

Unit 2 Idealism, Realism and Pragmatism in Education

By the end of this topic, you should be able to:

1. Explain major world views of philosophies: idealism, realism, and pragmatism; and
2. Identify the contributions of the world views of philosophies, such as idealism, realism, and pragmatism to the field of education.

INTRODUCTION

Traditionally, philosophical methods have consisted of analysis and clarification of concepts, arguments, theories, and language. Philosophers have analyzed theories and arguments; by enhancing previous arguments, raising powerful objections that lead to the revision or abandonment of theories and lines of arguments (Noddings, 1998).

This topic will provide readers with some general knowledge of philosophies. Basically, there are three general or world philosophies that are idealism, realism, and pragmatism. Educators confront philosophical issues on a daily basis, often not recognizing them as such. In fact, in the daily practice of educators, they formulate goals, discuss values, and set priorities. Hence, educators who gets involved in dealing with goals, values and priorities soon realizes that in a modern society such as ours there are many competing choices. Some are incompatible with others. Hard decisions have to be made on some everyday dilemmas that educators confront, such as: how do we treat a specific students needs, yet deal fairly with a class of students as a whole? When, if ever, should we bend the rules? and should a teacher ever emphasize good behavior over subject skills? In trying to resolve such questions, the discussion may become philosophical, even though it may not be recognized by educators as such. With philosophy it can help educators to make better choices among goals, values and priorities.

Philosophy is concerned primarily with identifying beliefs about human existence and evaluating arguments that support those beliefs. Develop a set of questions that may drive philosophical investigations.

7. 1 IDEALISM

In the Western culture, idealism is perhaps the oldest systematic philosophy, dating back at least to Plato in ancient Greece. From that time until now, idealism has been a dominant philosophical influence to our society, for example in the American philosophical thought, it was inspired so much by the German idealism. Even though idealism is not as strong as it was before, it is still alive in certain areas such as contemporary religious studies and certain aspects of moral philosophy.

Idealism is the philosophical theory that maintains that the ultimate nature of reality is based on mind or ideas. It holds that the so-called external or real world is inseparable from mind, consciousness, or perception. Idealism is any philosophy which argues that the only things knowable are consciousness or the contents of consciousness; not anything in the outside world, if such a place actually exists.

Indeed, idealism often takes the form of arguing that the only real things are mental entities, not physical things and argues that reality is somehow dependent upon the mind rather than independent of it. Some narrow versions of idealism argue that our understanding of reality reflects the workings of our mind, first and foremost, that the properties of objects have no standing independent of minds perceiving them.

Besides, the nature and identity of the mind in idealism upon which reality is dependent is one issue that has divided idealists of various sorts. Some argue that there is some objective mind outside of nature; some argue that it is simply the common power of reason or rationality; some argue that it is the collective mental faculties of society; and some focus simply on the minds of individual human beings.

In short, the main tenant of idealism is that ideas and knowledge are the truest reality. Many things in the world change, but ideas and knowledge are enduring. Idealism was often referred to as idea-ism. Idealists believe that ideas can change lives. The most important part of a person is the mind. It is to be nourished and developed.

To achieve a sufficient understanding of idealism, it is necessary to examine the works of selected outstanding philosophers usually associated with this philosophy. Idealism comes in several flavors:

(a) Platonic idealism - there exists a perfect realm of form and ideas and our world merely contains shadows of

that realm; only ideas can be known or have any reality;

(b) Religious idealism - this theory argues that all knowledge originates in perceived phenomena which have been organized by categories.

(c) Modern idealism - all objects are identical with some idea and the ideal knowledge is itself the system of ideas.

How does modern idealism compare with the other idealism of earlier periods? Discuss.

7.1.1 Platonic Idealism

Plato was a Greek philosopher during the 4th century B.C.E. - a student of Socrates and teacher of Aristotle.



Figure 7.1: Plato (427 - 347 B.C.E.)

Platonism is an ancient school of philosophy founded by Plato. At the beginning, this school had a physical existence at a site just outside the walls of Athens called the Academy, as well as the intellectual unity of a shared approach to philosophizing.

Platonic idealism usually refers to Plato's theory of forms or doctrine of ideas, the exact philosophical meaning of which is perhaps one of the most disputed questions in higher academic philosophy. Plato held the realm of ideas to be absolute reality. Plato's method was the dialectic method - all thinking begins with a thesis; as exemplified in the Socratic dialogues. Its main doctrine is that the objects of our thoughts constitute the ultimate and eternal reality. The reality is physically perceive is but a shadow of that. Plato's argument that the real world is the same as the world of ideas played a great role in the later development of western religion. Some critics hold Plato argued that

truth is an abstraction. In other words, we are urged to believe that Plato's theory of ideas is an abstraction, divorced from the so-called external world, of modern European philosophy; despite the fact Plato taught that ideas are ultimately real and different from non-ideal things.

According to Platonic idealism, there exists a perfect realm of form and ideas and our world merely contains shadows of that realm. Plato was a follower of Socrates, a truly innovative thinker of his time, who did not

record his ideas, but shared them orally through a question and answer approach. Plato presented his ideas in two works: The Republic and Laws. He believed in the importance of searching for truth because truth was perfect and eternal. He wrote about separating the world of ideas from the world of matter. Ideas are constant, but in the world of matter, information and ideas are constantly changing because of their sensory nature. Therefore Plato's idealism suggested moving from opinion to true knowledge in the form of critical discussions, or the dialectic. Since at the end of the discussion, the ideas or opinions will begin to synthesize as they work closer to truth. Knowledge is a process of discovery that can be attained through skilful questioning. For example, a particular tree, with a branch or two missing, possibly alive, possibly dead, and with the initials of two lovers carved into its bark, is distinct from the abstract form of tree-ness. A tree is the ideal that each of us holds that allows us to identify the imperfect reflections of trees all around us.

Platonism is considered to be in mathematics departments all over the world, regarding the predominant philosophy of mathematics as the foundations of mathematics. One statement of this philosophy is the thesis that mathematics is not created but discovered. The absence in this thesis is of clear distinction between mathematical and non-mathematical creation that leaves open the inference that it applies to supposedly creative endeavors in art, music, and literature. Plato held Pythagoras together with the Pythagorean theorem in high regard, where Pythagoras as well as his followers in the movement known as Pythagoreanism claimed the world was literally built up from numbers; an abstract and absolute form.

Plato believed in the importance of state involvement in education and in moving individuals from concrete to abstract thinking. He believed that individual differences exist and that outstanding people should be rewarded for their knowledge. With this thinking came the view that girls and boys should have equal opportunities for education. In Plato's utopian society there were three social classes of education: workers, military personnel, and rulers. He believed that the ruler or king would be a good person with much wisdom because it was only ignorance that led to evil.

7.1.2 Religious Idealism: Augustine

Religion and idealism are closely attached. Judaism, the originator of Christianity, and Christianity were influenced by many of the Greek philosophers that hold idealism strongly. Saint Augustine of Hippo, a bishop, a confessor, a doctor of the church, and one of the great thinkers of the Catholic Church discussed the universe as

being divided into the City of God and the City of Man.

The City of God was governed by truth and goodness whereas The City of Man was governed by the senses.



Figure 7.2: Saint Augustine of Hippo (354 - 430 C.E.)

Source:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Augustine_of_Hippo

This parallels Plato's scheme of the world of ideas and the world of matter. Religious thinkers believed that man did not create knowledge, but discovered it. Augustine, like Plato did not believe that one person could teach another. Instead, they must be led to understanding through skilful questioning. Religious idealists see individuals as creations of God who have souls and contain elements of godliness that need to be developed.

Augustine was connected the philosophy of Platonists and Neo-Platonist with Christianity. For instance, he saw the World of Ideas as the City of God and the World of Matter as the City of Man. He interpreted the pagan idea of the Good as God and matter as man: evil. Plato believed in absolute truth based on science and reason whereas Augustine believed in irrational faith in God. Augustine also saw parallels with the ideas of rediscovery of knowledge - the fall of Adam, the origin of knowledge - God created it, and educational philosophy: worldly knowledge was wrong, faith over reason. He believed that faith based knowledge is determined by the church and all true knowledge came from God.

According to Ozmon & Craver, 2008 today one can see the tremendous influence religious idealism has had on American education. Early Christians implemented the idea of systematic teaching, which was used consistently throughout new and established schools. Many Greek and Jewish ideas about the nature of humanity were taught. For centuries, the Christian church educated generations with Idealist philosophy. In addition, idealism and the Judeo-Christian religion were unified in European culture by the Middle Ages and thereafter.

Augustine was also very influential in the history of education where he introduced the theory of three different types of students and instructed teachers to adapt their teaching styles to each student's individual

learning style. The three different kinds of students are:

- (a) The student who has been well-educated by knowledgeable teachers;
- (b) The student who has had no education; and
- (c) The student who has had a poor education, but believes himself to be well educated.

If a student has been well educated in a wide variety of subjects, the teacher must be careful not to repeat what they have already learned, but to challenge the student with material which they do not yet know thoroughly. With the student who has had no education, the teacher must be patient, willing to repeat things until the student understands and sympathetic. Perhaps the most difficult student, however, is the one with an inferior education who believes he understands something when he does not. Augustine stressed the importance of showing this type of student the difference between having words and having understanding and of helping the student to remain humble with his acquisition of knowledge.

An additional fundamental idea which Augustine introduced is the idea of teachers responding positively to the questions they may receive from their students, no matter if the student interrupted his teacher. Augustine also founded the controlled style of teaching. This teaching style ensures the student's full understanding of a concept because the teacher does not bombard the student with too much material; focuses on one topic at a time; helps them discover what they don't understand, rather than moving on too quickly; anticipates questions; and helps them learn to solve difficulties and find solutions to problems. In a nutshell, Augustine claimed there are two basic styles a teacher uses when speaking to the students:

- (i) The mixed style includes complex and sometimes showy language to help students see the beautiful artistry of the subject they are studying; and
- (ii) The grand style is not quite as elegant as the mixed style, but is exciting and heartfelt, with the purpose of igniting the same passion in the students' hearts.

Augustine balanced his teaching philosophy with the traditional bible-based practice of strict discipline where he agreed with using punishment as an incentive for children to learn. Augustine believed all people tend toward evil, and students must therefore be physically punished when they allow their evil desires to direct their actions.

Identify and explain the aims, content, and the methods of education based on the educational philosophy of Aristotle.

7.1.3 Modern Idealism: Rene Descartes, Immanuel Kant, and Friedrich Hegel

By the beginning of the modern period in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, idealism has become to be largely identified with systematization and subjectivism. Some major features of modern idealism are:

- (a) Belief that reality includes, in addition to the physical universe, that which transcends it, is superior to it, and which is eternal. This ultimate reality is non-physical and is best characterized by the term mind;
- (b) Physical realities draw their meaning from the transcendent realities to which they are related;
- (c) That which is distinctive of human nature is mind. Mind is more than the physical entity, brain;
- (d) Human life has a predetermined purpose. It is to become more like the transcendent mind;
- (e) Man's purpose is fulfilled by development of the intellect and is referred to as self-realization;
- (f) Ultimate reality includes absolute values;
- (g) Knowledge comes through the application of reason to sense experience. In so far as the physical world reflects the transcendent world, we can determine the nature of the transcendent; and
- (h) Learning is a personal process of developing the potential within. It is not conditioning or pouring in facts, but it is self-realization. Learning is a process of discovery.

The identification of modern idealism was encouraged by the writings and thoughts of Renè Descartes, Immanuel Kant, and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel.

(i) René Descartes

Descartes, a French philosopher, was born in the town of La Haye in the south of France. In 1606, at the age of 8, Descartes attended the Jesuit college of Henri IV in La Flèche, where he studied literature, grammar, science, and



mathematics. In 1614, he studied civil and cannon law at Poitiers. In 1616, he received his baccalaureate and licentiate degrees in law. Aside from his law



Figure 7.3: René Descartes (1596 - 1650 C.E.) Source: <http://www.renedescartes.com/>

degrees, Descartes also spent time studying philosophy, theology, and medicine. After a short stay in the military, Descartes went on to lead a quiet life, continuing his intellectual pursuits, writing philosophical essays, and exploring the world of science and mathematics.

In 1637, he published geometry, in which his combination of algebra and geometry gave birth to analytical geometry, known as Cartesian Geometry. But the most important contribution Descartes made was his philosophical writings. Descartes was convinced that science and mathematics could be used to explain everything in nature, so he was the first to describe the physical universe in terms of matter and motion - seeing the universe as a giant mathematically designed engine. Descartes wrote three important texts: Discourse on Method of rightly conducting the reason and seeking truth in the sciences, "Meditations on First Philosophy and A Principles of Philosophy". In his Discourse on Method, he attempts to arrive at a fundamental set of principles that one can know as true without any doubt. To achieve this, he employs a method called metaphysical doubt, sometimes also referred to as methodological skepticism where he rejects any ideas that can be doubted, and then re-establishes them in order to acquire a firm foundation for genuine knowledge. Initially, Descartes arrives at only a single principle - thought exists: „thought cannot be separated from me, therefore, I exist. Most famously, this is known as cogito ergo sum where it means I think, therefore I am. Therefore, Descartes concluded, if he doubted, then something or someone must be doing the doubting; therefore the very fact that he doubted proved his existence. Descartes decides that he can be certain that he exists because he thinks as he perceives his body through the use of the senses; however, these have previously been proven unreliable.

Hence, Descartes assumes that the only indubitable knowledge is that he is a thinking thing. Thinking is his essence as it is the only thing about him that cannot be doubted. Descartes defines thought or cogitatio as what happens in me such that I am immediately conscious of it, insofar as I am conscious of it. Thinking is thus every activity of a person of which he is immediately conscious.

(ii) Immanuel Kant

Immanuel Kant, one of the world's great philosopher, was born in the East Prussian city of Königsberg, Germany studied at its schools and university, and worked there as a tutor and professor for more than forty years. He



Figure 7.4: Immanuel Kant (1724 - 1804 C.E.)
Source: <http://www.philosophypages.com/>

had never traveled more than fifty miles from home. Although his outward life was one of legendary calm and regularity, Kant's intellectual work easily justified his own claim to have effected a Copernican Revolution in philosophy. Beginning with his inaugural dissertation in 1770 on the difference between right and left-handed spatial orientations, Kant patiently worked out the most comprehensive and influential philosophical programme of the modern era. His central thesis - that the possibility of human knowledge presupposes the active participation of the human mind - is deceptively simple, but the details of its application are notoriously complex.

In writing his *Critique of Pure Reason* and *Critique of Practical Reason*, Kant tried to make sense of rationalism and empiricism within the idealist philosophy. In his system, individuals could have a valid knowledge of human experience that was established by the scientific laws of nature. The *Critique of Pure Reason* spells out

the conditions for mathematical, scientific, and metaphysical knowledge in its *Transcendental Aesthetic*, *Transcendental Analytic*, and *Transcendental Dialectic*. Carefully distinguishing judgments as analytic or synthetic and as a priori or a posteriori, Kant held that the most interesting and useful varieties of human knowledge rely upon synthetic a priori judgments, which are, in turn, possible only when the mind determines the conditions of its own experience. Thus, it is we who impose the forms of space and time upon all possible sensation in mathematics, and it is we who render all experience coherent as scientific knowledge governed by traditional notions of substance and causality by applying the pure concepts of the understanding to all possible experience. However, regulative principles of this sort hold only for the world as we know it, and since metaphysical propositions seek a truth beyond all experience, they cannot be established within the bounds of reason. In *Critique of Practical Reason*, Kant grounded the conception of moral autonomy upon our postulation of God, freedom, and immortality.

Kant's philosophy of education involved some aspects of character education. He believed in the importance of treating each person as an end and not as a means. He thought that education should include training in discipline, culture, discretion, and moral training. Teaching children to think and an emphasis on duty toward self and others were also vital points in his philosophies.

Teaching a child to think is associated closely with Kant's notion of will, and the education of will means living

according to the duties flowing from the categorical imperatives. Kant's idealism is based on his concentration on thought processes and the nature of relationship between mind and its objects on the one hand and universal moral ideas on the other. With these systematic thoughts it has greatly influenced all subsequent Western philosophy, idealistic, and otherwise.

(iii) Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel

George Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, German philosopher, is one of the creators of German idealism. He was born in Stuttgart, Germany and conducted a normal and uneventful life as a youth and even until he was a tutor of theology in the University of Tübingen. Hegel continued to study and ended up as a professor of philosophy at the University of Berlin, remaining there until his death.

Hegel developed a comprehensive philosophical framework, or system, to account in an integrated and developmental way for the relation of mind and nature, the subject and object of knowledge, and psychology, the state, history, art, religion, and philosophy. In particular, he developed a concept of mind or spirit that manifested itself in a set of contradictions and oppositions that it ultimately integrated and united, such as those between nature and freedom, and immanence and transcendence, without eliminating either pole or reducing it to the other. However, Hegel's most influential conceptions are of speculative logic or dialectic, absolute idealism, absolute spirit, negativity, sublation, the master / slave dialectic, ethical life, and the importance of history.

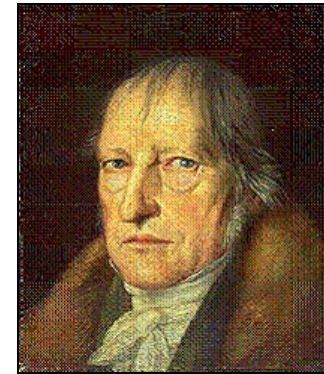


Figure 7.5: George Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831 C.E.)

Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/>

Hegelianism is a collective term for schools of thought following Hegel's philosophy which can be summed up by the saying that the rational alone is real, which means that all reality is capable of being expressed in rational categories. His goal was to reduce reality to a more synthetic unity within the system of transcendental idealism. In fact, one major feature of the Hegelian system is movement towards richer, more complex, and more complete synthesis.

Three of Hegel's most famous books are *Phenomenology of Mind*, *Logic*, and *Philosophy of Right*. In these books,

Hegel emphasizes three major aspects: logic, nature, and spirit. Hegel maintained that if his logical system were applied accurately, one would arrive at the Absolute Ideas, which is similar to Plato's unchanging ideas. However, the difference is that Hegel was sensitive to change where change, development, and movement are all central and necessary in Hegel's logic. Even Absolute Ideas is the final stage only as it concerns thought process because Absolute Ideas have an antithesis - Nature.

Nature was considered to be the opposite of the Absolute Ideas. Ideas and nature together form the Absolute Spirit which is manifested by history, art, religion, and philosophy. Hegel's idealism is in the search for final Absolute Spirit. Examining any one thing required examining or referring to another thing. Hegel's thinking is not as prominent as it once was because his system led to the glorification of the state at the expense of individuals. Hegel thought that to be truly educated an individual must pass through various stages of the cultural evolution of mankind. Additionally, he reasoned that it was possible for some individuals to know everything essential in the history of humanity.

The far reaching influence of Hegel is due in a measure to the undoubted vastness of the scheme of philosophical synthesis which he conceived and partly realized. A philosophy which undertook to organize under the single formula of triadic development every department of knowledge, from abstract logic up to the philosophy of history, has a great deal of attractiveness to those who are metaphysically inclined. Hegel's philosophy is the highest expression of that spirit of collectivism which characterized the nineteenth century. In theology, Hegel revolutionized the methods of inquiry. The application of his notion of development to biblical criticism and to historical investigation is obvious to anyone who compares the spirit and purpose of contemporary theology with the spirit and purpose of the theological literature of the first half of the nineteenth century. In science, as well, and in literature, the substitution of the category of becoming for the category of being is a very patent fact, and is due to the influence of Hegel's method. In political economy and political science the effect of Hegel's collectivistic conception of the „state%“ supplanted to a large extent the individualistic conception which was handed down from the eighteenth century to the nineteenth.

Hegel also had considerable influence on the philosophy and theory of education. He appeared to think that to be truly educated, an individual must pass through the various stages of the cultural evolution of humankind. This idea can be much applies to the development of science and technology. For instance, to a person who lived 300 years ago, electricity was unknown except as a natural occurrence, such as lightning. Then again, today,

practically everyone depends on the electrical power for everyday use and has a working, practical knowledge of it entirely outside the experience of a person from the past. A contemporary person can easily learn elementary facts about electricity in a relatively short time; that is he or she can pass through or learn an extremely important phase of our cultural evolution simply due to a passing of time.

Finally, in short, in Hegel's philosophical education, he believed that only mind is real and that human thought, through participation in the universal spirit, progresses toward a destined ideal by a dialectical process of resolving opposites through synthesis. 112/126

REALISM

According to Ozmon and Craver (2008) the most central thread of realism is the principal or thesis of independence. This thesis holds that reality, knowledge, and value exist independently of the human mind. The world of ideas and matter defined in idealism by Plato and Socrates do not exist separately and apart from each other for realists. Realists contend that material things can exist whether or not there is a human being around to appreciate or perceive them.

Realists believe that the study of ideas can be enhanced by the study of material things. They believe that knowledge is power, and acquiring knowledge allows individuals to deal with problems and to face life effectively. If the mind is a blank slate, then knowledge comes from sources other than the mind, those things gained from sensation and reflection. Moreover, realists hold that the essence of things is objectively given in nature, and that our classifications are not arbitrary. As such, realism is contrasted with nominalism, the theory that universals are merely names or general terms.

7.2 REALISM

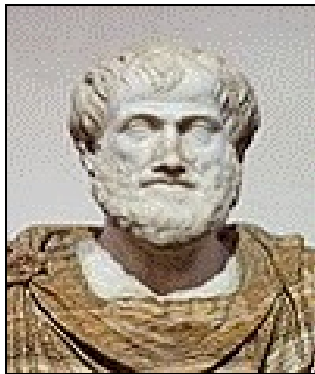
More generally, realism is any philosophical theory that emphasizes the existence of some kind of things or objects, in contrast to theories that dispense with the things in question in favour of words, ideas, or logical constructions. In

particular, the term stands for the theory that there is a reality quite independent of the mind. In this sense, realism is opposed to idealism, the theory that only minds and their contents exist.

To understand this complex philosophy, one must examine its development beginning from the classical times up to the nineteenth century. Philosophers like Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas, Francis Bacon, John Locke, Alfred North Whitehead, and Bertrand Russell have contributed much to realism ideology.

7.2.1 Aristotle Realism

Aristotle (384 - 322 B.C.E.), a great Greek philosopher, was a child of to a physician to the King of Macedon, thus science was in his background. At the age of seventeen, he went to Athens and joined Plato's school, where he stayed until Plato's death. Although he studied under Plato,



Aristotle fundamentally disagreed with his teacher on just about everything. Aristotle could not bring himself to think of the world in abstract terms the way Plato did; above all else,

Aristotle believed that the world could be understood at a fundamental level through the detailed observation and cataloguing of phenomenon. That is, knowledge, which is what the word science means, is fundamentally empirical.

As a result of this belief, Aristotle literally wrote about everything: poetics, rhetoric, ethics, politics, meteorology, embryology, physics, mathematics, metaphysics, anatomy, physiology, logic, dreams, and so forth.

Aristotle was the first person to asserts that nature is understandable. This tradition, opposed to the idea that nature is under the control of changeable divinity which are to be appeared rather than understood, is one of the roots of science. Aristotle also provides a good example of the way in which what one knows or believes influences the way one understands new information. His theory of motion flows from his understanding of matter as constituted of four elements: air, earth, fire, and water. Objects, being solid like earth, would tend to clump together with other solids - earth, so objects tend to fall to earth, their natural place and an object's natural state is then at rest. Certainly, this explains a common observation. Falling is an example of a natural motion in Aristotle's scheme.

Aristotle proposed Aristotelian Realism that ideas, such as the idea of God or the idea of a tree, can exist without matter, but matter cannot exist without form. In order to get to form, it was necessary to study material things. As a result, Aristotle used syllogism, which is a process of „ordering statements about reality in a logical, systematic form (Ozmon & Craver, 2008). This systematic form would include a major premise, a minor premise, and a conclusion. The problem with this thinking is that if one premise is false, the conclusion can not be accurate. For example, a famous but a simplistic version of a syllogism goes as follows:

All men are mortal.
Socrates is a man;
Therefore, Socrates is mortal.

Aristotle described the relation between form and matter with the Four Causes:

- (a) Material cause - the matter from which something is made;
- (b) Formal cause - the design that shapes the material object;
- (c) Efficient cause - the agent that produces the object; and
- (d) Final cause - the direction toward which the object is tending.

Through these different forms, Aristotle demonstrated that matter was constantly in a process of change. He believed that God, the Ultimate Reality held all creation together. Organization was very important in Aristotle's philosophy. It was his thought that human beings as rational creatures are fulfilling their purpose when they think and thinking are the highest characteristic.

According to Aristotle, each thing had a purpose and education's purpose was to develop the capacity for reasoning. Proper character was formed by following the Golden Mean, the path between extremes of the soul. Aristotle believed that a good education helps achieve the Golden Mean and thereby promotes harmony and balance of soul and body. Aristotle spoke of three aspects of the soul: vegetative - brass, animative - silver, and rational - gold. Balance and moderation in all things was a key to a happy life. The body and mind were not in opposition, but by collecting data using the senses, reasoning was developed.

The importance of education in the philosophy of Aristotle was enormous, since the individual man could learn to

use his reason to arrive at virtue, happiness, and political harmony only through the process of education. For Aristotle, the purpose of education is to produce a good man. Man is not good by nature so he must learn to control his animal activities through the use of reason. Only when man behaves by habit and reason, according to his nature as a rational being, he is capable of happiness. In short, education must aim at the development of the full potentialities of each man man's intellectual capacities to the fullest extent and individual's body to its highest level of health and strength.

7.2.2 Religious Realism: Thomas Aquinas

Saint Thomas Aquinas (1225 - 1274) was a priest of the Roman Catholic Church in the Dominican Order in Italy. He is also an immensely influential philosopher and theologian in the tradition of scholasticism, known as Doctor Angelicus and Doctor Communis. He is frequently referred to as Thomas since Aquinas refers to his residence rather than his surname. He was the foremost classical proponent of natural theology and the father of the Thomistic school of philosophy and theology.

The philosophy of Aquinas has exerted enormous influence on subsequent Christian theology, especially the Roman Catholic Church, and extending to Western philosophy in general. He stands as a vehicle and modifier of Aristotelianism, which he merged with the thought of Augustine. Aquinas believed that for the knowledge of any truth whatsoever man needs divine help, that the intellect may be moved by God to its act. Besides, he believed that human beings have the natural capacity to know many things without special divine revelation, even though such revelation occurs from time to time. Aquinas believed that truth is known through reason - the natural revelation and faith - the supernatural revelation. Supernatural revelation has its origin in the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and is made available through the teaching of the prophets, summed up in Holy Scripture, and transmitted by the Magisterium, the sum of which is called Tradition. On the other hand, natural revelation is the truth available to all people through their human nature where certain truths all men can attain from correct human reasoning.

Thomism is the philosophical school that arose as a legacy of the work and thought of Thomas Aquinas where it is based on Summa Theologica meaning summary of theology. Summa Theologica is arguably second only to the Bible in importance to the Roman Catholic Church, written from 1265 to 1274 is the most famous work of Thomas

Aquinas. Although the book was never finished, it was intended as a manual for beginners as a compilation of all of the main theological teachings of that time. It summarizes the reasoning for almost all points of Christian theology in the West. The Summa's topics follow a cycle:

- (a) the existence of God;
- (b) God's creation;
- (c) Man;
- (d) Man's purpose;
- (e) Christ;
- (f) The Sacraments; and
- (g) back to God.

In these works, faith and reason are harmonized into a grand theologico-philosophical system which inspired the medieval philosophical tradition known as Thomism and which has been favored by the Roman Catholic church ever since. Aquinas made an important contribution to epistemology, recognizing the central part played by sense perception in human cognition. It is through the senses that we first become acquainted with existent, material things. Thomas held that the relation of dependence of objects on something which transcends them is disclosed to the observer through the contemplation of material things. Just as our knowledge depends not on innate ideas but perceiving the material world, the same material world is dependent on a productive agent for its existence. Aquinas thought the proposition everything which begins to exist through the agency of an already existent, extrinsic thing to be a fact beyond doubt.

Moreover, in the Summa Theologica, Aquinas records his famous five ways which seek to prove the existence of God from the facts of change, causation, contingency, variation and purpose. These cosmological and teleological arguments can be neatly expressed in syllogistic form as below:

(i) Way 1

- The world is in motion or motus.
- All changes in the world are due to some prior cause.
- There must be a prior cause for this entire sequence of changes, that is, God.

(ii) Way 2

- The world is a sequence of events.
- Every event in the world has a cause.
- There must be a cause for the entire sequence of events, that is, God.

(iii) Way 3

- The world might not have been.
- Everything that exists in the world depends on some other thing for its existence.
- The world itself must depend upon some other thing for its existence, that is, God.

(iv) Way 4

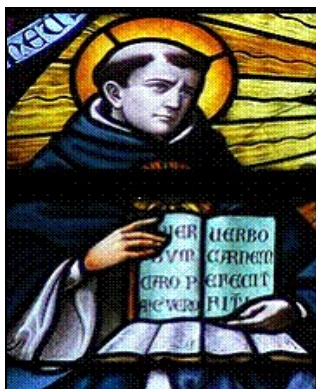
- There are degrees of perfection in the world.
- Things are more perfect the closer they approach the maximum.
- There is a maximum perfection, that is, God.

(v) Way 5

- Each body has a natural tendency towards its goal.
- All order requires a designer.
- This end-directedness of natural bodies must have a designing force behind it.

Therefore each natural body has a designer, that is, God.

Thomas Aquinas tried to balance the philosophy of Aristotle with Christian ideas. He believed that truth was passed to humans by God through divine revelation, and that humans had the ability to seek out truth. Unlike



Aristotle, Aquinas believed that the soul was not a biological entity, but an immortal creation from God. Because of this the soul has an inner knowledge that can be used to guide individuals in life. The path to the soul was through the physical senses and education should use this path to help students to progress from a lower to a higher form. He felt that knowledge gained from the senses leads to God and that education should focus on the physical and spiritual nature of individuals.

Aquinas' realism came to the forefront because he held that human reality



Figure 7.7: Thomas Aquinas (1225 - 1274)
Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Aquinas

is not only spiritual or mental but also physical and natural. From the standpoint of a human teacher, the path to the soul lies through the physical senses, and education must use this path to accomplish learning. Proper instruction thus directs the learner to knowledge that leads to true being by progressing from a lower to a higher form. As knowledge can be gained from sense data, and it can lead one to God, provided the learner views it in the proper perspectives.

In view of education, Aquinas believed that the primary agencies of education are the family and the church; the state -or organized society - runs a poor third; the family and the church have an obligation to teach those things that relate to the unchanging principles of moral and divine law. In fact, Aquinas mentioned that the mother is the child's first teacher, and because the child is molded easily; it is the mother's role to set the child's moral tone; the church stands for the source of knowledge of the divine and should set the grounds for understanding God's law. The state should formulate and enforce law on education, but it should not abridge the educational primacy of the home and church.

7.2.3 Modern Realism: Francis Bacon and John Locke

Modern realism began to develop because classical realism did not adequately include a method of inductive thinking. If the original premise or truth was incorrect, then there was a possibility of error in the logic of the rest of the thinking. Modern realists therefore believed that a process of deduction must be used to explain ideas. Of all the philosophers engaged in this effort, the two most outstanding did Francis Bacon and John Locke; where they were involved in developing systematic methods of thinking and ways to increase human understanding.

(a) Francis Bacon

Francis Bacon (1561 - 1626) was an English philosopher, statesman, scientist, lawyer, jurist, and author. He also served as a politician in the courts of Elizabeth I and James I. He was not a successful in his political efforts, but his record in the philosophical thought remained extremely influential through his work as a philosophical



Figure 7.8: Francis Bacon (1561- 1626)
Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francis_Bacon

advocate and practitioner of the scientific revolution. He claimed to take all knowledge as his field of investigation. His most famous work is *Novum Organum*, which he challenged the Aristotelian logic.

The *Novum Organum* is a philosophical work by Francis Bacon published in 1620. This is a reference to Aristotle's work *Organon*, which was his treatise on logic and syllogism. In *Novum Organum*, Bacon details a new system of logic he believes to be superior to the old ways of syllogism of Aristotle. In this work, we see the development of the Baconian Method, consisting of procedures for isolating the form, nature or cause of a phenomenon, employing the method of agreement, method of difference, and method of associated variation.

Bacon felt that the problem with religious realism was that it began with dogma or belief and then worked toward deducing conclusions. He felt that science could not work with this process because it was inappropriate and ineffective for the scientific process to begin with preconceived ideas. Bacon felt that developing effective means of inquiry was vital because knowledge was power that could be used to deal effectively with life. He therefore devised the inductive method of acquiring knowledge which begins with observations and then uses reasoning to make general statements or laws. Verification was needed before a judgment could be made. When data was collected, if contradictions were found, then the ideas would be discarded.

The Baconian Method consists of procedures for isolating the form nature, or cause, of a phenomenon, including the method of agreement, method of difference, and method of concomitant or associated variation. Bacon suggests that we draw up a list of all things in which the phenomenon we are trying to explain occurs, as well as a list of things in which it does not occur. Then, we rank the lists according to the degree in which the phenomenon occurs in each one. After that, we should be able to deduce what factors match the occurrence of the phenomenon in one list and do not occur in the other list, and also what factors change in accordance with the way the data had been ranked. From this, Bacon concludes that we should be able to deduce by elimination and inductive reasoning what is the cause underlying the phenomenon.

Because of the scientific or inductive approach uncover many errors in propositions that were taken for granted originally. Bacon urged that people should re-examine all previously accepted knowledge. At the least, he

considered that people should attempt to get rid off the various idols in their mind before which they bow down and that cloud their thinking. Bacon identified the idols, called the Idols of the Mind; where he described these as things which obstructed the path of correct scientific reasoning:

(i) Idols of the Tribe (Idola Tribus): This is humans' tendency to perceive more order and regularity in systems than truly exists, and is due to people following their preconceived ideas about things.

(ii) Idols of the Cave or Den (Idola Specus): This is due to individuals' personal weaknesses in reasoning due to particular personalities, likes and dislikes. For instance, a woman had several bad experiences with men with moustaches, thus she might conclude that all moustached men are bad; this is a clear case of faulty generalization.

(iii) Idols of the Marketplace (Idola Fori): This is due to confusions in the use of language and taking some words in science to have a different meaning than their common usage. For example, such words as liberal and conservative might have little meaning when applied to people because a person could be liberal on one issue and conservative on another.

(iv) Idols of the Theatre (Idola Theatri): This is due to using philosophical systems which have incorporated mistaken methods. Bacon insisted on housekeeping of the mind, in which we should break away from the dead ideas of the past and begin again by using the method of induction.

Bacon did not propose an actual philosophy, but rather a method of developing philosophy. He wrote that, although philosophy at the time used the deductive syllogism to interpret nature, the philosopher should instead proceed through inductive reasoning from fact to axiom to law.

(b) John Locke

John Locke (1632 - 1704) was an English philosopher. Locke is considered the first of the British empiricists. His ideas had enormous influence on the development of epistemology and political philosophy, and he is widely regarded as one of the most influential Enlightenment thinkers, classical republicans, and contributors to liberal theory. Surprisingly, Locke's writings influenced Voltaire and Rousseau, many Scottish Enlightenment thinkers, as well as the American revolutionaries. This influence is reflected in the American Declaration of Independence.

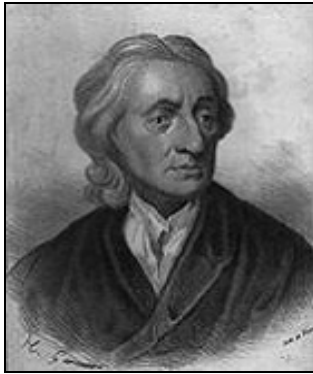


Figure 7.9: John Locke (1632 - 1704)

Source:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Locke

John Locke sought to explain how we develop knowledge. He attempted a rather modest philosophical task: to clear the ground of some of the rubbish that deter people from gaining knowledge. He was trying to do away with thought of what Bacon called idol.

Some Thoughts Concerning Education is a 1693 discourse on education written by John Locke. For over a century, it was the most important philosophical work on education in Britain. It was translated into almost all of the major written European languages during the eighteenth century, and nearly every European writer on education after Locke, including Jean-Jacques Rousseau, acknowledged its influence. He believed that education makes the man; as Locke writes at the opening of his treatise, I think I may say that of all the men we meet with, nine parts of ten are what they are, good or evil, useful or not, by

their education. He further explains how to educate that mind using three distinct methods: the development of a healthy body; the formation of a virtuous character; and the choice of an appropriate academic curriculum.

In Locke's Essay Concerning Human Understanding, wrote in 1690, Locke outlined a new theory of mind, contending that the child's mind was a tabula rasa or blank slate or empty mind; that is, it did not contain any innate or inborn ideas. In describing the mind in these terms, Locke was drawing on Plato's Theatetus, which suggests that the mind is like a wax tablet. Although Locke argued vigorously for the tabula rasa theory of mind, he nevertheless did believe in innate talents and interests. For example, he advises parents to watch their children carefully in order to discover their aptitudes, and to nurture their children's own interests rather than force them to participate in activities which they dislike. John Locke believed that the mind was a blank slate at birth; information and knowledge were added through experience, perception, and reflection. He felt that what we know is what we experience. Locke believed that play was very important in learning and stressed the importance of age appropriate readiness to receive certain concepts of learning. He thought that teachers shouldn't push children beyond their natural inclinations and should make lessons interesting and rewarding. The focus of Locke's curriculum was on educating the total child. He felt that reading instruction should begin as soon as a child was talking.

Another Locke most important contribution to eighteenth-century educational theory also stems from his

theory of the self. He writes: the little and almost insensible impressions on our tender infancies have very important and lasting consequences. That is, the associations of ideas made when young are more significant than those made when mature because they are the foundation of the self - they mark the tabula rasa.

7.2.4 Contemporary Realism: Alfred North Whitehead and Bertrand Russell

Contemporary realism developed around the twentieth century due to concerns with science and scientific problems of a philosophical nature (Ozmon and Carver, 2008). Two outstanding figures in the twentieth century of contemporary realism were Alfred Norton Whitehead and Bertrand Russell.

(a) Alfred North Whitehead

Alfred North Whitehead (1861 - 1947) was an English mathematician who became a philosopher. He wrote on algebra, logic, foundations of mathematics, philosophy of science, physics, metaphysics, and education. He co-authored the epochal *Principia Mathematica* with Bertrand Russell. While Thomas Aquinas tried to balance the ideas of Aristotle with the ideas of the Church, Alfred North Whitehead tried to balance the ideas of realism with the ideas of idealism. He felt that philosophy was a search for patterns with pattern being similar to form as described by Aristotle. Whitehead did not believe in gaining knowledge just for the sake of knowledge, but gaining ideas connected with the experience. He felt that curriculum should not be taught just because it was taught in the past. According to Whitehead ideas should be learned in a practical and useful context.

The *Principia Mathematica* is a three - volume work on the foundations of mathematics, written by Alfred North Whitehead and Bertrand Russell and was published in 1910, 1912, and 1913.



It is an attempt to derive all mathematical truths from a well-defined set of axioms and inference rules in symbolic logic. The *Principia* is widely considered by specialists in the subject to be one of the most important and seminal works in mathematical logic and philosophy since Aristotle's *Organon*. Logicism, the theory that mathematics is in some important sense reducible to logic, consists of two main theses. Firstly, all mathematical truths can be translated into logical truths or, in other words, that the vocabulary of mathematics constitutes a proper subset of

Figure 7.10: Alfred North Whitehead (1861 - 1947)

Source:

<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/whitehead/#WPI>

the vocabulary of logic. The second is that all mathematical proofs can be recast as logical proofs or, in other words, that the theorems of mathematics constitute a proper subset of the theorems of logic.

Whitehead's philosophical influence can be felt in all three of the main areas in which he worked - logic and the foundations of mathematics, the philosophy of science, and metaphysics, as well as in other areas such as ethics, education and religion. Whitehead was interested in actively utilizing the knowledge and skills that were taught to students to a particular end. He believed we should aim at producing men who possess both culture and expert knowledge in some special direction. He even thought that, education has to impart an intimate sense for the power and beauty of ideas coupled with structure for ideas together with a particular body of knowledge, which has peculiar reference to the life of being possessing it.

(b) Bertrand Arthur William Russell

Bertrand Arthur William Russell, a British mathematician and philosopher had embraced materialism in his early writing career. Russell earned his reputation as a distinguished thinker by his work in mathematics and logic. In 1903 he published „The Principles of Mathematics and by 1913 he and Alfred North Whitehead had published the three volumes of Principia Mathematica. The research, which Russell did during this period, establishes him as one of the founding fathers of modern analytical philosophy; discussing towards mathematical quantification as the basis of philosophical generalization.

Russell appears to have discovered his paradox in the late spring of 1901, while working on his Principles of Mathematics of 1903. Russell's paradox is the most famous of the logical or set-theoretical paradoxes. The paradox arises within naive set theory by considering the set of all sets that are not members of themselves. Such a set appears to be a member of itself if and only if it is not a member of itself, hence the paradox. For instance, some sets, such as the set of all teacups, are not members of themselves; other sets, such as the set of all non-teacups, are members of themselves. If we call the set of all sets that are not members of themselves: R . If R is a member of itself, then by definition it must not be a member of itself. Similarly, if R is not a member of itself, then by definition it must be a member of itself. The paradox has



Figure 7.11: Bertrand Russell (1872 – 1970)

[Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bertrand_Russell]

prompted much work in logic, set theory and the philosophy and foundations of mathematics. The significance of Russell's paradox can be seen once it is realized that, using classical logic, all sentences follow from a contradiction. Bertrand Russell is considered to be one of the most significant educational innovators of his time. In his influential and controversial work, Russell calls for an education that would liberate the child from unthinking obedience to parental and religious authority. He argues that if the basis of all education is knowledge manipulated by love then society can be transformed.

7.3 PRAGMATISM

The root of the word pragmatism is a Greek word meaning work. According to pragmatism, the truth or meaning of an idea or a proposition lies in its observable practical consequences rather than anything metaphysical. It can be summarized by the phrase whatever works, is likely true. Because reality changes, whatever works will also change - thus, truth must also be changeable and no one can claim to possess any final or ultimate truth. In other word, pragmatism is the philosophy that encourages us to seek out the processes and do things that work best to help us achieve desirable ends (Ozmon and Craver, 2008).

Pragmatism is also a practical, matter-of-fact way of approaching or assessing situations or of solving problems. However, we might wonder why people insist on doing things and using processes that do not work. Several true reasons for this to happened is because the weight of the customs and tradition, fear and apathy, and the fact that habitual ways of thinking and doing seem to work even though they have lost use in today's world.

Although pragmatism as a philosophical movement began in the United States of America in the late 1800s, but it roots can be traced back to British, European, and the ancient Greek philosophical traditions. One important element of this tradition is the development of world-view with regards to scientific revolution. The questioning attitudes cultivated by the Enlightenment and the development of a more naturalistic humanism also have outgrows this movement. The background of pragmatism can be found in the works of such people like Francis Bacon and John Locke.

7.3.1 Centrality of Experience: Francis Bacon and John Locke

Human experience is an important ingredient of pragmatist philosophy. John Locke talked about the mind as a „tabula rasa“ and the world of experience as the verification of thought, or in other words: the mind is a tabula rasa at birth; world of experience verifies thought. Another philosopher, Rousseau followed Locke's idea but with an expansion of the „centrality of experience“ as the basis for a philosophical belief. Rousseau saw people as basically good but corrupted by civilization. If we would avoid that corruption then we should focus on the educational connection between nature and experience by building the education of our youth around the youth's natural inquisitiveness while attending to their physiological, psychological and, social developmental stages.

Locke believed that as people have more experiences, they have more ideas imprinted on the mind and more with which to relate. However, he argued that one could have false ideas as well as true ones. The only way people can be sure of their ideas are correct is by verifying them in the world of experience, such as physical proof.

Consequently, Locke emphasized the idea of placing children in the most desirable environment for their education and pointed out the importance of environment in making people who they are. Nevertheless, Locke's notion of experience contained internal flaw and caused difficulties. His firmness that mind is a tabula rasa established mind as a passive, malleable instrument buffeted by a muddle conflict of impressions received through senses. When carried to its logical conclusion, Locke's notion leads to separation of mind from body, with the result that one can know only ideas.

7.3.2 Science and Society: Auguste Comte, Charles Darwin, and John Dewey

Bridging the transition between the Age of Enlightenment and the Modern Age, Auguste Comte (1798 - 1857) and Charles Darwin (1809 – 1882) shared a belief that science could have a profound and positive effect on society. Comte's commitment to the use of science to address the ills of society resulted in the study of sociology. The effects of Charles Darwin and his five years aboard the HMS Beagle are still echoing throughout the world of religion and education.

Basically, Comte talked on use of science to solve social problems in sociology and was very much influenced by John Dewey's (1859 – 1952) ideas regarding the role of science in society. While Darwin initiate „Origin of the Species“; nature operates by process of development without predetermined directions or ends, reality not found in being but becoming, and promoted pragmatist view that education tied directly to biological and social development.

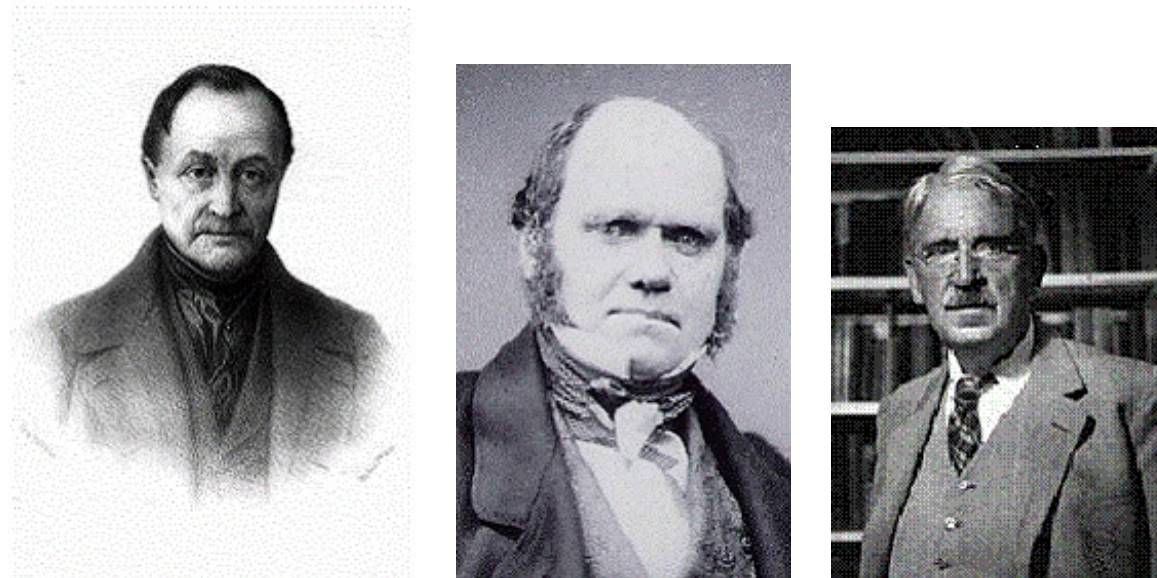


Figure 7.12: From Left : Auguste Comte, Charles Darwin, and John Dewey

Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/>

Auguste Comte was a French philosopher and one of the founders of sociology and positivism. He is responsible for the coining and introduction of the term altruism. Altruism is an ethical doctrine that holds that individuals have a moral obligation to help, serve, or benefit others, if necessary at the sacrifice of self interest. Auguste Comte's version of altruism calls for living for the sake of others. One who holds to either of these ethics is known as an "altruist." One

universal law that Comte saw at work in all sciences where he called it the law of three phases. It is by his statement of this law that he is best known in the English-speaking world; namely, that society has gone through three phases:

theological, metaphysical, and scientific. In Comte's lifetime, his work was sometimes viewed skeptically, with perceptions that he had elevated positivism to a religion and had named himself the Pope of Positivism.

Comte's emphasis on the interconnectedness of social elements was a forerunner of modern functionalism. His

emphasis on a quantitative, mathematical basis for decision-making, remains with us today. It is a foundation of the modern notion of positivism, modern quantitative statistical analysis, and business decision making. His description of the continuing cyclical relationship between theory and practice is seen in modern business systems of Total Quality Management and Continuous Quality Improvement where advocates describe a continuous cycle of theory and practice through the four-part cycle of plan, do, check, and act. Despite his advocacy of quantitative analysis, Comte saw a limit in its ability to help explain social phenomena.

Darwin coined the idea that „nature is in process without some preconceived or predetermined end, redefined reality as a state of becoming, not a state of being. Darwin gave credence to the idea that education should be tied directly to biological and social development by demonstrating that the process of becoming was subject to external forces. It should be remembered that during this time period, the world was beginning to experience the effects of industrialization. A significant decline in agricultural occupations and an increase in the opportunities for travel and more open commerce between nations led to the expansion of the middle class and a change in the daily lives of the world's population. Political power was shifting; money became more important than any previous period of time because the opportunity to provide for the family was not a matter of growing more food but of earning more money to buy food. Modern times brought difficulties that were not previously experienced.

Charles Darwin's wrote the *On the Origin of Species*, published in 1859, is a seminal work of scientific literature considered to be the foundation of evolutionary biology. The full title was *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favored Races in the Struggle for Life*.

For the sixth edition of 1872, the short title was changed to *The Origin of Species*. Darwin's book introduced the theory that populations evolve over the course of generations through a process of natural selection, and presented a body of evidence that the diversity of life arose through a branching pattern of evolution and common descent. He included evidence that he had accumulated on the voyage of the *Beagle* in the 1830s, and his subsequent findings from research, correspondence, and experimentation.

Various evolutionary ideas had already been proposed to explain new findings in biology. There was growing support for such ideas among protester anatomists and the general public, but during the first half of the 19th

century the English scientific establishment was closely tied to the Church of England, while science was part of natural theology. Ideas about the transmutation of species were controversial as they conflicted with the beliefs that species were unchanging parts of a designed hierarchy and that humans were unique, unrelated to animals. The political and theological implications were intensely debated, but transmutation was not accepted by the scientific mainstream. The book was written to be read by non-specialists and attracted widespread interest on its publication. As Darwin was a well-known scientist, his findings were taken seriously and the evidence he presented generated scientific, philosophical, and religious discussion. Darwin's concept of evolutionary adaptation through natural selection became central to modern evolutionary theory, now the unifying concept of the life sciences.

On the other hand, Dewey attempted to create a philosophy that captured and reflected the influences of the contemporary world on the preparation of the future leaders through the educational system. The reliance on the source of knowledge has to be tempered by an understanding of the societal effects if the learning was to be meaningful, beneficial, or productive. John Dewey discussed the Nature of Experience; experience and nature are not two different things separated from each other, rather experience itself is of nature : experience is and of nature.

Dewey viewed method, rather than abstract answer, as a central concern, thought that modern industrial society has submerged both individuality and sociality. He defined individuality as the interplay of personal choice and freedom with objective condition. Whereas sociality refers to milieu or medium conducive to individual development.

Moreover, Dewey believed that most religions have a negative effect because they tend to classify people. Dewey thought that two schools of social and religious reform exist: one holds that people must be constantly watched, guided and controlled to see that they stay on the right path and the other holds that people will control their own actions intelligently. Dewey also believed that a truly aesthetic experience is one in which people are unified with their activity.

Finally, Dewey stated that we should project art into all human activities, such as, the art of politics and the art of education.

- (a) How is pragmatism similar and different from idealism and realism? Explain.
- (b) Discuss your thoughts about why pragmatism is seen as most effective in a democratic society.
- (c) Compare and contrast Dewey's philosophical thoughts with your society's approach and your own.

7.4 IDEALISM, REALISM, AND PRAGMATISM AND ITS CRITIQUE IN PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

Developing a philosophical perspective on education is not easy. However, it is very important if a person wants to become a more effective professional educator. A sound philosophical perspective helps one see the interaction among students, curriculum, and aims and goals of education of various types of philosophy in achieving a teacher's personal and professional undertakings.

7.4.1 Idealism in Philosophy of Education

Idealism as a philosophy had its greatest impact during the nineteenth century. Its influence in today's world is less important than it has been in the past. Much of what we know as idealism today was influenced by German ideas of idealism. The main tenant of idealism is that ideas and knowledge are the truest reality. Many things in the world change, but ideas and knowledge are enduring. Idealism was often referred to as „idea-ism%. Idealists believe that ideas can change lives. The most important part of a person is the mind. It is to be nourished and developed.

Table 7.1 discusses the aims of education, methods of education, curriculum, role of teacher, and critique for idealism in philosophy of education:

Table 7.1: Idealism in Philosophy of Education

| Idealism in Philosophy of Education | | | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------|--|--|
| | Aims of Education | Emphasis is placed on developing the mind, personal discipline, and character development. A person should be literate and of good moral character | |
| | Methods of Education | Idealist education involves depth of learning, a holistic approach that involves | |

| | | | |
|--|-----------------|--|--|
| | | <p>teaching the whole rather than its parts. The best method of learning for Plato was the dialectic, a process where ideas are put into battle against each other, with the most significant idea winning the battle. Knowledge was not important just for the material needs that it met. The idealist is not concerned with turning out students with technical skills so much as having students with a broad view and understanding of the world in which they live. Self realization and self education are very important in idealism.</p> | |
| | Curriculum | <p>The important factor in education at any level for idealists is teaching children to think. Teachers should help students to explore texts for ideas about the purposes of life, family and the nature of peer pressures, and the problems of growing up. Idealists believe that ideas can change lives and that classical literature can be used and explored to help solve problems in today's world.</p> <p>Creativity will be encouraged when students immerse themselves in the creative thinking of others and when they are encouraged to reflect.</p> | |
| | Role of Teacher | <p>Since idealists believe in character development, they also believe that the teacher should be a role model for students to emulate. Teaching is considered a moral calling. The teacher's role is to be a skilful</p> | |

| | | | |
|--|-----------|---|--|
| | | <p>questioner who encourages students to think and ask more questions in an environment that is suitable for learning. While the lecture method is still important in an idealist's education system, it is considered more of a way to convey information and to help students comprehend ideas. Since teachers cannot always be present when learning occurs, they must attempt to stimulate students so that learning occurs even when they are not present. Project based learning is an example of a self directed learning activity where learning can occur without a teacher's presence.</p> | |
| | Critiques | <p>Idealism has been influential in education for a considerable amount of time. It is considered a conservative philosophy because of its emphasis in preserving cultural traditions. The strengths of idealism include encouraging thinking and cognition, promoting cultural learning, and providing for character development of students. Teachers are considered valuable parts of the educational process who should strive to provide a comprehensive, systematic, and holistic approach to learning that stresses self realization. Today, science has challenged idealism and brought about challenges to idealistic principles. Science is based on hypothesis and tentativeness, but idealism promotes a finished and absolute universe</p> | |

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| | <p>waiting to be discovered. Idealism has often been linked with traditional religion.</p> <p>The weakening of religion has led to the weakening of idealism as a philosophy. Through Plato's ruler kings, and Augustine's emphasis on the monastic life, it has been said that idealism leads to intellectual elitism. In the past, education was considered important for the upper classes of society, marking education as a luxury. Vocational and technical studies were considered good enough for the general public. Idealistic education was considered bookish and lacking relevance. It is argued that the character development aspect of the philosophy involved conformity and subservience on the part of the learner. This type of character development was considered to stifle creativity and self direction, making students naïve and ready to accept ideas without serious examination.</p> | |
|--|--|--|

Source: http://pangea.tec.selu.edu/~vmartinez/ETEC644/philosophy_idealism_martinez.doc_

7.4.2 Realism in Philosophy of Education

According to Ozmon and Craver (2008) „the central thread of realism is the principal of independence.% The world of ideas and matter defined in idealism by Plato and Socrates do not exist separately and apart from each other for realists. They contend that material things can exist whether or not there is a human being around to

appreciate or perceive them.

Table 7.2 discuss the aims of education, methods of education, curriculum, role of teacher, and critique for realism in philosophy of education:

Table 7.2: Realism in Philosophy of Education

| Realism in Philosophy of Education | | |
|------------------------------------|----------------------|---|
| | Aims of Education | Educational aims are viewed from two perspectives: religious realism and secular realism. The religious realist believed that matter was not important unless it led to something else. For example, not only looking at a rock's physical characteristics, but also using that information to lead to more philosophical questions such as its beginnings and purpose. Religious realists believe that God created the universe out of nothing, giving it order, and people could get to know God by studying the universe. Secular realists believed in understanding the material world through methods of rigorous inquiry. They promoted the study of science and scientific inquiry with the beliefs that people needed to know about the world in order to promote their survival. Self preservation was the aim of education. Students needed to be equipped with basics in a no-nonsense approach. The basics also included a moral education. They felt that learned information should be useful and practical, developing rational abilities to their fullest for the achievement of a good life. |
| | Methods of Education | Secular realists believe that schools should teach fundamental facts about the universe in ways that make learning interesting and enjoyable. They place much emphasis on critical reasoning which is assisted by observation and experimentation. Realists believe that self realization is valuable and that it occurs best when students are able to obtain knowledge of the external world by the didactic method and other methods of learning. Regardless of the method, however, realists felt it should be organized and systemic. Locke believed that play was very important in learning and stressed the importance of age |

| | | |
|--|-----------------|--|
| | | appropriate readiness to receive certain concepts of learning. |
| | Curriculum | Realists agree that the educational curriculum should be practical and useful. |
| | Role of Teacher | They believe that the role of the teacher is that of a person who provides the basics in a fun and interesting way. The basics should include practical studies like reading, writing, drawing, geography, astronomy, and math, with additional physical activities. Many experiences should be provided since children are blank slates coming to school ready to receive information. Most realists believe that children should have a positive learning climate and be provided with rewards as a motivation for learning. The realist's curriculum tends to be one that emphasizes mental and physical development in a very organized and systematic approach. |
| | Critiques | According to Ozmon and Carver (2008), realism appears primarily in times of trouble, but was brought into focus more by the advancement of industry and technology. Although classical and religious realists promote the development of morals and character, many other critics say that scientific realists are too materialistic and „biased toward social control and social order%. In some countries, a realist outlook has been used to support totalitarian regimes, religious systems, and other worldviews that seem to seek over riding, controlling authority. Realists seem very concerned with testing and having students measure up to certain standards. The result of this approach is the development of a very rigid curriculum that focuses on preparing students for taking a test which is scientific and fact based. In one sense, getting through the test itself is preparation for survival. |

Source: http://pangea.tec.selu.edu/~vmartinez/ETEC644/philosophy_realism_martinez.doc

7.4.3 Pragmatism in Philosophy of Education

Pragmatism is basically an American philosophy, but has its roots in European thinking. Pragmatists believe that

ideas are tools that can be used to cope with the world. They believe that educators should seek out new process, incorporate traditional and contemporary ideas, or create new ideas to deal with the changing world. There is a great deal of stress placed on sensitivity to consequences, but are quick to state that consideration should be given to the method of arriving at the consequences. The means to solving a problem is as important as the end. The scientific method is important in the thinking process for pragmatists, but it was not to seem like sterile lab thinking. Pragmatists want to apply the scientific method for the greater good of the world. They believe that although science has caused many problems in our world, it can still be used to benefit mankind.

However, the progressive pragmatic movement believed in separating children by intelligence and ability in order to meet the needs of society. The softer side of that philosophy believed in giving children a great deal of freedom to explore, leading many people to label the philosophy of pragmatism in education as permissive.

Table 7.3 discuss the aims of education, methods of education, curriculum, role of teacher, and critique for pragmatism in philosophy of education:

Table 7.3: Pragmatism Realism in Philosophy of Education

| Pragmatism in Philosophy of Education | | |
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| | Aims of Education | <p>According to Dewey, education was a preparation for life that allowed cultures to survive over time and that allowed all individuals to have the fullest life possible in a social environment using democratic ideals. He felt that educators should be as interested in the interests of children as they were in the environments from which they were coming. Education according to Dewey is a social process that should be flexible and always have an objective in mind. The aim of education is the growth in the ability to learn from experience and to make good decisions based on that experience because humankind is ultimately responsible for bringing order to the universe. Education should be a process that looks at the past for guidance, choosing the ideas that work and apply for the situations of today, solving problems</p> |

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| | | intelligently rather than automatically relying on tradition. |
| | Methods of Education | Pragmatism encourage a curriculum that is flexible and open-ended, involving cross curricula project based activities which involve the application of all subject matter. It is an action based philosophy which would include using multiple methods of educating students, some of which involve going into the community or involving community members. Teachers need to be concerned with teaching children how to solve real life problems in a practical setting. This philosophy advocates meeting the needs and interests of individual children through a directed approach. Experimentation is basic, leading to problems which children must learn to solve. |
| | Curriculum | The curriculum focuses on learning experiences in a syllabus that is diversified and problem centered, not fragmented or compartmentalized. All learning starts with a problem or question that allows students to search for answers according to interests and abilities that may involve working alone, or in group. Use of a wide variety of resources from traditional to modern, is encouraged with students identifying those resources which are best suited for the project at hand. |
| | Role of Teacher | According to Dewey, learning was essential for the continuation of society, which would make the job of the teacher quite significant. Pragmatists believe that people learn through informal processes, but these processes must have a purpose and a flexible plan of action. The teacher's job is to provide an open-ended opportunity for study in an environment that allows the child to think and act intelligently in order to test ideas and skills. All children do not learn in the same way or at the same rate, so teachers are the guides to the learning process, which meets children at their level of ability. In that respect, teachers must have sufficient knowledge of a subject to be able to break it down into parts for students to study, and they must be able to link the learning to a motivation and natural curiosity that the children already possess. It is also important for teachers to also understand the background and environment that learners are |

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| | | bringing to school so that they can make suggestions and arouse student interests in order to help them grow by leading them into new areas of knowledge. |
| | Critiques | One criticism of the pragmatist philosophy of education is that it dilutes the curriculum by incorporating pieces of each discipline or subject area without exploring any of them in detail. It is also often said that this philosophy rejects traditional values for values that are uncertain or impermanent. However, the pragmatist believes that traditional methods that work should be kept and those that do not should be replaced. Sometimes the replacement process involves experimenting with new ideas and processes. The teacher who teaches in a pragmatist curriculum must be an extremely capable and organized person who is able to think spontaneously and possess a wide base of knowledge. In the past, many teachers were not well trained enough to be able to support this concept adequately. Because of the idea that the curriculum should be centered on the interests of children, pragmatists are also often charged with being too permissive with children.. |

Source: http://pangea.tec.selu.edu/~vmartinez/ETEC644/philosophy_pragmatism_martinez.doc

Which of the philosophy is most compatible with your beliefs as an educator? Why?

SUMMARY

- Basically, there three general or world philosophies that are idealism, realism, and pragmatism.
- Idealism is the philosophical theory that maintains that the ultimate nature of reality is based on mind or ideas. It holds that the so-called external or „real world% is inseparable from mind, consciousness, or perception.
- Platonic idealism says that there exists a perfect realm of form and ideas and our world merely contains

shadows of that realm; only ideas can be known or have any reality.

- Religious idealism argues that all knowledge originates in perceived phenomena which have been organized by categories.
- Modern idealism says that all objects are identical with some idea and the ideal knowledge is itself the system of ideas.
- Platonic idealism usually refers to Plato's theory of forms or doctrine of ideas. Plato held the realm of ideas to be absolute reality. Plato's method was the dialectic method – all thinking begins with a thesis; as exemplified in the Socratic dialogues.
- Augustine discussed the universe as being divided into the City of God and The City of Man.
- Augustine believed that faith based knowledge is determined by the church and all true knowledge came from God.
- Descartes was convinced that science and mathematics could be used to explain everything in nature, so he was the first to describe the physical universe in terms of matter and motion - seeing the universe as a giant mathematically designed engine.
- Kant held that the most interesting and useful varieties of human knowledge rely upon synthetic a priori judgments, which are, in turn, possible only when the mind determines the conditions of its own experience.
- Kant's philosophy of education involved some aspects of character education. He believed in the importance of treating each person as an end and not as a means.
- Hegel developed a concept of mind or spirit that manifested itself in a set of contradictions and oppositions that it ultimately integrated and united, such as those between nature and freedom, and immanence and transcendence, without eliminating either pole or reducing it to the other.
- „Hegelianism“ is a collective term for schools of thought following Hegel's philosophy which can be summed up by the saying that „the rational alone is real“, which means that all reality is capable of being expressed in rational categories.
- The most central thread of realism is the principal or thesis of independence. This thesis holds that reality, knowledge, and value exist independently of the human mind.
- Aristotle believed that the world could be understood at a fundamental level through the detailed observation and cataloguing of phenomenon.
- Aquinas believed that truth is known through reason - the natural revelation and faith - the supernatural revelation.
- Thomism is the philosophical school that arose as a legacy of the work and thought of Thomas Aquinas where it is

based on Summa Theologica meaning „summary of theology“.

- Aquinas mentioned that the mother is the child's first teacher, and because the child is molded easily; it is the mother's role to set the child's moral tone; the church stands for the source of knowledge of the divine and should set the grounds for understanding God's law. The state should formulate and enforce law on education.
- Bacon devised the inductive method of acquiring knowledge which begins with observations and then uses reasoning to make general statements or laws. Verification was needed before a judgment could be made. When data was collected, if contradictions were found, then the ideas would be discarded.
- The „Baconian Method“ consists of procedures for isolating the form nature, or cause, of a phenomenon, including the method of agreement, method of difference, and method of concomitant or associated variation.
- Bacon identified the „idols“, called the Idols of The Mind where he described these as things which obstructed the path of correct scientific reasoning.
- John Locke sought to explain how we develop knowledge. He attempted a rather modest philosophical task: „to clear the ground of some of the rubbish“ that deter people from gaining knowledge. He was trying to do away with thought of what Bacon called „idols“.
- Locke outlined a new theory of mind, contending that the child's mind was a „tabula rasa“ or „blank slate“ or „empty mind“; that is, it did not contain any innate or inborn ideas.
- Whitehead was interested in actively „utilising the knowledge and skills that were taught to students to a particular end“. He believed we should aim at „producing men who possess both culture and expert knowledge in some special direction“.
- Russell, one of the founding fathers of modern analytical philosophy; discussing towards mathematical quantification as the basis of philosophical generalization.
- Russell's paradox is the most famous of the logical or set-theoretical paradoxes. The paradox arises within naive set theory by considering the set of all sets that are not members of themselves. Such a set appears to be a member of itself if and only if it is not a member of itself, hence the paradox.
- Pragmatism is a practical, matter-of-fact way of approaching or assessing situations or of solving problems.
- Human experience is an important ingredient of pragmatist philosophy.
- John Locke talked about the mind as a „tabula rasa“ and the world of experience as the verification of thought, or in other words: the mind is a tabula rasa at birth; world of experience verifies thought.
- Rousseau followed Locke's idea but with an expansion of the „centrality of experience“ as the basis for a philosophical belief. Rousseau saw people as basically good but corrupted by civilization. If we would avoid that corruption then we should focus on the educational connection between nature and experience by building the education of our youth around the youth's natural inquisitiveness while attending to their physiological,

psychological and, social developmental stages.

- Locke believed that as people have more experiences, they have more ideas imprinted on the mind and more with which to relate.
- Comte is responsible for the coining and introduction of the term altruism. Altruism is an ethical doctrine that holds that individuals have a moral obligation to help, serve, or benefit others, if necessary at the sacrifice of self interest.
- One universal law that Comte saw at work in all sciences where he called it the „law of three phases%. It is by his statement of this law that he is best known in the English-speaking world; namely, that society has gone through three phases: theological, metaphysical, and scientific.
- Darwin coined the idea that „nature is in process without some preconceived or predetermined end, redefined reality as a state of becoming, not a state of being%. Darwin gave credence to the idea that education should be tied directly to biological and social development by demonstrating that the process of becoming was subject to external forces.
- Dewey attempted to create a philosophy that captured and reflected the influences of the contemporary world on the preparation of the future leaders through the educational system. The reliance on the source of knowledge has to be tempered by an understanding of the societal effects if the learning was to be meaningful, beneficial, or productive.
- John Dewey discussed the Nature of Experience; experience and nature are not two different things separated from each other, rather experience itself is of nature : experience is and of nature.
- Idealists believe that ideas can change lives. The most important part of a person is the mind. It is to be nourished and developed.
- The world of ideas and matter defined in idealism by Plato and Socrates do not exist separately and apart from each other for realists. They contend that material things can exist whether or not there is a human being around to appreciate or perceive them.
- They believe that educators should seek out new process, incorporate traditional and contemporary ideas, or create new ideas to deal with the changing world.

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