
UNIT 1 ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF HUMAN

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1.0 OBJECTIVES

- To study the uniqueness of human being in the process of evolution of life.
- To familiarize the students with the larger issues related to human development.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

In the unit we want to study the origin and development of human being, not from biological but from philosophical point of view. We start from our normal daily experiences and see how we have evolved in terms of our relatedness to the rest of the universe and to our closest cousins, the animals. We finally show that there are some areas in our human development that make us distinctly unique: we call it *Weltoffenheit* or soul.

1.2 THE INNER CONFLICT

Let us begin our understanding of the origin and growth of the human person not on a too idealistic note, one that blinds us to the shades and darkness in the human psyche. If there is in us a noble quest for meaning, a relentless thirst for God, a drive that sends us out of ourselves to the world (especially the world of persons) in an outreach of love, all of us recognise that there is within us also a drive for power and selfishness. ... a “baser side to our selves”. St. Paul was thinking of these when he wrote: “I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. ... I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do. ... I delight in the law of God, in my inmost self, but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin which dwells in my members.” (Rom 7:15ff) How do we explain this “inner conflict” that divides the very depths of our being? One simple answer is provided by Plato : the spiritual “soul” which is good and seeks to rise up to eternal truths and ideal forms, but the corrupt and corrupting “body” keeps pulling it down to transient, material “shadows”. Assuredly, this is a dualistic, oppressive (because anti-body) understanding of human being.

A slight variation of the above is the traditional (Augustinian-dominated) conception of original sin in Scholastic philosophy. As a result of the “sin of our first parents” (taken to be historical persons) our inner being has somehow been “wounded” or “vitiating” and thus an “inclination to evil” has somehow come down to us along with the “stain of original sin” (like any of the other genes and what not that we have due to heredity). However, it is good for us to remember that the Adam and Eve story is not a primary datum: it is an interpretation of a primary datum. As Ricœur puts it, “the exile is a primary symbol of human alienation. ... [and] the story of the expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise is a mythic account of the second degree, bringing into play characters, a locale, a time, fabulous episodes” (Ricoeur). Immeasurable harm has been done to countless millions of dedicated religious believers – as Ricœur himself laments – by forcing them to a literal understanding of the story as one of the requisites of religious faith. No small “agony of conscience” was produced among such sincere people who felt thereby constrained to reconcile their religious faith, to which they intended to remain faithful, with their scientific and professional knowledge, which seems to contradict this Augustinian speculations. The datum is the experienced fact of human alienation of the inner conflict within human being. Could we not put this down to the as yet unfinished working of evolution? That is, we haven’t “quite ungrown” the Law of the Jungle (“might is right”, “survival of the fittest,” etc.) and this final vestige of our lower, beastly nature still lingers on within us to cause disharmony.

1.3 ANIMAL SYMBOLICUM

Contemporary thinkers have often referred to human being as an *animal symbolicum* – which may be translated as “symbol-using animal”. This is another felicitous expression which brings out the basically integrative (and thereby liberative.) understanding of how the traditionally called “spiritual” and “material” elements fuse together in the human person. Firstly, thanks to Maréchal, we see how human person is not just “open” to the world and beyond, right up to the fullness of reality, to God. On the other hand, we also see how the external world collaborates, as it were, in this quest of human being by pointing beyond itself to that same Ultimate. One constitutive element of a symbol is that it points to something other than itself. In this sense “all reality is symbolic”. Again, human person is a being that *needs* symbols. It has been one of our (recently-exploded) contemporary conceits that “modern man” has no need of symbols (nor of myths and, perhaps also, rites – for these are further developments of symbol see Desbruslais, 1984).

After all, it was argued, our ancestors were too primitive to be able to attain our sophisticated level of abstract thought. So they had to have recourse to symbol, myth and so on. But we, enlightened moderns, can dispense with such childish things and come straight to the raw material of metaphysics directly. Well, a full scale rejoinder to this snobbery is out of place here, but in the light of Maréchal’s study we can say a few things. Human being, inasmuch as s/he is embodied, incarnate, enfleshed cannot envisage (much less relate to in any inter-personal depth) a totally disembodied, un-incarnate and unfleshed reality. Somehow her/his embodiedness must also enter into the relationship, else her/his personhood would experience an un-ignorable element of frustration. After all, we aren’t pure spirits but (in Rahner’s phrase) spirit in the world (refer back to earlier pages for some of the implications). Hence, in order to ensure the full meaningfulness of inter-personal relationships, we have to somehow “embody the disembodied”. Thus our bodily dimension can enter into the relationship and find its fulfilment. Now, to “embody the disembodied” is to do none other than make a symbol. That is why, when you love somebody (and love is, in itself, a disembodied thing) we have to embody this love through

hand-shakes, embraces, the giving of gifts, going out together and like. For that reason, too, we need statues, holy pictures, religious rites. All of these participates in the nature of symbols and it is important, of course, that we recognise them for what they are: symbols, not idols. “Idols must die so that symbols can live”. Unfortunately, however, just as we mechanistic moderns have a propensity to reduce mystery to problems, so have a parallel perversion which seduces us into distorting symbols into idols (Pandikattu 2000).

Common Parlance

Modern European languages are built on ideas and roots taken from ancient Greek and so it is inevitable that some of the slants and biases of the Hellenistic world should have entered into our everyday life through our usage of such words. When we use the word “man”, we are, in effect, saying that what is most characteristic of human reality is that s/he has a mind (Latin *mens* – of the Sanskrit *manas*, whence our own *manushya* and its derivatives). The incarnate dimension of this “mind” is by-passed. So also, when we talk of “spirituality”, are we not implying that what matters in human development is the cultivation of her/his “spirit”? On the other hand, the word ‘human’ suggests a more integrated insight: it reminds us that we are *humus* (Latin, earth) plus *mens* – earthy minds. This is a conception that comes very close to Rahner’s “Spirit in the World”.

Check Your Progress I

Note: Use the space provided for your answer

1. Give two traditional explanations for the inner conflict in us.

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2. Symbols are innate to human life. What is its philosophical explanation?

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1.4 THE PHENOMENA OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Having defined, more or less, the extent and the limits of the question before us as also given a hint as to with what attitude we intend to approach it, let us plunge boldly into the issue by first sizing up the data. What is the *given* on which we must base our answer/response to the matter? We need to keep this clearly before our eyes. It's our only recourse to ascertaining whether we, or anyone else for that matter, have overlooked or exaggerated one or other aspect of the multi-faceted reality which is the human person. Approaching the phenomena with as open a mind as possible, it seems that we cannot but recognise two groups of data which, at first sight, seem down-right contrary (if not contradictory or complementary). In certain dimensions of human activity, we are struck by a certain *oneness* with all observable reality. On the other hand, certain human activities stand out as quite *unique* and distinct: no other observable agent on the face of this earth gives evidence of the identical operations (to borrow a term from metaphysics).

1.5 THE HUMAN BEING IN COMMON WITH ALL OBSERVABLE REALITY

When we, the human reality, look around us at the world in which we live, we notice three types of beings, basically. First, there is what is traditionally been called the "mineral kingdom" which comprises a vast and multifarious array of elements and compounds, some solid, some gaseous and some liquid – non-living things (we shall have to pause in a moment for a brief reflection on what is meant by us when we speak of life ...). Then there is the "vegetative kingdom", with which we enter the realm of living things. Under this rubric is another host of things: plants, fruits, vegetables, trees and such like. Finally, there is the "animal kingdom", living-things that have sensation and are capable of locomotion, with all their species and sub-species. This would include all manner of reptiles, birds, insects, fish and those which, in common parlance we call "animal proper".

"A man for whom his body is an object is a man without a body. He is not a man at all....[D]epersonalization can be traced in the drive for power, in which men are often tempted to seek their perfection. As long as power is linked with the body in a reasonable proportion, as long as I can sense or at least imagine the things over which I have power, I can act as a responsible agent, as a person fully accountable for my acts. But the divorce of power from personal responsibility, the divorce of power from the human body, progressively corrodes the sense of responsibility itself. Thus an airplane pilot, to use an example ..., who would hesitate to crush out the life of a butterfly, will trigger without the least hesitation the bomb that sends thousands to their death. No longer experiencing any personal responsibility for the power he exercises; aware of power only as an abstract object grasped through the manipulation of handful of gadgets - man soon becomes a prey to his own servant. Cut away from the person, power thus tends to objectify itself and to master its servant. The end is still further dehumanization, the price we must be willing to pay for our refusal to understand the unity and integrity of human person." (Wilhelmsen 1962, 45-46)

Let's begin with the *mineral kingdom* and *human being*: what do we have in common? Well, to begin with our body is 65% oxygen, 18% carbon, 1½% calcium 1% phosphorous and 1½% other elements. In other words, there is no chemical element (or compound, for that matter – we are 70% water.) in the human body that is not found in nature. As someone has well put it, "We are cousins of stones and our sisters are the stars." And who has not had a doctor telling us that we

need some more iron to our diet (though it wouldn't quite work if we tried to eat a nail.)? Truly are we *of* the planet earth. As for the *vegetative kingdom*, it is characterised by four basic "living" activities: growth, reproduction, nourishment and repair. And so do we share, with it, these basic vegetative functions. We also grow, take in nourishment, produce offspring and wounds and injuries that we undergo (unless too severe) gradually heal themselves. And need we add, all plant life share in the same chemical composition as the various elements and compounds in nature.

Finally, there is the *animal kingdom* which, in addition to the vegetative activities mentioned above, has also locomotion (can get up and go elsewhere for food, not being rooted in one place like a plant) and, in addition, gives clear evidence of sensation (that is, can see, hear, smell, taste and touch – which include feeling pain and pleasure). All these animal activities are ours too.

And maybe we can pause briefly to ask ourselves what we mean when we say that a thing has life, is alive. Actually "life" is a kind of short-hand term for a complex of activities and when a being gives evidence of them, we say that it is "alive". What is the trait that runs through this whole "complex of activities" we have mentioned? In everyday life, we say things like, "Look, it's moving: it must be alive." Life, then, would be characterised by movement. But cars move and so do machines (so long as someone drives them or pushes the "start" button – and they're in "working order"). Would we be prepared to call them "alive"? I dare say not. We would, no doubt, revise our "definition" to identify life with "self-motion" (locomotion). A being which is able to move itself without any apparent pulling of strings or shoving or pushing from outside is alive. Here, of course, the meaning of "motion" or "movement" would be widened from its usual connotations of local motion (capacity to transport oneself from one place to another), which is, strictly speaking, a property of the animal kingdom alone and not of plant-life. It would encompass any self-initiative activity (growth, reproduction and the like). But a further refinement might be necessary. Today we know that there is tremendous activity in the sub-atomic world: neutrons, protons and what not whirling around – would we be prepared to say that all sub-atomic reality is alive? To begin with, these activities do not involve growth, nourishment, reproduction and repair. They are all geared to maintaining the *status quo*: at keeping the molecule of oxygen or whatever to be a molecule of oxygen and nothing else. Vegetative activity, on the other hand, does more than that: it provides the positive dynamic development (perfection) of the organism concerned. Let us then sum up these activities as "self-developmental" or "self-perfective" activities and conclude that "to have life" means to exhibit signs of such activity. This is what life means phenomenologically. It would be interesting to pursue the matter to a deeper, metaphysical level and explore life as a "degree of having-being" (Pandikattu 2011). But that is beyond the scope of this unit.

1.6 HUMAN BEING IN ITS UNIQUENESS

There are other equally evident and undeniable activities of the human being which distinguish her/him from all other observable reality on our planet. The human being, and only the human being, gives evidence of these activities. They can be listed in various ways. We prefer to sum them up as the following trio: use of a conceptual language, creative art, transcendental religion. Some people would prefer to call these by different names. Others would include other activities. We prefer to limit ourselves to just these three for convenience of study and reflection (Desbruslais 1977).

In the first place, we do not say that only human being has a language, a means of communication: even bees and ants have some kind of language – they inform each other (by tapping their feelers on the ground, or whatever) as to where recently discovered food supplies may be found. But their communication is limited to very concrete and limited topics. Whereas we humans can, by means of abstract ideas and concepts, communicate to each other about theories and notions that go far beyond the immediately visible. And then there is the phenomenon of art and creativity. The human being is ever creating new styles of architecture, dress and so on; s/he is able to express her/his imaginative insights in a variety of ways from batik to sculpture to dance and painting. Animals have some instinctive know-how: how to construct their nests, burrows or whatever form of dwelling places they have. Some of them have a more or less elaborate mating “dance”. But they remain singularly devoid of any creative or artistic variations here. The same species or sub-species has always built its nest in the same way as far as we can reach back in recorded knowledge of these things. The scorpions and snakes haven’t come out with any new dance steps to vary their mating game. But look at the variety of styles and fads in architecture, dress, dance and what have you which characterise human social life.

Finally, human person is the only observable reality which has been able to form some sort of an understanding of the deity, be it gods, goddesses or spirits. Only human being has evolved a religion which concerns this whole area of her/his life. Various rites and rituals and religious beliefs have existed among men since the dawn of human history. There is nothing comparable to this in the animal kingdom. These three things together constitute the human culture.

1.7 TRANSCENDENCE

Can we suggest a word that will sum up what characterises these three unique activities of human being: conceptual language, creative art and religion? The word that comes to my mind would be *transcendence*, the capacity to go beyond, to pass over the immediately accessible. This is the quality that Wolfhart Pannenberg calls, in the German, *Weltoffenheit* (literally world-open-ness). We shall soon be seeing that this is, perhaps, too passive sounding a word to designate a powerfully dynamic human trait. We are not just “open” to the world, like a door. On the contrary, we are driven from within to go forth to the world. Whence comes this drive and how it operates are questions that we must postpone for a little while.

Check Your Progress II

Note: Use the space provided for your answer

1. What is life phenomenologically?

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2. On what do you base human uniqueness?

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1.8 HERMENEUTICS OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Alternatives

Though in our chemical composition we are no different than the other things around us, yet we are capable of some activities that no other observable being can come out with. Shall we say that this is because there is in us two beings or principles of being, one which is in common with everything around us and one which is unique to the human reality alone and that it is the presence of the latter within us which makes it possible for us to do what other beings of this earth cannot? Or shall we say that we can do what others cannot only because we are more evolved, have – somehow or the other – been able to refine those some fundamental constituents so that they have become capable of transcendence? It all depends on how or why we set limits to the possibilities of the former element, call it matter, body or whatever (Desbruslais 1977).

Clarifying Terms

History has given us a legacy of terms to call these two constituents: spirit or soul and matter or body. Some thinkers have seen these two as fundamentally inimical to each other (Plato, for one). Others have seen them as not so inimical, perhaps, but make them such complete beings and so vastly unlike each other that they have not known how to save the unity of the human person nor explain how one can act upon the other. Many thinkers (and the whole Indian tradition in general is heavily weighted in this direction) see the human person as fundamentally spirit or soul or mind and the body element as some kind of unfortunate appendage or prison-house or what have you. Obviously, in such a conception of things the body and its needs will not be taken seriously. It may be worthwhile to point out, at this juncture, that according to Thomistic philosophy, the human person is not a composite of “body and soul” as we may be led to think: it is prime matter informed by the human soul, which is its substantial form, that accounts for the human reality (Pandikattu 2011).

1.9 CONSEQUENCES

When we speak of the body-soul nature of human beings, it seems to indicate where one’s fundamental values lie. The more one opts for an integrated vision of human person, the more difficult is it to account philosophically for life after death. On the other hand, the more one feels a kindred spirit with all that surrounds us in this world, the more one is inclined *not* to subscribe to the view that “there is in us something that the rest hasn’t got”. No one would deny that the human person evinces certain activities – call it abstraction, transcendence or what you will – that no other observable being is capable of. Nevertheless, on what grounds can we say that such

activity is completely beyond the powers and capacities of matter? Traditional Thomistic philosophy assumes this to be the case. That is one valid enough interpretation of the facts. However, there is another possible interpretation, along the lines of Teilhard de Chardin's views. Could it not be that we are capable of these acts while "sub-human reality" is not? It is not because we have in us something special that they don't have (a spiritual soul), but because the same ingredients have attained a higher "threshold" level of "complexification" (complexity) in us and such types of activity can only proceed when this threshold has been crossed? For by what right can we be sure that matter (by definition that which is extended, spread out or "has parts outside of parts") can never refine itself, evolve or become sufficiently complex that consciousness (presence to self) and thereby abstraction and transcendence cannot emerge? Indeed, the doctrine of the Incarnation would have us envision matter and spirit as not such diametrical opposites, for if they were the very idea of God (Spirit *par excellence*) becoming en-fleshed would be an absurdity. Nor is there anything blasphemous or irreligious in this unorthodox-seeming view. All is seen in the perspective of God's creative act: S/he it is who has willed that matter should be able to transcend itself when a certain level of complexity has been attained in the evolutionary process that s/he has willed.

1.10 AFTER-LIFE?

The less integrated view, even in its Thomistic refinement which saves the human composite from blatant Cartesian dualism, assuredly makes "life after death" more credible inasmuch as it provides an easy hand with which to churn out neat proof of the same. After all, if there is in the human person something extra, something "more than or above matter", then death would be the process whereby the merely material part of the person fell apart (corrupted, to use the metaphysical term) whereas the more spiritual element would remain untouched and would go marching on. This will be done in more detail when we take up precisely this issue in the next chapter. And, obviously, if we opt seriously for the integrity of the human composite and its oneness with all observable reality, we shall be hard put to show what in us could possibly survive the undeniable phenomenon of death. However, as we shall see, there is a way out of the impasse – not a very satisfactory one for everyone, but a way out nevertheless. That will be the challenge for us today: to be open to the ethos of the world where we emphasise our worldliness and body without giving up the human quest for enduring values and the possibility of life after death (Desbruslais 1977).

1.11 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, after studying human's evolutionary nature in general we have seen how humans are composed of the same material and chemical elements like any other animal or plant. At the same time we saw how we are unique in terms of conceptual language, creative art and transcendental religion. This leads us to posit a unique soul or *Weltoffenheit* in human beings, which does not deny our body and integrate it with other dimensions of human existence.

Check Your Progress III

Note: Use the space provided for your answer

1. Is human beings made of body and soul according to Thomistic Philosophy?

2. How does Teilhard understand human uniqueness?

1.12 KEY WORDS

Weltoffenheit: Literally world-open-ness and it indicates human uniqueness as understood by Wolfhart Pannenberg.

Animal symbolicum: Symbol using animals. Humans are the only such animals.

Complexification: Teilhard de Chardin uses the term complexification to denote that matter, with increased complexity and nuances takes on new properties. He affirms that soul is the result of the complexification of matter.

Life: “To have life” means to have “self-developmental” or “self-perfective” activities

1.13 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

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UNIT 2 HUMAN AS BEING IN THE WORLD

Contents

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 - 2.2 Introduction to Heideggerian Thought
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 - 2.4 Dasein's Facticity
 - 2.5 Concern
 - 2.6 Living as Authentic Existence
 - 2.7 Difference between Authentic and Inauthentic Lives
 - 2.8 Let us Sum up
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2.0 OBJECTIVES

- To study some of the fundamental notions of Heidegger about human being and so enlighten our human nature.
 - To familiarize the students with “being-in-the-world,” and its related term “Dasein” as developed by Heidegger.
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2.1 INTRODUCTION

As we saw in the last unit, humans are totally one with the animal and plant kingdom. We are also unique. We live in the world which is our home. “Being in the world,” is a unique feature of human beings, because they are the only ones who are aware of their facticity and fallenness in the world. Since “being-in-the-world” is a unique notion of Heidegger on the human situation, we spend some time studying the basic thoughts of Heidegger with a view of understanding authentic human life.

2.2 INTRODUCTION TO HEIDEGGERIAN THOUGHT

Who am I? What is my relationship to the world? What Heidegger seeks to destroy in particular is a certain picture of the relation between human beings and the world that is widespread in modern philosophy, especially in Descartes. Roughly and readily, this is the idea that there are two sorts of substances in the world: “thinking things,” like us and “extended things,” like tables, chairs and indeed the entire fabric of space and time. The relation between thinking things and extended things is one of knowledge and the philosophical and indeed scientific task consists in ensuring that what a later tradition called “subject” might have access to a world of objects. This is what we might call the epistemological construction of the relation between human beings and the world. This is a dualistic understanding of humans and the world. Heidegger does not deny the importance of knowledge, he simply denies its primacy. Prior to this dualistic picture of the

relation between human beings and the world lies a deeper unity that he tries to capture in the formula "Dasein is being-in-the-world". This is quite significant for us.

If the human being is really being-in-the-world, then this implies that the world itself is part of the fundamental constitution of human beings. In other words, I am not a free-floating self or ego facing a world of objects that stands over against me. Rather, for Heidegger, I am my world. The world is part and parcel of my being, the real fabric of my existence. We might capture the sense of Heidegger's thought here by thinking of Dasein not as a subject distinct from a world of objects, but as an experience of openness where mostly my being and that of the world are not distinguished. I am completely fascinated and absorbed by my world, not cut off from it in some sort of "mind" or what Heidegger calls "the cabinet of consciousness" (Critchley 2009).

Heidegger's major claim in his discussion of world in his most famous book, *Being and Time*, is that the world announces itself most closely and mostly as a handy or useful world, the world of common, average everyday experience. My encounter with the table on which I am writing these words is not as an object made of a certain definable substance (wood, polish, iron, etc.) existing in a geometrically ordered space-time continuum. Rather, this is just the table that I use to write and which is useful for arranging my papers, my laptop and my coffee cup. Heidegger insists that we have to "thrust aside our interpretative tendencies" which cover over our everyday experience of the world. In fact we need to attend much more closely to that which shows itself in and through the world (Wikipedia 2010).

The world is full of handy things that hang together as a whole and which are meaningful to me. In even more basic terms, the world is a whole load of stuff that is related together: my laptop sits on my desk, my spectacles sit on my nose, the desk sits on the floor, and I can look over to the window at the garden and hear the quiet hum of traffic and police sirens that make up life in this city. This is what Heidegger calls "environment" (*Umwelt*), a term he uses to describe the world that surrounds the human being and in which it is completely immersed for the most part.

Heidegger insists that this lived experience of the world is missed or overlooked by scientific inquiry or indeed through a standard philosophy of mind, which presupposes a dualistic distinction between mind and reality. What is required is a phenomenology of our lived experience of the world that needs to be open to what shows itself first and foremost in our experience (Hornsby 2010). In other words, we might say that Heidegger is inverting the usual distinction between theory and practice. My primary encounter with the world is not theoretical; it is not the experience of some spectator gazing out at a world stripped of value. Rather, I first apprehend the world practically as a world of things which are useful and handy and which are imbued with human significance and value. The theoretical or scientific vision of things that find in a thinker like Descartes is founded on a practical insight that is fascinated and concerned with things.

Heidegger introduces a distinction between two ways of approaching the world: the present-at-hand (*Vorhandenheit*) and the ready-to-hand (*Zuhandenheit*). Present-at-hand refers to our theoretical apprehension of a world made up of objects. It is the conception of the world from which science begins. The ready-to-hand describes our practical relation to things that are handy or useful. Heidegger's basic claim is that practice precedes theory, and that the ready-to-hand is prior to or before the present-at-hand. The problem with most philosophy after Descartes is that it conceives of the world theoretically and thus imagines, like Descartes, that I can doubt the existence of the external world and even the reality of the persons that fill it – who knows, they

might be robots. For Heidegger, by contrast, who we are as human beings is inextricably bound up and bound together with the complex web of social practices that make up my world (Critchley 2009). The world is part of who I am. For Heidegger, to cut oneself off from the world, as Descartes did, is to miss the point entirely: the fabric of our openness to the world is one piece. And that piece should not be cut up. Furthermore, the world is not simply full of handy, familiar meaningful things. It is also full of persons. If I am fundamentally with my world, then that world is a common world that experienced together with others. This is what Heidegger calls "being-with" (*Mitsein*).

2.3 BEING IN THE WORLD

Being-in-the-world is Heidegger's replacement for terms such as subject, object, consciousness, and world. For him, the split of things into subject/object, as we find in the Western tradition and even in our language, must be overcome, as is indicated by the root structure of Husserl and Brentano's concept of intentionality, i.e., that all consciousness is consciousness of something, that there is no consciousness, as such, cut off from an object (be it the matter of a thought, or of a perception). Nor are there objects without some consciousness beholding or being involved with them (Wikipedia 2010).

At the most basic level of *being-in-the-world*, Heidegger notes that there is always a mood, a mood that "assails us" in our unreflecting devotion to the world. A mood comes neither from the "outside" nor from the "inside," but arises from being-in-the-world. One may turn away from a mood, but that is only to another mood; it is part of our facticity. Only with a mood are we permitted to encounter things in the world. Dasein (a co-term for being-in-the-world) has an openness to the world that is constituted by the attunement of a mood or state of mind. As such, Dasein is a "thrown" "projection," projecting itself onto the possibilities that lie before it or may be hidden, and interpreting and understanding the world in terms of possibilities. Such projecting has nothing to do with comporting oneself toward a plan that has been thought out. It is not a plan, since Dasein has, as Dasein, already projected itself. Dasein always understands itself in terms of possibilities. As projecting, the understanding of Dasein is its possibilities *as* possibilities. One can take up the possibilities of "The They-self" and merely follow along or make some more authentic understanding

Check Your Progress I

Note: Use the space provided for your answer

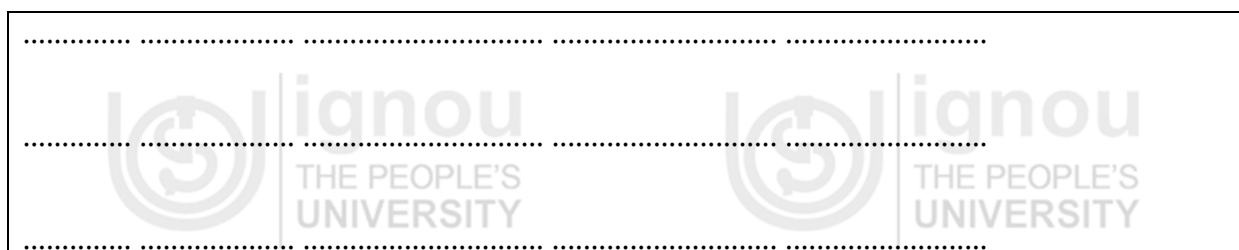
1. Which are the two ways of approaching the world, according to Heidegger?

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2. What is Being-in-the-world for Heidegger?



2.4 DASEIN'S FACTICITY

Martin Heidegger's main interest was to raise the issue of Being, that is, to make sense of our capacity to make sense of things. Additionally, he wished to rekindle the notion that although difficult to understand, this issue was of utmost importance. Heidegger's study, however, was of a specific type of Being, the human being, referred to by Heidegger as 'Dasein', which literally means 'Being-there'. By using the expression Dasein, Heidegger called attention to the fact that a human being cannot be taken into account except as being an existent in the middle of a world amongst other things, that Dasein is 'to be there' and 'there' is the world. To be human is to be fixed, embedded and immersed in the physical, tangible day to day world we experience. Our goal here is to offer an explanation of what Heidegger meant by 'Being-in-the-world'.

According to Heidegger, philosophy should be capable of telling us the meaning of Being, of the where and what Dasein is. Heidegger postulated that, the world 'is', and that this fact is naturally the primordial phenomenon and the basis of all ontological inquiry. For Heidegger the world is here, now and everywhere around us. We are totally immersed in it, and after all, how could we be anywhere 'else'? Before Heidegger, Edmund Husserl had previously spoken of a '*Lebenswelt*' (life-world) to stress the solidness of the human encapsulation within reality, but Heidegger's 'grounding' was more complete. Heidegger articulated this entrenchment with the composite, *In-der-welt-sein* (a 'Being-in-the-world', a 'to-be-in-the-world').

For Heidegger, "Dasein is an entity which, in its very Being, comports itself understandingly towards that Being." To add: "Dasein exists. Furthermore, Dasein is an entity which in each case I myself am. Mineness belongs to any existent Dasein, and belongs to it as the condition which makes authenticity and inauthenticity possible."

For Heidegger, Dasein may exist in either one of two modes, (authenticity or inauthenticity), or it is modally undistinguished, but Dasein's character needs to be understood a-priori as being 'grounded' in the state of Being that he called 'Being-in-the-world'.

Therefore, 'Being-in-the-world', for Heidegger stood for a unitary phenomenon and needed to be seen as a whole. However, Heidegger was aware that the expression had several components to its structure. There was the duty to examine the ontological structure of the 'world' and define its 'in-the-world-ness'. Also, the identity of the 'Who' that is within the mode of Dasein's average everydayness needs to be sought out, and, the ontological establishment of 'Being-in' needs to be proposed.

Heidegger was concerned with Dasein's distinctive method of being-in, which is at variance with the manner in which one object can be in another. In *Being and Time* Heidegger wrote: "What is meant by 'Being-in'? Our proximal reaction is to round out this expression to 'Being-in' 'in the world'", and we are inclined to understand this Being-in as 'Being in something'as the water

is 'in' the glass, or the garment is 'in' the cupboard. By this 'in' we mean the relationship of Being which two entities extended 'in' space have to each other with regard to their location in that space.....Being-present-at-hand-along-with in the sense of a definite location-relationship with something else which has the same kind of Being, are ontological characteristics."

It is the convening or converging of 'Dasein' and the 'world' which gives definition to both, and the solidness of these terms is covered thinly by the English word 'facticity' (Steiner 1978). Heidegger maintains: "Dasein's facticity is such that its Being-in-the-world has always dispersed [*zerstreut*] or even split itself up into definite ways of Being-in. The multiplicity of these is indicated by the following examples: having to do with something, producing something, attending to something and looking after it, making use of something, giving something up and letting it go, undertaking, accomplishing, evincing, interrogating, considering, discussing, determining.... All these kind ways of Being-in have concern ('*Besorgen*') as their kind of Being."

2.5 CONCERN

Heidegger (1962) used the term 'concern' as an ontological term for an *existential* to select the Being of a possible way of Being-in-the-world because he felt that the Being of Dasein itself was to be revealed as 'care' (*Sorge*) and that because Being-in-the-world fundamentally belongs to Dasein, its Being concerning the world is fundamentally concern. Concern is the temporal meaning which Being-in-the-world has for human beings and it is the time configuration of human life which is the identical concern which human beings have for the world. If human beings had no concept of time they would have no reason to be engaged or implicated in the world in a human way. It is the awareness of temporality which establishes that the relationship that human beings have with the world is through concern (Warnock 1970).

Not everything is possible for every human being. Every person's options are limited in one way or another and 'concern' is a way that humans can decide what decision could be the correct one in order to move from one condition to another. Choices are made in the world in which humans exist surrounded by other humans. Human beings are characterized by uniqueness, one from another, and this uniqueness gives rise to a set of possibilities for each individual. All human beings are continually oriented towards their own potential, among which are the possibilities of authentic and inauthentic existence. If, whilst moving forward, the standards and beliefs and prejudices of society are embraced, individuals may fail to differentiate themselves from the masses. This, Heidegger regarded as living an 'inauthentic' existence.

Check Your Progress II

Note: Use the space provided for your answer

1. Why does Heidegger uses the term "Dasein" for human beings?

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2. How does “concern” relate Being-in-the-world and human beings?

2.6 LIVING AS AUTHENTIC EXISTENCE

For Heidegger, Authentic existence can only come into being when individuals arrive at the realization of who they are and grasp the fact that each human being is a distinctive entity. Once human beings realize that they have their own destiny to fulfill, then their concern with the world will no longer be the concern to do as the masses do, but can become an ‘authentic’ concern to fulfill their real potentiality in the world (Warnock 1970).

Heidegger described the self of everyday Dasein as the ‘they-self’, “which we distinguish from the authentic Self – that is, from the Self which has been taken hold of in its own way [*eigens ergriffenen*]. As they-self, the particular Dasein has been dispersed into the ‘they’, and must first find itself.” And further “If Dasein discovers the world in its own way [*eigens*] and brings it close, if it discloses to itself its own authentic Being, then this discovery of the ‘world’ and this disclosure of Dasein are always accomplished as a clearing-away of concealments and obscurities, as a breaking up of the disguises with which Dasein bars its own way.” Heidegger said that deliberation on these matters have brought about a solid understanding of Dasein bringing the average everydayness of Being-in-the-world into view.

Heidegger felt that the all-determining focal point of our Being-in-the-world was being ignored because the daily realities of our existence are so trite and numerous but, for Heidegger, ‘knowing’ was a kind of Being and Dasein only discovers itself when it comprehends reality. Knowledge is not an inexplicable bound from subject to object and return (Steiner 1978), But as soon as the ‘phenomenon of knowing the world’ is grasped it is interpreted, unfortunately, in a ‘superficial’ or formal manner. The evidence for this is the procedure (still customary today) of setting up knowing as a ‘relation between subject and Object’ – a procedure in which there lurks as much ‘truth’ as vacuity. But subject and object do not really coincide with Dasein and the world. (Hornsby 2010)

Heidegger maintained that principle task of Dasein was to understand that knowing has a phenomenal character of a Being which is in and towards the world. Knowing is the possession of those human-things which are able to know and is an internal characteristic of those entities. Heidegger expanded upon this by saying that knowing is a ‘concern’ and to know something, even with little interest, is a tangible kind of Being-in-the-world. In fact for Heidegger, even forgetting modifies the primordial Being-in just as knowledge did not create the world, forgetting does not destroy it. Therefore, it follows that Dasein only realizes itself when it grasps reality (Steiner 1978).

Further, Heidegger proclaimed that we are 'thrown' into the world and that our Being-in-the-world is a 'thrownness' [*Geworfenheit*]. According to Heidegger, this concept is a primordial banality, which had long been overlooked by metaphysical conjecture. Humans beings are thrown with neither prior knowledge nor individual option into a world that was there before and will remain there after they are gone (Steiner 1978). So Heidegger wrote: "This characteristic of Dasein's Being – this 'that it is' – is veiled in its 'whence' and 'whither', yet disclosed in itself all the more unveiledly; we call it the 'thrownness' of this entity into its 'there'; indeed, it is thrown in such a way that, as Being-in-the-world, it is the 'there'. The expression 'thrownness' is meant to suggest the *facticity of its being delivered over*."

No biology of parentage can answer the question of whence we came into Being. Neither do we know toward what end our existence has been projected, apart from our position in relation to death. Yet for Heidegger, it is this twofold mystery that makes the 'thrown' state of human life more absolute and tangible. Human kind is 'delivered over' to a total, all-encompassing 'thereness' and Dasein must occupy this presentness and take it up into its own existence. Heidegger wished to emphasize the unmistakable 'thereness' of the world into which we are thrown (Steiner 1978).

The world into which our Dasein is thrown has others in it, and the existence of others is totally indispensable to its facticity of Being-there. Understanding of others in the world and the association of the ontological status of others with our own Dasein is, in itself, a form of Being. Heidegger said that Being-in-the-world is a being-with, and that the understanding of the presentness of others is to exist. However, being-with presents the possibility of comprehending our own Dasein as an everyday Being-with-one-another where we may come to exist not on our own terms, but only in reference to others. In so doing, we eventually come to not be ourselves, and surrender our existence to a formless 'Theyness' or alterity (Steiner 1978).

For Heidegger, the 'belonging to others' is a drastic irresponsibility because the 'they' deprives the particular Dasein of its own accountability by making every decision and judgement for it. The 'they' can do this most easily because it can always be said that 'they' were responsible for such and such. Heidegger said that this passivity creates the alienated self, the 'Man' who is fatally disburdened of moral autonomy and, therefore, of moral responsibility. This 'Man' can know no ethical guilt. Heidegger called this the 'self of everyday Dasein' or the 'they-self', the total opposite of the solid singularity of a Dasein which has grasped itself. This crucial distinction was important for Heidegger as it is the distinction between an authentic and an inauthentic human existence (Steiner 1978).

Inauthentic Dasein does not live as itself but as 'they' live. In fact, for Heidegger, it barely exists at all and it exists in a state of fear [or *Furcht*] (Steiner 1978). This fear is distinct from anxiety [*Angst*]. Fear could be experienced when a threat to our life, signifying our situation is recognized, but anxiety is experienced in the face of nothing in particular in our situation (Warnock 1970). According to Warnock (1970), anxiety is that which drives us to swamp ourselves in the insignificant, the common and in all of the elements of an inauthentic existence. However, Steiner (1978), wrote that fear is a part of an ordinary communal reaction whereas anxiety [*Angst*] is "that which makes problematic, which makes worthy of our questioning, our Being-in-the-world. *Angst* is one of the primary instruments through which the ontic character and context of everyday existence is made inescapably aware of, is rendered naked to, the pressures of the ontological. And further, *Angst* is a mark of authenticity, of the repudiation of the 'theyness'."

Heidegger wrote that an understanding of Being belongs to the ontological structure of Dasein, and he proposed that there is an understanding state of mind in which Dasein is disclosed to itself. Heidegger sought a simplified way of disclosure to bring the structural totality of Being to light and he hypothesized that the state of mind that would satisfy his requirements, was the state of anxiety. Taking the phenomenon of falling as his departure point and distinguishing anxiety from fear, Heidegger wrote, “As one of Dasein’s possibilities of Being, anxiety – together with Dasein itself as disclosed in it – provides the phenomenal basis for explicitly grasping Dasein’s primordial totality of Being.”

Steiner holds that a further aspect of Dasein, as argued by Heidegger, is that Dasein is grounded in language; Being-in-the-world expresses itself in discourse. Furthermore, he made a distinction between ‘*Rede*’, ‘the speech of Dasein’ and ‘*Gerede*’, ‘talk’. He avoided the triteness of using the term ‘idle chatter’ for ‘talk’ because it was far too reassuring for what he wanted to say. For Heidegger, ‘talk’ had lost its primary relationship-of-being toward the talked about entity and all that ‘talk’ was doing was to ‘pass words along’ or, to ‘gossip emptily’, fostering illusions of understanding that have no real comprehension. Dasein-with-others takes place in an echo chamber of nonstop bogus interaction, with no cognition as to what is being communicated (Hornsby 2010).

2.7 DIFFERENCE BETWEEN AUTHENTIC AND INAUTHENTIC LIVES

The differences between authentic and inauthentic lives were contrasted by Heidegger through the agencies of fear set against anxiety, ‘speech’ contrasted with ‘talk’, genuine wonder opposed to mere novelty. Each disparate category comes about as an expected outcome of the complete antithesis between the self-possession of true Dasein and the collective lack of perception of an existence carried out in terms of ‘oneness’ and ‘theyness’. Heidegger denoted this latter state as ‘*Verfall*’ (‘a falling away from’). Heidegger was careful to point out that the condition of ‘*Verfallensein*’ (a fallen state) is not sinful, nor is the term meant to cast a moral value judgement (Critchley 2009).

Heidegger wrote, “Dasein has, in the first instance, fallen away [*abgefallen*] from itself as an authentic potentiality for Being its self, and has fallen into the ‘world’. ‘Fallenness’ into the world means an absorption in Being-with-one-another, in so far as the latter is guided by idle talk, curiosity and ambiguity. Through the Interpretation of falling, what we have called the ‘inauthenticity’ of Dasein may now be defined more precisely. On no account however do the terms ‘inauthentic’ and ‘non-authentic’ signify ‘really not’, as if in this mode of Being, Dasein were altogether to lose its Being. ‘Inauthenticity’ does not mean anything like Being-no-longer-in-the-world, but amounts rather to quite a distinctive kind of Being-in-the-world – the kind which is completely fascinated by the ‘world’ and by the Dasein-with of Others in the ‘they’. Not-Being-its-self [*Das Nicht-es-selbst-sein*] functions as a positive possibility of that entity which, in its essential concern, is absorbed in a world. This kind of not-Being has to be conceived as that kind of Being which is closest to Dasein and in which Dasein maintains itself for the most part.”

For Heidegger then, ‘inauthenticity’ and ‘fallenness’ are not mere mishaps or erroneous options. Rather they are essential components of existence, because Dasein is always Dasein-with and a Being-in-the-world into which we have been thrown. Acceding to the enticement of living a mundane existence is simply a part of existing itself. ‘Fallenness’ was a positive for Heidegger in the sense that there must be ‘inauthenticity’, ‘theyness’, and ‘talk’, for Dasein to become aware

of its loss of self and strive for its return to authentic Being. ‘*Verfall*’ turns out to be the completely essential prerequisite towards the repossession of self, the struggle toward true Dasein (Hornsby 2010).

In the first division of “Being and Time”, Heidegger worked out his account of Being-in-the-world and used it to ground an insightful evaluation of long-established ontology and epistemology. For Heidegger, human beings are never directly in the world except by way of being in some particular circumstance; it is Dasein that is Being-in-the-world (Dreyfus 1991).

2.8 LET US SUM UP

After analyzing Heidegger’s understanding of Being-in-the-world, we have indicated the authentic existence that Dasein is called to live.

Check Your Progress III

Note: Use the space provided for your answer

1. How can we arrive at authentic existence?

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2. What is ‘thrownness’ in Heidegger’s philosophy?

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1.9 KEY WORDS

Being-in-the-world (*In-der-Welt-Sein*) is Heidegger's replacement for terms such as subject, object, consciousness, and world. It is the human being understood as a unitary phenomenon and needed to be seen as a whole.

Dasein: “Being there” or human beings in their everydayness. Heidegger’s definition of human being. For him, Dasein is an entity which, in its very Being, comports itself understandingly towards that Being.

Existentialia: *Existentialia* (plural) are certain characteristics of Dasein that are revealed by the analysis of its existence. In Heideggerian terms, an *existentialia* (singular) concerns Dasein's residing alongside the world and its involvement with entities within the world which is always expressed in terms of care and concern. Normally, if we were analysing anything other than Dasein we would use the term category. But Heidegger forbids this, because Dasein is not like any other entity (Dasein is, in fact, the ground upon which the perception and conception of everything else rests) and therefore Dasein needs to be analysed in a different way to other entities. The existence structure of Dasein must be defined existentially. Heidegger therefore wants his '*existentialia*' to be sharply distinguished from the concept of 'category,' as it is ordinarily understood. '*Existentialia*' and 'category' are the two basic possibilities for characters of Being. The entities that correspond to them are these: 1. *Existentialia* relating to Dasein, 2. Categories relating to Entities that present at hand, i.e., not Dasein (Munday, Roderick. "Glossary of Terms in Being and Time" http://www.visual-memory.co.uk/b_resources/b_and_t_glossary.html#e, accessed July 2010.)

Existentiell: It refers to someone's personal understanding of their own existence. For an individual Dasein, the question of existence never gets clarified except through existing. The understanding of oneself that we acquire along the way Heidegger calls "*Existentiell*".

Extential: It refers to a more general understanding of existence. The question of existence is close to Dasein, but this does not mean that Dasein is necessarily conscious of the question of existence. But the structuring of the question "What is Being?" points the way for the formal analysis of what constitutes existence. The context of such structuring we call "*Existentiality*". But its analytic has the character of an understanding *which is not extentiell*, i.e. structure plus content. But *extential*: structure minus content.

Facticity: An understanding of specific structures in advance comes from Dasein understanding of its own most Being.

Lebenswelt: Life world or the world of lived experience. It may be conceived as a universe of what is self-evident or given, a world that subjects may experience together. For Edmund Husserl, the lifeworld is the fundament for all epistemological enquiries.

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UNIT 3 HUMAN AS INTERDEPENDENT

Contents

- 3.0 Objectives
 - 3.1 Introduction
 - 3.2 Human Dependent
 - 3.3 Human as inter-dependent
 - 3.4 Humans as Independent
 - 3.5 The Phenomena of Freedom
 - 3.6 Towards a Definition of Freedom
 - 3.7 Some Related Quotable
 - 3.8 Let us Sum up
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3.0 OBJECTIVES

- To see how humans are dependent and interdependent on the world and on each other.
 - To see how independence emerges from such interdependence.
 - To attempt at a definition of freedom that is relevant and contextual.
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3.1 INTRODUCTION

After having seen the human condition as being in the world this chapter looks into human life as dependent and interdependent on the world and on fellow human beings. That will help us to appreciate the freedom that humans enjoy, at least sometimes.

3.2 HUMANS AS DEPENDENT

Humans have, for the most part, taken themselves out of the “natural” world. We often overemphasize technological advances at the expense of the environment. Rapid exploitation of finite natural resources and uncontrolled waste are acceptable in many businesses as the only way to grow. The price of this way of thinking is starting to come into the light. Modern high-tech lifestyles are competitive instead of communal and cooperative. An effect of this competition is the human-created deserts in place of once lush forests. We have polluted virtually every corner of the planet. Instead of taking just what the environment can replenish, we tend to take it all--right now.

Most scientific concepts involve breaking living organisms into parts, labeling those parts, and treating those parts as something somehow separate from the whole organism. Most people believe that the universe is comprised of boundless building materials from which technological progress can flourish. In contrast, in the systems theory, the basic principle underlying life is processes. In a process, one thing depends on another. If one step in the process doesn't occur, then the subsequent steps cannot occur. The system comes to a halt.

Thus, in the ecological approach to nature, the world and its inhabitants are seen to be interdependent. Everything relies on everything else for survival and prosperity. In contrast to many human institutions, the functioning of ecosystems is to establish cooperative relationships. The relationships promote the harmonious integration of systems.

In a natural setting, the competitive struggle for existence might at first glance appear to be mere brutality (whereby one animal eats another animal). However, the overall scheme is a sort of cooperation. Some species of fish, for example, swim in massive schools. This is perhaps a part of the acceptance by this species that some fish are sacrificed for the good of the whole species. The predator usually captures the weak and the old fish. If you follow evolutionary theory, this is good for the species, because it strengthens the species' genetics. In other words, the stronger fish will survive and they will produce stronger offspring. This is actually one of the underlying themes of evolution (Systems Theory 2010).

The ecological approach is also seen, for instance, in the mangrove forests. Everything depends on everything else for both survival and prosperity. For example, the immature shrimp rely on the decomposing leaves of the trees for food. If there is an abundance of leaves, the shrimp flourish. If there is a shortage of leaves, the shrimp population decreases. If the shrimp population decreases, it is likely that the other animals that rely on the shrimp for food, such as the kingfishers and many species of fish, will decrease in numbers. Looking back even further, another example in the mangrove is the relationship between the mud and its many dependents.

The mud is made up of decomposing leaves, bark, and other sediment that come into the mangrove forest during the tides. The mud is food for bacteria and plankton. The bacteria and plankton is food for immature crabs. The immature crabs are food for small fish. Small fish are food for bigger fish. Humans are at the top of this food chain. They eat the fish. However, if the mud is not in the mangrove forest, many species suffer the loss, such as the crabs, fish, and humans.

In sum, everything in the world, no matter what it is, depends on something else for its existence. If you understand and accept the systems theory you see the need for a balanced ecological view of the world, the need for changes in the manner in which we do business with each other, and the need for a general shift in technology toward a more friendly use of the limited supply of natural resources. Human beings are no exception and they are totally dependent on the world for their survival and well-being (Systems Theory 2010).

3.3 HUMANS AS INTER-DEPENDENT

From the above perspective, we can see how human beings are dependent on nature and also inter-dependent on each other. A powerful articulation of such respectful interdependence is made in 1854, when the U.S. President made an offer for a large area of Indian land and promised a "reservation" for the Indian people. Chief Seattle's reply, quoted below with modifications, has been described as the most beautiful and profound statement on the environment ever made. It speaks of the inter-dependence of the whole earth on each other (See Kochery 1998).

How can you buy or sell the sky, the warmth of the land? The idea is strange to us. If we do not own the freshness of the air and the sparkle of the water, how can you buy them? Every part of the earth is sacred to my people. Every shining pine needle, every sandy shore, every mist in the dark woods, every clearing and humming insect is holy in the memory and experience of my

people. The sap which courses through the trees carries the memories of the red man. The white man's dead forget the country of their birth when they go to walk among the stars. Our dead never forget their beautiful earth, for it is the mother of the red man. We are part of the earth and it is part of us. The perfumed flowers are our sisters; the horse, the great eagle, these are our brothers. The rocky crests, the body heat of the pony and man – all belong to the same family.

So, when the Great Chief of Washington sends word that he wishes to buy our land, he asks much of us. The Great Chief sends word he will reserve us a place so that we can live comfortably by ourselves. He will be our father and we will be his children. So we will consider your offer to buy our land. But it will not be easy. For this land is sacred to us. This shining water which moves in the streams and rivers is not just water but the blood of our ancestors. If we sell you land, you must remember that it is sacred and you must teach your children that it is sacred and that each ghostly reflection in the clear water of the lakes tells of events and memories in the life of my people. The water's murmur is the voice of my father's father. The rivers are our brothers, they quench our thirst. The rivers carry our canoes, and feed our children. If we sell you our land, you must remember, and teach your children, that the rivers are our brothers, and yours, and you must henceforth give them the kindness you would give any brother.

We know that the white man does not understand our ways. One portion of land is the same to him as the next, for he is a stranger who comes in the night and takes from the land whatever he needs. The earth is not his brother but his enemy, and when he has conquered it, he moves one. He leaves his father's graves behind, and he does not care. He kidnaps the earth from his children. His father's grave and his children's birthright are forgotten. He treats his mother, the earth, and his brother, the sky, as things to be bought, plundered, sold like sheep or bright beads. His appetite will devour the earth and leave behind only a desert.

I do not know. Our ways are different from your ways. The sight of your cities pains the eyes of the red man. But perhaps it is because the red man is a savage and does not understand. There is no quiet place in the white man's cities. No place to hear the unfurling of leaves in spring, or the rustle of an insect's wings. But perhaps it is because I am a savage and do not understand. The clatter only seems to insult the ears. And what is there to life if a man cannot hear the lonely cry of the whippoorwill or the arguments of the frogs around a pond at night? I am a red man and do not understand. The Indian prefers the soft sound of the wind darting over the face of a pond, and the smell of the wind itself, cleansed by midday rain, or scented with the pinion pine.

The air is precious to the red man, for all things share the same breath, the beast, the tree, the man, they all share the same breath. The white man does not seem to notice the same air he breathes. Like a man dying for many days, he is numb to the stench. But if we sell you our land you must remember that the air is precious to us, that the air shares its spirit with all the life it supports. The wind that gave our grandfather his first breath also receives the same sigh. And if sell you our land, you must keep it apart and sacred as a place where even the white man can go to taste the wind that is sweetened by the meadow's flowers. So we will consider your offer to buy our land. If we decide to accept, I will make one condition. The white man must treat the beasts of this land as his brothers.

I am a savage and I do not understand any other way. I have seen a thousand rotting buffaloes on the prairie, left by the white man who shot them from passing trains. I am a savage and I do not understand how the smoking iron horse can be more important than the buffalo that we kill only

to stay alive. What is man without beasts? If all the beasts were gone, man would die from a great loneliness of spirit. For whatever happens to the beasts soon happens to man. All things are connected. You must teach your children that the ground beneath their feet is the ashes of our grandfathers. So that they will respect the land. Tell your children that the earth is rich with the lives of our kin. Teach your children what we taught our children, that the earth is our mother, whatever befalls the earth befalls the sons of the earth. If men spit upon the ground, they spit upon themselves.

This we know. The earth does not belong to man; man belongs to the earth. This we know: all things are connected like the blood which unites one family. All things are connected. Whatever befalls the earth befalls the sons of the earth. Man did not weave the web of life: he is merely a strand in it. Whatever he does to the web he does to himself. Even the white man, whose God walks and talks with him as friend to friend, cannot be exempt from the common destiny. We may be brothers after all. We shall see. One thing we know, which the white man may one day discover, that our God is the same God. You may think now that you own Him as you wish to own the land; but you cannot. He is the God of man, and His compassion is equal for the red man and the white. This earth is precious to Him, and to harm the earth is to heap contempt on its Creator. The white man too shall pass; perhaps sooner than all other tribes. Contaminate your bed and you will one night suffocate in your own waste.

But in your perishing you will shine brightly, fired by the strength of the God who brought you to this land and for some special purpose gave you dominion over this land and over the red man. That destiny is a mystery to us, for we do not understand when the wild buffaloes are all slaughtered, the wild horses are tamed, the secret corners of the forest heavy with scent of many men and the view of the ripe hills blotted by talking wires. Where is the thicket? Gone. Where is the eagle? Gone. The end of living and the beginning of survival.

Check Your Progress I

Note: Use the space provided for your answer

1. What is the evolutionary significance of brutal and competitive struggle in nature?

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2. "The end of living and the beginning of survival." What is its significance?

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3.4 HUMANS AS INDEPENDENT

This unit introduces us to the notion of human independence and freedom which will be further elaborated in the next unit.

There's a big difference in asking "Are we free?" and "Are we *really* free?". The former question implies an issue whose answer we are "in the dark" about. The latter format suggests that we are naturally and spontaneously inclined to hold that we *are* free: recent events or findings have surfaced so as to make us have second thoughts about it all. And this is precisely the case. Of course, we shall not just "take for granted" the fact of our freedom (that would be an unpardonable sin of dogmatism in philosophy): we shall cast about for reasons, evidences, "pointers" that would seem to confirm this "unphilosophical conviction" to which we all subscribe, consciously or unconsciously. After all, we commonsensical people just *know* we are free: for instance, right now I can reflect on my free reading of this page and realise that there is nothing internally that compels me to go on reading. At any time I can just put it down and go and do something else – it's all up to me, to me and my freedom. On the other hand, there have been the studies of men like Freud and Skinner who appear to challenge this smug assurance of ours.

Our unconscious (or sub-conscious) determine us far more than we realise and at times are the causes of what we had been thinking were our personal, arbitrary and whimsical choices. It might well be that *all* our so-called "decisions" stem not so much from our free choice but from obedience to past conditioning of which we are yet unaware. Then again, if – as pious believers put it – "everything is in the hands of God", if all that happens has been already predestined by Her/Him, then where does our freedom and initiative come in, if at all? Finally, just what is freedom anyway? In fact, the problem is rendered all the more complex because we can speak about "freedom" in various contexts – in psychology, politics, religion and so on. In the texts quoted at the beginning of this chapter, for instance, Topol and Manuel are not speaking of the same freedom as Mme Roland or Orestes. And even when we are all speaking of freedom in the same context, not everyone is in agreement as to what is meant by the word. For instance, while many people argue for the need for political freedom – that the State should not take away one's freedom and, on the contrary protect it – they may actually differ with each other while appearing to be great advocates of freedom. This could arise, for instance, from the fact that one group is thinking about the "freedom to *have* more" (therefore uncontrolled capitalism etc.) And another group is more concerned about the "freedom to *be* more" (so controlled capitalism or no capitalism at all). And that is just one example.

What dimension of freedom shall we be focusing on in this unit? Obviously psychological freedom, the mastery over one's actions which is often referred to simply as "freedom of choice". This is the basic or root freedom in human being, without which it would be silly to speak of political freedom or anything else. This will involve us having to pay more attention to the objections raised against it by psychologists as Freud and Skinner. We shall leave to *The Philosophy of God* the main responsibility of reconciling human freedom with divine providence though we may say a thing or two in passing here. Nor will we completely ignore political and other expressions of freedom (Desbruslais 1997).

3.5 THE PHENOMENA OF FREEDOM

Freedom is very much an “in” topic these days. We find the word emblazoned on everything from T-shirts to wall-posters. Advertisements appeal to potential customers by stressing how this brand of cigarette or this make of jeans proclaims freedom and the casual, uninhibited look. Graffiti often features freedom, liberty and spontaneity as key inspirations. New styles in art and literature rehearse bold, “free” new ventures, forays into uninhibited self-expression with a minimum of rules and planning. And the most insulting words we can use against anyone today are “Capitalist” and “Fascist” (or “imperialist,” a slight variation) and all these terms imply a person who has scant (if any.) respect for freedom.

On the other hand, many of those who present themselves as champions of freedom seem to show scant respect for anyone who is not quite prepared to toe the line as far as their understanding of “what is freest and best”. Apart from terrorists and freedom fighters (one man’s freedom fighter is another man’s anarchist.), there is subtle as well as not-so-subtle manipulation of public opinion and value-systems by the media. Scientific and technological progress has often been harnessed to refine techniques of brain-washing and “population-programming” in such carefully hidden ways that few would realise how the decision-process is being quietly taken away from them. And science and technology is ever discovering new and more efficient means for Big Brother and his efficient thought-police to observe and flush out dissenters – not to mention speedier methods to isolate, punish and silence non-conformists. Even in relatively innocent matters like fashions of dress and fads in art, how much does real “freedom of choice” operate and how much is it a matter of artificial needs and wants created by “decision-makers” who enjoy almost unlimited power and whose sole goal is profit?

As if this were not complicated enough, we note that in English (unlike most other languages) we have a choice of two words to speak of this topic: *freedom* and *liberty*. Are these merely synonymous? Strictly speaking, no words are. And, even if they are used synonymously in general practice, can they afford us some valuable insights as an aid to reflection? (Desbruslais 1997)

Check Your Progress II

Note: Use the space provided for your answer

1. “Freedom to *be* more.” What is its meaning?

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2. What is freedom of choice?

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3.6 TOWARDS A DEFINITION OF FREEDOM

Ask the average person what freedom means and you can be almost certain to get the “pat answer”: doing whatever one wants. If I can do what I want I’m free; if I can’t, I’m not. As simple as that. In other words, any restriction or rule is seen as inherently bad, as anti-freedom. But suppose we were to press the question, Socrates-like. “And suppose there is this religious fanatic who’s not certainly insane but is quite convinced that all women are evil, sinful creatures and is resolved to murder as many of them as is possible. Or the case of a person who feels that s/he must make a human sacrifice to appease the wrath of the gods he believes in, or in order to wrest from them some favour. Would you allow these people to “do what they want” and kill some innocent victims – especially if these victims were to be people near and dear to you?” No doubt, the embarrassed answer would be no – and so it should be, whether the victims be total strangers to one or not. This, quite likely, would lead to scaling down of the earlier confident assertion: “I mean, well, doing whatever I wish, so long as no one else gets hurt.” But is that enough? What if, for instance, my parents wanted me to become a priest or a religious or get married to someone whom I detest? If I were to refuse, surely I’d “hurt” them. In which case, would it be a free act if I were to agree? Here there is a clash between what I want to do and hurting someone. This definition is equally self-defeating, as Desbruslais notes (Desbruslais 1997).

Furthermore, if either of these popular and uncritical definitions is pushed to the extreme, no real human relationships, no love and no friendship would be possible. Indeed, Sartre is quite consistent with his views when he condemns all inter-personal relationships as either veiled forms of sadism or of masochism. For Sartre “man is freedom” and Sartre understand human freedom as something that is meant to be absolute, something that must never surrender even the slightest shred of personal autonomy to any norm or rule, however noble or spiritual it may sound. Every human inter-relationship, then, involves the collision of two autonomous worlds. Now, the only way for any permanent kind of relationship to develop in such a case is either for one of the two persons to capitulate before the other, to willingly annihilate himself or herself before the other and claim to find joy in that (hence, masochism) or, on the other hand, to ruthlessly suppress and trample underfoot the autonomy and freedom of the other and find, in that, the delight of alleged love or friendship (hence, sadism). Any pretence at establishing a loyal relationship is nothing but that: pretence, self-deception, *mauvaise foi* (bad faith). As one critic has summed it up so well, for Sartre the act of freedom resides in the saying of a relentless and proud “No”. As long as I say no to people, to ideals, to norms – in short, to anything that seeks to impose itself upon me from outside, or to draw or inspire me externally – I remain free. Sartre cannot conceive of a possible ‘Yes’ which not only does not destroy freedom but actually enhances it. Paul Ricoeur has a lot to say about this latter and we shall soon go into it.

Again, if freedom is merely “doing what I want”, then we would have to admit the drug addict who helplessly sets about fulfilling her/his deep inward craving (her/his “want”), even at the cost

of brutal murder and robbery, is a totally free person. After all, s/he is doing “what s/he wants”. And the human being who is strong enough to resist the urge to rape a lone and defenceless woman would be less free than the degenerate soul who, at the slightest stirring of his loins, ventures off to slake his lust (his “want”) on the first hapless victim. In the former case, one is suppressing her/his want and in the other case s/he is fulfilling it. So we need to go a bit into just what level of me is doing the wanting in question. Is it the superficial selfish me or the deeper human self? (Desbruslais 1997).

We are back to that “inner conflict” within us, spoken of, among others, by St. Paul himself (Rom 7: 15ff.). We are all conscious of this interior struggle, between a baser, selfish urge and a more loving, nobler drive. We suggested earlier that we interpret these “wars within us” in terms of evolution rather than the traditional language of original sin. Which of these two battling principles in me is the more basic, stems more fundamentally from the deepest level of my “I”? If we wish to define freedom as “doing whatever I want”, a lot will depend on which of these two forces take us to the real deep-down “I” in me. Which is the “I” – or, more accurately, the level of “I” – whose wishes I want to help triumph over the contrary (contradictory?) desires of the other?

Finally, if we are all aware that there is an undeniable element of spontaneity and initiative in our actions (sometimes more evident than at other times), are we not also equally aware that there is something else afoot? Often outside situations, persons, events do influence, motivate or condition (which is the proper word) our decision-making? Some people make the unrealistic error of assuming that opting for determinism (that is, that we are the ones who determine our own action – in other words, we are really free) means establishing a kind of total sovereignty of decision-making, that nothing from outside be detected as somehow having a part to lay in our resolve. And so, as soon as such can be detected, they hastily jump to the conclusion that we are not free. Others, starting with the same false presupposition, do a cursory survey of the data and, with equal haste conclude that there is no outside interference and rush to the claim that we *are* free. Both these views stem from unrealistic presuppositions about human freedom. Let us not forget that human freedom is a kind of dialectic between external influence and personal choice. As Ramsey puts it, in a thought-clinching passage: “... A free decision is neither, on the one hand, merely a reaction to stimuli, nor on the other hand is it ... some altogether circumscribed, independent isolated going-on which is all my own. A free decision is a personal response – something certainly my own – but it is a response to a discerned obligation which exceeds ‘observables’.” (Iam Ramsey, 1960: 16.)

It is not necessary to explain, here, all the ramifications of Ramsey’s views, nor even be in total agreement with all that he says and implies in this brief note. Suffice is it to note that the point is well made – and taken, here. From all this, it seems to me, that we should avoid trying to define freedom in terms of absence of restraint. Even the distinction between moral and physical freedom is not much help here. For this gives the impression that all laws, all restraint is necessarily anti-freedom but the human being who restrains, out of her/his convictions (or whatever) her/his passions and her/his thirst for unbridled power and unjustly-acquired wealth, wouldn’t we rather say s/he is freer than the unscrupulous rascal who feels no restraint upon her/himself to rob and exploit the weak? Should we countenance a language that seems to imply that the main job of morality is to take away freedom by bringing restraint? Can there not be good laws which protect and enhance freedom? (Desbruslais 1997).

Let us, then seek to describe freedom in more positive terms, concentrating on the other traditional definition of mastery over one's act (*dominium sui actus*). I am free if the real, deep down "I" is in control of my actions. If it restrains or checks my baser urge, I may feel a kind of surface or temporary sadness or frustration. But, overall, deep-down, I find a pervasive peace and joy.

3.7 SOME RELATED QUOTABLE

1. One of the commonest experiences is to meet someone whose belief that he cannot help doing what he is doing (or failing to do) is often an excuse for not doing as well as he can or at least better than he is at present doing. (Sidney Hook, *Determinism and Freedom in the Age of Modern Science*, London, Methuen, 1978, p. 179)

2. It is now widely recognised among moral philosophers that, no matter how irrefutable the logic of absolute or naturalistic determinism may be, sane and rational human beings, in order to retain their sanity, their rationality, and their human purposefulness in living, still stubbornly insist on deciding, choosing and acting as though they were autonomous, dignified, and free individuals. This is the phenomenon, above all, that still needs to be explained. (H.W.Hintz, in *Determinism and Freedom ...* p.166)

3. And now, without comment, here is a "beaut" from Robert Burns: "Freedom and Whisky gang *thegither*" (i.e. go together)

Check Your Progress III

Note: Use the space provided for your answer

1. Freedom is "doing whatever I wish, so long as no one else gets hurt." – Comment.

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2. What is "*dominium sui actus*" and how is it related to freedom?

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3.8 LET US SUM UP

In this chapter we have seen basically the interdependence, dependence and independence of human beings and have attempted at a definition of freedom.

3.9 KEY WORDS

Mauvaise foi: it is Sartre's term meaning "bad faith." It refers to every attempt at establishing a loyal relationship, which turns out to be nothing but pretence, self-deception or bad faith.

Dominium sui actus: it means "mastery over one's act" and is the traditional definition of freedom.

Freedom: The traditional definition of freedom is "mastery over one's act" (*dominium sui actus*). I am free if the real, deep down "I" is in control of my actions.

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UNIT 4 HUMAN AS FREE

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- 4.12 Further Readings and References

4.0 OBJECTIVES

- To analyse deeply and meaningfully the notion of freedom.
- To study the significance of freedom in human lives.
- To respond to some of the criticisms against human freedom.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter we delve into the nuances and significance of freedom. After elaborate discussion on the nature of freedom and taking up the challenges of Freud and Skinner, we give our critical response to them. Then we conclude with some meaningful insights on freedom by philosophers like Frankl and Ricoeur.

4.2 APPROACHING THE PHENOMENON OF FREEDOM

Actually, much of the last unit has already begun to venture into hermeneutics – in as much tried to suggest a saner, more useful way of looking at the “data” about human decision-making. For instance, we passed over certain deficient readings of what constitutes human freedom, notably the idea that it is something absolutely sovereign and impervious to heredity, environment and all that sort of thing. We also expressed our reservations of linking it too unqualifiedly to absence of restraint. Now, let us situate freedom in its full context – the whole area of appetites in general and of the faculty of the will in particular.

To begin with *appetite*. Though in common parlance, this word is used exclusively with reference to our craving for food, it seems worthwhile to extend this term in a general sense to every human (hence, more or less conscious) process whereby we strive towards some good or pleasure or, conversely, seek to avoid some evil or pain. In this sense, “appetite” is more or less a synonym for “tendency”, “drive”, “striving” or even “dynamism”. For further precision, let us point out that

“inclination” implies relatively weak tendency. If we’re speaking of a stronger and more powerful striving, it would be better to say “drive”. A “need”, on the other hand, brings in the notion of a conscious lack of something which provokes action. A “passion” would be a powerful and lasting tendency, deeply rooted in the mind and associated with strong feelings or sentiments. An “instinct” would be, psychologically speaking, a tendency which is inborn and present in all individuals of a given species. In this sense, our intellectual dynamism is an “instinct”: it is an orientation which is innate in all human beings and is the fundamental driving power in all our activities. Incidentally, I am indebted to Donceel for the explanation of all these terms.

What about the will? Well, it is one of our various faculties or proximate principle of activity. By “proximate principles” we mean the immediate or closest responsible power for the action concerned. Thus, we could say that the eye is the proximate principle of faculty of my seeing. The ultimate or remote principle of my seeing is myself, “I”. After all, as everyone knows, it is not really my eye which sees or my mind that thinks, but I who see or think by means of my eyes or my mind.

The human faculties are traditionally subdivided into the organic or sentient faculties and the spiritual faculties. The former refer to those active powers which human being has in common with animals – the faculties of sight, hearing, smell, touch and taste. This latter indicates those faculties which in human being enable her/him to transcend “the immediate data of senses” and these comprise the intellect and the will. Incidentally, we should not confuse the faculty with the organ. The faculty is a power or capacity to act that, in itself, is not visible or tangible: it is rooted in one’s inmost self or “I”. The organ is the instrument (Greek *organon* = tool or instrument) through which the faculty acts. Thus the eye is the organ of the faculty of sight, the ear is the organ of the faculty of hearing and so on. If the organ is injured the activity of that faculty is impeded. That the organ cannot be simply identified with the faculty seems to be borne out by the fact that a diseased or “dead” organ can be replaced (in a transplant) and the working of the once impaired activity is resorted.

Even the most cursory phenomenological observation of human activity (as we have seen) reveals that human being has the capacity to transcend the immediate data of the senses. As we have seen, her/his ability to develop and use a conceptual language, her/his creative capacity and her/his practice of religion reveal this. We could say then that s/he has a “spiritual” faculty or “spiritual” faculties, in the Rahnerian sense of term. That there is in human person a spiritual faculty called intellect should be clear enough in what we have already seen from our analysis of direct judgement, guided by Maréchal. We saw there how the intellect transcends the immediate data of the senses, recognising the limitedness of existence as much in the beings of our immediate affirmation. But this is not the only type of activity that we do, by means of which we “transcend”. We also will and choose. In other words, we possess not only a spiritual cognitive faculty, we also have a spiritual appetitive faculty: we have an intellect and a will. Everyday experience confirms this, through the exercise of self control. We frequently feel within us an urge to do something and we, for some reason or the other, resist this. In other words, we are aware that there is a tendency within us which is more superficial, and which is held in check by a higher tendency. This “higher tendency” which controls our lower, base (“animal”) desire is nothing but what we mean by the will (Pandikattu 2011).

But, someone may object, even a well – trained dog manifests acts of self-control, as when s/he will not grab food placed before her/him, though her/his mouth may salivate evidently enough. But there is no reason to put the dog’s “self-control” on a par with that of humans. All the observable indicates that there has been no transcending of immediate data of experience to that level of values

and principles that has guided the dog's self-restraint. It is merely the memory of certain very vivid and unpleasant "immediate data of experience" in the past (a good beating), which accompanied her/his grabbing of the food which is holding her/him back – for s/he knows how to make associations from the past for the future (cf. Pavlov's famous experiment with the dog). In fact were the dog's hunger greater than her/his fear or a thrashing s/he could snatch at the morsel. Nor would it fail to do so if it had never been trained with that or similar very concrete, very tangible experiences from the past. True again, some humans are "no better than animals" and the only reason they don't go in for stealing hand-bags and snatching *mangal-sutras* is because they're afraid of the policeman's baton or the lock-up. But we also know from experience – our own as well as observation of others – that there are many situations where humans do restrain themselves for reasons which are totally above and beyond such immediate sensible data as avoidance of physical pain or gaining of physical pleasure. Here, ideas, values, principles (transcending sense-data) are surely at work. Hence, postulate a spiritual appetitive faculty in us, called the will.

Further confirmation is provided that very often we consciously choose or will an object that is repugnant to sense data – as when we "knuckle down" to some study or unpleasant duty, or take some bitter medicine. Here, what moves us to act is not plain and simply some sensible good but some other supra-sensible good presented to us by our intellect and sought by our will. (Desbruslais 1997)

That last sentence already gives us a clue to what the "formal object" of the will is. Our various faculties are distinguished by their formal objects – that is, the aspect according to which they approach and perceive reality. Thus the formal object of the faculty of sight is colour, that of hearing is sound and so on. We cannot see a sound for the formal object of sight cannot relate to sound. Now, since both the intellect and the will are spiritual faculties, we should expect them to be working in tandem, which is in fact what happens. Both of these faculties attain the same *material* object, being (any being). The formal object of the intellect is being as being, that of the will is the good. In other words, whenever the intellect presents to the will any being as good, then the will is provoked to respond. When we talk about the will being "free", what we mean that though the will is roused to action whenever something is presented to by the intellect is good, it is not irresistibly compelled to choose is (so long as the thing concerned is not perceived as the absolute good). It must act, but it can act either by choosing that (limited) good or by rejecting it.

4.3 VOLITIONAL DYNAMISM

If there is in human person a basic intellectual dynamism towards the unlimited being as such, it follows that there is also, in us a consequent volitional dynamism (a dynamism of will) towards the same ultimate being, but seen by the intellect as good and presented as such to the will. And just as it is this basic orientation that spurs the intellect to affirm limited beings at all, it is this same orientation that ultimately drives the will to seek and desire limited goods. Since we are made for the unlimited good, when anything is presented (*rightly* or *wrongly*.) to the will by the intellect as the unlimited good, we would be powerless to resist or reject it. But so long as something – as should all the objects of our experience – be presented to the will by the intellect as a *limited* good, then the will is under no compulsion to reach out for it. We are free only in the face of what is perceived by us as *limited* goodness.

The will always strives or seeks after something under the appearance of good. Even that which is morally or physically evil (sin or pain) is consciously sought by the will (more accurately, by us through the will) because of something in it which is perceived as good (pleasure and comfort,

health and virtue). In the case of drunkard or drug addict, s/he perceives the drink or the heroin as the absolute good and so s/he cannot resist it. Thus, s/he is not morally guilty for indulging her/himself in these, nor even (in all probability) for the felony s/he commits to have access to them. We do not send such people to jail but for medical or psychiatric treatment. The addict is not guilty, here and now, for this particular act of indulgence for, as we have seen, s/he is not really free to check her/himself. But s/he is “culpable in cause”: s/he is guilty of having caused this sorry state of affairs to finally take possession of her/him. Frequent indulgence has slowly befuddled her/his brain so that her/his intellect has slowly come to be “brain-washed” into seeing drugs/drinks as the absolute good.

The possession by the will of the good constitutes happiness. But the will is not a cognitive or knowing faculty. It cannot know whether something is good for it or not. That is the job of the intellect which, on the other hand, is incapable of reaching out for the good seen. That is the role of the will. The independence of the intellect and the will is usually brought out by saying that the former is lame and the latter is blind. Remember the fable of how the blind person and the lame person formed an alliance of collaboration, the blind carrying the lame on her/his shoulders and the lame person directing her/his friend. That is a pretty good picture of how the intellect and the will work (Pandikattu 2011).

Our reviewing of Joseph Maréchal’s analysis of intellectual dynamism from the stand-point of the will has thus afforded us an insight into the freedom of the will from a more metaphysical perspective.

4.4 PRAISE AND BLAME

The very fact that we praise people for certain actions and blame them for others implies that we acknowledge human freedom to be a fact. If we were not free, if all our actions were but conditioning and/or blind responses to stimuli, why should we allocate praise or blame at all? The very fact that we punish people for certain actions – even putting them away for life – while others, who have done the same unacceptable deeds, in effect, are put in an asylum and given treatment means that we do grant the general fact of human freedom. This can be impaired from birth or through traumatic experiences or wantonness or whatever. In any criminal case there is always the effort to establish that the person was psychologically free at the time of her/his action and, if s/he was, s/he is punished. In short, the whole penal system is an implicit “argument” for the fact that we are free. Indeed, there could be no ethics, no such thing as heroes and villains, saints and sinners if there were no such thing as freedom. In such a case, the one who orders the ruthless butchery of millions of innocent people would be on a par with the one who sought to save them from death by starvation. Hitler and Mother Theresa would have to be put on the same level. It is hard to find a rabid determinist who would do that.

Check Your Progress I

Note: Use the space provided for your answer

1. What is “appetite” in the context of the volitional drive towards freedom?

2. Faced with unlimited goodness, has the will any freedom to choose?

4.5 FREUD'S CRITICISM

Sigmund Freud (1856 – 1939) is generally taken to be the founder of Psychoanalysis, which may be defined as “the separation of the psyche into its constituent elements.” We can sum up his main ideas by quoting the above-mentioned notes:

Freud's views had their antecedents in the culture of the age – the general positivist and behaviourist current in psychology. There was a strong feeling, in France and Germany, against what was known as “vitalism”, the view that life can only be explained by postulating something over and above what is found in the interaction of organic bodies. Everyone – except, perhaps, the Man from Mars – knows the basic notions of Freudian psychology: the assumption of unconscious mental processes, recognition of resistance and repression, the importance of sexuality and aggression and the Oedipus complex. Freud was to resolve the psyche into the basic elements, the id, the ego and super ego and give a purely positivist explanation of morality and its so called laws. Other key, but less known, ideas in Freudianism are infantile sexuality, the libido, narcissism and the life and death instincts. Psychoanalysis soon came to be represented as a conceptual system for understanding all human behaviour and personality, not only that of the mentally disturbed. Towards the end of his life, Freud had to face a lot of problems. Apart from Nazi harassment and the painful cancer of the mouth which he developed, several rifts gathered around him. Otto Rank, his most devoted disciple (he had come to be known as his “crown prince”) broke with him after twenty-five years, went on to propose quite independent views and left Freud with no one to succeed him as the new guru of the group. Two other giants, Alfred Adler (1870 – 1937) and Carl Jung (1875 – 1961) also deserted Freud because they found that he was stressing too much the sexual element in his system and they disagreed with this view (Freud 1938:939).

“The theory of repression is the pillar upon which the edifice of psychoanalysis rests”, Freud tells us in his *“History of the Psychoanalytic Movement”* (Freud 1938:939). He goes on to add that, “it is really the most important part of it.” By repression he means the unconscious and automatic inhibition of a psychic content. When this is done consciously and in voluntary manner, we have “suppression.” Here we have one drive being stopped by another drive. What happens to an inhibited drive, be it repressed or suppressed? It doesn't go away altogether: it still keeps on trying

to attain its goal but in a roundabout and unconscious way. Eventually it will appear in consciousness. If the repression/suppression does not succeed, it will manifest itself in a slip of the tongue or as in many cases, it may even express itself in schizophrenia and other psychotic states. When repression/suppression is successful, the inhibited tendency has been given some kind of alternative outlet through art or some other valuable achievement.

We shall pass over details of Freud's dream theory, psycho-sexual development and so on as they are not directly pertinent to our study here. Instead, let us confine ourselves to *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*. This is, in fact, the title of what is perhaps Freud's most widely read work. This is a kind of popular primer of psychoanalysis and is concerned with slips of the tongue, forgetting and the like. Freud claimed that all these are by no means fortuitous or chance happenings. They have a specific meaning and are both the effect as well as the sign of hidden tendencies. A "psychic determinism" is at work here, determining these lapses and it is possible to work backwards from these and unearth these determining causes. Freud, being a determinist, extended his principle of psychic determinism to all psychic phenomena. Slip of tongue and so on is not caused by fatigue, inattention and the similarity of words. It is assumed that there is some repressed or suppressed psychic drive that is at work. Even inability to recall a name is taken as pointing towards some unpleasant event in one's past, associated with the words that have been forgotten. In these and various aspects of his theory, Freud proposes his view of human being which denies in her/him all capacity for transcendence, seeing in her/him a being of determinism and instinct, nothing more.

4.6 SKINNER'S CHALLENGE

Burrhus Frederic Skinner (1904-1990), an American psychologist, was born in Susquehanna and was drawn, in his student days, into the American behavioural school of psychology and became very interested in the work of Watson and Pavlov. He secured a Ph.D. in psychology from Harvard in 1931 and spent several years studying animal learning and the functions of the central nervous system. He did not hesitate to have his younger daughter, Deborah, spend her first two years in his "baby box", a controlled environment chamber for infants.

He is best known for his research into the learning process and his belief in what has come to be called a *planned society*. He also supports *planned instruction*, according to which the principles of learning elaborated from laboratory research are to be applied in the class room. He is also one of the leading exponents of behavioural psychology today – the study of the observable behaviour of human beings. In his popular work *Walden Two* (1948) he described his vision of an ideal society based on principles of learning. In *Beyond Freedom and Dignity* (1971) – a book which stirred up a hornet's nest – he called for restrictions on individual freedoms that hinder the development of the ideal planned society.

4.7 CRITICAL RESPONSE

It is one thing to explain human transcendence in terms of complexification. It is quite another thing to reduce all human transcendence (language, creativity, religion and so on) to transformations and derivations of the sex drive – which, in effect, is to deny their transcendent element altogether. Though Freud has much that is both relevant and challenging to say on the issue of the human *psyche*, great parts of his system have been vitiated by the materialistic mentality that he seems to have unconsciously imbibed from his environment. Nor is it matter of "an alternative and valid

hermeneutics”: vast areas of data have to be ignored or taken lightly if one is to explain man’s moral, religious and artistic activity in this starkly materialistic way.

Again, it is true that Freud made some very illuminating and insightfully intuitive discoveries, enabling him to put his finger on many a solution which had previously eluded earlier investigators. But he had the unfortunate tendency to generalise from one or a few individual cases. Worse still, he drew conclusions about normal behaviour from the diseased workings of a troubled mind. Such unwarranted generalisations are seen as faults in the scientific world. The great emphasis that statistical methods put on numerous, carefully monitored case-studies is meant as a corrective to such hasty generalisations.

Coming to the difficulties raised by Skinner, we shall but make a few general remarks (leaving to the course on *Psychological Perspectives* the filling in of more details). In the first place, let us remember that human freedom is not something that is required to be able to stand aloof from its environment, from the possibility of being influenced by programming and whatever. It is even true that some techniques of programming or brain-washing may more or less completely break down the will power – just as an accident may harm seriously the brain, organ of intellectual faculty and “reduce the person on the state of a vegetable”. But this is no argument against the existence of the faculty of the intellect, any more than a diseased eye is an argument against the faculty of sight. What could be discussed is the morality of such programming and the values upon which a particular concept of an ideal society is based. In passing, let us note, that it may be necessary – but as a temporary remedy – to sacrifice some freedoms as an emergency measure to enable the victims of injustice and of dehumanising structures to find a meaningful and dignified human life.

The basic rights (to food, clothing, shelter and work) surely have priority over derivatives of the right to private property. In any case, the thrust of Skinner’s views seems to be, not so much to deny human freedom as a basic datum in human person as to question whether it is something always to be encouraged in every one of its outlets. Ultimately, the discussion will hinge upon one’s understanding of the human person and of freedom (both of which can be understood liberatively and oppressively). Still, I cannot help registering my disgust at confining a helpless little child in a “baby box” for years on end for the sake of a scientific experiment. A human person (and that includes a baby, let us not forget) is an end in himself/herself and can never be used merely as a means (and little Deborah was being utilised as precisely that). It is quite a different thing to elaborate more efficient techniques of pedagogy in the laboratory and try them out in the classroom on people who are old enough to critically react. But any brain-washing – however subtle, however brutal – is surely but another word for using a person merely as a means. Whatever Skinner’s ideas do this or not depends on more detailed familiarity with his views than I have. Donceel gives us a nice thought-clinching summing up: “...the will should not be conceived as standing above the drives any more than the soul hovers over the body. If there is to be moral growth, the will must orientate the drives in the direction of its own higher ends, use their energies for its own purposes, try to penetrate them more and more with spiritual finality [whatever Donceel may mean by words like “spiritual” and “spiritualised”, we can take them in the Rahnerian sense of implying the possibility of transcending what falls merely within the limits of immediate data of sense-experience]. This cannot be done directly with all drives. These which are essentially somatic [are inherently bound up with the body] can be put at the service of the will; they cannot be really spiritualised or sublimated. It is impossible to sublimate hunger, thirst and the biological sex drive. Other drives which are not so somatic can really be spiritualised. Take, for

instance, ambition. The drive to excel, to be strong and outstanding, is inborn in most human beings; it needs a favourable environment to reach its full strength, this “instinct” can be assumed by the will, animated and spiritualised by it, sublimated in the real sense of that word. We might even say that outstanding achievements will rarely occur except when a naturally “ambitious” character is thus animated by some higher purpose, whether that purpose be egoistic, as with Napoleon, or altruistic, as with John F. Kennedy. The same real sublimation may occur with other non-somatic drives, such as curiosity and gregariousness” (Donceel 1967: 256-257).

The difficulty with all forms of determinism is that, in the last analysis, all determinists can't help behaving “as if” people were free after all. For instance, they react angrily to someone who has cheated them – but why do so, unless that action were blameworthy, which presupposes freedom on the part of the doer? After all, if Hitler were not acting freely when he decreed the wholesale extermination of the Jews, his action was just one more natural disaster (like an earth-quake) and there is no reason to feel any indignation about it all. “One teacher of psychology I know works his course up to a fine climax wherein he declares that freedom of the will is man's greatest delusion. ...Privately this same psychologist sees his dilemma and laments that he finds it necessary to administer praise and blame to himself and others “as if” people were responsible for their acts.” (Desbruslais 1997). Wouldn't it be more natural to see the necessity that we must speak that way as a sign that such is the case, rather than fly in the face of experience because of one's nice little theory?

Sometimes determinists try to wriggle out of this “praise and blame” argument as Donceel notes. What we mean when we praise or blame someone for her/his deeds is not more than that is implied when we praise a racehorse or a heavyweight champion for her/his prowess. Such admiration doesn't imply that either – certainly not the racehorse. – is free? So why should our admiration for someone's heroic act or our condemnation of a person's shameless act imply that they are free? (Desbruslais 1997)

But are both such cases on par? We praise a racehorse or an athlete because her/his achievements imply overcoming certain physical difficulties through discipline, training and resolute commitment. But real heroic acts involve something more. It may not be more physically difficult to run into a burning building and rescue three children than it is to win the Marathon in record time. Assuredly, the latter would involve greater preparation and more physical effort. Rescuing the children means overcoming internal, psychological obstacles, freely. Admiration for a heroic act thus implies a recognition of freedom.

As for the fact that even would-be determinists want a criminal to be punished, they often try to defend themselves against the charge of inconsistency by saying that the reason they desire such action is not because they really believed that s/he was able to have refrained from such action but because her/his punishment would be a deterrent for others. But now could it be a deterrent at all if they were not free to act otherwise anyway? And this argument from deterrence (usually trotted out to justify capital punishment) assuredly violates out metaphysical conviction that the human person is an end in her/himself. To execute or punish someone on the sole ground that s/he be thereby a lesson to others is tantamount to using her/him as a means.

There remains that the typically Freudian objection that we may be totally determined (by traumatic experiences and what not) without knowing it. To this our only response can be that the very fact that we can speak of determinism at all implies that we somehow transcend it, are not totally within

its grip. Nor does admission of the role of external forces – heredity and environment – in the process of decision-making (as we have seen) amount as evidence against indeterminism.

Check Your Progress II

Note: Use the space provided for your answer

1. How do you respond to Freud's challenge of psychological determinism?

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2. What does Freud mean by "suppression" and "repression"?

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4.8 CONCLUDING REMARKS ON FREEDOM

Freedom and Liberty

English has been blessed with a special philological fecundity in that we have words that trace their origin to a Germanic root and others that have to use via the "romance" languages from Latin. Thus we have often two handy words that point towards the same reality. Since we have both "freedom" (from the German *Freiheit*) and "liberty" (from the Latin *libertas*), let us make good use of this potential.

Many authors like to distinguish between "freedom from" and "freedom for". The former comprises what we might call the "first phase" of freedom, where we seek to release ourselves from all that trammels us, from all that stifles and prevents us from being our full selves. For instance, 'breaking free' from shyness, from the scares of inhibiting and painful childhood experiences which put a kind of strait-jacket on us, freeing ourselves from companions, habits and an environment that weaken our will power – all these are part and partial of the process of becoming "free from". But when that is over the real work is just beginning. We must decide what goal, what ideals and what values we will set out to pursue with conviction and resolve. For some people this will be to seek a deeper relation with God, or to build up more mature friendships with human persons, or to dedicate oneself to build up one's country (these possibilities are by no means mutually exclusive). In this sense, we could speak of freedom as *means* and freedom as *end* (Desbruslais 1997).

We think the whole idea becomes less unwieldy and more inspiring if we speak of freedom and liberty (better still, liberation), seeing the former as a means to the latter. Furthermore, the best thing would be to situate both these terms in the general context of a dynamic world view. In a dynamic world-view, nothing is a finished product. Rather, everything is, consciously or not, striving to realise itself fully, tending to become all that it is meant to be, bursting towards its full flowering by a kind of inner urge. If we have described a “liberated person” as one who is fully human, fully alive, let us extend this concept, by analogy to all reality. So let us say that any reality (a mango seed, for instance) becomes fully liberated when it finally grows into being all that it is meant to be (in this case, a mango tree). Now, sub-human reality attains liberation by purely deterministic process – the various “laws of nature” which are inbuilt into them and hurry them on to attain this goal. Human beings attain self realisation partly by natural deterministic processes (the child grows into adult, his or her body gradually develops and matures into full stature by a kind of automatic natural process which does not, in any way depend on freedom – except insofar that freely assumed exercise and health-care can help work out a more sturdy, athletic form). But, “being human” is no more physical goal. It involves developing “character”, commitment to values, principles and goals worthy of a human being. Now, to attain these, human being must use her/his freedom. Whereas other things on the face of this earth reach their full flowering by a purely natural, spontaneous and determinist process, the human person must also make use of freedom to attain liberation.

It is in this sense that many contemporary psychologists prefer to speak of freedom as not so much a state with which we begin life, but as a goal or project to work for throughout life. I think there will be less ambiguity and confusion if we make use of the words “freedom” and “liberty” (“liberation”) in this connection.

Insights from Frankl, Ricœur

There is also what Viktor Frankl has called man’s “last and greatest freedom”, that freedom which no one can take away from her/him – the freedom to make meaning. A person can be unjustly imprisoned, deprived of freedom of speech and her/his most fundamental rights, but s/he is still free to make whatever meaning s/he wishes out of her/his condition. In her/his moving and personal account of how s/he and so many of her/his fellows maintained their sanity as well as their sense of dignity and this most basic freedom while interned in Hitler’s concentration camps, he explains how this was possible (Frankl 1992).

Paul Ricœur is speaking about the same thing from a slightly different aspect and with another vocabulary when he makes his famous distinction between the areas of the voluntary and involuntary in our life (Ricœur). There are certain things in our life, with regard to which we seem to be not at all free – the date and place of our birth, our parents, the particular physical body we have, the circumstances of our death. But there is an element of voluntary reserved for us even with regard to these things: It is up to us to freely choose what shall be our attitude to all hindrances and impediments, things to be regretted and rejected. Or we can make of them positive assets, assimilate them into our lives and build upon them. If ours is “*une liberté seulement humaine*” (a phrase which we would like to translate – the grandeur of human freedom, no more and no less), if it lacks the sovereign autonomy that Sartre would like it to have, it still has an area of the voluntary boldly carved out for itself right in the heart of the involuntary. Thus it becomes possible to find a genuine act of freedom in saying a meaningful YES and act not merely in a proud Sartrean NO. For a YES spoken to the “involuntaries” of our life can be a way of assimilating them positively into our fundamental options and life style and a great advance on the road to full personal liberation (Pandikattu 2011).

Freedom that Unites, Not Isolates

If liberation is the ultimate goal of human being and freedom is the most human means to realise this goal, it follows that acts of authentic freedom will bring persons together in community rather than seek to isolate and insulate themselves from each other (Desbruslais 1997).

The human person is a social animal. This is not just a pious platitude but even the most superficial phenomenological surveys of the human person will bear this out. At the merely physiological level human person is “built to live with others”. Of what value and use would our ears be if it were not to hear some human voice and how frustrated our “organs of speech” would be were there no other ears to hear them – let alone the other deeper dimensions of ourselves, sexual, psychological and so on? The perfection of the faculty of the will is realised in an act of love, of self-gift (which is the great act of freedom). Paradoxically, our freedom is best and fully used when, through it, we make a total interpersonal gift of ourselves to another. Hence, the solitary Robinson Crusoe cannot achieve liberation – the development of his full self – unless and until he finds some way of relating to human society, to community. This, of course, is not to endorse any kind of “hard life” in these agglomerations of people, lonely in a crowd, that seem to characterise so much of contemporary urban life. A mere assemblage of persons within a given area does not constitute a community. That arises when there is a genuine inter-personal, intersubjective relationship. It is true that certain minor rights and preferences will have to be sacrificed because of practical difficulties. But in a genuine spirit of sharing and mutual growth.

4.9 SOME RELATED QUOTABLE

1. *One of the commonest experiences is to meet someone whose belief that he cannot help doing what he is doing (or failing to do) is often an excuse for not doing as well as he can or at least better than he is at present doing.*

(Sidney Hook, *Determinism and Freedom in the Age of Modern Science*, London, Methuen, 1978, p. 179)

2. *It is now widely recognised among moral philosophers that, no matter how irrefutable the logic of absolute or naturalistic determinism may be, sane and rational human beings, in order to retain their sanity, their rationality, and their human purposefulness in living, still stubbornly insist on deciding, choosing and acting as though they were autonomous, dignified, and free individuals. This is the phenomenon, above all, that still needs to be explained.*

(H.W.Hintz, in *Determinism and Freedom ...* p.166)

3. *And now, without comment, here is a “beaut” from Robert Burns: “Freedom and Whisky gang thegither”(i.e. go together)*

4.10 LET US SUM UP

In this chapter we have seen basically the interdependence, dependence and independence of human beings and attempted at a definition of freedom.

Check Your Progress III

Note: Use the space provided for your answer

1. What is the “last and greatest freedom”, according to Victor Frankl?

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2. What is Ricoeur’s understanding of freedom?

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4.11 KEY WORDS

Appetite: Though in common parlance, this word is used exclusively with reference to our craving for food, it seems worthwhile to extend this term in a general sense to every human (hence, more or less conscious) process whereby we strive towards some good or pleasure or, conversely, seek to avoid some evil or pain. In this sense, “appetite” is more or less a synonym for “tendency”, “drive”, “striving” or even “dynamism”.

Liberty: It is connected with freedom seeing the freedom as a means to liberty. Furthermore the best thing would be to situate both these terms in the general context of a dynamic world view. In a dynamic world-view, nothing is a finished product. Rather, everything is, consciously or not, striving to realise itself fully, tending to become all that it is meant to be, bursting towards its full flowering by a kind of inner urge. If we have described a “liberated person” as one who is fully human, fully alive, let us extend this concept, by analogy to all reality.

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