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Chapter 1 : Rationalism and Empiricism

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These social and pedagogic changes were bound up with new tendencies in philosophy. Sir Francis Bacon of England was one who criticized the teachers of his day, saying that they offered nothing but words and that their schools were narrow in thought. He believed that Types and expressions of rationalism Rationalism has somewhat different meanings in different fields, depending upon the kind of theory to which it is opposed. Similarly, rationalism is opposed to transactionalism, a point of view in psychology according to which human perceptual skills are achievements, accomplished through actions performed in response to an active environment. On this view, the experimental claim is made that perception is conditioned by probability judgments formed on the basis of earlier actions performed in similar situations. These presettings, which have their basis in the brain, set the pattern for all experience, fix the rules for the formation of meaningful sentences, and explain why languages are readily translatable into one another. It should be added that what rationalists have held about innate ideas is not that some ideas are full-fledged at birth but only that the grasp of certain connections and self-evident principles, when it comes, is due to inborn powers of insight rather than to learning by experience. Common to all forms of speculative rationalism is the belief that the world is a rationally ordered whole, the parts of which are linked by logical necessity and the structure of which is therefore intelligible. Thus, in metaphysics it is opposed to the view that reality is a disjointed aggregate of incoherent bits and is thus opaque to reason. In particular, it is opposed to the logical atomisms of such thinkers as David Hume (1711-1776) and the early Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951), who held that facts are so disconnected that any fact might well have been different from what it is without entailing a change in any other fact. Rationalists have differed, however, with regard to the closeness and completeness with which the facts are bound together. In the field where its claims are clearest—in epistemology, or theory of knowledge—rationalism holds that at least some human knowledge is gained through a priori prior to experience, or rational, insight as distinct from sense experience, which too often provides a confused and merely tentative approach. In the debate between empiricism and rationalism, empiricists hold the simpler and more sweeping position, the Humean claim that all knowledge of fact stems from perception. Rationalists, on the contrary, urge that some, though not all, knowledge arises through direct apprehension by the intellect. What the intellectual faculty apprehends is objects that transcend sense experience—universals and their relations. A universal is an abstraction, a characteristic that may reappear in various instances: Though these cannot be seen, heard, or felt, rationalists point out that humans can plainly think about them and about their relations. This kind of knowledge, which includes the whole of logic and mathematics as well as fragmentary insights in many other fields, is, in the rationalist view, the most important and certain knowledge that the mind can achieve. Such a priori knowledge is both necessary and sufficient. In the critical philosophy of Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), epistemological rationalism finds expression in the claim that the mind imposes its own inherent categories or forms upon incipient experience see below Epistemological rationalism in modern philosophies. In ethics, rationalism holds the position that reason, rather than feeling, custom, or authority, is the ultimate court of appeal in judging good and bad, right and wrong. Among major thinkers, the most notable representative of rational ethics is Kant, who held that the way to judge an act is to check its self-consistency as apprehended by the intellect: Is theft, then, right? In religion, rationalism commonly means that all human knowledge comes through the use of natural faculties, without the aid of supernatural revelation. Reason, for the rationalist, thus stands opposed to many of the religions of the world, including Christianity, which have held that the divine has revealed itself through inspired persons or writings and which have required, at times, that its claims be accepted as infallible, even when they do not accord with natural knowledge. Religious rationalists hold, on the other hand, that if the clear insights of human reason must be set aside in favour of

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alleged revelation, then human thought is everywhere rendered suspectâ€”even in the reasonings of the theologians themselves. There cannot be two ultimately different ways of warranting truth, they assert; hence rationalism urges that reason, with its standard of consistency, must be the final court of appeal.

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Chapter 2 : Empiricism - Wikiquote

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Introduction The dispute between rationalism and empiricism takes place within epistemology, the branch of philosophy devoted to studying the nature, sources and limits of knowledge. The defining questions of epistemology include the following. What is the nature of propositional knowledge, knowledge that a particular proposition about the world is true? To know a proposition, we must believe it and it must be true, but something more is required, something that distinguishes knowledge from a lucky guess. A good deal of philosophical work has been invested in trying to determine the nature of warrant. How can we gain knowledge? We can form true beliefs just by making lucky guesses. How to gain warranted beliefs is less clear. Moreover, to know the world, we must think about it, and it is unclear how we gain the concepts we use in thought or what assurance, if any, we have that the ways in which we divide up the world using our concepts correspond to divisions that actually exist. What are the limits of our knowledge? Some aspects of the world may be within the limits of our thought but beyond the limits of our knowledge; faced with competing descriptions of them, we cannot know which description is true. Some aspects of the world may even be beyond the limits of our thought, so that we cannot form intelligible descriptions of them, let alone know that a particular description is true. The disagreement between rationalists and empiricists primarily concerns the second question, regarding the sources of our concepts and knowledge. In some instances, their disagreement on this topic leads them to give conflicting responses to the other questions as well. They may disagree over the nature of warrant or about the limits of our thought and knowledge. Our focus here will be on the competing rationalist and empiricist responses to the second question. Some propositions in a particular subject area, *S*, are knowable by us by intuition alone; still others are knowable by being deduced from intuited propositions. Intuition is a form of rational insight. Deduction is a process in which we derive conclusions from intuited premises through valid arguments, ones in which the conclusion must be true if the premises are true. We intuit, for example, that the number three is prime and that it is greater than two. We then deduce from this knowledge that there is a prime number greater than two. Intuition and deduction thus provide us with knowledge a priori, which is to say knowledge gained independently of sense experience. Some rationalists take mathematics to be knowable by intuition and deduction. Some place ethical truths in this category. Some include metaphysical claims, such as that God exists, we have free will, and our mind and body are distinct substances. The more propositions rationalists include within the range of intuition and deduction, and the more controversial the truth of those propositions or the claims to know them, the more radical their rationalism. Rationalists also vary the strength of their view by adjusting their understanding of warrant. Some take warranted beliefs to be beyond even the slightest doubt and claim that intuition and deduction provide beliefs of this high epistemic status. Others interpret warrant more conservatively, say as belief beyond a reasonable doubt, and claim that intuition and deduction provide beliefs of that caliber. Still another dimension of rationalism depends on how its proponents understand the connection between intuition, on the one hand, and truth, on the other. Some take intuition to be infallible, claiming that whatever we intuit must be true. Others allow for the possibility of false intuited propositions. The second thesis associated with rationalism is the Innate Knowledge thesis. The Innate Knowledge Thesis: We have knowledge of some truths in a particular subject area, *S*, as part of our rational nature. The difference between them rests in the accompanying understanding of how this a priori knowledge is gained. The Innate Knowledge thesis offers our rational nature. Our innate knowledge is not learned through either sense experience or intuition and deduction. It is just part of our nature. Experiences may trigger a process by which we bring this knowledge to consciousness, but the experiences do not provide us with the knowledge itself. It has in some way been with us all along. According to some rationalists, we gained the knowledge in an earlier existence. According to

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others, God provided us with it at creation. Still others say it is part of our nature through natural selection. Once again, the more subjects included within the range of the thesis or the more controversial the claim to have knowledge in them, the more radical the form of rationalism. Stronger and weaker understandings of warrant yield stronger and weaker versions of the thesis as well. The third important thesis of rationalism is the Innate Concept thesis. The Innate Concept Thesis: We have some of the concepts we employ in a particular subject area, S, as part of our rational nature. According to the Innate Concept thesis, some of our concepts are not gained from experience. They are part of our rational nature in such a way that, while sense experiences may trigger a process by which they are brought to consciousness, experience does not provide the concepts or determine the information they contain. Some claim that the Innate Concept thesis is entailed by the Innate Knowledge Thesis; a particular instance of knowledge can only be innate if the concepts that are contained in the known proposition are also innate. Others, such as Carruthers, argue against this connection, pp. The content and strength of the Innate Concept thesis varies with the concepts claimed to be innate. The more a concept seems removed from experience and the mental operations we can perform on experience the more plausibly it may be claimed to be innate. Since we do not experience perfect triangles but do experience pains, our concept of the former is a more promising candidate for being innate than our concept of the latter. Two other closely related theses are generally adopted by rationalists, although one can certainly be a rationalist without adopting either of them. The first is that experience cannot provide what we gain from reason. The Indispensability of Reason Thesis: The knowledge we gain in subject area, S, by intuition and deduction, as well as the ideas and instances of knowledge in S that are innate to us, could not have been gained by us through sense experience. The second is that reason is superior to experience as a source of knowledge. The Superiority of Reason Thesis: The knowledge we gain in subject area S by intuition and deduction or have innately is superior to any knowledge gained by sense experience. How reason is superior needs explanation, and rationalists have offered different accounts. Another view, generally associated with Plato Republic ec, locates the superiority of a priori knowledge in the objects known. What we know by reason alone, a Platonic form, say, is superior in an important metaphysical way, e. Most forms of rationalism involve notable commitments to other philosophical positions. One is a commitment to the denial of scepticism for at least some area of knowledge. If we claim to know some truths by intuition or deduction or to have some innate knowledge, we obviously reject scepticism with regard to those truths. We have no source of knowledge in S or for the concepts we use in S other than sense experience. Insofar as we have knowledge in the subject, our knowledge is a posteriori, dependent upon sense experience. Empiricists also deny the implication of the corresponding Innate Concept thesis that we have innate ideas in the subject area. Sense experience is our only source of ideas. They reject the corresponding version of the Superiority of Reason thesis. Since reason alone does not give us any knowledge, it certainly does not give us superior knowledge. Empiricists generally reject the Indispensability of Reason thesis, though they need not. The Empiricism thesis does not entail that we have empirical knowledge. It entails that knowledge can only be gained, if at all, by experience. Empiricists may assert, as some do for some subjects, that the rationalists are correct to claim that experience cannot give us knowledge. The conclusion they draw from this rationalist lesson is that we do not know at all. I have stated the basic claims of rationalism and empiricism so that each is relative to a particular subject area. Rationalism and empiricism, so relativized, need not conflict. We can be rationalists in mathematics or a particular area of mathematics and empiricists in all or some of the physical sciences. Rationalism and empiricism only conflict when formulated to cover the same subject. Then the debate, Rationalism vs. The fact that philosophers can be both rationalists and empiricists has implications for the classification schemes often employed in the history of philosophy, especially the one traditionally used to describe the Early Modern Period of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries leading up to Kant. It is standard practice to group the major philosophers of this period as either rationalists or empiricists and to suggest that those under one heading share a common agenda in opposition to those under the other. We should adopt such general classification schemes with caution. The views of the individual philosophers are more subtle and

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complex than the simple-minded classification suggests. See Loeb and Kenny for important discussions of this point. Descartes and Locke have remarkably similar views on the nature of our ideas, even though Descartes takes many to be innate, while Locke ties them all to experience. Thus, Descartes, Spinoza and Leibniz are mistakenly seen as applying a reason-centered epistemology to a common metaphysical agenda, with each trying to improve on the efforts of the one before, while Locke, Berkeley and Hume are mistakenly seen as gradually rejecting those metaphysical claims, with each consciously trying to improve on the efforts of his predecessors. One might claim, for example, that we can gain knowledge in a particular area by a form of Divine revelation or insight that is a product of neither reason nor sense experience. What is perhaps the most interesting form of the debate occurs when we take the relevant subject to be truths about the external world, the world beyond our own minds. A full-fledged rationalist with regard to our knowledge of the external world holds that some external world truths can and must be known a priori, that some of the ideas required for that knowledge are and must be innate, and that this knowledge is superior to any that experience could ever provide. The full-fledged empiricist about our knowledge of the external world replies that, when it comes to the nature of the world beyond our own minds, experience is our sole source of information. Reason might inform us of the relations among our ideas, but those ideas themselves can only be gained, and any truths about the external reality they represent can only be known, on the basis of sense experience. This debate concerning our knowledge of the external world will generally be our main focus in what follows. The debate raises the issue of metaphysics as an area of knowledge.

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Chapter 3 : Rationalism - Wikipedia

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The primary meanings it has are "induct" and "initiate". Secondary meanings include "introduce", "make someone aware of something", "train", "familiarize", "give first experience of something". Its figurative meaning is to be initiated into the "mystery revelation". The meaning derives from the initiatory rites of the pagan mysteries. The term means "anything hidden", a mystery or secret, of which initiation is necessary. A particular meaning it took in Classical antiquity was a religious secret or religious secrets, confided only to the initiated and not to be communicated by them to ordinary mortals. In the Septuagint and the New Testament the meaning it took was that of a hidden purpose or counsel, a secret will. It is sometimes used for the hidden wills of humans, but is more often used for the hidden will of God. Elsewhere in the Bible it takes the meaning of the mystic or hidden sense of things. It is used for the secrets behind sayings, names, or behind images seen in visions and dreams. The Vulgate often translates the Greek term to the Latin sacramentum sacrament. These followers of mystery religions belonged to a select group, where access was only gained through an initiation. The terms are first found connected in the writings of Heraclitus. Such initiates are identified in texts with the persons who have been purified and have performed certain rites. Such initiates were believers in the god Dionysus Bacchus who took on the name of their god and sought an identification with their deity. Hesychasm , Contemplative prayer , and Apophatic theology Deriving from Neo-Platonism and Henosis , mysticism is popularly known as union with God or the Absolute. For example, in Advaita Vedanta, there is only one reality Brahman and therefore nothing other than reality to unite with itâ€”Brahman in each person atman has always in fact been identical to Brahman all along. Dan Merkur also notes that union with God or the Absolute is a too limited definition, since there are also traditions which aim not at a sense of unity, but of nothingness , such as Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite and Meister Eckhart. Religious ecstasy , Altered state of consciousness , Cognitive science of religion , Neurotheology , and Attribution psychology Mysticism involves an explanatory context, which provides meaning for so-called mystical and visionary experiences, and related experiences like trances. According to Dan Merkur, mysticism may relate to any kind of ecstasy or altered state of consciousness, and the ideas and explanations related to them. These experiences are not necessarily interpreted in a religious framework. Enlightenment spiritual , Divine illumination , and Subitism Some authors emphasize that mystical experience involves intuitive understanding of the meaning of existence and of hidden truths, and the resolution of life problems. According to Larson, "mystical experience is an intuitive understanding and realization of the meaning of existence. Horne, mystical illumination "a central visionary experience [The term illumination is derived from the Latin illuminatio , applied to Christian prayer in the 15th century. Spirituality , Spiritual development , Self-realization , and Ego death Other authors point out that mysticism involves more than "mystical experience. Greco-Roman mysteries , Early Christianity , and Esoteric Christianity In early Christianity the term "mystikos" referred to three dimensions, which soon became intertwined, namely the biblical, the liturgical and the spiritual or contemplative. In western Christianity it was a counter-current to the prevailing Cataphatic theology or "positive theology". Theoria enabled the Fathers to perceive depths of meaning in the biblical writings that escape a purely scientific or empirical approach to interpretation. Middle Ages This threefold meaning of "mystical" continued in the Middle Ages. It is best known nowadays in the western world from Meister Eckhart and John of the Cross. Early modern meaning[edit] See also: By the middle of the 17th century, "the mystical" is increasingly applied exclusively to the religious realm, separating religion and "natural philosophy" as two distinct approaches to the discovery of the hidden meaning of the universe. Western esotericism , Theosophy Blavatskian , Syncretism , Spirituality , and New Age The 19th century saw a growing emphasis on individual experience, as a defense against the growing rationalism of western society. The historical evidence, however,

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does not support such a narrow conception of mysticism. These traditions include practices to induce religious or mystical experiences, but also ethical standards and practices to enhance self-control and integrate the mystical experience into daily life. Dan Merkur notes, though, that mystical practices are often separated from daily religious practices, and restricted to "religious specialists like monastics, priests, and other renunciates. Shamanism According to Dan Merkur, shamanism may be regarded as a form of mysticism, in which the world of spirits is accessed through religious ecstasy. The term is also used to describe similar magico-religious practices found within the ethnic religions of other parts of Asia, Africa, Australasia and the Americas. Neoshamanism comprises an eclectic range of beliefs and practices that involve attempts to attain altered states and communicate with a spirit world, and is associated with New Age practices.

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Chapter 4 : Rationalism | Definition of Rationalism by Merriam-Webster

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This paper focuses on the most recent period in the development of Russian thought ss. The Brothers Karamazov It is a property of the Russian people to indulge in philosophy. The fate of the philosopher in Russia is painful and tragic. The Russian Idea The fact that one can annihilate a philosophy. The last period of the Soviet ideocracy, approximately from the early s through the late s, can be characterized as a period of "philosophical awakening," to use the felicitous expression of the theologian Georgy Florovsky - Philosophical life begins as a new mode or a new stage of national existence One can feel in the generation of that epoch some irresistible attraction to philosophy, a philosophical passion and thirst, a kind of magical gravitation toward philosophical themes and issues. This intellectual renaissance is associated with the philosophical collection Signposts and the work of Merezhkovsky, Rozanov, Berdyaev, Bulgakov, Frank, Florensky, Shestov, and other outstanding representatives of the so-called Silver Age. Finally, after the soporific years of Soviet materialist scholasticism, a third philosophical awakening occurred in the ss. In this period, philosophical works were circulated in various forms of "samizdat" "self-publishing" , "tamizdat" "there-publishing," i. Such works conveyed a mysterious charm that could not be explained in terms of "truth or falsity," "persuasiveness or dubiousness. Over the past forty years, several "philosophical" schools have emerged to challenge the ideocratic principles of Soviet Marxism which itself has undergone remarkable changes. Below, I will briefly outline seven principal trends of Russian thought of the ss. One principal vector of its transformation in the post-war period was the infusion of nationalism into Marxism, undertaken first by Stalin in his work on linguistics, where the class categories of traditional Marxism were abolished in favor of a notion of national unity, as exemplified in the integrity of national language. This tendency resurfaced in the s, with the increasing rapprochement of official Marxism and grass-roots, nativist ideology, which later grew into a political alliance of communists and neo-fascists. This tendency suffered a severe political blow with the failure to build "socialism with a human face" in Czechoslovakia, which revealed the incompatibility of humanism and Soviet Marxism. Later, in the s, three new approaches to Marxism emerge. The first is an attempt to revitalize and modify Marxism in the wake of the failure of the Soviet communist project. This version of post-communist Marxism, exemplified in the work of Sergei Platonov, proposes the purification of Marxism from its Leninist and especially Stalinist contaminations and the incorporation of new realities, such as the persistent success of market economics. This version, developed in the writings of Aleksandr Yakovlev, the chief official ideologist of perestroika, involves the radical criticism of Marxism as a non-scientific and anti-humanist theory which, with its all-inclusive determinism, underestimates the sovereignty of consciousness, reducing personality to a function of social circumstances. The third approach, which can be called post-Marxist communism as distinct from post-communist Marxism , glorifies the religious aspects of communism, which were abandoned by classical Marxism in favor of a quasi-scientific materialism. This position, articulated in the works of Sergei Kurginian and, to a lesser extent, Aleksandr Zinoviev, promotes a renewal of communism as a religious doctrine encompassing the deepest insights of many Eastern and Western faiths and opposed to the soulless hedonism and consumerism of capitalist civilization. Thus Marxism is presented as the latest form of "humanist religion" that might save humanity from the pitfalls of bourgeois individualism through high spiritual ideals and collectivist aspirations. A number of new methodological approaches starting from the late s may be united under the title of neo-rationalism. He offers many penetrating methodological insights on the role of sign systems throughout history and culture. This project of rapprochement between the sciences and humanities was also developed in the Moscow school of structuralism Vladimir Toporov, Vyacheslav Ivanov and others. Merab Mamardashvili and Aleksandr

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Piatigorsky some of their works were written in collaboration undertook a phenomenological analysis of consciousness, with a special interest in non-classical, post-rationalist and Oriental types of logic. Neo-rationalism, and especially structuralism, achieved its greatest impact in the 1920s and 1930s when it boldly challenged the social mysticism of orthodox Soviet Marxism; but later, in the 1950s, the role of the primary philosophical alternative passed from structuralism to religious thought, which increasingly opposed itself to old-fashioned Marxist rationalism. Among the most influential intellectual trends in the 1950s - 1960s are varieties of religious Orthodox thought. Christian visions of history and contemporary society were powerfully expressed by such major writers as Boris Pasternak and Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, who inspired many other thinkers. In his seven-volume treatise, *In the Search of the Way, Truth, and Life*, as well as in his other books, he elaborates a philosophy of spiritual ascension that leads humanity from paganism to the Christian revelation of Godmanhood. The next generation of Orthodox thinkers is represented by Tatiana Goricheva who writes on the topics connecting and contrasting Orthodox spirituality with postmodernism and feminism, Sergei Khoruzhii, Evgeny Barabanov, and Vladislav Zelinsky. New critics, including Barabanov, Khoruzhii, and Boris Paramonov, on the contrary, blame Russian idealism for its secret or unconscious complicity with the communist Revolution, by supposedly preparing the ground for this social cataclysm through the dissemination of apocalyptic forebodings and totalitarian metaphysics "total unity". Synthetic and spiritualist teachings proliferated in Russia since the 1950s. Such outstanding scientists as the father of Soviet cosmonautics Konstantin Tsiolkovsky and the pioneer of biogeochemistry Vladimir Vernadsky are considered the major authorities in Cosmism. Cosmism is a philosophy of active evolutionism, presupposing the possibility and necessity for the human mind to regulate and transform the laws of nature. Cosmism explains historical, social and psychological processes by the influences of cosmic energies and asserts a reciprocal dependency of the fates of the universe on the activity of human mind. A leading exponent of this movement, Svetlana Semyonova, is one among very few women engaged in contemporary philosophical debates in Russia. A different, more explicitly ecumenical and synthetic trend was expressed by Daniil Andreev in his treatise *The Rose of the World*. Andreev develops an original "meta-historic" and "trans-physical" vision that attempts to absorb the religious wisdom of both West and East and to pave a way for a future "inter-religion" and harmonious world order based on a universal theocracy. Many thinkers and intellectual writers represent various trends of personalist philosophy whose supreme values are freedom and the individual. No comprehensive systematic treatises have been produced in this field, but there are numerous essays, articles and philosophical diaries by Mikhail Prishvin, Iakov Druskin, Lidia Ginzburg, Andrei Siniavsky, Grigory Pomerants, Boris Khazanov, Mikhailo Mikhailov, and Boris Paramonov. The formation and self-awareness of personality, its attitudes towards nature and society, love and death, and time and fate are the central motifs of personalist thought. Nationalist ideology, which emerged in the early 1990s and escalated rapidly in post-communist Russia, has produced its own intellectual elite: Its major intellectual predecessors include the Russian Slavophiles of the 19th century and the Eurasianists of the 1920s. The influential publicistic writings of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn and the historio-ethnographic treatises of Lev Gumilev can be placed in this category insofar as they concern general philosophical issues, such as the relation between culture and nation, collective responsibility and guilt, biological energy and the moral patterns of ethnic groups. Even more extreme representatives of the same conservative nationalism are critic Vadim Kozhinov and mathematician Igor Shafarevich, who have developed a pessimistic view on Russian and Soviet history as permanently threatened and undermined from within by non-Russians, particularly Jews. Finally, two modifications of nationalism surfaced in the 1990s. One presented by Viktor Aksiuchits is moderate conservatism, claiming the timeless values of Orthodox Christianity as a specifically Russian legacy destined to introduce the spirit of national reconciliation into a society torn apart by militant pluralism and partisanship. The other promoted by Aleksandr Dugin is radical traditionalism, proclaiming the restoration of a paganist, esoteric legacy and the unification of Eurasia into one Empire under Russian guidance with the aim of waging spiritual war on the secularized and materialist West. Unlike other conservatives, with their exclusively Russian or Slavic

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nationalism, traditionalists attempt to unite the extreme Rightist movements of the entire world, which reveals that they are more indebted to German, French, and Italian fascist or para-fascist ideologists than to the nineteenth-century Russian Slavophiles. Radical traditionalists believe that after the fundamentally leftist and democratic revolutions in France, America and Russia, the world abandoned Tradition and sold its soul to the devil of material prosperity. That is why a new, metaphysical revolution is needed, this time a rightist one, antithetical to the conventional revolutionary formula insofar as it pursues the restoration of the spiritual foundations of the world that were buried by decadent civilization in its pursuit] of "progress. Another important trend of the ss is culturology, the philosophy of cultural dialogue and self-determination through "otherness. Thus culturology can be defined as a metadiscipline investigating the interconnections among the various phenomena of culture-in the realms of politics, science, art, literature, and religion. One reason for the ascendancy of culturology is the traditional tendency of Russian culture to overcome the extreme specialization of various disciplines and professions so characteristic of Western modes of cultural production. In communist Russia this unification was achieved on ideological grounds that submitted the entire range of cultural activities to the domination of politics. Culturology became a field of interdisciplinary interaction, posing an alternative both to excesses of scholarly specialization and to the pressures of ideological totalization. In culturology, "culture" is treated as a descriptive rather than a normative concept, the term itself being used both in the singular and in the plural. Culture as the ultimate unity of disciplinary spheres presupposes the diversity of cultures as multiple national and historical types, each having its own formative principle irreducible to others. Culturology attempts to approach culture on its own specific terms and to develop a holistic language that avoids lapsing into politicism, scientism, aestheticism, moralism, or the absolutization of any single aspect of culture. Culturology received powerful impetus from Mikhail Bakhtin , who asserted in his later works that "a culture exists only on the border of other cultures. Representatives of culturology include Vladimir Bibler who managed to create his own methodological school of "dialogical logic" in the history of sciences and humanities; and Sergei Averintsev, a brilliant scholar in the field of antiquity and Byzantine civilization who has elaborated the philosophical aspects of cultural heritage and innovation, giving special emphasis to the problems of symbol and the interaction between religious and secular types of culture. The latest trend worthy of mention corresponds to the post-structuralist paradigm in the West. One of its most original versions may be identified as conceptualism. This name usually refers to a well-known movement in Russian arts and literature of the s and s, but it can also be aptly applied to a broad spectrum of critical and philosophical ideas that complement and highlight this movement. Conceptualism assumes that certain conceptual schemes underlie the ideological construction of reality and determine its artificial, conventionalized character. Conceptual thinking is imbued with irony, parody, and a sense of relativity, since "truth" and "reality" are considered to be empty categories. The relationship between conceptualism and Marxism is somewhat reminiscent of the dispute between nominalists and realists in the epoch of the medieval scholastics: Every cultural form is conceived in terms of combinations of pre-established codes, such as Soviet ideological language or the code of the Russian psychological novel. Another version of philosophical poststructuralism is presented by the Laboratory of Non-Classical Philosophy at the Institute of Philosophy in Moscow, in particular, by such authors as Valery Podoroga, Mikhail Ryklin, and Mikhail Yampolsky. They publish a philosophical collection Ad Marginem book series and an annual which is methodologically inspired by contemporary French thinkers Jacques Derrida, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari and others. For example, Georgy Gachev has created an original holistic genre of writing that includes such components as "living-thinking" zhiznemyслиe , "national images of the world," and a "humanitarian approach to natural sciences. Contemporary Russian thought is polyphonic, not just pluralistic, in the sense that different positions and voices interact in the consciousnesses of the most creative individual thinkers. Rarely in the history of thought has philosophy represented such a liberating force as it did in Russia from the s through the s. The Soviet State had generated a rigid system of "once and forever proven" ideas that aimed to perpetuate its mastery over the individual mind. For this reason, philosophical thinking,

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which by its nature transcends the limits of the existing order and questions sanctioned practices, was under permanent suspicion as an anti-State activity: Philosophical ideas in the Soviet Union rarely matured into well-balanced, self-sufficient systems, because the State arrogated to itself the privilege of consummating and elaborating ideas in a systematic way. The fate of non-Marxist thinkers was to dissolve these ideocratic systems in a stream of critical, spontaneous thinking that attempted to go beyond all possible systems, in order to undermine rather than consolidate them. Since official philosophy functioned as a tool of power, it was the task and merit of non-official philosophy to advance anti-totalitarian modes of thinking, thus de-centralizing the structure of discourse and deconstructing any possible principle of systematization. Thought tried to free itself from ideocracy by putting down roots in authentic, concrete entities beyond ideological generalizations, such as faith in a living God, the existential uniqueness of personality, the organic soul of the nation, the empirical credibility of science, the symbolic meanings of culture, or, finally, by challenging the master-discourse of Soviet ideology through its parodic imitation and exaggeration. The internal logic of development, however, has led some of these schools of thought, especially the philosophies of national spirit and religious syncretism, to renovated and "improved" projects of postcommunist ideocracy. Indeed, if we attempt to summarize the most recent developments in Russian thought the s , we discover a general tendency for the radicalization of its metaphysical ambitions. Even the movements that would seem to be the most resistant to metaphysical assumptions, such as Structuralism, culturology and conceptualism, reveal a growing propensity for universalist claims. For example, the later works of Yury Lotman and Vasily Nalimov are rife with a metaphysics of chance, contiguity, indeterminism. Georgy Gachev builds much more ambitious cosmological constructions than did his predecessors in culturology, Bakhtin, Losev and Likhachev. Is it a coincidence that this proliferation of new, radical metaphysical discourses has arisen with the degradation and collapse of the ideocratic system of Soviet power? The Soviet system was not merely a political and legislative entity but was founded on a metaphysical, even eschatological, vision, officially called Marxism but stemming also from the prophetic philosophizing of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Hence the collapse of the Soviet regime left something more than just a need for governmental reform: Traditionally in Russia, political platforms have been constructed on a framework of the most general, "filosofical" ideas; in the early s, competing metaphysical theories were rushing in to fill the demolished and excavated site with a foundation for a new political architecture. The death of one "big" totalitarianism gave birth to a number of smaller ones. Many politicians, of both leftist and rightist orientation, such as Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, Aleksandr Rutskoi, and even the new communist leader Gennady Zyuganov more or less consistently wielded metaphysical ideas to justify their ambitions for intellectual leadership. This overall tendency, characteristic of the Russian mentality in general but aggravated in the early s by increasing political instability, can be called "metaphysical radicalism. At the same time, any politics with pretensions to radically transforming the world cannot limit itself to the social, economic, and legislative dimensions, but must entail metaphysical assumptions. In the contemporary West, politics usually pursues less expansive goals of partially improving existing systems, and therefore, it is divorced from metaphysical considerations, or at least pretends to be. It is the privilege of metaphysics to address the world as a whole, as it is the objective of political radicalism to transform this whole completely. Thus metaphysical and political radicalism are mutually dependent, as the totalitarian experiments of the 20th century have shown: Russian philosophy, which during the ss had resisted the stranglehold of Soviet ideocracy, may now be preparing the foundation for a new type of ideocracy, potentially based on the ideas of Cosmism, universal theocracy, radical traditionalism, Eurasianism or eschatological communism. The options are varied. Metaphysical radicalism is a specific type of philosophical discourse that ignores the Kantian critique of metaphysics and claims to "transcend" the epistemological limits imposed on human cognitive capacities.

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Name any area of achievement, any field of human endeavour—patents filed, literacy, quality of life, degree of civil or political freedoms, transparency, world-class universities, and so on. In every case, the nations of Islam are at or near the bottom in every category, and only barely beat sub-Saharan Africa in overall performance. How has this dreadful state of affairs come to pass? The answer is simple—Muslims are intellectually paralyzed by their own philosophy. In matters of the intellect, Muslims are a miserable failure. Islam has sucked their minds dry from infancy onwards. In this respect, it is the best in human history, as no other philosophy has been so successful at institutionalizing failure among its followers. To analyse philosophical differences effectively, one must first know the difference between the different branches of philosophy. Philosophy has five major branches, listed and generally defined as follows: The last philosophical branch, aesthetics, needs a brief explanation. The values are communicated non-verbally, of course, but very effectively. Or contemplate the sculptures of ancient Greece, where the human form was often portrayed as graceful, beautiful, and even triumphant. In the Soviet Union, for example, only the glory of the collective, the group, and the state was permitted to be portrayed. It could be portrayed in many ways, but the subject matter was limited pretty much to glorification of the state. Many Soviet artists were jailed for art that deviated from that restrictive policy. Except for plants, lifeforms are forbidden in Islamic art. In the West, the artist is free to project into his work anything he values, whether anyone thinks it makes sense or not. That Muslims have a fine sense of what is beautiful is evident, despite the crushing limitations placed on them. If they but had the freedoms of thought and self-expression, which would require them to drop the shackles of Islam from their minds, then there is no doubt that they could excel in every branch of human achievement. No one can say that Muslims are stupid. According to al-Ghazzali, a piece of cotton placed in a flame does not darken and smoulder because of the heat, but because Allah wants it to darken and smoulder. After al-Ghazzali, the light of reason went out in Dar al-Islam, and Dar al-Harb slowly gained the advantage in all aspects of civilisation, especially science. Why Islam is fundamentally irrational and how this inevitably leads to terrorism: With startling—indeed alarming—clarity, Pope Benedict XVI told his audience in Regensburg, Germany, that not only is violence in spreading faith unreasonable and therefore against God, but that a conception of God without reason, or above reason, leads to that very violence. To ensure everyone knew what he was talking about, the pope quoted from a 14th-century Byzantine emperor, Manuel II Paleologus, who was besieged by Islamic forces attempting to conquer Constantinople. The emperor denounced the effort to "spread by the sword the faith he [Mohammed] preached. God is not shackled by reason; He rules as He pleases. He is pure will. God is so powerful that every instant is the equivalent of a miracle. Nothing intervenes or has an independent or even semi-autonomous existence. In philosophical language, this view holds that God is the primary cause of everything, and there are no secondary causes. Therefore, what may seem to be "natural laws," such as the laws of physics, gravity, etc. As Benedict points out, this is called "volunteerism. If creation exists simply as a succession of miraculous moments, it cannot be apprehended by reason. Other religions, including Christianity, recognize miracles. But they recognize them precisely as temporary and extraordinary suspensions of the natural law. In fact, that is what defines them as miracles. One admits to the possibility of a miracle only after discounting every possible explanation of its occurrence by natural causes. In this school of Islamic thought, there are no natural causes to discount. As a result, reality becomes incomprehensible. In *The Incoherence of the Philosophers*, Abu Hamid al-Ghazali—, perhaps the single most influential Muslim thinker after Mohammed, vehemently rejected Greek thought: There are only juxtapositions of discrete events that make it appear that the fire is burning the cotton, but God could just as

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well do otherwise. This doctrine is known as occasionalism. In other words, there is no continuous narrative of cause and effect tying these moments together in a comprehensible way. Since reason is not a source of moral truth, concludes al-Ghazali, "No obligations flow from reason but from the Sharia [the divinely ordained path]. Man cannot love what he does not know. Reason plays no role, and free will is denigrated. In his attack on philosophy titled *Kuzari*, Judah ha-Levi, a Jewish follower of al-Ghazali, reached the logical conclusion as to how man ought to approach the revelations of such a deity: There could hardly be a more radical rejection of what Benedict calls "the reasonableness of faith. Once the primacy of force is posited, terrorism becomes the next logical step to power, as it did in the 20th-century secular ideologies of power: The problem today is that the side of reason in Islam is lost. The ultimate consequences of the rejection of reason and the loss of causality are playing themselves out across the Muslim world. Indeed there are exhortations to Muslims to be kind to the poor, the traveler, the orphan and the sick. This is to be expected. You cannot preach only evil. In order to attract followers you must teach things that people like and can easily identify as good. Once they accept you as a prophet, guru or their spiritual guide, then you can do whatever you want and get away with it. The difference between a true spiritual teacher and a conman is in their consistency. There are several teachings of Muhammad that can be compared to those of Jesus, but the teachings of Jesus are consistent while those of Muhammad are not. Good words are dime a dozen. If they are not accompanied by good actions they are worthless. In fact the difference between a great man and a conman is in how much their word and deed differ. He even adopted children from many races to set the example. The problem with the good teachings of Muhammad is that they are reserved for fellow Muslims. The brotherhood in Islam does not extend to everyone. In fact there are many verses that tell the Muslims to kill the unbelievers and be harsh to them. A clear example that Islam is not based on the Golden Rule is the verse There are many other verses that show the brotherhood in Islam is not universal. The non believers have no rights and should not be treated in the same way that Muslims are to be treated. The entire Quran is a breach of the Golden Rule. The Quran tells Muslims to slay the unbelievers wherever they find them 2: Are these verses compatible with the Golden Rule? Islam is the only doctrine that calls upon its believers to do evil to others for the simple fact that they are not believers. According to Muslims it is not the Golden Rule that defines the good and bad, it is Muhammad who does it. They believe that what is good for Islam is the highest virtue and what is bad for Islam is the ultimate evil. This is the definition of good and evil in Islam.

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History of Jewish Literature: The Struggle of Mysticism and Tradition Against Philosophical Rationalism by Israel Zinberg. Ktav Pub Inc. Hardcover. GOOD. Spine creases, wear to binding and pages from reading.

Various meanings of empiricism Broader senses In both everyday attitudes and philosophical theories, the experiences referred to by empiricists are principally those arising from the stimulation of the sense organs. In addition to these five kinds of sensation, some empiricists also recognize kinesthetic sensation, or the sensation of movement. Even when empiricists agree on what should count as experience, however, they may still disagree fundamentally about how experience itself should be understood. Thus there may be radical theoretical differences even among empiricists who are committed to the notion that all concepts are constructed out of elements given in sensation. Two other viewpoints related to but not the same as empiricism are the pragmatism of the American philosopher and psychologist William James, an aspect of which was what he called radical empiricism, and logical positivism, sometimes also called logical empiricism. Although these philosophies are empirical in some sense, each has a distinctive focus that warrants its treatment as a separate movement. Pragmatism stresses the involvement of ideas in practical experience and action, whereas logical positivism is more concerned with the justification of scientific knowledge. When describing an everyday attitude, the word empiricism sometimes conveys an unfavourable implication of ignorance of or indifference to relevant theory. The medical empiricists opposed to Galen preferred to rely on treatments of observed clinical effectiveness, without inquiring into the mechanisms sought by therapeutic theory. But empiricism, detached from this medical association, may also be used, more favourably, to describe a hard-headed refusal to be swayed by anything but the facts that the thinker has observed for himself, a blunt resistance to received opinion or precarious chains of abstract reasoning. Stricter senses As a more strictly defined movement, empiricism reflects certain fundamental distinctions and occurs in varying degrees. Fundamental distinctions A distinction that has the potential to create confusion is the one that contrasts the a posteriori not with the a priori but with the innate. Since logical problems are easily confused with psychological problems, it is difficult to disentangle the question of the causal origin of concepts and beliefs from the question of their content and justification. It is therefore possible for beliefs to be innate without being a priori: Another supposedly identical, but in fact more or less irrelevant, property of concepts and beliefs is that of the universality of their possession or acceptance—that a priori or innate concepts and beliefs must be held by everyone. There may be, in fact, some basis for inferring universality from innateness, since many innate characteristics, such as the fear of loud noises, appear to be common to the whole human species. But there is no inconsistency in the supposition that a concept or belief is innate in one person and learned from experience in another. Two main kinds of concept have been held to be a priori. First, there are certain formal concepts of logic and of mathematics that reflect the basic structure of discourse: One might add to these the more specific theoretical concepts of physics, which are sometimes said to apply to entities that are unobservable in principle. In the long history of debate over the a priori, it was long taken for granted that all a priori propositions are necessarily true. Likewise, it was held that propositions that are contingently true, or true merely by virtue of the way the world happens to be, are a posteriori. In the s, however, the American philosopher Saul Kripke argued to the contrary that some a priori propositions are contingent and some a posteriori propositions are necessary. Thus heat refers to molecular motion, then and now, because molecular motion was the cause of sensations of warmth when the term was introduced. Because its introduction stipulated that heat is the phenomenon that causes sensations of warmth, it is knowable independently of experience that heat causes sensations of warmth, even though it is only a contingent matter of fact that it does. But the proposition is also necessary, according to Kripke, because once the referent of heat has been fixed as molecular motion, there are no imaginable circumstances in which the term could refer to anything else. This conclusion is supported by the intuition that, if it were discovered

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tomorrow that sensations of warmth in humans are actually caused by something other than molecular motion, one would not say that heat is not molecular motion but rather that sensations of warmth are caused by something other than heat. Degrees of empiricism Empiricism, whether concerned with concepts or knowledge, can be held with varying degrees of strength. On this basis, absolute, substantive, and partial empiricisms can be distinguished. Absolute empiricism Absolute empiricists hold that there are no a priori concepts, either formal or categorial, and no a priori beliefs or propositions. Absolute empiricism about the former is more common than that about the latter, however. Although nearly all Western philosophers admit that obvious tautologies e. Substantive empiricism A more moderate form of empiricism is that of the substantive empiricists, who are unconvinced by attempts that have been made to interpret formal concepts empirically and who therefore concede that formal concepts are a priori, though they deny that status to categorial concepts and to the theoretical concepts of physics, which they hold are a posteriori. The parallel point of view about knowledge assumes that the truth of logical and mathematical propositions is determined, as is that of definitional truisms, by the relationships between meanings that are established prior to experience. The truth often espoused by ethicists, for example, that one is truly obliged to rescue a person from drowning only if it is possible to do so, is a matter of meanings and not of facts about the world. On this view, all propositions that, in contrast to the foregoing example, are in any way substantially informative about the world are a posteriori. Even if there are a priori propositions, they are formal or verbal or conceptual in nature, and their necessary truth derives simply from the meanings that attached to the words they contain. A priori knowledge is useful because it makes explicit the hidden implications of substantive, factual assertions. But a priori propositions do not themselves express genuinely new knowledge about the world; they are factually empty. Substantive empiricism about knowledge regards all a priori propositions as being more-or-less concealed tautologies. That such extrication is nearly always required means that a priori knowledge is far from trivial. For the substantive empiricist, truisms and the propositions of logic and mathematics exhaust the domain of the a priori. Science, on the other hand, from the fundamental assumptions about the structure of the universe to the singular items of evidence used to confirm its theories is regarded as a posteriori throughout. The propositions of ethics and those of metaphysics, which deals with the ultimate nature and constitution of reality e. Partial empiricism The least thoroughgoing type of empiricism here distinguished, ranking third in degree, can be termed partial empiricism. According to this view, the realm of the a priori includes some concepts that are not formal and some propositions that are substantially informative about the world. At any rate, in all versions of partial empiricism there remain a great many straightforwardly a posteriori concepts and propositions: History of empiricism Ancient philosophy So-called common sense might appear to be inarticulately empiricist; and empiricism might be usefully thought of as a critical force resisting the pretensions of a more speculative rationalist philosophy. In the ancient world the kind of rationalism that many empiricists oppose was developed by Plato c. The ground was prepared for him by three earlier bodies of thought: Plato pointing to the heavens and the realm of forms, Aristotle to the earth and the realm of things. Plato, and to a lesser extent Aristotle, were both rationalists. For the Stoics the human mind is at birth a clean slate, which comes to be stocked with concepts by the sensory impingement of the material world upon it. The empiricism of the Epicureans, however, was more pronounced and consistent. For them human concepts are memory images, the mental residues of previous sense experience, and knowledge is as empirical as the ideas of which it is composed. Medieval philosophy Most medieval philosophers after St. Augustine took an empiricist position, at least about concepts, even if they recognized much substantial but nonempirical knowledge. The standard formulation of this age was: Thomas Aquinas rejected innate ideas altogether. Both soul and body participate in perception, and all ideas are abstracted by the intellect from what is given to the senses. Human ideas of unseen things, such as angels and demons and even God, are derived by analogy from the seen. The 13th-century scientist Roger Bacon emphasized empirical knowledge of the natural world and anticipated the polymath Renaissance philosopher of science Francis Bacon in preferring observation to deductive reasoning as a source of knowledge. The

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empiricism of the 14th-century Franciscan nominalist William of Ockham was more systematic. His more extreme followers extended his line of reasoning toward a radical empiricism, in which causation is not a rationally intelligible connection between events but merely an observed regularity in their occurrence.

Modern philosophy In the earlier and unsystematically speculative phases of Renaissance philosophy, the claims of Aristotelian logic to yield substantial knowledge were attacked by several 16th-century logicians; in the same century, the role of observation was also stressed. One mildly skeptical Christian thinker, Pierre Gassendi, advanced a deliberate revival of the empirical doctrines of Epicurus. But the most important defender of empiricism was Francis Bacon, who, though he did not deny the existence of a priori knowledge, claimed that, in effect, the only knowledge that is worth having as contributing to the relief of the human condition is empirically based knowledge of the natural world, which should be pursued by the systematic—indeed almost mechanical—arrangement of the findings of observation and is best undertaken in the cooperative and impersonal style of modern scientific research. Bacon was, in fact, the first to formulate the principles of scientific induction. A materialist and nominalist, Thomas Hobbes combined an extreme empiricism about concepts, which he saw as the outcome of material impacts on the bodily senses, with an extreme rationalism about knowledge, of which, like Plato, he took geometry to be the paradigm. For him all genuine knowledge is a priori, a matter of rigorous deduction from definitions. Yet all knowledge also concerns material and sensible existences, since everything that exists is a body. The most elaborate and influential presentation of empiricism was made by John Locke, an early Enlightenment philosopher, in the first two books of his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. Locke often seemed not to separate clearly the two issues of the nature of concepts and the justification of beliefs. Even so, he later admitted that much substantial knowledge—in particular, that of mathematics and morality—is a priori. He argued that infants know nothing; that if humans are said to know innately what they are capable of coming to know, then all knowledge is, trivially, innate; and that no beliefs whatever are universally accepted. Locke was more consistent about the empirical character of all concepts, and he described in detail the ways in which simple ideas can be combined to form complex ideas of what has not in fact been experienced. One group of dubiously empirical concepts—those of unity, existence, and number—he took to be derived both from sensation and from reflection. But he allowed one a priori concept—that of substance—which the mind adds, seemingly from its own resources, to its conception of any regularly associated group of perceptible qualities. He accounted for the continuity and orderliness of the world by supposing that its reality is upheld in the perceptions of an unsleeping God. It is not clear how to reconcile the existence of such notions with a thoroughgoing empiricism about concepts. Like Berkeley, Hume was convinced that perceptions involve no constituents that can exist independently of the perceptions themselves. Unlike Berkeley, he could find neither an idea nor a notion of mind or self, and as a result his radical empiricism contained an even more parsimonious view of what exists. While Berkeley thought that only minds and their ideas exist, Hume thought that only perceptions exist and that it is impossible to form an idea of anything that is not a perception or a complex of perceptions. For Hume all necessary truth is formal or conceptual, determined by the various relations that hold between ideas. Its empiricism, in a very stark form, became the basis of sensationalism, in which all of the constituents of human mental life are analyzed in terms of sensations alone. A genuinely original and clarifying attempt to resolve the controversy between empiricists and their opponents was made in the transcendental idealism of Kant, who drew upon both Hume and Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz. With the dictum that, although all knowledge begins with experience it does not all arise from experience, he established a clear distinction between the innate and the a priori. He held that there are a priori concepts, or categories—substance and cause being the most important—and also substantial or synthetic a priori truths. Although not derived from experience, the latter apply to experience. Lockean empiricism prevailed in 19th-century England until the rise of Hegelianism in the last quarter of the century; see also Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel. To be sure, the Scottish philosophers who followed Hume but avoided his skeptical conclusions insisted that humans do have substantial a priori knowledge. But the philosophy of John Stuart

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Mill 1806 is thoroughly empiricist. He held that all knowledge worth having, including mathematics, is empirical. The apparent necessity and aprioricity of mathematics, according to Mill, is the result of the unique massiveness of its empirical confirmation. All real knowledge for Mill is inductive and empirical, and deduction is sterile. It is not clear that Mill consistently adhered to this position, however. In both his epistemology and his ethics, he sometimes seemed to recognize the need for first principles that could be known without proof. The philosopher of evolution Herbert Spencer 1820 offered another explanation of the apparent necessity of some beliefs: Two important mathematicians and pioneers in the philosophy of modern physics, William Kingdon Clifford 1845 and Karl Pearson 1857, defended radically empiricist philosophies of science, anticipating the logical empiricism of the 20th century.

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Chapter 7 : History of Jewish Literature, by Israel Zinberg - The Jewish Eye

ZINBERG, ISRAEL *The struggle of mysticism and tradition against philosophical rationalism. (A history of Jewish literature, vol Translated (from the.*

A purportedly super sense-perceptual or sub sense-perceptual experience granting acquaintance of realities or states of affairs that are of a kind not accessible by way of sense perception, somatosensory modalities, or standard introspection. We can further define the terms used in the definition, as follows: For example, a person can have a super sense-perceptual experience while watching a setting sun. The inclusion of the supersensory mode is what makes the experience mystical. In one, a subject is aware of the presence of one or more realities on which one or more states of affairs supervene. It is not necessary that at the time of the experience the subject could tell herself, as it were, what realities or state of affairs were then being disclosed to her. The realization may arise following the experience. To what extent this knowledge is alleged to come from the experience alone will be discussed below Section 8. Generally, philosophers have excluded purely para-sensual experiences such as religious visions and auditions from the mystical. The definition also excludes anomalous experiences such as out of body experiences, telepathy, precognition, and clairvoyance. All of these are acquaintance with objects or qualities of a kind accessible to the senses or to ordinary introspection, such as human thoughts and future physical events. In the wide sense, mystical experiences occur within the religious traditions of at least Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Indian religions, Buddhism, and primal religions. In some of these traditions, the experiences are allegedly of a supersensory reality, such as God or Brahman or, in a few Buddhist traditions, Nirvana, as a reality See Takeuchi, , pp. Many Buddhist traditions, however, make no claim for an experience of a supersensory reality. The unconstructed experience is thought to grant insight, such as into the impermanent nature of all things. These Buddhist experiences are sub sense-perceptual, and mystical, since thisness is claimed to be inaccessible to ordinary sense perception and the awareness of it to provide knowledge about the true nature of reality. Some Buddhist experiences, however, including some Zen experiences, would not count as mystical by our definition, involving no alleged acquaintance with either a reality or a state of affairs see Suzuki, Specifically it refers to: A purportedly super sense-perceptual or sub sense-perceptual unitive experience granting acquaintance of realities or states of affairs that are of a kind not accessible by way of sense-perception, somatosensory modalities, or standard introspection. A unitive experience involves a phenomenological de-emphasis, blurring, or eradication of multiplicity, where the cognitive significance of the experience is deemed to lie precisely in that phenomenological feature. Excluded from the narrow definition, though present in the wide one, are, for example, a dualistic experience of God, where subject and God remain strictly distinct, without any blurring of the boundaries, a Jewish kabbalistic experience of a single supernal sefirah, and shamanistic experiences of spirits. These are not mystical in the narrow sense, because not unitive experiences in any degree. This would include much of mystical experience, but also religious visions and auditions, non-mystical Zen experiences, and various religious feelings, such as religious awe and sublimity. Also included is what Friedrich Schleiermacher identified as the fundamental religious experience: Numinous experiences contrast with religious experiences that involve, for example, feelings but no alleged acquaintance with non-sensory realities or states of affairs. Categories of Mystical Experiences Mystical and religious experiences can be classified in various ways, in addition to the built-in difference between mystical super sense-perceptual and sub sense-perceptual experiences. This section notes some common classifications. When not extrovertive, we may say an experience is introvertive. A dualistic experience maintains a distinction, however tenuous, between the subject and what is disclosed. Thus, theistic experiences are ordinarily dualistic, retaining, at some level, a distinction between God and the mystic. Monistic experiences are the extreme of unitive experiences, in that they dissolve all duality. They are either experiences of the absolute ontological oneness of everything, so that in a deep sense the distinctions are illusory, or are pure conscious experiences. Christian

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mystics have variously described union with the Divine. Generally, medieval Christian mysticism had at least three stages, variously described, in the union-consciousness: Also, the Hasidic master, R. It is still controversial, however, as to when such declarations are to be taken as identity assertions, with pantheistic or acosmic intentions, and when they are perhaps hyperbolic variations on descriptions of union-type experiences. Non-Theurgic Mysticism In theurgic from the Greek theourgia mysticism a mystic intends to activate the divine in the mystical experience. See Shaw, , p. So they are not involved in theurgic activity. The Jewish Kabbalah is the most prominent form of theurgic mysticism. In it, the mystic aims to bring about a modification in the inner life of the Godhead see Idel, Apophatic mysticism, put roughly, claims that nothing positive can be said about objects or states of affairs which the mystic experiences. So, apophatic theology typically will be negative theology, that we can say only what God is not. Kataphatic mysticism does make claims about what the mystic experiences. Pertaining to God, this means that God can be described by positive terms. Analytic philosophers of mysticism have been working largely with kataphatic conceptions. But for an exception see Alston in the Other Internet Resources. Even the finest name is insufficient to define it. Without words, the Tao can be experienced, and without a name, it can be known. Applied to God, apophatic mysticism maintains that the experience of God can be described only by saying what God is not. Pertaining to God, kataphatic mysticism says that God can be described by positive terms. The two need not be exclusive but represent two stages, respectively, in mystical contemplation. The Attributes of Mystical Experience 3. It is not always clear, however, whether it is the experience or its alleged object, or both, that are to be ineffable. To say that X is ineffable is to say something about X, which contravenes ineffability. Several responses to this problem are possible for the mystic. One is to avoid speech altogether and remain silent about what is revealed in experience. Mystics, however, have not been very good at this. A second possibility is to say that an ineffable object has no phenomenological properties but has non-phenomenological properties Jones, An example of unsaying can be found in the endless negations in some Madyamika and Zen Buddhist meditative consciousness. Since the truth about reality "as it is" lies outside of our conceptualizations of it, we cannot say that truth, only experience it. We must then immediately negate the latter saying by saying that reality is neither not-reality nor not not-reality. See Thich Nhat Hanh, , Chapter 5. A second, theistic, example of this approach is in the negative theology of Pseudo Dionysius c. Such continuing negation points beyond discourse to experience. Similarly, Wayne Proudfoot argues that the ineffability-claim is not describing but prescribing that no language system shall be applicable to it, and so serves to create and maintain a protective sense of mystery Proudfoot, , " However, experiences of things ineffable exist in art and music see Gallope , as well as in everyday experience. Think of the impossibility of describing the taste of coffee to someone who has never tasted it. This diminishes the argument that ascriptions of ineffability are aimed at protective strategies. Grace Jantzen has advanced a critique of the emphasis on ineffability as an attempt to remove mystical experiences from the realm of rational discourse, placing them instead into the realm of the emotions Jantzen, , p. The issue of ineffability is thus tied into questions of the epistemic value of mystical experiences, to be discussed below in section 8. This may be for rhetorical effect or because of difficulty in conveying a thought without resort to linguistic tricks. See section 4 below. Insofar as mystical experience is out of the ordinary, and the unitive quality strange for ordinary folk, at least , reports of them may very well be surprising or contrary to expectation. Mystics, though, might in time find their experiences to be expected. Hence, they may be paradoxical in sense 1. Reports of mystical experiences may be paradoxical also in sense 2 , because at times mystical language does assume logically offensive forms, when actual absurdity may not be intended. However, paradox in this sense occurs less frequently in first-hand reports of mystical experiences and more in second-order mystical systems of thought Moore, , and Staal, There is no good reason for thinking that reports of mystical experience must imply logical absurdity, as in 3 or 4. The attempt to designate mystical experiences as paradoxical in senses 3 and 4 may result from being too eager to take logically deviant language at its most literal. No logical absurdity infects this description. In a different direction, Frits Staal has argued that paradoxical mystical language has been used systematically to make

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logically respectable claims Staal, While mystics use much literal language in describing their experiences see Alston, , 80â€” , the literality need not extend to paradox in senses 3 or 4. The next three sections present this debate among philosophers of mysticism. Such a position has occurred in psychological studies as well Taves and Asprem, See section 6 below. Stace considers the universal introvertive experience to be a ripening of mystical awareness beyond the halfway house of the universal extrovertive consciousness. Jones argues for extrovertive experiences not being merely stunted introvertive ones, but full experiences in their own right. Marshall has developed a detailed phenomenology of extrovertive experiences. Stace assimilates theistic mystical experiences to his universal introvertive experience by distinguishing between experience and interpretation. The introvertive experience, says Stace, is the same across cultures. Theistic mystics are pressured by their surroundings, says Stace, to put a theistic interpretation on their introvertive experiences. Ninian Smart also maintained the universality of the monistic experience, arguing that descriptions of theistic mystical experiences reflect an interpretive overlay upon an experiential base common to both theistic and non-theistic experiences Smart, Stace has been strongly criticized for simplifying or distorting mystical reports For a summary, see Moore, , and for failing to properly describe the difference between extrovertive and introvertive experiences for example, Almond, , chapter 4. For example, Pike criticizes the Stace-Smart position because in Christian mysticism union with God is divided into discernible phases, which find no basis in Christian theology. These phases, therefore, plausibly reflect experience and not forced interpretation Pike, , Chapter 5. In contrast to Stace, R. Zaehner identified three types of mystical consciousness: Zaehner thought that theistic experience was an advance over the monistic, since the latter, he thought, expressed a self-centered interest of the mystic to be included in the ultimate.

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Chapter 8 : Rationalism, Pluralism, and Freedom - Hardcover - Jacob T. Levy - Oxford University Press

Volume 3 - The Struggle of Mysticism and Tradition Against Philosophical Rationalism Volume 4 - Italian Jewry in the Renaissance Volume 5 - The Jewish Center of Culture in the Ottoman Empire.

Rationalism and Empiricism Some Notes on Epistemological Strategies and their Implications in Ethics While the main focus in an ethics course is on ethics and the problems and issues that ethics raises, it is impossible to investigate these problems in isolation, without at least some excursions into the other philosophical sub-disciplines. While all the philosophical sub-disciplines consider what, on one level, are separate questions and issues, there are considerable interconnections, as assumptions in one area will have repercussions in other areas. One question that all ethical theories must address is where ethical knowledge arises, i. These and other similar questions raise issues that are no longer unique to ethics, rather these issues touch upon more general epistemological questions, i. Some might question whether an answer is even possible. Nevertheless, it is a legitimate indeed, an essential philosophical question and though there are difficultiesâ€”real difficultiesâ€”answers are possible. Rationalism and empiricism represent the traditional Western philosophical responses to these epistemological questions. As knowledge that arises through our experiences, empirical knowledge is about the material universe and the various entities and phenomena in that universe. In contrast a priori knowledge is not about phenomena in the empirical universe or our experiences, though some a priori knowledge is applicable to that universe. Perhaps it is easier, then, to consider a priori knowledge as knowledge that arises through reason alone, i. There are, to be sure, triangular entities, i. Again, while it is obvious that some mathematical knowledge is applicable to experience e. This difference has to do with their truth conditions. A truth condition specifies under what conditions a given statement can be said to be true or false, i. Under what conditions is this statement true? It should be obvious that the statement is true so long as the outside temperature is 75o. How would one prove whether the statement is true or false? Again, it should be obvious that one would need to determine, through some procedure or apparatus, the outside temperature. In short, one appeals to experience and the empirical data it provides. Under what conditions is this statement true and how is it possible to prove it? But, and here is the principal difference between empirical and a priori knowledge, how does one prove the statement to be true? Perhaps the most obvious response is: Well, take three apples and add them to three more apples and then there are six apples. No, at best this little exercise confirms the statement, but it fails to prove it. It is a quiet summer afternoon and James decides to rest on the grass beside a river. Some moments later a white swan swims down stream. As James continues to rest seven more swans, that are also white, swim down stream. James considers this experience and realizes that all the swans he has ever seen have been white. To be precise, one must appeal to other mathematical knowledge. At this point someone will perhaps take exception with this analysis and point out that since one learns mathematics through experience, so mathematics must also be empirical knowledge! The point is well taken. The source, however, is not the real issue. The real issue is what the knowledge is about and its truth conditions. Moreover, even though some a priori knowledge might arise through experience, it should be obvious that most does not, i. Indeed, since the statement is about all the entities in the universe, the experience one needs to prove it as an empirical claim is impossible. It should be obvious, however, that one needs no experience or empirical data to prove the statement, i. All the entities in the universe are either purple or not purple, bigger than a cat or not bigger than a cat, spherical or not spherical, and so on. One can know that this statement is true even when one has no idea what the characteristic in question is. Thus, one knows that all the entities in the universe are either merbalis or not-merbalis, even though no one else in the universe knows what merbalis is since I made it up! To rationalists this power to discern and generate universal truths is quite impressive. Indeed, the differences between rationalism and empiricism as to a what constitutes genuine knowledge, b what such knowledge is about, and c its truth conditions, suggest to the rationalists that there is a real qualitative difference between empirical and a priori knowledge. To be precise, most rationalists

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argue that a priori knowledge is superior to empirical knowledge. The one consideration that is seen as the most decisive in this argument is the difference in truth conditions between empirical and a priori knowledge. Most rationalists consider there to be a fundamental problem with empirical knowledge. Empirical knowledge depends upon our senses, senses that, the rationalist wastes no time to demonstrate, are unreliable. Here the rationalist appeals to common sense deceptions and perceptual illusions—when one places a straight rod into water the rod appears to bend, at a distance a square tower appears to be round, parallel lines appear to converge in the distance, and so on. It seems that it is possible to doubt even the most certain sense perceptions. In contrast, a priori knowledge is certain knowledge. Furthermore, while empirical knowledge represents conditional knowledge, i. As with most philosophical theories there is some disagreement between rationalists on certain issues. One issue that separates rationalists is the answer to the question where a priori knowledge originates. The more radical rationalists e. At best then experience acts to elicit the knowledge, but the knowledge was there prior to the experience. Given these three innate ideas and reason, Descartes argues that other a priori knowledge is derivable. The obvious problem that these radical rationalist strategies face is the need to explain where the mind acquires these innate ideas. It is also possible to argue that evolution is responsible, i. While this sounds rather strange, the linguist Noam Chomsky argues this precise thesis. Unless one assumes that certain linguistic structures, e. Immanuel Kant argues a less radical rationalist line. Kant accepts the rationalist claim that reason alone can provide certain knowledge. Nevertheless, Kant also accepts the empiricist claim that all knowledge begins in experience, i. Knowledge, as Kant conceives it then is what the mind produces as it orders and structures otherwise chaotic sense data. The rather radical idea here is that it is the mind that imposes the order and structure on the sense data, the implication being that the sense data have no intrinsic order or structure. The main organizational principles that the mind imposes on sense data are its spatial and temporal structure. These considerations led Kant to a metaphysical distinction—the distinction between the noumenal universe and the phenomenal universe. The noumenal universe comprises entities-in-themselves, while the phenomenal universe comprises entities-through-their-appearances White This is rather technical so it is best to go through it in stages. Suppose someone presents us with a blue glass sphere. It is through our senses that we perceive this sphere. In this case the principal senses are visual and tactile—our visual sense indicates that it is blue and spherical and our tactile sense that it is glass and also that it is spherical. Philosophers call these qualities—being blue, being glass and being spherical—properties or characteristics. All entities have properties—a size, a shape, a color, a taste, a texture, an odor, and sound and so on. All knowledge about entities comes through their properties which Kant calls appearances. Our commonsense intuitions suggest, however, that there must be some substance or matter that has the properties that our senses perceive, i. While the substance that underlies the properties is unseen, nevertheless reason and commonsense insist that it must exist. Descartes suggests that such inferences are rather common occurrences, e. But does one see a person? No, all that one sees is a cap, a coat and perhaps trousers and shoes. Nevertheless, no one doubts that there is someone under all the apparel. Even though one is unable to see the person one still reasons that there must be one there, since clothes seldom stroll across lawns on their own. All that is knowable are the properties i. These appearances are the entities that comprise the phenomenal universe. Since all our knowledge comes through the senses and reason, these act as filters which order and structure all our perceptions and thoughts. The entities-in-themselves that underlie the perceptions remain forever elusive. The main point to remember is that rationalists believe that, even though it might require experience to initiate the knowledge process, there is some knowledge that is irreducible to experience, i. All knowledge, the empiricist argues, arises through, and is reducible to, sense perception. Thus, there is no knowledge that arises through reason alone. It is essential to be clear here: All empiricists acknowledge that human beings possess reason—reason is the instrument that allows us to manipulate and augment the knowledge that experience provides. Knowledge, however, has its origins in experience rather than in reason. Empiricism begins with the distinction between sense data and ideas. Sense data represent the basic information that the senses present to the mind through our perceptual experiences, i. To illustrate, suppose

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that one sees a blue sphere. This sense experience is reducible to the visual act and the sense data i. At this stage there is no conscious recognition that one sees a blue sphere, all there is is the pure sense data that the senses present to the mind through the sense experiences. To the empiricist, sense data represent the basic material that the mind uses to construct the ideas that comprise all our knowledge. Thus, no matter what the idea is, it is possible to trace that idea to some sense experience s. While the precise details differ, these are the basic cognitive mechanisms that the principal empiricist philosophersâ€”John Locke, George Berkeley and David Humeâ€”all appeal to in order to explain the process through which sense data becomes knowledge. Nevertheless, empiricism argues that such knowledge is still reducible to experience.

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Chapter 9 : TradCatKnight: Rationalism

1 AGAINST RATIONALISM Michael Rosen Rationality and the issues associated with it have always occupied a central place within the Western philosophical tradition.

A-D[edit] Science in the past and partly in the present , was dominated by one-sided empiricism. Ludwig von Bertalanffy General System Theory. E-H[edit] I have found no better expression than "religious" for confidence in the rational nature of reality, insofar as it is accessible to human reason. Whenever this feeling is absent, science degenerates into uninspired empiricism. Albert Einstein Letter to Maurice Solovine, 1 January [Einstein Archive] ; published in Letters to Solovine Many people think that the progress of the human race is based on experiences of an empirical, critical nature, but I say that true knowledge is to be had only through a philosophy of deduction. For it is intuition that improves the world, not just following a trodden path of thought. Intuition makes us look at unrelated facts and then think about them until they can all be brought under one law. To look for related facts means holding onto what one has instead of searching for new facts. Intuition is the father of new knowledge, while empiricism is nothing but an accumulation of old knowledge. Albert Einstein Einstein and the Poet. Quite the contrary, suspicion arises that the absence of major difficulties is a result of the decrease of empirical content brought about by the elimination of alternatives, and of facts that can be discovered with their help. In other words, the suspicion arises that this alleged success is due to the fact that the theory, when extended beyond its starting point, was turned into rigid ideology. Such Ideology is "successful" not because it agrees so well with the facts; it is successful because no facts have been specified that could constitute a test, and because some such facts have been removed. Its "success" is entirely man-made. It was decided to stick to some ideas, come what may, and the result was, quite naturally, the survival of these ideas. If now the initial decision is forgotten, or made only implicitly, for example, if it becomes common law in physics, then the survival itself will seem to constitute independent support. This is how empirical "evidence" may be created by a procedure which quotes as its justification the very same evidence it has Produced. Paul Karl Feyerabend Against Method. Empiricism takes it for granted that sense experience is a better mirror of the world than pure thought. Praise of argument takes it for granted that the artifices of Reason give better results than the unchecked play of our emotions. Such assumptions may be perfectly plausible and even true. Still, one should occasionally put them to a test. Putting them to a test means that we stop using the methodology associated with them, start doing science in a different way and see what happens. Ancient skepticism was so far from making feeling and intuition the principle of truth that, on the contrary, it turned first of all against the senses. Hegel , Encyclopedia of Philosophy , cited in W. Kaufmann, Hegel , pp. The more often something has occurred in the past, the more certain that it will in all the future. Knowledge relates solely to what is and to its recurrence. New forms of being, especially those arising from the historical activity of man, lie beyond empiricist theory. Thoughts which are not simply carried over from the prevailing pattern of consciousness, but arise from the aims and resolves of the individual, in short, all historical tendencies that reach beyond what is present and recurrent, do not belong to the domain of science. Such thought and the critical, dialectical element it communicates to the process of cognition, thereby maintaining conscious connection between that process and historical life, do not exist for empiricism; nor do the associated categories, such as the distinction between essence and appearance, identity in change, and rationality of ends, indeed, the concept of man, of personality, even of society and class taken in the sense that presupposes specific viewpoints and directions of interest. According to rationalism, too, all subjective and objective potentialities are rooted in insights which the individual already possesses, but rationality uses existing objects as well as the active inner striving and ideas of man to construct standards for the future. In this regard, it is not so closely associated with the present order as is empiricism. The bottom of being is left logically opaque to us, a datum in the strict sense of the word, something we simply come upon and find, and about which if we wish to act we should pause and wonder as little as possible. In this confession lies the

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lasting truth of empiricism. We can be deceived by believing what is untrue, but we certainly are also deceived by not believing what is true. Which deception is more dangerous? Hong , p. Actually it is easy to show that in general no significant problem can be solved empirically, except for accidents so rare as to be statistically unimportant. We try everything, but we try the right thing first! Herbert Marcuse One-Dimensional Man, p. Q-T[edit] Our argument is not flatly circular, but something like it. It has the form, figuratively speaking, of a closed curve in space. Nine Logico-Philosophical Essays, p. Empiricism and idealism alike are faced with a problem to which, so far, philosophy has found no satisfactory solution. This is the problem of showing how we have knowledge of other things than ourself and the operations of our own mind. The newer method, however, had never prevailed in German universities, and after it was held responsible for the horrors of the Revolution. Recanting revolutionaries such as Coleridge found in Kant an intellectual support for their opposition to French atheism. The Germans, in their resistance to the French, were glad to have a German philosophy to uphold them. Even the French, after the fall of Napoleon, were glad of any weapon against Jacobinism. All these factors favored Kant. In Leibniz, if the principle is completely true and the deductions are entirely valid, all is well; but the structure is unstable, and the slightest flaw anywhere brings it down in ruins. In Locke and Hume, on the other contrary, the base of the pyramid is on the solid ground of observed fact, and the pyramid tapers upward, not downward; consequently the equilibrium is stable, and a flaw here and there can be rectified without total disaster. The charge is no doubt exaggerated, but it is hard to deny that they have sometimes gloried in presenting themselves as straightforward empiricists for whom the proper task of the historian is simply to uncover the facts about the past and recount them as objectively as possible. Quentin Skinner , "The practice of history and the cult of the fact", Visions of Politics Philosophy lost its prestige to the extent that it lost its evident advantage in cleverness to "normal life. It had to accept that the independent cleverness theories of pragmatics, economics, strategy, and politics proved themselves to be its better, until, with its logical niceties, it became infantile and academic, and stood there as the Utopian idiot with its reminiscences about great ideals. Today philosophy is surrounded on all sides by maliciously clever empiricisms and realistic disciplines that "know better. I once received a valuable lesson in this. By searching, you can always find someone who made a well-sounding statement that confirms your point of view"and, on every topic, it is possible to find another dead thinker who said the exact opposite.