UNIT 15 KANT ON PHENOMENA AND NOUMENA

UNIT STRUCTURE

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15.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to-

- know about intuition and concepts that constitute the elements of all our knowledge.
- learn the role of logic, which comprises the rules that govern concepts.
- know about general and transcendental logic.
- learn the division of transcendental logic into transcendental analytic and transcendental dialectic.
- know about judgments with corresponding concepts.

15.2 INTRODUCTION:

According to Kant there are two elements of knowledge. They are intuition and the concepts. Neither intuition alone nor the concept in isolation can yield knowledge. Intuition is the capacity of receiving representations (receiving impressions), and the concept is the power of knowing an object through these representations. Through intuition, an object is given to us, and through concept, the object is thought in relation to that representation. Both intuition and the concept may be pure or empirical. When they contain sensation (which presupposes the actual presence of the object), they are

empirical. When there is no mingling of sensation with the representation, they are pure.

Kant argues that the receptive capacity of the mind, its power of receiving the representations in which it is affected by the object is known as sensibility, and the capacity of the mind to produce these representations are known as the understanding. Without sensibility no object would be given to us, without understanding no object would be thought. Thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind. He says that sensibility and understanding, however, do not exchange their functions. It is through their integration, we can have knowledge. According to him, the understanding can intuit nothing, the senses can think nothing. Only through their union can knowledge arise.

We are now into the second part of the Transcendental 'Doctrine of Elements'-the elements that synthetically make up cognition. The first, as we know, deals with pure intuitions (we have already discussed in unit13); we are now turning to concepts. The Introduction to this part, though, concerns itself with 'logic,' specifically with 'transcendental logic'. As we shall see, Kant defines logic as the 'science' that deals with the rules of understanding (A52=B76). Since the understanding is Kant's employment for our ability to apply concepts, logic comprises then the rules that govern concepts. Kant says that the rules for determining the sensibility, which provides the object of knowledge, is different from the rules of the understanding in general.

15.3 PHENOMENA

Kant treats logic in a two-fold manner. They are logic of the general and the logic of the special employment of the understanding. Logic of the general, according to Kant, contains, the absolutely necessary rules of thought without which there can be no employment (whatsoever) of the understanding. It therefore treats of understanding without any regard to difference in the objects to which the understanding may be directed. The

logic of the special employment of the understanding contains the rules of correct thinking as regards a certain kind of objects. While distinguishing between the two, the former may be called the logic of elements, the latter the organon of this or that science. The logic of the special employment of the understanding is considered as the propaedeutic to the sciences.

Kant states that general logic may be pure or applied. General logic is pure, when we abstract it from all the empirical conditions under which our understanding is exercised. Kant gives certain instances like- the influence of the senses, the play of imagination, the laws of memory, the force of habit, inclination, etc., where understanding exercises under certain circumstances, and to become acquainted with these circumstances experience is required. He says, Pure general logic has to do, therefore, only with principles a priori, and is a canon of understanding and of reason. At the same time, general logic is applied, when it is directed to the rules of the employment of the understanding under the subjective empirical conditions. Unlike pure general logic, applied logic has empirical principles. It is general because it refers to the employment of the understanding without regard to the difference in the objects. It is neither a canon of the understanding, nor an organon of special sciences, but merely a cathartic of the common understanding.

Kant puts forward two rules, which govern the operations of pure general logic. They are-

1. As pure general logic, it abstracts from all content of the knowledge of understanding and from all differences in its objects, and deals with the form of thought.

2. As pure general logic, it has nothing to do with empirical principles, and does not borrow anything from psychology, which therefore has no influence whatever on the canon of the understanding. Pure logic is a body of demonstrated doctrine, and everything in it must be certain entirely a priori.

Kant argues that general logic has nothing to do with the origin of knowledge. It deals only with that form which the understanding is able to impart to the representations, from whatever source they may have arisen. Kant distinguishes transcendental logic from general logic, which deals with concepts. These concepts are pure or a priori and not empirical. These concepts belong neither to intuition nor to sensibility but to thought and understanding. The term 'transcendental', signifies such knowledge as concerns the a priori possibility of knowledge, or its a priori employment.

Kant divides transcendental logic into transcendental analytic and transcendental dialectic. In the transcendental analytic, on the one hand, Kant is concerned with explaining the a priori forms and the principles of pure understanding, which make synthetic a priori judgments. Transcendental analytic on the one hand, is chiefly concerned with the following: (I) that the concepts be pure and not empirical; (2) that they belong, not to intuition and sensibility, but to thought and understanding; (3) that they be fundamental and be carefully distinguished from those which are derivative or composite; (4) that our table of concepts be complete, covering the whole field of the pure understanding. Transcendental dialectic, on the other hand, is concerned with exposing the illusion of transcendental judgments and at the same time caution us against being deceived by it. A detailed discussion of transcendental aesthetic has been made earlier. Here, we will discuss in detail only the transcendental analytic, the first part of transcendental logic.

15.4 NOUMENA

Transcendental analytic, for its proper exposition is divided into two parts-analytic of concepts, and the analytic of principles. The transcendental analytic of concepts is mainly concerned in finding out the a priori concepts in human understanding. According to Kant, understanding is a faculty of judgment. Understanding consists of concepts. Concepts lie in the function. By the term, 'function', Kant refers to, the unity of the act of bringing various

representations under one common representation. In every judgment there is a concept. This concept holds many representations. Among these various representations, there is a given representation that is immediately related to an object. Kant gives an example to illustrate his point. He says, in the judgment, 'all bodies are divisible', the concept of the divisible applies to various other concepts, but is here applied in particular to the concept of body, and this concept again to certain appearances that present themselves to us.

Kant divides all kinds of judgments into four main heads- quantity, quality, relation and modality. Each heads contain three sub-divisions. Thus, there are twelve forms of judgments and relate them with the corresponding concepts.

Under quantity, judgments are universal, particular and singular. Kant says singular judgment is different from the universal judgment. According to him, If, therefore, we estimate a singular judgment …according to its quantity in comparison with other knowledge, it is certainly different from general judgments. Here Kant's view is similar to the view of the modern logician. Modern logicians, unlike traditional logicians, give independent status to the singular proposition. A singular proposition, in a traditional classification of proposition, is included under universal proposition.

Under quality, judgments are affirmative, negative and infinite. Infinite judgment, in transcendental logic, must be distinguished from the affirmative judgment. But in general logic, infinite judgment is not different from the affirmative judgment.

Under relation, judgments are categorical, hypothetical and disjunctive. Kant says that in a categorical judgment, two concepts are involved, in a hypothetical judgment, two judgments are involved, and in a disjunctive judgment, several judgments are involved. Categorical judgment like all men are mortal, two concepts are involved; the class of men and the class of mortal beings. Hypothetical judgment, such as, 'if there is a perfect justice,

the obstinately wicked are punished'. This judgment contains the relation of two propositions, namely, 'there is a perfect justice', and the 'obstinately wicked are punished'. Disjunctive judgment contains the relation of two or more propositions. In a disjunctive proposition, one proposition may exclude the other proposition, but jointly they give the complete knowledge of the world. Kant gives an example of the disjunctive judgment, 'the world exists either through blind chance, or through inner necessity, or through an external cause.' Each of these propositions gives us a part of the knowledge of the existence of the world. But together they can provide us the complete knowledge. Kant says in a disjunctive judgment the concept of community is involved. He says, in a disjunctive judgment a certain community of the known constituents, such that they mutually exclude each other, and yet thereby determine in their totality the true knowledge.

Under modality, judgments are problematic, assertoric and apodeictic. Kant argues that in a problematic judgment, affirmation or negation is merely possible. For example, 'earth exists through an external cause' is a problematic judgment because it either can possibly affirm or denied. In an assertoric judgment, affirmation or negation is viewed as real. 'There exists a perfect justice' is an assertoric judgment, because the existence of perfect justice is merely an assertion. In an apodeictic judgment, affirmation or negation are viewed as necessary. 'Socrates must be mortal' is an apodeictic judgment, because it expresses necessity and excludes contingency.

According to Kant, there are twelve categories. For him, judgments and categories are relative terms, because corresponding to every judgment there is a category. Kant shows the table of categories in the following way-

Table of Categories

I

Of Quantity

Unity

Plurality

Totality

Ⅱ

Of Quality

Reality

Negation

Limitation

Ⅲ

of Relation

of inherence and subsistence

of causality and dependence

of community

Ⅳ

of Modality

Possibility-Impossibility

Existence-Non-existence

Necessity- Contingency

Kant says that transcendental logic lays before us the manifold of a priori sensibility, presented by transcendental aesthetic. Space and time are the a priori forms of sensible intuition. The manifold of a priori sensibility serves as the material for the concepts of pure understanding. But he argues that if this manifold is to be known, the spontaneity of our thought must go

in a certain way. Kant regards it as synthesis. The role of synthesis is discussed in its appropriate place.

According to Kant, the pure concepts of understanding, which apply a priori to the forms of sensible intuitions, are known as the categories. Kant, however, in the Critique of Pure Reason, does not give any specific definition of categories. According to him, the categories are not inductive generalizations but deduced from the concepts of the 'logical employment of the understanding'.

According to Kant, there are twelve categories. For him, judgments and categories are relative terms, because corresponding to every judgment there is a category. According to Kant, Categories are the original pure concepts of synthesis that the understanding contains within itself a priori. He divides the categories into two groups- mathematical categories and dynamical categories. The first groups of categories are concerned with the objects of intuition. The second groups of categories are concerned with the existence of these objects. Kant again says that, the former have no correlates; these are to be met with only in the second group.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q1. What are the two elements of knowledge, according the Kant?

Q2. What is sensibility?

Q3. What is understanding?

Q4. With what transendental login mainly deals?

Q5. What are the categories mention by Kant?



11.5 LET US SUM UP

- According to Kant there are two elements of knowledge. They are intuition and the concepts.
- Intuition is the capacity of receiving representations (receiving impressions), and the concept is the power of knowing an object through these representations. Through intuition, an object is given to us, and through concept, the object is thought in relation to that representation.
- Without sensibility no object would be given to us, without understanding no object would be thought.
- Kant says that sensibility and understanding, however, do not exchange their functions. It is through their integration, we can have knowledge.
- According to Kant, the understanding can intuit nothing, the senses can think nothing. Only through their union can knowledge arise.
- Kant says that the rules for determining the sensibility, which provides the object of knowledge, is different from the rules of the understanding in general.
- Kant treats logic in a two-fold manner. They are logic of the general and the logic of the special employment of the understanding.
- Logic of the general, according to Kant, contains, the absolutely necessary rules of thought without which there can be no employment of the understanding. It therefore treats of understanding without any regard to difference in the objects to which the understanding may be directed.
- The logic of the special employment of the understanding contains the rules of correct thinking as regards a certain kind of objects.
- Kant argues that general logic has nothing to do with the origin of knowledge. It deals only with that form which the understanding is able

to impart to the representations, from whatever source they may have arisen.

- Kant distinguishes transcendental logic from general logic, which deals with concepts. These concepts are pure or a priori and not empirical. These concepts belong neither to intuition nor to sensibility but to thought and understanding.

- Kant divides transcendental logic into transcendental analytic and transcendental dialectic.

- In the transcendental analytic, Kant is concerned with explaining the a priori forms and the principles of pure understanding, which make synthetic a priori judgments. Transcendental dialectic is concerned with exposing the illusion of transcendental judgments and at the same time caution us against being deceived by it.

- Transcendental analytic, for its proper exposition is divided into two parts- analytic of concepts, and the analytic of principles. The transcendental analytic of concepts is mainly concerned in finding out the a priori concepts in human understanding.

- According to Kant, understanding is a faculty of judgment. Understanding consists of concepts. Concepts lie in the function. By the term, 'function', Kant refers to, the unity of the act of bringing various representations under one common representation.

- In every judgment there is a concept. This concept holds many representations. Among these various representations, there is a given representation that is immediately related to an object.

- Kant divides all kinds of judgments into four main heads- quantity, quality, relation and modality. Each heads contain three sub-divisions. Thus, there are twelve forms of judgments and relate them with the corresponding concepts.

- Under quantity, judgments are universal, particular and singular. Under quality, judgments are affirmative, negative and infinite. Under relation, judgments are categorical, hypothetical and disjunctive. Under modality, judgments are problematic, assertoric and apodeictic.

- According to Kant, the pure concepts of understanding, which apply a priori to the forms of sensible intuitions, are known as the categories.

- The categories are not inductive generalizations but deduced from the concepts of the 'logical employment of the understanding'.



15.6 FURTHER READING:

1) Burnham, Douglas and Young Harvey Kant's Critique of Pure Reason, (Edinburg: Edinburg University Press, 2007).

2) Cassirer, H.W., Kant's First Critique: An Appraisal of the Permanent Significance of Kant's Critique of Pure Reason, (London: George Allen & Unwin Limited, 1961).

3) Ewing, A.C., A Short Commentary to Kant's Critique of Pure Reason, (London: The University of Chicago Press, 1970).

4) Falkenberg, Richard, History of Modern Philosophy, (Calcutta: Progressive Publishers, 1977).

5) Kant, Immanuel Critique of Pure Reason, translated by N.K. Smith, (London: Macmillan, 1973).

6) _____, Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics: That will be Able to Come Forward as Science, translated and edited by Gary Hatfield, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

7) O'Connor, D.J., (ed.), A Critical History of Western Philosophy, (New York: The Free Press, 1964).

8) Scruton, Roger Kant, (London: Oxford University Press, 1982).

9) Wilkerson, T.E. Kant's Critique of Pure Reason: A Commentary for Students, (London: Clarendon Press, 1976).

10) Wood, Allen Kant, (London: Blackwell Publishing, 2005).

15.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS:

Ans. to Q No. 1: Intuitions and the concepts.

Ans. to Q No. 2: Kant argues that receptine capacity of mind, its power of receiving the representations in which it is affected by the object is known as sensibility.

Ans. to Q No. 3: IThe capacity of the mind to produce the representations are known as understanding.

Ans. to Q No. 4: Concepts.

Ans. to Q No. 5: Quantity, Quality, Relation & Modality.

15.8 MODEL QUESTIONS:

Q1. Discuss the role of understanding in knowledge formation.

Q2. Distinguish between general and transcendental logic.

Q3. Discuss the function of transcendental logic in detail.

Q4. What is meant by the 'concept' of human understanding? How many concepts are admitted by Kant? Discuss in detail.

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