length', or 'Time is one-dimensional and has only one direction', metaphysical in the sense in which he attacked metaphysics; whereas for Wittgenstein they are so.

The criticism of sentences as expressing no real thought, according to the principles of the Tractatus, could never be of any very simple general form; each criticism would be ad hoc, and fall within the subject-matter with which the sentence professed to deal. For example, if someone says that time moves only in one direction, we investigate this by asking him what processes he is comparing.

One frequently used tool in such enquiries is: 'What would it be for it to be otherwise?' - when, e.g. someone has said: 'Time has only one direction.' Here we are asked for an intelligible description of a state of affairs in which the asserted proposition- let it be, say, 'the future comes after the past' - does not hold. As far as sensible verification is concerned, the asserted proposition and the alternative to it that is being asked for are, or may be, on the same level; the relation of actual sense-experiences to each is not necessarily being investigated. What is operative here is evidently not a sensible verification theory, but the picture theory of the significant description: both the proposition and its negation are supposed to describe a possibility, otherwise the status of the proposition is other than that of a significant description.

'Psychology is no more akin to philosophy than any other natural science. Theory of knowledge is the philosophy of psychology' (4.1121). In this passage Wittgenstein is trying to break the dictatorial control over the rest of philosophy that had long been exercised by what is called theory of knowledge-that is, by the philosophy of sensation, perception, imagination, and, generally, of 'experience'. He did not succeed. He and Frege avoided making theory of knowledge the cardinal theory of philosophy simply by

cutting it dead; by doing none, and concentrating on the philosophy of logic. But the influence of the Tractatus produced logical positivism, whose main doctrine is 'verificationism' and in that doctrine theory of knowledge once more reigned supreme, and a prominent position was given to the test for significance by asking for the observations that would verify a statement. Further, in the period between the Tractatus and the time when he began to write Philosophical Investigations, Wittgenstein's own ideas were more closely akin to those of the logical positivists than before or after.

We can see how the Tractatus generated logical positivism, although the two philosophies are incompatible, by studying Moritz Schlick's essay, Meaning and Verification: 'Whenever we ask about a sentence, "What does it mean?" what we expect is instruction as to the circumstances in which the sentence is to be used; we want a description of the conditions under which the sentence will form a true proposition, and of those which will make it false.' Here Schlick seems to follow the Tractatus, except in the last clause of his statement: the Tractatus says that I 'determine the sense' of a proposition by 'determining in what circumstances I call it true' (4.063

Schlick calls the 'description of the conditions' under which a word has application, or a sentence is true, the 'rules for the use' of the word or sentence. These 'rules' will consist partly of 'ostensive definitions', of which the simplest form will be a pointing gesture combined with the pronouncing of the word; this can be done with words like 'blue'. For words like 'immediate', 'chance', 'because', 'again', Schlick says, the ostensive definition is of a more complicated kind: 'in these cases we require the presence of certain complex situations, and the meaning of the words is defined by the way we use them in these different situations.' All rules for use 'ultimately point to ostensive definitions'. 'This,' Schlick says, 'is the situation, and nothing seems to me simpler or less questionable. It is this situation and nothing else that we describe when we affirm that the meaning of a proposition can be given only by giving the rules of its verification in experience. This shows us the transition from the Tractatus to 'verificationism' very clearly. What Schlick says leads immediately (a) to

the quick test for significance; 'What experience would verify this?' and (b) to the maintenance of theory of knowledge as the cardinal theory of philosophy.

In the Tractatus, the 'determination of the circumstances in which I call a proposition true' must be a statement of its truth conditions. This is a completely different thing from a 'rule for the use' of a sentence, if this takes the form of an 'ostensive definition'. There could be no statement of the truth-conditions of an elementary proposition, other than a restatement of it; and for all non-elementary propositions there can always be statements of truth conditions. If, then, Schlick is following the Tractatus, 'ostensive definition' can only be relevant to the elementary proposition.

Further, Schlick insists that our 'rules for use' are 'arbitrary'; we give what rules we like; all that is essential is that we give some. The only arbitrariness in the Tractatus is in the assignment of names. There is no arbitrariness about the fact that a certain type of arrangement of names is capable of representing such-and-such a situation; it can do that only by reproducing in its own structure the arrangement of objects in the situation, and we cannot make it do so at will. Therefore, on the Tractatus view, there is no room for criticizing a sentence on the ground that we have not stipulated what situation it describes; but only on the ground that we have not assigned a reference to some of the words in it. The utterance of a sentence in a context in which it is true does not take the place of a stipulation of truth-conditions; the most that it can do is to show someone the reference of the words; he will then understand the propositional sign, in its positive or negative sense, by meaning the objects named in it. Then 'you have said something meaningless' could only mean 'you have not assigned a reference to this expression', and never 'you have not shown what observations would establish the truth of this'.

On the Tractatus view, then, one could not ask what observations would establish the truth of a proposition unless the 'structures' of possible observation statements already stood in certain internal relations to the

'structure' of the proposition. In the presence of these internal relations, the question of meaningfulness cannot arise, except in the form of a question about the reference of the individual signs; if these signs are not given a reference, the proposition could not be 'given' a sense, even by stipulating that its truth would be established if and only if such-and-such observation statements were verified. An alleged 'proposition' that was so 'given a sense' would necessarily be, not a proposition, but the simple sign of a complex; and then the sentences in which the 'proposition' occurred would have to stand in internal relations to the 'observation statements'; these internal relations would then supply us with the description of a complex, and the definition of a simple sign for that complex; and the 'observation statements' would give the truth conditions of propositions in which that sign occurred. This doctrine is quite different from Schlick's.

In Philosophical Investigations, where Wittgenstein makes an extensive investigation of psychological concepts, his object was to shew that it is not necessary to introduce the problems of epistemology of -i.e. of perception, imagination, and generally of 'experiencing' - into the discussion of other problems of philosophy. That is to say, we can discuss e.g. the problems implicit in the expression 'the process of time', without laying foundations by giving an account of the ways in which we apprehend time-memory, expectation, experience of succession, and so on.

Knowledge and certainty, however, are topics for the philosophy of logic. In doing logic we are not indeed interested in what is the case, or in what things are certainly known, or in the conditions for certainty in practice. But logical theory must allow for the certainty of propositions which are not logically necessary. Otherwise logic would have no application. For 'It is clear in advance that the logical proof of a significant proposition and proof in logic (i.e. proof of a logical proposition) must be two quite different things. 'The significant proposition asserts something, and its proof shows that it is so' (6.1263, 6.1264). Thus the proof of a significant proposition is not hypothetical. If its proof proves that it is the case, it is presupposed that those propositions from which it is proved are known to be true; for if they

were uncertain, the conclusions would be equally uncertain. The only 'certainty' would then be hypothetical- that if the premises are true the conclusion is; but that is not what Wittgenstein calls a significant proposition; it is a proposition of logic, and proof of it nothing but a 'mechanical expedient to facilitate the recognition of it as a tautology' (6.1262). Thus, if we are to speak of proving significant propositions, 'A knows p' cannot be an ideal form of description without specifiable instances, nor one exemplified only in 'knowledge' of tautologies.

It is easy to misunderstand certain remarks in the Tractatus which have to do with this question and to suppose that Wiltgenstein calls only tautologies certain. At 4.464 he says: 'The truth of tautology is certain, that of a proposition is possible, and of contradiction impossible. (Certain, possible, impossible: here we have a hint of that gradation which we need in probability theory.)' And at 5.525: 'Certainty. possibility or impossibility of a state of affairs are expressed, not by a proposition, but by an expression's being a tautology, a significant proposition or a contradiction: It would be natural at first sight to take these remarks as implying that certainty belongs only to tautology. But the 'state of affairs' whose certainty is expressed by an expression's being a tautology cannot be a state of affairs described by a tautology; for Wittgenstein is insistent that tautology describes no state of affairs- is true for every possible state of affairs (4.466). Again the 'significant proposition asserts something, and its proof shows that it is so'; but there will be no such proof if certainty belongs only to a tautology.

Now if we take the hint given by the parenthetical remark at 4.464 and examine the theory of probability as it is described by the Tractatus, we find that the first impression perhaps conveyed by these propositions is mistaken, as it must be if Wittgcnstein is consistent.

The account of probability is closely connected with the view that all the propositions are truth-functions of elementary propositions. At 5.15 we are told: 'If Tr is the number of truth-grounds of the proposition "r", Trs the number of the truth-grounds of the proposition "s" which are at the

same time truth-grounds of "r", then we call the ratio Trs: Tr the measure of the probability given by the proposition "r" to the proposition "s" , (5.15). That is, if we assume 'p' and 'q' to be elementary, since 'p or q' has 3 possible combinations of the truth-values of 'p' and 'q' which make it true, and only 1 in common with 'p and q', the measure of the probability given by 'p or q' to 'p and q' is 1 :3.

This account of probability has been criticized as resting upon the arbitrary dogma that all elementary propositions are equally probable. 'Two elementary propositions give one another the probability ½' (5.152). Now Wittgenstein also says: 'Propositions which have no truth-arguments in common with one another, we call independent of one another' (5.152). This is not an author's 'we'. Turning it round we might say: 'When we speak of propositions as independent of one another, what this really means is that they have no truth-arguments in common, i.e. are truth-functions of quite separate sets of elementary propositions.' With this we get some light on what is meant by saying 'the application of logic decides what elementary propositions there are' (5.557). That is to say: if in the application of logic- i.e. reasoning not 'in logic' but from facts- we (rightly) say 'even if this is so, that would not have to be so, it is not even made probable, they have nothing to do with another': then we have found propositions that are truth-functions of quite separate sets of elementary propositions. But he goes on to say at this place: 'Logic cannot anticipate what resides in its application' and 'Logic and its application must not overlap.' Thus the question what are the elementary propositions does not belong to logic at all.

These passages show the doubtfulness of part of Wittgenstein's criticism of the Tractatus in Philosophical Investigations. He jeers at the idea that when I say 'The broom is in the corner' I really mean 'The broomstick is in the corner and so is the brush and the broomstick is stuck in the brush.' But I shall recognize the negation of any of those propositions as constituting an objection to 'The broom is in the corner'; and that is all that the Tractatus theory requires. If I understand a proposition, I shall know

what more detailed statements are inconsistent with it; these will then be more elementary than it is.

To return to the probability theory: 'If p follows from q, then the proposition "q" gives the proposition "p" the probability 1. The certainty of the logical conclusion is a limiting case of probability' (5.162). This can readily be seen from the Tractatus account of probability together with its account of inference, according to which what follows from a proposition is already staled by it (5.14-.141).

Now, however, we are in a position to understand the proposition: 'Certainty, possibility, or impossibility of a state of affairs is expressed not by a proposition, but by an expression's being a tautology, a significant proposition, or a contradiction.' Since an expression that is a tautology (or contradiction) does not answer to any 'state of affairs', what expresses the certain (or impossible) 'state of affairs' itself, as opposed to expressing its certainty (or impossibility), will not be the tautology (or contradictory) expression, but rather one of the propositions that occur as components of this tautology (or contradiction). Moreover, in order to get 'a hint of that gradation which we need in probability theory', 'possibility' must here be taken as excluding both certainty and impossibility. Take a case where 's' is a significant proposition and 'r' expresses something we know. Then the 'state of affairs' expressed by 's' will be certain if 'r. ~ s' is a contradiction (i.e. if 'r s' is a tautology); it will be impossible if 'r.s' is a contradiction (i.e. if 'r ~ s' is a tautology); it will be, relative to our knowledge, merely 'possible' if 'r.s' and 'r.~s' are both significant propositions (each of them must be either a significant proposition or a contradiction, if 'r' and 's' are both significant propositions).

This raises the question how we know that r; does the same account apply as would apply to 's' if it were 'certain' that s, and does this go on indefinitely, or do we come to a stop somewhere? Wittgenstein's view is at this point obscure; but he refers to 'being completely acquainted with a fact' (5.156), and presumably held that here we do come to a stop.

Thus Wittgenstein offers an extraordinarily over-simplified account of knowledge, which would presumably have to be filled out with an account of 'acquaintance with facts', 'A knows p', he remarks at 5.1362, 'is senseless if p is a tautology.' (We should notice that the word is 'senseless', not 'nonsensical'; that is to say, the knowledge that p, when 'p' is a tautology, is treated as he treats the truth of 'p'.) But he has just said that the connection between knowledge and what is known is that of logical necessity. He is not referring to the mere fact that 'A knows p, but p is not true' is a contradiction; but to his theory, which would be the foundation for that fact, that the certainty of a state of affairs comes out in an expression's being a tautology, That is to say, if A knows p, then, for some q, the fact that q is a fact that A is 'acquainted' with, and q p is a tautology.

The remark: 'Certainty, possibility and impossibility of a state of affairs are expressed, not by the proposition but ...' stands as a comment on 'It is incorrect to give "It is possible" as the verbal rendering of (Ex) (fx), as Russell does.' Russell held that necessity, possibility (contingency) and impossibility belong not to propositions, but to propositional functions, such as 'fx'. ' "fx" is necessary', he says, means that all values of fx are true.

In the passage we have been considering, Wittgenstein discusses not necessity, possibility and impossibility, but certainty, possibility and impossibility. This might seem insignificant, from his saying 'the truth of tautology is certain'; but, as we have seen, he cannot hold that only the truth of tautology is certain. His objection to Russell's account of necessity (and hence of logical impossibility) is made elsewhere, at 6.1231: 'The mark of logical propositions is not general validity; For to be general only means: to be accidentally valid for all things. An ungeneralized proposition can be tautologous just as well as a generalized one.'

'That precedent,' Wittgenstein concludes 5.525, 'to which one would always like to appeal, must reside in the very symbol itself.' He evidently refers to a reason why it is especially tempting to equate '(Ex)(fx), and 'fx is possible'. The most fundamental motive for adopting Russell's views is

that it would be one way of getting rid of the puzzling character of 'necessary', 'possible' and 'impossible'; Wittgenstein has his own way of doing that. There remains, however, the feeling that a case will guarantee possibility, and thus give the assertion of possibility a sense, as nothing else could; this is like the lawyer's feeling that the best way of showing a procedure to be legal is to cite a precedent for it. So Russell thought that 'fx' is possible only if there is an actual case of an f.

Now Wittgenstein acknowledges this desire for 'a precedent', but says that this precedent resides in the symbol itself. The 'symbol itself' will be the significant proposition. For 'in the proposition a situation is as it were put together experimentally' (4.031). It is as if the construction of small models of mechanisms were used to make reports on what machines there were in some place, and one also constructed hypothetical models, say in order to ask whether there are any of these in that place. If the models are in clay and do not move, one might want to know what makes them express possible hypotheses. But if the models are themselves working mechanisms, the 'precedent' to which one would want to appeal would be in the models themselves. And so it is, Wittgenstein says, with significant propositions.

No 'precedent' is to be found in tautology and contradiction; Wittgenstein's remark has sole application to significant propositions. For 'sentences which are true for every state of affairs cannot be connections of signs at all, for otherwise only particular connections of objects will correspond to them. (And there isn't any logical combination to which there corresponds no combination of the objects.)' (4.466). To regard tautologies (logically necessary propositions) as descriptions is as if one were to regard the empty space where the mechanism was to go as itself a model for all possible mechanisms. But the significant proposition is a logical working model of the situation it asserts to exist.



LET US KNOW

Kant Immanual(1724-1804): German philosopher who revolutionised modern philosophy, in an effort to counter the sceptical arguments of Hume and provide a firm basis for human knowledge and morality. Kant used transcendental arguments to show that human beings apply synthetic a priori judgements as the preconditions for any possible experience.

Metaphysics: Branch of philosophy concerned with providing a comprehensive account of the most general features of reality as a whole, the study of being as such. Questions about the existence and nature of minds, bodies, God, space, time, causality unity, identity and the world are all metaphysical issues. From Plato onwards, many philosophers have tried to determine what kinds of things (and how many of each) exist. But Kant argued that this task is impossible. He proposed instead that we consider the general structure of our thought about the world. Strawson calls former activity revisionary and the latter descriptive, metaphysics.

Frege, Gotlob(1848-1925): German mathematician and philosopher of mathematics. Frege was born in the small town of Wismar in Pomerania and was sent to the university of Jena when he was twenty-one. He obtained his doctorate at Gottingen and worked almost the whole of his life in the mathematics department at the university of Jena. His first important work , the Begriffsschrift (Concept Writing, 1879)is also the first important example of formal system in the sense of Modern Logic.

Verifiability Principle: the claim that the meaning of a proposition is just the set of observation or experiences which would determine its truth, so that an empirical proposition is meaningful only if it either actually has been verified or could at least in principle be verified.

(Analytic statements are non-empirical, their truth or falsity requires no verification.)

Knowledge: Justified true belief. Since Plato, nearly all western philosophers have accepted this deceptively simple statement of the three necessary (and jointly sufficient) conditions for knowledge. That is, I know a proposition if and only if : I sincerely affirm the proposition, the proposition is true and my affirmation is genuinely based upon its truth. The correct analysis of each element of the definition, however, is open to question. Philosophers have held different views about the nature of belief and have proposed many different theories of truth.

Logical Positivism: Twentieth Century philosophical movement that used a strict principle of verifiability to reject as meaningless the non-empirical statements of metaphysics, theology and ethics. Under the influence of Hume, Russell and the early Wittgenstein, the logical positivists regarded as meaningful only statements reporting empirical observations taken together with the tautologies of logic and mathematics. Prominent logical positivists included members of the Vienna circle and Ayer.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 7: What is picture Theory?

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Q 8: What is Ostensive Definition?

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Q 9. What is theory of Knowledge according to Wittgenstein?

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Q.10. Knowledge and Certainty are topics of What?

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15.6 LET US SUM UP

Philosophy looking for certainty has presented a number of conclusions. But in these conclusions, it must be noted that these are not unanimous in the sense in which scientific conclusions are unanimous.

- First, analytic statements are certain. Analytic statements are wholly independent of sense experience.
- Secondly, deductions made from such analytic statements are also capable of giving certain knowledge.
- Thirdly, the ego or the self is so foundational that it can not be doubted. The very process of doubting presupposes the ego
- Fourthly, according to the empiricist philosophers the propositions, which are the records of the immediate experiences are also beyond all doubt.
- The quest for certainty has led philosophers to explore the nature of standard of justification. These explorations have opened new area in epistemology.



15.7 FURTHER READINGS

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15.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answer to Q No 1: Plato distinguished among four levels of knowledge or thought. Among these four levels the first two are called by him opinion and the last two knowledge.

Answer to Q No.2: Wittgenstein

Answer to Q No 3: Wittgenstein

Answer to Q No 4: Scepticism is a belief that some or all human knowledge is impossible. Since even our best methods for learning about the world sometimes fall short of perfect certainty, sceptics argue, it is better to suspend belief than to rely on the dubitable products of reason. Classical

sceptics include Pyrrho and Sextus Epmpiricus. In the modern era, Montaigne, Bayle and Hume, all advocated some form of sceptical philosophy. Fallibilism is a more moderate response to the lack of certainty.

Answer to Q No 5: Wittgenstein

Answer to Q No 6: G.E. Moore

Answer to Q No 7: The picture theory of language is also know as the picture theory of meaning, is a theory of linguistic reference and meaning articulated by Wittgenstein in TLP. Picture theory of language states that statements are meaningful if they can be defined or pictured in the real world.

Answer to Q No 8: Ostensive definition coveys the meaning of a term by pointing out examples. It is usually accompanied with a gesture pointing to the object serving as an example, and for this reason is also often referred to as "definition by pointing"

Answer to Q No 9: 'Psychology is no more akin to philosophy than any other natural science. Theory of knowledge is the philosophy of psychology' (4.1121). In this passage Wittgenstein is trying to break the dictatorial control over the rest of philosophy that had long been exercised by what is called theory of knowledge-that is, by the philosophy of sensation, perception, imagination, and, generally, of 'experience'.

Answer to Q No 10: Knowledge and certainty, however, are topics for the philosophy of logic.



15.9. MODEL QUESTIONS

A) Very Short Questions:

Q 1: What is metaphysics?

Q 2: What is knowledge?

Q 3: What is the full form of TLP

Q 3: What is the full form of PI

Q 4: Is psychology a branch of philosophy?

B) Short questions (Answer each question in about 150 words)

Q 1: What is metaphysics according to Kant

Q 2: What is Plato's view on certainty?

Q 3: What is certainty?

Q 4: What is verification theory?

Q 5: What is ostensive definition?

Q 6: Write short notes on:

a) Knowledge and Certainty

b) Wittgenstein and Certainty

c) Wittgenstein and G.E. More on certainty

d) Plato and Certainty

e) Descartes and Certainty

C) Long Questions (Answer each question in about 300-500 words)

Q 1: What is the epistemological investigations On Certainty?

Q 2: How Plato related with Certainty?

Q 4: What is the view of Descartes on scepticism and certainty?

Q 5: What is certainty according to Wittgenstein?

Q 6: Explain Certainty from the point of epistemology.

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