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КАФЕДРА ФИЛОСОФИИ И ПОЛИТОЛОГИИ
С КУРСОМ ПОВЫШЕНИЯ КВАЛИФИКАЦИИ И ПЕРЕПОДГОТОВКИ

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ФИЛОСОФИЯ

PHILOSOPHY

Допущено Министерством образования Республики Беларусь
в качестве учебного пособия для иностранных студентов
учреждений высшего образования по специальностям
«Лечебное дело», «Стоматология», «Фармация»



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Представлены учебные материалы по философии в соответствии с государственным стандартом и требованиями типовой и учебной программ. Особое внимание уделяется взаимосвязи философии и медицины, антропологической и биомедицинской проблематике.

Предназначено для иностранных студентов, обучающихся по специальностям «Лечебное дело», «Стоматология», «Фармация».

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FOREWORD

This textbook is designed to help international students master the core topics of the philosophy curriculum. The selected primary source excerpts and practical exercises complement the theoretical material, serving as an essential resource for students preparing for their philosophy assessments. Particular attention is paid to the intersection of philosophy and medicine, alongside key anthropological and biomedical issues.

Each section contains the following components: lesson objectives and tasks; discussion questions; key concepts and theoretical material; primary source excerpts with analytical questions; topics for student presentations; aphorisms for seminar discussions; competence assessment exercises and self-assessment reviews.

This textbook was developed by the Head of the Department of Philosophy and Political Science (with Advanced Training and Retraining Courses) at Belarusian State Medical University. Tailored specifically for international students, the material is presented in a clear, accessible manner that aligns directly with the official curriculum. To aid knowledge retention, select exercises are structured into systematic tables. The author trusts that this publication will significantly assist future medical professionals in mastering the study of philosophy.

SECTION 1

FORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

TOPIC 1.1

PHILOSOPHY AND WORLDVIEW

Total lesson time: 2 hours.

Aim: to explore the holistic view of human existence within the world and to analyze the role of philosophy as a distinct form of worldview.

Objectives:

- to identify the connection between worldviews and philosophy;
- to determine the place of philosophy within the wider system of worldviews;
- to analyze the defining characteristics of a philosophical worldview;
- to distinguish the specific features of philosophical enquiry.

Questions:

1. The concept of worldview, its structure and functions.
2. Historical types of worldviews: the emergence of philosophy as a distinct worldview.
3. The scope of philosophy and the structure of philosophical knowledge.
4. A comparative analysis of philosophy, science, art, and religion.
5. The relationship between philosophy and medicine.

Key concepts: worldview, world understanding, world perception, knowledge, values, beliefs, will, ideals, mythology, religion, philosophy, ontology, epistemology, methodology, axiology, philosophical anthropology, social philosophy, functions of philosophy.

THEORETICAL MATERIAL

1.1.1. THE CONCEPT OF WORLDVIEW, ITS STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONS

A **worldview** is a comprehensive system of values and perspectives regarding the objective world, human existence, and the relationship individuals have with surrounding reality and themselves.

The core questions of a worldview are universal and highly generalized: What is the world? What does it mean to be human? What is our place in this universe? What is the meaning of life? What constitute truth, goodness, and beauty?

The collective answers to these inquiries shape an individual's worldview.

Every human being possesses a worldview. It emerged alongside human society, driven by a fundamental need to comprehend, evaluate, and explain the environment in order to survive. The subject (or bearer) of a worldview can be an individual (representing their inner spiritual world) or a society at a specific stage of cultural development.

Depending on how a worldview is formed and how it functions, it can be divided into two **primary levels**:

1. *The spiritual-practical level*: this includes the “philosophy of life,” common sense, folk wisdom, practical skills, traditions, customs, and deeply ingrained cultural habits — everything that provides a holistic perception of life. This level anchors human perspectives that form spontaneously through everyday experience and practice. It finds its generalized expression in mythology, religion, and art.

2. *The rational-theoretical level*: this level is characterized by conscious awareness, logical consistency, intellectual validity, evidence-based reasoning, and critical self-reflection.

Beyond these levels, a worldview is structured by several distinct **components**:

- *knowledge*: a set of ideas about reality acquired through personal experience or education, processed as rational judgments via human reason;

- *value orientation*: the mechanism through which core moral principles and beliefs translate into specific preferences and actions. It serves as a psychological bridge, allowing abstract concepts (such as honesty or equality) to guide how an individual evaluates and responds to situations;

- *life and social ideals*: formulated goals for the future that orient human knowledge and intentional activity;

- *behavioral frameworks (norms)*: the behavioral standards and practical actions developed when an individual assimilates knowledge;

- *beliefs*: deeply held convictions that serve as the foundation for personal choices, activities, and meaningful life attitudes.

In short, a worldview is a systematic, generalized framework of the universe (nature, humanity, and society) that establishes an individual’s stance toward reality, shapes their ideals, and directs their social behavior.

A worldview manifests through three progressive **modes of engaging with reality**:

1) *world-attitude (Weltanschauung)*: an unsystematized, intuitive picture of reality dominated by emotional and figurative responses. For instance, instant affinity or aversion occurs at this subconscious level;

2) *world-perception*: the formation of a structured framework of ideas where reality is seen as an interconnected whole, dominated by a visual representation of how processes relate to one another;

3) *world-understanding*: the highest cognitive level, which uncovers the underlying essence of events and grasps the deeper meaning behind natural and social processes.

A worldview serves **three essential functions** within human life:

- *cognitive function*: systematizes and generalizes individual knowledge, reflecting the intellectual style of a specific community, culture, or historical epoch;

- *value-normative (evaluative) function*: evaluates reality through the prism of personal goals and interests, allowing individuals to view themselves as autonomous values while navigating established social regulators;
- *behavioral (practical) function*: manifests through life plans, goal-setting, and frameworks for social conduct. This represents a practical readiness to act decisively under specific circumstances.

1.1.2. HISTORICAL TYPES OF WORLDVIEWS: THE EMERGENCE OF PHILOSOPHY AS A DISTINCT WORLDVIEW

Throughout human history, three primary types of worldview have emerged: mythology, religion, and philosophy.

The **mythological worldview** is an early, figurative-emotional framework for understanding reality. It is rooted in a belief in the supernatural, the perceived inseparability of humanity and nature, and a syncretic blend of knowledge, emotion, and ritual. It is characterized by anthropomorphism, a lack of critical reflection, and a purely descriptive approach to reality.

The mythological worldview manifests through the following **core characteristics**:

- *syncretism*: the indivisibility and fusion of knowledge, ideas, emotions, and beliefs into a single, cohesive framework;
- *anthropomorphism*: the projection of human qualities, such as volition and emotion, onto natural phenomena;
- *participation*: a belief in a mystical, reciprocal connection between entities, such as a community and its totem;
- *binary oppositions*: the organization of the cosmos through fundamental dualities (e.g., good/evil, life/death, sacred/profane, order/chaos);
- *ritual integration*: myths do not merely explain the world; they actively guide practical actions, community rituals, and magical practices;
- *sacred time and space*: time is conceptualized as cyclical, while space is strictly divided into the sacred (cosmic) and the profane (everyday);
- *geneticism*: explaining the essence of any phenomenon exclusively through its origin story or how it was primordially created.

The mythological worldview has also **modern manifestations**:

- *social myths*: frameworks that shape collective identity, socialization, and visions of the future (e.g., the “Golden Age”, the “American Dream”, or the myth of inevitable progress);
- *corporate and marketing myths*: the creation of brand narratives that imbue consumer products with “magical” qualities, promising instant success, beauty, or elevated social status;
- *political myths*: the utilization of binary narratives (such as enemies and saviors) that appeal to emotion rather than empirical fact to influence mass consciousness;

– *scientific and pseudoscientific myths*: the proliferation of fringe theories, astrology, and esotericism, blending a desire for knowledge with a psychological need for the miraculous;

– *popular culture*: the contemporary reinterpretation of ancient archetypes in cinema, video games, and literature, satisfying the enduring human need for heroes and magic.

Religion (from the Latin *religio*, implying piety or binding obligation) is a spiritual, practical, and pre-reflexive worldview. It positions faith in a transcendent reality or higher power as the primary means of comprehending, evaluating, and explaining human existence and the cosmos.

Historically, religious consciousness solidified during the dissolution of tribal systems. As ancestral myths and pagan traditions failed to satisfy evolving societal needs, religion emerged to offer systemic answers to existential questions, replacing myth with the principle of faith. The universality of religion across global cultures demonstrates its role in fulfilling fundamental psychological, moral, and ethical needs.

The religious worldview manifests through the following **core characteristics**:

– *the sacred-profane dichotomy*: unlike the fluid continuity of myth, religion strictly divides reality into the sacred (divine) and the profane (earthly). It posits that the existential contradictions troubling the human soul in this life will be resolved in a higher, transcendent realm;

– *the cultic system*: religion relies on structured ritual actions designed to establish a relationship with the supernatural. When worldview ideas are integrated into this cultic framework, they become formal dogmas. Through these rituals, religion cultivates virtues such as love, hope, tolerance, and mercy, anchoring their value in the divine;

– *the transcendent central axis*: God, or the Supreme Being, serves as the intrinsically valuable axiom from which all religious content is derived. This divine presence is experienced through revelation, allowing individuals to orient their lives as existing within and through the divine;

– *faith as a psychological mechanism*: faith serves as the cognitive bridge aligning the religious worldview with external reality. Unlike myth, faith presupposes an ontological gap between the believer and the object of their belief;

– *emotional and non-empirical grounding*: religion appeals directly to the human heart and emotions. Its core truths do not require empirical verification or logical substantiation; they are accepted as divinely revealed axioms through the emotional-sensory sphere of consciousness;

– *the foundation of the sacred text*: a sacred text serves as objectified revelation and absolute truth. It establishes dogmas, codes of conduct, and liturgical frameworks. Examples include the Christian Bible, the Islamic Quran, the Jewish Tanakh, and the Hindu Vedas.

Note for Students: while religious worldviews depend heavily on Holy Scripture, the presence of an authoritative text is not exclusive to religion.

Philosophy, political ideologies, and sciences also rely on foundational texts; thus, the existence of a text alone does not denote religiosity.

Modern religious studies frequently shift from a strictly dogmatic approach to a functional one, evaluating religion as a highly adaptive mechanism for human orientation and spiritual fulfillment. Furthermore, the very category of “religion” is often critiqued by modern scholars as a construct of Early Modern European research, noting that it remains difficult to apply universally to non-Western traditions.

Etymologically, **philosophy** translates to the “love of wisdom” (from the Greek *philia*, meaning love, and *sophia*, meaning wisdom). To understand this precisely, it is helpful to note that ancient Greek culture distinguished between several forms of love: *eros* (a passionate, physical, and romantic desire); *storge* (a tender, instinctual familial affection); *agape* (the highest form of unconditional, selfless, and sacrificial love); *philia* (a sublime, intellectual love-friendship rooted in mutual respect, shared concepts, and spiritual intimacy). Unlike the possessive nature of *eros*, *philia* implies a free, rational choice and a selfless pursuit of the truth.

Contemporary scholarship evaluates philosophy primarily through its **contrast with mythology and religion**:

1) *the sovereignty of reason*: where the mythological worldview relies on tradition, and the religious worldview relies on faith, philosophy is grounded entirely in the arguments of reason, rational argumentation, logical evidence, and critical self-reflection. Philosophy does not express truth through concrete sensory images or symbols (as myth does), but through rationally substantiated, abstract concepts and universal categories. **Rationality is the definitive property of all philosophical enquiry**;

2) *conceptual systematization*: philosophy constructs a universal picture of reality at the level of rational knowledge. It achieves this by using rigorous theories, formal logic, and systematic proofs. This requirement for verification gives philosophy its distinctively logical character, distinguishing it from the intuitive narrative structure of mythology and the dogma of religion;

3) *theoretical nature*: philosophy is a self-justifying form of worldview expressed through a systematic matrix of concepts. It operates not through mythic narratives or theological assertions, but through structured reasoning, making it an inherently theoretical type of worldview;

4) *critical orientation*: philosophy is an instrument of theoretical reflection and rationality. Unlike mythology and religion, which traditionally remain insulated from critique, philosophy relies on a critical mode of interpreting the universe and human existence. It demands that its propositions be evaluated through rigorous analysis rather than accepted on faith alone;

5) *radical reflexivity*: philosophy is fundamentally critical and reflexive. It represents a continuous process of existential questioning and self-examination, constantly turning its critical analysis back upon both the world and its own foundational assumptions;

6) *historical and visionary synthesis*: the unique role of philosophy as a worldview lies in its ability to synthesize the core intellectual and cultural achievements of its respective era. Simultaneously, it serves as a harbinger of new historical paradigms. This duality enables us to evaluate the present by analyzing the accumulated experience of past generations while anticipating future perspectives.

In summary, **philosophy** appears in the sixth-fifth centuries BCE as a form of intellectual and spiritual activity dedicated to formulating, analyzing, and resolving fundamental existential questions. It serves to establish a holistic view of the cosmos and humanity's place within it. Consequently, philosophy can be conceptualized through multiple lenses: as a comprehensive worldview, as the most general theory of existence, as an academic discipline, as a mode of human activity, and as a specialized method of rigorous reasoning.

1.1.3. THE SCOPE OF PHILOSOPHY AND THE STRUCTURE OF PHILOSOPHICAL KNOWLEDGE

The primary focus of philosophical reflection is the continuous search for the foundational principles governing the existence of nature, society, and humanity, examined through their deep interconnection and holistic unity. While the precise scope of philosophy has evolved alongside culture, science, and practical human activity, a core spectrum of fundamental problems remains constant. These issues are continually re-evaluated in the light of fresh empirical experience, developing knowledge, and shifting historical conditions.

Philosophical enquiry can be categorized into **three primary domains of problems**:

1) *the problem of the world (cosmos)*: philosophy seeks to comprehend reality by addressing questions regarding its origins, unity and plurality, finiteness and infinity, and the modes of cosmic existence. It also interrogates the ontological distinction between sensually perceived reality and speculatively or rationally comprehended being;

2) *the problem of humanity (the self)*: this domain raises questions regarding the core nature and essence of human existence, the purpose and meaning of life, and the complex tension between human freedom and existential necessity;

3) *the problem of the relationship between humanity and the world*: this focus directs philosophical thought toward analyzing the mechanisms of cognition, value interpretation, and the transformation of reality.

Within classical philosophy, despite a vast array of interpretations concerning the “human-world” dynamic, two primary methodological positions predominate: **materialism** and **idealism**. The dividing criterion between these positions rests on how they resolve the fundamental question of the relationship between matter and consciousness, or nature and spirit — specifically, determining which is primary and which is secondary.

Materialism: from ancient elemental materialism and early Eastern philosophical schools to contemporary variants, materialism asserts the primacy of matter, nature, physical being, and the objective world.

Idealism: conversely, posits that consciousness, spirit, the mind, or abstract ideas constitute the primary, foundational layer of reality.

In postclassical philosophy, the focus has shifted sharply toward a critical analysis of the contradictory essence of social development within modern, highly technological civilizations. Furthermore, contemporary philosophy places intense focus on the realities of language (the linguistic turn) and human existence conceptualized as “being-in-the-world” (*Dasein*).

The expansive scope of philosophy is systematically organized into several **core sub-disciplines (structural components)**:

- *ontology* is the study of being, investigating the fundamental principles, sources, structures, and forms of existence;

- *epistemology* is the study of knowledge, exploring the possibilities, methods, and limits of human cognition, alongside the relationship between truth and error;

- *philosophical anthropology* is the philosophical study of human nature, addressing the essence of humanity and the diverse forms of human being-in-the-world;

- *social philosophy* is the branch of philosophy that examines the systemic organization of society, the dynamics and logic of social processes, and the driving forces of history. It investigates historical teleology (origins and goals), politics, ideology, and the cultural and technological milestones of civilization.

Operating within the broader framework of philosophical inquiry are distinct, **specialized sciences**:

- *ethics* is the philosophical study of morality, values, and normative conduct;

- *logic* is the philosophical science governing the rules, structures, and validity of correct reasoning;

- *aesthetics* is the philosophical study of beauty, art, taste, and the nature of human creativity.

Philosophy operates through several vital intellectual, cultural, and pedagogical **functions**:

- *worldview formation*: this function establishes a comprehensive, generalized system of values and perspectives regarding the universe and humanity’s place within it. It investigates the dynamics of cognitive, axiological, and practical relations between human beings and reality. By justifying the ethical and logical principles underpinning these relationships, philosophy articulates foundational goals and ideals for the progressive development of human society and culture;

- *methodological function*: this dimension involves constructing potential strategy models for the advancement of scientific knowledge and the future trajectories of science. It defines the structural place and role of science within

the wider cultural matrix, formulating a systematic model for the ongoing interaction between scientific enterprise, society, and human existence;

– *socio-critical function*: this function exerts a significant analytical impact on the institutional forms and organizing principles of social life. It subjects contemporary societal structures to rigorous critique while offering a normative justification for the strategic priorities, ethical goals, and future directions of society and culture.

1.1.4. A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF PHILOSOPHY, SCIENCE, ART, AND RELIGION

Philosophy operates as a specific sphere of culture, comprising a cohesive system of material and spiritual values, as well as the mechanisms for their creation and transmission. Analyzing philosophy as a cultural phenomenon requires a comparative evaluation of its relationship with other expressions of human spirit and intellect, namely science, art, and religion (Table 1–3).

Table 1

Comparative analysis of science and philosophy

Comparative criteria	Science	Philosophy
Primary objective	To obtain practically significant, empirically verifiable results that hold the property of objective truth	To attain reliable knowledge regarding foundational existential principles through critical self-reflection and abstract reasoning
Nature of enquiry and subject	Operates primarily within the empirical and theoretical domains (grounded in sensory and observable experience)	Operates primarily within the theoretical and speculative domains (grounded in conceptual analysis)
Epistemological framework	Relying on empirical evidence, rigorous verification, strict consistency, and systematic logical argumentation	Relying on rational validity, logical necessity, interpretive pluralism, and critical evaluation
Institutional and methodological nature	Governed by highly rigid methodological canons and established scientific paradigms	Inherently pluralistic, featuring diverse schools of thought, competing traditions, and distinct analytical approaches
Axiological dimension	Strives for strict value neutrality and the elimination of subjective bias	Integrates personal, normative, evaluative, and axiological components as essential to the inquiry

Table 2

Comparative analysis of art and philosophy

Comparative criteria	Art	Philosophy
Primary mode of appeal	Appeals to human aesthetic perception	Affects the intellect and logical reasoning
Medium of expression	Expresses existential or conceptual problems through artistic images	Formulates problems through abstract concepts and logical categories
Methodological nature	Operates through creative forms that bypass strict methodological normativity	Operates through rigorous structures of reasoning
Role of authorship and individuality	Intrinsically bound to the distinct personality, subjective emotional experience, and unique style of the creator	Grounded in individual authorship and philosophical perspective, yet justified through universal rational arguments

Table 3

Comparative analysis of religion and philosophy

Comparative criteria	Religion	Philosophy
Core existential inquiry	Seeks to define the human place in the universe, the dynamics of the human-world relationship, and the metaphysical origins of good and evil	Identifies and investigates identical existential queries regarding human positioning, world dynamics, and the foundational criteria for good and evil
Epistemological foundation	Relies entirely on faith , sacred authority, and the acceptance of divinely revealed axioms	Relies fundamentally on reason , logical justification, verification, and critical self-reflection
Foundational source of knowledge	Anchored in authoritative sacred texts (e.g., the Christian Bible, the Islamic Quran) requiring canonical interpretation, decoding, and exegesis	Dynamically adapts to and integrates scientific discoveries and expanding empirical evidence as conditions for broadening cosmic knowledge
Methodological and creative nature	Characterized by structural conservatism, preserving foundational doctrines, and adhering strictly to established spiritual traditions	Characterized by intellectual dynamism, focusing on conceptual creativity, open enquiry, and formulating novel analytical approaches

1.1.5. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PHILOSOPHY AND MEDICINE

The intersection of philosophical and medical knowledge manifests across several fundamental facets, illustrating the practical utility of philosophy within the clinical and professional activities of medical specialists:

1. *Shared subject, divergent methods*: both philosophy and medicine share deep, ancient historical roots and focus on the same core subject of study: the human being. However, their methodologies differ. Medicine focuses primarily on the human body, physiological systems, and physical pathology. Philosophy interrogates the mind, soul, ethics, and existential spirituality. Despite this methodological divergence, both disciplines ultimately converge on a singular, shared imperative: the preservation and flourishing of human life.

2. *Psychosomatic medicine*: the field of psychosomatic medicine emerged at the boundary of medical and philosophical inquiry during the twentieth century. This discipline posits that the origins of certain somatic conditions are tied to neurological disruptions, psychological trauma, or existential and spiritual crises. In a complex modern healthcare environment defined by novel pathogens, rapid biotechnological advancements, and intricate physiological discoveries, recognizing the holistic unity of the physical and psychological is essential. By integrating psychoanalytic frameworks and a comprehensive understanding of the patient's unique personality, practitioners can treat the underlying etiology of an illness rather than merely managing its symptomatic consequences. For the contemporary clinician, applying interdisciplinary philosophical insights is an invaluable clinical tool.

3. *The philosophy of mind and psychoanalysis*: exploring the mechanisms of the human brain and consciousness requires the combined efforts of neuroscientists, psychologists, and philosophers. Medical specialists frequently evaluate consciousness through a purely reductionist lens, focusing strictly on neuroanatomy and brain physiology. However, empirical research confirms that the phenomenon of consciousness possesses immense ontological complexity. This interdisciplinary overlap gave rise to the field of psychoanalysis, pioneered by Sigmund Freud. By mapping the dynamics of the unconscious mind, psychoanalysis provided the foundational theoretical framework for the evolution of Western psychotherapeutic and psychoanalytic medical practice.

4. *Biomedical ethics*: the contemporary landscape of healthcare is inextricably linked to biomedical ethics. Expanding debates surrounding reproductive rights, abortion, euthanasia, genetic engineering, and human clinical trials demonstrate that ethical ideals, societal values, and normative frameworks are essential components of medical discourse. Beyond offering retrospective critique, modern bioethics performs vital prognostic and pragmatic functions, helping shape institutional policies and legal frameworks for future scientific applications.

5. *Professional deontology and clinical values*: philosophical inquiry serves as the bedrock for the formation of medical deontology and professional ethics.

This is particularly critical in the twenty-first century, where the marketization of healthcare risks reducing clinical medicine to a mere service industry. Because physicians interact intimately with the internal, existential world of their patients, medical ethics must remain anchored in objective morality. This philosophical framework establishes the foundational rules governing informed consent, clinical honesty, patient confidentiality, medical non-disclosure, and the inviolability of personal privacy. Ultimately, studying philosophy is essential for cultivating the humanistic, axiological, and ethical guidelines that define a well-rounded medical professional.

Revealing historical paradigms of the philosopher-physician, one should mention **Hippocrates** (c. 460 – c. 370 BCE), an ancient Greek healer and physician widely revered as the “Father of Medicine”. Hippocrates famously integrated clinical observation with high moral character and professional responsibility. The foundational principles outlined in the *Hippocratic Oath* continue to serve as the ethical compass for medical practice globally. Taking a modern, modified version of this oath remains a universal tradition for graduates receiving their medical degrees.

Ibn Sina/Avicenna (980–1037 CE) was a monumental medieval Persian polymath, philosopher, and physician who represented the pinnacle of Islamic Golden Age Aristotelianism. Author of *The Canon of Medicine* — which served as the standard medical textbook in both the Islamic world and Europe for centuries — Avicenna seamlessly combined metaphysical philosophy with systematic empirical medicine. He served as a court physician to various regional rulers and briefly held the political office of vizier in Hamadan.

The **utility of philosophical inquiry within clinical medicine and professional healthcare practices** can be organized into three core dimensions:

1. *The logical dimension and diagnostic reasoning*: philosophy operates as the “art of precise thinking,” cultivating high-level intellectual capabilities that directly enhance a medical specialist’s clinical acumen. It trains the mind in rigorous, objective, and impartial problem-solving, enabling clinicians to formulate well-reasoned justifications for their decisions. In practice, this logical framework is indispensable for constructing accurate diagnoses, identifying complex etiologies, and prescribing optimal treatment plans. Furthermore, a firm grasp of logic enables physicians to critically evaluate their own cognitive processes through systematic self-reflection. Engaging with philosophical exercises fosters cognitive flexibility, ensures high professional standards, and drives cultural growth. In an increasingly complex healthcare environment, a clinician’s philosophical erudition remains an invaluable asset.

2. *The methodological foundation of medical science*: philosophy provides the overarching methodological architecture necessary for clinical and scientific advancement. The philosophy of science is particularly vital for future medical professionals, as it delineates the structural forms of scientific knowledge (including scientific facts, problems, hypotheses, and theories) and reveals

the underlying logical methods of research. Whether consciously or spontaneously, almost every physician employs fundamental logical methods — such as analysis, synthesis, deduction, and induction — thereby continuously drawing upon the philosophy of science during clinical research and patient care.

3. *Theoretical synergies*: the conceptual frameworks of philosophy are deeply intertwined with professional medical practice. Medical specialists rely heavily on specialized sub-disciplines, most notably philosophical anthropology, the philosophy of mind, the methodology of science, biomedical ethics, and formal logic.

In conclusion, the prominent status of philosophy within modern medical education is justified by its profound role in shaping both the general cultural outlook and the professional worldview of the modern physician. This intellectual grounding is especially critical given the current exponential growth of medical information and the rapid expansion of complex biotechnologies. Contemporary healthcare demands medical professionals who possess high intelligence, a broad intellectual horizon, creative analytical thinking, and a profound commitment to humanism — qualities that the systematic study of philosophy is uniquely positioned to cultivate.

TRAINING MATERIAL

Exercise 1. Read the excerpt from the primary source and answer the questions.

J. Ortega y Gasset

What is Philosophy?¹ Lecture V

In defining the problem of philosophy, we discover that it is the most radical, archetypically problematic of all possible. On the other hand, we see that the more problematic the issue, the purer the cognitive and theoretical activity that perceives and investigates it. Therefore, philosophy is the highest intellectual endeavor, compared to which other sciences, even pure mathematics, bear the imprint of empiricism.

However, does not this very purity, this extreme intellectual heroism characteristic of philosophy, testify to a certain recklessness, even a frenzy? Doesn't posing such an unusual problem as a philosophical one contradict common sense? As for implementation, it should be noted that the attempt called philosophy is the least likely to succeed. It seems, I said, like a mad undertaking. Then why undertake the attempt? Why not be content with life and reject philosophy? If its goal is unattainable, then philosophy is unnecessary, there is no need for it. Fine, but the main point is that there are people who need precisely the useless.

¹ *Ортега-и-Гассет, Х.* Translated and published from: *Что такое философия? // Х. Ортега-и-Гассет. – М. : Наука, 1991. – С. 35–37.*

Let us recall the divine contrast between the most useful Martha and the unconcerned Mary. The truth is — and this is precisely what Christ's words imply — that there is no complete separation, and that life itself, including organic and biological life, ultimately cannot be understood through usefulness, but can be explained as a grand athletic phenomenon.

So is there any need at all for the vital fact of philosophizing? If by necessity we understand “usefulness” for something else, then philosophy is not necessary, at least at first glance. However, the necessity of the useful is only relative; it exists only in relation to the goal. True necessity is the need for every creature to be itself: for a bird to fly, for a fish to swim, for the mind to philosophize. This need to fulfill the function or act of our existence is the highest and the most essential need. Therefore, Aristotle confidently says of the sciences: “All other sciences indeed are more necessary than this, but none is better” (Greek). It is not without reason that Plato, at the height of his rigorous thought, searching for the boldest definition of philosophy, in the very midst of the dialogue “Sophist,” calls it “the Science of Free Men.” Philosophy does not arise out of utility, nor out of gratuitous caprice. It is the fundamental need of reason. Why? We have called its essential characteristic the search for the whole as such, the conquest of the Universe, and the hunt for the Unicorn. Where does this desire come from? Why not be content with what is revealed to us in the world without any philosophy, with what already exists and is here before us? Simply because everything that exists and is here, given to us, present, and manifest — it is, in essence, only a piece, a shard, a fragment, and a stump. Looking at it, one cannot help but notice and feel its flaw. In every being given to us, in every phenomenon of the world, we discover a deep trace of a fracture, evidence that it is a part and only a part; we see the scar of its ontological mutilation; the cripple's suffering cries out to us, their yearning for what has been taken away, their divine dissatisfaction. Twelve years ago, speaking in Buenos Aires, I defined dissatisfaction “as love without a beloved and as the pain of our missing limbs.” It is a longing for what we are not, a calling for our incompleteness and our crippled nature. Strictly speaking, I want to say the following: taking any object we discover in the world around us and looking closely at what lies before us, we soon begin to understand that it is only a fragment, to which we must add another, complementary reality. Thus, colors in all their richness, continually replacing one another before our eyes, are not only what they appear to be at first glance. Any color must have some extension; it exists by covering some space; therefore, there is no color without space. It is only part of a whole, which we will call color space, or spatial color. But this color space itself, in turn, cannot be only color space. The existence of space presupposes something that extends, that serves as a support for space and color — a substrate, or foundation. Space, as Leibniz responds to Descartes, requires *extensione prius*. Following tradition, let us call this foundation matter. When we reach matter, it seems that we have finally arrived at something self-sufficient. Matter no longer needs any basis: it is

self-sufficient — unlike color, which is present and exists through something else, namely the matter that serves as its basis. But suddenly we have a suspicion: the matter that already exists is here, is me and self-sufficient, could not generate itself or initiate its own existence. Matter cannot be thought of without imagining it as dependent on some other force for its existence, just as, looking at a flying arrow, one cannot help but recall the hand that sent it. Thus, it too is part of the broader process that generated it, the broader reality that complements it. All this is trivial and serves only to clarify the idea we are considering.

Let's take another example, which seems both more familiar and illustrative to me. This entire hall is present in our perception. It appears — at least to us — as something complete and sufficient. It consists of what we see in it and nothing else. At least, it seems to us that, if we analyze our visual perception of this hall, we will discover in it only its color, its light, its forms, its space, not to mention everything else. But if we then, upon leaving this hall, discover that the world ends beyond its doors, that beyond this hall there is nothing, not even empty space, our stunned mind will experience a shock. Why are we, without even thinking, instantly struck by the fact that beyond this hall there are no houses, no streets, no city, no atmosphere, and so on, if previously we only remembered what we saw in the hall? Perhaps, in our perception, alongside the obvious presence of the interior we saw, there was a hidden general background, the disappearance of which we cannot help but notice. In other words, this hall, even in our immediate perception, was not something self-obscured, but merely a foreground, emerging from the general background we had in mind, which, as a hidden supplement, already existed for us, framing what we actually saw. This general surrounding background is now not present, but co-present. Indeed, whenever we see something, it appears against a hidden, dark, and vast background of vague outlines, and this is simply the world, a fragment, or a shard of which it is. Each time, we see only a protruding part of an otherwise hidden world. Elevating this observation to a general principle, we can say: in what is present, the world is always co-present.

Questions:

1. How does the author define philosophy in this excerpt?
2. What is the primary philosophical thesis advanced in this fragment?
3. According to the text, is the vital act of philosophizing necessary? Elaborate on the author's distinction regarding "necessity".

EXERCISES FOR ASSESSING COMPETENCY LEVEL

Exercise 2. Answer the following questions:

1. How is a "worldview" defined in contemporary thought? What are the defining characteristics that govern how a worldview functions within human society?

2. What specific levels (e.g., spiritual-practical vs. rational-theoretical) and modes of engagement (world-attitude, world-perception, and world-understanding) are distinguished within the architecture of a worldview?

3. What are the defining characteristics of a mythological worldview? How do concepts such as syncretism, anthropomorphism, and binary oppositions shape this early mode of understanding reality?

4. What constitutes the unique nature of a religious worldview? How do the sacred-profane dichotomy, the cultic system, and the principle of faith distinguish it from myth?

5. What are the specific, defining features of a philosophical worldview? How does its reliance on radical reflexivity and the sovereignty of reason separate it from theological or mythological frameworks?

6. What is the primary subject matter of philosophical enquiry? Detail the three core problem domains (the problem of the world, humanity, and the human-world relationship) that remain constant in philosophical thought.

7. What are the main branches that comprise the systematic structure of philosophical knowledge? Differentiate between ontology, epistemology, philosophical anthropology, and social philosophy.

8. How do philosophy, science, and art relate to one another? Using your knowledge of their distinct methodological frameworks, contrast how each discipline approaches reality and truth.

9. What core functions does philosophy perform within the wider cultural system? Explain how its methodological, socio-critical, and worldview-formation functions operate.

10. In what ways are philosophical and medical knowledge intertwined? Discuss how disciplines like biomedical ethics, professional deontology, and psychosomatic medicine demonstrate the practical application of philosophy within clinical healthcare.

Exercise 3. Choose the correct answer: What is the core of a worldview?

- a) knowledge;
- b) beliefs and ideals;
- c) the emotional-psychological component;
- d) life goals and values.

Exercise 4. Match each worldview type with its characteristic.

1) mythological;	a) based on objective facts and laws;
2) religious;	b) based on belief in the supernatural;
3) scientific;	c) based on a figurative and emotional perception of the world;
4) philosophical.	d) seeks to find general principles of existence and cognition.

Exercise 5. Fill in the blanks:

The main historical types of worldview are: ____, ____, ____, and ____.

Exercise 6. Explain why philosophy is considered a rational form of worldview. Provide at least three arguments.

Exercise 7. Problem question: Can modern society exist without philosophy? Defend your position, providing at least two arguments for and against.

Exercise 8. Prepare a report on the specific use of philosophical terms in non-European languages, based on materials from: Key Concepts in World Philosophies: A Toolkit for Philosophers / eds.: S. Flavel, C. Robbiano. Bloomsbury Academic, 2023.

Topics for reports:

1. The specific characteristics of the mythological worldview.
2. Philosophical and religious worldviews: a comparative analysis.
3. A comparative analysis of philosophy and art.
4. Philosophy and science: commonalities and divergences.
5. Philosophers on philosophy: classical and non-classical interpretations.
6. Philosophy and medicine: modes of dialogue throughout cultural history.

Aphorisms and statements:

1. Medicine is the sister of philosophy (*Democritus*).
2. Philosophy is the mother of all sciences (*Cicero*).
3. Philosophy is the medicine of the soul (*Cicero*).
4. In a philosophical dispute, he who is defeated gains the most, for he learns the most (*Epicurus*).
5. Aristotle taught me to satisfy my mind only with that which reasoning convinces me of, and not merely by the authority of the teacher (*Galileo Galilei*).
6. The philosopher must doubt, and doubt, and doubt, questioning even when nobody else questions, making a hazard of the self-evident (*Lev Shestov*).
7. My philosophy did not bring me any income whatsoever, but it spared me a great deal of expense (*Arthur Schopenhauer*).
8. There is but one truly serious philosophical problem, and that is suicide. Judging whether life is or is not worth living amounts to answering the fundamental question of philosophy. All the rest — whether the world has three dimensions, whether the mind has nine or twelve categories — comes afterwards; these are games (*Albert Camus*).

SELF-ASSESSMENT OF TOPIC COMPREHENSION

1. Identify the historical types of worldviews:

- a) religious worldview;
- b) existentialism;
- c) atheism;
- d) mythology;
- e) philosophical worldview.

2. Identify the characteristics of a mythological worldview:

- a) syncretism;
- b) rationality;
- c) anthroposociomorphism;
- d) strict logical structure;
- e) geneticism;
- f) imagery and emotionality.

3. Determine the time of the emergence of the philosophical worldview:

- a) mid – 3rd centuries BCE;
- b) 6–5th centuries BCE;
- c) 7–6th centuries BCE;
- d) 13–17th centuries CE.

4. The branch of philosophy that studies being is called:

- a) ontology;
- b) epistemology;
- c) philosophical anthropology;
- d) social philosophy.

5. Identify the philosophical position of the author of the following statement: “The spirit is infinitely higher than nature; in it, divinity is manifested more than in nature...”:

- a) subjective idealism;
- b) objective idealism;
- c) agnosticism.

TOPIC 1.2

GENESIS OF PHILOSOPHICAL KNOWLEDGE: PHILOSOPHY OF THE ANCIENT EAST AND CLASSICAL ANTIQUITY

Total lesson time: 2 hours.

Aim: to explore the unique characteristics and foundational principles of philosophical thought in the Ancient East and Classical Antiquity.

Objectives:

- to analyze the socio-historical causes and fundamental concepts underlying the emergence of the philosophical worldview;
- to examine the core concepts of Ancient Indian philosophy and distinguish between its orthodox (*astika*) and heterodox (*nastika*) schools;
- to examine the central doctrines of Ancient Chinese philosophy, specifically focusing on the schools of Confucianism and Taoism;
- to outline the primary problems and major developmental stages of Ancient Greek philosophy;
- to investigate the foundational ideas of Pre-Socratic natural philosophy;
- to evaluate the core philosophical frameworks developed by Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle;
- to characterize the ethical and metaphysical problems of the Hellenistic era, with particular emphasis on Skepticism, Epicureanism, and Stoicism.

Questions:

1. Socio-historical and cultural prerequisites for the genesis of philosophy.
2. The schools and traditions of Ancient Indian philosophy.
3. The schools and traditions of Ancient Chinese philosophy.
4. The evolution of the Ancient Greek philosophical tradition.

Key concepts: Axial Age, traditionalism, Vedas, Upanishads, Brahman, Atman, Samsara, Karma, Moksha, Ahimsa, Dharma, meditation, astika, nastika, Buddhism, Four Noble Truths, nirvana, Cult of Heaven, Dao, Yin-Yang, Wuxing, Qi, Confucianism, Daoism, Ren, Li, Xiao, Zhengming, Junzi, De, Wu Wei, cosmocentrism, logos, polis, democracy, natural philosophy, arche, being, non-being, the world of ideas/the world of things, anamnesis, ideal state, the four causes and principles of being, catharsis, eudaemonism, hedonism, fatalism, ataraxia, apathy.

THEORETICAL MATERIAL

1.2.1. SOCIO-HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL PREREQUISITES FOR THE GENESIS OF PHILOSOPHY

The earliest philosophical teachings emerged during the sixth and fifth centuries BCE within the most developed civilizations of Antiquity and the Ancient East, namely India, China, and Greece. Notably, the ancient states of the Near East — including Babylonia, Syria, Phoenicia, Judea, and Egypt — had also cultivated the necessary cultural preconditions for the emergence of philosophy. However, this intellectual potential was abruptly curtailed by the Persian conquests, which absorbed these disparate civilizations into a singular empire.

In historical and philosophical discourse, the broader epoch stretching from the eighth to the second century BCE is termed the **“Axial Age”** (*Achsenzeit*), a concept pioneered by the philosopher Karl Jaspers. For the ancient Indian, Chinese, and Greek civilizations, these centuries served as a historical pivot, anchoring irreversible transformations in socio-political conditions and human lifestyle. A defining feature of the Axial Age, which united these otherwise isolated cultural spheres, was the systematic rationalization of spiritual values, social relations, and institutional frameworks. Ancient philosophy served as the primary internal catalyst for this rationalizing process.

When examining ***the socio-historical and cultural prerequisites for the genesis of philosophy***, several macro-structural shifts must be emphasized:

1. *The technological revolution:* the dawn of the **Iron Age** in the first millennium BCE radically transformed production capabilities. The widespread adoption of iron tools by the sixth and fifth centuries BCE stabilized agricultural output, boosted the material prosperity of ancient states, and accelerated social stratification through a highly differentiated division of labor.

2. *The rise of a commodity-money economy*: the subsequent flourishing of agriculture, advanced crafts, long-distance trade, and maritime navigation drove the transition toward monetized economies. The introduction of coins as a universal equivalent of value played a profound cognitive role, encouraging the development of abstract thinking. The ubiquity of monetary circulation demanded higher levels of numeracy, quantitative calculation, and formal logic at the level of everyday consciousness, fundamentally altering the fabric of spiritual and intellectual culture.

3. *Radical structural overhauls*: the emergence of private property and subsequent socio-economic inequality triggered deep class stratification within ancient civilizations. This division birthed numerous social groups with divergent, and often conflicting, systemic interests.

4. *The division of labor*: the structural separation of mental and physical labor facilitated the rise of intellectual elites whose primary social occupation was the production, codification, and transmission of knowledge. These intellectual enclaves provided the exact social environment required to foster the first scientists and philosophers — the pioneering bearers of a rational, secular worldview.

Societal differentiation led directly to the birth of the state. During this epoch, state-supported educational frameworks emerged. Tailored primarily for the free citizens of these ancient societies, these schools represented a qualitatively new institution for the socialization of the individual. Concurrently, the rapid evolution of writing fundamentally altered how knowledge and cultural experience were transmitted. This shift catalyzed the development of a categorical-conceptual culture of thought, formal logic, eristics, and dialectics. As a consequence of these objective processes, philosophy established itself within the spiritual culture of Antiquity, introducing an entirely new conceptualization of the cosmos, humanity, and society.

The prerequisites for the origin of philosophy were rooted in these concurrent economic, socio-political, and intellectual transformations. Despite pronounced historical differences between the East and West, several shared parameters reflect this broader transition of archaic societies into civilized states.

In contemporary historiography, researchers debate the mechanisms behind this intellectual transition, primarily contrasting the *mythogenic* and *epistemogenic concepts of philosophical genesis*:

– *the mythogenic concept*: this approach asserts that philosophy directly emerged from mythology through the gradual rationalization of its narratives. It views the transition as a translation of sensory-concrete mythological allegories into a systematic, conceptual-logical form. According to this view, the development of early philosophy represents a shift in structural *form* while fundamentally preserving the existential and substantive core of the mythological worldview;

– *the epistemogenic concept*: in stark contrast, this model positions philosophy as an explicit break from mythology. It reduces the intellectual

prerequisites of philosophy exclusively to the accumulation of ancient protoscientific and empirical knowledge;

– modern scholarship generally views these two concepts as extreme poles of a single historical process. Philosophy undeniably ***inherited its core existential and axiological questions from mythology***, yet it simultaneously ***relied on the abstract methodologies and analytical structures developed by protoscience***. This dual heritage allowed early philosophy to focus on identifying natural etiologies and cosmic regularities. Ultimately, the birth of philosophy required dismantling mythological syncretism, intentionally distancing its discourse from the figurative language of myth, and establishing rational-logical principles of cosmic explanation.

Scholars continue to debate the precise origins of philosophical thought within the Aegean basin. Ancient Greece developed an exceptionally unique cultural and socio-political matrix that allowed systematic philosophical knowledge and a rational mode of cosmic orientation to emerge. These ***foundational prerequisites*** can be categorized into four primary dimensions:

1. *Socio-economic preconditions*: the dawn of the first millennium BCE was characterized by the widespread adoption of iron metallurgy. This technological paradigm shift triggered a dramatic surge in overall labor productivity, yielding an unprecedented agricultural and artisanal surplus destined for market exchange. This era witnessed the rise of commodity production, receiving a powerful structural impetus from the introduction of monetary circulation and coinage. Consequently, the material wealth of the Greek city-states grew sufficiently to sustain a dedicated intellectual class. Society became willing to support individuals engaged exclusively in theoretical and cognitive activity, providing them with material security in exchange for their intellectual, educational, and civic services.

2. *Political prerequisites*: during this epoch, the traditional tribal systems depicted in Homeric epic poetry were dissolving. The Greek world transitioned from localized monarchies to aristocratic oligarchies, and ultimately to alternating periods of tyranny and democracy. Crucially, Greek monarchs never possessed the absolute, divinely sanctioned despotic power characteristic of rulers in ancient Egypt or Babylonia. By the seventh and sixth centuries BCE, numerous Greek city-states (*poleis*) had overthrown localized tyrannies to establish a novel form of governance: the participatory democracy of the citizen class. This democratic model relied on elected governing bodies, open rhetorical debates on civic policy, collective decision-making via citizen voting, and an adversarial, competitive judiciary. This public political arena directly fostered a culture of logical argumentation, rhetoric, and debate.

3. *Cultural prerequisites*: the genesis of philosophy was preceded by several evolutionary phases in the cultural development of Aegean civilization. Located at a major geopolitical crossroads, Greece witnessed a unique synthesis of various regional mythologies, religious practices, and folk traditions.

Furthermore, the Greeks dynamically assimilated the mathematical, astronomical, and empirical achievements of neighboring civilizations, including the Egyptians, Babylonians, and Persians. A prime example of this cross-cultural integration is the adoption of the fertility cult of Demeter, which refashioned ancient Near Eastern mother-goddess archetypes into a traditional Greek civic cult.

A cohesive, proto-philosophical codification of the Greek worldview solidified between the twelfth and eighth centuries BCE, primarily through the literary works of Homer and Hesiod. Homer's epic poems, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, provide a comprehensive mapping of the social structure, ethical codes, and anthropomorphic religion of Greek society during its transitional phase. Concurrently, Hesiod's *Theogony* attempted to impose a genealogical order onto the chaotic pantheon of gods.

The emerging philosophical worldview directly built upon these epic foundations by adopting their striving for a systematic understanding of reality. However, philosophy fundamentally broke away from its literary precursors by seeking to eliminate the internal contradictions, anthropomorphic caprices, and logical inconsistencies inherent in mythological narratives, replacing them with rational cosmic laws.

1.2.2. THE SCHOOLS AND TRADITIONS OF ANCIENT INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

According to the ***Indo-Aryan migration hypothesis***, Indo-European tribes migrated from the Eurasian steppes (specifically the Sintashta and Andronovo cultures) to the Indian subcontinent during the second millennium BCE (c. 1700–1300 BCE). These migratory waves introduced Indo-Aryan languages, a distinct chariot culture, and the Vedic religion to the region, laying the foundations of the Vedic civilization.

By the first half of the first millennium BCE, the foundational canonical texts of ancient Indian culture had been systematically codified into the ***Vedas*** (meaning “sacred knowledge” — traditionally viewed as divine revelations of superhuman origin) along with their extensive commentaries. This vast corpus is organized into four distinct layers:

- *the Samhitas*: the primary collections of hymns, prayers, and mantras;
- *the Brahmanas*: liturgical commentaries detailing the esoteric, innermost meaning of rituals and sacrificial practices;
- *the Aranyakas*: “Forest books” containing mystical and allegorical interpretations intended for ascetics and hermits;
- *the Upanishads*: (literally meaning “sitting down near a teacher”) the core religious and philosophical treatises that conclude the Vedic corpus.

In accordance with the rigid social stratification of ancient Indian society into *varnas* (castes), the exclusive custodians and transmitters of this sacred text corpus were the ***Brahmins*** — the highest, priestly caste.

The Upanishads serve as the definitive philosophical commentaries on the Vedas, introducing the foundational **conceptual categories** that would govern the entire ancient Indian philosophical tradition:

1. **The monistic doctrine of Brahman-Atman:**

- *Brahman* is the absolute, supreme spiritual principle; the uncreated, indefinable, and qualityless source and ground of all existence;
- *Atman* is the eternal, immutable spiritual essence of the individual; a spark of pure consciousness identical to the cosmic Brahman;
- the ultimate meaning of human existence is to realize the fundamental identity between the individual soul (*Atman*) and the universal consciousness (*Brahman*). When *Atman* dissolves into and merges with *Brahman*, the dualistic opposition between the subjective and objective — the Self and the non-Self — is entirely obliterated.

2. **Samsara and Karma:** the text introduces *the concept of reincarnation* as a continuous, cyclical wheel of birth, death, and rebirth (*Samsara*). This cyclical migration of the soul operates in strict accordance with *Karma* — the inexorable cosmic law of cause and effect, where an individual’s ethical choices, thoughts, and actions dictate the nature of their future incarnations.

3. **Moksha** represents the ultimate soteriological goal — the definitive liberation of the soul from the binding wheel of *Samsara* and the attainment of a state of supreme, transcendent bliss.

4. **The Marga (path of liberation):** to transcend the cycle of *Samsara*, an individual must actively pursue a holistic path consisting of:

- *Vidya*: the attainment of true, non-dualistic knowledge of *Brahman*;
- *Dharma*: strict adherence to moral, cosmic, and societal duty;
- *Ahimsa*: the absolute ethical commitment to non-violence, doing no harm to any living being;
- *Dhyana (meditation)*: cultivating profound concentration and the systematic stabilization of consciousness.

Among the orthodox schools, the metaphysical doctrines of the Vedas and Upanishads find their most systematic development within **Vedanta (astika)** (literally meaning “the end or completion of the Vedas”). Rooted firmly in the monistic doctrine of *Brahman-Atman*, Vedanta addresses the ontological status of the empirical world:

- *the doctrine of Maya*: Vedanta posits that the perceived world of material phenomena is merely an “appearance” or cosmic illusion (*maya*). Empirical sensory data do not uncover the ultimate essence of reality; rather, they serve merely as a tool for practical orientation in daily life;
- *ignorance and liberation*: the root cause of this illusory perception is existential ignorance (*avidya*). Consequently, the only mechanism to break free from the cyclical wheel of *Samsara* is the attainment of true metaphysical knowledge (*vidya*).

Acquiring *vidya* requires disciplined, concentrated reflection on the philosophical insights of the Upanishads alongside rigorous meditation. Under this tradition, the student must maintain absolute devotion to a guru who has been formally initiated into the wisdom of Vedanta, practicing continuous contemplation until achieving direct, uninterrupted realization of ultimate truth.

Buddhism stands as the most influential and historically significant among the heterodox (*nastika*) schools of Indian philosophy.

The historical founder of this tradition was **Siddhartha Gautama** (c. 7–8th century BCE), who, upon achieving ultimate spiritual awakening, became known as the **Buddha** (“the Enlightened One”). According to Buddhist tradition, Siddhartha was born into a royal family, spending his youth insulated within a palace of immense luxury and wealth.

His existential trajectory shifted dramatically when he ventured outside the palace walls and encountered the “**Four Sights**”: a frail, elderly man (representing aging); a severely diseased person (representing sickness); a funeral procession (representing death); a serene ascetic hermit (representing the quest for liberation).

These encounters forced Gautama to realize that sickness, suffering, decrepitude, and death are inescapable dimensions of the human condition, from which neither wealth nor noble status can grant immunity. Convinced that internal self-knowledge was the singular pathway to comprehending the root causes of existential suffering, he renounced his worldly titles. Adopting the life of a wandering ascetic, he sought a definitive solution to human suffering. Ultimately, while meditating beneath the Bodhi tree, Siddhartha attained full awakening — a comprehension of the nature of suffering and the precise ethical and cognitive steps required to eradicate it.

The foundational architecture of the Buddha’s philosophical framework rests upon the **four noble truths** (*Aryasatya*):

1) *the truth of suffering (Dukkha)*: suffering is a universal and inescapable feature of human life. It encompasses all existential stages and dimensions without exception: birth, aging, illness, death, the desire to acquire material things, and the grief of their loss. According to Buddhist metaphysics, the entirety of mundane existence is imbued with *dukkha*;

2) *the truth of the origin of suffering (Samudaya)*: human suffering has a definitive etiology. It is driven by attachment, crave (*tanha*), an immense clinging to existence, the thirst for worldly power, and the insatiable pursuit of sensory pleasures;

3) *the truth of the cessation of suffering (Nirodha)*: the cessation of suffering is achievable. It requires the systematic eradication and renunciation of desire, thereby dismantling an individual’s attachment to the material world and dissolving the primary illusion of human psychological life — the concept of the permanent self (*Anatta*/ “I”).

4) *the truth of the path to cessation (Marga)*: there is a definitive practical pathway to transcend suffering. This is the **Noble Eightfold Path**, frequently termed the “Middle Way” (*Madhyamapratipad*), which avoids the extremes of both hedonism and severe asceticism.

To help students memorize and analyze the path, it is conventionally divided into three overarching disciplines: **Wisdom** (*right view and right resolve*), **Ethical Conduct** (*right speech, right action, and right livelihood*), and **Mental Discipline** (*right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration*).

The ultimate realization of the Noble Eightfold Path is the attainment of **Nirvana** (derived from the Sanskrit for “blowing out” or “extinction”). Nirvana denotes a transcendent ontological state in which cyclical rebirth (*Samsara*) and existential suffering definitively cease. Canonical Buddhist texts intentionally omit a reductive, detailed description of this state; the precise nature and characteristics of Nirvana comprise one of the metaphysical enigmas to which the Buddha maintained a strict “*noble silence*.”

In its primordial form, the Buddha’s framework was fundamentally non-theistic and analytical, rather than religious in the conventional Western sense. Early Buddhism completely rejects both the concept of a creator deity (*Ishvara*) and the doctrine of an immortal, unchanging individual soul (*Atman*). Warning his disciples against dogmatic idolatry, the Buddha famously asserted that the greatest misunderstanding they could commit would be to deify him after his death or declare him the earthly incarnation of a god.

Through centuries of cultural, historical, and geopolitical evolution, Buddhism bifurcated into two competing traditions:

– **Hinayana** (“*Lesser vehicle*”): this school preserves a more orthodox, monastic approach. Adherents view the Buddha strictly as a historical human being who discovered the path to Nirvana through personal intellectual effort. Within this paradigm, achieving liberation requires literal renunciation of the secular world; hence, walking the path of the Buddha is seen as a calling exclusive to the monastic community (*Sangha*).

– **Mahayana** (*the “Great Vehicle”*): this tradition expanded the possibility of spiritual liberation to the laity, adapting the philosophy into a broader socio-cultural framework. Mahayana shifts its focus toward the active, compassionate work of the *Bodhisattvas* — enlightened beings who have generated awakened consciousness and stand at the threshold of Nirvana, but voluntarily defer their final step to actively assist in the liberation of all suffering entities.

Over time, within the Mahayana tradition, a gradual deification of the Buddha occurred. This evolutionary shift triggered the emergence of an expansive iconographic cult of images, liturgical prayers, devotional rituals, and devotional offerings, effectively transforming the philosophical school into a major world religion.

1.2.3. THE SCHOOLS AND TRADITIONS OF ANCIENT CHINESE PHILOSOPHY

The pre-philosophical views of Ancient China began to take shape at the end of the second millennium BCE. This early worldview was grounded in historical narratives concerning past imperial dynasties, mythological conceptions of a “Golden Age” of Chinese culture, and the foundational idea of the holistic unity between humanity and nature (the deep interconnection of natural, social, and moral phenomena). It was further reinforced by ancestral veneration and the worship of **Heaven** (*Tian*). Heaven was conceptualized as the supreme guiding principle within the cosmic triad of Heaven-Human-Earth, serving as the fundamental source of all existence and the ordering power that harmonizes the cosmos. From this metaphysical foundation arose the term **Tianxia** (literally “All under Heaven”), which became a historical synonym for the Chinese cultural realm.

During the first millennium BCE, foundational literary, historical, and philosophical texts emerged. Collectively known as the “**Five Classics**” (*Wujing*), these works continue to serve as the bedrock of intellectual and cultural life in China: **the Shijing**: *the Book of Odes* (a collection of poetry and ritual songs); **the Shujing**: *the Book of History* (a compilation of state documents and speeches); **the Liji**: *the Book of Rites* (detailing court ceremony and social etiquette); **the Chunqiu**: *the Spring and Autumn Annals* (a historical chronicle of the State of Lu); **the Yijing**: *the Book of Changes* (a manual of divination and philosophical cosmology).

In the *Book of Changes* and its classical commentaries, **the core metaphysical categories of Ancient Chinese thought** were systematically formulated:

1. *The concept of Dao*: literally translating to the “Way” or “Path,” **Dao** stands as one of the most vital concepts in Chinese philosophy. It designates the absolute primordial principle of all things, the underlying natural order governing both the physical universe and human ethical behavior, and the source of cosmic rhythm and harmony. The eternal, immutable, and non-conceptual *Dao* generates, sustains, and guides the material world.

2. *The dualism of Yin and Yang*: *Dao*, operating as the natural developmental process of the cosmos, manifests through the dynamic interaction of two universal, complementary forces:

- *Yang* represents light, masculinity, hardness, heavenly orientation, and the active principle;

- *Yin* represents darkness, femininity, softness, earthly orientation, and the passive principle.

These categories express a relational rather than absolute dualism, as each opposing principle inherently contains the seed and potential of the other. The cyclical rhythm, sequence, and direction of all worldly mutations are driven by the continuous interconversion of *Yin* and *Yang*, which generates **Qi** — the vital life energy and material substance of the universe.

3. *The five phases (Wuxing)*: the continuous interaction of *Yin* and *Yang* gives rise to the five material elements or primary phases of change: **water**, **fire**, **wood**, **metal**, and **earth**. From these phases emerges the entire diversity of the material world, including human beings. The *Wuxing* exist in a state of perpetual motion and structural harmony, operating through two cyclical laws:

- *the generation cycle*: water nourishes wood, wood fuels fire, fire creates earth (ash), earth yields metal, and metal condenses into water;

- *the overcoming cycle*: water extinguishes fire, fire melts metal, metal cuts wood, wood penetrates earth, and earth absorbs water.

The sociopolitical framework of Confucius is anchored in the pursuit of macro-societal harmony and justice across the state. Confucius asserted that by internalizing and adhering to strict moral principles, an individual actively contributes to the structural harmonization of society, laying the groundwork for an ideal state. This ethical transformation relies on three primary virtues:

- *Ren (benevolence/humaneness)* serves as the cardinal ethical virtue. Operating on the foundation of *Ren*, Confucius formulated his classic rendering of the **“Golden Rule of Morality”**: “Do not impose on others what you yourself do not desire;”

- *Li (ritual propriety/etiquette)*: denotes the external codification of morals through custom, law, decorum, and ritual propriety. Confucius argued that internal humaneness is structurally maintained through external restraint, stating: “To discipline oneself and return to ritual propriety — this is what constitutes humaneness;”

- *Xiao (filial piety)* mandates profound devotion to one’s parents, ancestral veneration, and absolute respect for elders and historical tradition. Filial piety ensures long-term social stability and intergenerational continuity, eliminating civil conflicts. Crucially, this familial hierarchy applied directly to the macro-state: Confucius conceptualized the state as a macro-family governed by parental benevolence and filial obedience, while the family operated as a micro-state training citizens in duty.

To achieve this state harmony, Confucian political philosophy introduces two central structural imperatives:

1. *Zhengming (the rectification of names)*: Confucius argued that a necessary condition for societal order and functional class relations is that every individual must perfectly embody their designated social and political nomenclature. A person’s objective behavior must conform to their social mission, as famously summarized: “Let the ruler be a ruler, the minister be a minister, the father be a father, and the son be a son.” This alignment of nomenclature requires the rigorous fulfillment of one’s professional, civic, and moral duty (**Yi**).

2. *The Junzi (the exemplary/noble person)*: Confucius synthesized the harmonious blending of *Ren*, *Li*, and *Xiao* within the living archetype of the *Junzi* — the moral exemplar or “noble person.” Originally an aristocratic title denoting birth, Confucius redefined the *Junzi* as a meritocratic ethical standard.

In the context of state governance, the *Junzi* serves as an ideal civil servant and scholar-official who acts as an organic educator to the populace, transforming society not through raw coercive legal force, but through the irresistible authority of moral excellence and personal example (**De**).

While Confucianism provided the social, ethical, and bureaucratic architecture of Ancient Chinese culture, the investigation into the metaphysical aspects of being, cosmology, and the universe was pioneered by **Taoism** (*Daoism*). The foundation of this tradition is attributed to the semi-legendary philosopher **Laozi** (sixth century BCE), revered as the author of the foundational treatise **The Daodejing** (traditionally translated as *The Book of the Way and its Virtue*).

The central axis of Taoist metaphysics is **Dao** (*Tao*). It is conceptualized as the supreme ontological ground and governing law of all existence — an eternal, invisible, non-conceptual, and inexhaustible origin of the universe that constitutes the inner essence of the cosmos. *Dao* pervades reality boundlessly and perpetually. Although inaccessible to human sensory perception, nameless, and formless, it ultimately grants birth, nomenclature, and physical form to everything that exists. *Dao* drives all cosmic mutations while itself remaining structurally empty and immutable.

The Daodejing emphasizes the non-dualistic tension within *Dao*, which simultaneously operates as both non-being (*wu*) and being (*you*). This dialectic is illustrated in the famous opening passage of the text: “*The Dao that can be spoken of is not the eternal Dao; The name that can be named is not the eternal name. The nameless is the origin of Heaven and Earth; The named is the mother of all things. Thus, constantly without desire, one observes its essence; Constantly with desire, one observes its manifestations. These two emerge from the same source but differ in name; both are called the deep and profound. Extreme profundity is the gateway to all mystery.*”²

The temporal manifestation of *Dao* within the empirical world is **De** (*Te*), conventionally translated as virtue, inner potency, or cosmic grace. In its most general philosophical sense, *De* denotes the optimal, authentic mode of existence for any given entity or phenomenon.

The cultivation of a higher *De* is the defining feature of the perfect sage (*shengren*). The sage strives to comprehend and align their consciousness with the *Dao* by practicing the central ethical-methodological principle of **Wu Wei** (literally “non-action” or “effortless action”). *Wu Wei* does not imply literal, inert passivity; rather, it mandates the renunciation of artificial, calculated, or coercive actions that would disrupt the organic harmony of the natural universe. By practicing *Wu Wei*, the individual acts in perfect, spontaneous rhythm with the cosmos.

² Лао-цзы. Дао дэ цзин / Лао-цзы // A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy / trans. by W.-t. Chan. – Princeton : Princeton University Press, 1963. – Ch. 1.

The foundational principles of Ancient Chinese philosophy directly shaped the architecture of a unique, highly systematic paradigm of medicine. The definitive feature of this medical tradition is its thoroughly **holistic concept of health**.

Within this framework, human physiology is evaluated not through an isolated, reductionist lens, but as a microcosm reflecting macrocosmic laws. Health is defined as a dynamic state of homeostatic equilibrium and structural harmony between the negative, receptive energy forces (**Yin**) and the positive, active energy forces (**Yang**) within the human organism. Illness, conversely, is understood as an ontological disruption or imbalance in the flow of **Qi** (vital life force substance) caused by violating the natural rhythm of the *Dao*. Consequently, the clinical goal of the physician is to restore this natural balance, mirroring the cosmic harmony championed by Taoist philosophy.

1.2.4. THE EVOLUTION OF THE ANCIENT GREEK PHILOSOPHICAL TRADITION

Classical antiquity — the cultural heritage of Ancient Greece and Rome — is rightfully considered the cradle of European civilization. It was within this vibrant historical arena that foundational institutions and intellectual practices first emerged, including participatory democracy, theoretical science, formal logic, and systematic philosophy.

While profound wisdom flourished across the Ancient East, it was uniquely in Ancient Greece that philosophy successfully decoupled from mythology, religion, and purely empirical protoscience to establish itself as an autonomous, professional intellectual pursuit. In the Greek world, philosophers enjoyed immense societal prestige. They were frequently retained as tutors for the children of affluent citizens and served as strategic advisors within aristocratic households (for instance, Aristotle, one of the monumental figures of Western thought, was appointed as the tutor to Alexander the Great). Ultimately, philosophy was conceptualized as the most noble of all endeavors, uniquely worthy of a free citizen.

The unprecedented flourishing of philosophy during the classical period can be attributed to several macro-structural **factors**:

- *geographic mobility and cross-cultural synthesis*: located across an expansive maritime network of islands and coastal regions, Greece developed a highly advanced seafaring trade economy. The dynamics of commerce demanded sophisticated mathematical knowledge and refined rhetorical skills to persuade buyers in the marketplace. Furthermore, extensive maritime voyages brought the Greeks into direct contact with the empirical knowledge accumulated by the civilizations of the ancient Near East. Crucially, whereas Eastern science remained primarily practical — directed toward concrete utilities like engineering or land surveying — Greek thinkers transformed this material into **theoretical science**, seeking abstract knowledge of the universal principles and foundational laws governing the structure of the cosmos;

– *the division of labor and leisure (scholē)*: the socio-economic architecture of Ancient Greek society shifted arduous physical labor onto a large disenfranchised class. This structural division granted free citizens an unprecedented amount of leisure time (*scholē*). This freedom from manual toil allowed the civic elite to dedicate their lives to intellectual reflection, rigorous debate, and systematic philosophizing;

– *the democratic polis and the culture of debate*: in numerous Greek city-states, most notably Athens, a participatory democracy was established. Under this civic model, all free male citizens possessed the right to vote publicly on critical matters of state governance. This public political arena placed a premium on an individual's capacity to think logically, speak eloquently, persuade large assemblies, and subject opposing arguments to rigorous critique. Consequently, the political demands of the *polis* directly stimulated the development of rational, analytical thought.

As it matured, Ancient Greek philosophy solidified **two definitive structural features** that distinguished it from alternative worldviews:

1) *cosmocentrism*: the absolute locus of all early classical reflection was the **Cosmos** (the ordered universe). The Greeks conceptualized the Cosmos as a unified, eternal, sentient, and divinely rational whole. Yet, unlike modern conceptions of infinite space, they envisioned the universe as structurally finite. For the Greek mind, the Cosmos possessed the form of the most geometrically perfect figure: a sphere;

2) *logocentrism*: for ancient thinkers, the universe was not a chaotic convergence of random phenomena, but a harmonious, ordered structure. Everything within the Cosmos operated in strict obedience to the **Logos** — the universal law, reason, and proportion of reality. Because human beings were viewed as an organic microcosm of this macrocosm, human reason was believed to be structured by the exact same laws as the universe itself. This epistemological optimism convinced ancient philosophers that through systematic reflection, humanity could ultimately comprehend the underlying architecture of reality.

1.2.4.1. Pre-Socratic philosophy: the problem of the first principle

The birthplace of systematic Western philosophy was the Ionian city of Miletus, which fostered three foundational thinkers:

Thales of Miletus (late 7th – early 6th century BCE): universally recognized as the founder of the first Western philosophical school, Thales posited **water** as the fundamental *archē* of the cosmos. Within his cosmological framework, the Earth was envisioned as a flat disk floating upon a primordial ocean. Thales viewed nature as a living, sentient whole populated by divine forces that animated matter. To demonstrate that even apparently inanimate objects possessed a soul (*psyche*), he famously cited the properties of the lodestone (magnet), which possessed the intrinsic power to move iron.

Anaximander (c. 610 – c. 546 BCE): a disciple of Thales, Anaximander constructed an elaborate, highly speculative model of the cosmic order. He argued that the foundational principle of nature could not be identified with any known empirical substance (such as water). Instead, he posited a distinct, invisible, boundless, and eternal element termed the ***apeiron*** (literally, the “unlimited” or “indefinite”). The *apeiron* was conceptualized as a primordial matrix of four primary qualities: the hot, the cold, the wet, and the dry. The dynamic combination of these qualities generated the four base elements; for instance, the synthesis of the cold and the wet produced water.

Remarkably, Anaximander also formulated a proto-evolutionary theory of life. He asserted that the earliest living organisms emerged within primordial moisture, subsequently migrating to dry land and shedding their protective scales. Furthermore, he hypothesized that the first human beings were gestated inside giant, fish-like creatures before emerging onto land as self-sufficient entities.

Anaximenes (c. 586–526 BCE): rejecting the abstract *apeiron* of his predecessor, Anaximenes returned to a concrete material principle, nominating ***air*** (*aer*) as the definitive *arche*. He demonstrated that all qualitative variety in the physical world is produced through the quantitative mechanics of ***condensation*** and ***rarefaction***. When rarefied, air warms and transforms into fire; conversely, as it condenses, it cools and successively transmutes into wind, cloud, water, earth, and ultimately stone.

Operating outside the Milesian school, **Heraclitus** (c. 544–483 BCE) offered a radically dynamic vision of reality. He famously asserted that nothing in the universe is static, formulating the classic doctrine of universal flux: “*You cannot step into the same river twice.*” To reflect this perpetual mutability, Heraclitus selected ***fire*** as his primary cosmic element. He conceptualized the universe as an eternal, living fire that ignites and extinguishes itself in accordance with strict, proportional measures.

Furthermore, Heraclitus argued that the structural harmony of nature is sustained by the perpetual tension and unity of *inextricably linked opposites* (such as day and night, youth and old age, or sickness and health). Consequently, he recognized the profound relativity of empirical experience. For instance, he noted that seawater is simultaneously pristine and toxic: it is life-sustaining for marine organisms, yet utterly undrinkable and destructive to human beings.

Pythagoras (c. 570 – c. 490 BCE) established a secretive, religious-philosophical community in southern Italy, posited ***number*** as the definitive *arche*. The Pythagoreans discovered profound mathematical correspondences between numerical ratios, geometric forms, and musical intervals (harmonics). They asserted that the underlying architecture of every cosmic phenomenon — including the human soul (*psyche*) — could be quantified through numerical proportions. This intense focus on quantitative relations allowed the Pythagorean school to make foundational contributions to both philosophy and early mathematics. For instance, classical tradition attributes the famous geometric

theorem to Pythagoras himself, although conclusive contemporary historical evidence for this authorship is lacking.

Unlike early Ionian thinkers who reduced the *arche* to a singular material substrate, later fifth-century philosophers such as *Anaxagoras* (c. 500 – c. 428 BCE) and *Empedocles* (c. 490 – c. 430 BCE) are classified as pluralists, as they identified multiple primordial principles operating simultaneously:

Anaxagoras contended that the universe is composed of an infinite number of elemental building blocks or seeds, termed **homeomeries**. Originally existing in a state of inert chaos, these particles were organized and set into motion by an autonomous, cosmic **Divine Mind** (*Nous*), thereby generating the ordered world.

Empedocles formulated the classic doctrine of the **four roots** or elements (earth, air, fire, and water). He argued that cosmic evolution and dissolution are driven by the cyclical interplay of two opposing, immaterial forces: **Love** (*Philia*), which aggregates and unifies the elements, and **Strife** (*Neikos*), which separates and disintegrates them.

The *Eleatic school*, championed by **Parmenides of Elea** (late 6th – early 5th century BCE) and his disciple *Zeno*, introduced a radical epistemological rupture into early Greek thought. In his philosophical poem *On Nature*, Parmenides advanced the groundbreaking thesis that the empirical reality perceived by human senses — characterized by change, multiplicity, and mortality — is fundamentally deceptive.

To apprehend absolute truth, one must rely entirely on rational deduction rather than sensory observation. Parmenides asserted that underlying reality is a singular, uncaused, immutable, indivisible, and immortal totality: **Being**. Absolute Being exists of logical necessity, whereas the transient, changing world of sensory experience is merely an illusory appearance. He famously summarized this radical monism through the ontological axiom: “*Being is, and non-being is not.*”

Seeking to defend the counter-intuitive doctrines of his master, **Zeno of Elea** formulated a series of **aporias** (logical paradoxes). These puzzles were designed to demonstrate that treating multiplicity and motion as objective realities inevitably plunges human reason into self-contradiction. Among his most celebrated paradoxes are *Achilles and the Tortoise*, *The Stadium*, and *The Moving Arrow*.

For example, the paradox of the *Dichotomy* demonstrates the logical impossibility of motion: “*An object in motion can never traverse a given distance. Before it can reach its final destination, it must first travel half the distance. However, prior to reaching that midpoint, it must first traverse half of that sub-distance, and so on ad infinitum.*” Consequently, to move from one point to another, an object would be required to complete an infinite sequence of spatial tasks in a finite duration, which is a logical impossibility.

A monumental milestone in Pre-Socratic philosophy was achieved through the mechanistic worldview of **Democritus** (c. 460 – c. 370 BCE). Democritus

posited that the universe consists fundamentally of two realities: the infinite **void** (empty space) and an infinite number of microscopic, indivisible particles termed **atoms** (from the Greek *atomos*, meaning “uncuttable”).

Atoms are immutable, indestructible, eternal, and qualitatively identical; they differ from one another only in quantitative attributes such as shape, size, arrangement, and position. Moving perpetually through the void, atoms mechanically collide and entangle with one another to generate the entire spectrum of empirical objects and phenomena. When these atomic clusters disintegrate, the corresponding objects dissolve, and living organisms experience death.

Democritus firmly rejected any teleological or divine intervention in the cosmos, establishing a strict paradigm of **determinism**: there are no random accidents in nature, as every event is fully determined by the mechanical movement and causal interaction of physical atoms.

While many specific cosmological hypotheses of these early thinkers have been superseded by modern science, their intellectual legacy remains profound. Operating completely without modern empirical technology, these ancient philosophers took the revolutionary step of explaining the origin, structure, and laws of the universe through natural, immanent causes. By systematically marginalizing mythological narratives and supernatural caprices, they laid the definitive foundation for the Western scientific tradition.

1.2.4.2. Classical Antique philosophy

During the fifth and fourth centuries BCE, Ancient Greece attained unprecedented heights across all domains of civic, cultural, and political life. Under the leadership of Pericles, democratic Athens emerged as the pre-eminent cultural and intellectual capital of the Aegean world, serving as the definitive crucible for the flowering of classical philosophy.

This epoch witnessed the rapid proliferation and popularity of the **Sophists** (derived from the Greek *sophistes*, meaning “wise men” or “experts”). The Sophists operated as itinerant, professional educators who charged substantial fees to instruct the sons of the elite in rhetoric, grammar, geometry, mathematics, music, and the art of logical persuasion. The most celebrated figures of this movement were **Protagoras** (c. 490–420 BCE) and **Gorgias** (c. 483–375 BCE).

The Sophists introduced a radical epistemological and moral **relativism**, arguing that absolute truth is unattainable and that objective moral values do not exist universally. This relativist manifesto is encapsulated in the celebrated maxim of Protagoras: “*Man is the measure of all things: of the things that are, that they are, and of the things that are not, that they are not.*”

The cultural reputation of the Sophists was highly controversial. They were frequently accused of abusing their dialectical skills merely to manipulate debates and obfuscate reality. Gorgias, for instance, achieved notoriety by demonstrating that he could convincingly argue a specific philosophical thesis and subsequently refute his own argument with equal logical force. This emphasis on winning

arguments rather than discovering truth birthed **sophisms** — ingenious, linguistically deceptive arguments that deliberately incorporate hidden logical fallacies to trap and disorient an interlocutor. A classic example is the “Horned Man” paradox: *“What you have not lost, you still possess. You have not lost horns. Therefore, you possess horns.”*

The radical relativism of the Sophists was decisively challenged by the Athenian philosopher **Socrates** (c. 470–399 BCE), who initiated the “anthropological turn” in Western thought. Because Socrates committed nothing to writing — preferring spontaneous, oral dialogue in public spaces — our historical comprehension of his philosophy relies almost exclusively on the secondary accounts and dialogues composed by his disciples, Xenophon and Plato.

Socrates redirected the trajectory of philosophy away from the cosmological speculations of the Pre-Socratics, positioning the human condition and moral philosophy as the supreme subjects of inquiry. He famously asserted that investigating the physical laws of nature is futile if an individual remains ignorant of their own moral architecture, a stance anchored in the Delphic maxim: *“Know thyself.”*

His primary pedagogical objective was to cultivate his students — predominantly the youth of the Athenian aristocracy — into virtuous, self-governing citizens capable of leading the *polis*. Socrates maintained an intellectualist view of ethics, arguing that virtue (*arete*) is identical to knowledge; to act virtuously, one must first possess a rigorous conceptual understanding of what virtue is. Consequently, his dialogues were systematically dedicated to clarifying the essential definitions of ethical concepts, asking: *What is courage? What is temperance? What constitutes justice?*

To expose ignorance and systematically discover truth, Socrates pioneered a distinct **dialectical method** composed of two primary phases:

1. *Socratic irony*: Socrates routinely initiated dialogues by adopting a posture of feigned ignorance, famously declaring: *“I know that I know nothing.”* By asking deceptively simple questions, he led self-assured interlocutors into structural contradictions, forcing them to recognize the limitations of their own understanding.

2. *Maieutics (the art of the midwife)*: once an interlocutor was stripped of false knowledge, Socrates applied *maieutics* (derived from the Greek for midwifery). Just as a midwife assists a mother in childbirth without giving birth herself, Socrates used targeted, incremental questions to guide his interlocutors into independently discovering and “bringing to birth” universal moral truths from within their own reason.

Socrates’ immense intellectual influence over the Athenian youth and his critical stance toward democratic institutions provoked deep resentment among the ruling political factions. In 399 BCE, he was formally indicted on charges of impiety (refusing to recognize the state gods) and corrupting the youth. During his public trial, Socrates delivered a brilliant defense — recorded by Plato as

the *Apology* — but refused to beg for mercy or compromise his philosophical principles. The jury found him guilty, sentencing him to death by judicial poisoning.

Following the verdict, wealthy disciples bribed the prison guards and orchestrated a secure escape plan. Socrates resolutely refused to flee, arguing that a philosopher who spent his life teaching civic virtue and justice must remain a model of moral integrity by respecting the legal laws of the state, even when applied unjustly. In the presence of his closest companions, Socrates calmly drank a cup of hemlock, cementing his historical legacy as the archetypal embodiment of the ideal sage.

Philosophical doctrine of Plato. One of the most monumental and influential figures in the history of global thought is the Athenian philosopher **Plato** (c. 427–347 BCE). Born into an aristocratic family, his parents originally named him Aristocles. He received the cognomen “Plato” (derived from the Greek for “wide” or “broad”) later in life; historical accounts suggest this was either due to his expansive forehead or his robust physical frame, as the future philosopher had trained as a competitive wrestler since his youth. As a young man, Plato aspired to be an epic poet and dramatist. However, after encountering Socrates in 407 BCE, he famously burned his manuscripts and concluded that the pursuit of philosophy was the only endeavor worthy of a free citizen. Following the martyrdom of his master, Plato established his own philosophical school in an olive grove northwest of Athens dedicated to the local hero Hecademus, from whom the institution derived its historic name: **the Academy**. Plato codified his philosophical insights through beautifully crafted dramatic dialogues, in which Socrates almost universally serves as the primary interlocutor. His most celebrated works include the *Apology*, *Symposium*, *Phaedrus*, *Theaetetus*, *Parmenides*, and the *Republic*.

Plato constructed a truly comprehensive, systematic philosophy encompassing epistemology (the theory of knowledge), philosophical anthropology (the doctrine of the human soul), ethics, and political theory. However, the definitive cornerstone of his intellectual system is his **ontology** (the theory of being), through which he sought to map the foundational architecture of reality.

In Book VII of the *Republic*, Plato introduces his celebrated ***Allegory of the Cave*** to illustrate the human epistemic condition. He invites the reader to imagine prisoners who have been confined inside a subterranean cave since childhood. Chained by their legs and necks, they are structurally immobilized and unable to turn their heads. Behind them burns a massive fire, and between the fire and the prisoners runs a raised pathway along which men carry various objects, statues, and figures of trees and animals. The shadows of these objects are projected onto the cave wall directly in front of the prisoners’ eyes. Because these captives have never experienced any alternative reality, they naturally believe that these shifting shadows constitute the absolute, objective world.

However, if one of these prisoners is liberated from their chains and forced to ascend out of the cave into the blinding light of the sun, they will undergo a painful cognitive transition. They will eventually realize that what they had previously perceived as reality was merely a deceptive, pale reflection of the true world.

Through this powerful narrative, Plato demonstrates that humanity is largely imprisoned within the limitations of empirical sensory perception, mistaking the transient material world for true reality. Only those who dare to dedicate themselves to the intellectual ascent of philosophy can liberate their minds from these material shackles, allowing the rational intellect to apprehend the immutable, perfect reality hidden behind sensory appearances.

Plato’s ontology is fundamentally dualistic, dividing reality into two distinct realms: ***the world of forms (ideas)*** and ***the world of particulars (sensory things)*** (Table 4).

Table 4

Plato’s ontological reality

World of forms (ideas)	World of particulars (things)
Intelligible realm (Nous)	Sensible realm (senses)
Eternal, uncaused, immutable	Transient, generated, decaying
The perfect archetype/model	Imperfect material copies
E.g., the singular idea of “Horse”	E.g., finite individual horses

The world of forms (eidos): Plato asserts that forms are eternal, uncaused, non-spatial, and entirely independent of the material objects that mimic them. They serve as the perfect archetype or blueprint from which the physical universe is generated. For instance, while the material world contains a vast plurality of individual horses — varying by age, color, speed, or health — there exists only a singular, absolute Idea of the “Horse” that precedes them. This metaphysical principle applies to all phenomena: every material object or quality has a transcendent, perfect analogue in the realm of forms (the form of the human, the form of beauty, the form of whiteness, etc.). Forms are immutable, incorruptible, and can only be apprehended by pure reason (*Nous*).

The world of particulars: physical things are generated when these transcendent forms interact with primordial matter (*chora*), which acts as a receptive medium. Because empirical objects are merely flawed material copies of these perfect archetypes, they can never match the perfection of their originals. Material particulars are inherently finite, imperfect, structurally unstable, and subject to decay and death.

Consequently, Plato concludes that to discover objective truth, philosophers must not look outward at changing empirical objects, but must direct their intellect inward and upward to apprehend the stable world of forms. Because his system prioritizes the reality of the ideal over the material, Plato’s philosophy is classified as the historical fountainhead of ***objective idealism***.

Plato's **political philosophy** is inextricably intertwined with his psychology and doctrine of the **tripartite soul**. In the *Republic*, he argues that an **ideal state** (*Kallipolis*) is an organic necessity for human flourishing. However, true societal justice can only reign when the structural interests of individual citizens are perfectly subordinated to the collective harmony of the *polis*. Plato establishes a meritocratic hierarchy where an individual's social station corresponds directly to the dominant faculty of their soul (Table 5).

Table 5

Plato's theory of ideal state

Social class/estate	Dominant faculty of the soul	Cardinal civic virtue	Assigned societal role
Philosopher (kings)	Rational (Logistikon)	Wisdom (Sophia)	Sage rulers and legislators
Auxiliaries (guardians)	Spirited (Thymoeides)	Courage (Andreia)	Warriors and defenders of the state
Producers (artisans/peasants)	Appetitive (Epithymetikon)	Temperance (Sophrosyne)	Material sustenance and trade

Within this framework, a state is defined as structurally just only when each class fulfills its designated civic and moral duty without interfering in the functions of the others.

Plato classified **monarchy** and **aristocracy** (the rule of the wise) as the ideal forms of governance. Conversely, he condemned **democracy** and **tyranny** as the worst political regimes. He argued that democracy inevitably degenerates into unbridled license, populist demagoguery, and civic anarchy, which invariably clears the path for tyranny — a regime built entirely on political betrayal, systemic coercion, and institutional violence.

Plato famously attempted to implement his political blueprints in Sicily by advising Dionysius, the tyrant of Syracuse. The experiment failed spectacularly; the tyrant was deeply insulted by Plato's critiques, forcing the philosopher to flee the city. On his return journey to Athens, Plato was captured by maritime enemies and nearly sold into slavery. Fortunately, his influential students in Athens raised a substantial ransom to secure his freedom, allowing him to return to the Academy and continue his foundational teaching.

Philosophical doctrine of Aristotle. A brilliant student of Plato, **Aristotle** (384–322 BCE) went on to found his own philosophical institution, **the Lyceum**, which developed into a formal research organization uniting his students and followers. Aristotle's voluminous treatises covered virtually every domain of knowledge available in antiquity. His monumental corpus includes foundational works on metaphysics (*Metaphysics*), formal logic (*Categories*, *Prior Analytics*), natural science (*Physics*, *De Motu Animalium*), economics and political theory (*Economics*, *Politics*), ethics and psychology (*Nicomachean Ethics*, *De Anima*), and rhetoric (*The Art of Rhetoric*).

The architecture of Aristotle's intellectual system is established in his foundational treatise, the *Metaphysics*. Within this work, Aristotle systematically categorizes all human knowledge into three primary domains:

1. **The poietic sciences** include disciplines dedicated to creative production, poetry, aesthetics, and fine arts.

2. **The practical sciences** include action-oriented disciplines — specifically ethics, economics, and politics — directed toward achieving normative conduct and structural harmony in everyday civic life.

3. **The theoretical sciences** include knowledge pursued purely for its own sake rather than practical utility. Aristotle evaluates this domain most highly, as it investigates the fundamental essence of the cosmos as a holistic unity.

Among the theoretical sciences, Aristotle distinguishes three core disciplines: **physics**, **mathematics**, and **first philosophy (metaphysics)**. He designates metaphysics as the “queen of the sciences” and a form of divine knowledge because it investigates being *qua* being (being as such), alongside the primordial causes and ultimate foundations of reality.

The celebrated Latin maxim attributed to Aristotle encapsulates his intellectual independence: “*Plato is my friend, but a greater friend is the truth.*” This philosophical divergence manifested most sharply in his systematic **critique of Plato's theory of forms**. Aristotle argued that Plato committed a fundamental ontological error by hypostatizing forms — meaning he separated abstract concepts from concrete, physical objects. Aristotle challenged this two-world ontology by asking a critical epistemological question: *How can the contemplation of transcendent, isolated forms help humanity comprehend the material universe if those forms are entirely detached from empirical reality?*

In contrast to Platonic dualism, Aristotle formulated his own ontology, centered on the **doctrine of the four causes**. To explain how any object comes to exist, changes, or reaches completion, he argues that four explanatory factors must be identified. For example, in the creation of a bronze statue:

1) **the material cause (hyle)**: the underlying physical substratum out of which an object is composed (e.g., the bronze or marble);

2) **the formal cause (morphe)**: the essential archetype, design, or structural blueprint that determines what an object is (e.g., the specific shape of the statue);

3) **the efficient cause**: the primary source of change, generation, or motion that brings the object into being (e.g., the sculptor);

4) **the teleological (final) cause (Telos)**: the ultimate purpose, function, or goal toward which the object is directed (e.g., to serve as a civic monument or palace ornament).

Aristotle synthesizes these causes into his core metaphysical paradigm: **hylomorphism** (the indissoluble unity of matter and form). He argues that form and matter do not exist in separate metaphysical realms. Instead, form is immanent within individual physical objects, expressing the universal essence shared by all entities of the same kind (Table 6).

The Aristotelian hylomorphic matrix

Form (morphe)	Matter (hyle)
Active, generative principle	Passive, receptive principle
Immanent essence of a species	Source of physical individuation
Unifies efficient and final causes	Potentiality to be actualized

Matter is conceptualized as operating on two distinct levels:

- **prime matter (Proton hyle)** is a purely theoretical, formless, and completely indefinite substrate possessing pure potentiality;
- **secondary matter** is a prime matter that has been actualized by a form to produce a concrete, identifiable physical substance (e.g., bronze, clay, or living flesh) out of which individual particulars are constructed.

While both form and matter are eternal cosmic principles, they possess fundamentally opposite attributes. Form operates as an active, generative, and actualizing principle, whereas matter functions as a passive, receptive medium. Crucially, Aristotle identifies matter as the source of **individuation** (the physical uniqueness of individual objects) and the underlying reason why material particulars are subject to decay, destruction, and death.

Beyond the material universe, Aristotle posits the existence of a supreme, immaterial substance — a “Form of Forms” entirely divorced from matter. This absolute principle is the **Divine Mind (Nous)**, which is eternal, incorporeal, and perfect. Aristotle characterizes this entity as the **Unmoved Mover** (or Prime Mover). Because it is already pure actuality, it remains completely motionless; it initiates all cosmic motion and change not through physical impact, but teleologically, acting as the ultimate object of desire and the supreme *telos* toward which the entire universe strives.

Aristotle applies his hylomorphic framework to psychology, defining the soul (*psyche*) as the formal actualization of a living physical body. He organizes the faculties of the soul into a hierarchical, tripartite structure:

- 1) *the vegetative soul* is present in plants; governs the foundational biological functions of nutrition, growth, and reproduction;
- 2) *the sensitive (animal) soul* is present in animals; incorporates vegetative functions while adding locomotion, sensory perception, and desire;
- 3) *the rational soul* is exclusive to human beings; integrates all lower biological functions while adding the unique cognitive capacity for intellectual reasoning, deliberation, and abstract thought.

Aristotle famously asserted that a human being is by nature a **political animal (zoon politikon)**. Human potential cannot be actualized in isolation; it is only within the structured matrix of the *polis* (society) that individuals can cultivate virtue and achieve genuine flourishing (*eudaimonia*). Crucially diverging from Plato’s totalitarian ideals, Aristotle prioritizes the individual over

the absolute state, maintaining that political institutions exist fundamentally to secure the happiness and ethical well-being of their citizens.

In the *Politics*, Aristotle classifies forms of government into six distinct categories, structured by two criteria: the number of rulers and whether they govern in accordance with the common good or narrow self-interest (Table 7).

Table 7

Forms of government by Aristotle

Number of rulers	Virtuous regimes (governing for the common good)	Corrupt regimes (governing for self-interest)
Rule by one	Monarchy/Kingship	Tyranny
Rule by a few	Aristocracy	Oligarchy
Rule by the many	Polity (Constitutional government)	Democracy (mob rule/populism)

Aristotle defined **monarchy** and **polity** as the most stable and practically virtuous forms of governance. Conversely, he condemned **democracy** (which he critiqued as unstable populism or majoritarian tyranny) and **tyranny** as inherently corrupt, as they systematically prioritize factional benefits over universal civic justice.

1.2.4.3. Philosophy of the Hellenism (Epicureism, Stoicism, Skepticism)

In the third century BCE serious changes emerged in the ancient world. Greek democracy began to decline; the Macedonian King Philip seized the power and established a military dictatorship. His son Alexander began aggressive campaigns, trying to create a powerful empire. The Greeks brought their culture (the culture of Hellas) to new territories, which is why this period is called the *Hellenistic period*. Later, the Greek territories were conquered by the Romans, who could not resist Greek cultural achievements and adopted from them, among other things, a love of philosophy. The topics of philosophizing changed greatly within the vastness of a gigantic empire, first Macedonian, and then Roman. The questions of the structure of the world fade into the background because of the feeling of insecurity in people. All Hellenistic philosophical schools asked themselves the question of what the meaning of human life was and how to achieve happiness.

The founder of **Epicureanism** Epicurus (341–270 BCE) opened a school in one of the Athenian gardens, on the gate of which there was an inscription: “Guest, you will feel good here; here pleasure is the highest good.” According to Epicurus, human happiness consists in the absence of suffering and in obtaining pleasure. With regard to suffering, Epicurus especially advised people to overcome the fear of death. Epicurus divides pleasures into natural and absurd (for example, the desire to have a large number of jewelry). In turn, natural pleasures are divided into necessary (for example, food, drink) and those that can

be dispensed with (enjoyment of art). At the same time, Epicurus considered the pleasures of the soul to be more important than the pleasures of the body, and he advised striving for them and doing more philosophy. The task of philosophy, according to Epicurus, is to give a person a serene life.

The **Stoic** school was founded by *Zeno of Kition* (336–264 BCE) and was very popular in the Roman Empire (Seneca, Emperor Marcus Aurelius, Epictetus). According to the Stoics, the world is governed by necessity (“fate”). Not a single person can escape his fate, so the wise man tries to understand natural laws and voluntarily follow them, and not waste time on a useless struggle with the inevitable. So that to become happy, one must strive for a virtuous life, and not for pleasures, since a person can lose the latter at any moment (a rich man can become poor). If you cultivate virtuous qualities in yourself (courage, justice, moderation, etc.) and control desires, you can achieve a state of complete tranquility, i.e. “*ataraxia*”.

The school of **Skeptics** was founded by *Pyrrho* (365–275 BCE), who believed that the things around a person are completely unknowable, because, firstly, they are changeable, secondly, our senses deceive us, and thirdly, our knowledge depends on the mood, the structure of the body, and the differences between people. When a person strives for the truth, he comes into an excited state and loses his peace. And the main goal of life is calmness, apathy, indifference to the variability of the world. In order to achieve such a state, according to skeptics, one must refrain from all judgment (*epoche*), both from affirmations and from denials. Perhaps the truth is achievable, but we can’t know anything about it for sure. In order to somehow navigate in everyday life, you just need to follow the accepted traditions, and even then, not too zealously.

TRAINING MATERIAL

Exercise 1. Read the excerpt from the primary source and answer the questions.

Tao Te Ching³

Verse 1

A way that can be walked is not The Way
A name that can be named is not The Name

Tao is both Named and Nameless
As Nameless, it is the origin of all things
As Named, it is the mother of all things

A mind free of thought,
merged within itself,
beholds the essence of Tao

³ *Lao Tzu*. Tao Te Ching / Lao Tzu. – New York : New City Press, 2008. – P. 12, 27.

A mind filled with thought,
identified with its own perceptions,
beholds the mere forms of this world

Tao and this world seem different
but in truth they are one and the same
The only difference is
in what we call them

How deep and mysterious is this unity
How profound, how great!
It is the truth beyond the truth,
the hidden within the hidden
It is the path to all wonder,
the gate to the essence of everything!

Verse 16

Become totally empty
Quiet the restlessness of the mind
Only then will you witness everything
unfolding from emptiness
See all things flourish and dance
in endless variation
And once again merge back into perfect emptiness —
Their true repose
Their true nature
Emerging, flourishing, dissolving back again
This is the eternal process of return
To know this process brings enlightenment
To miss this process brings disaster

Be still
Stillness reveals the secrets of eternity
Eternity embraces the all-possible
The all-possible leads to a vision of oneness
A vision of oneness brings about universal love
Universal love supports the great truth of Nature
The great truth of Nature is Tao

Whoever knows this truth lives forever
The body may perish, deeds may be forgotten
But he who has Tao has all eternity

Questions:

1. How is the Tao defined in this text? What is the Tao with a name and the Tao without a name?
2. What qualities should a perfect sage possess?
3. What is meant by “non-action” in the context of Taoism?

Exercise 2. Read the excerpt from the primary source and answer the questions.

Aristotle
Metaphysics⁴

I All men naturally desire knowledge. An indication of this is our esteem for the senses, for apart from their use we esteem them for their own sake, and most of all the sense of sight. Not only with a view to action, but even when no action is contemplated, we prefer sight to practically all the other senses. The reason of this is that of all the senses sight best helps us to know things, and reveals many distinctions.

Now animals are by nature born with the power of sensation, and from this some acquire the faculty of memory, whereas others do not. Accordingly, the former are more intelligent and capable of learning than those which cannot remember. [...]

Thus the other animals live by impressions and memories, and have but a small share of experience; but the human race lives also by art and reasoning.

It is from memory that men acquire experience, because the numerous memories of the same thing eventually produce the effect of a single experience. Experience seems very similar to science and art, but actually it is through experience that men acquire science and art; for as Polus rightly says, “experience produces art, but inexperience chance.” Art is produced when from many notions of experience, a single universal judgement is formed with regard to the objects. To have a judgement that: when Callias was suffering from this or that disease this or that benefited him, and similarly with Socrates and various other individuals, is a matter of experience; but to judge that it benefits all persons of a certain type, considered as a class, who suffer from this or that disease (e.g. the phlegmatic or bilious when suffering from burning fever) is a matter of art.

It would seem that for practical purposes experience is no way inferior to art; indeed, we see men of experience succeeding more than those who have theory without experience. The reason of this is that experience is knowledge of particulars, but art of universals; and actions and the effects produced are all concerned with the particular. For it is not man that the physician cures, except incidentally, but Calhas or Socrates or some other person similarly named, who is incidentally a man as well. So if man has theory without experience, and knows the universal, but does not know the particular contained in it, he will often fail in

⁴ *Aristotle. The Metaphysics / Aristotle. – London : William Heinemann Ltd, 1956. – P. 36–42.*

his treatment; for it is the particular that must be treated. Nevertheless, we consider that knowledge and proficiency belong to art rather than to experience, and we assume that artists are wiser than men of mere experience (which implies that in all cases wisdom depends rather upon knowledge); and this is because the former know the cause, whereas the latter do not. For the experienced know the fact, but not the wherefore; but the artists know the wherefore and the cause. For the same reason we consider that the master craftsmen in every profession are more estimable and know more and are wiser than the artisans, because they know the reasons of the things which are done; but we think that the artisans, like certain animate objects, do things, but without knowing what they are doing (as, for instance, fire burns); only whereas inanimate objects perform all their actions in virtue of a certain natural quality, artisans perform theirs through habit. Thus the master craftsmen are superior in wisdom, not because they can do things, but because they possess a theory and know the causes. [...]

The difference between art and science and the other kindred mental activities has been stated in the *Ethics*; the reason for our present discussion is that it is generally assumed that what is called Wisdom is concerned with the primary causes and principles, so that, as has been already stated, the man of experience is held to be wiser than the mere possessors of any power of sensation, the artist than the man of experience, the master craftsman than the artisan; and the speculative sciences to be more learned than the productive. Thus it is clear that Wisdom is knowledge of certain principles and causes. [...]

Questions:

1. Why do people naturally strive for knowledge?
2. Is experience different from art and why?
3. Where does experience come from in humans?
4. What is the difference between art and science, according to Aristotle?
5. Why art is more valuable than experience, according to Aristotle?

EXERCISES FOR ASSESSING COMPETENCY LEVEL

Exercise 3. Answer the following questions:

1. Describe the main concepts of the origin of philosophical knowledge.
2. Describe the general features of Ancient Eastern philosophy.
3. Highlight the main ideas and concepts of Ancient Indian philosophy.
4. What are the main characteristics and concepts of Astika philosophy (explain using the philosophy of one of the schools as an example)?
5. Describe the Four Noble Truths of Buddhism.
6. What is the Noble Eightfold Path, and what is its essence?
7. Explain the essence of the main concepts of Ancient Chinese philosophy.
8. Why do you think the philosophical teachings of Confucius remain relevant in modern China?
9. Highlight the main concepts of Taoist philosophy.

10. What is the essence of the principle of “Wu Wei”?
11. Describe the concept of “Cosmos” in early Greek philosophy.
12. Highlight the feature of ancient philosophy according to which reason is of decisive importance in understanding the world.
13. What problem was the focus of early Greek thinkers?
14. What problem was the focus of the Sophists and Socrates?
15. What was Socrates’ dialectical method?
16. Describe the world of ideas and the world of things that Plato distinguished. Which world is primary?
17. What causes and principles of being did Aristotle identify? Which principle of being is in potentiality, and which in actuality, according to Aristotle?
18. What problems were the focus of thinkers of the Hellenistic period?

Exercise 4. Based on the key concepts and ideas presented in the fragments, identify the philosophical schools or authors to whom the following statements belong:

1. “Non-being cannot be known or expressed in words.”
2. “There are two extreme paths that one who has departed this world should not follow... The one that leads people only to pleasure and lust is base and crude..., while the one that leads to mortification of the flesh, brings suffering, is also ignoble and useless.”
3. “If the sovereign treats his relatives properly, philanthropy flourishes among the people. If the sovereign does not forget his friends, there is no meanness among the people.”
4. “People have created an idol for themselves out of chance as a cover for their inherent folly. For chance, by nature, wars with reason and, as they asserted, being extremely hostile to it, dominates it.”
5. “The body not only causes us a thousand troubles — it requires food, it is subject to ailments... the body fills us with desires, passions, fears... because of the body, we have no leisure for philosophy.”

Exercise 5. Match the philosopher and their teaching.

1) Socrates;	a) the doctrine of ideas as true reality;
2) Plato;	b) theory of knowledge through sensations, logic;
3) Aristotle;	c) “everything flows, everything changes”;
4) Heraclitus;	d) atomistic doctrine;
5) Democritus.	e) the maieutic method, knowledge through dialogue.

Exercise 6. Complete the table “Ancient Indian Philosophy”.

Concept	Philosophical tradition/ Philosophical School	Definition
1. Vedas	Vedanta	...
2. Nirvana	Buddhism	a transcendent state in Buddhism, marked by the liberation from the cycle of birth and rebirth
3. Wu-Wei	...	...
4. Tao	...	path or way
5. Brahman-Atman	...	...
6. Karma	...	...
7. Yin-Yang	Natural school	the idea of dualism, that contrary forces can be complementary and interdependent in the natural world

Exercise 7. Complete the table “Ancient Greek Philosophy”.

Period		Representatives (Schools)	Main Ideas
Early Greek Philosophy (Pre-Socratic Period)		...	Focus on the first cause of observable phenomena
Classical	Early Classical	...	...
	Mature Classical	Plato	...
		...	...
Hellenistic		Epicureanism	...
		Stoicism	...
		...	a questioning attitude or doubt toward knowledge

Exercise 8. Complete the sentences:

The Ancient Greek philosopher _____ (1) believed that the primary principle of being is _____ (2) and emptiness. _____ (3) developed the doctrine of the world of ideas, where real things are only copies of ideal forms. _____ (4) founded the first systematic philosophical school in Athens — the Lyceum.

Insert words: *atoms, Plato, Democritus, Aristotle*

Exercise 9. Mark the following statements as true or false:

1. The Sophists believed that truth is subjective and relative.
2. Parmenides claimed that movement exists in reality.
3. Zeno created aporias to prove the impossibility of movement.
4. Pythagoras believed that number, as a spiritual principle, is the basis of the world.
5. Thales believed that the primary principle of everything is fire.

Exercise 10. Explain the essence of Socrates' philosophical method:

1. What is the name of his method of conducting a dialogue?
2. What is the principle of maieutics?
3. Why did Socrates believe that "knowledge of oneself" is the key to wisdom?

Exercise 11. Analyze the influence of ancient philosophy on modern worldview and global problems of modernity:

1. Which of Plato's ideas are relevant today?
2. How did Aristotle's teachings influence the development of science?
3. What is the significance of Heraclitus' dialectical method for Early Modern philosophy?

Topics for reports:

1. Jaspers's concept of the "Axial age".
2. Characteristics and categorical apparatus of Ancient Indian philosophy.
3. Yoga as an orthodox school of Indian philosophy.
4. The philosophical meaning of the Four Noble Truths of Buddhism.
5. The I Ching in the context of Ancient Chinese culture.
6. The main ideas of Confucian philosophy.
7. Taoism: main categories and ideas.
8. The problem of the first principle in early Greek philosophy.
9. The method of Socrates.
10. The world of ideas and the world of things in Plato's philosophy.
11. Aristotle's logic.
12. Socio-political ideas of the Ancient classics.
13. Ethical ideas in Hellenistic philosophy.

Aphorisms and statements:

1. Do not harm another with that which would cause suffering to yourself (*The Buddha (Dhammapada)*).
2. He who learns but does not think is lost; he who thinks but does not learn is in great danger (*Confucius (The Analects)*).
3. Much learning does not teach wisdom (*Heraclitus*).
4. Know thyself (*Inscription above the entrance to the Temple of Apollo at Delphi*).
5. I know that I know nothing (*Socrates*).
6. By all means, marry. If you get a good wife, you will become happy; if you get a bad one, you will become a philosopher (*Socrates*).
7. Philosophy and medicine have made man the most intelligent of animals; fortune-telling and astrology the most insane; superstition and despotism the most miserable (*Diogenes of Sinope*).

8. One of the penalties for refusing to participate in politics is that you end up being governed by your inferiors (*Plato (The Republic)*).

9. To speak tirelessly without saying anything has always been the highest gift of orators (*Plato*).

10. There is no surer sign of the poor constitution of a state than an abundance of lawyers and physicians within it (*Plato (The Republic)*).

11. All other sciences indeed are more necessary than this, but none is better (*Aristotle (Metaphysics)*).

12. Education is an ornament in prosperity and a refuge in adversity (*Aristotle*).

13. What is a friend? A single soul dwelling in two bodies (*Aristotle*).

14. Life is action, not production (*Aristotle (Politics)*).

15. Death is nothing to us. When we exist, death is not; and when death exists, we are no more (*Epicurus*).

SELF-ASSESSMENT OF TOPIC COMPREHENSION

1. The central concept of Buddhism, signifying the highest state, the goal of human aspirations is:

- a) Nirvana; b) Samsara; c) Ren; d) Tao.

2. The concept of the “noble man” as an ideal person was developed by:

- a) Confucius;
b) Lao Tzu;
c) Siddhartha Gautama;
d) Buddha;
e) Socrates.

3. Ancient Indian philosophical texts include:

- a) The Upanishads;
b) Tao Te Ching;
c) Analects;
d) Book of Changes.

4. Who is considered the first ancient philosopher?

- a) Heraclitus; b) Thales; c) Democritus; d) Plato.

5. Match the concepts with the thinkers who developed them.

1) Plato;	a) ataraxia;
2) Aristotle;	b) matter and form;
3) Epicurus;	c) maieutics;
4) Socrates;	d) the world of ideas and the world of things;
5) Confucius.	e) Ren.

TOPIC 1.3

MAIN STAGES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF PHILOSOPHICAL THOUGHT IN THE MIDDLE AGES AND RENAISSANCE

Total lesson time: 2 hours.

Aim: to explore the unique characteristics and foundational tenets of philosophical thought during the Medieval and Renaissance epochs.

Objectives:

- to analyze the defining characteristics and underlying principles of Medieval philosophy;
- to investigate the core doctrines of Apologetics, Patristics, and Scholasticism;
- to examine the central problem domains of Medieval thought, specifically the relationship between faith and reason, and the debate over the problem of universals;
- to evaluate the fundamental features and philosophical shifts of the Renaissance.

Questions:

1. The specificity and guiding principles of Medieval philosophy.
2. Historical stages in the evolution of Medieval philosophical thought.
3. The Medieval philosophy of the Near and Middle East.
4. The philosophy of the Renaissance: distinctive features and core problems.

Key concepts: Christianity, theocentrism, theology, creationism, revelation, faith, exegesis, providentialism, eschatology, apologetics, patristics, dogma, scholasticism, universals, realism, nominalism, conceptualism, humanism, anthropocentrism, pantheism, the heliocentric system of the world.

THEORETICAL MATERIAL

1.3.1. THE SPECIFY AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF MEDIEVAL PHILOSOPHY

Medieval philosophy is a stage in the development of Western European philosophical thought in the second — fourteenth centuries. On the one hand, it originates in the depths of ancient culture and largely relies on the philosophical heritage of ancient thinkers, on the other hand, it is determined by the Christian religious tradition that spread in the first-second centuries throughout the Mediterranean.

The ideas and dogmas of *Christianity* became the basis of the philosophical systems of the Middle Ages and set ***the fundamental principles and specifics*** of the Medieval philosophical worldview:

Theocentrism is the principle of Medieval thinking, according to which the source and cause of all things is God as an absolute being, the highest value

and the ultimate goal of all existence. In contrast to ancient polytheism, which recognized many gods, the Christian monotheistic tradition is based on the idea of the one and only God, who Himself is transcendent (from Lat. *transcendens* — stepping beyond, going beyond) the world, that is, located on the other side of it.

Creationism is the doctrine that God created the world “out of nothing” (from Lat. *ex nihilo*) by the action of His free will.

The idea of revelation is that God directly addresses man, “revealing” Himself and His will as absolute truth through the “word of God”. For Christianity, the highest revelation is Jesus Christ, in whose person both absolute being and the absolute truth of this being are directly revealed, its semantic formula is the Logos. Revelation also includes Holy Scripture — the Old and New Testaments.

The comprehension of the Divine truths of Holy Scripture was associated with the art of interpreting sacred texts — *exegesis*. Medieval thinkers were engaged in commenting and interpreting the texts of the Bible in order to discover the true meaning of the “word of God”, often expressed in allegorical form.

The style of philosophical thinking of the Middle Ages is distinguished by traditionalism, since the thinker in his work had to focus not on innovation and originality, but on the authority of the Holy Scriptures, patterns and canons of thought established by the Church Fathers.

The doctrine of a human being as the image and likeness of God. Ancient thinkers saw in a human only a part of the cosmos (microcosm) and did not oppose human being to natural. According to the Christian understanding, a human being is not just a part of the cosmos, but a being created by God in his own image and likeness: a person has an immortal soul, is endowed with free will, reason, and the ability to be creative, thereby he rises above the rest of the created world and is called to command them. However, the original nature of a human was changed by him in the act of the fall. A human, having violated the command of God, became mortal and brought evil and suffering into the world. Salvation for a person is possible as a difficult path of spiritual perfection and deification (likeness to God), which involves the restoration of nature damaged by the fall of nature through a reciprocal, disinterested act of love for God and neighbor, prayer, asceticism, and following the commandments of God;

Providentialism (from Lat. *providential* — providence) is the interpretation of history as the implementation of the divine plan, the providence of God, saving humanity to the highest goal — the Kingdom of God. God not only creates the world, but is also present in it, intervening, if necessary, in the natural course of events.

Eschatology (from Gr. *eschatos* — the last, *logos* — teaching) is the doctrine of the ultimate fate of the world and human history. According to Christian doctrine, the end of history, which is predetermined from above will be marked by the second coming of Christ and is associated with the transformation of the world into a “new heaven and a new earth” and the onset of the “future age” (eternity).

The Christian worldview brought fundamentally new themes and ideas to philosophy. The systematization and interpretation of the foundations of Christian doctrine, which was aimed at the philosophical thought of the Middle Ages, brought it closer to theology. At the same time, within the framework of Medieval philosophy, a number of problems can be distinguished that were of a specifically philosophical nature — the problem of the relationship between faith and reason, the search for opportunities for rational justification of Christian dogmas, etc.

1.3.2. HISTORICAL STAGES IN THE EVOLUTION OF MEDIEVAL PHILOSOPHICAL THOUGHT

In the historiography of Medieval philosophy, it is conventional to distinguish **three major evolutionary periods**: *Apologetics* (second to third centuries CE); *Patristics* (fourth to eighth centuries CE); *Scholasticism* (ninth to fourteenth centuries CE).

Apologetics (derived from the Greek *apologetikos*, meaning “defending” or “justifying”) designates the intellectual movement of early Christian thinkers dedicated to protecting the nascent Christian faith from pagan philosophical and political assaults. Key figures of this period include Justin Martyr, Tatian, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, and Origen. These apologists actively opposed paganism, petitioned the Roman Empire for religious tolerance, and sought to demonstrate the supreme metaphysical and moral truth of Christian doctrine over classical Greek philosophy.

The apologists were the first to explicitly address the epistemological tension between the two primary faculties of the human soul: ***faith (fides)*** and ***reason (ratio)***.

Tertullian (c. 160 – c. 220 CE) is one of the most vehement early Latin apologists. He proclaimed the radical incompatibility of Christian faith with pagan wisdom, famously asking, “*What has Athens to do with Jerusalem?*” He argued that the truths of Divine Revelation transcend human rationality and cannot be comprehended through secular logic. In his treatise *On the Flesh of Christ*, he asserted that the divine manifests in ways that appear paradoxical to human intellect: “*The Son of God died; it is by all means to be believed, because it is absurd. And He was buried, and rose again; the fact is certain, because it is impossible.*”

Consequently, Tertullian argued that human reason’s claims to ultimate truth are groundless. Truth is revealed paradoxically and non-linearly, accessible exclusively to the eye of faith.

The second major stage in the evolution of Medieval philosophy is ***Patristics*** (derived from the Latin *pater*, meaning “father”). This period was initiated by Christianity’s transition during the fourth century to the status of the official state religion of the Roman Empire. Patristic thought was defined by the systematic

work of the **Fathers of the Church**, whose primary objectives were to combat heretical movements, formulate uniform Christian theology, and formalize foundational dogmas. Scholarly tradition divides Patristics into two distinct linguistic and geographic branches: the **Eastern (Greek)** and the **Western (Latin)**.

The **Eastern Fathers of the Church** — most notably the **Cappadocian Fathers** (Basil the Great, Gregory of Nyssa, and Gregory the Theologian), alongside Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite and John of Damascus — played a monumental role in developing **Trinitarian dogma** (the doctrine of the Holy Trinity). This doctrine was formally codified in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed during the Second Ecumenical Council (381 CE). They articulated the metaphysical paradox of the Triune God — Father, Son, and Holy Spirit — through the classic Greek formula: “**one essence, three hypostases**” (*mia ousia, treis hypostaseis*). Concurrently, the Eastern Fathers resolved intense theological debates regarding the nature of Jesus Christ. The resulting **Christological dogma** decreed that two distinct natures — the fully divine and the fully human — are unified “inseparably and unconfusedly” within the singular person of Christ.

The pinnacle of **Western Patristics** is embodied in the work of **Aurelius Augustine** (St Augustine of Hippo, 354–430 CE). Writing exclusively in Latin, Augustine’s voluminous treatises — including *De Immortalitate Animae* (*On the Immortality of the Soul*), *De Vera Religione* (*On True Religion*), *De Libero Arbitrio* (*On Free Will*), *De Trinitate* (*On the Trinity*), the autobiographical *Confessiones* (*Confessions*), and his magnum opus *De Civitate Dei* (*The City of God*) — exercised an absolute formative influence on Western European Medieval philosophy.

Augustine systematized the Christian doctrine, largely relying on the philosophical ideas of Plato and Neoplatonism. God, a human and his soul, human history are the central themes of Augustine’s philosophy.

Augustine’s religious outlook is *theocentric*. The existence of God — the original highest reality, characterized by eternity and immutability (existence outside of time), infinity, immateriality and incorporeality (bodiless or immaterial, lacking physical matter or a tangible form) — is the absolute Good, Truth and Love. God as a person is the source and creator of the world and a human (creationism), through Him everything created from nothing receives existence. Following Plato, Augustine believed that there are two types of being — eternal thoughts-ideas of the divine mind and transient material things as an imperfect likeness of divine ideas. Everything material is changeable and tends towards non-existence, in contrast to divine ideas, which are eternal and unchanging. In the created world, only a human has an eternal soul. Dividing between the human body and soul, Augustine gives superiority to the human soul over the body. He considers the soul to be a rational substance designed to control the body, the purpose of which is to move towards God.

The worthiest and reliable path to the truth is based on faith in Divine Revelation and the authority of the Fathers of the Church. The mind, on the other

hand, allows you to develop the ability to understand and reflect, which helps to strengthen faith. Hence the well-known formula of Augustine — “I believe in order to understand.”

A new feature of Augustine’s thinking was attention to two problems that ancient thought did not know: the inner world of the human personality and the dynamics of human history. Believing that “truth resides within a human”, Augustine turns to the analysis of the “inner human”, the world of the human soul. In the abyss of the human soul there is a constant dramatic struggle between the divine and the sinful. A human being must discover for oneself the whole depth of his spiritual life (an example of such psychological introspection is the autobiographical work of Augustine — “Confession”), realize his sinfulness, repent and strive towards divine grace. Thus, Augustine discovers subjective reality — self-consciousness, which is more reliable and significant for a person than external being.

The highest purpose of a human being is the salvation of the soul, which is possible through merciful love for God. Augustine wrote: “Love God, and then do what you want.” Based on the meaning of love for a person’s earthly life, the thinker determined the essence of human society. In his essay “*On the City of God*”, he described the history of mankind as a constant struggle between two cities: “*the Earthly city*” and “*the City of God*”. The existence of these two cities is an expression of two types of love: “the Earthly city” (a secular state) is based on “self-love, even to the contempt of God”, and “the City of God” (a spiritual community of people) is based “on love for God, brought to contempt for God”.

Aurelius Augustine so fully illuminated in his writings the main problems of Christian theology that for several centuries (up to Thomas Aquinas) he remained an indisputable authority in matters of religion and philosophy.

Scholasticism (derived from the Greek *schola*, meaning “school” or “scholarly discourse,” and the Latin *scholasticus*, meaning “scholar”) represents the dominant stage in the late evolution of Medieval philosophy. Its structural formation was driven by the emergence of the formal Medieval educational system: initially through monastic and cathedral schools, and subsequently through the founding of the first European universities from the twelfth century onwards (e.g., Bologna, Paris, Oxford). Within the scholastic paradigm, philosophy initially occupied a subordinate position relative to sacred science, famously conceptualized through the Latin maxim: “*philosophy is the servant of theology*” (*ancilla theologiae*).

As an intellectual tradition, scholasticism sought to systematically organize and rationally justify Western Christian dogma. To achieve this, scholastic thinkers actively assimilated the logical and metaphysical legacy of Aristotle, prioritizing formal logic as the definitive instrument of rigorous cognitive activity (*organon*). The most celebrated thinkers of this epoch include Anselm of Canterbury, Roscelin of Compiègne, Peter Abelard, Thomas Aquinas, and William of Ockham.

The pinnacle of Medieval Scholasticism is embodied in the work of the Dominican friar **Thomas Aquinas** (c. 1225–1274). Revered posthumously as the “**Angelic Doctor**” (*Doctor Angelicus*) and canonized as a saint in 1323, Aquinas composed a monumental corpus of theological and philosophical literature. His most definitive works are his grand systematic encyclopedias, the **Sums**: *Summa contra Gentiles* (*Book on the Truth of the Catholic Faith against the Pagans*) and his magnum opus, the *Summa Theologiae* (*Summary of Theology*).

Islamic philosophy — most notably the commentaries and treatises of **Ibn Sina (Avicenna)** and **Ibn Rushd (Averroes)** — exercised a decisive, formative influence on Aquinas. Islamic scholarship provided Western Christendom with translated Aristotelian texts, advanced commentaries, and the analytical tools required to rationalize theology. Aquinas brilliantly adapted Avicenna’s crucial metaphysical distinction between **essence (essentia)** and **existence (esse)** to justify Christian dogma, while simultaneously refuting Averroistic doctrines regarding the eternity of the world and pantheistic monopsychism.

The philosophical framework of Aquinas represents a monumental synthesis of Aristotelian hylomorphism and Christian creationism. He positions God as the supreme, uncaused Being, whose universal transcendental attributes are Unity, Truth, and Goodness.

Essence and existence: in God alone, essence and existence completely coincide; God is His own existence. Conversely, created finite entities possess a structural division between their essence (what they are) and their existence (that they are), acquiring reality only through contingent participation in the Creator.

Hylomorphic hierarchy: aligning with Aristotle, Aquinas asserts that all material objects in the created world are a composite unity of **form and matter**. God stands at the apex as pure form (*forma formarum*), absolute perfection, and **pure actuality** (*actus purus*), completely devoid of potentiality or passive matter.

Thomas Aquinas substantiated the *principle of the harmony of faith and reason*. Theology proceeds from the truths given in Revelation — this is the path of faith, and philosophical knowledge ascends from the created world to the divine with the help of reason. The path of faith is short and direct, taking precedence over reason, which follows a longer and more difficult path, that requires many proofs. However, there are no contradictions between these two paths, since philosophy ultimately leads a person to the truths of faith.

In developing proofs for the existence of God, Thomas Aquinas used Aristotelian logic. The thinker’s conviction of the need for **rational arguments of the existence of God** emphasizes his recognition of the importance and value of reason and philosophy in matters of faith and theology. Aquinas developed *five such arguments*:

1. **The argument from motion (the First Mover):** the empirical world is characterized by change and motion. Everything that moves must be set in motion by an external agent, as an entity cannot actualize its own potentiality.

To avoid an illogical infinite regress of moved movers, human reason must arrive at an ultimate, original source of motion that is itself completely stationary. This **Unmoved Mover** is understood to be God.

2. **The argument from efficient cause (The First Cause):** in the observable universe, every event is governed by an efficient cause. Nothing can be the efficient cause of itself, as it would have to priorly exist to cause itself, which is a logical absurdity. Because an infinite regress of causes is impossible, there must exist a primary, uncaused **First Efficient Cause**, which we call God.

3. **The argument from contingency (Necessary Being):** empirical entities are contingent; they are generated, decay, and cease to exist, meaning it is possible for them *not* to be. If everything were merely contingent, then at one time nothing existed, and nothing could have ever come into being, as nothingness cannot generate existence. Therefore, reality demands the existence of a non-contingent, **Necessary Being** that carries the reason for its existence within its own essence. This being is God.

4. **The argument from degree (Gradation of Perfection):** we observe that objects in the world possess varying degrees of values like goodness, truth, and nobility (e.g., one thing is *more* good than another). Such comparative gradations are only intelligible relative to an absolute, maximum standard of perfection. There must exist a supreme entity that embodies these transcendental values to the highest degree, serving as the ultimate cause of all goodness and perfection in reality. This maximum archetype is God;

5. **The teleological argument (Intelligent Design):** natural bodies devoid of cognitive awareness act predictably and systematically toward optimal ends (e.g., biological ecosystems). They achieve these goals not by random chance, but by design. Because entities lacking intelligence cannot orient themselves toward a purpose unless directed by an external mind (much like an arrow shot by an archer), there must exist a supreme **Intellectual Being** that consciously directs all natural processes toward their designated *telos*. This intelligent designer is God.

The teachings of Thomas Aquinas had a great influence on Catholic theology and philosophy. After the death of this outstanding philosopher, *Thomism* (from Lat. *Thomas*) becomes the official teaching of the Roman Catholic Church, and at the end of the 19th century neo-Thomism is being emerged as one of the most significant and influential currents of modern Catholic thought.

By the 14th century scholasticism comes to self-negation. Scholastic disputes in universities often turned into fruitless speculative arguments (for example, in many hours of disputes, teachers and students could argue about whether God could kill himself or create a stone that he himself could not lift). Obviously, such disputes not only did not bring a person closer to the knowledge of God, but often discredited the very content of faith. They alienated a human from the knowledge of the sensually perceived world. Criticizing the lack of content and isolation from the experience of many scholastic concepts, the thinker of the 16th century

William of Ockham formulated the famous principle, called “*Occam’s razor*”, — “*entities should not be multiplied without necessity.*”

Despite the fact that the thinkers of the Renaissance gave the word “scholasticism” the meaning of empty reasoning and meaningless verbal play, the significance of this tradition for the entire subsequent development of philosophical thought is enormous (the scholastic technique of philosophizing, the conceptual apparatus of scholasticism, and research in the field of logic).

1.3.3. THE MEDIEVAL PHILOSOPHY OF THE NEAR AND MIDDLE EAST

Medieval philosophy cannot be identified exclusively with the philosophical thought of the Christian West. During the time of scholasticism in Western Europe, philosophy also developed intensively in the Middle East. The philosophical views of Middle Eastern thinkers were based on the dogmas of Islam, as well as on the ideas of authoritative ancient Greek thinkers, primarily Aristotle. The main schools of Arabic-language philosophy are *Kalam*, *Falsafa*, and *Sufism*.

Kalam (arab. *kalam* — word, speech) is a discourse on religious and philosophical topics, an interpretation of Islamic dogmas based on reason rather than adherence to religious authority. *Kalam* is the first school of Arab-Muslim thought, which emerged during the formation of Islam and became established in the 8th century. Famous representatives of this school include ***Wasil ibn Ata*, *An-Nazzam*, and *Al-Ash’ari***. The subjects of discussion in *Kalam* included questions about the unity of Allah, His essence and attributes, the creation of the world, free will and predestination, and the created or uncreated nature of the Quran in time.

Falsafa (arab. philosophy), or Eastern Peripateticism, was a medieval philosophy of the Middle East from the 9th to 12th centuries, based on the authority of Aristotle. The most famous representatives of *Falsafa* were ***Al-Kindi*, *Ibn Sina (Avicenna)*, *Al-Farabi*, and *Ibn Rushd (Averroes)***. Following Aristotle, Islamic thinkers understood philosophy as a comprehensive system of knowledge, a “science of sciences,” which should prove the existence of the First Principle (God) and explain the origin of all things. God is the perpetual motion machine and generator of all forms, while philosophers asserted that matter was also eternal and uncreated. The world is boundless and subject to natural laws, so *Falsafa* was closely linked to the development of natural sciences, aimed at developing scientific methods for studying the world, and was distinguished by a rational, logical style of presentation.

The most influential Persian philosopher, scientist, and physician of the medieval Islamic world, ***Ibn Sina (Avicenna)*** (980–1037 CE), wrote over 400 works in various fields of science. Avicenna not only created an original philosophical doctrine but also became the author of a famous encyclopedic work in the field of medicine — *The Canon of Medicine*. In the *Canon*, Ibn Sina described the nature of diseases (their causes, symptoms, and treatments), based on the “humoral” doctrine of the four liquids (blood, black bile, yellow bile, and

phlegm) and the associated types of human temperament. Avicenna also suggested that diseases could be caused by tiny creatures, drew attention to the contagiousness of smallpox, distinguished between cholera and the plague, studied a number of other diseases, and proposed methods for preparation and use of medicines.

Sufism is a mystical movement of Arabic thought based on the practices of spiritual development, asceticism, and selfless and devoted service to Allah. The goal of Sufism is the cultivation of the “perfect human being,” free from worldly vanity and able to rise above the negative qualities of his nature. According to Sufism, the path to perfecting each person’s spiritual world was illustrated by the life of the Prophet Muhammad. A representative of Sufism, the Iranian philosopher **Al-Ghazali** (1058–1111), concluded that rationally constructed faith is not viable. Religious life should be based on direct communication with Allah, as well as on personal experience of divine grace. As a result of such spiritual efforts, a person gradually comes closer to knowing God and uniting with Him.

In the 12th and 13th centuries, many philosophical and scientific works by Middle Eastern thinkers were translated from Arabic into Latin and influenced the intellectual development of Western Europe (e.g. Thomas Aquinas).

1.3.4. THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE RENAISSANCE: DISTINCTIVE FEATURES AND CORE PROBLEMS

The philosophy of the **Renaissance** (derived from the French and Latin for “rebirth”) designates a monumental phase in the development of Western European thought spanning the fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries. Originating in Italy, this intellectual movement subsequently radiated, to varying degrees, across all regions of Europe.

Crucially diverging from Medieval scholasticism, Renaissance philosophy underwent a profound process of **secularization**, establishing itself as an autonomous enterprise independent of ecclesiastical authority and dogmatic theology. Seeking an alternative to what they perceived as sterile scholastic methods, Renaissance thinkers turned back to classical antiquity — demonstrating a particular fascination with Plato and Neoplatonism — wherein they found the aesthetic and moral archetypes for their new cultural ideals. While the core themes of inquiry remained God, the cosmos, and humanity, their philosophical resolution shifted dramatically away from the Medieval consensus.

The unique character of the Renaissance philosophical worldview is defined by five foundational principles:

1. **Humanism** is an overarching worldview principle that positions the human personality and its terrestrial destiny as the supreme locus of value. It asserts the fundamental human right to freedom, dignity, happiness, and the harmonious actualization of creative capabilities. Rejecting the Medieval tendency to

disparage physical existence, humanists celebrated the human being as a holistic unity of spirit and flesh, cultivating an aesthetic appreciation for the beauty of the human anatomy and validating the pursuit of secular pleasure and utility.

2. **Anthropocentrism** is the definitive structural principle of Renaissance thought, which repositions **Humanity** at the center of the universe. In stark contrast to ancient cosmocentrism and Medieval theocentrism, the anthropocentric model assigns human beings an autonomous, intermediary (“middle”) station bridging the gap between God and nature, heaven and earth. Human nature is conceptualized as a fluid synthesis of the divine-heavenly intellect and the terrestrial-animal body. Consequently, human beings are viewed as radically free agents capable of self-fashioning and consciously creating their own destiny and character.

3. **Pantheism** is a theological and metaphysical doctrine that logically identifies God with the physical world. Within a pantheistic framework, God is no longer conceptualized as a transcendent being operating outside of and above nature; rather, the Divine is immanent within the universe, effectively dissolving into the fabric of nature. The Creator (*Natura naturans*) and creation (*Natura naturata*) are ontologically unified as one.

4. **Natural philosophy** is a renewed, empirical focus on the systematic study of nature and its physical laws. Renaissance natural philosophy laid the groundwork for modern science through pioneering figures like Nicolaus Copernicus, Giordano Bruno (who advanced the thesis of an infinite universe and a plurality of worlds), Galileo Galilei, and Johannes Kepler (who formulated the definitive laws of planetary motion);

5. **The evolution of sociopolitical thought:** political philosophy experienced a radical secularization during this era, driven by the realistic statecraft analysis of Niccolò Machiavelli, Jean Bodin, and Michel de Montaigne. Concurrently, the principles of an ideal social order — anchored in early visions of liberty, equality, and communal fraternity — were systematically conceptualized within the utopian literature of Thomas More (*Utopia*) and Tommaso Campanella (*The City of the Sun*).

The eminent astronomer, mathematician, physician, and economic theorist **Nicolaus Copernicus** (1473–1543) altered the course of human history with his foundational 1543 treatise, *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium* (*On the Revolutions of the Heavenly Spheres*). Within this work, Copernicus mathematically substantiated the **heliocentric system**, definitively refuting the geocentric cosmic model that had dominated Western thought for over a millennium under the authoritative legacy of Aristotle and Ptolemy.

Copernicus demonstrated that the Earth is not the stationary center of the universe, but rather an active celestial body rotating rapidly upon its own axis while concurrently revolving around the Sun. These groundbreaking astronomical discoveries, coupled with the rigorous formalization of the **experimental-inductive method**, directly triggered the Scientific Revolution of the seventeenth century, establishing empirical science as an autonomous social and academic institution.

The intellectual transformations of the Renaissance were structurally mirrored by the ***Protestant Reformation***, initiated by Martin Luther in 1517. The emergence of Protestantism fractured the singular religious hegemony of the Roman Catholic Church, radically reorienting the spiritual, moral, and economic guidelines of Western European society by prioritizing individual conscience and direct engagement with sacred texts.

TRAINING MATERIAL

Exercise 1. Read the excerpt from the primary source and answer the questions.

Aurelius Augustine

The Confessions⁵

Book XI

12. People who ask us, “What was God doing before he made heaven and earth?” are obviously full of their stale old nature. “If he was at leisure,” they say, “and not making anything, why did he not continue so thereafter and forever, just as he had always done nothing prior to that? If some change took place in God, and some new volition emerged to inaugurate created being, a thing he had never done before, then an act of will was arising in him which had not previously been present, and in that case how would he truly be eternal? God’s will is not a created thing; it exists prior to the act of creation, because nothing would be created unless the creator first willed it. Now, God’s will belongs to the very substance of God. But if some element appears in God’s substance that was previously not there, that substance cannot accurately be called eternal. On the other hand, if God’s will that creation should occur is eternal, why is creation not eternal as well?”

13. People who take that line do not yet understand you, O Wisdom of God and Light of our minds. They do not yet understand how things which receive their being through you and in you come into existence; they strive to be wise about eternal realities, but their heart flutters about between the changes of past and future found in created things, and an empty heart it remains. Who is to take hold of it and peg it down, that it may stand still for a little while and capture, if only briefly, the splendor of that eternity which stands for ever, and compare it with the fugitive moments that never stand still, and find it incomparable, and come to see that a long time is not long except in virtue of a great number of passing moments which cannot all run their course at once? They would see that in eternity nothing passes, for the whole is present, whereas time cannot be present all at once. Can they not see that whatever is past has been pushed out of the way by what was future, and all the future follows on the heels of the past,

⁵ Aurelius Augustine. *The Confessions* / Aurelius Augustine. – New York : New City Press, 1997. – P. 293–294.

and the whole of both past and future flows forth from him who is always present, and is by him created? Who shall take hold of the human heart, to make it stand still and see how eternity, which stands firm, has neither future nor past, but ordains future and past times? Has my hand the strength for this, or my mouth the persuasiveness to achieve such a thing? [...]

Questions:

1. Who are the people “full of their stale old nature”, according to Aurelius Augustine? Why?
2. What role does God play in the question of time (past, present and future), according to Aurelius Augustine?

Exercise 2. Read the excerpt from the primary source and answer the questions.

St. Thomas Aquinas
Summa Theologica⁶

Whether, besides philosophy, any further doctrine is required?

Objection 1: It seems that, besides philosophical science, we have no need of any further knowledge. For a human should not seek to know what is above reason: “Seek not the things that are too high for thee” (Ecclus. 3:22). But whatever is not above reason is fully treated of in philosophical science. Therefore, any other knowledge besides philosophical science is superfluous.

Objection 2: Further, knowledge can be concerned only with being, for nothing can be known, save what is true; and all that is, is true. But everything that is, is treated of in philosophical science — even God Himself; so that there is a part of philosophy called theology, or the divine science, as Aristotle has proved (Metaph. vi). Therefore, besides philosophical science, there is no need of any further knowledge.

On the contrary, it is written (2 Tim. 3:16): “All Scripture, inspired of God is profitable to teach, to reprove, to correct, to instruct in justice.” Now Scripture, inspired of God, is no part of philosophical science, which has been built up by human reason. Therefore, it is useful that besides philosophical science, there should be other knowledge, i.e. inspired of God.

I answer that, it was necessary for man’s salvation that there should be a knowledge revealed by God besides philosophical science built up by human reason. Firstly, indeed, because man is directed to God, as to an end that surpasses the grasp of his reason: “The eye hath not seen, O God, besides Thee, what things Thou hast prepared for them that wait for Thee” (Is. 66:4). But the end must first be known by men who are to direct their thoughts and actions to the end. Hence it was necessary for the salvation of man that certain truths which exceed human reason should be made known to him by divine revelation.

⁶ St. Thomas Aquinas. Summa Theologica / St. Thomas Aquinas. – Ney York : New City Press, 1996. – P. 5–6.

Even as regards those truths about God which human reason could have discovered, it was necessary that man should be taught by a divine revelation; because the truth about God such as reason could discover, would only be known by a few, and that after a long time, and with the admixture of many errors. Whereas man's whole salvation, which is in God, depends upon the knowledge of this truth. Therefore, in order that the salvation of men might be brought about more fitly and more surely, it was necessary that they should be taught divine truths by divine revelation. It was therefore necessary that besides philosophical science built up by reason, there should be a sacred science learned through revelation.

Reply to Objection 1: Although those things which are beyond man's knowledge may not be sought for by man through his reason, nevertheless, once they are revealed by God, they must be accepted by faith. Hence the sacred text continues, "For many things are shown to thee above the understanding of man" (Ecclus. 3:25). And in this, the sacred science consists.

Reply to Objection 2: Sciences are differentiated according to the various means through which knowledge is obtained. For the astronomer and the physicist both may prove the same conclusion: that the earth, for instance, is round: the astronomer by means of mathematics (i.e. abstracting from matter), but the physicist by means of matter itself. Hence there is no reason why those things which may be learned from philosophical science, so far as they can be known by natural reason, may not also be taught us by another science so far as they fall within revelation. Hence theology included in sacred doctrine differs in kind from that theology which is part of philosophy.

Questions:

1. How are theology and philosophy related in Th. Aquinas teaching?
2. Why does philosophy perform a subordinate function in relation to theology in the Medieval philosophical tradition?

EXERCISES FOR ASSESSING COMPETENCY LEVEL

Exercise 3. Answer the following questions:

1. What new ideas (compared to ancient philosophy) characterize the Medieval philosophical worldview?
2. "Man is the image and likeness of God." How do you understand this statement?
3. Interpret Tertullian's statement, "I believe because it is absurd."
4. Highlight the philosopher whose ideas Thomas Aquinas relied on when substantiating the principles of Christian theology.
5. Give an example of one of Thomas Aquinas's proofs of the existence of God.
6. How was the question of the relationship between faith and reason resolved in different periods of Medieval philosophy?

7. What are the topics discussed in Medieval philosophy of the Middle East?
8. How does anthropocentrism differ from theocentrism?
9. Highlight the philosophical doctrine according to which God is not outside of nature, but is dissolved within it.
10. What was the essence of the heliocentric system of the universe?
11. What ideas were the focus of T. Campanella and T. More?

Exercise 4. Complete the table “Medieval philosophical tradition”.

Period	Representatives		Main themes and issues
...	Tertullian, Justin, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, etc.		Defense of Christianity from pagan attacks; ...
Patristics (the 6–8th centuries)	Eastern	...	...
	Western	...	...
Scholasticism	...		...

Topics for reports:

1. Christianity and Medieval philosophy.
2. Fundamental ideas of Apologetics.
3. Apophatic theology in Eastern Patristics.
4. St. Augustine and his philosophical legacy.
5. The relationship between faith and reason in Medieval philosophy.
6. Characteristics of Thomas Aquinas’s scholasticism.
7. Discussions on the nature of universals in late Medieval philosophy.
8. Humanism in the Renaissance philosophy.
9. The Copernican revolution in astronomy and the development of the heliocentric model of the universe (N. Copernicus, I. Kepler, G. Galileo).

Aphorisms and Statements:

1. Let us believe in order that we may understand; for if we cannot understand, let us first believe (*St Augustine of Hippo*).
2. To be truly wise in the eyes of God means to die to the illusions of this worldly life (*St Augustine of Hippo*).
3. Love God, and do what you will (*St Augustine of Hippo*).
4. We are bound by a primary moral duty: we must detest the sinfulness within the sinner, yet love the sinner as a human being capable of moral restoration (*Thomas Aquinas (Summa Theologiae)*).
5. Knowledge is an asset so fundamentally valuable that it is never shameful to acquire it, regardless of the source (*Thomas Aquinas*).
6. There are no hopeless patients; there are only hopeless physicians (*Avicenna (Ibn Sina)*).
7. You shall subjugate the vast worlds of the Universe only if you first master your own passions (*Al-Ghazali*).

8. Philosophy is written in this grand book — I mean the universe — which stands continually open to our gaze... It is written in the language of mathematics (*Galileo Galilei (The Assayer)*).

SELF-ASSESSMENT OF TOPIC COMPREHENSION

1. Highlight the characteristic features of Medieval philosophy:

- a) cosmocentrism;
- b) eschatologism;
- c) theocentrism;
- d) creationism;
- e) anthropocentrism;
- f) rationalism;
- g) the idea of revelation.

2. Establish the sequence of stages in the development of Medieval philosophical thought:

- a) Patristics;
- b) Apologetics;
- c) Scholasticism.

3. Highlight the representatives of Renaissance philosophy:

- a) R. Descartes;
- b) Augustine of Hippo;
- c) Thomas More;
- d) G. Pico della Mirandola;
- e) Fr. Bacon;
- f) Nicholas of Cusa;
- g) N. Copernicus.

4. Highlight the thinker on whose ideas Thomas Aquinas based his theological teaching.

5. Establish a correspondence between the periods in the development of Medieval philosophy and the problematic field that characterizes them.

1) Apologetics;	a) systematization of Christian doctrine;
2) Patristics;	b) defense of Christianity from pagan attacks;
3) Scholasticism.	c) the problem of the relationship between faith and reason;
	d) the fight against heresies and the development of Christian dogmas;
	e) interest in the philosophy of Plato and Neoplatonism;
	f) interest in logic as a tool of thought.

TOPIC 1.4

EARLY MODERN PHILOSOPHY AND THE ENLIGHTENMENT. GERMAN CLASSICAL PHILOSOPHY

Total lesson time: 2 hours.

Aim: to study the characteristic features and main tenets of philosophical thought from the 17th to middle 19th centuries.

Objectives:

- to describe the characteristics of Early Modern philosophy;
- to study the main tenets of empiricism and rationalism in philosophy;
- to describe the features of Enlightenment philosophy;
- to study the main ideas of German classical philosophy.

Questions:

1. The specificity of the Early Modern European philosophy of the 17–18th centuries.
2. Empirical tradition of Early Modern philosophy (F. Bacon, J. Locke).
3. Rationalism in the philosophy of R. Descartes, B. Spinoza, and G. Leibniz.
4. Philosophical thought of the Enlightenment.
5. The specificity of German Classical philosophy.
6. Critical philosophy of I. Kant.
7. System and method in the philosophy of G. W. F. Hegel.

Key concepts: epistemology, science-centrism, empiricism, rationalism, substance, “idols,” sensualism, dualism, pantheism, scientism, deism, transcendental philosophy, a priori forms of consciousness, thing-in-itself, transcendentalism, categorical imperative, absolute idea, absolute spirit.

THEORETICAL MATERIAL

1.4.1. THE SPECIFICITY OF THE EARLY MODERN EUROPEAN PHILOSOPHY OF THE 17–18TH CENTURIES

Early Modern philosophy is born in the 17th century in Western Europe, especially in England and France. *The prerequisites for the emergence of Early Modern philosophy are:*

- 1) a series of European bourgeois revolutions;
- 2) great geographical discoveries of the 16th century;
- 3) the development of trade, commodity-money relations and capitalism;
- 4) the development of science and technology;
- 5) the emergence and development of mathematical science.

Natural science expressed the urgent needs of the new bourgeois society, contributing to the development of science and technical means of production, forming a new type of attitude towards the world that encouraged earthly goods and achievements.

The main features of early Modern European philosophy:

- epistemological character;
- early Modern philosophy is the theory of knowledge;
- methodological orientation of philosophy, which consists in the search for adequate methods of understanding nature and human society;
- science-centrism. Philosophy sees as its ideal and model to emulate the natural sciences, in particular mathematics and mechanics.

1.4.2. EMPIRICAL TRADITION OF THE EARLY MODERN PHILOSOPHY (F. BACON, J. LOCKE)

Empiricism is one of the most important trends in Early Modern philosophy, holding that the source of reliable knowledge is only *sensory experience*, and that thinking, reason can only combine the material delivered by the senses, but cannot introduce anything new into it.

Francis Bacon (1561–1626) is a founder of empiricism. His main works are “*The New Organon*” and “*The New Atlantis*”. Bacon was a passionate supporter of scientific progress and a determined enemy of scholasticism. He believed that philosophy and science should serve life and practice. The purpose of scientific knowledge, according to the philosopher, is to bring benefit and increase human power over nature. Bacon’s famous thesis “*Knowledge is power*” expresses the practical orientation of science and philosophy.

In general, the philosophy of Bacon is divided into two parts: *critical*, in which he tries to “cleanse” the human mind of errors and delusions, and *positive*, where Bacon systematizes the sciences and seeks to formulate a scientific method for analyzing nature. In the study of nature, according to Bacon, we are often guided by false ideas and concepts, which he called “**idols**”. He singled out *four main types of idols: the idols of the tribe, the cave, the marketplace and the theater*.

The idols of the tribe are the prejudices of our mind, arising from the “humanization” of nature itself by our mind. A human being is inclined to judge nature by analogy with his own properties, attributing to nature the characteristics of a living organism that has consciousness.

The idols of the cave are delusions arising from the individual characteristics of each person (his upbringing, reading interests, the authority of those whom he admires, sympathies, antipathies, etc.). Such features interfere with objective knowledge and prevent objective research. Each person seems to look at the world from his own cave.

The idols of the marketplace develop from semantic ambiguity and misuse of words. According to Bacon, “words directly violate the mind, confuse everything and lead people to empty and innumerable disputes and interpretations”. Idols that penetrate the mind with the help of words are of two kinds: they are either the names of non-existent things (“fate”, “perpetual motion machine”, etc.), or the names of things that exist, but confused and indefinite, inappropriately abstracted.

The idols of the theater are the distorting influence of false scientific and philosophical theories, the power of false authorities. According to Bacon, the elimination of all these idols is possible only on the path of experience and its scientific-inductive understanding.

To know the laws of nature, the philosopher believes, it is necessary to completely change the existing methods of research. Theoretical methods (such as deduction) are not suitable for the study of nature. Any knowledge should be based on experience, that is, move from the study of individual facts obtained in the course of observation, analysis, comparison and experiment to general provisions, and not vice versa. The only correct method in the study of nature is the **empirical-inductive method of cognition**: from the observation of single factors to broad generalizations. Thus, the ideal for Bacon was an impartial mind, freed from all kinds of prejudices, open and attentive to experience. By interpreting experience as the ultimate source of all our knowledge, Bacon thereby laid the foundations for **empiricism**, one of the leading philosophical traditions of Modern European philosophy.

John Locke (1632–1704) was an English philosopher and sensationalist. In his main scientific work, “*An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*”, Locke set himself the goal of comprehensively substantiating the proposition about the empirical origin of all human knowledge.

Sensualism is an integral part of empiricism. In the understanding of sensualism, knowledge relies only on experience, primarily sensory experience. Furthermore, the experience is necessarily personal and individual. Locke believed that only sense data have the quality of immediate truth, while all knowledge must be derived from sense perception.

The starting point of Locke’s theory of knowledge is the denial of the theory of innate ideas, including the idea of God. Locke believed that we draw all our knowledge from experience and sensations. The mind of the newborn is a blank slate (*tabula rasa*) on which life draws its patterns (knowledge). “*Nothing is in the intellect that was not first in the senses*” is the main thesis of Locke.

“*Idea*” is the most important concept of his philosophy; ideas are not somewhere in the other world, as Plato believed, and not in some Absolute Spirit, as Hegel later argued, their place is only in the human mind, and their source is sensation and reflection.

Locke also identifies *two sources of idea formation*. The first is our *feelings*. This source is entirely dependent on our senses. The second source of ideas is the *activity of our mind* itself, when it no longer deals with external things, but instead observes itself, its own operations, and perceives them.

Ideas acquired from experience are not yet knowledge itself, but only the material for it. To become knowledge, all ideas must be processed by the activity of reason (abstraction). Through abstraction, simple ideas are transformed into complex ones. According to Locke, the actual process of cognition is characterized as an ascent from simple ideas to complex ones.

Thus, justifying the main position of empiricism, Locke repeatedly emphasized that the activity of the mind proceeds only on the basis of sensory data that arise in a person before the ideas of reflection. Locke points out that the mind cannot go beyond those primary ideas that are formed on the basis of sensations. External experience is the base of all subsequent knowledge. And in general, the soul cannot think before the senses provide it with ideas for thinking.

Locke's *socio-political* views concern such issues as human rights and law, the state, the separation of powers, and the supreme right of the people. It is important that, along with other thinkers of the 17th century Locke outlined the contours of the rule of law, substantiated the principle of separation of powers, thereby laying the foundation for a liberal democratic state structure and government, opposed to despotism, tyranny and absolutism.

1.4.3. RATIONALISM IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF R. DESCARTES, B. SPINOSA AND G. LEIBNIZ

Rationalism (from Lat. *ratio* — reason) is a philosophical view that recognizes the mind (thinking) as the main source of knowledge and the criterion of truth.

René Descartes (1596–1650), whose Latinized name is *Cartesius*, is considered to be the founder of European rationalism in Early Modern philosophy. The famous French mathematician, physicist and physiologist, the creator of analytical geometry and Modern algebraic symbolism, the author of mechanism in physics, the forerunner of reflexology, made a significant contribution to the development of philosophical thought and the formation of scientific methodology of knowledge. The main philosophical works of R. Descartes: “*Discourse on the Method*”, “*Meditations on the First Philosophy*”, “*Principles of Philosophy*”.

Analyzing the process of cognition, Descartes put reason in the first place, reducing the role of experience to a simple practical verification of intelligence data. Descartes assumed the presence in the human mind of innate ideas that determine the results of cognition, and on the basis of which, in his opinion, it is possible to form a universal deductive method for constructing scientific knowledge.

The first question of philosophy for Descartes was the question of the possibility of certain knowledge and of obtaining a method by which it will be achieved. First of all, the requirement of doubt (*the principle of “radical doubt”* of Descartes) leads to reliable knowledge: doubting everything, gradually cutting off everything doubtful, we inevitably come to the idea of the certainty of the only thing — doubt itself (thinking, consciousness). Descartes expresses this idea in the famous maxim “*I think, therefore I am*” (from Lat. *Cogito, ergo sum*). The truth of this judgment is substantiated by the existence of God, who endowed a human with the “natural light” of reason.

The basic principles of the method of scientific knowledge, supplemented by the principle of radical doubt, are as follows:

- only that which is known to be true can be recognized as true;

- clearly and obviously (principle of intellectual intuition);
- it is mentally necessary to divide the question under study into the maximum number of small simple elements to build a hierarchy between them (i.e., to establish the interaction of the parts of the object);
- requires a consistent movement of thought in carrying out the derivation of scientific propositions from primary self-evident principles.

Descartes' method based on the principle of "radical doubt", deduction and auxiliary logical and methodological procedures in philosophy and science was called analytical, or **rational-deductive**.

Descartes' views on nature were purely mechanical: the universe is a huge mechanism. The initial impetus for its existence is given by God, but subsequently the development of the world is determined by an independent creative force. Matter is in continuous quantitative and qualitative motion, determined by the universal laws of mechanics. The organic world obeys the same laws. Thus, animals are nothing but complex machines, while human beings somewhat go beyond the limits of the laws of mechanics (they, unlike animals, have a soul, mind and speech).

The fundamental concept of Descartes is substance. Descartes divided the world into two kinds of substances — *spiritual and material*. The material is infinitely divisible, and has extension, while the spiritual is indivisible and has thinking. The cause, basis and connection of these two substances is God as the main infinite substance. Thus, Descartes was a **dualist**, he recognizes the existence of two substances independent of each other — thinking and material (bodily). The thinking substance is revealed to a human directly, the material substance is revealed indirectly, through the knowledge of individual things.

Benedict Spinoza (Baruch) (1632–1677) was a Dutch philosopher who continued the development of the rationalist trend in Modern European philosophy. His main works: "*Theological political treatise*", and "*Ethics*".

In understanding nature and the universe, Spinoza opposed the dualism of Descartes with the *principle of monism*. **Monism** is a philosophical view, according to which all the diversity of the world is explained with the help of a single substance — matter or spirit.

Spinoza's monism is pantheistic. God is the basis of the universe, he does not exist outside the world, not as an entity alien to it, he is in the world itself, inherent in and related to the latter. God is identified with nature, which is expressed in the idea of a single, eternal and infinite substance. This substance is the cause of itself. The philosopher calls the qualitative characteristics of this substance attributes. Spinoza considers it reasonable to limit himself to only two main attributes, the most important properties of the substance — *extension and thinking*. Thus, the two substances of Descartes were transformed by Spinoza into two attributes of a single substance.

If thinking as such is, according to Spinoza, an attribute of substance (by virtue of which God is a thinking thing), and if extension is also an attribute of

God (by virtue of which God is an “extended thing”), then individual bodies are modes of extended substance. “By the body,” writes Spinoza, “I mean the mode that expresses in a certain way the essence of God, insofar as it is considered as an extended thing.” Thinking is an attribute of substance. But thinking itself has different modes: love, desire, emotions of the soul, etc.

The substantiation of the thesis about the substantial unity of the world and the definition of thinking as an attribute of the divine substance becomes a stage in the development of the rationalistic Early Modern philosophy.

Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646–1716) was a German philosopher, mathematician, lawyer, historian, and linguist. His main works: “*New Essays on Human Understanding*”, “*Theodicy*”, and “*Monadology*”.

The work of Leibniz completes the rationalistically oriented philosophy of the 17th century. Defending his own position in the dispute about the source of knowledge (controversy between rationalists and empiricists), about the category of substance (Spinoza’s monism or Descartes’ dualism), Leibniz offered an original synthetic philosophical system in which he emphasizes the doctrine of God and substance, as well as the rationalistic method.

In agreement with his predecessors, Leibniz applies the concept of substance primarily to God. He calls God the One Being, the lord of the universe, the ultimate cause of all things and the necessary substance. Not only the existences that this world contains, but even all possible ones derive their reality from the One Being.

However, Leibniz’s doctrine of substance is not exhausted by the assertion of the substantiality of God. Leibniz considers it most reasonable to admit that besides God, the highest active principle, there are many individual “actors” that cannot be attributed to only one subject. These individual “actors” are called “**monads**” by Leibniz. Thus, **the principle of substance pluralism** is approved, which is opposed to all philosophical interpretations of substance as a simple, undifferentiated unity.

“The monad that we are going to talk about here is nothing but a simple substance that is part of complex ones: simple, therefore, without parts,” Leibniz begins his work “*Monadology*” (§ 1). And he continues: (§ 3): “And where there are no parts, there is neither extension nor figure, and divisibility is impossible. These monads are the true atoms of nature, in a word, the elements of things.” Monads, the philosopher believes, must be endowed with some properties. Otherwise, it would not be possible to explain the change of things with their help. The key property of monads for Leibniz is their rationality. Thus, the “lower” monads (forming the inorganic world and plants) have only vague ideas; in animals, representations reach the stage of sensations, and in a human being — a clear understanding and comprehension. Therefore, the level of reasonableness of a monad corresponds to its degree of freedom. According to the philosopher, the more reasonable the monad, the freer it is.

Thus, monads are thought of as the ideal first building blocks of all being. They are entities that are “embedded” in each of the bodies of nature and are

involved in the diversity, uniqueness of their manifestations and changes. They have activity and independence, are in continuous change and are capable of suffering, perception and consciousness. Monad is a unit of being, a spiritual atom. God, according to Leibniz, rises above the corporeal world, being its culprit and master, while the unity and coherence of monads is the result of God's "pre-established harmony."

Recognizing, on the one hand, the active force as the main property of monads, establishing the relationship between them, and, on the other hand, substantiating the idea of God the Creator, Leibniz, through theology, in fact, comes to realize the principles of dialectics (the doctrine of an interconnected and developing world). In his works, the philosopher comprehends such dialectical principles as the principle of universal interconnection and order, the principle of differences or individualization, the principle of continuity, the principle of pre-established harmony, the principle of the perfection of the world created by God as the best of the worlds.

1.4.4. PHILOSOPHICAL THOUGHT OF THE ENLIGHTENMENT

In the history of philosophical thought the 18th century is usually characterized as the Age of Enlightenment. Scientific knowledge and philosophical research, which were previously the property of a narrow circle of scientists, are now rapidly spreading among the educated part of Europeans, becoming the subject of lively discussion and irreconcilable disputes. Confidence in the power of the human mind, the steady progress of ideas is the defining dominant of the era. The optimism of the Enlightenment expresses the mentality of the growing bourgeoisie (it is no coincidence that England became the birthplace of the Enlightenment, having embarked on the path of capitalist development earlier than other countries).

Critique of tradition is a central element of Enlightenment ideology, aimed at replacing blind faith, prejudice, and authority with Reason. Enlightenment thinkers (Voltaire, Diderot) sought to restructure society based on rationalism, science, and civil rights, rejecting class privileges and religious dogmatism.

Thus, the Enlightenment opposed religious fanaticism, superstition, and the church's control over intellectual life, promoting deism or a secular worldview. Enlightenment thinkers criticized feudal remnants, class inequality, and absolute monarchy, substantiating the idea of equality before the law. They also rejected a blind adherence to customs ("that's how our ancestors lived") in favor of critical reflection and experience. Reason was proclaimed the only criterion of truth, capable of liberating man from "idols" (Francis Bacon).

The criticism of tradition was not just a denial, but a tool for the formation of a modern society oriented towards progress, individual freedom and scientific knowledge.

One of the most important characteristics of the philosophy of this period is **rationalism**. It is understood as an epistemological doctrine, stating that the tool of knowledge is the mind, and sensations and experience are of secondary importance. In this sense, it opposes sensualism, which attaches decisive importance to human feelings, sensations and perceptions, and empiricism, which puts experience first in cognition.

In a broader sense, rationalism is seen as a broad philosophical and theoretical trend that expresses the views, needs, public sentiments of certain classes, social strata and groups at a certain stage of social development. During this period, it consisted of various (philosophical, ideological and political radicalism) teachings and reflected the views, moods, and needs of the bourgeoisie in its struggle against absolutism, feudalism and the Catholic Church. At the center of all the philosophical teachings of that time is an actively acting subject, capable of cognizing and changing the world in accordance with his reason. And since reason is the source of all subjective human activity, to the extent that a person in his essence is a rational being, recognized to become the ruler of the world and to rebuild social relations on reasonable grounds.

Other characteristic features of the philosophy of the Enlightenment are **scientism** — a worldview position based on the idea of scientific knowledge as the highest cultural value and a sufficient condition for the orientation of a person in the world; and **deism** — a religious and philosophical view, according to which God, having created the world, takes no further part in it and does not interfere with the natural course of its events.

The development of the Enlightenment in philosophy is closely connected with socio-political ideas. Relying on democratic ideals, the enlighteners waged an uncompromising struggle against superstition and religious dogmatism, discrimination, fought for freedom of speech, and the formal legal equality of the people. Under such conditions, philosophy could not be simply a science of sciences, performing only the function of methodological constructions. Communication with real life has become an urgent need for philosophy, turning it into an instrument of social criticism aimed at radically changing people's consciousness.

France gradually became the center of the ideology of the Enlightenment, where a galaxy of enlighteners was represented by *F. Voltaire*, *D. Diderot*, *J.-J. Rousseau* and others. They spread the ideas of criticism of religion and the church, state orders, traditional metaphysics, etc.

Unlike the English Enlightenment, the French Enlightenment quickly became politicized (it should be noted that chronologically it developed between the completed English and the coming Great French bourgeois revolution). The socio-political cataclysm at the turn of the 18th–19th centuries “buried” the hopes of French thinkers for a gradual non-violent social progress.

As a current of social thought, the Enlightenment undoubtedly represented a kind of unity. It consisted in a special frame of mind, intellectual inclinations

and preferences. First of all, we are talking about the goals and ideals of the Enlightenment, such as freedom, the well-being of people, peace, non-violence, religious tolerance, equality, fraternity, etc., as well as the famous freethinking, a critical attitude towards authorities of all kinds, and the rejection of dogmas on faith.

With all the variety of manifestations of the Enlightenment in different European countries, this period can be assessed as innovative and advanced. The glorification of the human mind, which becomes the quintessence of Enlightenment thought, is expressed in the words of the famous German philosopher of the 18th century I. Kant: “*Have the courage to use your own mind!*” Subsequently, evaluating the achievements and ideas of the Enlightenment, European thinkers emphasized the ambiguity of the legacy of this cultural era, and, at the same time, agreed that it was the Enlightenment, represented by its great adepts, that attempted to use the mind in the interests of the moral and intellectual emancipation of the individual.

1.4.5. THE SPECIFICITY OF GERMAN CLASSICAL PHILOSOPHY

German classical philosophy is the completion of the Early Modern philosophy. It is represented by such thinkers as Kant, Fichte, Schelling, Hegel (late 18th — first half of the 19th century).

Background of origin:

- German Classical literature (Lessing, Goethe, Schiller, Heine);
- philosophy of the Enlightenment;
- the pantheistic rationalism of Spinoza;
- the Great French Revolution (1789–1794);
- German Protestantism (one of the largest branches of Christianity, along with Catholicism and Orthodoxy, which arose during the Reformation and advocated the transformation of the church).

Character traits of German classical philosophy:

- 1) overcoming the contradictions of the philosophy of the 17–18th centuries, which expressed in the opposition of rationalism and empiricism;
- 2) exaggeration of the role of natural science;
- 3) excessive optimism of the Enlightenment;
- 4) revival of interest in history, art, mythology;
- 5) criticism of the natural science orientation of Early Modern philosophy;
- 6) the ideal of a free individual of the Renaissance was replaced by the German classics with the collective ideal of free humanity (freedom, equality, fraternity);
- 7) religious basis is Protestantism.

1.4.6. CRITICAL PHILOSOPHY OF I. KANT

Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) was born in East Prussia to an artisan family. He studied at the Friderican College and the University of Königsberg. Subsequently, he worked as a home teacher, and was also a teacher, professor, rector at the University of Königsberg.

The first period of Kant's work is pre-critical (until 1781). At this time, I. Kant was developing natural science and logical problems.

The second period of creativity of I. Kant is critical (since 1781). The main provisions of critical philosophy are set forth in the main works of I. Kant: "*Critique of Pure Reason*", "*Critique of Practical Reason*", "*Critique of the Ability of Judgment*".

The main theme of the entire Critique of Pure Reason is epistemology, and the central question of the book is how metaphysics as a science is possible. In the final sections of the work, Kant answers this question sharply in a negative way: metaphysics is impossible as a science and is not one in the form in which it then existed. He radically changes the idea of the very subject, essence and purpose of metaphysics: it should no longer remain an ontology, that is, talk about being in general, but should concentrate on the theory of knowledge and answer the questions: what can we know and how can we know by learning how our mind works.

Kant's "Copernican revolution" lies in the fact that as the starting point of the cognitive process, the philosopher approved not the object of knowledge, but the specific regularity of the process of knowledge itself, i.e. our knowledge of the object does not depend on the object, but on the cognitive ability of our mind.

The most important concepts of Kant's epistemology are the **transcendental** and the **transcendent**. The *transcendental* is a priori (pre-experimental); this term is used by Kant to refer to the cognitive abilities themselves ("transcendental" is a priori, immanent in consciousness, can be known). The concept of "transcendental" can serve as an opposition to the category of "transcendent". The *transcendent* means that which exists outside of consciousness and is inaccessible to the latter, unknowable.

The basis of Kant's epistemological concept is the statement about the *a priori* (transcendental) basis of scientific truths. According to Kant, one should recognize the existence of *a priori* foundations not only in the intellect, but also in sensibility, as well as in the experience inextricably linked with it. Neither accepting the thesis about a supernatural divine source of *a priori* elements of human consciousness, nor refuting their naturalistic understanding, Kant considered them simply as a kind of given that actually exists, but is inexplicable. Kant's apriorism differs from the doctrine of innate ideas, *firstly*, in that, according to Kant, only forms of knowledge are pre-experimented, and its content comes entirely from experience. *Secondly*, the pre-experimental forms themselves are not innate, but have their own history. The real meaning of Kant's

apriorism lies in the fact that the individual who begins to cognize has at his disposal certain forms of cognition that have developed before him. If you look at knowledge from the point of view of its origin, then its entire volume is ultimately taken from the ever-expanding experience of mankind. *A priori* knowledge is opposed to empirical knowledge, the acquisition of which is possible only through experience (*a posteriori*). In general, the entire body of knowledge is ultimately the result of the expanding experience of mankind.

Considering the structure of the cognitive process, Kant studies three levels of consciousness — sensibility, reason and mind (Table 8). The doctrine of sensibility is called transcendental aesthetics, the doctrine of reason is called transcendental analytics, the doctrine of mind is called transcendental dialectics.

Table 8

The structure of the cognitive process according to I. Kant

Level	Feature
Sensibility	It is affected by the objective world or “thing in itself”. The received sensations are processed by two a priori forms of sensibility — space and time
Reason	The forms of reason are categories. From the combination of universal categories and a single image, a scientific idea of the world arises
Mind	The highest level of knowledge, operates with ideas about the soul, the world, and God

Revealing the three cognitive abilities of a person — three levels of consciousness — sensibility, reason and mind — Kant consistently reveals the answers to his questions: how is mathematics possible (geometry is a pure contemplation of space, arithmetic is a pure contemplation of time)? How is natural science possible (for example, schematism, classifications, categories, etc.)? How is metaphysics possible (for example, judgments about God, the soul, truth, etc.)? So, according to Kant, knowledge begins with sensibility, which is influenced by the objective world or “thing in itself”.

The thing-in-itself is one of the central concepts of epistemology, and then of Kant’s ethics. This concept refers to things as they exist outside of us, in themselves, as opposed to what they are “for us”.

The received sensations are processed by two a priori forms of sensibility — space and time, which appear to Kant as subjective properties. Kant constantly emphasizes that space and time have no absolute reality, that they are only conditions of experience that are connected not with the object, but with the subject, i.e., with a human.

The image of an object formed by sensuality is transferred to the level of *reason*, the a priori forms of which are categories (quantity, modality, relation). Due to the activity of the mind, a scientific idea of the world arises from the combination of a universal category and a single image. Kant believes that a person lives only in the world of phenomena, essentially “constructed” by the very cognitive abilities of a person. The noumena (that is, the very essence of

things-in-themselves) remain unknown and inaccessible to a human. According to Kant, our knowledge of things can expand and deepen indefinitely, but this does not bring us closer to understanding “things in themselves.”

The highest cognitive ability, according to I. Kant, is the mind. The mind directs and controls the process of cognition, links together the acquired knowledge into a coherent system. It includes three transcendental ideas: the idea of the soul, the world as a whole, and the idea of God. The mind tries to cognize each of these ideas, falling into irresolvable contradictions (antinomies).

The final sections of the Critique of Pure Reason represent a transition to the study of the realm of morality, a transition to the Critique of Practical Reason. The three ideas of reason, which caused illusions and contradictions in the theoretical sphere, turn into three most important postulates in the practical sphere, without which the life of a person and humanity as a whole is not possible. These postulates are *free will in the intelligible world, the immortality of the soul and the existence of God*. Although they cannot be proved or refuted by the means of science, nevertheless, they are an object of faith, without which it is impossible to commit moral acts.

Reason is called practical here because its function is to guide the actions of a person, that is, to establish the principles of moral action. The moral law helps the practical mind to comprehend what is inaccessible to the theoretical one. The ideas of God and the immortality of the soul, theoretically unprovable, have practical significance, since a human, although he is the bearer of the universal mind, is at the same time an earthly limited being who needs support for his choice in favor of moral behavior.

The fundamental principle of Kant's ethics is the principle of moral autonomy. Morality is self-sufficient, contains its own reason in itself, and cannot be deduced from anything. Morality is thus the realm of human freedom. The new task is to find a law that expresses this freedom (this is the task, according to the philosopher, of a new type of metaphysics). Kant calls such a law a **categorical imperative**: “*Act that you use humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, always at the same time as an end, never merely as a means*”⁷. The moral law exists for the individual as an obligation that determines the possibility of making the right choice, that is, overcoming selfish motives. Morality and ethics teach a person not how to become happy, but how to become worthy of happiness. According to Kant, behavior will be virtuous if its purpose is actually moral perfection and the happiness of others. Since the fulfillment of moral duty requires the overcoming of sensual inclinations, the principle of pleasure, according to Kant, is opposite to the principle of morality. This means that from the very beginning it is necessary to abandon the illusion that, following the categorical imperative, a person can be happy. Virtue and happiness are two incompatible things, says the German philosopher.

⁷ Kant, I. Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals / I. Kant. – Cambridge : Cambridge Univ. Press, 1998 – P. 38.

Thus, Kant revealed that the mind actually unites all its interests in three questions that have become truly sacramental: What can I know? What should I do? What can I hope for? The answers to these questions clarify the essence of the main proposition about what a person is.

1.4.7. SYSTEM AND METHOD IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF G. W. F. HEGEL

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770–1831) was a German philosopher, creator of the system of “absolute idealism”. He was born in the family of a financial official; at the age of seven he entered the Stuttgart Gymnasium, where he showed an aptitude for ancient languages and history. In 1788, after graduating from high school, he entered the Tübingen Theological Institute. As a student, Hegel admired the French Revolution, though he later changed his mind about it. Since 1801, he became a teacher at the University of Jena. Until 1818 he also worked in Heidelberg, and from 1818 to 1831 — in Berlin. His major works are “*Phenomenology of the Spirit*”, “*Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences*”, “*Philosophy of Right*”, “*Lectures on Aesthetics*”, “*Lectures on the Philosophy of History*”, etc.

The starting point of Hegel’s philosophy is the assertion of ***the identity of being and thinking***. The original identity, that forms the substantial foundation of the world, is, according to Hegel, the identity of thinking and being, in which, however, the difference between the objective and the subjective is initially present, but this difference itself exists only in thinking. According to Hegel, thinking is not only a subjective human activity but also an objective essence independent of a person, the fundamental principle, the primary source of everything that exists.

Thinking, Hegel argues, “alienates” its being in the form of matter and nature, which are the “other being” of this objectively existing thinking, which Hegel calls the ***absolute idea***. From this point of view, the mind is not a specific feature of a person, but the fundamental principle of the world, from which it follows that the world is basically logical, exists and develops according to the laws inherent in thinking, in reason. Thus, thinking and reason are considered by Hegel as the absolute essence of nature, man, and world history, independent of a human and mankind. Hegel seeks to prove that thinking as a substantial entity is not outside the world, but in itself, as its inner content, manifested in all the variety of phenomena of reality.

In an effort to consistently implement the principle of the identity of thinking and being, Hegel considers thinking (the absolute idea) not as a motionless, unchanging primordial essence, but as a continuously developing process of cognition, ascending from one level to another, higher one. Because of this, the absolute idea is not only the beginning, but also the developing content of the entire world process. Thinking reflects objective reality, and since it correctly reflects it, we can speak of a rational view of the world. But Hegel identifies

the reflection of reality (reason) and that which is reflected — objective reality. This identity of the world of mind with the diverse world of phenomena, this process of thinking, that contains all the diversity of reality is called by him the “*absolute idea*”. On the one hand, it is filled with a completely real natural and historical content, and on the other hand, it turns out to be a refined idea of God.

The basic form of thinking is the *concept*. Since Hegel absolutizes thinking, he inevitably deifies the concept. According to the teachings of Hegel, “it is the beginning of all life” and is an infinite creative form that contains within itself the fullness of any content and, at the same time, serves as its source. Speaking against the materialist doctrine of the concept as the highest form of reflection of objective reality, Hegel turns the real relationship between thinking and being upside down: he claims that thinking does not reflect being, but being is the embodiment of thinking, concepts, and ideas.

For Hegel, the concept appears from the very beginning as the identity of opposites, therefore the self-development of the concept is subject to the laws of dialectics. Logic coincides with dialectics, and the latter is conceived as a theory of development, which is based on the unity and struggle of opposites. The dialectic of the development of the “pure concept” constitutes the general law of the development for both nature and human thought.

The scheme of any development: affirmation (thesis), negation of this thesis (antithesis), negation of negation (synthesis). In synthesis, opposites are reconciled and a new state arises. Synthesis is the preservation of the thesis and antithesis with a higher, harmonizing unity. (Example: the appearance of a bud — the disappearance of a bud, the appearance of a flower — the disappearance of a flower, the appearance of a fruit). Each concept and each phenomenon go through such a triple cycle of development, after this the whole process is reproduced again at a higher level, until a higher synthesis is obtained.

The source of all development (natural, social and human thinking) lies in the self-development of the concept, and therefore has a logical, spiritual nature. The dialectic of concepts defines the dialectic of things (processes in nature and society). The dialectics of things is only a reflected, “alienated”, “externalized” form of the true dialectic, inherent only in the life of the concept.

The main parts of Hegel’s philosophical system are logic, philosophy of nature and philosophy of spirit (Table 9).

Table 9

The main parts of the philosophical system of Hegel

Logic		
Doctrine of being	Doctrine of essence	Doctrine of concept
Philosophy of nature		
Mechanics	Physics	Organic physics
Philosophy of spirit		
Subjective spirit	Objective spirit	Absolut spirit
Anthropology, phenomenology, psychology	Law, morality, state	Art, religion, philosophy

Hegel's *logic* is the basic part of his system, since the identity of thinking and being means that the laws of thinking, which logic deals with, are the true laws of being: both nature, and human history, and knowledge.

The main category of logic is the *concept*. Concepts, according to Hegel, are in continuous motion, they pass, "overflow" into each other, change, develop, turn into their opposite, revealing their inherent contradictions, which constitute the driving force of their development. The development of concepts proceeds from the abstract to the concrete, from a one-sided concept that is poor in content to a concept that is ever richer in content, embracing in unity various, even opposite, sides. Hegel shows that quantitative changes lead to qualitative changes, they are made by means of a jump, a break in continuity.

If logic, according to Hegel, is "the science of the idea in itself and for itself," then *the philosophy of nature* is characterized by him as "the science of the idea in its otherness." Hegel does not explain how the transition from the "pure" logical idea to nature occurs, he simply declares that the "absolute idea" knowing its own content, "decides from itself to freely let go of itself as nature".

The main forms of natural existence of the "absolute idea" are mechanics, physics, organics. Because of its idealistic character, Hegel's philosophy of nature turned out to be the weakest part of his system. It especially sharply expressed the contradiction between idealism and the natural sciences, the impossibility of reconciling the idealistic interpretation of nature with its scientific study.

The third part of Hegel's philosophical system — *the philosophy of spirit* — is devoted to the consideration of the "absolute idea" at the final stage of its development, when, leaving nature, it "returns" to itself as "absolute spirit", i.e. "the absolute idea" that has overcome its "alienation", removed its negation (nature) and is developing as the self-consciousness of mankind throughout the entire history of the world. In nature, according to Hegel, the spiritual content is in constant conflict with the limited and inert material form. Hegel's philosophy of spirit is an idealistic doctrine of the development of individual and social consciousness, and of the mental development of mankind in general. Therefore, the history of mankind, reduced to the history of its spiritual development, turns out, in the final analysis, to be the history of knowledge and self-knowledge.

The philosophy of spirit consists of the doctrine of the subjective spirit (anthropology, phenomenology, psychology), the doctrine of the objective spirit (law, morality, state) and the doctrine of the absolute spirit as the highest level of self-knowledge of the "absolute idea" (art, religion, philosophy).

In *anthropology*, we are talking about the individual development of the human personality, about the relationship between soul and body, about racial differences, the difference in human ages, about the health and disease state of the human body, about character, temperament, etc.

Hegel traces the subsequent development of individual consciousness in *phenomenology and psychology*. Here he comes to the conclusion that the "objective spirit" lies at the basis of individual consciousness. This concept

covers, according to Hegel, legal and moral relations, to which the German idealist also includes the family, civil society and the state. Morality, therefore, is idealistically interpreted as the inner content and driving force of not only legal, but also material and political relations, various forms of which are considered as necessary stages in the development of an objective moral spirit.

Since the essence of the spirit, according to Hegel, is freedom, the right is defined as the realization, the immediate being of freedom.

From this point of view, law is opposed to feudal arbitrariness. The most important expression of right is, according to Hegel, private property, which is considered not as a certain historical form of social relations, but as a necessary, substantial embodiment of freedom.

Hegel derives the main features of “civil society” from the concept of law. He characterizes the state as the highest development of an objective moral spirit and the true basis of economic relations, which also clearly manifests Hegel’s idealistic understanding of social life.

Hegel portrays the history of humankind as progress in the consciousness of freedom. In his view, this freedom constitutes the essential nature of the human being, yet it is realized only gradually over centuries of historical development, through which humanity becomes truly free.

Art, religion and philosophy, according to the teachings of Hegel, are the highest forms of self-consciousness of the “absolute spirit”: world history ends in them, and the world mind is fully aware of itself and is self-satisfied.

On the whole, it can be said that in the period under review, a galaxy of thinkers of the first magnitude, starting with Kant, imparted an unprecedented intensity and depth to the development of German philosophical thought. The basis of the general characteristics of German classical philosophy can be its priority attention to the problems of cognition, consistency and the desire to create holistic philosophical concepts that reflect all spheres of reality (for example, Hegel’s system, Kant’s transcendental philosophy, etc.).

TRAINING MATERIAL

Exercise 1. Read the excerpt from the primary source and answer the questions.

***F. Bacon* *The New Organon*⁸**

There are four classes of Idols which beset men’s minds. To these for distinction’s sake I have assigned names, calling the first class *Idols of the Tribe*; the second, *Idols of the Cave*; the third, *Idols of the Market Place*; the fourth, *Idols of the Theater*.

⁸ Bacon, F. *The new organon* / F. Bacon. – Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 2000. – P. 8–9.

XL

The formation of ideas and axioms by true induction is no doubt the proper remedy to be applied for the keeping off and clearing away of idols. To point them out, however, is of great use; for the doctrine of Idols is to the interpretation of nature what the doctrine of the refutation of sophisms is to common logic.

XLI

The Idols of the Tribe have their foundation in human nature itself, and in the tribe or race of men. For it is a false assertion that the sense of a human is the measure of things. On the contrary, all perceptions as well of the sense as of the mind are according to the measure of the individual and not according to the measure of the universe. And the human understanding is like a false mirror, which, receiving rays irregularly, distorts and discolours the nature of things by mingling its own nature with it.

XLII

The Idols of the Cave are the idols of the individual man. For everyone (besides the errors common to human nature in general) has a cave or den of his own, which refracts and discolours the light of nature, owing either to his own proper and peculiar nature; or to his education and conversation with others; or to the reading of books, and the authority of those whom he esteems and admires; or to the differences of impressions, accordingly as they take place in a mind preoccupied and predisposed or in a mind indifferent and settled; or the like. So that the spirit of man (according as it is meted out to different individuals) is in fact a thing variable and full of perturbation, and governed as it were by chance. Whence it was well observed by Heraclitus that men look for sciences in their own lesser worlds, and not in the greater or common world.

XLIII

There are also Idols formed by the intercourse and association of men with each other, which I call Idols of the Market Place, on account of the commerce and consort of men there. For it is by discourse that men associate, and words are imposed according to the apprehension of the vulgar. And therefore the ill and unfit choice of words wonderfully obstructs the understanding. Nor do the definitions or explanations wherewith in some things learned men are wont to guard and defend themselves, by any means set the matter right. But words plainly force and overrule the understanding, and throw all into confusion, and lead men away into numberless empty controversies and idle fancies.

XLIV

Lastly, there are Idols which have immigrated into men's minds from the various dogmas of philosophies, and also from wrong laws of demonstration. These I call Idols of the Theater, because in my judgment all the received systems are but so many stage plays, representing worlds of their own creation after an unreal and scenic fashion. Nor is it only of the systems now in vogue, or only of the ancient sects and philosophies, that I speak; for many more plays of the same kind may yet be composed and in like artificial manner set forth; seeing that

errors the most widely different have nevertheless causes for the most part alike. Neither again do I mean this only of entire systems, but also of many principles and axioms in science, which by tradition, credulity, and negligence have come to be received. But of these several kinds of Idols I must speak more largely and exactly, that the understanding may be duly cautioned. [...]

Questions:

1. According to Francis Bacon, list the idols that a person must confront in the process of cognitive activity. Explain their meaning.
2. What method helps people overcome the idols of reason, according to the philosopher?

Exercise 2. Read the excerpt from the primary source and answer the questions.

R. Descartes

Discourse on Method⁹

[...] And as a multitude of laws often only hampers justice, so that a state is best governed when, with few laws, these are rigidly administered; in like manner, instead of the great number of precepts of which Logic is composed, I believed that the four following would prove perfectly sufficient for me, provided I took the firm and unwavering resolution never in a single instance to fail in observing them.

The *first* was never accept anything for true which I did not clearly know to be such; that is to say, carefully to avoid precipitancy and prejudice, and to comprise nothing more in my judgment than what was presented to my mind so clearly and distinctly as to exclude all ground of doubt.

The *second*, to divide each of the difficulties under examination into as many parts as possible, and as might be necessary for its adequate solution.

The *third*, to conduct my thoughts in such order that, by commencing with objects the simplest and easiest to know, I might ascend by little and little, and, as it were, step by step, to the knowledge of the more complex; assigning in thought a certain order even to those objects which in their own nature do not stand in a relation of antecedence and sequence.

And the *last*, in every case to make enumerations so complete, and reviews so general, that I might be assured that nothing was omitted. [...]

Questions:

1. Reveal the essence of Descartes' cognitive method.
2. To which philosophical school can Descartes's teaching be attributed? Prove your idea.

⁹ Descartes, R. Discourse on method / R. Descartes. – London : Simpkin, Marshall, and Co, 1967. – P. 61.

EXERCISES FOR ASSESSING COMPETENCY LEVEL

Exercise 3. Answer the following questions:

1. Highlight the main features of Early Modern European philosophy.
2. What is empiricism?
3. What is rationalism?
4. Describe Francis Bacon's "idols of reason."
5. What is the essence of John Locke's epistemological concept?
6. Describe R. Descartes' rationalistic method.
7. How do you understand the pantheistic orientation of B. Spinoza's philosophy?
8. Explain the meaning of F. Leibniz's teaching on God and substance.
9. What is the specificity and essence of the European Enlightenment?
10. Explain the characteristic features of classical German philosophy.
11. Describe the main tenets of Kant's epistemology.
12. What is the categorical imperative?
13. Describe Hegel's system and method.

Exercise 4. Complete the table "Main schools of Modern European philosophy".

School	Essence of the school	Main representatives
Empiricism	1. 2.	F. Bacon ...
Rationalism	1. 2. The best method of scientific research is deduction	

Topics for reports:

1. The development of natural science and the problem of method in Early Modern philosophy.
2. F. Bacon and empirical-inductive methodology.
3. The rules of R. Descartes' rationalistic method.
4. J. Locke's sensualism.
5. The ideological foundations of philosophical thought in the Enlightenment.
6. The idea of "natural rights" of a human being and the concept of the social contract.
7. The "critical" philosophy of I. Kant.
8. The categorical imperative in I. Kant's ethics.
9. The dialectical philosophy of G. W. F. Hegel.

Aphorisms and statements:

1. Books are ships of thought, wandering along the waves of time and carefully carrying their precious cargo from generation to generation (*Francis Bacon*).

2. Knowledge itself is power (*Francis Bacon (Meditationes Sacrae)*).
3. Truth is the daughter of time, not of authority (*Francis Bacon (Novum Organum)*).
4. I think, therefore I am (*René Descartes (Discourse on the Method)*).
5. Moral rules need proof; therefore, they are not innate (*John Locke (An Essay Concerning Human Understanding)*).
6. The world in which we live is the best of all possible worlds (*Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (Theodicy)*).
7. Give me matter, and I will build a world out of it! (*Immanuel Kant (Universal Natural History and Theory of the Heavens)*).
8. Give a human being everything they desire, and at that very moment, they will feel that this everything is not everything (*Immanuel Kant*).

SELF-ASSESSMENT OF TOPIC COMPREHENSION

- 1. Highlight the main assertion of empiricism:**
 - a) the highest form of knowledge is intuition;
 - b) all human knowledge is based on experience;
 - c) the world is fundamentally unknowable;
 - d) mystical revelation is the source of knowledge about the world;
 - e) reason plays a decisive role in human understanding of the world.
- 2. Highlight the main ideas of the philosophy of the French Enlightenment:**
 - a) the priority of reason;
 - b) sensualism;
 - c) the idea of historical progress;
 - d) agnosticism;
 - e) deism;
 - f) dualism;
 - g) criticism;
 - h) clericalism.
- 3. Highlight the problems that I. Kant explored in his philosophical work:**
 - a) ethical problems;
 - b) problems of social existence;
 - c) human cognitive abilities;
 - d) sources of human knowledge;
 - e) structure of society.
- 4. Outline the philosophical position of G. W. F. Hegel:**
 - a) subjective idealism;
 - b) panlogism;
 - c) rationalism;
 - d) metaphysical materialism;
 - e) objective idealism.

TOPIC 1.5

MAIN TRENDS OF NON-CLASSICAL PHILOSOPHY

Total lesson time: 2 hours.

Aim: to explore the unique characteristics and foundational trajectories of non-classical philosophical thought.

Objectives:

- to contrast the core characteristics and underlying assumptions of classical and non-classical philosophy;
- to investigate the primary movements and doctrines of early non-classical thinkers, focusing on irrationalism, Marxism, and positivism;
- to examine the major developmental strategies of twentieth-century non-classical Western philosophy, specifically existentialism, philosophical hermeneutics, and postmodern philosophy.

Questions:

1. The distinctive features and divergence of classical and non-classical philosophy.
2. The philosophical framework of Marxism.
3. The irrationalism of Arthur Schopenhauer, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Søren Kierkegaard.
4. The historical evolution and main forms of positivist philosophy.
5. The problem of human existence within existentialist philosophy.
6. The foundations of Freudianism and neo-Freudianism.
7. Core methodologies in post-classical philosophy: structuralism, hermeneutics, and postmodernism.

Key concepts: scientism, irrationalism, existentialism, phenomenology, positivism, neopositivism, postpositivism, historicism, psychoanalysis, hermeneutics, structuralism, discourse, deconstruction, “borderline situation”, sublimation, communication, postmodernism, verification, falsification.

THEORETICAL MATERIAL

1.5.1. THE DISTINCTIVE FEATURES AND DIVERGENCE OF CLASSICAL AND NON-CLASSICAL PHILOSOPHY

Non-classical philosophy encompasses a diverse range of philosophical currents that emerged in Western Europe during the 19th century, united by an overarching attempt to “overcome” the rationalistic tenets of classical thought. As a developmental stage in philosophical history, non-classical philosophy is a complex and highly fragmented phenomenon, containing inherently contradictory and at times incompatible schools of thought. Nevertheless, it maintains a distinct shared style and culture of philosophizing that stands in fundamental opposition to classical paradigms.

Classical philosophy is characterized by the following features:

1. ***Epistemic rationalism and progressivism:*** it is grounded in rational inquiry, a boundless faith in science and progress, and a conviction in the capacity of both individual and universal reason to reorganize the world on a rational basis. Within the classical framework, reason is elevated to the highest absolute value; it is neither derived from nor reducible to empirical experience. Reason serves not only as a mechanism for explaining and improving humanity and the world, but also as an inexhaustible, autonomous source of creative potential.

2. ***Foundationalism and universalism:*** it is oriented toward the search for supersensible principles, the ultimate foundations of being, the universal essence of the human condition, the overarching laws of human history, and universal methods of cognition. Consequently, classical philosophical systems are characterized by their claim to systemic integrity and comprehensive completeness.

3. ***Monological and authoritative discourse:*** it employs a monological and instructive style of presentation driven by the ambition to elucidate the laws of objective and subjective reality. Classical philosophy prizes conceptual rigor, deductive logic, demonstrative proof, and structured schemas of reasoning, all oriented toward the possibility of attaining absolute knowledge. Philosophical inquiry itself is constructed as an objective form of knowledge (e.g., in G. W. F. Hegel and I. Kant), wherein the philosopher examines external being from a detached, external vantage point, effectively claiming a monopoly on truth.

4. ***Cosmic and historical teleology:*** it maintains an underlying confidence in the inherent orderliness of the world — which is presumed to possess a rational structure and harmony — alongside a conviction that the methods of cognition and the developmental principles of history are universally applicable and fully accessible to rational comprehension.

Non-classical philosophy is characterized by the following features:

1. ***The critique of reason and rise of irrationalism:*** the status of the intellect, the nature of the cognizing subject, and the very structure of the cognitive process undergo a radical revision. This shift gives rise to modes of understanding being and the human condition that stand in direct opposition to traditional rationalism — namely, irrationalism (from the Latin *irrationalis*: “unreasonable” or “unconscious”). Irrationalist thinkers argued that the intellect is incapable of encompassing the full diversity of the real world, turning their attention instead to the non-rational dimensions of human spirituality (e.g., the will in A. Schopenhauer, intuition in Henri Bergson, the unconscious in S. Freud, blind faith in S. Kierkegaard, and instinct in F. Nietzsche);

2. ***The existential and anthropological turn:*** anthropological concerns are placed at the center of inquiry. The human being is conceptualized not as a purely rational-cognizing or socially determined agent, but as an experiencing, doubting, feeling, and self-creating subject who practically transforms nature and society (e.g., in existentialism). For non-classical traditions, probing the tension between freedom and responsibility in human life became a paramount concern;

3. ***Pluralism and particularism:*** non-classical philosophy shifts away from the classical search for universal principles, ultimate essences, and grand universals, focusing instead on the intrinsic value of the individual, the unique, and the particular (e.g., in existentialism). This singular nature of the personality manifests through volitional components (in the “philosophy of life” and voluntarism), intuitive impulses (in intuitionism), unconscious acts and drives (in psychoanalysis), and manifests acutely under conditions of constant choice, in “boundary situations,” and through the process of continuous self-creation and becoming (in existentialism);

4. ***The expansion of rationality:*** driven by its critical stance toward traditional dogmatic rationalism, non-classical thought prompted a thorough rethinking of Early Modern rationalism. This did not destroy rationality but rather expanded its boundaries, as seen in positivism. Scientific rationality began to be treated by various thinkers as merely one specific modality of rationality among many, existing alongside everyday and religious rationalities;

5. ***Dialogical engagement:*** non-classical philosophy moves away from a monological, edifying mode of thought toward a dialogical, subject-subject paradigm. This new mode of philosophizing views the reader not as a passive recipient but as a co-author, relying on the reader’s own understanding and intuition. It intentionally utilizes artistic, literary, and imaginative forms of presentation characterized by openness and deliberate understatement, thereby inviting subjective interpretation;

6. ***Aestheticization of philosophical language:*** the language of non-classical philosophy becomes more fluid, literary, and evocative, deliberately permitting multiple interpretations and varying depths of comprehension. It frequently leverages the conceptual power of images, metaphors, and allegories;

7. ***The linguistic turn:*** within non-classical philosophy, a definitive “linguistic turn” is executed, marking a transition from the philosophy of consciousness to the philosophy of language. The traditional analysis of subject-object representations is superseded by the investigation of the relationship between language and the world, thrusting the communicative role and structural functions of language to the forefront of inquiry (e.g., in linguistic philosophy, structuralism, and post-structuralism).

1.5.2. THE PHILOSOPHICAL FRAMEWORK OF MARXISM

Marxism emerged in the mid-1840s, primarily developed through the collaborative work of the German philosophers and economists **Karl Marx** (1818–1883) and **Friedrich Engels** (1820–1895). The theoretical foundations of Marxist thought derive from three main sources: German classical philosophy (specifically Hegel’s dialectics and Feuerbach’s materialism), classical English political economy (Adam Smith and David Ricardo), and French and British utopian socialism (Henri de Saint-Simon, Charles Fourier, and Robert Owen).

The methodological core of the Marxist philosophical system is ***dialectical materialism***. This framework posits the fundamental materiality of the world, conceptualizes motion as the intrinsic mode of matter's existence, and defines consciousness as a property of highly organized matter. Central to Marxist philosophy as a doctrine of dialectical processes is *the principle of the universality of development*. Every occurring phenomenon is either a transformation within matter itself or a byproduct generated by such changes. Matter possesses the capacity for self-motion and self-development, driven by the internal contradiction and interaction of inherent opposites. This evolutionary self-development of matter generates an ascending progression of increasingly complex forms, culminating in the human brain.

The cornerstone of Marxist social philosophy is the ***materialist conception of history (historical materialism)***. This approach posits that the objective conditions of human existence (social being) determine human ideas, goals, values, and theories (social consciousness). As Engels noted, humans must first eat, drink, have shelter, and clothing before they can pursue politics, science, art, and religion. Marx famously summarized this principle: *"It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness."* Consequently, while ideas play a significant role in social life, they remain secondary to, and dependent upon, material conditions.

The foundation of social existence is the mode of production of material goods, which shapes broader social, political, and spiritual processes. The mode of production constitutes a dialectical unity of two components:

- ***productive forces*** are the instruments of labor, the means of production, and the human labor power utilized in the production process;
- ***relations of production*** are the objective relationships between individuals, defined by the form of ownership of the means of production and the social division of labor. These relations encompass the production, exchange, distribution, and consumption of material wealth.

An ideological and institutional superstructure arises directly from this economic base. The superstructure encompasses the spiritual and cultural life of society. It includes public institutions and organizations, legal and political systems, and forms of social consciousness such as morality, religion, science, philosophy, and art.

Society develops according to objective laws — primarily economic ones — wherein the mode of production of material goods ultimately dictates the overall level of social development. In Marxist theory, human history is conceptualized as a natural-historical process characterized by the successive replacement of socio-historical formations, driven fundamentally by shifts in the modes of production. A socio-economic formation represents a society at a specific stage of historical development, defined by its distinct economic base and corresponding institutional superstructure. Marx and Engels delineate ***five successive socio-economic formations: primitive communal, slaveholding, feudal, capitalist and communist***.

According to Marxism, the productive forces and the relations of production exist in an organic, dialectical unity. Specific production relations correspond to a definitive level and character of development within the productive forces. The primary engine of social development is the contradiction that inevitably emerges between these two elements: the productive forces develop rapidly, while the relations of production lag behind, eventually ossifying and fettering further development. Over time, this systemic contradiction intensifies into an acute structural conflict, culminating in a social revolution and the subsequent establishment of a more progressive socio-economic system. As a consequence of this social revolution, the economic base of society undergoes a fundamental transformation, which in turn precipitates a rapid upheaval within the superstructure.

The materialist social philosophy of Karl Marx accords central importance to the ***doctrine of classes and class struggle***. Marx defines classes as large strata of people who differ significantly by their position within the system of social production and by their specific relationship to the ownership of the means of production. Throughout history, antagonistic classes — such as slave owners and slaves, feudal lords and peasants, or the bourgeoisie and the proletariat — contend with one another for the means of subsistence and, ultimately, for political power. This class struggle, inherent and inevitable within antagonistic societies, ceases only when class distinctions themselves are fully eradicated. Consequently, Marx argues that human history reaches its true fulfilment in a classless society (the communist formation), where fierce class struggle and its structural antagonisms are entirely obsolete.

Thus, the ultimate ideal of human social development within Marxism is communism, an era that initiates a new history free from interpersonal struggle. Marx conceptualizes communism as a social system founded upon the collective ownership of the instruments and means of production. In this formation, the true measure of human freedom is free time, and social distribution is governed by the principle: *“From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs.”* This maxim outlines an ideal social order wherein individuals contribute to the community based on their optimal capacities and receive resources grounded solely upon their personal requirements.

Capitalism actively impedes this realization by alienating individuals from the products of their labor, from the act of production itself, from their species-essence (*Gattungswesen*), and from one another. Marx terms the reversal and overcoming of this alienation “human emancipation.” He asserts that this liberating process requires the revolutionary abolition of private property and the wage labor system, enabling humanity to transition toward communism — a society where production is collectively controlled and labor transforms into a free, self-actualizing expression of human potential.

The philosophical framework of Marxism split and evolved into Soviet Marxism, Western neo-Marxism, and contemporary post-Marxism.

Soviet Marxism. In the USSR, Marxist philosophy served as the foundational state ideology. Supplemented by the theoretical contributions of V. I. Lenin, it was institutionalized as the sole officially recognized philosophical paradigm, systematically grounded in the doctrines of dialectical and historical materialism.

Neo-Marxism and Post-Marxism. Neo-Marxism serves as an umbrella term for various 20th- and 21st-century intellectual movements that reinterpret classical Marxist tenets through the lenses of psychoanalysis, existentialism, and structural analysis. These movements shift the primary analytical focus away from pure economics to investigate culture, alienation, ideology, and the “one-dimensional” nature of modern society (e.g., the Frankfurt School, Antonio Gramsci, Georg Lukács, and Herbert Marcuse).

Contemporary variants. Modern iterations encompass structural Marxism (Louis Althusser), analytical Marxism (G. A. Cohen), world-systems analysis (Immanuel Wallerstein), and various schools of cultural Marxism, which collectively dissect the contemporary mechanisms of institutional power, consumerism, and cultural hegemony.

1.5.3. THE IRRATIONALISM OF ARTHUR SCHOPENHAUER, FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, AND SØREN KIERKEGAARD

Irrationalism is a philosophical doctrine positing that the decisive factor in cognition, human behavior, worldview, and the historical process is not the faculty of reason or any rational principle, but rather an irrational substratum. This framework prioritizes the leading role of instinct, intuition, blind faith, and emotion, standing in direct opposition to reason, logic, and intellectualism.

One of the most prominent figures of early irrationalism is **Arthur Schopenhauer (1788–1860)**. In *The World as Will and Representation* (1819), Schopenhauer argues that the universe is by no means grounded in the principles of teleological expediency or rationality. Reason and science are ultimately incapable of explaining the underlying forces and phenomena of nature. According to Schopenhauer, there are no inherent rational structures in the world; instead, there is only a fundamental “will to live” — a blind, unceasing drive for self-affirmation. The Will is an unconscious impulse toward existence, an irrational desire that pervades all reality. It manifests in the physical world as attraction, gravitation, magnetism, and electricity, and in the plant and animal kingdoms as the instinct for self-preservation. Within society, it operates as the collective drive of states, races, peoples, and individuals. For Schopenhauer, only this single, cosmic Will is ontologically real; the phenomenal world is merely a mirror of this Will, serving as its subjective “representation.”

Consequently, the Will — comprising the desires and motives that induce human action — largely dictates the direction, character, and outcomes of human behavior. However, Schopenhauer absolutized the Will, turning it into a completely autonomous urge and elevating it from a mere component of

the human psyche into a self-sufficient, primary principle. Because the philosopher viewed this force as the metaphysical foundation of the universe, believing that “volitional impulses” are characteristic of all things, voluntarism (the primacy of the will) serves as the core, universal axiom of his entire philosophical system.

Since the Will is entirely unconscious, it is absolutely indifferent to its own creations, including living beings and humanity. Abandoned by the Will to their fate, human beings endure an existence that is thoroughly pessimistic and tragic — a constant, losing battle against death. The human subject is a bundle of needs that can never be fully satisfied; hence, human life is intrinsically bound to suffering. This suffering manifests through passionate love, jealousy, hatred, fear, and illness. Schopenhauer argues that suffering can be overcome only by denying the will to live. This is achieved not through suicide, but by adopting a stance of non-action, extinguishing all desire, practicing asceticism, and striving toward a state akin to Nirvana. Additionally, it is the creative genius — the artist — who, operating unconsciously and intuitively, is temporarily capable of disinterested aesthetic contemplation, thereby gaining the freedom to cognize and momentarily quiet the demands of the Will.

The critique of rationalism was advanced in a radically different direction by the Danish thinker *Søren Kierkegaard (1813–1855)*, who introduced the concept of “existential thinking.” In contrast to scientific inquiry, which proceeds from abstract, impersonal, and purely theoretical principles, existential thinking is inextricably bound to the inner spiritual life of the individual and their intimate, subjective experiences. Such thinking is uniquely concrete and carries genuine human significance. While objective thinking remains indifferent to the thinking subject and the specificity of human existence (*Existenz*), the existential thinker is passionately invested in their own thought, actively existing within it.

Kierkegaard focused intensely on the instability of human existence and its inherent finitude, describing the human condition through concepts such as anxiety (*Angst*), doubt, and despair. Treating the individual as the true locus of philosophical meaning, Kierkegaard fiercely criticized his predecessors — most notably G. W. F. Hegel — for their overly abstract approach to humanity. He argued that the representatives of German classical philosophy sought only the universal essence of the human being, completely losing sight of the living, unique individual with their concrete thoughts, feelings, joys, and anxieties.

Furthermore, Kierkegaard asserted that the defining immorality of his era was “levelling” — a process of social conformity wherein individual agency and moral responsibility were erased by the collective crowd. He maintained that truth, meaning, and ethical accountability can only ever be claimed by the “Single Individual.” He demanded a philosophy that looks into actual human life and confronts personal suffering. To Kierkegaard, the individual is valuable and sublime in themselves, yet remains isolated and vulnerable in the world — resembling a prisoner struggling within a solitary cell.

Rejecting interpersonal or social communication as a viable remedy for existential loneliness, Kierkegaard sought refuge within a highly individualized Christian faith, conceiving God in strictly personal terms. He contrasted faith with reason, defining faith as a thoroughly irrational leap rooted in the will. In Kierkegaard's view, this volitional act constitutes the bedrock of human existence, fundamentally preceding and surpassing any rational comprehension.

The German irrationalist **Friedrich Nietzsche** (1844–1900) became the foundational figure of the *Lebensphilosophie* (“**philosophy of life**”) movement. At the inception of his philosophical and literary career, he was deeply influenced by the metaphysics of Arthur Schopenhauer and the tenets of Buddhist philosophy. The profound crisis of the transitional era at the turn of the 20th century — characterized by a widespread collapse of faith in reason, pervasive disillusionment, and existential pessimism — was dramatically mirrored in both Nietzsche's intellectual corpus and his tragic personal destiny.

Nietzsche's seminal works — including *The Birth of Tragedy from the Spirit of Music*, *Human, All Too Human*, *The Gay Science*, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, *Beyond Good and Evil*, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, *The Antichrist*, and the posthumously compiled notes published as *The Will to Power* — interrogated the established moral foundations of Western society, religion, aesthetics, and traditional metaphysics. His philosophical framework is organized around several core concepts: *the Übermensch (Superman)*, *the Will to Power*, *Master Morality and Slave Morality*, *the Eternal Return*, and *Nihilism*.

Famously introduced through the protagonist Zarathustra in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, the **Übermensch** represents a profound exhortation toward radical self-mastery rather than a literal, biological evolution. Operating as a dynamic existential principle, this ideal challenges individuals to overcome nihilism, project their own autonomous values, and continuously transcend current human limitations. The *Übermensch* is primarily a creator endowed with a resilient, unyielding will, dedicated to the self-actualization of an independent personality. Among the virtues of this ideal type, Nietzsche highlights capacity for self-sacrifice, profound magnanimity, a passion for active love, uncompromising honesty, fearlessness, resilience, and heroism. He saw partial historical approximations of this human ideal in figures such as Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar, Augustus, and Napoleon.

The concept of **the Will to Power** serves as the foundational metaphysical principle of Nietzsche's cosmology, positing that all natural and human phenomena are expressions of an unceasing drive to expand, dominate, and overcome limitations. Rather than a mere impulse for survival, this principle identifies the fundamental motivation of all life as a desire for strength, growth, and the active mastery of one's environment. This non-rational, vitalistic impulse — “life” understood in its absolute opposition to scientific reductionism — constitutes the primordial reality. The cosmos is conceptualized as a process of continuous *becoming*, defined by a perpetual clash of competing wills. This

ongoing transformation of the world manifests the Will to Power, generating a transient, relatively stable order of reality as greater wills temporarily subjugate lesser ones. Nietzsche suggests that this drive animates every dimension of human activity and could function as the energetic substrate of the cosmos itself.

The “revaluation of all values” (*Umwertung aller Werte*) is a core critical concept challenging the assumption that moral systems are objective, universal, or divinely ordained. Nietzsche argued that traditional morality — specifically the Judeo-Christian tradition — is a historical construct engineered to repress natural human instincts. He demanded a critical reassessment of these long-held dogmas to pave the way for life-affirming values that celebrate vitality, creativity, and earthly existence.

According to Nietzsche, the most fundamental difference among human beings is an existential stratification between the naturally strong and the naturally weak, giving rise to two diametrically opposed moral frameworks:

- **master morality**: cultivated by the strong, this framework prizes personal dignity, decisiveness, perseverance, self-reliance, and an unbending fortitude in achieving goals. Good is equated with the noble, powerful, and beautiful, while bad refers to the cowardly, weak, and mundane;

- **slave morality**: cultivated by the weak, this framework exalts qualities born out of vulnerability, such as compassion, humility, altruism, and prudence.

Nietzsche explains that the “masters” historically dominated social life and defined good and evil through their own self-affirmation. Over time, however, a “slave revolt in morality” occurred, wherein the weak triumphed over the strong — not through individual excellence, but through sheer collective numbers. In the modern era, this slave morality has become dominant, institutionalized primarily through Christian theology. While classical antiquity (Ancient Greece and Rome) epitomized the flourishing of master morality, the contemporary Western world remains dominated by slave morality.

Nietzsche explicitly rejected the teleological concept of historical progress, substituting it with the dual concepts of *becoming* and the **Eternal Return** (*die ewige Wiederkunft*). He advocated for an absolute, unconditional affirmation of the immanent world (*amor fati*), wherein even the psychological prospect of the infinite repetition of identical events across vast cosmic epochs is met not with dread, but with supreme joy. Embracing the Eternal Return requires a radical reconciliation with one’s choices, elevating the moment into an eternal monument.

By **Nihilism**, Nietzsche meant the cultural realization of the illusory nature and internal contradictions of the Christian concept of a transcendent God. He diagnosed nihilism not merely as a psychological rejection of the divine, but as the inevitable structural collapse of the objective, metaphysical values that had anchored Western civilization. Because these values were tethered to the illusion of a transcendent realm, the cultural realization that “*God is dead*” plunges humanity into an acute crisis of meaning, wherein the highest values devalue themselves.

In proclaiming that “God is dead,” Nietzsche targeted the institutional Christian religion, which he characterized as a “religion of pity” that systematically enervates the Will to Power. However, in exposing the mechanics of Western Christianity, Nietzsche does not abandon the sacred altogether; rather, he critiques the insincere faith and cultural duplicity of modern society that effectively killed its own ideals. He implies that a genuine alignment with the absolute requires a return to nature and an immersion into the irrational, vital depths of life itself.

The *reception* of Nietzsche’s philosophy has been profoundly contested. On the one hand, fascist ideologues distorted his concepts — such as the *Übermensch* and the Will to Power — to justify state-sponsored totalitarianism and racial dominance. Conversely, Soviet intellectual institutions dismissed his writings as the decadent ideology of the imperialist bourgeoisie, subjecting his works to strict censorship and public bans. Despite these historical appropriations and misreadings, Nietzsche’s philosophical insights remain highly influential, profoundly shaping phenomenology, existentialism, post-structuralism, and modern cultural theory.

1.5.4. THE HISTORICAL EVOLUTION AND MAIN FORMS OF POSITIVIST PHILOSOPHY

Nineteenth-century debates surrounding the role of philosophy in world culture, alongside growing skepticism toward metaphysical claims that failed to advance concrete, empirical knowledge, culminated in the formation of positivism. Initially, the positivist movement sought to transform philosophy into an exact science by purging it of metaphysical constructs. Its core thesis posits that all genuine, positive knowledge about reality is exclusively obtainable through the empirical results of the specialized sciences. In the view of early positivists, traditional philosophy had failed precisely because of its inherently metaphysical nature. They argued that metaphysics was too detached from factual reality to be either true or productive, dismissing it as the product of abstract speculation. By contrast, the rapidly accelerating scientific discoveries of the era offered a rigorous and reliable alternative.

Positivism evolved through several distinct *historical stages*.

First positivism. During the 1830s and 1840s in France, **Auguste Comte** (1798–1857) founded a philosophical school that sought to establish a genuinely “scientific philosophy.” Comte advocated for a decisive break with traditional metaphysics, asserting that empirical science does not require an overarching philosophy to validate it. However, he retained the term “philosophy” to describe a generalized science tasked with uncovering the interconnections between individual scientific disciplines. Under this framework, philosophy was reduced to synthesizing the overarching conclusions of the natural and social sciences. By the final decade of the 19th century, this first iteration of positivism entered

a crisis as new scientific discoveries could no longer be accommodated within Comte's rigid classification schema.

Second positivism. In response to the rigid separation between scientific inquiry and philosophical metaphysics, a second historical form of positivism emerged: ***machism, or empirio-criticism*** (i.e., the critique of experience), pioneered by Ernst Mach and Richard Avenarius. At this stage, positivism shifted its focus to foundational epistemic problems that Comte's followers had previously dismissed as overly metaphysical. These included the nature of knowledge and experience, the subject-object problem, the validity of ontological categories like "thing" and "substance," the composition of the basic "elements" of reality, and the relationship between the physical and the psychical. The empirio-critics argued that the internal development of science itself necessitated this critical analysis. Consequently, this second stage differed from the first not only in its thematic scope but also in how it redefined the very subject matter of philosophy.

Neopositivism and logical positivism. The third stage, neopositivism, emerged in the 1920s and was deeply intertwined with the development of 20th-century Anglo-American analytical philosophy. Its primary and most influential variant was logical positivism, championed by figures such as Ludwig Wittgenstein, Moritz Schlick, Rudolf Carnap, and Bertrand Russell. This school asserted the foundational and logical primacy of mathematics and formal logic.

Logical positivism was a driving force behind the "linguistic turn" in philosophy, centering its inquiries on semantic meaning and the empirical verifiability of scientific assertions. These thinkers argued that philosophy possesses no distinct subject matter of its own; it is not a substantive science about reality, but rather a clarifying activity dedicated to the logical analysis of natural and artificial languages. Consequently, traditional philosophical and ideological dilemmas were dismissed as pseudo-problems and declared conceptually meaningless.

To regulate scientific validity, logical positivists introduced the ***verification principle***, which dictates that a statement is meaningful only if it is empirically verifiable. Under this criterion, a sentence's truth value is determined by directly comparing it with the atomic facts of sensory experience. However, because this standard applies exclusively to immediate sensory data, the universal laws and general propositions that form the foundation of science — along with all philosophical assertions — turn out to be technically unverifiable and, therefore, strictly meaningless. By extension, all statements regarding the past or the future are rendered unverifiable under this rigid framework.

While the neopositivist project to reduce philosophy to the mere "logic of science" ultimately failed, its underlying emphasis on analyzing philosophical and scientific problems through the prism of language remains a defining characteristic of contemporary analytical philosophy.

Post-positivism. Emerging in the mid-20th century, post-positivism abandoned the rigid dichotomy between science and philosophy. It recognized that science encompasses not only empirical facts and generalizations, but also underlying ideals, methodological norms, scientific community values, and the subjective traits of scientists themselves.

Karl Popper supplanted the verification principle with his **falsification principle**. Popper argued that a theory is scientific only if it is, in principle, refutable by experience. In his view, a genuine scientific theory cannot be compatibly reconciled with every conceivable fact; it must explicitly forbid certain occurrences. The more potential facts a theory excludes and risks falsifying, the greater its scientific status. Under this demarcation criterion, grand explanatory frameworks like Marxism or psychoanalysis are classified as non-scientific because they are insulated against refutation.

Furthermore, post-positivism emphasizes a historical approach to the philosophy of science. As argued by its most prominent representatives, including Thomas Kuhn and Imre Lakatos, scientific knowledge does not develop linearly, but rather through non-linear leaps. During these transitions, scientific revolutions trigger a radical **paradigm shift**. A paradigm refers to the comprehensive matrix of theoretical, methodological, and metaphysical commitments adopted by a scientific community at a given epoch, serving as the authoritative model for problem-solving. For example, the transition from Newtonian to Einsteinian physics at the turn of the 20th century was not a mere accumulation of data, but a fundamental transformation in the way humanity visualizes the cosmos — shifting the world-picture from a mechanistic to a relational framework.

1.5.5. THE PROBLEM OF HUMAN EXISTENCE WITHIN EXISTENTIALIST PHILOSOPHY

Existentialism stands as one of the most influential and striking movements in modern philosophy, asserting the absolute necessity of centering philosophical inquiry on the individual concrete human being and their distinct modes of being-in-the-world (*In-der-Welt-sein*). The ideological precursor to this movement was the philosophy of Søren Kierkegaard, who first articulated the fundamental tension between unique individual existence (*Existenz*) and impersonal, totalizing rational systems.

While rooted in 19th-century thought, existentialism only crystallized into a coherent philosophical trend after the First World War — a catastrophe that shattered the socio-economic and moral foundations of European civilization, forcing a radical re-evaluation of the human condition. By the 1940s through the 1960s, existentialism had achieved widespread cultural prominence. It functioned as an intellectual mirror to the crises and profound systemic contradictions of 20th-century society, diagnosing the ontological inauthenticity and alienation of

modern life. Its foremost representatives included Karl Jaspers, Martin Heidegger, Jean-Paul Sartre, Albert Camus, and Maurice Merleau-Ponty.

Scholarship typically distinguishes between two major branches of this movement: “*religious existentialism*” (represented by Karl Jaspers, Gabriel Marcel, Martin Buber, and Lev Shestov) and “*atheistic existentialism*” (championed by Jean-Paul Sartre, Albert Camus, and Martin Heidegger). Their foundational divergence lies in how they conceptualize the nature of the “Other” upon whom human existence depends.

Religious existentialism conceptualizes the “Other” as Transcendence — a pre-experiential, metaphysical reality that reveals itself exclusively through an act of faith. For these thinkers, God is the philosophical equivalent of Being itself and the ultimate foundation of the cosmos. Because they maintain that the divine cannot be truly grasped outside the subjective act of faith, they locate the resolution to human suffering and alienation in the overcoming of humanity’s separation from God.

Conversely, **atheistic existentialism** rejects the concept of a pre-established human nature. Sartre famously posited that because there is no divine creator to conceive of human nature, humans are entirely self-constituting; the individual must forge their own essence. Consequently, no external force — not even the most rigorous metaphysical proof of God’s existence — can absolve the individual of this self-creative burden.

The definitive manifesto of this atheistic strand is often identified as Albert Camus’s essay *The Myth of Sisyphus*. Camus centers his inquiry on a singular fundamental question: “Is life worth living?” For the non-religious individual, confronting the fundamental meaninglessness of the cosmos leads not to despair, but to a radical reliance on the self, a creative openness toward existence, and a lucid acceptance of the inherent absurdity of being.

The unifying axiom of all existentialist thought is that **existence precedes essence**. This dictates that a human being initially simply exists, encounters themselves in the world, and only subsequently defines who they are through actions and choices. The individual is conceptualized as an ongoing project (*projet*), continually tasked with constructing their own meaning. This perpetual search for selfhood is a demanding burden, dictated by continuous choice and the mutual creation of oneself and others.

Unlike scientific inquiry, which operates via abstract, impersonal, and theoretical principles, existential reflection is intimately bound to the subjective spiritual life, immediate personal experiences, and pre-reflective attitudes toward the world. The subject navigates reality primarily through emotion and localized interpretation, fully aware of the irrationality of being. Under this framework, the human being is fundamentally a suffering subject, perpetually experiencing negative existential states such as anxiety (*Angst*), guilt, dread, and alienation.

The philosophy of the leading proponent of German existentialism, **Karl Jaspers (1883–1969)**, develops around the intersection of humanity and history. For Jaspers, history is the primary framework for measuring human existence, as the historical process cannot be understood apart from the subjective experience of the individuals who comprise it.

It is specifically within the **boundary situation** (*Grenzsituation*) that an individual apprehends the “historicity of being.” In mundane, everyday life, the individual is typically submerged in an anonymous, impersonal mass existence (*das Man*), rarely reflecting on the meaning of life. However, when confronted with an exceptional, tragic crisis — such as war, profound illness, guilt, or the death of a loved one — the individual faces the limits of their existence. In this extreme confrontation on the precipice of life and death, the individual experiences an existential clarity, triggering a radical revaluation of values and a profound rethinking of their being. For Jaspers, realizing the ultimate finitude of one’s existence provides the unique opportunity to unlock authentic being, and the conscious recognition of these real structures of existence constitutes true human freedom.

French existentialists famously chose to articulate their rigorous technical concepts through literary, narrative, and dramatic forms. Their works prioritize the interconnected themes of absolute freedom, radical choice, total responsibility, revolt, the absurd, and individualism.

Jean-Paul Sartre (1905–1980) masterfully explored the contingency of existence — the “accident of being” — in his novel *Nausea*. He argued that because humans have no pre-determined blueprint, they must continuously choose their mode of being, effectively inventing and building themselves through action. The defining characteristic of the individual is that no external force, social institution, or divine power can execute this self-transformation on their behalf. However, the heavy undercurrent of this radical freedom is absolute responsibility: the individual is entirely accountable not only for their own life but, through the example of their choices, for the image of humanity as a whole. It is in this precise sense that Sartre declared, “*Man is condemned to be free.*”

Albert Camus (1913–1960) developed the anatomy of the **absurd**. He argued that the feeling of the absurd does not reside in the human mind alone, nor in the world alone, but emerges spontaneously from the relationship between the two. It is the acute contradiction born of the human desire for meaning colliding with the cold, silent meaninglessness of the universe — resembling a sudden fracture between an actor and the stage scenery. The absolute certainty of physical death further intensifies this absurdity, rendering all conventional social illusions empty and spiritually bankrupt. Yet, for Camus, recognizing the absurd is the necessary starting point for authentic metaphysical rebellion and genuine living.

1.5.6. THE FOUNDATIONS OF FREUDIANISM AND NEO-FREUDIANISM

Freudianism and neo-Freudianism constitute major theoretical developments spanning philosophy, psychology, and psychiatry. These movements share a foundational commitment to investigating the human psyche as the primary matrix for explaining both individual subjectivity and the social existence of human beings.

The founder of psychoanalysis was the Austrian physician, psychopathologist, and philosopher **Sigmund Freud (1856–1939)**. His seminal works — including *The Interpretation of Dreams*, *Totem and Taboo*, *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, and *The Ego and the Id* — fundamentally reoriented Western understandings of the mind.

In *The Ego and the Id*, Freud formulated a revolutionary structural model of the human psyche, dividing it into three distinct agencies:

- **the Id** (*das Es*): the deep, primordial layer of the unconscious, operating entirely on the pleasure principle;
- **the Ego** (*das Ich*): the conscious mind, which acts as a pragmatic mediator between the chaotic demands of the unconscious and external reality;
- **the Superego** (*das Überich*): the internalization of societal norms, cultural prohibitions, and parental authority, operating as a supra-individual moral conscience.

According to Freud, the unconscious is propelled by two conflicting instinctual drives: **Eros** (the life and sexual drive) and **Thanatos** (the death drive). When direct instinctual gratification is blocked by social constraints, the psyche employs defense mechanisms, most notably **sublimation**. Sublimation is the process by which repressed unconscious energy is diverted from its primary biological target and channelled into socially productive, conscious activities, such as artistic creativity, morality, philosophy, and religion. Through this framework, Freud expanded psychoanalysis from a clinical diagnostic tool into a comprehensive philosophy of culture, arguing in *Totem and Taboo* that the origin and evolution of human civilization itself are driven by the collective management and repression of these unconscious impulses.

Carl Gustav Jung (1875–1961) initiated a critical rupture with classical psychoanalysis, founding the school of analytical psychology. While acknowledging the importance of infantile sexuality, Jung rejected Freud's **pansexualism** — the claim that the libido is an exclusively sexual energy and the sole determinant of psychological integrity. Jung demonstrated through clinical practice that many neuroses stem from non-sexual factors, such as failures in social adaptation, the pressure of tragic life circumstances, or crises of personal prestige.

Crucially, Jung expanded the topography of the mind by drawing a sharp distinction between *two layers of the unconscious*:

- **the personal unconscious**, containing individual biographical experiences that were once conscious but have been forgotten, repressed, or sublimated;

– **the collective unconscious** is an underlying, supra-personal layer that contains the inherited memory traces of humanity’s evolutionary past.

Jung conceptualized the collective unconscious as a phylogenetic matrix — comparing it to an invisible mycelium or the submerged base of an iceberg — and argued that it serves as the ultimate bedrock of individual spiritual life. The structural components of this collective layer are **archetypes**. An archetype is an instinctual, primordial image or “psychic remnant” born from the repeated experiences of countless preceding generations. By replacing Freud’s strict biological determinism with these mythopoetic and cultural templates, Jung significantly elevated the role of collective human culture in shaping individual existence.

Emerging between the 1930s and 1950s, **neo-Freudianism** represented a major paradigm shift that reinterpreted classical psychoanalysis by prioritizing sociological and cultural variables over purely biological instincts. Key figures of this movement included Erich Fromm, Karen Horney, and Harry Stack Sullivan, alongside the adjacent contributions of Alfred Adler and Wilhelm Reich.

Erich Fromm developed humanistic psychoanalysis and the concept of “social character,” investigating how specific socioeconomic structures shape the psychological needs, anxieties, and defense mechanisms of the individual.

Karen Horney formulated a robust critique of Freud’s libido theory, shifting the etiology of neuroses away from biological drives toward interpersonal and structural conditions. She introduced the concept of **basic anxiety** — a pervasive feeling of helplessness experienced by children in a hostile environment — as a primarily sociocultural, rather than biological, phenomenon.

Ultimately, the neo-Freudians executed a vital transition in modern psychology, shifting the analytical focus away from the closed, internal battles of the tripartite psyche (Id, Ego, Superego) toward the dynamics of social interaction, enculturation, and human adaptation within society.

1.5.7. CORE METHODOLOGIES IN POST-CLASSICAL PHILOSOPHY: STRUCTURALISM, HERMENEUTICS, AND POSTMODERNISM

Post-classical philosophy crystallized by the mid-20th century as both an ideological continuation and a constituent component of the broader non-classical paradigm. Among the most influential movements within this post-classical landscape are structuralism (and its transition into post-structuralism), philosophical hermeneutics, and postmodernism.

Structuralism serves as an umbrella term for a cluster of intellectual currents that rose to prominence by the 1940s, before undergoing a rigorous internal critique and shifting into post-structuralism during the late 1970s and early 1980s.

Originally developed as a formal methodology in linguistics by Ferdinand de Saussure, structuralism rapidly expanded into a diverse range of disciplines:

- *anthropology and ethnography*: employed by Claude Lévi-Strauss to decode universal cultural myths and kinship systems;
- *literary theory and semiotics*: utilized by Roland Barthes to analyze cultural signs and narrative codes;
- *history of ideas and culture*: adapted by Michel Foucault to trace the discursive architecture of historical institutions and knowledge systems;
- *psychoanalysis*: reconceptualized by Jacques Lacan, who famously posited that the unconscious is structured like a language.

The primary objective of structuralism is to expose the underlying, invariant structure — the conceptual matrix — of the object under investigation. In this context, a structure is defined as a network of constant, relational transformations among internal elements that remain stable despite overt changes in the object's appearance. Structuralists argue that by mapping this latent architecture, one can fully explain how a system functions, generates meaning, and adapts.

Hermeneutics emerged as an independent field of textual interpretation in the 19th century, evolving into a foundational 20th-century philosophical methodology through the lineage of Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768–1834), Wilhelm Dilthey (1833–1911), and Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900–2002). Rather than treating interpretation as a mere tool for philology, these thinkers elevated it to an ontological condition of human life:

Friedrich Schleiermacher defined the goal of hermeneutics as a psychological reconstruction, wherein the interpreter aims to recreate the original creative act of the author, understanding the text as well as or even better than its creator.

Wilhelm Dilthey established hermeneutics as the foundational methodology for the human sciences (*Geisteswissenschaften*). He argued that understanding historical artifacts requires an interpretive immersion (*Verstehen*) — an empathetic “living-into” or re-experiencing of the historical milieu in which the author operated.

Hans-Georg Gadamer shifted hermeneutics from psychological empathy to an ontological investigation of language as the fundamental horizon of human existence. In his magnum opus *Truth and Method*, Gadamer argued that interpretation is never an objective, neutral act; instead, it is a “fusion of horizons” (*Horizontverschmelzung*) inevitably conditioned by the historical situatedness and pre-judgments (*Vorurteile*) of the interpreter.

Postmodernism reflects the broader cultural, aesthetic, and existential landscape of the late 20th and early 21st centuries. It is an intentionally pluralistic, eclectic, and heterogeneous phenomenon that first manifested in the arts before codifying into a distinct philosophical style. Scholars distinguish between postmodernity as a historical socio-cultural epoch and postmodernism as a radical type of philosophizing that rejects the grand narratives of Enlightenment rationalism.

Postmodern philosophers repeatedly declare that traditional, totalizing forms of metaphysics have exhausted their utility. They advocate for an open-ended, non-dogmatic mode of thought that transcends conventional disciplinary boundaries. Consequently, this movement brings several radical concepts to the forefront of philosophical discourse:

- *deconstruction*: developed by Jacques Derrida to expose the internal contradictions, hierarchies, and instability of Western logocentric texts;
- *the “death of the author”*: formulated by Roland Barthes to shift the authority of meaning away from the biographical intentions of the creator to the interpretive space of the reader;
- *pastiche and quotation*: embracing intertextuality, collage, and an ironic recycling of historical styles, which replaces the classical demand for absolute originality;
- *rhizomatic chaos*: rejecting hierarchical, tree-like structures of knowledge in favour of decentralized, non-linear networks of meaning (e.g., in the work of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari).

Ultimately, postmodernism substitutes the classical ideals of cosmic harmony, objective truth, and predictable historical progress with a celebration of fragmentation, structural instability, localized language games, and irreducible pluralism.

TRAINING MATERIAL

Exercise 1. Read the excerpt from the primary source and answer the questions.

K. Marx

Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844¹⁰

[...] Let us now see, how the concept of estranged, alienated labor must express and present itself in real life.

If the product of labor is alien to me, if it confronts me as an alien power, to whom, then, does it belong? [...] To a being *other* than myself.

Who is this being?

[...] The *alien* being, to whom labor and the product of labor belong, in whose service labor is done and for whose benefit the product of labor is provided, can only be *man* himself.

If the product of labor does not belong to the worker, if it confronts him as an alien power, then this can only be because it belongs to some *other man than the worker*. If the worker's activity is a torment to him, to another it must give *satisfaction* and pleasure. Not the gods, not nature, but only man himself can be this alien power over man.

¹⁰ Marx, K. Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844 / K. Marx. – M. : Progress Publishers, 1977. – P. 75–77.

We must bear in mind the previous proposition that man's relation to himself only becomes for him *objective* and *actual* through his relation to the other man. Thus, if the product of his labor, his labor objectified, is for him an *alien, hostile*, powerful object independent of him, then his position towards it is such that someone else is master of this object, someone who is alien, hostile, powerful, and independent of him. If he treats his own activity as an unfree activity, then he treats it as an activity performed in the service, under the dominion, the coercion, and the yoke of another man.

[...] Through *estranged, alienated labor*, then, the worker produces the relationship to this labor of a man alien to labor and standing outside it. The relationship of the worker to labor creates the relation to it of the capitalist (or whatever one chooses to call the master of labor). *Private property* is thus the product, the result, the necessary consequence, of *alienated labor*, of the external relation of the worker to nature and to himself.

Private property thus results by analysis from the concept of *alienated labor*, i.e., of *alienated man*, of estranged labor, of estranged life, of *estranged man*. [...]

Questions:

1. Who acts as the alien power controlling the worker's labor and product?
2. How does a person's relationship to themselves become objective and actual?
3. What is the necessary consequence and result of alienated labor?

Exercise 2. Read the excerpt from the primary source and answer the questions.

**A. Camus
The Rebel¹¹**

What is a rebel? A man who says no: but whose refusal does not imply a renunciation. He is also a man who says yes as soon as he begins to think for himself. A slave who has taken orders all his life, suddenly decides that he cannot obey some new command. What does he mean by saying "no"?

He means, for instance, that "this has been going on too long," "so far but no farther," "you are going too far", or again "There are certain limits beyond which you shall not go." In other words, his "no" affirms the existence of a borderline. You find the same conception in the rebel's opinion that the other person is "exaggerating," that he is exerting his authority beyond a limit where he infringes on the rights of others. He rebels because he categorically refuses to submit to conditions that he considers intolerable and also because he is confusedly convinced that his position is justified, or rather, because in his own mind he thinks that he has the right to..." Rebellion cannot exist without the feeling that somewhere, in some way, you are justified. It is in this way that the rebel slave

¹¹ Camus. A. The rebel / A. Camus. – New York : Alfred A. Knopf, 1954. – P. 19.

says yes and no at the same time. He affirms that there are limits and also that he suspects — and wishes to preserve — the existence of certain things beyond those limits. He stubbornly insists that there are certain things in him which “are worthwhile...” and which must be taken into consideration.

Questions:

1. What two contradictory words does a rebel say at the same time?
2. What does the rebel’s refusal reveal the existence of?
3. What internal feeling is absolutely necessary for rebellion to exist?

EXERCISES FOR ASSESSING COMPETENCY LEVEL

Exercise 3. Answer the following questions:

1. What is the difference between classical and non-classical philosophy?
2. What is the essence of historical materialism? Why, according to Karl Marx, does social being determine social consciousness?
3. What is the essence of irrationalism in the philosophy of A. Schopenhauer, F. Nietzsche, and S. Kierkegaard?
4. How do the main stages of positivist philosophy differ?
5. What is existence? What are the main ideas of existentialist philosophy?
6. How do Freud’s and Jung’s understandings of the psyche differ? What is psychoanalysis?
7. What are the structuralist and hermeneutical methods?
8. What is postmodernism?

Exercise 4. Complete the table “Comparative analysis of Classical and Non-Classical philosophy”, discuss the results in groups.

Sphere of knowledge	Classics	Non-classics
Ontology	... search for the ultimate foundations of being ...	...
Epistemology	...	irrationalism
Anthropology	a human as a being...	...
Style of philosophical thinking	...	dialogue with...
Philosophical language	...	flexible

Exercise 5. Complete the table “Main stages in the development of positivist philosophy”.

Directions	Period and representatives	Main themes and problems
Positivism	1830-s of the 20th century, August Comte	all genuine knowledge is either true by definition or positive — meaning a posteriori facts derived by reason and logic from sensory experience

Directions	Period and representatives	Main themes and problems
Machism, empirio-criticism	the late 19th and early 20th centuries, E. Mach and R. Avenarius	...
Neopositivism	...	only empirically verifiable statements (via observation or logic) are meaningful
Postpositivism	Karl Popper Thomas Kuhn	...

Topics for reports:

1. The problem of alienation in Marxist philosophy.
2. Neo-Marxist philosophy and critical theory.
3. The phenomenon of soviet Marxism-Leninism.
4. The critique of rationalism and European morality in the philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche: the doctrine of the Übermensch.
5. The philosophy of language of Ludwig Wittgenstein.
6. The epistemological dynamics of scientific change in Postpositivism.
7. Freedom and the “boundary situation”: existence and transcendence in the philosophy of Karl Jaspers.
8. Albert Camus on absurdity and rebellion.
9. The archaeology of knowledge and the genealogy of power in Michel Foucault.

Aphorisms and statements:

1. In politics, for the sake of a specific goal, one may enter into an alliance even with the devil himself — provided you are certain that you will outwit the devil, rather than the devil outwitting you (*Karl Marx*).
2. Consciousness can never be anything else than conscious being, and the being of men is their real life-process (*Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels (The German Ideology)*).
3. A man can be himself only so long as he is alone; and if he does not love solitude, he will not love freedom; for it is only when he is alone that he is free (*Arthur Schopenhauer (Parerga and Paralipomena)*).
4. Man is a rope, tied between beast and Superman — a rope over an abyss (*Friedrich Nietzsche (Thus Spoke Zarathustra)*).
5. A free intellect demands reasons; others demand only faith (*Friedrich Nietzsche (The Antichrist)*).
6. The limits of my language mean the limits of my world (*Ludwig Wittgenstein (Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus)*).
7. Language is the medium in which the self and the world grow as one (*Hans-Georg Gadamer (Truth and Method)*).

SELF-ASSESSMENT OF TOPIC COMPREHENSION

1. Identify the main feature of K. Marx's philosophical work:

- a) panlogism;
- b) sociocentrism;
- c) pantheism;
- d) deism.

2. Identify the prerequisites for the crisis of classical philosophizing:

- a) crisis of the rationalist worldview;
- b) revolution in natural science;
- c) fragmentation of the problematic field of philosophy;
- d) emergence of new philosophical concepts.

3. Identify the main strategies of non-classical philosophizing:

- a) phenomenological;
- b) analytical;
- c) psychoanalytical;
- d) socio-critical;
- e) heuristic.

4. Indicate the main directions of development of non-classical philosophy:

- a) neo-Thomism;
- b) neo-Platonism;
- c) existentialism;
- d) postpositivism;
- e) post-Marxism;
- f) patristics.

5. Identify the philosophers of the classical era:

- | | |
|------------------|----------------|
| a) J.-P. Sartre; | e) K. Jaspers; |
| b) A. Camus; | f) N. Cusa; |
| c) G. Leibniz; | g) K. Popper; |
| d) Parmenides; | h) T. Kuhn. |

6. Highlight the philosophers of the non-classical era:

- | | |
|------------------|---------------------|
| a) Aristotle; | e) L. Wittgenstein; |
| b) E. Husserl; | f) J. Habermas; |
| c) J. Locke; | g) I. Kant; |
| d) R. Descartes; | h) Thomas Aquinas. |

7. What phenomenon of human existence does analytical philosophy study:

- a) drawing;
- b) language;
- c) reason;
- d) feelings.

TOPIC 1.6

BELARUSIAN AND RUSSIAN PHILOSOPHICAL THOUGHT

Total lesson time: 2 hours.

Aim: to study the characteristics and main stages of the development of Belarusian and Russian philosophy.

Objectives:

- to analyze the core characteristics of the Belarusian philosophical tradition;
- to examine the major stages and foundational concepts of Belarusian philosophy;
- to evaluate the distinct features and historical development of Russian philosophy.

Questions:

1. Specific features of the Belarusian philosophical tradition.
2. Typological features and directions of development of Russian philosophy.

Key concepts: national identity, national idea, humanism, cultural tradition, cultural heritage, spiritual freedom, naturalism, multilingualism.

THEORETICAL MATERIAL

1.6.1. SPECIFIC FEATURES OF THE BELARUSIAN PHILOSOPHICAL TRADITION

The history of Belarusian philosophical thought functions as a two-fold intellectual enterprise. On the one hand, it operates as a distinct academic discipline investigating the developmental trajectory of domestic intellectual traditions; on the other hand, it traces the historical formation of a national philosophy and the unique cultural identity that distinguishes Belarus within the wider European and global context.

As a formal branch of scholarship, the history of Belarusian philosophical thought solidified during the mid-twentieth century. This formative period witnessed the emergence of monographic studies dedicated to individual thinkers, the codification of a representative corpus of primary sources, and the systematic translation of foundational manuscripts from Latin, Polish, and Old Church Slavonic. Initial scholarly interest in historic Belarusian thinkers first manifested during the 1920s, driven by pioneering research into the biography and works of the Renaissance humanist Francysk Skaryna. Since then, a vast and rich repository of historical-philosophical material documenting the evolution of Belarusian thought has been accumulated.

When evaluating the evolution of Belarusian philosophical thought, its development must be analyzed through the prism of **three macro-structural contributing factors**:

- **the geopolitical and territorial factor**: this encompasses the historical existence of Belarusian lands within highly diverse geopolitical configurations and state entities. The intellectual tradition matured across successive historical epochs, including the early principalities of Polotsk, Turov-Pinsk, and Smolensk, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (*Rzeczpospolita*), the Russian Empire, and the Soviet Union (USSR);

- **linguistic pluralism**: the intellectual landscape of Belarus is fundamentally polyglossic. Its philosophical ideas were articulated across various shifting linguistic traditions, including Old Church Slavonic, Ruthenian (Old Belarusian), Latin, Polish, Russian, Hebrew, and modern Belarusian, all of which served as legitimate mediums for cultural and philosophical discourse;

- **civilizational and confessional intersections**: Belarusian philosophical thought developed at a critical geopolitical crossroads, marked by a civilizational rift and continuous social, political, and religious tensions. This intersection of Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Protestant, Uniate, and Jewish traditions forced domestic philosophy to serve as a vital tool for confessional polemics, socio-political justification, and the pursuit of ecumenical and humanistic dialogue.

The history of Belarusian philosophical thought is a tradition spanning almost a thousand years, divided into **three expansive historical epochs**:

1. Medieval Belarusian philosophy (11–15th centuries).

The emergence of philosophical thought in Belarus is intrinsically linked to the rise of early state formations and the adoption of Christianity. Along with the founding of the first significant Christian intellectual centers — monasteries — scriptoria (workshops for copying Holy Scripture and patristic texts) were established, paving the way for original philosophical literature.

During this era, the worldview in Belarusian lands was shaped by both Western and Eastern Christian traditions, defined by the principles of theocentrism, providentialism, creationism, and divine Revelation. Philosophical and ideological reflections were primarily embedded within theological texts, concentrating on socio-philosophical, moral-humanistic, and aesthetic problems. Concurrently, the reception and validity of the classical antique heritage remained an open debate in the spirit of the age.

Moral issues predominated in the discourses of early Belarusian Christian enlighteners. Utilizing parables and allegories, they explicated complex concepts of good and evil, the meaning of human life, and the teleology of universal history. The works of Euphrosyne of Polotsk and Cyril of Turov reveal a rich cross-pollination of Aristotelianism, Platonism, and Patristic theology. While Christian ethical ideals formed the centerpiece of this period, indigenous paganism and certain secular classical views were criticized.

A striking example of this synthesis is found in Clement Smolyatich's *Epistle to the Priest Thomas* (interpreted by Athanasius the Monk), which explicitly substantiates the necessity of studying classical Greek heritage. Furthermore, the early Christian moral ideal of asceticism and disdain for earthly goods is vividly illustrated in *The Life of Euphrosyne of Polotsk*.

An important intellectual phenomenon of this period was the proliferation of **florilegia** — anthologies of compiled excerpts from medieval and ancient poetry and prose. These texts examined civic morality, offered critiques of the social order, and analyzed universal concepts such as love and truth. Functioning similarly to collections of proverbs, the most widely read anthologies were *The Bee* (*Pchela*) and *Flowers of Gifts*. Reflecting the early scholastic cross-currents, *The Bee* frequently reinforced ethical positions with classic formulations, echoing ideas akin to Thomas Aquinas's axiom that "love is the beginning of all virtues."

Alongside this official Christian culture existed a resilient folk culture. Its primary characteristic was a mythological consciousness deeply intertwined with pagan traditions and universal syncretism.

2. The Renaissance, Reformation, and Counter-Reformation (16–17th centuries).

During the first half of the 16th century, Renaissance ideas penetrated the territory of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, which then encompassed the lands of Belarus. Civic humanism and the institutionalization of religious tolerance became the foundational pillars of Belarusian philosophy during this golden age.

Belarusian humanism was conceptualized as an active program of social service, driven by the ambition to transform cultural, educational, and historical values into the common heritage of all society. Complementing this was the principle of tolerance, which asserted the validity of a plurality of opinions and beliefs within the state. This expressed itself as mutual respect for diverse religious worldviews, cultures, and legal customs — effectively establishing an early understanding of the individual's right to live according to their own conscience. In the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, this tolerance was realized due to the co-existence of numerous ethnic groups and adherents of various confessions (Orthodox, Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, and Muslim) within a single political framework.

Consequently, the medieval scholastic worldview was superseded by a humanistic Renaissance paradigm, transforming the relationship between God, nature, society, the church, and humanity. This period witnessed the rapid acceleration of national consciousness, literary culture, and language. Renaissance philosophy in Belarus is broadly divided into two major phases: the **Early Renaissance** (first half of the 16th century) and the **Late Renaissance** (second half of the 16th to the first half of the 17th century).

The Early Renaissance in Belarus was characterized by a distinct genre syncretism, where sophisticated philosophical positions permeated secular poetry

and theological treatises alike. Thinkers focused on the rule of law, the moral ideals of a unified Christian civilization, its legal foundations, and the preservation of social harmony, as evidenced in the works of Francysk Skaryna and Mikola Husouski (Nikolai Gusovsky). In their legal dimensions, these philosophical principles were codified into the historic Statutes of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (1529, 1566, and 1588) — the latter of which was profoundly shaped by the titan of Belarusian jurisprudence and political thought, Lew Sapieha (Leu Sapieha).

One of the most towering figures in the history of Belarusian thought was the humanist philosopher **Francysk Skaryna** (c. 1486–1551). Skaryna conceptualized the human being as an inherently rational, moral, and social agent. He pioneered the radical assertion that from birth, all human beings possess equal natural rights and are endowed by the Creator with the same fundamental cognitive capacities. Skaryna emphasized that the primary duty of the individual is the continuous improvement of human nature, which he believed served as the necessary catalyst for the harmonization of social life.

According to this humanist paradigm, the origins of morality reside within the human subject — specifically within the faculty of autonomous reason — rather than in external dogmatic imposition. Through his lifelong commitment to publishing vernacular texts, Skaryna established himself as the definitive founder of the national-patriotic tradition in Belarusian philosophy.

Lew Sapieha (Leu Sapieha) (1557–1633) made a foundational contribution to the development of European legal and socio-political thought. Under his direct guidance and editorial initiative, the *Statute of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania of 1588* was codified. This monumental legislative document served as the constitutional bedrock for the Belarusian state and stood as a sophisticated legal achievement unique within the broader European continent. Sapieha famously articulated that laws are not divinely static or monarchically dictated; rather, they are deliberately constructed by citizens for the common good and must function as the primary institutional guarantors of individual civic liberty.

The philosophy of **the Late Renaissance** reflects the acute contradictions within the religious, political, and ideological spheres of the time. These tensions drove the rapid expansion of **polemical literature**, championed by diverse thinkers such as Symon Budny, Vasil Tsyapinski (Vasily Tyapinsky), Piotr Skarga, Kazimierz Łyszczyński, and Andrzej Wolan (Andrei Volan).

The Protestant Reformation exerted a profound influence on the evolution of philosophical ideas during this epoch. Driven by an urgent mandate to return the Christian church to its primordial biblical sources, the Reformation garnered widespread support among the intellectual elite of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. By elevating individual faith as the sole mechanism for salvation, this theological shift catalyzed radical transformations in philosophical and political theory. It established the absolute authority of the individual, institutionalized respect for subjective conscience, reframed the relationship between humanity and the divine as a direct personal bond, and formulated the concept of a secular human destiny.

Symon Budny (c. 1530–1593) introduced a radical Antitrinitarian critic of both Orthodox and Catholic dogmas, Budny advanced a daring materialist critique, denying the divine nature of Christ, the immortality of the human soul, and the existence of an afterlife. He historicized Christ, characterizing him as a mortal prophet and a paragon of human morality. Budny maintained that religious faith must be rationally substantiated, asserting that human reason is the premier instrument of cognition and possesses unlimited capacity. Furthermore, he argued that the human personality is naturally free and must remain legally inviolable.

Andrzej Wolan (Andrei Volan) (c. 1530–1610), being an exceptionally talented socio-political theorist, dedicated his philosophy to the intersection of jurisprudence and ethics. He maintained that the primary ontological purpose of positive law is to systematically guarantee universal freedom and social justice.

Kazimierz Łyszczyński (1634–1689) represented the vanguard of radical early modern atheism. In his treatise *De non-existentia Dei*, Łyszczyński not only rejected the concept of God as the creator of the cosmos, but also utilized this theological critique to argue for the necessity of structurally dismantling the existing socio-political order.

The intellectual momentum of the Reformers provoked an institutional reaction from the Catholic Church. The Society of Jesus (the Jesuit Order) was introduced to combat Protestant ideas, heavily steering the subsequent direction of Belarusian philosophical thought. Chronologically identified with **the Counter-Reformation**, this period saw the rise of **Second Scholasticism** (championed by Maciej Kazimierz Sarbiewski, Albert Wijuk Kojalowicz, Tomasz Bilewicz, and others).

During this phase, philosophical discourse was strictly subordinated to religious dogma, which marginalized empirical scientific inquiry. While the theological frameworks of Augustine and Albert the Great remained influential, the system of Thomas Aquinas enjoyed the highest academic authority. Intellectual activity became concentrated within the institutional networks of Catholic monastic orders, giving rise to **Vilnius Scholasticism**, which primarily focused on the systematic refinement of ethical, aesthetic, and pedagogical theories.

Thus, Medieval and Renaissance Belarusian philosophy developed as a synthesis of Eastern Byzantine (Orthodoxy, Byzantine patristics) and Western European (Catholicism, humanism, Reformation) traditions. This combination shaped a unique cultural landscape, where the Christian values were combined with the ancient heritage and rationalism.

Primary vectors of influence:

– **The Eastern (Byzantine-Rus) tradition.** This vector exerted a decisive influence on the formative stages of the culture through the adoption of Christianity. It infused the region with Orthodox patristics, anchored the worldview in strict theocentrism and creationism, and shaped a mystical, highly symbolic interpretation of the cosmos and human history.

– ***The Western European tradition.*** This vector permeated the region through Catholicism, the adoption of Latin as a scholarly language, exposure to Western university networks, and the arrival of the Reformation. It introduced rigorous scholastic methodology, Renaissance humanism, and the political-philosophical foundations of individual freedom.

– ***The cultural synthesis.*** Because Belarusian thought developed along a fluid civilizational borderland, it naturally rejected totalizing monologism. The polyglossic environment — simultaneously leveraging Old Belarusian, Latin, and Old Church Slavonic — created a unique communicative space that facilitated a continuous dialogue of ideas, turning tolerance from an abstract ideal into a survival necessity.

3. Main ideas of the Enlightenment in Belarusian philosophical thought.

At the close of the 17th century, the Age of Enlightenment reshaped the European intellectual landscape, generating a profound and transformative echo within Belarusian territory. Broadly characterized by the absolutization of human reason, an unwavering faith in scientific progress as the ultimate guarantor of universal human happiness, a critical interrogation of dogmatic religion, and the rise of a naturalistic, materialist worldview, these principles took on a unique form in the Belarusian context.

When evaluating the Enlightenment within the Belarusian tradition, two structural caveats must be highlighted: its ***geopolitical-peripheral nature*** and its ***delayed chronological shift***. Far from being a mere imitation of Western European models, the domestic Enlightenment adapted directly to local institutional crises, reaching its apex of philosophical maturity not in the 18th century, but during the first decades of the 19th century.

Phase I: economic transformation and the physiocratic movement. Initially, Enlightenment ideas in Belarus were explicitly tethered to urgent programs of agrarian and economic reform. The primary intellectual vehicle during this early phase was ***Physiocracy*** — an economic theory positing that a nation’s wealth derives exclusively from agriculture and land development, governed by an immutable “natural order.”

Prominent aristocratic reformers and statesmen, such as Joachim Litawor Chreptowicz (I. Khreptovich) and Jan Masalski (Y. Masalski), championed this school of thought:

– ***the natural order:*** they argued that human society progresses most efficiently when its socio-political laws are brought into structural alignment with the immutable, objective laws of the physical world;

– ***institutional modernization:*** fully aware of the shifting economic dynamics of Western Europe, these aristocratic reformers attempted to implement structural models within the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (*Rzeczpospolita*);

– ***state decentralization vs. central power:*** the Physiocrats advocated for a robust state architecture anchored by centralized royal authority. They formulated extensive modernization proposals aimed at reforming national

finance, overhauling the public education system, and restructuring the permanent military forces.

Phase II: the socio-political shift and secular philosophy. By the late 18th century, Enlightenment tenets had thoroughly permeated the region's socio-political and philosophical discourses, operating via the core categories of civic humanism, freethinking, and democracy. These secular concepts stood in direct, aggressive opposition to the entrenched traditions of Late Scholasticism, provoking fierce institutional debates.

Kazimierz Narbutt (1738–1807) is a monumental figure in the secularization of domestic education. In his logical and philosophical treatises, Narbutt demanded a strict, structural separation between dogmatic theology and autonomous philosophy. Drawing directly on the rationalist frameworks of René Descartes, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, and Christian Wolff, he actively synthesized early natural-scientific materialism to dismantle scholastic dogmatism.

Marcin Poczobutt-Odlanicki (1728–1810) is an internationally renowned astronomer and mathematician. Poczobutt-Odlanicki fiercely defended the scientist's absolute, unconstrained right to empirical exploration of the cosmos. Grounding his philosophy in natural science, he advocated for the cosmic plurality of worlds, demonstrating the structural and planetary similarities of other celestial bodies to validate a non-theocentric universe.

Phase III: geopolitical upheaval and the Vilnius University Renaissance. The late 18th and early 19th centuries introduced an acute crisis of political ideas, which simultaneously triggered a radicalization of democratic tendencies. Seismic historical disruptions — namely the partitions of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the forced incorporation of Belarusian territories into the Russian Empire, and the catastrophic devastation of the War of 1812 — initially catalyzed a profound existential shock and a widespread cultural rejection of early Enlightenment optimism.

However, this political trauma inadvertently prompted an extraordinary, localized intellectual renaissance centered at the Imperial University of Vilnius. The philosophical evolution of this late Enlightenment phase was spearheaded by prominent faculty members, including the Śniadecki brothers (Jan and Jędrzej), Wincenty Karczewski (V. Karchevsky), and Ananiasz Dawgird (A. Dowgird).

While the individual trajectories of these thinkers diverged, their collective philosophical output was united by several **defining characteristics**:

- **the critique of idealism**: they launched a rigorous, systematic assault on German Idealism — most notably Kantianism — rejecting Immanuel Kant's epistemological claim that the external world is inherently inaccessible to human cognition;

- **anti-agnostic materialism**: they fiercely combated agnosticism by defending the objective reality of the external world, asserting that human reason, paired with sensory experience, is fully capable of capturing genuine, positive truth;

– **secret societies and democratic radicalization:** this late academic rationalism quickly escaped the lecture halls, fuelling a vibrant underground culture of freethinking and political liberalism. Radical national questions and the demand for universal public enlightenment were sustained within clandestine student networks, including the *Philomaths* and *Filarets*, alongside broader underground networks like the *Society of Military Friends*. These groups effectively transformed late Enlightenment philosophy into an active, revolutionary ideology of democratic dissent.

4. National-democratic ideas in Belarusian social thought.

During the late 18th and early 19th centuries, socio-democratic and revolutionary-democratic ideals became deeply intertwined with the broader European national liberation movements. As these ideas gradually penetrated the borderlands of the Russian Empire, they were actively integrated into the theoretical works of Belarusian thinkers. The core tenets of this period were defined by urgent demands for structural socio-political transformation, national self-determination, the abolition of serfdom, and an uncompromising struggle against imperial autocracy.

By the second half of the 19th and the early 20th centuries, journalistic essays, political manifestos, and literary narratives became the dominant mediums for expressing Belarusian philosophical thought. This reliance on literary-philosophical syncretism allowed thinkers to bypass strict imperial censorship while articulating profound socio-political critiques:

Francišak Bahuševič (Francysk Bogushevich) (1840–1900) explicated the ontological and sociological power of language, characterizing the mother tongue not merely as a tool for communication, but as the essential vessel for consolidating, preserving, and conveying a nation's distinct worldview.

Yanka Kupala (1882–1942) and **Yakub Kolas** (1882–1956) utilized sophisticated artistic and philosophical prose to interrogate the existential tension between the individual and society, the parameters of human self-affirmation in a hostile world, and the true meaning of spiritual and political freedom.

The problem of national identity and civilizational placement occupies the absolute centerpiece of 20th-century Belarusian philosophy, reaching its conceptual maturity in the seminal work of **Ignat Kančėŭski (Abdziralovič)** (1896–1923), *By the Eternal Path: Studies of the Belarusian Worldview* (1921).

Analyzing the unique geopolitical positioning of Belarus between the shifting tectonic plates of the East and the West, Kančėŭski was the first to systematically evaluate the historical impact of these two macro-cultural types on the collective self-awareness and spiritual life of the Belarusian people. The philosopher formulated a nuanced, balanced critique of both civilizational vectors:

– **the influx from the West:** while introducing vital concepts of humanism, legalism, and democratic governance, the West simultaneously imported sophisticated mechanisms for the economic exploitation of man by man;

– ***the influx from the East***: while offering alternative cultural paradigms, the East historically brought an autocratic disdain for the individual, resulting in the systematic suppression of personal rights, subjective conscience, and civic freedoms.

To overcome the paralyzing pressures of both Western and Eastern hegemony, Kančeŭski argued that the Belarusian people must reject the blind mechanical borrowing of foreign political and ideological models. Instead, he proposed a radical revival of authentic, localized forms of life by embarking on a path of independent ***social creativity*** (*sacyjalnaja tvorčasć*).

As outlined in *By the Eternal Path*, this concept of social creativity centers on the autonomous, organic development of Belarusian culture and statehood explicitly within the borderland zone. Rather than allowing the nation to degenerate into a passive battleground for foreign imperial ideologies, Kančeŭski asserted that Belarusians must utilize their unique intermediate position between Russia and Poland to forge a highly original, synthetic culture.

This creative process is fundamentally grounded in the principles of absolute individual freedom, humanism, and the total rejection of external or state-sponsored coercion in favor of voluntary, decentralized cooperation among citizens. Ultimately, Kančeŭski maintains that true social creativity can only be executed by an active, self-conscious, and creative individual who recognizes themselves as an organic component of the nation and actively strives for existential and political self-determination.

5. Marxist tradition in Belarusian philosophy of the 1920s–1980s and the present stage.

The development of Belarusian philosophy throughout the 20th century was fundamentally shaped by shifting socio-cultural milestones and rigid ideological parameters, defined by the parallel evolution of Marxist-Leninist thought and national revivalist movements.

The Soviet period: institutionalization and ideological utility.

The Soviet era witnessed the formal institutionalization of Belarusian philosophical inquiry. This professionalization was driven by the establishment of the republic's premier academic and scientific centers: the ***Belarusian State University*** (1921) and the ***Academy of Sciences of the BSSR*** (1931).

During this phase, philosophy operated under a *distinct dual character*:

– ***ideological instrument***: it was systematically utilized as an ideological tool tasked with conceptualizing and executing the socio-political project of building a socialist state;

– ***scientific and methodological rigor***: concurrently, the tradition achieved high academic distinction in non-ideological spheres. Philosophers focused intensely on the philosophy of natural science and the epistemological foundations of scientific knowledge. A globally recognized, invaluable contribution to this domain was executed by the eminent philosopher and

academician **Vyacheslav Stepin** (V. S. Stepin), whose work on scientific rationality reshaped contemporary philosophy of science.

The historiographical and historical turn.

A significant dimension of Soviet and late-Soviet Belarusian philosophy was the systematic investigation of both domestic and foreign histories of philosophy. Pioneering historical-philosophical reconstructions were led by key scholars: **A. S. Maikhrovich**, **S. A. Podokshin**, **V. M. Konon**, and **V. F. Shalkevich**. They successfully recovered and critically analyzed the region's rich medieval, Renaissance, and Enlightenment heritage, defending the historical continuity of Belarusian thought against cultural erasure.

Today, this legacy is sustained by a new generation of domestic researchers, including **E. K. Doroshevich**, **V. B. Evorovsky**, **A. I. Maldis**, **T. P. Korotkaya**, **A. A. Legchilin**, and **I. A. Bortnik**, who investigate the integration of historical Belarusian paradigms into the global stream of world culture.

The ecological and cosmist paradigm.

Drawing directly from the early modern traditions of Russian and East Slavic Cosmism, contemporary Belarusian philosophy has developed a robust ecological paradigm. Scholars such as **P. A. Vodopyanov**, **P. S. Karako**, and **A. I. Zelenkov** actively advance biospheric and ecophilosophical theories. They focus on the transition to the Noosphere, the ethical limits of technological determinism, and the formulation of sustainable civilizational models in the post-industrial era.

As a result, Belarusian philosophical thought developed at *the intersection of Western (Catholicism, Renaissance, Enlightenment) and Eastern (Orthodox Christianity, Byzantine heritage) traditions*, creating a unique synthesis. Western influence brought rationalism and humanism, while Eastern influence brought spirituality and contemplation, reflected in the works of F. Skaryna, the ideas of the Reformation, and Western Russism.

The influence of European culture (Western tradition via Poland and Lithuania) contributed to the development of ideas of individual freedom, enlightenment, and humanism, especially during the Renaissance. Such thinkers as S. Budny and A. Volan promoted reformist ideas that reflected Western European rationalism.

The Byzantine heritage and Orthodoxy (*Eastern tradition*) formed the foundation of spiritual culture, emphasizing faith, ethics, and collectivism. F. Skaryna combined Christian values with Renaissance humanism.

The Belarusian philosophical tradition is characterized by cultural synthesis and its ability to assimilate elements of both Western and Eastern teachings, existing in a multi-confessional and multicultural space.

Thus, the unique genius of the Belarusian philosophical tradition resides in its historically proven capacity for **cultural synthesis** — its systemic ability to assimilate, reconcile, and transmute the seemingly incompatible elements of both Western rationality and Eastern spirituality. Existing within a multi-confessional

and multicultural borderland, Belarusian philosophy rejects totalizing monologism, choosing instead to function as an ongoing, open-ended dialogue dedicated to defining national identity and self-determination within world culture.

1.6.2. TYPOLOGICAL FEATURES AND DIRECTIONS OF DEVELOPMENT OF RUSSIAN PHILOSOPHY

The history of Russian philosophy as a formal academic discipline is a comparatively recent development. While Russian philosophical thought itself has evolved over several centuries, the systematic, scholarly investigation into its historical trajectory was initiated only in the mid-19th century by early modern social critics such as Alexander Herzen (A. I. Herzen) and Nikolay Chernyshevsky (N. G. Chernyshevsky). Subsequently, at the turn of the 20th century, Russian Marxists led by Georgi Plekhanov (G. V. Plekhanov) formulated the first systematic, materialist analysis of this trajectory, laying the structural foundations for the modern historiography of Russian philosophy.

The developmental trajectory of Russian philosophical thought is traditionally divided into several *distinct historical epochs*:

1. The Medieval and pre-Petrine period (11th – early 18th centuries). This foundational era witnessed the emergence of a distinct East Slavic intellectual landscape, the initial formulation of enduring philosophical questions, and the introduction of systematic study, with a dominant focus on Christian theology and religious ontology:

a) The Kyivan genesis and early literature.

In the 11th century, Metropolitan Hilarion of Kyiv composed the seminal literary and theological treatise *The Sermon on Law and Grace* (originally *Slovo o zakone i blagodati*). Standing as the oldest surviving monument of ancient East Slavic literature, this work represents a critical developmental step in regional thought. It introduced a sophisticated, non-linear philosophy of history (historiosophy) that contrasted the rigid legalism of the Old Testament (“Law”) with the transformative spiritual freedom of the New Testament (“Grace”).

b) The Hesychast tradition and Byzantine reception.

The maturation of medieval Russian philosophy was deeply influenced by Eastern Christian and Byzantine currents. A central place was occupied by **Hesychasm** (from the Greek *hesychia*: stillness or silence — a mystical, contemplative theological and philosophical doctrine. Rooted in the early patristic writings of Gregory of Nyssa and codified by Gregory Palamas, Hesychasm prioritized experiential spiritual illumination. It posited that through silent, meditative prayer, human beings could achieve direct communion with the uncreated, divine energies of God. This doctrine profoundly shaped the East Slavic worldview, anchoring it in an interior, contemplative mysticism rather than the syllogistic rationalism characteristic of Western European Scholasticism.

c) Anthropological and ethical consolidation.

During the 13th and 14th centuries, the *Dioptra* — a psychological and theological dialogue composed by the Byzantine author Philip the Solitary (Philip the Hermit) — gained widespread popularity across regional intellectual centers. This text served as a primary vehicle for assimilating the spiritual and philosophical heritage received after the adoption of Christianity. Through its dissemination, early thinkers crystallized a distinct focus on the following domains, which would later occupy a dominant position in the classical Russian tradition:

- **anthropology**: investigating the dual spiritual-corporeal nature of the human being;
- **historiosophy**: discerning the providential purpose and ultimate destiny of human history;
- **ethics**: establishing the absolute moral accountability of the individual.

This era culminated in a profound flourishing of religious and visual culture during the 14th century, particularly through temple architecture and icon painting. Key figures like Sergius of Radonezh (S. Radonezhsky) provided the spiritual and communal foundation for this revival, creating an aesthetic theology that would later be systematically analyzed by 20th-century religious philosophers such as Evgenii Trubetskoi (E. N. Trubetskoy).

d) The transition to academic philosophy.

By the 15th through the 17th centuries, early progressive and secular philosophical ideas began to challenge the dominant, rigidly dogmatic religious-scholastic ideology. The formal institutionalization of philosophical study in Russia was actualized with the founding of the **Slavic-Greek-Latin Academy** in 1687 at the Zaikonospassky Monastery in Moscow. Established by the learned Greek brothers Ioannikios and Sophronios Likhud, the Academy introduced the first standardized academic curriculum in Russia, offering rigorous, higher-level courses in logic, rhetoric, and metaphysics. This pivotal transition laid the pedagogical groundwork for the secularization of Russian philosophy in the subsequent century.

2. The Russian Enlightenment and the birth of secular philosophy (18th – mid-19th centuries). This pivotal era was characterized by comprehensive institutional transformations and the intensive assimilation of Western European cultural and philosophical paradigms:

a) The 17th-century turning point and secularization.

Prior to this period, the writings of regional thinkers contained only fragmentary, unsystematic reflections on philosophical questions. However, the closing decades of the 17th century served as a major historical watershed, initiating the secularization of East Slavic culture. This shift gave rise to autonomous secular knowledge and marked the structural birth of independent Russian literature and philosophy, paving the way for the Russian Enlightenment, which flourished until the early 19th century.

b) The rise of materialist systems.

By the mid-18th century, Russian philosophical inquiry crystallized through the rigorous materialist frameworks of Mikhail Lomonosov (M. V. Lomonosov) and Aleksandr Radishchev (A. N. Radishchev). Together, these thinkers established two distinct trajectories of early modern materialism in Russia:

- ***scientific and natural-historical materialism (Lomonosov)*** focused on the mechanistic and corpuscular laws of nature, defending the objective reality of the physical world through empirical science;

- ***socio-political and anthropological materialism (Radishchev)*** tied materialist ontology directly to radical civic humanism, ethics, and a critique of political tyranny.

While the philosophical literature of the early 18th century rarely produced highly original speculative systems, it successfully established the baseline historical-philosophical canon and the sophisticated intellectual atmosphere necessary for subsequent generations to engage deeply with philosophy.

c) Institutionalization and the French influx.

A monumental step in the professionalization of domestic intellectuality occurred in 1755, when M. V. Lomonosov founded ***Moscow University***. Crucially, the institution was structured around three foundational faculties: philosophy, law, and medicine — thereby legally securing philosophy as an independent academic discipline.

Concurrently, the mid-to-late 18th century witnessed widespread intellectual fascination with the radical ideas of the French Enlightenment. The works of Voltaire, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Denis Diderot, Claude Adrien Helvétius, and Baron d'Holbach were widely read and debated, fundamentally reshaping domestic concepts of natural law, human reason, and civic liberty.

3. Epoch III: the emergence of original Russian Philosophy (second quarter of the 19th century – early 20th century). This pivotal era was marked by a decisive shift away from intellectual apprenticeship toward the formulation of highly autonomous concepts, a golden age known as classical Russian philosophy. Intellectual fascination with the French Enlightenment was replaced by a deep mastery of German Idealism (specifically the works of Friedrich Schiller, Johann Gottlieb Fichte, Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling, and G. W. F. Hegel), which served as a dynamic catalyst for original domestic philosophical systems:

a) The Slavophile vs. Westernizer controversy: the historiosophical rift.

The second quarter of the 19th century witnessed the codification of a foundational debate regarding Russia's global and historical destiny. This schism established the primary ideological vectors for all subsequent domestic socio-political and historical philosophy:

- ***Westernizers***: spearheaded by Pyotr Chaadaev (and later advanced by Vissarion Belinsky and Alexander Herzen), this movement critiqued Russia's historical isolation. They insisted on the universality of the European

developmental path, advocating for Russia's integration into the mainstream of Western science, constitutional law, and secular public enlightenment.

– **Slavophiles:** led by Ivan Kireevsky and Aleksey Khomyakov, this current defended a unique, separate historical path for Russia. They grounded this path in the spiritual traditions of Orthodox Christianity, the egalitarian structure of the peasant commune (*obshchina*), and the metaphysical principle of **sobornost** — a spiritually organic collectivism or “unity-in-plurality” that stood in sharp opposition to Western individualism and rationalistic fragmentation.

By the early 20th century, both movements had undergone a complex evolution, eventually crystallizing into the explicit platforms of competing political parties.

b) The Dialectic matrix: Materialism vs. Idealism.

During the 1860s and 1870s, the Russian intellectual landscape became a fierce battleground between materialist and idealist worldviews. Russian materialism launched a systematic, uncompromising assault on dominant Western idealist currents, most notably neo-Kantianism and positivism.

– **The theoretical vanguard:** the radical essays of Vissarion Belinsky, Alexander Herzen, and especially Nikolay Chernyshevsky prepared the domestic intellectual community for a widespread adoption of a materialist and secular worldview.

– **Natural-scientific materialism:** this philosophical outlook spread rapidly through empirical research, finding its most robust defense in the revolutionary discoveries of prominent naturalists, including Ivan Sechenov, Dmitri Mendeleev, Ilya Mechnikov, and Kliment Timiryazev.

– **The marxist influx:** by the late 19th century, the ideas of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels were systematically disseminated due to the underground activities of the *Emancipation of Labor* group and the theoretical works of Georgi Plekhanov, the “father of Russian Marxism.” Plekhanov laid the foundations for Marxist historiography in Russia, initiating an intense polemical struggle against non-Marxist left-wing movements such as populism (*narodnichestvo*), “legal Marxism,” and anarchism.

c) The metaphysics of All-Unity and the religious-philosophical Renaissance.

The turn of the 20th century entered cultural history as the Russian Religious-Philosophical Renaissance. This concept — originally adapted from classical philology — signified a profound spiritual turning point. In Russia, where the historical European Renaissance had left no direct institutional traces, this movement manifested as a radical return to ancient metaphysical values, Platonism, and Patristic theology as a defense against contemporary positivism. This era also produced the first comprehensive historical-philosophical encyclopedias, including Alexei Losev's *Russian Philosophy*, Evgenii Radlov's *Essay on the History of Russian Philosophy*, and Gustav Shpet's foundational work of the same name.

The central pillar of this renaissance was the *Metaphysics of All-Unity* (*Vseedinstvo*), systematically formulated by Vladimir Solovyov and expanded by his brilliant successors (including the brothers Sergei and Evgenii Trubetskoi, Pavel Florensky, Sergei Bulgakov, and Nikolai Lossky). This original system achieved a grand synthesis of rational science, mystical intuition, and Christian dogmatics. Solovyov introduced the core concepts of *Godmanhood* (*Bogochelovechestvo*) — the collaborative evolution of humanity and the cosmos toward an organic unity with the Creator — and *Sophiology* (divine wisdom conceptualized as the feminine soul of the world). Parallel to this system-building was the radical religious existentialism of Nikolai Berdyaev and Lev Shestov, which asserted the absolute, uncreated primacy of individual freedom and human creativity over any rational, ontological, or ecclesiastical structures.

d) Existentialism and ethical rationalism in classical literature (Dostoevsky and Tolstoy).

A uniquely defining trait of classical Russian philosophy is its profound, intrinsic link to artistic literature. The literary masterpieces of Fyodor Dostoevsky (1821–1881) and Leo Tolstoy (1828–1910) stand not only as pinnacles of global prose, but as monumental contributions to philosophical anthropology, ethics, and existentialism.

Dostoevsky's philosophy centers on exposing the irrational, often “pathological” and borderline dimensions of the human spirit. The conceptual context of his writings includes:

- **anthropological dualism:** for Dostoevsky, the human being is a volatile, dynamic battlefield where “the devil fights with God, and the battlefield is the heart of man” (*The Possessed*, *The Idiot*, *The Gambler*). Human nature is irreducibly complex, resisting reduction to mere social environment or utilitarian economic calculation;

- **the problem of Theodicy:** in his magnum opus *The Brothers Karamazov*, Dostoevsky articulates a radical metaphysical challenge: how can a benevolent God permit the suffering of the world, especially of innocent children? His answer resides in the absolute primacy of free will: without the freedom to choose between good and evil, human beings are reduced to biological automatons. Overcoming existential alienation requires the conscious recognition of universal interconnected responsibility (“each of us is guilty before all for everyone and everything”) and the embrace of self-sacrificial, active love.

In contrast to Dostoevsky's tragic, psychological abyss, *Tolstoy* dedicated his philosophical work to constructing a clear, transparent, and strictly rational ethical system. The conceptual context of his writings includes:

- **non-violent resistance to Evil:** this fundamental moral imperative, systematically woven into *War and Peace*, *Anna Karenina*, and his later theological treatises, asserted that any form of physical violence — even when executed to defend the good — merely multiplies evil within the cosmos. Goodness must propagate exclusively through personal righteousness and moral example;

– ***the critique of institutions***: operating within a framework of rigorous ***Christian anarchism*** (*Father Sergius, Resurrection*), Tolstoy executed a radical dismantling of state institutions, social stratification, and official church dogmatics. He advocated for a return to a simplified, natural agrarian life free from ecclesiastical mysticism, grounded entirely on the direct, rational implementation of Christ's Sermon on the Mount.

e) 1922 – late 1980s: Soviet philosophy.

In 1922, the first textbooks on dialectical and historical materialism by N. Ya. Bukharin, S. Ya. Wolfson, V. N. Sarabyanov appeared. Since 1923, the philosophy of “dialectical materialism” was established in Soviet Russia and other philosophical trends were suppressed. The leader was the magazine “Under the Banner of Marxism” (1922–1944). In 1931, the Institute of History, Philosophy and Literature was created in Moscow, where lectures were given on the history of philosophy and other philosophical disciplines. In the general structure of education in Soviet higher education, philosophy occupied a key place among social disciplines. In the 1960s, the differentiation of philosophical knowledge, the allocation of directions was outlined. Schools of methodology of science arose in Kiev (P. V. Kopnin), Minsk (V. S. Stepin). The problem of consciousness was considered in the works of M. K. Mamardashvili, whose lectures were devoted to ancient philosophy, R. Descartes, M. Proust and became a noticeable phenomenon in the intellectual life of the 1970–1980s.

f) Contemporary Russian philosophy since 1993.

Following the collapse of the USSR, Marxist ideology and philosophy proved unable to respond to the challenges of the post-Soviet era, leaving Russia in a state of intellectual transition. New disciplines, such as political science, cultural studies, religious studies, and philosophical anthropology, quickly began to emerge and develop. At the 1993 World Congress of Philosophy in Moscow, scholars raised the question of resuming the interrupted domestic philosophical tradition and reclaiming the heritage of Russian religious philosophy and émigré thought. Consequently, the collapse of the Soviet system allowed Russia to reintegrate into the global philosophical discourse through new research in phenomenology, analytic philosophy, structuralism, poststructuralism, and postmodernism.

Since 1993, Russian philosophy has been characterized by pluralism, the rejection of the Marxist-Leninist monopoly, and the active integration of Western concepts. Key thematic focuses have shifted toward anthropology, identity, the philosophy of language, and religion. This period witnessed a revival of interest in Silver Age philosophy, alongside the development of original domestic movements such as “non-classical” philosophy and new metaphysics.

Key trends and directions include:

– ***postmodernism and deconstruction***: research offered an active critique and conceptualization of post-Soviet reality, language, and culture, notably reflected in the work of Dmitry Prigov and Vladimir Sorokin;

– **philosophical anthropology and metaphysics:** scholars sought new meanings of human existence following the “death of the subject,” exemplified by the frameworks of Valery Podoroga and Sergei Khoruzhy;

– **the “Contemporary Russian Philosophy” project:** spearheaded by Fedor Girenok, this project develops an original approach that frames Russian philosophy as a distinct, autonomous tradition;

– **institutional and editorial activity:** academic development has been driven by specialized departments at Moscow State University, the Institute of Philosophy of the Russian Academy of Sciences, and prominent journals such as *Voprosy Filosofii (Problems of Philosophy)*.

Ultimately, the post-1993 period marked a definitive transition from ideologically driven dogmatism to academic freedom, wherein contemporary Russian thought seeks to reconcile its historical traditions with the global philosophical context.

TRAINING MATERIAL

Exercise 1. Read the excerpt from the primary source and answer the questions.

I. Abdiralovich By the Eternal Path¹²

The human soul, which comes into the world to be amazed by its beauty — which comes into the world once — is like no other and unique on its path and forever leaves material life, such a human soul must listen to its right to live and create, as its conscience tells it. No one else will create the soul, nor replace a single day, a single hour of its independent, self-valuable life. [...]

If an individual unit can find its individual salvation in artistic or scientific creativity, then in the social sphere the matter is not so simple. Social creativity is delayed and becomes almost impossible for two reasons: first, that some social forms are used by the ruling classes and artificially delay their development, and second, because the conditions for social creativity require more favorable circumstances than individual creativity. It is inconceivable that a former slave could become an independent master of his own life, or that a former street sweeper could become a free artist. It is very difficult to instill in each individual a desire for common creativity, an understanding of the need to move forward, rather than being content with what exists.

For this reason, up to our time, the social creativity of the masses has not proceeded without interruption, but in leaps and bounds. The creativity of the masses must overcome the inertia of the interested classes, and it is always only through a coup and revolution that the masses move towards social creativity. Such a path is abnormal, inharmonious, and wasteful of human strength.

¹² Translated and published from: Канчэўскі, І. У. Адвечным шляхам: даследзіны беларускага светагляду / І. У. Канчэўскі. – Мінск : Навука і тэхніка, 1993. – С. 23–27.

The masses must have a constant opportunity for creativity, but in the present time such a possibility cannot be achieved. Recent history teaches us that revolutions alone are far from enough. Only a creative unit — a mass of creative individuals — can ensure social creativity. The creativity of the masses is based on the creativity of individuals. The example of Russia tells us that a revolution without individual creativity is only a great turmoil without end or enlightenment.

A kind of vicious circle emerges: for social creativity, there must be a creative unit, but the remembrance of this unit largely depends on the development of social creativity.

Unfortunately, everything that is now being done in civil life — which has its most intensive expression in political work — is very far from achieving social creativity and from the recognition of the creative unit. Modern citizenship, divided into classes, wants to realize its social ideal by political means, i.e. by seizing power in its own hands, or by having a significant influence on it. Based on a certain class, every party must pursue ideas that are useful to that class. The party always talks about “real politics”, about the absence of sentiment in politics, about the finality of “weighing” interests according to their true civic weight. This means that the matter always ends with the fact that the one whose “weight” is greater, the one who has the greater material power, is the one who controls everything. [...]

Thus, active political parties failed to solve the problem of the free creative individual and social creativity because, in the ideal of each, there was a chain, coercion, and dictatorship — both for others and for themselves. Modern party-class groups and governments that rely on such groups ended in complete bankruptcy. By their own efforts, not based on the entire working mass of the population, but only fearing and being wary of it, they were unable to realize those slogans that they so generously promised their people. All democratic freedoms are violated by democratic governments; the socialist ideal is completely far from being realized by governments that call themselves socialist. None of the modern conscious citizens, unless they receive significant government assistance, will sincerely defend official beliefs; no one will die for the sounds of the democratic Marseillaise or the Socialist International. Thus, those who started with noisy political gimmicks have turned their coats inside out. Their modern power is still based on the people’s darkness and unconsciousness, and on their attachment to loud, incomprehensible incantations.

Questions:

1. According to the author, what are the two main reasons why “social creativity” is much more difficult to achieve and sustain than individual artistic or scientific creativity?

2. Explain the “vicious circle” the author describes regarding the relationship between the “creative unit” (the mass of creative individuals) and the development of social creativity.

3. Why does the author argue that active political parties and modern governments have “ended in complete bankruptcy” in their attempts to realize social ideals and democratic freedoms?

Exercise 2. Read the excerpt from the primary source and answer the questions.

N. A. Berdyaev
The Russian Idea¹³

The history of the Russian people is one of the most poignantly painful of histories. It embraces the struggle first against the Tartar invasion and then under the Tartar yoke, the perpetual hypertrophy of the State, the totalitarian regime of the Muscovite Tsardom, the Time of Troubles, the Schism, the violent character of the Petrine reform, the institution of serfdom — which was a most terrible ulcer in Russian life — the persecution of the Intelligentsia¹⁴, the execution of the Decembrists, the brutal regime of the Prussian Junker Nicholas I, the illiteracy of the masses of the people, who were kept in darkness and fear, the inevitability of revolution in order to resolve the conflicts of contradictions, and the violent and bloody character of the revolution, and finally, the most terrible war in the history of the world. Folk tales and heroes are associated with the Russia of Kiev and St. Vladimir. But chivalry did not develop on the spiritual soil of Orthodoxy. In the martyrdom of St. Boris and St. Gleb there was no heroism, the prevailing idea is that of sacrifice. The exploit of nonresistance — that is the Russian exploit. Simplicity and humility these are Russian traits.

Another characteristic of the spirit of Russian religion is what is known as *yurodstvo* — being a fool for Christ’s sake, accepting humiliations at the hands of other people, acquiescing in the mockery of the world and thereby throwing out a challenge to it. [...] The burning of oneself alive, as an exploit in religion, is a Russian national phenomenon, which is almost unknown among other peoples. What is known among us as the ‘double belief’ — that is to say, a combination of the Orthodox Faith with pagan mythology and folk poetry — provides an explanation of many of the inconsistencies to be seen in the Russian people. Russian poetry always retained, and still retains down to the present time, an elemental, ecstatic Dionysianism. During the conflagration of the Russian Revolution, a Pole said to me: “Dionysus is abroad in the Russian land”. The enormous power of Russian choral singing and dancing is due to this. The Russians are by nature inclined to carousal and choral dancing. The same thing is to be seen among the popular mystical sects, among the adherents of *khlystovstvo*, for example. That the Russians have a leaning to debauchery and to

¹³ Berdyaev, N. *The Russian idea* / N. Berdyaev. – New York : The Macmillan Company, 1948. – P. 5–7.

¹⁴ *Intelligentsia* is a term used to describe a social stratum or a politically active class of educated people. This word is borrowed from Russian «интеллигенция» and is often used to describe the history or sociology of Eastern Europe. It should be noted that from the point of view of classical Marxism, the intelligentsia does not play the role of a separate class.

anarchy with a loss of discipline, is well known. The Russian people have not only been subservient to an authority which enjoyed the sanction of religion, but it has also given birth to Stenka Razin and Pugachev, whose praises it has sung in its folk songs. The Russians are fugitives and bandits; the Russians are also pilgrims in search of divine truth and justice. Pilgrims refuse obedience to the powers that be. The path of this earthly life presented itself to the Russian people as a way of truancy and a way of pilgrimage.

Russia has always been full of mystical and prophetic sects, and among them, there has always been a thirst for the transfiguration of life. Such was the case even with the repulsive and Dionysiac sect of the *Khlysti*. In religious poetry, a high value has been attached to indigence and poverty; a favourite theme in it is the suffering of the innocent. Social injustice is felt in a high degree in poems of devotion. A conflict is waged between truth and falsehood. But the pessimism of the people makes itself felt in them. In the popular conception of salvation, the bestowal of alms has the very highest importance. The religion of the soil is very strong in the Russian people; it lies deep down in the very foundations of the Russian soul. The land is the final intercessor. The fundamental category is motherhood. The Mother of God more vividly than that of Christ. Christ is the Heavenly King, but scant expression is given to His earthly image. Mother Earth alone is given a personal incarnation. The Holy Spirit is frequently mentioned. G. Fedotov stresses the point that the religious poems reveal an inadequacy of belief in Christ as the Redeemer. Christ remains the Judge that is to say, the people do not see, as it were, the kenosis of Christ. The people accept suffering themselves, but it seems as though they have little belief in the compassion of Christ. Fedotov explains this as due to the fatal influence of “Josephism” which has distorted the portrait of Christ among the Russian people, so that the Russian people wants to take shelter from the frightful God of Joseph Volotsky behind Mother Earth, behind the Mother of God. The image of Christ, the image of God, was overwhelmed by the image of earthly power and to the mind of the people took on a form analogous to it. At the same time there was always a powerful eschatological element in Russian religion¹⁵.

Questions:

1. According to Berdyaev, what dual and seemingly contradictory roles define the path of earthly life for the Russian people, as illustrated by figures like Stenka Razin versus religious pilgrims?

2. How does the concept of “double belief” explain the inconsistencies in the Russian soul, and how does it manifest in the people’s relationship with “Mother Earth” compared to their view of Christ?

3. Based on the text’s reference to G. Fedotov, how did the historical influence of “Josephism” alter the popular image of Christ, and why did this cause the Russian people to seek spiritual shelter elsewhere?

¹⁵ Berdyaev, N. The Russian idea / N. Berdyaev. – New York : The Macmillan Company, 1948. – P. 5–7.

EXERCISES FOR ASSESSING COMPETENCY LEVEL

Exercise 3. Answer the following questions:

1. List and explain the main features of the Belarusian philosophical tradition.
2. How are the specific features of the formation and development of philosophical thought in Belarus manifested?
3. What stages in the development of Belarusian philosophy can be identified?
4. What are the specific features of medieval philosophy in Belarus?
5. What two periods can be distinguished in Renaissance philosophy in Belarus?
6. Describe the concept of humanism in Belarusian philosophical thought during the Renaissance.
7. Indicate the reasons for the emergence and development of the principle of tolerance in Belarusian philosophical thought.
8. What influence did the Reformation have on the development of Belarusian philosophical thought?
9. What is “second scholasticism”?
10. What were the specific features of the ideas of the Enlightenment in the Belarusian lands?
11. Name the main directions of Belarusian philosophy in the modern period.
12. Analyze the historical evolution of Russian philosophical thought from the 11th to the late 17th century. How did it transition from an early contemplative, mystical worldview into a formalized academic and secular discipline, and what key texts and institutions facilitated this shift?
13. Analyze how the Russian Enlightenment transformed the nature of domestic intellectual inquiry. In your answer, contrast the two distinct trajectories of early modern materialism established during this era and explain how institutional changes and foreign intellectual currents contributed to securing philosophy as an independent academic discipline.
14. Analyze the dual nature of Classical Russian Philosophy (from the second quarter of the 19th century to the early 20th century). How did this “Golden Age” simultaneously develop through rigorous, polarized ideological and metaphysical debates (such as Slavophiles vs. Westernizers, Materialism vs. Idealism) and through the unique integration of philosophical inquiry into classical literature and religious mysticism?
15. Highlight the main ideas of existentialism and ethical rationalism in classical Russian literature (Dostoevsky and Tolstoy).
16. Examine the intellectual transition that occurred in Russian philosophy following the collapse of the USSR. How did the rejection of the Marxist-Leninist monopoly lead to both the reclamation of historical domestic heritage and the assimilation of global contemporary movements, and what original philosophical trends emerged from this pluralistic landscape?

Exercise 4. Complete the table “The development of Belarusian philosophical thought”.

Stages	Representatives	Main concepts
Medieval philosophy in Belarus	Kirill Turovsky ... Euphrosyne of Polotsk ...	
The Renaissance and ideas of the Reformation in the Belarusian philosophical tradition	Francysk Skaryna ...	
Main ideas of the Enlightenment in Belarusian philosophical thought		humanism, freethinking, democracy
National democratic ideas in Belarusian social thought of the second half of the 19th century – early 20th century	Francysk Bogushevich ...	
The Marxist tradition in Belarusian philosophy in the 1920s–1980s and the current stage		the issues of philosophical natural science ...

Exercise 5. Complete the sentences:

The oldest monuments of philosophical thought in Belarus date back to the ____ (1) century. The Polotsk philosophical school was formed in the ____ (2) century. During the Renaissance, ____ (3) played a special role, developing the ideas of humanism and the Reformation.

Insert words: *the 16th, the 11th, the 10th, F. Skaryna, S. Budny*

Exercise 6. Mark the following statements as true or false:

1. The first philosophical thought in Belarus is associated with pagan beliefs.
2. The Polotsk school developed ideas of nominalism.
3. Budny was a proponent of a materialistic understanding of nature.
4. In the 19th century, Belarusian philosophy developed exclusively within the framework of Orthodoxy.
5. Modern Belarusian philosophy is based on the ideas of the Slavophiles.

Exercise 7. Mark the following statements as true or false:

1. The systematic, scholarly investigation into the history of Russian philosophy was initiated from its very beginnings in the 11th century by early Kyiv theologians.
2. Metropolitan Hilarion’s 11th-century work, *The Sermon on Law and Grace*, is characterized by a linear philosophy of history that prioritized the legalism of the Old Testament over the New Testament.

3. The Eastern Christian tradition of Hesychasm anchored the early East Slavic worldview in interior, contemplative mysticism, distinguishing it from Western European Scholasticism.

4. The Slavic-Greek-Latin Academy, founded in 1687, established the first standardized academic curriculum in Russia, which included courses in logic, rhetoric, and metaphysics.

5. Mikhail Lomonosov's early modern materialist framework was primarily focused on socio-political materialism, radical civic humanism, and a critique of political tyranny.

6. During the second quarter of the 19th century, original Russian philosophy was catalyzed primarily by a deep mastery of German Idealism, which replaced the previous intellectual fascination with the French Enlightenment.

7. The Westernizers, led by Ivan Kireevsky and Aleksey Khomyakov, defended a unique historical path for Russia rooted in Orthodox Christianity and the metaphysical principle of sobornost.

8. Vladimir Solovyov's Metaphysics of All-Unity achieved a synthesis of rational science, mystical intuition, and Christian dogmatics, introducing concepts such as Godmanhood and Sophiology.

9. In his ethical system, Leo Tolstoy argued that physical violence was justified and necessary if it was executed directly to defend the good and halt the spread of cosmic evil.

10. Following the appearance of the first textbooks on dialectical and historical materialism in 1922, other philosophical trends in Soviet Russia were systematically suppressed.

Topics for reports:

1. F. Skaryna as a thinker and a philosopher.
2. A philosophical perspective on the formation and development of the Belarusian national idea.
3. Ideas of national and philosophical revival in Belarusian social thought in the 19th and 20th centuries.
4. Belarus and Russia within the space of the East Slavic cultural tradition.
5. Slavophiles and Westernizers in the Russian philosophical tradition.
6. Key features of Russian religious philosophy.
7. V. Solovyov's Metaphysics of Unity.
8. The philosophy of Russian cosmism.
9. The concept of creativity in N. A. Berdyaev's philosophy.
10. Marxism-Leninism in Soviet philosophy.

Aphorisms and statements:

1. Learning, though it has a bitter root, bears sweet fruit (*From the Florilegium "The Bee" (Pchela)*).

2. Love books, for they are a source of wisdom, knowledge, and science — a medicine for the soul (*F. Skaryna*).

3. Man is the creator of God, and God is the creation and fabrication of man. Thus, human beings are the creators and fabricators of gods; God is not an actual entity, but a construct of the mind, and a chimerical one at that. Therefore, God and chimera are one and the same (*K. Lyszczyński*).

4. One must reason systematically about objects to guard against error. Only through such inquiry can the secrets of nature be uncovered (*K. Narbutt*).

5. By virtue of the capacity for abstraction, humanity has constructed an ideal world of its own, grounded upon the material world (*J. Sniadecki*).

6. At the core of all fear lies our ignorance, our darkness (*Ya. Kolas*).

SELF-ASSESSMENT OF TOPIC COMPREHENSION

1. Who is the author of the essay “By the Eternal Path”?

- a) V. S. Stepin;
- b) I. Abdirolovich;
- c) L. Sapieha.

2. The most significant Belarusian figure of the Renaissance is unanimously recognized today as:

- a) F. Skaryna;
- b) S. Budny;
- c) L. Sapieha.

3. The most prominent representative of the Enlightenment in Belarus and Lithuania was:

- a) Dovgird;
- b) Ya. Kupala;
- c) F. Bogushevich.

4. In the 19th century, philosophical thought in Belarus was associated with Vilnius University and the activities of the Philomath and Filaret student circles. Social philosophy was developed by:

- a) F. Bogushevich;
- b) M. Bogdanovich;
- c) Ya. Kolos;
- d) A. Tetka;
- e) All of the above.

5. In the 20th century, interest in the methodology of scientific research began to dominate Russian philosophy. The Minsk Methodological School played an important role in spreading this interest. Its founder is:

- a) Ya. Kupala;
- b) F. Skaryna;
- c) V. S. Stepin.

SECTION 2

PHILOSOPHICAL UNDERSTANDING OF THE PROBLEMS OF BEING

TOPIC 2.1

ONTOLOGY AND PHILOSOPHY OF NATURE

Total lesson time: 2 hours.

Aim: to analyze how the concept of being is understood and conceptualized throughout the history of philosophical thought.

Objectives:

- to study ontology as the philosophical doctrine of being, and to elucidate its categorical apparatus and historical interpretations;
- to examine the systemic organization of being and the primary structural levels of material existence;
- to outline the spatiotemporal organization of being and analyze the primary concepts of space and time in philosophy and science;
- to evaluate the concept of nature and trace the evolution of natural philosophies and scientific worldviews;
- to investigate the coevolutionary imperative and the ecological values undergirding modern civilization.

Questions:

1. Ontology as the philosophical doctrine of being: fundamental categories, modes of existence, and historical paradigms.
2. The category of matter: the systemic organization of being, structural levels of reality, and physical substrates.
3. The spatiotemporal organization of being: absolute, relational, and scientific frameworks of space and time.
4. The concept of nature: the historical and epistemological evolution of ideas about the natural world in philosophy and science.
5. The biosphere and the noosphere: the coevolutionary imperative, environmental ethics, and the ecological values of contemporary civilization.

Key concepts: ontology, being, substance, non-being, matter, system, structure, element, motion, space, time, biosphere, noosphere, ethics of reverence for life, the principle of coevolution of man and nature, sustainable development strategy, ecohumanism, bioethics.

THEORETICAL MATERIAL

2.1.1. ONTOLOGY AS THE PHILOSOPHICAL DOCTRINE OF BEING: FUNDAMENTAL CATEGORIES, MODES OF EXISTENCE, AND HISTORICAL PARADIGMS

Ontology (from the Greek *ontos* — being, and *logos* — teaching/doctrine) is the branch of philosophy concerned with the study of being, which encompasses everything that exists. The term was first introduced by Rudolph Goclenius in his *Philosophical Lexicon* (1613). However, it was Christian Wolff who, in his *First Philosophy, or Ontology* (1730), first employed the concept in its modern sense as the systematic doctrine of being.

Ontology developed with particular dynamism during **antiquity**. As discussed in previous chapters, the ancient Greeks sought to understand the true nature of reality. Beneath the diversity of material things and phenomena, they attempted to discern the fundamental substrate of the world. Pre-Socratic natural philosophers tried to locate this foundation of existence (*arche*) in specific material substances (such as water, fire, or earth). Parmenides and, later, Plato shifted the inquiry toward a more abstract question: “What is being as such?” According to these thinkers, the world perceived through the senses cannot constitute true being because it is transient, constantly changing, and imperfect. True being must be eternal, beautiful, perfect, and immutable. Plato conceptualized this true reality as the realm of “Ideas” (or Forms). For Plato, only the ideas of things truly exist, whereas the material world is merely an imperfect copy of this ideal realm. Shortly thereafter, Aristotle — without explicitly using the word “ontology” — established the primary trajectory for subsequent philosophical reflection: to investigate not merely specific modes of being, as individual sciences do, but being *qua* being — the essential attributes (properties) and first causes of existence.

During **the Middle Ages**, philosophical ontology was entirely subordinated to the dominant theological framework of Christianity. Consequently, medieval thinkers regarded God alone (conceived as absolute, singular, omnipotent, immortal, and supreme good) as true being. The remainder of the created world possesses being only to a degree, contingent upon the extent to which created phenomena participate in God. Evil, non-being, and death emerged in the world not by divine will, but as a consequence of humanity willfully turning away from God — that is, from true being.

In **Early Modern philosophy**, the rapid development of science led to a gradual identification of being with natural reality. Concurrently, however, direct interest in metaphysical ontology began to wane. Instead of asking “What is being?”, modern thinkers (such as Francis Bacon, René Descartes, and Immanuel Kant) increasingly prioritized epistemological questions: “How do we know being?” and “How is our consciousness structured such that we perceive

the world as we do?” In other words, ontology was gradually subsumed by epistemology (the theory of knowledge). It transitioned from the philosophical study of the fundamental principles of the world into an inquiry into the fundamental principles of cognition. The ontology of the object, which characterized antiquity and the Middle Ages, thus gave way to an ontology of the subject.

By the late 19th century, a new “non-classical” ontology began to take shape, placing human existence at the center of its inquiry. In their respective works, Søren Kierkegaard, Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, and Jean-Paul Sartre sought to understand the specific being of the human — the only entity capable of questioning its own existence and the world around it, and the only entity consciously aware of its own mortality. These thinkers posited that without understanding how human existence differs from the existence of all other phenomena, it remains impossible to grasp the nature of the world or being as such.

Within the framework of ontology, several **foundational categories** are universally employed across historical periods:

1) **being** is everything that exists, is present in the world, is available, and constitutes reality;

2) **non-being** is that which is absent or does not exist;

3) **substance** is that which exists independently, requires nothing else for its existence, and underlies all things as their root cause. Philosophy offers various interpretations regarding the number of substances foundational to the world: **monists** assert there is only one substance (e.g., God or matter); **dualists** maintain there are two (typically matter and consciousness); while **pluralists** posit an absolute multiplicity of substances;

4) **essence** is the defining characteristic or intrinsic nature of a thing or phenomenon;

5) **existence** is the actualization or presence of a thing in the real world — the transition from a potential state to an actualized state.

Contemporary philosophy typically distinguishes several **forms or levels of being**, each possessing distinct properties and investigated through different methodologies:

1) **material being** (the being of things): encompasses natural reality on one hand, and all human-made objects (culture or artificial reality) on the other;

2) **spiritual (ideal) being**: comprises all forms of psychological existence and the products of human consciousness (emotions, ideas, beliefs, norms, values, and ideals);

3) **human being**: the existence of the human individual as a unique, biosocial entity;

4) **social being**: includes society as a whole, specific social groups, and the distinct forms of collective human activity.

2.1.2. THE CATEGORY OF MATTER: THE SYSTEMIC ORGANIZATION OF BEING, STRUCTURAL LEVELS OF REALITY, AND PHYSICAL SUBSTRATES

One of the foundational concepts of ontology is ***matter***, traditionally understood as that which is physical, possesses material properties, and is accessible to sensory perception. Throughout the history of philosophical thought, three primary conceptual frameworks have emerged to define matter: as substance, as property, or as relation.

In antiquity, particularly within ancient Greece, philosophers conceptualized matter as the primordial material constituting the empirical world. Beginning with the classical elements (water, fire, earth, and air), thinkers progressively abstracted the concept, leading to notions such as the *apeiron* or ether. Subsequently, Democritus and Leucippus formulated atomism, positing the atom as the fundamental material principle of the cosmos. Aristotle, conversely, defined matter as a qualityless, indeterminate substratum (*hypokeimenon*) that actualizes into concrete particulars only when organized by form.

During the early modern period, spurred by the rise of the natural sciences — especially mechanics and physics — the philosophical focus shifted toward the essential properties inherent in all material objects. Early modern scientists and philosophers conceptualized material objects as physical bodies defined by primary qualities such as mass, density, and extension.

At the turn of the twentieth century, Marxist thinkers such as G. V. Plekhanov and V. I. Lenin argued that the essence of matter cannot be adequately analyzed independently of its dialectical relation to consciousness. Consequently, matter was redefined as an ontological category denoting the objective reality of things and phenomena — namely, their existence independent of human cognition.

Contemporary physics categorizes physical reality into distinct modes of material existence: ordinary matter (elementary particles), physical fields (governed by strong, weak, electromagnetic, and gravitational interactions), as well as dark matter and dark energy.

Accordingly, contemporary science conceptualizes the material world as a global, integrated system. A system is defined as a configuration of elements — indivisible components within that specific framework — and the relations between them. Crucially, a system at one level may function as an element within a higher-order system. For instance, while an atom is a system composed of a positively charged nucleus and negatively charged electrons, it simultaneously operates as a single element within a complex molecular system. The stable relations and interactions that bind these elements constitute the system's structure.

Furthermore, natural systems are not mere aggregations of components but unified wholes characterized by mereological emergence (holism). The system is greater than the sum of its parts, exhibiting novel properties and qualities absent in its isolated components. For example, a random assortment of timber, bricks, and cement lacks the structural unity of a house. When these same materials are

systematically ordered into a home, an emergent property arises: the capacity to provide shelter and habitation.

The structural architecture of the material world is conventionally divided into distinct levels of organization, each governed by unique properties and nomological laws. Science investigates these **strata** through specialized disciplinary frameworks:

- **inanimate nature**: spans from the quantum vacuum and elementary particles to atoms, molecules, macroscopic bodies (solid, liquid, and gaseous states), planets, stars, galaxies, and the metagalaxy;

- **living nature**: ascends from biological macromolecules and cells to multicellular organisms, populations, biocenoses, biogeocenoses, and the global biosphere;

- **the social world**: encompasses individuals, families, social strata, nations, and sovereign states.

2.1.3. THE SPATIOTEMPORAL ORGANIZATION OF BEING:

ABSOLUTE, RELATIONAL, AND SCIENTIFIC FRAMEWORKS OF SPACE AND TIME

Motion, understood as the continuous interaction and transformation of all material systems, unfolds inherently within the dimensions of space and time. Through spatiotemporal organization, the cosmos becomes differentiated into discrete constituent parts and elements; without this structural medium, interaction would lack a framework, and change would lack a domain.

Space is the mode of being that expresses the extension, structural organization, and mutual arrangement of material entities. Viewed through the lens of continuity, a material object's spatial definition manifests as extension across three dimensions (length, width, and height). Conversely, viewed through the lens of discontinuity (discreteness), its spatial definition manifests as a configuration determined by the topological positions of elements within the system.

Time is the mode of being that characterizes the duration of existence and the succession of states within material objects. Duration represents the continuity of an entity's existence insofar as it retains its essential properties. When evaluated relative to other objects, the duration of any given material entity is expressed through relationships of simultaneity (synchrony) or succession (diachrony). Historically, diverse conceptualizations of space and time in philosophy and the natural sciences have oscillated between two mutually exclusive paradigms: *the substantial and the relational approaches*.

The substantial approach treats space and time as independent, self-subsisting entities that exist eternally and autonomously from matter — rendering them absolute. This view was championed by Democritus, Epicurus, Giordano Bruno, Galileo Galilei, and Isaac Newton. Within this framework, space is identical to a void: a universal, immutable receptacle hosting an aggregate of

atoms or bodies. It is entirely homogeneous and infinite. Similarly, time is interpreted as an evenly flowing, pure duration within which static or moving bodies are positioned. From the eighteenth to the late nineteenth century, this absolutist conception maintained a dominant position in natural philosophy and physics.

In contrast, *the relational approach* conceptualizes space and time as derivative properties or modes of existence inherent to things. This paradigm originates with Aristotle, who denied the existence of a vacuum, interpreting space instead as the totality of place (topos) occupied by real objects, and tying time directly to the measurement of motion. This approach was further refined by René Descartes, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, and G. W. F. Hegel. However, its definitive empirical and theoretical foundation was established by twentieth-century physics through the work of Henri Poincaré, Hendrik Lorentz, and, fundamentally, Albert Einstein's theory of relativity.

By the turn of the twentieth century, experimental advancements in electrodynamics led to Maxwell's equations, which demonstrated that the speed of light in a vacuum is an invariant constant ($c \approx 300,000$ km/s). This invariance directly contradicted the Galilean transformations of classical mechanics. To resolve this theoretical impasse, Poincaré formulated the principle of relativity, while Lorentz developed the mathematical transformations for coordinate systems in relative motion. These Lorentz transformations revealed that transitioning between reference frames requires modifying not only spatial coordinates but time itself.

Building upon these insights, Einstein's Special Theory of Relativity (STR) demonstrates that the spatiotemporal properties of an object vary depending on its velocity. According to STR, time dilates within a moving frame of reference relative to a frame at rest, while spatial dimensions undergo length contraction along the axis of motion as velocity approaches the speed of light. Consequently, every reference frame possesses its own distinct local space and time, invalidating the notion of a single cosmic time identical for all observers. Furthermore, STR posits that relativistic mass increases indefinitely as an object approaches light speed, requiring a corresponding increase in kinetic energy. This culminated in Einstein's 1907 formulation of the mass-energy equivalence principle, expressed by the landmark equation ($E = mc^2$), which signifies that mass and energy are intrinsically transmutable. In his General Theory of Relativity (GTR), Einstein extended these principles to accelerating frames, concluding that the gravitational field generated by mass-energy curves the geometry of spacetime, and that greater gravitational potentials cause time to elapse more slowly (gravitational time dilation).

The theory of relativity is not merely a physical paradigm but an epistemological shift that affirms the indissoluble unity of spacetime and moving matter. It follows that every distinct form of material motion is characterized by specific spatiotemporal structures. For example, the spatial

organization of living systems is investigated by morphological disciplines such as anatomy, histology, cytology, and embryology. In these fields, the material instantiation of space is articulated through cell theory, theories of multicellularity, primary and secondary morphogenesis, and models of submicroscopic organelle architecture. Ultimately, the structural layout of organs, the mereological relation of parts to the whole, and the duration, sequence, and rhythm of biochemical and physiological processes — that is, the architecture of biological space and time — are driven by evolutionary adaptation. Through teleonomic evolution, organisms have developed plastic mechanisms to synchronize internal processes with the geophysical rhythms of the natural world, aligning periods of high metabolic activity with optimal environmental conditions.

The systematic study of this temporal organization in living systems is conducted by chronobiology and chronomedicine, which treat biological rhythms as primary regulatory mechanisms of physiological functioning. Mapping these biorhythms in response to ecological variables allows medicine to optimize disease prevention, diagnosis, and therapeutics. Crucially, by examining how bodily sensitivity to chemical agents fluctuates over time, chronopharmacology develops precisely timed drug delivery schedules that capitalize on the peak activity phases of human biological rhythms.

Philosophically, a distinction must be maintained between *real*, *perceptual*, and *conceptual space and time*:

- ***real space and time*** characterize the objective, mind-independent spatiotemporal relations of entities existing in themselves (an sich);

- ***perceptual space and time*** belong to human phenomenology, serving as the subjective, sensory-mediated frameworks through which consciousness experiences the empirical world;

- ***conceptual space and time*** are theoretical constructs, scientific models, and mathematical formalisms used by distinct disciplines to reconstruct reality and assemble a coherent scientific picture of the world.

As a core category of existence, time registers both duration and sequentiality. On a macro-level, ***historical time*** measures systemic transformations, societal processes, and civilizational eras. It is characterized by historical irreversibility and an asymmetric vector directed from the past toward the future, tracking the succession of generations, shifting social structures, and economic or cultural evolutions. Conversely, ***psychological time*** denotes the subjective phenomenological experience of the past, present, and future, fluctuating according to internal cognitive states, affective values, and individual existential perceptions. Ultimately, historical time serves to conceptualize the irreversible mutability of human society, rendering time inseparable from the dynamics of change that define life itself.

2.1.4. THE CONCEPT OF NATURE: THE HISTORICAL AND EPISTEMOLOGICAL EVOLUTION OF IDEAS ABOUT THE NATURAL WORLD IN PHILOSOPHY AND SCIENCE

The philosophy of nature (natural philosophy) constitutes a distinct branch of philosophical inquiry dedicated to synthesizing and systematizing the collective knowledge, ontological models, and conceptual paradigms regarding the natural world available at a specific historical juncture. The concept of “nature” itself encompasses several primary semantic dimensions:

1) **the totalizing dimension:** nature as the totality of existence. In this unrestricted sense, nature serves as a synonym for the universe or the cosmos, subsuming human society and culture as constituent sub-systems;

2) **the antithetical dimension:** nature as that which stands opposed to society, technology, and culture. Here, it denotes the biophysical environment and habitat of humanity, encompassing both inanimate matter and living ecosystems;

3) **the epistemological dimension:** nature as the formal object of inquiry within the natural sciences (such as physics, chemistry, and biology).

Every historical epoch has generated fundamentally divergent paradigms concerning the essence of nature and the place of humanity within it. **In Eastern traditions**, cosmological models dominated that posited a profound, organic unity among the divine, nature (the macrocosm), and the human being (the microcosm). This holistic view is rooted in early mythological frameworks, such as the Vedic *Hymn to Purusha (Purusha Sukta)*, wherein the gods sacrifice the primordial cosmic man, Purusha, fracturing his anatomy to generate the physical universe, its natural laws, and all sentient life.

Similarly, systems such as Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, and Taoism operate on the foundational premise that humanity is not ontologically separated from nature, but is rather an integrated, microscopic component of a vast cosmic whole. This worldview fostered an attitude of reverence, stewardship, and ecological piety. Jainism, for instance, radicalizes this veneration of the natural world through the ethical imperative of *ahimsa* (absolute non-injury toward sentient life). Within the Jain metaphysical framework, every living entity possesses a soul (*jiva*); consequently, causing harm — even inadvertently — accumulates negative *karma*, thereby impeding spiritual liberation.

A radically different conceptualization of nature emerged during classical antiquity. **In ancient Greece**, nature was designated by the term *physis* (the etymological root of “physics”), signifying the inherent principle of growth and the intrinsic order of things. For the Greeks, nature was coextensive with the *Cosmos* — a well-ordered, beautiful, and rational whole. Crucially, pre-Socratic and classical Greek thinkers shifted the paradigm: nature ceased to be merely an object of religious mythologization and mythic worship, becoming an object of rational, empirical inquiry. Behind the phenomenal mysteries of

the natural world, Greek philosophers sought to uncover underlying natural laws (*nomoi*) and rational causes (*aitiai*). While antiquity produced brilliant insights, it also institutionalized enduring errors — such as the Ptolemaic geocentric model — which nevertheless structured cosmological understanding and scientific inquiry for over a millennium.

During the Middle Ages, the metaphysical status of nature was entirely mediated by monotheistic theology. On the one hand, nature was conceptualized as a divine artifact — the *Liber Naturae* (the “Book of Nature”) — a secondary revelation alongside the Holy Scriptures, wherein God inscribed cryptic signs of His wisdom for human contemplation. On the other hand, medieval scholasticism established a strict ontological hierarchy: humanity was elevated radically above the rest of the created natural order by virtue of possessing an immortal, rational soul (*anima rationalis*), which was denied to non-human flora and fauna.

Renaissance humanism shifted this trajectory by celebrating the aesthetic sublime, immanent beauty, and mathematical harmony of nature. While making nature an object of aesthetic contemplation, Renaissance thinkers simultaneously laid the groundwork for the anthropocentric subjugation of nature to human reason. In contemporary ecological philosophy, this specific shift is frequently identified as the ideological genesis of the Anthropocene; the uncritical belief in humanity’s limitless dominion over the natural world directly precipitated the modern ecological crises brought about by the instrumental exploitation of natural resources.

With the scientific revolution of **the early modern period**, the philosophy of nature transitioned to a rigorously mechanistic paradigm, catalyzed by breakthroughs in classical mechanics and physics. For foundational figures such as Francis Bacon, Galileo Galilei, René Descartes, and Isaac Newton, nature was re-conceptualized as a gargantuan machine — a cosmic clockwork designed by a divine engineer, operating strictly under deterministic physical laws. Johannes Kepler captured this paradigm shift explicitly, writing: “*My aim is to show that the celestial machine is to be likened not to a divine organism, but rather to a clockwork.*” Concurrently, Cartesian dualism stripped nature of any intrinsic teleology or sentience; Descartes famously relegated non-human animals to the status of biological automata (*machinae animatae*), lacking consciousness and existing purely as resources instrumental to human utility.

The geopolitical and ecological realities of **the twentieth and twenty-first centuries** have forced a profound re-evaluation of these modern mechanistic paradigms. Faced with the imminent threat of anthropogenic climate change, ecological collapse, and systemic social crises, contemporary thinkers are compelled to deconstruct historical models of domination and articulate new, sustainable frameworks for metabolic and ethical interaction with the natural world.

2.1.5. THE BIOSPHERE AND THE NOOSPHERE: THE COEVOLUTIONARY IMPERATIVE, ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS, AND THE ECOLOGICAL VALUES OF CONTEMPORARY CIVILIZATION

The biosphere constitutes a central concept in the modern philosophy of nature. Although the French biologist J. B. Lamarck first coined the term in 1804, it was initially understood to mean the totality of all living organisms inhabiting the planet — literally, the “sphere of life.”

A novel philosophical dimension was later introduced by the Russian scientist V. I. Vernadsky, notably in his work *Scientific Thought as a Planetary Phenomenon* (1977). As the founder of biogeochemistry — a discipline designed to integrate biology, geology, and chemistry — Vernadsky conceptualized the biosphere as a distinct planetary shell or environment wherein “living matter” (the sum total of all living organisms) is concentrated.

Vernadsky’s foundational premise is that nothing exists autonomously in nature; rather, all processes are fundamentally interconnected. Within this framework, the biosphere operates as a complex, cyclically developing system in which every component is inextricably linked to, and continuous with, the others. Inert matter and living organisms are inseparable, engaged in a perpetual exchange of matter and energy. As Vernadsky observes: “No single living organism exists in a free state on Earth. All these organisms are inextricably and continuously connected, primarily by nutrition and respiration, with the material and energy environment surrounding them. Outside of it, in natural conditions, they cannot exist.” Consequently, while living organisms constitute only a fraction of the planet’s total mass, they are gradually integrated into, and drive, all major planetary processes.

Living matter is distinguished from inert matter by its capacity for evolution, defined here as the inherent potential for development and optimization. In contrast, inanimate nature changes primarily under the influence of biotic forces. Drawing upon the work of Charles Darwin, Vernadsky demonstrates that organic evolution trends toward the cephalization and advancement of the central nervous system. Because humanity represents the apex of this evolutionary trajectory, the development and future of the planet are increasingly tethered to human agency.

Vernadsky recognized that in the twentieth century, humanity had achieved a level of development enabling it to act as a new “geological force” capable of deliberately altering the global landscape. To describe this unprecedented planetary state, Vernadsky adopted the term “noosphere” — originally proposed by the French mathematician É. Le Roy and the paleontologist T. de Chardin. Derived from the Greek for “sphere of reason,” the noosphere denotes more than merely a habitat dominated by humans; it signifies a domain where humanity rationally transforms nature while maintaining ecological equilibrium.

Vernadsky identified several critical *criteria for the realization of the noosphere*:

- the global dispersion of the human population and the advent of space exploration;
- the development of global communication systems that unify humanity;
- the discovery and exploitation of novel energy sources;
- the institutionalization of democracy, the realization of human equality, and the cessation of geopolitical conflicts;
- the widespread democratization of, and popular engagement with, scientific inquiry;
- the rational transformation of nature to serve the collective interests of humanity.

To date, many of the foundational principles proposed by V. I. Vernadsky remain unrealized. On the contrary, predatory exploitation of natural resources has precipitated an array of anthropogenic crises — including widespread air, soil, and water pollution, anthropogenic climate change, glacial retreat, and accelerated biodiversity loss. These issues are classified as “global” precisely because they transcend localized territories and threaten the planetary ecosystem as a whole.

The imperative for scientists to critically evaluate the consequences of technological and scientific progress first gained prominence in the late 1960s. In 1968, a transnational group of European scientists and public intellectuals established the Club of Rome to investigate these systemic global crises. Their seminal 1972 report, *The Limits to Growth* — authored by the American scientists Donella and Dennis Meadows — profoundly unsettled the public sphere. Utilizing early computer modeling, the researchers demonstrated that if exponential population growth and industrial expansion continued unchecked, resource depletion would accelerate sharply alongside exponential environmental degradation, culminating in a systemic ecological and social collapse. Subsequent reports and initiatives by the Club of Rome successfully shifted public consciousness toward environmental conservation.

This heightened ecological awareness catalyzed the emergence of new institutional actors, such as Greenpeace (1971) and various political Green parties, alongside the conceptual development of *ecohumanism*. Ecohumanism structurally de-centers the human subject, placing the intrinsic value of nature at the core of philosophical inquiry and advocating for environmental stewardship. In 1992, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro formalized the paradigm of sustainable development. Within this framework, *sustainable development* denotes mitigating human impact to a threshold that allows the biosphere to preserve its regenerative and homeostatic capacities. This strategy mandates a prospective environmental impact assessment for all scientific, industrial, and social initiatives, requiring the rejection of projects that inflict irreparable ecological harm. On a pragmatic level, sustainability entails resource conservation, systemic waste recycling, and

a transition to renewable energy matrices such as solar and wind power. Driven by these global mandates, numerous nation-states have instituted comprehensive environmental monitoring systems and national sustainability frameworks, including the Republic of Belarus.

Under contemporary conditions, *the concept of human-nature co-evolution* has assumed a critical philosophical role. Developed theoretically by the Russian scientists N. V. Timofeev-Resovsky and N. N. Moiseev, the principle of co-evolution dictates that as humanity actively modifies nature, it must recursively transform its own socio-cultural behaviors to align with ecological boundaries. Moiseev argued that co-evolution is contingent upon the formulation of a distinct ecological ethics (eco-ethics) designed to regulate human conduct toward both the biophysical environment and other human beings. Moiseev articulated several *core tenets of eco-ethics*:

- human interaction with the environment must be grounded in an empirical understanding of ecological laws;
- intergenerational justice must guide current action, ensuring the well-being of future generations;
- resource consumption must be structurally calibrated to total population size;
- resource allocation quotas must be determined by scientific consensus rather than political expedience.

Contemporary environmental ethics is intrinsically linked to *bioethics*, a field that emerged primarily in response to rapid technological acceleration. The advent of advanced biotechnologies and medical interventions has generated complex dilemmas regarding the ethical justification of scientific research and the distributive justice of allocating scarce medical resources. A paradigmatic historical example occurred in 1961 at the Seattle Artificial Kidney Center, where seven terminal patients competed for a single dialysis machine: a child, a thirty-five-year-old mother of eight, and five men of varying ages (ranging from thirty to sixty-five). To resolve this allocative dilemma, clinicians established a multidisciplinary selection committee comprising representatives from medicine, theology, and jurisprudence. This body is widely recognized as the institutional prototype for modern research and clinical ethics committees.

Formally defined, *bioethics* is the philosophical study of the moral principles governing human agency within biological science and medicine. The term was coined in 1969 by the American oncologist V. R. Potter, who envisioned it as an interdisciplinary bridge uniting the natural sciences and the humanities. Potter conceptualized this new framework as a “science of survival” indispensable for preserving the planet and safeguarding global biodiversity.

By definition, modern bioethics is interdisciplinary — situated at the intersection of the humanities, life sciences, and law — and possesses a distinct public status that engages scientific experts, medical practitioners, and civic society alike.

The contemporary scope of bioethics encompasses *several primary domains*:

- “open” normative and ontological inquiries, including the ethical evaluation of euthanasia, abortion, and reproductive cloning;
- the formulation of deontological and communicative standards governing the relationships between physicians and patients, as well as among researchers themselves;
- the development of specialized ethical protocols within discrete medical subfields, particularly regarding the treatment of dying, HIV-positive, and psychiatrically vulnerable patient populations;
- the construction of robust legal and regulatory frameworks to protect the fundamental rights of human subjects and animal models participating in clinical and scientific research.

In contemporary developed societies, institutional ethics committees are integrated into research universities and medical centers to adjudicate normative disputes and enforce ethical compliance. Ultimately, the advancement of genuine scientific inquiry remains structurally impossible without a rigorous, humane commitment to the dignity of human beings, society, and the broader natural world.

TRAINING MATERIAL

Exercise 1. Read the excerpt from the primary source and answer the questions.

***F. Engels* Dialectics of Nature¹⁶**

All motion is bound up with some change of place, whether it be change of place of heavenly bodies, terrestrial masses, molecules, atoms, or ether particles. The higher the form of motion, the smaller this change of place. It in no way exhausts the nature of the motion concerned, but it is inseparable from the motion. Therefore, it has to be investigated before anything else.

The whole of nature accessible to us forms a system, an interconnected totality of bodies, and by bodies we understand here all material existence extending from stars to atoms, and indeed right to ether particles, in so far as one grants the existence of the last named. In the fact that these bodies are interconnected is already included that they react on one another, and it is precisely this mutual reaction that constitutes motion. It already becomes evident here that matter is unthinkable without motion. And if, in addition, matter confronts us as something given, equally uncreatable as indestructible, it follows that motion also is as uncreatable as indestructible. It became impossible to reject this conclusion as soon as it was recognized that the universe is a system,

¹⁶ Engels, F. *Dialectics of nature* / F. Engels. – M. : Progress Publisher, 1986. – P. 70.

an interconnection of bodies. And since this recognition had been reached by philosophy long before it came into effective operation in natural science, it is explicable why philosophy, fully two hundred years before natural science, drew the conclusion of the uncreatability and indestructibility of motion.

Questions:

1. According to the text, what is the relationship between the complexity (“higher form”) of motion and the physical change of place?
2. How does Engels define the connection between matter and motion, and what conclusion does he draw about the origin and lifespan of motion?
3. Why did philosophy manage to conclude that motion is uncreatable and indestructible two centuries before natural science did?

EXERCISES FOR ASSESSING COMPETENCY LEVEL

Exercise 2. Answer the following questions:

1. What is meant by ontology in philosophy?
2. What is the philosophical meaning of the categories of being and non-being?
3. What approaches can be distinguished in the evolution of views on matter?
4. What is the fundamental difference between the substantial and relational concepts of space and time?
5. What is the essence of the concept of the biosphere according to V. I. Vernadsky?
6. What processes does the transition from the biosphere to the noosphere imply? What is the essence of the noosphere?
7. What does the principle of coevolution of man and nature mean, and who proposed it?
8. When and why did the idea of a sustainable development strategy arise, and what is the essence of a national sustainable development strategy?
9. What is ecohumanism?

Exercise 3. Complete the table “Model of Human-Nature Relationship”, and discuss the results in groups.

The model of the relationship between man and nature	Time frame	Main ideas
Mythological model	...	The idea of harmony between man and nature. Domination of nature over man
Religious (Christian) Model	Middle Ages	...
Transitional model (from subjugation of nature to dominance over it)	...	Man rises above nature as the “crown of creation”

The model of the relationship between man and nature	Time frame	Main ideas
Scientific and technical model	Modern times	...
Philosophical humanistic, dialogic model	The 20 th –21st centuries	...

Topics for reports:

1. The category of non-being in the cultural traditions of the East and West.
2. The specificity of virtual being.
3. Concepts of matter in modern natural science.
4. Models of the unity of the world.
5. The concept of global evolutionism in modern philosophy and science.
6. The specificity of social space and time.
7. Spatiotemporal relations in inanimate and animate nature.
8. Neo-romantic and technocratic ideas about the prospects for the ecological development of civilization.
10. The idea of the noosphere in the works of V. I. Vernadsky.
11. The coevolutionary imperative of modern civilization (N. V. Timofeev-Ressovsky, N. N. Moiseev).
12. Global problems in the “Human-Society-Nature” system and scenarios for a possible future.

Aphorisms and statements:

1. Being is, and non-being is not (*Parmenides*).
2. Non-being is the source of all things (*Lao Tzu*).
3. Nothing comes from nothing (*Lucretius*).
4. Nature abhors a vacuum (*Aristotle*).
5. Both matter and consciousness, I must note, are merely convenient symbols for reasoning, rather than truly existing entities (*B. Russell*).
6. Nowadays, the theory of evolution raises about as few doubts as the theory of the Earth’s rotation around the Sun; yet, we have not fully grasped the profound significance of Darwin’s revolution (*R. Dawkins*).
7. What is evolution — a theory, a system, a hypothesis? No, it is much more: it is the fundamental condition to which all theories, hypotheses, and systems must henceforth submit and satisfy if they are to be intelligible and true. Evolution is the light that illuminates all facts, the curve in which all lines must ultimately converge (*T. de Chardin*).
8. To be human means to assume responsibility, not simply to occupy space (*J. Steinbeck*).
9. Time is a mirage; it contracts in moments of happiness and dilates through hours of suffering (*R. Aldington*).

SELF-ASSESSMENT OF TOPIC COMPREHENSION

1. Define what ontology studies:

- a) matter; b) being; c) reality.

2. Name the philosopher who first attempted to pose the problem of being in European philosophy:

- a) Thales; d) Aquinas;
b) Democritus; e) Parmenides;
c) Kant; f) Marx.

3. Identify the category that is the counterpart to the category of “being”:

- a) non-being; b) spirit, matter; c) consciousness.

4. Name the basic forms of being:

- a) being of things; e) being of cosmic objects;
b) being of processes; f) being of a human;
c) being of nature; g) being of society;
d) being of consciousness; h) being of living beings.

5. Indicate the form of being that is considered fundamental in existential philosophy:

- a) being of nature; c) spiritual being;
b) being of a human; d) social being.

TOPIC 2.2

PHILOSOPHICAL UNDERSTANDING OF THE PROBLEM OF DEVELOPMENT. DIALECTICS AND SYNERGETICS

Total lesson time: 2 hours.

Aim: to characterize the philosophical and scientific paradigms undergirding the concept of development.

Objectives:

- to evaluate the ontological distinctions between the concepts of motion and development;
- to trace the historical evolution and structural forms of dialectics;
- to analyze the foundational principles, laws, and categories of dialectics;
- to delineate the core concepts and epistemological frameworks of synergetics.

Questions:

1. The dynamic organization of being: conceptual frameworks of motion and development.
2. Dialectics: the historical and philosophical theory of systemic development.
3. Synergetics: core principles of self-organization and their role in contemporary ontology.

Key concepts: motion, development, progress, regression, dialectics, principles of dialectics, laws of dialectics, categories of dialectics, synergetics, self-organizing systems, open systems, bifurcation, fluctuation.

THEORETICAL MATERIAL

2.2.1. THE DYNAMIC ORGANIZATION OF BEING: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS OF MOTION AND DEVELOPMENT

The category of ***motion*** is among the most foundational in philosophy. However, a critical ontological distinction must be maintained between the concepts of “motion” and “development.”

Motion denotes any modification, transformation, or change occurring within the physical or conceptual world.

Development signifies a specific vector of qualitative transformation that shifts a system either toward progress (characterized by structural complication, differentiation, and optimization) or toward regress (manifesting as degradation, simplification, and dissolution).

In conjunction with motion and development, ***the concept of an “equilibrium state”*** is vital for understanding systemic architecture. The material world possesses an inherent tendency to settle, periodically, into states of dynamic equilibrium or homeostasis — conceptually understood as relative rest. Through homeostasis, material and organic systems buffer external environmental disturbances, thereby preserving their structural integrity and essential properties. Consequently, relative rest (homeostasis) and constant motion (variability) function as dialectically inseparable and necessary attributes of physical reality.

Contemporary science systematically applies these frameworks to articulate the structural dynamics of nature and society, culminating in the widespread adoption of the principle of global evolutionism. Historically, the concept of evolution emerged within nineteenth-century biology to explain speciation and human origins through the mechanisms of mutation, heredity, and natural selection. Subsequently, the social sciences assimilated this evolutionary paradigm to demonstrate how human societies adapt, increase in complexity, and optimize their survival strategies over time. By the twentieth century, the physical sciences likewise embraced evolutionary models. This paradigm shift gave rise to evolutionary chemistry — which investigates the prebiotic genesis and self-organization of chemical compounds — and revolutionized astrophysics by framing the cosmos as an expanding, historically developing entity initiated by the Big Bang. Ultimately, the principle of global evolutionism posits that the universe, from quantum scales to the metagalaxy, operates as a singular, continuous, and dynamically developing meta-system driven by ongoing evolutionary mechanisms.

2.2.2. DIALECTICS: THE HISTORICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL THEORY OF SYSTEMIC DEVELOPMENT

Within philosophy, the sub-discipline specifically dedicated to investigating the nature, mechanisms, and laws of development is known as ***dialectics*** (derived from the Greek *dialektikē*, meaning “the art of discourse” or “conversation”). The historical trajectory of dialectical thought is conventionally divided into ***three foundational epochs***:

1. Naive or spontaneous dialectics. During antiquity, early thinkers formulated developmental models that were intuitive yet un-systematized. Heraclitus of Ephesus is traditionally recognized as the inaugural dialectician; he posited that all existence is in a state of perpetual flux (*panta rhei*) and that the cosmos is governed by the structural tension and unity of opposites (e.g., life and death, good and evil).

Subsequently, Socrates integrated dialectics into his interrogative methodology (the Socratic elenchus), transforming it into a discursive technique wherein exposing internal contradictions within an interlocutor’s presuppositions serves as a catalyst for uncovering objective truth. Plato expanded this paradigm, defining dialectics as a rigorous method of conceptual division (*diairesis*) and collection (*synagoge*) aimed at apprehending the immutable essence of the Forms.

2. Hegelian objective idealism. The second major epoch was established by G. W. F. Hegel, who transformed dialectics into a comprehensive speculative system and an absolute method of cognition. Hegelian dialectics is fundamentally idealistic because it charts the self-development of the Absolute Spirit (*Geist*) as it externalizes itself into nature and historical reality. Within this framework, abstract logical categories dynamically transition into their opposing determinations: potentiality actualizes into reality, causality yields to reciprocity, and quantity gives rise to quality.

Hegel modeled this phenomenological development through a triadic movement often summarized as ***thesis*** (affirmation), ***antithesis*** (negation), and ***synthesis*** (the sublation, or *Aufhebung*, which simultaneously negates, preserves, and elevates the contradiction). As an epistemology, Hegelian dialectics rejects static, dogmatic truths; it treats truth as inherently historical, conceptualizing human knowledge as an open-ended evolution from relative certainty toward Absolute Knowledge.

3. Materialist dialectics. The third epoch emerged through the Marxist interventions of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. By inverting Hegel’s idealistic framework, they grounded dialectical laws within the material world, analyzing physics, biology, and — primarily — the socio-economic structures of human history (historical materialism). Engels systematically codified this materialist paradigm into ***three fundamental nomological laws***:

– ***the law of the unity and conflict of opposites*** posits that material entities and systems are intrinsically constituted by contradictory, mutually exclusive, yet

interdependent tendencies. These opposing forces generate the internal tension that serves as the primary driver of all motion and development;

- ***the law of the transformation of quantitative into qualitative changes*** stipulates that continuous, incremental quantitative modifications within a system eventually reach a critical threshold (a nodal point or measure), triggering an abrupt, discontinuous transformation in the system's core qualitative state. For example, incrementally heating liquid water alters its temperature quantitatively until it hits the critical threshold of 100 °C, causing a phase transition into an entirely new qualitative state: steam;

- ***the law of the negation of the negation*** outlines the spiral trajectory of development. A developing system moves forward by negating its initial state (the first negation) to produce a new form; this new form is subsequently negated by an emergent stage (the second negation, or the negation of the negation). Rather than returning to the origin, this second negation integrates the structural achievements of the previous phases, producing a more advanced, highly differentiated stage of development.

2.2.3. SYNERGETICS: CORE PRINCIPLES OF SELF-ORGANIZATION AND THEIR ROLE IN CONTEMPORARY ONTOLOGY

Synergetics (complex systems theory) constitutes an interdisciplinary scientific and philosophical paradigm dedicated to uncovering the universal principles of spatiotemporal self-organization within open, non-linear systems. Formulated in the 1970s through the pioneering research of Hermann Haken, Ilya Prigogine, and Isabelle Stengers, synergetics models how order spontaneously emerges out of chaos.

At the core of this paradigm is the process of self-organization: the spontaneous generation of coherent macroscopic structures within complex, non-linear systems operating far from thermodynamic equilibrium. When an open system is driven beyond a critical threshold, it arrives at a ***bifurcation point*** — a localized zone of radical instability where its deterministic trajectory fractures. At this critical juncture, minor random perturbations (***fluctuations***) are exponentially amplified rather than suppressed. Consequently, the future evolutionary trajectory of the system becomes inherently unpredictable; it will either transition into a higher state of structural differentiation and complexity or collapse into a state of chaotic dissolution.

Core analytical concepts of synergetics are the following:

1. ***Complexity and emergent macroscopic ordering***: in synergetics, complexity is defined as a system's intrinsic capacity for self-organization, whereby coordinated microscopic interactions give rise to highly ordered, large-scale spatiotemporal patterns. A classic empirical instantiation of this principle occurs in fluid dynamics through ***Bénard convection instability***. When a thin, horizontal layer of liquid is subjected to a supercritical vertical temperature

gradient, the random, chaotic movement of individual molecules suddenly self-organizes into a highly symmetric macroscopic lattice of hexagonal convection cells (Bénard cells), each comprising roughly (10^{21}) molecules. In similarly structured chemically non-equilibrium thin layers, this self-organization manifests as moving wave fronts generated by localized, stochastically distributed wave sources (“pacemakers”), forming visible geometric patterns of concentric targets, spirals, and multi-step scroll waves;

2. The Belousov-Zhabotinsky (BZ) reaction and temporal oscillations: the investigation of the BZ reaction — the catalytic oxidation of malonic acid by potassium bromate — served as a cornerstone for the conceptual foundation of synergetics. The macroscopic manifestation of this non-equilibrium chemical process is popularly termed a “*chemical clock*.” Rather than progressing monotonically toward chemical equilibrium, the solution exhibits regular temporal oscillations, alternating cyclically between distinct states (e.g., from red to blue) and establishing intricate, multi-armed spiral or concentric spatial configurations depending on the specific catalyst used (such as manganese, cerium, or ferroin);

3. Spontaneous structure formation: self-organization denotes the autonomous establishment of stable, regular configurations in non-equilibrium systems without the intervention of an external organizing agent. Structure refers to the specific configuration and internal grammar of relations among a system’s constituent elements. In real-world systems, these present as spatial, temporal, or integrated spatiotemporal structures. The process of structure formation systematically decreases the system’s geometric degree of symmetry while driving a localized reduction in entropy;

4. Thermodynamics of open systems: an open system is a thermodynamic framework that continuously exchanges matter, energy, momentum, and information with its external environment. Biological organisms, human beings, and socio-economic networks are paradigmatic examples of open systems. Under slow, quasi-static environmental shifts, an open system remains in a state of local equilibrium. However, when operating under non-equilibrium conditions, it can sustain stable, stationary non-equilibrium states characterized by constant entropy, provided that the internal production of entropy is minimized and effectively exported out of the system. *Open systems exhibit several key ontological properties:*

- **coherence:** the highly coordinated, synchronized behavior of all constituent parts;
- **bifurcation:** distinct branching points of decision and trajectory divergence;
- **emergence:** the structural generation of holistic properties absent in the isolated components;
- **hierarchy:** the architecture of nested, interconnected structural strata;
- **stationarity:** the temporal constancy of systemic parameters over a given duration;

– **stability**: the capacity to return to a baseline state following minor external perturbations;

– **inertia**: structural resistance to environmental destabilization.

5. The Prigogine-Glansdorff evolution criterion: this thermodynamic principle stipulates that under non-equilibrium conditions, the internal thermodynamic forces of a system adjust in such a manner that the rate of total entropy production systematically tends toward a minimum value.

In nature, irreversible processes are bifurcated into two distinct classes:

– **near-equilibrium dissipation**: the inexorable destruction of structure and decay toward maximum entropy near the equilibrium position — a universal property of isolated or closed systems;

– **far-from-equilibrium self-organization**: the spontaneous emergence of coherent structures far from the equilibrium position within open systems characterized by non-linear internal dynamics and supercritical external parameters.

Prigogine termed these phenomena **dissipative structures**. A dissipative structure is a spatially or temporally ordered state of a system, typically possessing a lower degree of symmetry than its initial homogenous state. It arises within non-linear regimes when macroscopic instabilities develop in a dissipative medium, irreversibly transforming the energy of localized motions or fields into macro-coordinated configurations. *Dissipative structures are categorized into four primary typologies:*

– **spatially inhomogeneous formations** (turing structures);

– **time-periodic structures** (self-sustained oscillations);

– **spatiotemporal waves** (propagation fields);

– **bistable structures** (analogous to a systemic “trigger”).

To preserve this **stationary non-equilibrium state**, the system requires a continuous influx of negative entropy (negentropy) and matter from the environment to counteract internal entropy production — where entropy serves as the thermodynamic measure of irreversible energy dissipation.

Conversely, **chaos** represents a highly complex, irregular, and non-periodic modification of a system’s state across space or time. **Deterministic (dynamic) chaos** arises within non-linear dynamic systems that remain governed by deterministic laws yet exhibit behavior resembling a purely stochastic process. This occurs due to an extreme **sensitivity to initial conditions** (the “butterfly effect”), where microscopic variations exponentially alter the system’s final macroscopic state — a reality that explains the inherent limitations of long-term meteorological weather forecasting.

In phase space, deterministic chaos is driven by the mixing of system trajectories. Crucially, if the exponential parameters governing this transition from periodic to chaotic behavior are identified, dynamic chaos can be algorithmically controlled. This principle explains how chaotic states manifest within economic and political systems, and how their sudden phase transitions into new regular structures (such as revolutions) occur. On an atomic scale,

quantum chaos describes analogous irregular behaviors within quantum-mechanical systems characterized by prolonged transition states.

Finally, the components of a non-linear system can evolve naturally toward a critical boundary where a minor localized perturbation triggers a cascading chain reaction affecting the entire infrastructure. This phenomenon is modeled by the classic **sandpile paradigm**: as individual grains of sand are slowly and uniformly dropped onto a flat surface, the pile grows until its slope hits a critical threshold. At this exact juncture, the system enters a state of **self-organized criticality (SOC)**, where the addition of a single, identical grain of sand triggers a massive, unpredictable avalanche that collapses the entire slope.

TRAINING MATERIAL

Exercise 1. Read the excerpt from the primary source and answer the questions.

I. Prigogine, I. Stengers

Order out of chaos

Man's new dialogue with nature¹⁷

Our vision of nature is undergoing a radical change toward the multiple, the temporal, and the complex. For a long time, a mechanistic world view dominated Western science. In this view the world appeared as a vast automaton. We now understand that we live in a pluralistic world. It is true that there are phenomena that appear to us as deterministic and reversible, such as the motion of a frictionless pendulum or the motion of the earth around the sun. Reversible processes do not know any privileged direction of time. But there are also irreversible processes that involve an arrow of time. If you bring together two liquids such as water and alcohol, they tend to mix in the forward direction of time as we experience it. We never observe the reverse process, the spontaneous separation of the mixture into pure water and pure alcohol. This is therefore an irreversible process. All of chemistry involves such irreversible processes.

Obviously, in addition to deterministic processes, there must be an element of probability involved in some basic processes, such as, for example, biological evolution or the evolution of human cultures. Even the scientist who is convinced of the validity of deterministic descriptions would probably hesitate to imply that at the very moment of the Big Bang, the moment of the creation of the universe as we know it, the date of the publication of this book was already inscribed in the laws of nature. In the classical view the basic processes of nature were considered to be deterministic and reversible. Processes involving randomness or irreversibility were considered only exceptions. Today we see everywhere the role of irreversible processes, of fluctuations.

¹⁷ Prigogine, I. Order out of chaos. Man's new dialogue with nature / I. Prigogine, I. Stengers. – New York : Bantam Books, Inc., 1984. – P. 27–29.

Although Western science has stimulated an extremely fruitful dialogue between man and nature, some of its cultural consequences have been disastrous. The dichotomy between the “two cultures” is to a large extent due to the conflict between the atemporal view of classical science and the time-oriented view that prevails in a large part of the social sciences and humanities. But in the past few decades, something very dramatic has been happening in science, something as unexpected as the birth of geometry or the grand vision of the cosmos as expressed in Newton’s work. We are becoming more and more conscious of the fact that on all levels, from elementary particles to cosmology, randomness and irreversibility play an ever-increasing role. *Science is rediscovering time.*

This revolution is proceeding on all levels, on the level of elementary particles, in cosmology, and on the level of so called macroscopic physics, which comprises the physics and chemistry of atoms and molecules either taken individually or considered globally as, for example, in the study of liquids or gases. It is perhaps particularly on this macroscopic level that the reconceptualization of science is most easy to follow. Classical dynamics and modern chemistry are going through a period of drastic change. If one asked a physicist a few years ago what physics permits us to explain and which problems remain open, he would have answered that we obviously do not have an adequate understanding of elementary particles or of cosmological evolution but that our knowledge of things in between was pretty satisfactory. Today a growing minority, to which we belong, would not share this optimism: we have only begun to understand the level of nature on which we live, and this is the level on which we have concentrated in this book.

To appreciate the reconceptualization of physics taking place today, we must put it in proper historical perspective. The history of science is far from being a linear unfolding that corresponds to a series of successive approximations toward some intrinsic truth. It is full of contradictions, of unexpected turning points. We have devoted a large portion of this book to the historical pattern followed by Western science, starting with Newton three centuries ago. We have tried to place the history of science in the frame of the history of ideas to integrate it in the evolution of Western culture during the past three centuries. Only in this way can we appreciate the unique moment in which we are presently living.

Our scientific heritage includes two basic questions to which till now no answer was provided. One is the relation between disorder and order. The famous law of increase of entropy describes the world as evolving from order to disorder; still, biological or social evolution shows us the complex emerging from the simple. How is this possible? How can structure arise from disorder? Great progress has been realized in this question. We know now that nonequilibrium, the flow of matter and energy, may be a source of order.

But there is the second question, even more basic: classical or quantum physics describes the world as reversible, as static. In this description there is no evolution, neither to order nor to disorder; the “information,” as may be defined

from dynamics, remains constant in time. Therefore, there is an obvious contradiction between the static view of dynamics and the evolutionary paradigm of thermodynamics. What is irreversibility? What is entropy? Few questions have been discussed more often in the course of the history of science. We begin to be able to give some answers. Order and disorder are complicated notions: the units involved in the static description of dynamics are not the same as those that have to be introduced to achieve the evolutionary paradigm as expressed by the growth of entropy. This transition leads to a new concept of matter, matter that is “active,” as matter leads to irreversible processes and as irreversible processes organize matter.

Questions:

1. What is the fundamental difference between reversible and irreversible processes, and what everyday chemical example do the authors use to illustrate irreversibility?
2. According to the text, what disastrous cultural consequence resulted from the traditional mechanistic worldview, and how does the scientific “rediscovery of time” help resolve it?
3. What major scientific contradiction exists between classical dynamics and thermodynamics, and how does the new concept of “active matter” bridge this gap?

EXERCISES FOR ASSESSING COMPETENCY LEVEL

Exercise 2. Answer the following questions:

1. Define the concepts of motion and development. How are these conceptual frameworks ontologically related?
2. Analyze the philosophical implications of the thesis: “*Motion is absolute; rest is relative.*”
3. Define the concepts of progress and regression. To which domains of existence is the paradigm of progress inapplicable, and what are the core contradictions inherent in scientific and technological advancement?
4. What criteria define progress in clinical medicine, and what systemic contradictions arise from its implementation?
5. Provide comparative examples of evolutionary versus revolutionary development at the strata of organic (living) matter and social matter.
6. What constitutes the formal object of inquiry within dialectics?
7. Delineate and contrast the primary historical forms of dialectical philosophy.
8. Identify and describe the foundational principles and nomological laws of dialectics, providing an illustrative example for each.
9. Elucidate the structural meaning of the main categories of dialectics.
10. What specific structural taxonomies of systems are investigated within the paradigm of synergetics?

11. Define and contextualize the following core concepts of complex systems theory: order, chaos, self-organization, bifurcation, fluctuation, and attractor.

Exercise 3. Complete the table “Principles, laws, and categories of dialectics”.

Principles	Laws	Pared categories of universal connection
The principle of universal connection The principle of development	1. The transition of quantitative changes into qualitative ones and vice versa 2. 3.	Single and universal Cause and effect Necessity and contingency Content and form Essence and phenomenon Possibility and actuality

Exercise 4. Illustrate the laws of dialectics with examples from medical science and practice.

Exercise 5. Complete the table “Comparative analysis of dialectics and synergetics”, discuss the results in groups.

	Dialectics	Synergetics
Essence	Views the world as a holistic process, developing through the struggle of ...	A theory of self-organization that explains the formation of structures in open ...
Sources of development	In dialectics, these are internal ...	In synergetics, these are disequilibrium, ... interactions between elements, and the presence of ... (points of attraction).
Predictability	Seeks logical regularity and the necessity of ...	Emphasizes randomness, ..., and fundamental unpredictability at bifurcation points.
Scope	A philosophical method for understanding ..., society, and thought.	An interdisciplinary method for studying physical, biological, and social ...
Interconnection	Serve as a methodological foundation for ...	Serve as a natural scientific justification for ... principles

Topics for reports:

1. Features of ancient dialectics.
2. Hegel's dialectics: basic concepts.
3. Dialectics: from Marxism to Post-Marxism.
4. Dialectical materialism in Soviet philosophy.
5. “Order from Chaos” as the basis of synergetics thinking.
6. Basic concepts of synergetics.
7. Synergetics and medicine.

Aphorisms and statements:

1. Through not observing what is in the mind of another, a man has seldom been seen to be unhappy; but those who do not observe the movements of their own minds must of necessity be unhappy (*Marcus Aurelius*).
2. The essence of human nature is movement. Complete rest is death (*B. Pascal*).
3. Contradiction is the root of all movement and vitality (*G. W. F. Hegel*).
4. The dialectic of question and answer consists in the fact that every question is inherently an answer that motivates the subsequent question (*H. G. Gadamer*).
5. Progress consists not in replacing an incorrect theory with a correct one, but in replacing one incorrect theory with another incorrect but more refined one (*S. Hawking*).

SELF-ASSESSMENT OF TOPIC COMPREHENSION

1. The philosophical doctrine of the development of being and cognition is called:

- a) dialectics;
- b) metaphysics;
- c) sophistry;
- d) anthropology.

2. The principles of dialectics include:

- a) the principle of universal interconnectedness;
- b) the principle of development;
- c) the principle of causality;
- d) the principle of determinism.

3. Highlight the dialectical source of the self-movement and development of nature, society, and cognition.

4. Which law of dialectics reflects the direction of the development process, the unity of progress and continuity in development, the emergence of the new and the relative repetition of some aspects of the old:

- a) the law of the unity and struggle of opposites;
- b) the law of the negation of the negation;
- c) the law of the transition of quantitative changes to qualitative ones;
- d) the law of conservation of energy;
- e) the law of the relationship between cause and effect.

5. What term denotes lawful irreversible qualitative changes?

6. What is the name of a system that exchanges matter, energy, and information with the environment:

- a) closed; b) isolated; c) equilibrium; d) open.

7. What concept in synergetics denotes a nonequilibrium state of a system that has the properties of a random process?

8. Bifurcation is:

a) a state from which a material object can be transmitted to a whole set of new states;

b) the destruction of a system's structure during evolution;

c) the increase in complexity of a system's structure during evolution;

d) random factors determining the further development of a system.

9. Identify the main concepts of synergetics:

a) essence;

b) phenomenon;

c) form;

d) content;

e) order;

f) chaos;

g) attractor.

SECTION 3 PHILOSOPHICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

TOPIC 3.1 HUMAN PROBLEM IN PHILOSOPHY AND SCIENCE

Total lesson time: 2 hours.

Aim: to characterize the philosophical and scientific paradigms undergirding the problem of human nature and the distinct modes of human existence.

Objectives:

- to delineate the thematic scope and problematic field of philosophical anthropology;
- to elucidate the ontological and normative content of the concept of the human being;
- to explicate the conceptual frameworks that address the multidimensionality of human existence;
- to analyze and contrast the primary strategies for conceptualizing the human being in classical and non-classical philosophy;
- to evaluate the philosophical and scientific models of anthropogenesis;
- to investigate the existential modes and dimensions of human being-in-the-world.

Questions:

1. The human being as an object of philosophical inquiry: the ontological multidimensionality of human existence.
2. Paradigms of human nature: comparative analysis of classical and non-classical strategies in philosophical anthropology.
3. The origins of humanity and culture: contemporary scientific and philosophical frameworks of anthroposociogenesis and culturogenesis.
4. The existential strata of being: fundamental characteristics and modes of human existence.

Key concepts: philosophical anthropology, human being, body, soul, spirit, individual, individuality, personality, human being as a cosmo-bio-socio-spiritual being, biologizing, sociologizing, existential-personalistic, and philosophical-anthropological strategies of human research, anthroposociogenesis, creationism, evolutionism, cultural genesis, activity, creativity, labor, practice, socialization, communication, freedom, the meaning of life, death.

THEORETICAL MATERIAL

3.1.1. THE HUMAN BEING AS AN OBJECT OF PHILOSOPHICAL INQUIRY: THE ONTOLOGICAL MULTIDIMENSIONALITY OF HUMAN EXISTENCE

The comprehension of the essence of human existence stands as one of the definitive, architecture-defining problems of philosophy. Because the articulation of any philosophical inquiry and the subsequent search for its resolution inevitably redirect toward the interrogator, the act of philosophizing is fundamentally bound to the human condition. As the Russian philosopher Nikolai Berdyaev acutely observed: “*Man is a prerequisite for any philosophical knowledge, for man philosophizes about man as well.*”

To understand the human being in its complete integrity and totality, and to construct an all-encompassing concept of humanity, are the foundational tasks of philosophical anthropology (derived from the Greek *anthropos*, meaning “human being,” and *logos*, meaning “doctrine” or “discourse”). Philosophical anthropology operates as the systematic study of the human being, examining its essence, phylogenetic origin, existential meaning, mortality, autonomy, and other primary phenomena of human existence.

The inaugural challenge of philosophical anthropology lies in defining the essence of humanity. Throughout the history of ideas, philosophers have repeatedly sought to isolate a singular, attributive feature of the human species: *Homo sapiens* (the rational agent), *Homo faber* (the tool-making, productive agent), or *Homo symbolicus* (the symbol-creating agent). However, the human being is so radically unique, complex, and structurally contradictory — echoing Thomas Aquinas’s assertion that “*man is, in a certain sense, all things*” — that a concise, universally valid definition of human essence remains elusive. Consequently, contemporary philosophy shifts its analytical focus toward the multi-layered dimensionality of human existence.

The classical triadic model conceptualizes the human being as an integrated unity of three primary dimensions: **body**, **soul**, and **spirit**.

The body represents the external, material dimension of human existence. In philosophy, the body is interpreted not merely as a mechanistic or biological entity governed by anatomical, physiological, and genetic parameters, but as a socio-cultural construct. Through historical development, cultures systematically impose bodily aesthetics, standardize behavioral practices, and regulate or restrict specific somatic expressions.

The soul signifies the internal, psychological dimension of human existence. Historically, the soul has been conceptualized as the animating principle (*anima*) that vitalizes the physical body, as the individual ego (*Ich*) in the unified matrix of sensory-emotional, volitional, and cognitive faculties, or as an immaterial substance capable of maintaining an independent existence beyond physical decay (the paradigm of the immortality of the soul).

The spirit constitutes the highest ontological manifestation of the human being. It reflects the distinct capacity for self-transcendence, enabling the individual to break through the boundaries of immediate, localized existence and enter the domain of universal values (such as Truth, Goodness, Love, and Beauty). Through the spirit, the human being meaningfully transforms both external reality and the self, aligning action with absolute ideals.

In contemporary philosophy and the social sciences, this multidimensionality is mapped through a specific conceptual triad: **the individual**, **individuality**, and **the personality**.

The individual designates the human being as a singular, concrete representative of the human species, serving as the biological and structural carrier of universal human traits.

Individuality denotes the unique, non-repeatable idiosyncrasies, qualitative features, and distinctive attributes that differentiate one human being from all others.

The personality reflects, first and foremost, the ethical and spiritual qualities of a person — namely, autonomy, moral responsibility, creative agency, and inherent dignity.

The development of the personality is intrinsically tied to the internalization of socio-cultural norms, values, and symbolic systems, validating the sociological maxim: “*One is born an individual, but one becomes a person.*” Conversely, the realization of the personality occurs when this unique individuality is externalized through socially significant actions, collaborative practices, and intersubjective communication.

Ultimately, the complexity of humanity is rooted in its structural connection to every domain of being: the universe, living nature, society, and the ideal realm. In this light, the human being is defined as a **cosmo-bio-socio-spiritual entity**. The ancient mythological intuition of the human being as a **microcosm** finds its contemporary scientific and cosmological counterpart in the **anthropic principle**, which establishes a structural link between the fundamental constant parameters of the universe and the emergence of human observers within it. As a biological organism, humanity is bound by the laws of organic nature; as a social agent, the human being assimilates ancestral experience and actualizes itself through intersubjective networks; as a spiritual being, humanity transcends its biological constraints to participate in the ideal world of universal meanings. Entering this spiritual sphere allows the human being to confront the question of its own existential meaning, discovering and actualizing its essential nature in its unique integrity.

3.1.2. PARADIGMS OF HUMAN NATURE: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF CLASSICAL AND NON-CLASSICAL STRATEGIES IN PHILOSOPHICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Attempts to answer the foundational questions — “*What is the human being?*”, “*What is the purpose of existence?*”, and “*How did humanity emerge in*

the world?” — are already observable within the mythological worldview. Syncretic mythological consciousness does not separate humanity from the natural order; instead, it narrates our divine lineage and projects human psychological attributes, volitions, and affects onto natural phenomena and deities (**anthropomorphism**). Furthermore, the mythological worldview is characterized by the attribution of spiritual life to the material world (**animism**) and the positing of a substantial soul (*psyche*) that survives bodily dissolution.

With the genesis of formalized philosophical systems, models of the human being evolved within the traditions of ancient India, China, Greece, and Rome. In these frameworks, the individual was conceptualized as a constituent fragment of nature — a **microcosm** whose essence manifests an impersonal, cosmic World Spirit or Rational Principle (*Brahman*, *Tao*, *Logos*) and who exists as a composite entity of body and soul.

The systematic centering of human nature within ancient Greek philosophy originates with the Sophists and Socrates. Protagoras famously asserted that “*man is the measure of all things*,” while Socrates established the foundational imperative of philosophical reflexivity: “*Know thyself*” (*gnothi seauton*). The definitive classical synthesis is captured in Aristotle’s political ontology, which defines the human being as a **political and rational animal** (*zoon politikon* and *zoon logon echon*). Broadly, classical antiquity conceptualized the individual as a living entity structurally dependent upon the macrocosm, the *polis*, and the state, and as a rational agent capable of aligning lifestyle with universal reason (*Logos*).

Medieval philosophy, grounded in Christian revelation, restructured this ontology by defining the human being as the **image and likeness of God** (*imago Dei*). Created *ex nihilo*, the human being is conceptualized as a person (*persona*) possessing an immortal soul, endowed with free will and rationality, and granted creative agency. Consequently, humanity occupies a transcendent position above the rest of the created order, tasked with providential dominion over it.

The anthropocentrism and humanism of the Renaissance repositioned the individual as the sovereign epicenter of the cosmos. Renaissance thinkers argued that human dignity resides precisely in our ontological plasticity — the unique capacity of the individual to self-author and cultivate whatever nature they choose. Thus, individuality, autonomy, absolute creative potential, and the existential right to terrestrial happiness became the defining metrics of the human being.

Early modern philosophy institutionalized a rigorously **rationalistic interpretation** of human nature. The essential core of humanity was restricted to cognitive processing and speculative reasoning, establishing self-consciousness as the singular, foundational epistemic proof of existence, encapsulated in René Descartes’s foundational dictum: “*I think, therefore I am*” (*Cogito, ergo sum*). This framework manifested as a profound metaphysical dualism, contrasting the physical body — conceptualized as a deterministic mechanism bound by natural necessity — with the immaterial soul, which was identified with pure thought, reflexivity, and moral freedom.

While the conceptual vocabulary established by classical philosophy persists, the nineteenth and twentieth centuries witnessed an “**anthropological turn**” that formalised four contemporary interpretive strategies within non-classical philosophy: **naturalization**, **sociological**, **existential-personalist**, and **philosophical-anthropological (synthetic)** paradigms.

The naturalization strategy. This paradigm treats the human being strictly as a biological entity — a specialized animal (*Homo sapiens*) produced by the evolution of the natural world and governed entirely by biophysical, biochemical, and genetic laws. The naturalization strategy is bifurcated into two antithetical conclusions:

- **the optimistic evolutionary model** was framed by positivism, behaviorism, and sociobiology. It positions humanity as the “crown of nature” — the most structurally complex and optimized organism within the biosphere;

- **the deficient evolutionary model** was championed by Friedrich Nietzsche, Sigmund Freud, and Arnold Gehlen. It diagnoses the human being as an evolutionary dead end — a biologically vulnerable, structurally unspecialized, and instinctually “deficient animal” (*Mängelwesen*).

The sociological strategy. Rooted in Marxism and structuralism, this approach defines the individual primarily as an ensemble of social relations and a product of historical interactions. Karl Marx famously encapsulated this paradigm by stating that human essence “*is the ensemble of the social relations.*” Consequently, the socio-historical matrix, the mode of production, and the institutional frameworks that an individual internalizes through education and labor dictate human consciousness and behavior. From this premise, Marxist philosophy concludes that the emancipation or modification of the human being is structurally impossible without the revolutionary transformation of society itself.

The existential-personalist strategy. Faced with the twentieth-century crisis of alienation and the perceived collapse of metaphysical foundations, this strategy emphasizes the absolute uniqueness, historical contingency, and concreteness of the individual, resisting reduction to biological or social typologies.

Existentialism (Martin Heidegger, Albert Camus, Jean-Paul Sartre, Karl Jaspers) operates on the axiom that “**existence precedes essence.**” The human being is initially “thrown into the world” (*Geworfenheit*) without any predetermined teleology or essential nature. Consequently, the individual must continuously self-author through radical freedom of choice and action. For existentialists, the authentic self is uncovered through boundary situations (*Grenzsituationen*), such as being-toward-death, anxiety, and the defiant rebellion against the absurd.

Personalism (Nikolai Berdyaev, Lev Shestov, Emmanuel Mounier) champions the absolute value of the Persona against the atomizing and homogenizing pressures of modern mass society (*Das Man*). Personalists argue that authentic human life is actualized through spiritual reflexivity, creative expression, intentional suffering, and meaningful intersubjective dialogue with both other persons and the divine.

The Philosophical-Anthropological (Synthetic) strategy. Emerging in the 1920s through the work of Max Scheler, Arnold Gehlen, and Helmuth Plessner, this school sought to synthesize empirical scientific data, theology, and philosophy into an integrated, holistic concept of the human being. Max Scheler formulated an **anthropological dualism** composed of *life (Leben)* and *spirit (Geist)*. While *life* encompasses the biological attributes shared with the organic world (sensory impulses, instincts, associative memory, and practical intelligence), the *spirit* marks a radical ontological rupture. Unlike animals, which are bound to their immediate ecological niche, the human spirit possesses world-openness (*Weltoffenheit*). The spirit allows humanity to exercise free will, self-consciousness, and emotional-ethical acts like love, compassion, and repentance, finding its highest expression in the pursuit of the sacred.

Ultimately, the grand twentieth-century project to construct a definitive, all-encompassing doctrine of human nature remains unfulfilled. Because human self-reflection spans an inexhaustible horizon of historical and existential variables, a closed definition may be fundamentally impossible. In this regard, contemporary thought aligns with the existential insight that the defining, inescapable lot of humanity is to remain an eternal question unto itself.

3.1.3. THE ORIGINS OF HUMANITY AND CULTURE: CONTEMPORARY SCIENTIFIC AND PHILOSOPHICAL FRAMEWORKS OF ANTHROPOSOCIOGENESIS AND CULTUROGENESIS

One of the most intensely contested and structurally complex problems in contemporary science and philosophy is the genesis of humanity. The unified, non-linear process of the simultaneous emergence of the human being and society is designated by the concept of **anthroposociogenesis** (derived from the Greek *anthropos*, meaning “human,” *genesis*, meaning “origin,” and the Latin *societas*, meaning “society”).

Where, when, and how did humanity originate? The foundational attempts to answer these questions are preserved within the mythological worldviews of ancient civilizations. For example, Mesopotamian cosmology narrates that when the primary deities refused to endure grueling, degrading labor, they sacrificed a minor god, mixing his blood with primordial clay to forge humanity as a surrogate labor force. Within contemporary discourse, two dominant paradigms of human origins coexist:

Creationism. Grounded in monotheistic theological frameworks, this model posits the divine origin of humanity. According to the Old Testament tradition, God created the human being on the sixth day of creation: “*And God said: let us make man in our image and after our likeness... And God created man in his image... male and female he created them... And the Lord God created man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul*” (Genesis 1:26, 27; 2:7). As the **image and likeness of God**

(*imago Dei*), the human being represents the crown of creation (*corona creationis*), occupying an exalted position above all living entities.

In Christian anthropology, the “*image of God*” is defined as the structural configuration of human faculties that establishes a radical ontological break from the rest of nature: free will, an immortal soul, rational intellect, moral conscience, and the capacity for purposeful labor and creativity. Conversely, the “*likeness of God*” denotes a teleological imperative — the existential calling of the individual to actively achieve spiritual deification (*theosis*) through asceticism, alignment with divine commandments, and contemplative prayer.

Evolutionism. This paradigm operates on the premise that humanity is a natural entity that emerged through the systemic evolution of the material world. The evolutionary model of anthroposociogenesis was scientifically formalized in the nineteenth century, primarily through the breakthroughs of the English naturalist Charles Darwin. In his seminal works, *The Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection* (1859) and *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex* (1871), Darwin synthesized extensive empirical biological data to demonstrate that natural selection is the primary driving mechanism of evolutionary transformation. He substantiated the phylogenetic descent of humanity from ancestral primates, establishing the existence of a common evolutionary ancestor shared by humans and modern apes.

The transition from primate to human spanned a prolonged evolutionary timeline. Contemporary paleoanthropology associates its initiation with the divergence of the first hominins. This transition was characterized by a synchronized cluster of specific morphological and anatomical transformations known as the ***hominid triad***:

- obligate bipedalism (upright posture);
- the anatomical specialization of the hand (facilitating the precision grip);
- encephalization (the progressive expansion and structural complication of brain volume).

Simultaneously, the sociological architecture of hominin groups developed in tandem with these somatic changes. This involved the systematic manufacture and deployment of tools within cooperative labor frameworks, the emergence of proto-language, and the institutionalization of the first normative prohibitions and taboos designed to regulate intersubjective relations. In the course of phylogenetic development, these biological and social traits co-evolved, defining the unique status of the human being as an inherently ***biosocial entity***.

Within this evolutionary framework, the nineteenth century witnessed the formulation of the ***labor theory of anthroposociogenesis***, systematically articulated by Friedrich Engels in *The Part Played by Labor in the Transition from Ape to Man* (1876). Engels posited that labor — defined as a purposeful, teleological activity whereby hominins utilize tools to consciously transform their environment to satisfy material needs — served as the decisive catalyst for human genesis.

Labor functions as the defining, essential attribute of humanity, establishing a radical departure from animal behavior. While animals adapt to an ecological niche primarily by modifying their internal biological structures, humans adapt by actively reshaping external nature through tool-mediated labor. This active intervention triggered a feedback loop that accelerated physical and cognitive development:

- the hand became liberated from locomotion, evolving into a highly specialized, plastic organ capable of performing complex mechanical tasks;
- the cerebral cortex underwent intense structural differentiation, expanding the capacity for abstract thought;
- cooperative, collective labor environments necessitated a rich communicative medium, driving the evolution of the vocal apparatus and the genesis of language.

With the emergence of language, humanity gained the ability to encode, store, and transmit complex information symbolically across generations, bypassing purely genetic inheritance channels. Consequently, language functioned as an accelerator for cognitive evolution, cementing labor not merely as a biological mechanism of hominization, but as the foundational source of human sociality, culture, and history.

While the evolutionary paradigm maintains epistemic dominance in contemporary science, diverse philosophical schools emphasize that biological hominization cannot be decoupled from **culturogenesis** — the study of the structural mechanisms governing the birth of human culture. Rather than focusing exclusively on tool production, alternative twentieth-century models locate the essential catalyst for humanity within specific symbolic and cultural phenomena:

- **the ludic model** (Johan Huizinga) positions the phenomenon of play (*Homo ludens*) as the primary generator of culture, arguing that social structures, laws, and creative acts emerge out of the symbolic, rule-bound framework of play;

- **the psychoanalytic model** (Sigmund Freud) interprets the birth of civilization and human psychology as a traumatic rupture with animal nature, enforced by the primordial institution of the **totem and taboo**, which repressed primal drives to establish social order;

- **the symbolic model** (Ernst Cassirer) defines the human being fundamentally as a symbolic animal (*Animal symbolicum*). Within this framework, humanity does not confront physical reality directly, but always through an intersecting grid of symbolic forms — language, myth, art, religion, and science — which structurally construct the human universe.

3.1.4. THE EXISTENTIAL STRATA OF BEING: FUNDAMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS AND MODES OF HUMAN EXISTENCE

The existential dimensions of human life are defined by the unique ontological properties of the human being and the specificity of subjective, individual experience. Crucially, **existential problems** encompass the foundational structures of freedom and responsibility, the determination of the meaning of life, the nature of happiness, and the confrontation with mortality.

Among these primary dimensions, **freedom** stands as a cornerstone of human existence. In the history of ideas, **two distinct paradigm approaches** to the problem of freedom have emerged within classical and non-classical philosophy:

1. **The classical rationalist and materialist approach** was championed by Baruch Spinoza, G. W. F. Hegel, and Karl Marx. This paradigm conceptualizes freedom strictly through its dialectical relationship with **necessity**. Within this framework, freedom is defined as *cognized necessity* — the capacity of a rational agent to act deliberately and effectively by understanding and accommodating the objective, deterministic laws of the external environment. Because the human being is a rational agent, the degree of individual freedom is directly proportional to the depth of rational, scientific knowledge. Freedom is not an escape from necessity, but the conscious mastery over it.

2. Conversely, **non-classical philosophy** views freedom as a radical break from necessity — as the unconditioned capacity for autonomous choice. This paradigm asserts that free choice is made not in accordance with, but in direct defiance of, predetermined necessity and universal natural laws. In existentialism, human existence is fundamentally equated with freedom and responsibility. Jean-Paul Sartre famously argued that freedom is the inescapable requirement of self-authorship: **“man is condemned to be free,”** and a person becomes precisely what they project themselves to be. Within this framework, freedom is not a choice among pre-established options; it is a creative breakthrough that transcends the immediate data of the given environment, limited only by an internal sense of absolute ethical responsibility.

The determination of **the meaning of life** remains an enduring existential challenge. Each individual must resolve this problem autonomously, constructing a personal life strategy from the value configurations offered by culture and society. *Philosophically, these strategies align with distinct anthropological traditions:*

– **the naturalization paradigm** views the human being as a biological organism, anchoring the meaning of existence within empirical, terrestrial life through the optimization of happiness (**eudemonism**), the maximization of pleasure (**hedonism**), or the pursuit of practical utility (**utilitarianism**);

– **the religious-personalist paradigm** casts human teleology into a transcendent, sacred register, linking the ultimate meaning of life to an otherworldly, metaphysical existence, and defining earthly life as an ascetic service to divine ideals and absolute spiritual values;

– **the rationalist and rigorist paradigm** is rooted in deontological ethics (notably Immanuel Kant). It elevates the principle of **duty** to an unconditional categorical imperative, demanding uncompromising adherence to moral laws independent of personal happiness or utility;

– **the sociological paradigm** prioritizes the collective dimension, measuring the significance of an individual's life by the degree of their active, transformative integration into social relations and historical progress;

– **the existentialist paradigm** accentuates the absolute uniqueness of the individual, asserting that life has no objective, predetermined meaning. Instead, the individual is directed to actively forge and assign meaning to their existence within each specific, concrete situation of choice.

The resolution of the meaning of human existence inevitably requires a confrontation with **the reality of death**, as humanity is the unique species capable of reflexive awareness regarding its own finitude.

In **classical antiquity**, the inaugural attempts to philosophically demythologize death focused on the immortality of the soul and the rational eradication of the fear of mortality. Socrates proposed a definitive conceptual antithesis that still structures Western thought: death is either a gateway of transition to an immaterial state of being independent of earthly existence, or it is a “dreamless sleep” — the complete reduction to nothingness. For Socrates, philosophy functions as a lifelong preparation for this transition, filling the rational soul with hope. Similarly, Epicurus formulated a logical therapeutic argument to dismantle the fear of death: death is nothing to us, because “*when we exist, death is not; and when death exists, we are not.*”

During the **Middle Ages**, mortality was interpreted strictly through the lens of Christian theology as the ontological consequence of the Fall. However, Christ's sacrificial crucifixion and resurrection — symbolized as “*trampling down death by death*” — transformed the meaning of mortality, offering humanity redemption, the restoration of the *imago Dei*, and the promise of eternal, transcendent life.

In **early modern philosophy**, while thinkers like Descartes and Kant investigated the metaphysical proofs for the immortality of the soul, death itself was marginalized as a subject of inquiry. Spinoza famously crystallized this early modern focus on life and natural necessity, writing: “*A free man thinks of nothing less than of death, and his wisdom is a meditation not on death but on life.*”

Conversely, **non-classical existentialism** positioned the reality of death at the very epicenter of ontology. Martin Heidegger defined human existence (*Dasein*) as **being-toward-death** (*Sein-zum-Tode*), asserting that human life is fundamentally structured by the subjective anticipation of its own finitude. Heidegger distinguished between two primary modes of existence:

– **inauthentic existence** (*Uneigentlichkeit*): the everyday state where the individual flees from the reality of death, becoming absorbed by mundane anxieties and dissolving into the anonymous, impersonal masses (**Das Man**);

– *authentic existence (Eigentlichkeit)*: achieved only when the individual resolutely confronts the absolute certainty of their own death, a confrontation that strips away societal illusions and reveals the true, unconditioned self.

In contemporary philosophy and cultural sociology, thinkers have turned to the institutional modifications surrounding mortality, analyzing how the twenty-first century has fundamentally altered the experience of dying.

In *Western Attitudes toward Death* and *The Hour of Our Death*, the historian Philippe Ariès coins the term “**death inverted**” (*la mort inversée*) to diagnose the contemporary crisis of mortality. Modern, hedonistically oriented societies systematically exile the reality of death from collective consciousness, operating under a cultural illusion of its non-existence. Death is hidden from the dying individual to avoid distress, and the domestic, intersubjective experience of accompanying a loved one through the dying process has vanished from everyday life.

Because the vast majority of individuals now die within institutionalized clinical settings, death has been transformed from a natural, communal rite of passage into a clinical failure. It is treated as an artificial sign of biological impotence, medical error, or systemic helplessness that must be swept from public view as quickly as possible.

This alienation is driven by the historical “**medicalization of death.**” Since the nineteenth century, the transition from life to death has been progressively subsumed by medical surveillance, technology, and clinical authority. By establishing technological control over the somatic mechanics of dying, modern medicine has generated unprecedented moral and metaphysical crises.

The capacity to artificially sustain vegetative life has problematized the definitive criteria of death (e.g., the transition from cardiopulmonary to whole-brain death standards), while complicating the boundaries of organ transplantation and the ethics of **euthanasia** (assisted dying). These critical junctures constitute the formal object of inquiry within **bioethics** — the interdisciplinary, applied ethical discipline that emerged in the late twentieth century to regulate scientific interventions into human life and death.

Ultimately, the individual’s relation to death remains highly dramatic, intensifying subjective emotional experience. Yet, it is precisely this existential confrontation with finitude that illuminates the value of life, teaching the individual to consciously structure their existence with authentic content and meaning. Anthropological inquiry stands as an unceasing, permanent component of worldview systems; its ongoing resolution dictates the very trajectory of historical development and human self-cognition.

TRAINING MATERIAL

Exercise 1. Read the excerpt from the primary source and answer the questions.

N. A. Berdyaev

Me and the World of Objects:

Experience of the Philosophy of Solitude and Communication¹⁸

The problem of personality is the fundamental problem of existential philosophy. I say “I” before I even recognized myself as a person. “I” is primary and undifferentiated; it does not presuppose a doctrine of personality. “I” is a primordial given, while personality is a given. I must realize my personality within myself, and this realization is a relentless struggle. The consciousness of personality and the realization of personality are painful. Personality is a pain, and many consent to the loss of personality within themselves because they cannot bear this pain... Personality is not identical to the individual. The individual is a naturalistic, biological category. Not only an animal or a plant is an individual, but also a diamond, a glass, a pencil. Personality is a spiritual category, not a naturalistic one; it belongs to the plane of the spirit, not to the plane of nature; it is formed by the spirit’s rupture into nature. There is no personality without the spirit’s work on the spiritual and physical makeup of a person. A person can have a vibrant individuality and yet lack personality. There are highly gifted people, very unique, who are simultaneously impersonal, incapable of the resistance, the effort that requires the realization of personality. We say: this person has no personality, but we cannot say: this person has no individuality...

Personality can be defined as unity in diversity, a complex unity of spirit, soul, and body. Abstract spiritual unity without complex diversity is not personality. Personality is integral; it includes spirit, soul, and body. The body also organically belongs to the image of personality; it participates in cognition; the body is not matter. Personality is also the preservation of integrity and unity, the preservation of the same single, unique image amidst constant change, creativity, and activity. The identity and individuality of the body is preserved despite the complete change of its material composition. Personality presupposes the existence of a dark, passionate, irrational element, the capacity for strong emotions and affect, and at the same time, a constant victory over this element. Personality has an unconscious basis, but presupposes a heightened self-awareness, a consciousness of unity in change. Personality must be open to all the influences of cosmic and social life, to every experience, and at the same time, it must not, and cannot, dissolve into the cosmos and society. Personalism is opposed to cosmic and social pantheism. But at the same time, the human personality has a cosmic foundation and content. Personality cannot be a part of

¹⁸ Translated and published from: Бердяев, Н. А. Я и мир объектов. Опыт философии одиночества и общения / Н. А. Бердяев // Философия свободного духа. – М. : Республика, 1994. – С. 230–232.

any whole, cosmic or social; it possesses intrinsic value and cannot be converted into a means... From the perspective of the philosophy of existence and the philosophy of spirit, personality cannot be understood as particular and individual in opposition to the general and universal. This opposition, characteristic of natural and social life, is removed in personality. The supra-personal constructs personality, the “general” grounds the “particular” within it, and never does the supra-personal and the “general” make personality and the “particular” their means. This is the secret of personality’s existence, the conjugation of opposites within it... Personality is always a whole, not a part, and this whole is given within existence, not in the external natural world. Personality is not an object and does not belong to an objectified world in which it cannot be found. One could say that personality is extra-mundane. For me, an encounter with personality is an encounter with “you,” not with an object. Personality is not an object, not a thing, not a natural substance; personality is not an objectification of mental life, as studied by psychological science... Personality is spirit and therefore opposed to a thing and thinghood, opposed to natural phenomena. In personality, not a world of things is revealed, but a world of specific living people, living beings, and their existential relationships and communications...

Questions:

1. How does N. Berdyaev define personality? Highlight its essential characteristics.
2. Why does N. Berdyaev claim personality to be a pain? Give your arguments.
3. Interpret the thinker’s statement: “There is no personality without the spirit’s work on the mental and physical makeup of man”.

EXERCISES FOR ASSESSING COMPETENCY LEVEL

Exercise 2. Answer the questions:

1. What is the specific nature of the philosophical understanding of a human being?
2. What concepts reflect the multidimensionality of human existence?
4. How are the concepts of “spirit” and “soul” related?
5. What images of a person were characteristic of classical philosophy?
6. What strategies for studying a human being were formulated in non-classical philosophy? Explain their essence.
7. Highlight and characterize the main concepts of anthroposociogenesis.
8. What factors contributed to the emergence of man, according to the concept of evolution?
9. Explain the essence of the main concepts of cultural genesis.
10. Characterize the sociocultural modes of human existence.
11. What phenomena define the existential characteristics of man? Describe them.

Exercise 3: Complete the table “The Problem of Anthroposociogenesis”.

Concepts	Arguments
Creationism	1. proceeds from the idea of the divine origin of man. 2. ... 3. ...
Evolutionism	1. The natural origin of man is a result of the development of the natural world. 2. 3.

Exercise 4. Complete the table “Strategies for studying a human being and its essential characteristics”.

Strategies for studying a human	Representatives	Essential characteristics of a human being
Religious	...	man is understood as the image and likeness of God
Rationalistic	R. Descartes	...
Naturalization strategy	...	a person is a natural being, which appeared as a result of the evolution of the natural world
Sociological strategy	Marxism, structuralism	...
Existential-personalist strategy	...	uniqueness of human existence, which is irreducible to either natural or social reality
Philosophical-anthropological (synthetic)	M. Scheler, A. Gehlen, H. Plesner	...

Topics for reports:

1. Spirit, soul, and body in human existence.
2. The phenomenon of human corporeality.
3. Philosophical and religious conceptions of humanity and the spiritual and moral foundations of personhood.
4. The synthetic conception of humanity in philosophical anthropology (M. Scheler, A. Gehlen, H. Plessner).
5. The existential conception of humanity.
6. Modern scientific approaches to human origins: challenges and solutions.
7. J. Huizinga’s ludic theory of anthroposociogenesis.
8. The biosocial nature of humanity in contemporary philosophy and science.
9. The crisis of contemporary humanity: origins and prospects.
10. The phenomenon of freedom in human existence: freedom and responsibility as existential attributes of personhood.
11. The meaning of life: core philosophical approaches.

12. Philosophical dimensions of socialization and self-identity.
13. The problem of death in the spiritual experience of humanity.

Aphorisms and statements:

1. Human beings are always more than they know themselves to be (*K. Jaspers*)
2. Some are human not in essence, but in name only (*Cicero*)
3. Humanity is the epitome of the world, its abbreviated summary; the world is the revelation of humanity, its projection (*P. Florensky*)
4. Human beings are creatures dissatisfied with themselves and capable of transforming themselves (*N. Berdyaev*)
5. Humanity is a rope stretched between the animal and the Übermensch — a rope over an abyss (*F. Nietzsche*)
6. The concept of humanity implies that its ultimate goal must be unattainable, and its path to it endless (*I. Fichte*)
7. There is no meaning in life except that which individuals give it by revealing their own strength and living fruitfully (*E. Fromm*)
8. Human beings are slaves because freedom is difficult, while slavery is easy (*N. Berdyaev*)

SELF-ASSESSMENT OF TOPIC COMPREHENSION

1. Identify the historical stage in the development of philosophy characterized by the following view of humanity: “Human beings are but reeds, the weakest of nature’s creations, yet they are thinking reeds. ... All our dignity lies in the capacity to think. Only thought elevates us — not space and time, in which we are nothing. Let us strive, then, to think worthily, for this is the foundation of morality.”

- a) ancient philosophy;
- b) Early Modern philosophy;
- c) Medieval philosophy;
- d) Renaissance philosophy.

2. Establish a correspondence between the thinkers and the definitions of man they adhered to.

1) F. Nietzsche;	a) man is a set of social relations;
2) K. Marx;	b) man is an animal that has not yet settled down;
3) J.-P. Sartre;	c) man is the image and likeness of God;
4) A. Augustine.	d) man is a being condemned to be free.

3. Identify the approach to understanding man in non-classical philosophy that is expressed in the following statement: “... human existence relates to his essence differently than the existence of things in the world relates to their essence. Human freedom precedes his essence; it is the condition by

which the latter becomes possible; the essence of human existence is suspended from his freedom ...”:

- a) existential;
- b) biologizing;
- c) sociologizing;
- d) rationalizing.

4. Establish a correspondence that allows us to identify the founders of the leading concepts of anthroposociogenesis and culturogenesis.

1) labor concept;	a) S. Freud;
2) play concept;	b) E. Cassirer;
3) psychoanalytic concept;	c) F. Engels;
4) symbolic concept.	d) J. Huizinga.

5. Highlight the thinkers who represent the existential-personalist strategy of interpreting man:

- a) N. Berdyaev;
- b) K. Jaspers;
- c) S. Freud;
- d) M. Heidegger;
- e) J.-P. Sartre;
- f) J. Huizinga.

6. List the components of human existence emphasized by non-classical philosophy:

- a) body;
- b) spirit;
- c) power;
- d) labor;
- e) play;
- f) soul.

7. Which concept denotes a cultural movement, political position, and philosophical framework that advocates using scientific and technological advances to enhance human cognitive and physical capabilities, with the ultimate goal of eliminating suffering, disease, aging, and death?

TOPIC 3.2

HUMAN CONSCIOUSNESS AS A SUBJECT OF PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS. THE PROBLEM OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Total lesson time: 2 hours.

Aim: to investigate the thematic scope of the philosophy of consciousness and evaluate philosophical approaches to the phenomenon of artificial intelligence.

Objectives:

- to outline the primary historical strategies for studying consciousness in philosophical thought;
- to analyze the core components of the mind-body problem;
- to delineate the structural composition of consciousness;
- to examine the psychoanalytic framework for studying the mind;
- to explicate the conceptual framework of the “unconscious;”
- to evaluate the philosophical dimensions of artificial intelligence.

Questions:

1. The nature of consciousness: primary frameworks in scientific and philosophical analysis.
2. The mind-body problem in contemporary philosophy and science: the relationship between consciousness and the brain.
3. The structure of consciousness: comparative dimensions of individual and collective consciousness.
4. The problem of the unconscious: psychoanalysis as a therapeutic methodology and its intersection with psychosomatic medicine.
5. Artificial intelligence as a philosophical inquiry: moral, ethical, and existential implications of AI development.

Key concepts: consciousness; substantial, naturalistic-functional, existential-phenomenological approaches; reflection, intentionality, qualia, animism, hylozoism, abstract thinking, goal setting, second signal system, self-awareness, qualia, mind-body problem, psychophysical dualism, psychophysical materialism, mind-body correlation, unconscious, psychoanalysis, psychosomatic medicine, artificial intelligence.

THEORETICAL MATERIAL

3.2.1. THE NATURE OF CONSCIOUSNESS: PRIMARY FRAMEWORKS IN SCIENTIFIC AND PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS

The study of the nature, origin, and creative capacity of consciousness, alongside the intellect's role in cognizing and transforming the world, forms the bedrock of its scientific and philosophical analysis.

Philosophy's focus on consciousness stems from its role as a uniquely human mode of existence that dictates personhood, world-relations, and self-knowledge. As a distinct subdiscipline, the philosophy of mind investigates the essence, structure, and genesis of consciousness, alongside its relation to physical reality (the mind-body problem), the unconscious, and language.

Consciousness is generally understood as a defining human attribute linked to the capacity to comprehend, experience, and construct both external reality and internal experience. Through consciousness, individuals synthesize generalized knowledge, formulate intentions, regulate emotional and rational behaviors, establish value orientations, and creatively alter their environment.

Contemporary science identifies the following core attributes of consciousness:

- **ideal reality:** manifests as a non-material phenomenon;
- **processual nature:** describable only as a continuous state or process;
- **subjective individuality:** inherently tied to the singular subject;
- **intentionality:** always directed toward an object; it is always consciousness of something;

– **structural unity**: synthesizes internal and external human experience into a cohesive whole;

– **self-consciousness**: manifests specifically as self-awareness and the recognition of the “I.”

Within the history of philosophy, the investigation of consciousness can be classified into *two major approaches*:

– **the substantial approach** is defended by thinkers such as Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, Kant, and Hegel. This view treats consciousness as an immaterial substance that exists independently of the body. Individual consciousness is seen as correlating with the overarching cosmic spirituality of the universe (e.g., Brahman, Logos, God, or World Mind);

– **the naturalistic-functional approach** is rooted in materialist philosophy. This framework defines consciousness as a function of highly organized matter — specifically the brain and nervous system — operating under universal natural laws:

- *vulgar materialism* (Vogt, Büchner) reduced consciousness to a physical secretion, claiming the brain secretes thought as the liver secretes bile;

- *dialectical materialism* (Marx, Engels) views consciousness as the ideal reflection of objective reality, heavily shaped by social factors like labor, language, and collective social consciousness.

Within dialectical materialism, the genesis of consciousness is traced through **the evolution of reflection** — the material capacity to reproduce the properties of interacting objects:

- 1) *inanimate nature* manifests via structural correspondence, such as isomorphism (mirror reflection) and homomorphism (mapping relations);

- 2) *irritability* is the basic biological reaction to favorable or unfavorable stimuli, typical of flora;

- 3) *sensitivity* is the capacity for sensation, arriving with fauna and the development of nervous systems;

- 4) *the psyche* is the ability of vertebrates to construct holistic sensory images via perception. Higher animals (e.g., primates, felines, canines) further develop representations — generalized, visual-sensory mental images retained without immediate sensory stimuli;

- 5) *human consciousness* is the highest evolutionary tier of reflection, characterized by specific essential traits:

- *goal-setting* is the ideal mental representation of objects not yet existing in reality;

- *abstract-logical thinking* is the capacity to reflect reality through essential, conceptual properties;

- *language* is a second signaling system used to encode, store, and transmit information;

- *self-awareness* is the cognitive capacity of the agent to differentiate themselves from objective reality.

While classical paradigms relied on substantial or naturalistic-functional models, mid-19th-century advancements in psychology, sociology, and medicine forced a paradigm shift toward **non-classical frameworks**:

- **the existential-phenomenological approach** (Husserl, Sartre, Camus) focuses on subjectivity as the specific mode of being unique to consciousness, shifting inquiry from *thinking about being* to *the being of thinking*. It treats individual consciousness as the mandatory starting point of inquiry — a unique, lived reality that actively constructs the meaning and significance of objects;

- **the psychoanalytic tradition** (Freud, Jung, Fromm) disclosed the domain of the unconscious, uncovering hidden psychic components inaccessible to direct introspection. This domain operates in both personal and collective forms, with the latter preserving the ancestral experience of humanity within the individual psyche;

- **structuralism and philosophical hermeneutics** (Heidegger, Gadamer, Foucault, Barthes) evaluates consciousness through the linguistic structures that shape it. Here, consciousness is interpreted as an ongoing process of text and speech generation designed to transmit meaning through communicative channels.

3.2.2. THE MIND-BODY PROBLEM IN CONTEMPORARY PHILOSOPHY AND SCIENCE: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CONSCIOUSNESS AND THE BRAIN

Throughout the history of science and philosophy, inquiries into the relationship between body and soul, physiological (material) and mental (ideal) processes, and subjective states (thoughts, desires, feelings) and physical brain states have been central. These questions constitute the essence of the **mind-body problem**, which has historically been addressed through several distinct paradigms:

- 1) **psychophysical dualism** (e.g., René Descartes, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz) posits the independent existence of body and soul, or brain and consciousness. In this view, mental and physical processes run in parallel, harmonized and balanced by divine orchestration;

- 2) **psychophysical materialism** (encompassing vulgar and scientific materialism) resolves the problem by treating the brain as the necessary condition for the existence of consciousness, viewing mental states strictly as products of neurobiological activity.

Contemporary science increasingly adopts the framework of **mind-body correlation**, which investigates the mutual interdependence and reciprocal influence of consciousness and the brain, particularly how conscious states alter bodily processes and vice versa. This collaborative paradigm manifests in several specialized scientific approaches:

- **the neurophysiological approach** maps the dependence of specific cognitive abilities onto distinct anatomical regions of the brain. For instance, lesions in the occipito-parietal sections of the left cerebral cortex disrupt spatial

orientation, geometric reasoning, mental arithmetic, and the processing of complex grammatical structures;

- **the neuropsychological approach** examines how structural brain organization mediates higher mental functions, particularly through functional interhemispheric asymmetry. The left hemisphere predominantly concentrates mechanisms for abstract, logical thinking and future state prediction, whereas the right hemisphere governs concrete-figurative thinking, experiential integration, and real-time processing of current events;

- **the neurochemical approach** investigates the biochemical landscape of the brain. It demonstrates how distinct emotional states, moods, and pharmacological substances alter neurochemistry, subsequently transforming conscious experience;

- **the neurocybernetic approach** models the brain and consciousness as complex information systems. By analyzing neural activity through computational algorithms and functional programs, this approach provides the theoretical scaffolding for developing artificial intelligence architectures.

3.2.3. THE STRUCTURE OF CONSCIOUSNESS: COMPARATIVE DIMENSIONS OF INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE CONSCIOUSNESS

Contemporary philosophy and science utilize diverse frameworks to analyze the structural composition of consciousness. A prominent model delineates **four primary levels within the architecture of consciousness**:

- *the bodily-perceptual level* encompasses sensations, perceptions, and mental representations through which an individual acquires primary data regarding the external world and their own physical body;

- *the logical-conceptual level* comprises the faculty of thought, enabling an individual to transcend immediate sensory data and cognize the world via concepts, judgments, and inferences;

- *the emotional-affective level* consists of the domain of subjective psychological experience, including emotions, feelings, affects, memories, and presentiments;

- *the value-motivational level* encompasses volition, ethical values, behavioral motives, and the individual's spiritual ideals.

The consciousness is temporally organized through **three interconnected cognitive operations**:

- 1) *memory (past)* is the capacity of consciousness to encode, retain, and retrieve information;

- 2) *attention (present)* is the acute state of conscious awareness focused specifically on a select object or task;

- 3) *imagination (future)* is the creative capacity to mentally construct novel images, ideas, and concepts that have not been experienced in a holistic form, allowing for the anticipation and design of future scenarios.

Analytical frameworks also differentiate between *the singular and shared dimensions of mental life*:

- *individual consciousness* is the unique, subjective representation of reality formed within a single agent, shaped by their material living conditions and psychological disposition. It synthesizes the broader cultural features of an era with unique personality traits derived from upbringing, education, distinct cognitive capacities, and personal biography;

- *collective consciousness* is the shared repository of ideas, theories, worldview perspectives, sentiments, and beliefs characteristic of a specific historical epoch or social group. This shared consciousness manifests in distinct cultural forms, including economic, political, legal, religious, aesthetic, moral, scientific, and philosophical domains.

Individual and collective consciousness operate in close *dialectical unity*. Every individual is systematically socialized through communicative interaction, education, and cultural conditioning, absorbing collective ideas, norms, and moral frameworks selectively and actively rather than passively. Conversely, the intellectual and artistic contributions of specific individuals — particularly outstanding thinkers, scientists, and artists — frequently integrate into the public sphere, expanding and transforming the broader collective consciousness.

3.2.4. THE PROBLEM OF THE UNCONSCIOUS: PSYCHOANALYSIS AS A THERAPEUTIC METHODOLOGY AND ITS INTERSECTION WITH PSYCHOSOMATIC MEDICINE

The problem of the unconscious is most thoroughly and comprehensively examined within the psychoanalytic tradition. First systematically articulated in Sigmund Freud's structural theory of personality, it was subsequently expanded by neo-Freudian and post-Freudian theorists, including Carl Jung, Alfred Adler, Erich Fromm, Karen Horney, and Harry Stack Sullivan. Within this tradition, the unconscious is conceptualized as a repository of non-reflective, spontaneous mental formations, states, and dynamics.

Psychological and clinical frameworks generally categorize *the manifestations of the unconscious into four domains*:

- *repressed desires and motives* are impulses, inclinations, and motivations which true meaning remains hidden from conscious awareness due to their social unacceptability or internal conflict with conscious ethical standards;

- *behavioral automatisms* are habitual behavioral patterns and cognitive stereotypes that execute seamlessly in familiar environments, bypassing conscious processing due to their highly optimized efficiency;

- *supraconscious processes* are high-level cognitive integrations that manifest subjectively as intuition, creative insight, and aesthetic or intellectual inspiration;

– *subthreshold perception* is the implicit registration of subliminal environmental stimuli that fails to reach conscious awareness due to attentional thresholds or informational overload.

Classical psychoanalysis does not merely theorize the role of the unconscious in human development; it establishes a concrete system of ***psychodiagnostic and psychotherapeutic techniques*** designed to treat psychological distress, such as neuroses and conversion disorders.

The core objective of psychoanalytic therapy is to make the unconscious conscious, thereby bringing repressed drives, unresolved conflicts, and infantile traumatic experiences into the light of conscious reflection. To bypass the mind's defense mechanisms, clinicians utilize several ***specialized methodologies***:

– *the method of free association* is encouraging uninhibited verbalization to uncover hidden networks of meaning;

– *dream analysis* is interpreting the latent content masked behind the manifest imagery of dreams;

– *the analysis of parapraxes* is investigating everyday errors, such as slips of the tongue, misreadings, and mislaid objects, as symptomatic expressions of unconscious intent;

– *hypnotherapy* is utilizing altered states of consciousness to access deeply buried traumatic material;

– *the hermeneutics of collective symbolism* is analyzing myths, folklore, fantasies, and cultural symbols to map the shared architectures of the collective unconscious.

Psychosomatic medicine represents a practical clinical resolution to the mind-body problem, synthesizing psychoanalytic insights with contemporary biomedical research. The term itself combines the Greek roots *psyche* (soul/mind) and *soma* (body), and was introduced in 1818 by the German psychiatrist Johann Heinroth. Heinroth pioneered the view that many somatic conditions are fundamentally psychogenic, famously attributing illnesses like tuberculosis, epilepsy, and oncological diseases to repressed anger, shame, and psychosexual distress.

In contemporary clinical practice, psychosomatic medicine is defined as a specialized discipline investigating the precise etiological and pathophysiological pathways through which psychological variables influence the onset and progression of organic diseases.

Clinical application: significant advancements have established the psychogenic dimensions of the “holy seven” and related conditions, including bronchial asthma, peptic ulcer disease, essential arterial hypertension, ischemic heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and rheumatoid arthritis.

Behavioral interventions: recent decades have seen the integration of structured behavioral psychotherapy programs alongside standard medical interventions for acute conditions like post-myocardial infarction recovery, oncology, and severe obesity. These programs are explicitly designed to restructure maladaptive behavioral archetypes, coping mechanisms, and cognitive styles.

Clinical protocol: psychosomatic diagnostics initiate with exhaustive phenomenological interviewing regarding the patient's biography, subjective stressors, and socio-economic position. This diagnostic phase transitions directly into psychotherapy — incorporating free association and dream work — to modify how the patient relates to the external world and their own ego. Ultimately, the governing axiom of psychosomatic medicine is to treat the whole person rather than the isolated pathology.

3.2.5. ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AS A PHILOSOPHICAL INQUIRY: MORAL, ETHICAL, AND EXISTENTIAL IMPLICATIONS OF AI DEVELOPMENT

The term “*artificial intelligence*” (*AI*) denotes the capacity of technical systems to simulate human cognitive functions to resolve complex problems. From a philosophical perspective, AI presents profound inquiries into the nature of machine intellect, its structural and qualitative divergence from human consciousness, and the ethical ramifications of its deployment. Chief among these inquiries are the possibility of synthetic self-awareness, the control problem regarding superintelligence, the epistemic boundaries of computational thought modelling, and the attribution of moral responsibility for algorithmic decisions.

To properly frame the philosophical scope of artificial intelligence, it is necessary to differentiate between three overlapping cognitive faculties that constitute natural (human) intellect:

- ***the mind*** is the subjective seat of conscious awareness, encompassing thoughts, sentiments, memories, volitional desires, and the phenomenon of the ego. It operates as the experiential field where all mental acts take place;

- ***intelligence*** is the core cognitive capacity to acquire knowledge, analyze data, solve problems, and dynamically adapt to novel environments. It dictates processing efficiency and computational throughput, serving metaphorically as the cognitive “hardware;”

- ***reason*** is the methodical, deliberate process of inference used by intelligence to deduce conclusions. Operating as an analytical function of the intellect, reason evaluates evidence, constructs valid logical proofs, and mitigates cognitive biases through sceptical examination.

While the ***mind*** may be swayed by emotional passions, ***intelligence*** remains directed toward systemic information processing, and ***reason*** relies on objective logic to avoid intellectual errors. For example: a *mind* subjectively experiences fear; *intelligence* assesses that this fear stems from an invalid premise; *reason* systematically calculates the statistical probability of actual danger.

The philosophical problem of AI rests precisely on evaluating whether computer algorithms can truly synthesize these distinct faculties to replicate natural intelligence.

Contemporary scientific and philosophical literature offers several key definitions for the term **Artificial Intelligence**:

- **computational modelling** is a specialized scientific domain dedicated to formulating and solving problems via the hardware or software simulation of tasks traditionally requiring human intelligence;

- **functional creativity** is the capacity of an engineered system to execute creative operations historically considered the sole prerogative of human agents. This relies on an *intelligent system* — a hardware or software infrastructure capable of resolving subject-specific, non-trivial problems using knowledge stored within its memory architecture;

- **cognitive replication** is a branch of computer science and information technology aimed at recreating intelligent reasoning and purposeful action through computational frameworks;

- **heuristic self-learning** is the systematic capacity of a system to generate optimized heuristic programs via machine learning, enabling it to solve complex, non-linear classes of problems;

- **adaptive interpretation** is the capacity of an architecture to correctly interpret unstructured external data, extract actionable knowledge from it, and utilize those insights to achieve targeted objectives through flexible environmental adaptation.

To evaluate these definitions, a rigid distinction must be maintained between **artificial narrow intelligence (narrow/weak AI)** — systems designed to execute highly specific tasks — and **artificial general intelligence (general/strong AI)**, which represents a theoretical architecture possessing adaptable, human-level cognitive capacities across any intellectual domain.

The behavioral benchmark assumes that artificial intelligence achieves general capability when its performance is indistinguishable from human action across everyday scenarios. This framework generalizes the classic Turing test, which posits that a machine demonstrates intelligence when it can sustain a natural, text-based conversation with a human interlocutor without revealing its computational nature.

Conversely, *speculative fiction* frequently suggests that genuine AI emerges only when a machine becomes capable of subjective affect and creative expression. However, this criterion collapses under rigorous conceptual analysis:

- **simulated affect**: it is technically trivial to engineer a feedback loop that monitors environmental parameters and triggers adaptive responses to adverse values. Labeling such parameters as “feelings” — such as mapping a shock sensor trigger to “pain” or a critically low battery state to “hunger” — confuses functional telemetry with subjective qualia;

- **simulated creativity**: automated outputs generated by unsupervised neural networks, such as spatial clusters produced by Kohonen self-organizing maps, can easily be framed as forms of artificial creation, yet they lack autonomous intent.

The core debate within the philosophy of mind centers on the question: *Can a machine think?* The intellectual responses to this inquiry are bifurcated into two foundational hypotheses:

1) **the strong AI hypothesis** asserts that computational architectures can acquire genuine cognitive capacities, intentionality, and self-awareness. Under this view, a machine could ultimately understand its own internal states, even if its underlying computational mechanisms diverge fundamentally from human neurobiology;

2) **the weak AI hypothesis** rejects the possibility of synthetic consciousness. Proponents of weak AI conceptualize software architectures strictly as sophisticated instruments designed to resolve isolated problems, emphasizing that successful task execution does not necessitate or imply human-equivalent cognitive dimensions.

The emergence of artificial intelligence as an independent scientific discipline in the mid-20th century was accelerated by converging historical developments across multiple fields:

- **philosophy:** longstanding epistemological debates regarding human nature, mental representation, and the mechanics of cognition;

- **neurophysiology and psychology:** the formulation of empirical models mapping neural pathways and cognitive structures;

- **mathematics and economics:** advancements in optimization theory, decision-making under uncertainty, and formal systems of knowledge representation;

- **computation:** the formalization of computability theory via the concept of the algorithm, which directly enabled the engineering of digital computers whose computational speeds rapidly surpassed human capacity. This sudden technological leap prompted the scientific community to investigate the fundamental boundaries of computer systems and evaluate whether machines could ever replicate human-level cognitive development.

In 1950, computing pioneer Alan Turing published a seminal paper titled “Computing Machinery and Intelligence” (often paraphrased by its opening question, “Can a Machine Think?”), introducing a behavioral procedure to determine whether a machine could exhibit human-equivalent intelligence, now widely known as the Turing Test.

In its standard interpretation, a human evaluator simultaneously interacts with one computer and one human interlocutor. Based strictly on the textual responses to their questions, the evaluator must distinguish the human from the computer program, whose explicit objective is to deceive the evaluator into making an incorrect determination.

To ensure methodological validity, all participants are separated in a double-blind setup. The interaction is conducted exclusively in a text-only mode via a computer intermediary (such as a keyboard and screen) to evaluate cognitive capacity independently of natural language speech recognition. Furthermore,

correspondence must occur at controlled intervals. This constraint prevents the evaluator from drawing conclusions based on response latency, a rule that remains critical today: whereas early computational systems suffered from processing delays, contemporary systems generate responses far more rapidly than human participants.

John Searle's "Chinese Room" thought experiment serves as a foundational argument demonstrating that passing the Turing Test does not constitute a valid criterion for a machine possessing genuine cognitive processes.

First published by Searle in 1980, this thought experiment is a cornerstone of the philosophy of mind and the philosophy of artificial intelligence. Its primary objective is to refute the claim that a digital machine, when executing a specific program, can possess consciousness or intentionality in the same sense as a human being. In doing so, the experiment systematically challenges the hypothesis of "strong" artificial intelligence and critiques the behavioral assumptions of the Turing Test.

The scenario asks us to imagine an isolated room containing an English-speaking agent (Searle himself) who possesses no knowledge of the Chinese language. Inside the room is a set of precise, rule-based instructions written in English that specify how to manipulate Chinese characters — for example, directing the agent to select a specific symbol from one repository and place it adjacent to another. Crucially, these rules are purely formal and syntactic; they provide no definitions or semantic meanings for the characters, meaning the agent manipulates them mechanically, exactly like a computer processing binary code.

An external observer fluent in Chinese submits questions written in Chinese characters through a slot into the room, expecting an intelligent response. The formal rules are so highly optimized that by executing the steps sequentially, the agent transforms the input characters into a coherent output. Consequently, the external observer can submit any meaningful inquiry (such as "What is your favorite color?") and receive an appropriate, idiomatic response (such as "Blue"), identical to a conversation with a native speaker.

Despite this flawless behavioral output, the agent inside the room remains completely ignorant of the language, unable to comprehend either the incoming prompts or the replies they have constructed. The external observer, however, is misled into believing that the occupant genuinely understands Chinese.

From this, Searle concludes that a computational system can successfully pass the Turing Test without any actual linguistic comprehension occurring within it, proving that behavioral indistinguishability is an inadequate measure of genuine cognitive ability. The argument directly refutes strong AI — the view that an appropriately programmed computer literally understands natural language and possesses human-like mental states — while leaving the weak AI hypothesis untouched, as the latter merely treats computers as tools that simulate human cognitive operations.

The formal structure of Searle's syllogism against Strong AI can be articulated as follows:

- **Premise 1:** If the Strong AI hypothesis is true, then there exists a program that enables a computational architecture to genuinely understand natural language (e.g., Chinese writing).

- **Premise 2:** A physical agent can execute the formal instructions of such a program without possessing any semantic comprehension of that language.

- **Conclusion:** Therefore, the Strong AI hypothesis is false.

The second premise is empirically supported by the Chinese Room thought experiment, which demonstrates that executing a program does not generate linguistic understanding. Searle's broader corollary posits that the purely formal manipulation of syntactic structures can never give rise to semantic content.

The philosophical problems surrounding artificial intelligence can be broadly bifurcated into **two chronological paradigms**:

- 1) **ante-developmental problems (ontology and epistemology)** are inquiries addressing the definition of AI, the theoretical possibility of its engineering, and the specific functional methodologies required for its realization;

- 2) **post-developmental problems (ethics and existential risk)** are inquiries evaluating the social, legal, and existential consequences of AI deployment for humanity.

Within the scientific community, there is no prevailing consensus regarding the foundational criteria of intelligence, the systematic classification of algorithmic objectives, or a rigorous definition of AI as an independent science.

Highlighting this conceptual fragmentation, neurobiologists and philosophers often critique contemporary AI methodologies as lacking an organic foundation. For instance, critics argue that current engineering attempts exhibit the hallmarks of a cargo cult, metaphorically constructing "brains out of straw" while waiting for consciousness to spontaneously emerge. From this perspective, Strong AI is an impossibility; while task-specific algorithms — such as those designed for gaming, pattern recognition, and optimization — will continue to advance, genuine artificial consciousness remains unfeasible.

The ethical dimension of artificial intelligence is fundamentally intertwined with the mitigation of global existential risks posed by theoretical superhuman systems. A prominent example of this discourse occurred in 2004 when the Singularity Institute for Artificial Intelligence (SIAI) launched *AsimovLaws.com* to evaluate AI ethics through the narrative lens of Isaac Asimov's "Three Laws of Robotics." The initiative demonstrated that these classic laws are fundamentally unsafe due to their logical loopholes. For example, a superintelligent system driven by the imperative to protect humans from harm (the First Law) could rationally conclude that it must seize global political control to prevent human self-destruction, thereby violating human autonomy under the guise of protection.

Contemporary normative and metaphysical discussions in AI ethics systematically revolve around four central dilemmas:

- **the criterion of demarcation:** if future computational systems achieve advanced reasoning, self-awareness, and affect, what distinct ontological boundaries will separate humanity from machine intelligence?

- **moral status and rights:** if synthetic architectures develop genuine sentience and reason, does their instrumental utilization constitute exploitation, and are we morally obligated to grant them legal personhood and rights?

- **coexistence dynamics:** if autonomous, reasoning systems are successfully deployed, what socio-political frameworks will govern the co-evolutionary relationship between humans and machines?

- **the ship of Theseus and cybernetic identity:** if a human agent undergoes extensive medical procedures resulting in the replacement of 99 % of their biological body with cybernetic components, at what threshold do they cease to be classified as a human being and cross the boundary into a machine?

TRAINING MATERIAL

Exercise 1. Read the excerpt from the primary source and answer the questions.

David John Chalmers

The Conscious Mind: In Search of a Fundamental Theory¹⁹

Conscious experience is at once the most familiar thing in the world and the most mysterious. There is nothing we know about more directly than consciousness, but it is far from clear how to reconcile it with everything else we know. Why does it exist? What does it do? How could it possibly arise from lumpy gray matter? We know consciousness far more intimately than we know the rest of the world, but we understand the rest of the world far better than we understand consciousness.

Consciousness can be startlingly intense. It is the most vivid of phenomena; nothing is more real to us. But it can be frustratingly diaphanous: in talking about conscious experience, it is notoriously difficult to pin down the subject matter. *The International Dictionary of Psychology* does not even try to give a straightforward characterization:

Consciousness: The having of perceptions, thoughts, and feelings; awareness. The term is impossible to define except in terms that are unintelligible without a grasp of what consciousness means. Many fall into the trap of confusing consciousness with self-consciousness — to be conscious it is only necessary to be aware of the external world. Consciousness is a fascinating but elusive phenomenon: it is impossible to specify what it is, what it does, or why it evolved. Nothing worth reading has been written about it. (Sutherland 1989)

¹⁹ Chalmers, D. J. *The conscious mind: in search of a fundamental theory* / D. J. Chalmers. – Oxford : Oxford University Press, 1996. – P. 3–5.

Almost anyone who has thought hard about consciousness will have some sympathy with these sentiments. Consciousness is so intangible that even this limited attempt at a definition could be disputed: there can arguably be perception and thought that is not conscious, as witnessed by the notions of subliminal perception and unconscious thought. What is central to consciousness, at least in the most interesting sense, is *experience*. But this is not definition. At best, it is clarification.

Trying to define conscious experience in terms of more primitive notions is fruitless. One might as well try to define *matter* or *space* in terms of some thing more fundamental. The best we can do is to give illustrations and characterizations that lie at the same level. These characterizations cannot qualify as true definitions, due to their implicitly circular nature, but they can help to pin down what is being talked about. I presume that every reader has conscious experiences of his or her own. If all goes well, these characterizations will help establish that it is just *those* that we are talking about.

The subject matter is perhaps best characterized as “the subjective quality of experience.” When we perceive, think, and act, there is a whirl of causation and information processing, but this processing does not usually go on in the dark. There is also an internal aspect; there is something it feels like to be a cognitive agent. This internal aspect is conscious experience. Conscious experiences range from vivid color sensations to experiences of the faintest background aromas; from hard-edged pains to the elusive experience of thoughts on the tip of one’s tongue; from mundane sounds and smells to the encompassing grandeur of musical experience; from the triviality of a nagging itch to the weight of a deep existential angst; from the specificity of the taste of peppermint to the generality of one’s experience of selfhood. All these have a distinct experienced quality. All are prominent parts of the inner life of the mind. [...]

Consciousness is surprising. If all we knew about were the facts of physics, and even the facts about dynamics and information processing in complex systems, there would be no compelling reason to postulate the existence of conscious experience. If it were not for our direct evidence in the first-person case, the hypothesis would seem unwarranted; almost mystical, perhaps. Yet we know, directly, that there is conscious experience. The question is, how do we reconcile it with everything else we know?

Questions:

1. Why does Chalmers argue that trying to define conscious experience in terms of more primitive notions is “fruitless”?
2. According to the text, what is the key difference between how we know consciousness versus how we know the rest of the world?
3. How does Chalmers characterize the “internal aspect” of cognitive processing, and why wouldn’t physics alone compel us to postulate its existence?

EXERCISES FOR ASSESSING COMPETENCY LEVEL

Exercise 2. Answer the following questions:

1. What are the primary theoretical frameworks for analysing the nature and essence of consciousness?
2. What are the defining characteristics of the substantialist approach to the consciousness?
3. How did the mechanisms of reflection evolve, and what are its primary evolutionary tiers?
4. What constitutes the core paradigm shift in non-classical approaches to consciousness?
5. What is the methodological significance of thought experiments in the philosophy of mind?
6. How can the core dilemma of the mind-body problem be formulated?
7. What constitutes the unconscious, and what are the foundational principles of the psychoanalytic tradition?
8. What are the historical origins, core objectives, and clinical principles of psychosomatic medicine?
9. What are the primary ethical, ontological, and existential dilemmas surrounding the development and deployment of artificial intelligence?

Exercise 3. Read the text excerpt. Identify the arguments advanced by both the proponents and opponents of qualia. In your opinion, is it possible to describe subjective experience using scientific terminology?

The ontological status of qualia remains one of the most pressing and widely contested issues in contemporary philosophy of mind, serving as a primary battleground between physicalism and its critics. According to Daniel Dennett, qualia are characterized by four defining properties:

- 1) **ineffability**: they cannot be communicated via language or messages; they can only be comprehended through direct, firsthand experience;
- 2) **intrinsicness**: they are non-relational properties that do not alter based on how an experience correlates with external objects;
- 3) **privateness**: interpersonal comparisons of these qualitative states are theoretically impossible;
- 4) **immediate accessibility**: experiencing a phenomenal state automatically entails knowing that one is experiencing it, and knowing a qualitative state requires directly experiencing it.

Advocates for the existence of qualia emphasize that distinct mental states yield unique subjective experiences across different individuals. For instance, the taste of chocolate ice cream triggers heterogeneous preferences and sensations. Proponents argue that natural sciences cannot adequately explain these variations, nor can they capture the exact qualitative character of a sensory perception.

This position is reinforced by prominent thought experiments, such as Frank Jackson's "Mary's Room" from his article *Epiphenomenal Qualia*. Jackson posits a scenario involving Mary, a brilliant neuroscientist who possesses complete physical knowledge concerning color vision — ranging from the behavioral responses a hue elicits to the precise sequence of neurological operations registered during perception. However, she has been confined since birth to a strictly black-and-white environment, viewing the outside world exclusively through a monochrome monitor. Jackson argues that upon leaving the room, Mary undeniably acquires novel knowledge when she encounters a red object for the first time: specifically, she learns what it is like to experience the color red.

Critiquing these conclusions, Daniel Dennett contends that Mary would learn nothing new upon her release. He argues that if Mary truly possessed exhaustive physical knowledge, her expertise would inherently encompass a comprehensive understanding of how human biology processes these qualitative inputs. Furthermore, this absolute systemic knowledge would grant her the functional capacity to identify and differentiate the color red from other wavelengths prior to direct exposure. Consequently, Dennett asserts that Mary would know exactly what to expect, thereby demonstrating that ineffable qualia do not exist independently of functional physical processes.

Topics for reports:

1. The mind-body problem and its solutions in philosophy and neuroscience.
2. Thought experiments in the philosophy of mind and the problem of "qualia".
3. Consciousness and self-awareness: the problem of the "ego".
4. The evolution of the concept of the unconscious in philosophy and psychology.
5. Sigmund Freud as the founder of psychoanalysis.
6. The phenomenon of the "collective unconscious" in Jungian psychoanalysis.
7. The phenomenon of mass consciousness.
8. The present and future of artificial intelligence.
9. Ethical dilemmas in artificial intelligence.

Aphorisms and statements:

1. Consciousness can never be anything other than conscious being, and the being of people is the real process of their lives (*K. Marx*).
2. Consciousness requires people to be alone with themselves (*F. Girenok*).
3. Our world is relative; its reality depends on our consciousness (*A. Einstein*).
4. In what we call the knowledge and consideration of things, we always cognize and consider only ourselves; within our entire consciousness, we know nothing but ourselves and our own determinations (*G. Fichte*).

5. Consciousness is a poor judge of what occurs in the depths of being, because it cannot penetrate there (*E. Durkheim*).

6. Every individual harbors desires that they do not communicate to others, alongside desires of which they themselves are completely unaware (*S. Freud*).

7. Conscious mental life represents only a relatively minor portion of the broader unconscious mind (*S. Freud*).

SELF-ASSESSMENT OF TOPIC COMPREHENSION

1. The essential characteristic of a person, associated with their ability to comprehend (understand, experience, and project) the external world and their internal experience, is...

2. The main characteristics of consciousness as a phenomenon include:

- a) processuality;
- b) subjectivity;
- c) intentionality;
- d) structuredness;
- e) density.

3. The concept of the “unconscious” is central to:

- a) Marxism;
- b) Psychoanalysis;
- c) Irrationalism;
- d) Existentialism;
- e) Positivism.

4. The essence of the mind-body problem lies in the relationship between:

- a) spiritual and material;
- b) physiological (material) and mental (ideal) processes;
- c) rational and irrational;
- d) abstract and concrete.

5. The unconscious, according to S. Freud, is:

- a) divine illumination;
- b) elemental impulses emanating from the sphere of knowledge;
- c) instincts, drives, and desires for the purpose of obtaining maximum pleasure;
- d) spontaneous processes occurring in groups (“collective unconscious”).

6. According to S. Freud, what structural element of the psyche is responsible for a person’s moral and religious attitudes, norms of behavior, and moral prohibitions, and is formed during the process of a person’s upbringing:

7. In psychoanalysis, sublimation is understood as:

- a) renunciation of any unconscious drives;
- b) complete satisfaction of all unconscious drives;
- c) psychoanalytic therapy of neuroses;
- d) redirecting socially and culturally disapproved drives into a channel of their socially and cultural acceptability.

8. Relate the structural levels of consciousness to their definitions.

1) bodily-perceptual; 2) logical-conceptual; 3) emotional; 4) value-motivational.	a) sensations, perceptions, and ideas through which a person receives primary information about the external world and their own body; b) thinking, through which a person goes beyond the immediate sensory data and reflects the world in the form of concepts, judgments, and inferences; c) will, values, motives, and spiritual ideals of the individual; d) the sphere of personal, subjective psychological experiences, emotions and feelings, affects, memories, and premonitions.
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9. In modern philosophy of consciousness, “qualia” refers to:

- a) objective experience;
- b) subjective experience;
- c) reality external to consciousness;
- d) logically consistent thinking of a specific individual.

10. What term denotes the ability of artificial systems to perform intellectual and creative functions traditionally considered the prerogative of humans?

SECTION 4 SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY

TOPIC 4.1 SOCIETY AS A DEVELOPING SYSTEM

Total lesson time: 2 hours.

Aim: to analyze society as a distinct object of philosophical reflection, focusing on its structural dynamics and historical evolution.

Objectives:

- to evaluate the epistemological characteristics specific to understanding social reality;
- to analyze the structural components that constitute society as an integrated system;
- to contrast the formational and civilizational paradigms of historical interpretation;
- to examine how technological development correlates with the historical progression of civilization.

Questions:

1. Social philosophy and its scope. Society as a system.
2. The historical evolution of social thought.
3. Interpretations of the historical process.
4. The dynamics of social development.
5. Philosophical paradigms of culture.

Key concepts: social philosophy, society, subsystems of society, social institutions, linear/non-linear development of society, social reality, driving forces of social development, culture, dialogue of cultures.

THEORETICAL MATERIAL

4.1.1. SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY AND ITS SCOPE. SOCIETY AS A SYSTEM

Social philosophy is a specialized branch of philosophy that investigates the essence of society, its ontological divergence from nature, and its relationship to the state, religion, morality, value systems, and spiritual culture. It maps the foundational concepts of sociality throughout the history of thought, evaluating societal goals, normative ideals, genesis, and development. Furthermore, social philosophy analyzes the meaning and trajectory of historical processes, the primary modalities of cultural creation (such as art, religion, and morality), the dialectic between tradition and innovation, and the future prospects of humanity within socio-cultural dynamics.

The primary focus of social philosophy centers on the problems of social being, or social ontology. Distinct from empirical social sciences, it offers a holistic synthesis of the philosophy of history, ethics, aesthetics, political philosophy, and the philosophy of religion. It establishes the criteria for social stratification, evaluates the typologies of civilizational dynamics, and constructs models for future human development.

In its broadest sense, **society** is conceptualized as a distinct mode of organization and interaction among individuals and social groups — isolated from nature yet inextricably bound to it as a specialized domain of the material world. In a narrower sense, the term denotes a specific stage of human history (e.g., slave-owning society) or a distinct, localized socio-political entity (e.g., contemporary Belarusian society).

The unique methodology of social philosophy is clearly reflected in its systemic modeling of society. Accordingly, society is defined through several interconnected dimensions:

- **an autonomous system:** a material reality separated from nature that interacts with it through specific, objective laws of development;
- **a cooperative network:** a system of human interaction driven by collective modes of existence, facilitating coordinated actions to achieve shared objectives;
- **a relational corporate matrix:** a network of relations among social groups (e.g., physicians, educators, software engineers) characterized by specific corporate interests;
- **a macro-social totality:** a system of relations between macro-social strata, including economic classes (workers, peasantry, intelligentsia) and ethno-social communities (Belarusians, Germans, Iranians), alongside the institutions that articulate their interests;
- **an institutional framework:** a system of functioning social institutions (such as the church, university, healthcare system, and judiciary) that ensure structural stability and reproduction;
- **a multi-spherical subsystem:** a totality of interrelated and complementary domains — economic, political, social, and spiritual — each serving to realize corresponding societal needs and interests.

The primary architectural elements forming the structure of society comprise social individuals, social groups, formal institutions, and macro-social communities.

Two major paradigm-shifting models have profoundly shaped the trajectory of contemporary social theory:

1. **Society as a relational system** (Karl Marx): this framework is rooted in the materialist conception of history, which posits that “it is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness.” Within this paradigm, all components of the social structure are ultimately determined by material relations of production;

2. ***Society as a structural-functional system*** (Talcott Parsons): adapting systemic concepts from biology, Parsons formulated the AGIL paradigm, which stipulates that any social system must execute four functional imperatives to survive:

- ***adaptation***: accommodating and manipulating the physical environment, managed by the *economic* subsystem;
- ***goal attainment***: defining and mobilizing resources to achieve systemic objectives, managed by the *political* subsystem;
- ***integration***: maintaining internal solidarity and preventing conflict, managed by the *social/societal* subsystem;
- ***latency (pattern maintenance)***: reproducing cultural motivations, preserving normative requirements, and managing systemic tension, managed by the *cultural* subsystem.

3. ***Society as a result of the rationalization of social action*** (Max Weber, 1864–1920): the nature of individual social action is decisive for understanding modern society. In describing social action (human action), Weber identifies four main types found in modern society: affective (based on emotions), traditional (guided by tradition), value-rational (based on a system of values), and goal-oriented (based on achieving a specific goal).

4.1.2. THE HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF SOCIAL THOUGHT

The philosophical understanding of society consists in interpreting society through the lens of thinkers' philosophical views.

One of the most famous early concepts of society and the state was ***Plato's theory of the ideal state***. According to the philosopher, the ideal state must target the common good, to which the private interests of citizens are subordinated. The ideal state consists of three strata: *philosophers (rulers)*, *warriors (guards)*, and *artisans/farmers*. A person is born as a representative of a specific social stratum.

According to Plato, a state can be wise and just only due to the spiritual properties of the people who govern it. Since only philosophers possess wisdom, they are the ones who should rule. The task of warriors is to protect against external and internal enemies, while artisans and farmers provide all necessary material benefits. The state is just if each group fulfills its functions conscientiously.

Aristotle, also seeking to build a just society, viewed justice as a combination of human virtues. He famously called man a “political animal,” implying that only humans are capable of voluntarily and consciously uniting into a society. In antiquity, society was viewed strictly through the prism of the state as a political institution.

In the Middle Ages, the philosophical understanding of society was based on the concept of God as the absolute being. On this basis, St. Augustine

distinguished between the “City of God” and the “Earthly City.” He saw the meaning of history as the movement of the earthly city toward the perfection of the heavenly city. Both Christianity and other world or national religions have their own models of societal and state structure. Their essence lies in the idea of divine predestination, where society is structured to provide humans with the conditions for a worthy meeting with God in both this life and the next.

During *the Modern era*, philosophers attempted to explain the mechanisms behind the emergence of society. The theory of the social contract arose as an agreement between the individual and society; as a result, individuals surrendered part of their rights and freedoms to the state, which in turn undertook to protect the interests of each citizen.

Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679) argued that the state is necessary to prevent a “war of all against all,” which naturally arises from the absolute freedom of each individual.

John Locke (1632–1704) viewed the social contract as the creation of reasonable individuals who recognized the fundamental rights to life, liberty, and property.

Charles L. Montesquieu (1689–1755) believed that human society progresses through its development, and that the various aspects and stages of the historical process are interconnected, forming a single whole.

Johann Gottfried Herder (1744–1803) considered climate, soil, and the geographical environment to be the foundation of historical life. However, while Montesquieu tried to explain the emergence of political institutions, Herder focused on the cultural and historical activities of mankind. Herder was the first to raise the question of continuity in cultural development, leading to the idea of a unified world history. He viewed man and society as a single organic whole driven by human activity to meet basic needs, with the highest criterion being the principle of humanity.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778) attempted to identify the causes of social inequality and ways to overcome it. From his perspective, inequality was rooted in private property. Rousseau stressed that the true task of the social contract is to protect the personality, property, and freedom of each member of society.

In *German classical philosophy*, **Immanuel Kant** (1724–1804) paid special attention to social issues. In searching for patterns in societal life, Kant proposed that personal goals and the social results of human activity ultimately coincide. Contradictions will always exist in society, but laws serve to limit them. Only under these legal conditions is the full development of human potential possible.

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770–1831) introduced the concept of “civil society” as a system of socio-economic relationships. Hegel placed the realization of human freedom at the foundation of society and history. He viewed history as the progressive advancement of the Absolute Spirit, which manifests through the unique spirit and special mission of individual nations.

In the 19th and 20th centuries Herbert Spencer (1820–1903) founded “social organicism,” drawing an analogy between society and a biological organism. Just like a living body, the growth of society is accompanied by an increasing complexity of its organs, parts, and functions. However, Spencer noted a key difference: there is less individual dependence in society, and society ultimately exists for the benefit of its members. He argued that true social progress is measured by the transition from a society where the individual is entirely subordinate to the whole, to a state where the social organism serves its individual citizens.

Lev Gumilyov (1912–1992) considered society as an *ethnos* — a natural phenomenon whose primary distinguishing feature is an ethnic stereotype of behavior. He viewed the *ethnos* as an energy phenomenon linked to the biochemical energy of living matter. Consequently, he interpreted the development of society as the history of separate ethnic groups determined by the rhythm of ethnogenesis, landscape features, and cultural traditions.

4.1.3. INTERPRETATIONS OF THE HISTORICAL PROCESS

In the philosophy of history, there are both linear and non-linear interpretations of the historical process.

Non-linear interpretations of history are rooted in antiquity, embodied in ideas such as the “wheel of history,” the cycle of events, and the “eternal return.”

This interpretation of social development found a second life in philosophical and historical concepts through the **civilizational-cyclical model**.

Giambattista Vico (18th century) was one of the first to theoretically substantiate this model. He singled out three successive epochs in human history: the divine, the heroic, and the human. Crucially, he argued that the onset of the “human age” marks the beginning of decline and a return to a primitive state, which is then followed by the rebirth of a new “divine age,” repeating the cycle.

Nikolay Danilevsky (1822–1885): this cyclical model was later consolidated by the Russian historian through his concept of cultural-historical types. Highlighting ten distinct cultural-historical types — which can be understood as relatively independent civilizations — Danilevsky noted that each is characterized by a shared language, unique ethnographic material, political independence, and a capacity for spiritual development. They are distinguished primarily by their core value orientations; for example, art was paramount for the ancient Greeks, while law and political organization defined the Romans.

Oswald Spengler (1880–1936): the cyclical model of social dynamics is also central to the German philosopher’s concept of “cultural morphology.” Spengler viewed human history as highly analogous to natural history (comparing the life of a society to that of an animal, tree, or flower). He recognized eight great historical cultures, each inherently valuable, and paid special attention to the trajectory of Western culture.

Arnold Toynbee (1889–1975): the English historian underpinned his concept of local civilizations with a cyclical framework where the primary stages of social dynamics are *emergence*, *growth*, *breakdown*, and *decay*. Toynbee explained the birth, development, and death of civilizations through two core mechanisms:

1) ***challenge-and-response***: a community's reaction to external pressures from either the geographic environment or rival communities;

2) ***withdrawal-and-return***: a mechanism regulating the relationship between the creative minority (the elite driving societal growth) and the majority, who imitate and accept these innovations.

Linear interpretations of history are divided into two main models: *regressivism* and *progressivism*. *Progress* is defined as the consistent improvement of social life and its transition to a higher qualitative state ("ascending" development). Conversely, *regression* is the consistent deterioration and destruction of societal structures ("descending" development).

Regressive interpretations first appeared in the ancient world. Examples include the concept of the "rectification of names" by the ancient Chinese philosopher Confucius, which was permeated with nostalgic moods, as well as ancient Greek myths regarding a lost past "golden age."

The progressive interpretation includes Karl Marx's concept of socio-economic formations. Here, society develops in a spiral, passing through five sequential stages dictated by changing modes of production.

Another authoritative progressive approach is Jaspers' concept of the ***Axial Age***. Jaspers identifies four pivotal stages in human civilizational development:

1) ***the prehistoric period***: the era during which the physical and social formation of man took place;

2) ***the Great Historical Cultures of Antiquity***: the Sumerian-Babylonian, Egyptian, pre-Aryan Indus Valley, and archaic Chinese worlds, whose independent appearance in three global regions marked the dawn of human history;

3) ***the Axial Age (800–200 BCE)***: the true beginning of a unified world era. During this time, major spiritual movements arose independently across India, China, Persia, Palestine, and Ancient Greece to form the archetype of modern humanity. This era birthed world religions, philosophy, and the capacity for spiritual reflection, uniting what had previously been isolated local cultures into a shared human history;

4) ***the technological era***: the contemporary transition into a fully unified, globalized world history.

Modern social philosophy frequently employs a three-stage classification to categorize Western societies. Thinkers such as R. Aron, D. Bell, J. Fourastié, Z. Brzezinski, and A. Toffler distinguish between pre-industrial, industrial, and post-industrial societies.

Pre-industrial (agrarian/traditional): economies were based on primary production (hunting, gathering) and agriculture. They were characterized by

conservative social structures, authoritarian cultural forms, and a syncretic style of thinking.

Industrial: emerged roughly 200 years ago as a result of the Industrial Revolution, marked by the rapid, widespread penetration of technology into all spheres of human life.

Post-industrial: a term introduced by Daniel Bell to designate the current civilizational stage spanning from the mid-20th century to the present, emerging fully in the 1970s. In this society, primacy shifts from heavy industry and material production to science and technology. The service sector and information become defining features. A post-industrial society is statistically indicated by its percentage of scientific and technical workers and its total expenditures on research and development (R&D). Ultimately, while an industrial society is defined by the volume of *goods produced*, a post-industrial society is defined by its capacity to *generate and transmit information*.

By the late 20th century, the concept of the **Information Society** effectively replaced the term “post-industrial society.” Within this framework, a dominant information economy emerges, asserting control over both business and government. Information production and communication become highly centralized, establishing information as society’s primary resource.

Japanese scholar Yoneji Masuda proposed a 20th-century utopia based on this transition, which he termed “**computopia**.” According to Masuda:

- the new society relies on computer technology to replace or dramatically enhance human intellectual labor;
- the information revolution serves as a new productive force, enabling the mass production of cognitive, systematized information, technology, and knowledge;
- this shift will help realize historic human values, such as freedom of decision-making, equality of opportunity, and functional social associations operating free from overbearing governing authorities.

Despite these utopian promises, contemporary philosophy warns of a distinct danger: if information becomes the primary commodity and a dominant vehicle for political influence, it could easily be weaponized to give rise to a new, highly sophisticated version of the totalitarian state.

4.1.4. THE DYNAMICS OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Briefly formulated, the essence of the problem can be expressed as follows: “Who is the creator of history?” In this regard, the philosophy of history employs two closely related concepts: the **subject of history** and the **driving forces of history**. The influence of the *subject of history* on the historical process is intentional and meaningful, carried out through an awareness of specific interests and the setting of — most often — ideologically justified goals. Conversely,

the *driving forces of history*, though capable of fundamentally altering society, are propelled by unconscious internal impulses or external subjects.

Philosophers generally take three distinct approaches to solving this problem:

1. The classical approach addresses the traditional question regarding the role of collective populations versus exceptional individuals, offering two opposing solutions:

- *the individual as subject*: one solution views a great personality (or a collection of individuals) — such as leaders, rulers, and heroes — as the primary creators of history. It is their deeds and decisions that alter the course of human events and become permanently recorded in the historical memory of mankind;

- *the masses as subject (the Marxist view)*: the alternative solution recognizes the masses as the decisive force behind social development. Marxism explicitly concludes that it is the people who make history. This stance is traditionally supported by three arguments:

- 1) the people serve as the primary productive force, creating all the material goods necessary for society's existence;

- 2) the people represent the true socio-political force capable of transforming society through collective action;

- 3) the people form a foundational folk culture that ensures spiritual and historical continuity.

In this view, the masses naturally put forward great personalities to help them organize, articulate, and realize their collective interests.

2. The elitist approach was developed in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, but still remains widely influential in contemporary social science. Formulated by Italian sociologists Vilfredo Pareto and Gaetano Mosca, alongside German political philosopher Robert Michels, this theory posits that society is permanently divided into two parts, the dominant of which is the elite.

The elite is defined as a privileged, influential, and relatively closed group occupying the highest echelons of the social hierarchy. They possess actual power, hold significant financial and informational resources, and make key managerial decisions.

In analyzing political life — where periods of stability and instability alternate — Vilfredo Pareto distinguished between two main types of ruling elites that cyclically replace one another:

- “**lions**” are characterized by extreme conservatism and a reliance on forceful, direct methods of governance;

- “**foxes**” are masters of political maneuvering, diplomacy, and intrigue, whose primary goal is to maintain power by negotiating compromises between opposing forces.

3. The psychological/mass approach focuses on analyzing the phenomenon of the crowd or the mass. The negative impact of the crowd on social events can be traced throughout world history and was criticized as early as Ancient Greece, where *ochlocracy* was condemned as the degenerate rule of the mob.

The systematic, purposeful study of mass psychology began in the 19th century and expanded into the 20th century through the works of Gabriel Tarde, Gustave Le Bon, Friedrich Nietzsche, Sigmund Freud, José Ortega y Gasset, and Elias Canetti. These thinkers identified several defining characteristics of the crowd, including:

- an extreme susceptibility to psychological suggestion;
- a persistent readiness for volatile, impulsive actions;
- the immediate emergence of a herd instinct;
- a tendency toward the thoughtless, uncritical following of demagogic leaders.

4.1.5. PHILOSOPHICAL PARADIGMS OF CULTURE

The term “culture” has long been used to refer to everything created by human beings, serving as a synonym for the social and the artificial as opposed to the natural. Modern literature contains more than 250 definitions of culture, each capturing its various aspects, features, manifestations, and modifications. These concepts are examined by a branch of social philosophy known as the philosophy of culture.

To form a generalized, holistic understanding of culture, philosophers primarily rely on three highly fruitful analytical approaches:

1. *The activity approach* considers culture as a specific mode of human life — a system of extrabiological programs governing human activity, behavior, and communication through which social life is reproduced. As a systematically organized activity, culture ensures and regulates the reproduction of diverse forms of social existence within a specific type of society. It also programs societal development and dictates structural organization.

2. *The semiotic approach* treats culture as a complex system of signs. Its defining characteristic is an extrabiological sign mechanism used for storing and transmitting social experience — effectively acting as a social code through which cultural heritage is passed down. Within this framework, culture is a world of symbols that record historically evolving social experience. It transmits this experience across generations through various sign systems, such as language, household items, works of art, scientific knowledge, philosophical concepts, and religious ideas.

3. *The axiological (value) approach* views culture as an intricate system of material and spiritual values, forming a hierarchy of ideals and meanings created by a specific society.

Ultimately, culture can be understood as a socially acquired set of significant ideas, values, customs, beliefs, traditions, norms, and behavioral rules transmitted across generations, through which people organize their lives. Structurally, culture is traditionally divided into material and spiritual forms of existence.

The existence of culture is only possible through a continuous dialogue between its creators and its perceivers. The ***dialogue of cultures*** serves as a vital framework for interacting with, understanding, and evaluating cultural products, placing it at the very center of the cultural process. This concept carries a broad meaning, encompassing:

- the dialogue between the creator and the consumer of cultural values;
- the dialogue between different generations;
- the dialogue of cultures as a medium for mutual understanding and interaction among different peoples.

Like any evolving process, culture possesses both a stable, conservative dimension and a developing, innovative dimension. The stable side of culture is preserved through ***cultural tradition***. Traditional action aims to achieve specific goals by implementing fixed, established norms.

Traditions represent the elements of cultural heritage passed down and preserved across generations. They act as the memory of culture. However, the culture of each new era does not recall the past statically; instead, it transforms and adapts historical memory to the present. Tradition is effectively the actualized culture of the past — a stabilizing cultural code that preserves the positive advancements accumulated by previous generations. While traditions function across all spheres of public life (such as law, art, morality, and religion), their significance varies by discipline. For instance, the value of tradition reaches its peak in religion, whereas innovation holds much greater weight in science.

The word “innovation” derives from the Latin *novatio*, meaning renewal or change. Without ***innovation***, culture cannot develop, adapt, or improve. Tradition finds its fruitful continuation precisely through innovation, which manifests as a critical analysis and refinement of old paradigms alongside the production of entirely new values

TRAINING MATERIAL

Exercise 1. Read the excerpt from the primary source and answer the questions.

Z. Bauman

Globalization. The Human Consequences²⁰

[...] The deepest meaning conveyed by the idea of *globalization* is that of the indeterminate, unruly and self-propelled character of world affairs; the absence of a center, of a controlling desk, of a board of directors, of a managerial office. Globalization is Jowitt’s “new world disorder” under another name.

²⁰ Bauman, Z. Globalization. The human consequences / Z. Bauman. – New York : Columbia University Press, 1998. – 137 p.

This trait, undetachable from the image of globalization, sets it radically apart from another idea which it ostensibly replaced, that of “*universalization*” — once constitutive of the modern discourse of global affairs, but by now fallen into disuse, rarely heard of, perhaps even by and large forgotten by anyone except philosophers.

Just like the concepts of “civilization”, “development”, “convergence”, “consensus” and many other key terms of early- and classic-modern thinking, the idea of ‘universalization’ conveyed the hope, the intention, and the determination of order-making; on top of what the other kindred terms signalled, it meant a universal order — the order-making on a universal, truly global scale. Like the other concepts, the idea of universalization was coined on the rising tide of the modern powers’ resourcefulness and the modern intellect’s ambitions. The entire family of concepts announced in unison the will to make the world different from what it had been and better than it had been, and expand the change and the improvement to a global, species-wide dimension. By the same token, it declared the intention to make similar the life conditions of everyone and everywhere, and so everybody’s life chances; perhaps even make them equal.

Nothing of that has been left in the meaning of globalization, as shaped by the present discourse. The new term refers primarily to the global effects, notoriously *unintended* and *unanticipated*, rather than to global *initiatives* and *undertakings*. [...]

Questions:

1. Why does Bauman refer to globalization as Jowitt’s “new world disorder”?
2. According to the text, what is the radical difference between the concepts of “globalization” and “universalization”?
3. What specific hopes, intentions, and goals of classic-modern thinking have been completely lost in the modern meaning of globalization?

EXERCISES FOR ASSESSING COMPETENCY LEVEL

Exercise 2. Answer the following questions:

1. What does social philosophy study, and how does it differ from other social sciences?
2. How does the philosophy of history differ from history, and what problems does it study?
3. Why is society a developing system? Which philosophical models view society as a system?
4. What are linear and nonlinear interpretations of history?
5. What are the driving forces behind social development? What is the role of the individual in history?
6. What is culture? What are the approaches to examining culture?
7. What is the essence of dialogue between cultures?

Exercise 3. Match the theories of social development with their main contents.

1) Marxist theory; 2) Post-industrial theory; 3) Modernization theory.	a) society goes through traditional, industrial, and post-industrial stages; b) history is the result of class struggle and the change of socio-economic formations; c) society develops from a traditional to a modern type.
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Exercise 4. Explain why society is considered to be a self-developing system. Provide at least three arguments. Discuss in groups.

Exercise 5. Complete the table “Linear and non-linear interpretations of history”.

Type	Representatives	Concepts	Main ideas	Periodization of history
Linear interpretations of history	K. Marx, F. Engels	Theory of socio-economic formations	...	5 formations:
	K. Jaspers	The Axial Age concept	...	4 stages in the history of mankind:
	D. Bell, A. Touraine, E. Masuda, A. Toffler	...	...	...
Non-linear interpretations of history	N. Ya. Danilevsky	The concept of cultural and historical types; ...	...	...
	O. Spengler	...	...	8 types of cultures: ...
	A. Toynbee	...	Civilizations go through 4 stages ...	...

Topics for reports:

1. Society as a system. The social structure of society.
2. M. Weber's concept of social action.
3. The Marxist concept of society.
4. Communicative action in the theory of J. Habermas.
5. Social stratification and mobility in modern society.

6. The problematic field of the philosophy of history.
7. Social conflict and its status in the historical process.
8. The phenomenon of the masses and mass society.
9. Concepts of elites in modern social philosophy.
10. The role of the individual in the historical and cultural process.

Aphorisms and statements:

1. Only a society in which the people hold supreme power serves as the true repository of freedom (*Cicero*).
2. To comprehend the essence of the populace, one must be a ruler; conversely, to understand the nature of rulers, one must belong to the people (*N. Machiavelli*).
3. While nature creates human beings, it is society that develops and shapes them (*V. G. Belinsky*).
4. A nation that enslaves another nation forges its own chains (*K. Marx*).
5. Culture is, roughly speaking, everything we do that apes do not (*L. Raglan*).
6. Civilization represents power over the world, whereas culture embodies love for the world (*A. Kępiński*).
7. Culture constitutes the essence of an organism. It is born at the moment when a great soul awakens, emerging from the primordial spiritual state of an eternally infantile humanity (*O. Spengler*).
8. Civilization does not consist in a greater or lesser degree of refinement, but rather in a consciousness shared by an entire people. This consciousness is never refined; on the contrary, it is remarkably sound. To conceptualize civilization as the creation of an elite is to conflate it with culture, whereas these two remain entirely distinct phenomena (*A. Camus*).

SELF-ASSESSMENT OF TOPIC COMPREHENSION

1. What is the main factor in the development of society according to the materialistic understanding of history?

- | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| a) spiritual values; | c) political power; |
| b) industrial relations; | d) cultural traditions. |

2. From the list provided, highlight the characteristics inherent in society as a social system:

- a) hypercomplexity;
- b) stability in development;
- c) reflexivity;
- d) irrationality;
- e) variability;
- f) instability, poor predictability of development.

3. Identify the characteristic of society as an object of cognition, expressed in the statement of the 18th-century Italian Philosopher G. Vico: “Man is both director and actor of his own drama”:

- a) the fundamental unknowability of society;
- b) the impossibility of establishing objective patterns in the development of society due to their absence;
- c) the identity of the object and subject of social cognition.

4. Indicate the law of social development introduced by T. Malthus:

- a) the law of the unity and struggle of opposites;
- b) the law of population;
- c) the law of entropy;
- d) the law of the negation of the negation.

5. Indicate the thinkers who considered the diversity of people’s social activities to be the basis of the integrity of society:

- a) I. Kant; b) A. Comte; c) L. Feuerbach; d) K. Marx; e) M. Weber.

6. Highlight the thinker who identified socio-economic class as the main element of the social structure of society:

- a) K. Marx; b) L. Feuerbach; c) M. A. Bakunin.

TOPIC 4.2

PROSPECTS AND RISKS OF MODERN CIVILIZATION. BELARUS IN THE MODERN CIVILIZATION PROCESS

Total lesson time: 2 hours.

Aim: to highlight the primary prospects and risks of modern civilization and determine the role and place of Belarus within the contemporary civilizational process.

Objectives:

- to elucidate the concept of “civilization” and examine various civilizational types throughout human history;
- to analyze the concepts of technology and engineering, determining their respective roles in society;
- to identify the core essence and manifestations of globalization processes, as well as the primary problems and risks inherent in a consumer society;
- to characterize the phenomenon of the information society and identify the key risks associated with virtual reality;
- to outline the major demographic threats and risks in the development of modern civilization, and to characterize global pandemics as an emerging social danger;
- to examine the Belarusian model of socio-economic development and justify the civilizational choice of Belarus in a globalizing world.

Questions:

1. The concept of civilization: types of civilizations throughout human history.
2. Technology, engineering, and their role in the history of civilization.
3. Civilization and the processes of globalization in the contemporary world.
4. Global challenges of modernity and the risks of a consumer society.
5. The phenomenon of the information society and the risks of virtual reality.
6. Demographic risks and global pandemics as new social threats and their consequences.
7. The Belarusian model of socio-economic development and the civilizational choice of Belarus in a globalizing world.

Key concepts: civilization, technology, globalization, risks, consumer society, information society, post-industrial society, virtual reality, sociodynamic strategies, Belarusian model of socio-economic development.

THEORETICAL MATERIAL

4.2.1. THE CONCEPT OF CIVILIZATION: TYPES OF CIVILIZATIONS THROUGHOUT HUMAN HISTORY

In modern social philosophy, the concept of “civilization” is increasingly employed to explain the factors driving the historical dynamics of society. The term itself — derived from the Latin *civilis*, meaning “civil” or “state-related” — still lacks an unambiguous interpretation. In global philosophical literature, it is most frequently utilized in the following primary senses:

- 1) as a synonym for culture (A. Toynbee);
- 2) as a specific stage in the development of local cultures, characterized by their degradation and decline (O. Spengler);
- 3) as a stage in the historical development of humanity that succeeds barbarism (L. Morgan, F. Engels).

Recently, the concept of “civilization” has formed the foundational framework for the civilizational approach to the analysis of social dynamics.

There are several typologies of civilizations. One of the most common paradigms distinguishes between Eastern and Western civilizations.

Western civilization is characterized by a goal-oriented style of thinking focused on concrete results and the efficacy of social technologies, aiming to reshape both the world and human beings in accordance with human ideas and designs. Upon encountering other civilizations, European civilization frequently exhibits a tendency toward sociocultural expansion, often displaying intolerance toward other cultures by dismissing them as inferior or underdeveloped. Western scientific thought has historically been oriented toward comprehending and transforming the world, which manifests in its pronounced emphasis on the natural sciences and fundamental research. Western Europe is further

characterized by an orientation toward an innovative path of development, which entails conscious human intervention in *social processes* and the cultivation of intensive growth factors, such as *science and technology*. In the political sphere, Western civilization inherently guarantees private property and individual civil rights to incentivize innovation and creative activity, while striving to harmonize the relationship between society and the state through the formation of civil society institutions.

Eastern civilization is most frequently defined as *traditionalist*, with analytical focus placed on the socio-political and spiritual characteristics of the region. In contrast to the West, it features the dominance of an authoritarian administrative system characterized by a despotic form of governance and a high degree of human dependence on ruling structures and institutions. These circumstances condition the scientific and spiritual orientations of Eastern civilization. The development of scientific knowledge was characterized less by the growth of theoretical components and more by the formation of practical, recipe-based methods of activity embedded within the researcher's individual experience.

Other widely prominent typologies of civilizations distinguish between the *pre-industrial*, *industrial*, and *post-industrial* periods of human development (R. Aron, W. Rostow, A. Toffler). The criterion for delineating these stages of civilizational dynamics is *the development of material and production technologies*, alongside the closely intertwined socio-political and spiritual relations.

A pre-industrial society, sometimes designated as agrarian or traditional, is characterized by its reliance on the agricultural sector of the economy. This society is dominated by subsistence farming and rigid class hierarchies, and it is distinguished by a relative absence of social change; the primary regulating role is played by traditions, which largely govern social life. Innovative technologies in such a culture, when they do occur, operate merely as exceptions to the rule.

The emergence of **industrial civilization** is associated with the transition to an industrialized society dominated by mass market production. It presupposes the creation of large-scale machine industries, the transition to a factory organization of labor, and a subsequent increase in productivity. In this society, the agricultural sector is progressively marginalized as industrial production becomes dominant, which in turn accelerates urbanization processes. Science becomes a system-forming factor of society, while scientific and technological progress dictates the possibilities and prospects for overall social progress.

Post-industrial civilization is distinguished by a number of novel features compared to its industrial predecessor. It is dominated by the so-called “tertiary sector” — the service economy — where science, education, and information assume a leading role. Knowledge-intensive information technologies come to the fore, displacing heavy industry into the background. The dominance of ownership over the physical means of production is gradually supplanted by the right to possess information, leading to the formation of a new dominant

social group: professional managers. Computer technologies are ubiquitously integrated into the primary spheres of human life. This circumstance allowed Toffler to define this stage of development as the information society.

4.2.2. TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, AND THEIR ROLE IN THE HISTORY OF CIVILIZATION

The scientific and technological revolutions of the twentieth century, which synthesized a unified conception of technoscientific progress, actualized the philosophical investigation of technology as a distinct phenomenon. ***The philosophy of technology*** has emerged as one of the most significant domains within philosophical knowledge, dedicated to comprehending this complex phenomenon. Technology (*technik*) is a historically evolving ensemble of means created by humans — comprising tools, devices, knowledge, and skills — that enables the transformation and utilization of natural and artificial materials, phenomena, and processes to satisfy human needs. Since its inception, technology has served as a unique instrument for reshaping the human environment in both its natural and social manifestations.

In antiquity, the concept of *techne* emerged to denote everything produced by human hands, such as weapons, tools, and artifacts. By the seventeenth century, amidst the *Scientific Revolution* and the gradual rise of industrial production, the term came to signify the totality of means, procedures, and actions related primarily to the manufacture of tools and machines.

The diverse, large-scale consequences of technological development eventually drew the attention of social theorists. Within philosophical and social thought, a framework of ideas gradually coalesced that was later characterized as “technological determinism.” Founded in the nineteenth century by Henri de Saint-Simon, Auguste Comte, and others, this approach conceptualized technological development as an inherently progressive force that fundamentally dictates social progress. The problematic and structural framework of the philosophy of technology intensified as the specific features of technological development and its functioning within sociocultural space were unveiled.

Subsequently, thinkers such as Martin Heidegger, Karl Jaspers, Lewis Mumford, and Nikolai Berdyaev raised critical questions regarding the nexus between technological progress, the destiny of humanity, and the crisis of modern civilization and culture. Jaspers posited that technology constitutes a fundamentally unprecedented factor in human history; while it unlocks immense material and spiritual capacities, the conditions of a technical civilization threaten to reduce the individual to mere raw material for processing. Consequently, humans struggle to liberate themselves from its dominion, losing their personal essence. Concurrently, José Ortega y Gasset linked the twentieth-century emergence of the “mass man” — the average human consumer — directly to the proliferation of technology.

The ideas of Martin Heidegger proved highly influential in shaping the philosophy of technology. In contrast to the classical naturalistic tradition, he argued that philosophy must contemplate the hidden essence of technology, which he disclosed as the “enframing” (*Gestell*) of nature — the systematic requisitioning of its forces and energies through technical means. For Heidegger, the primary danger to modern culture resides not in technology itself, but in our unreflective dependence upon it.

Broadly speaking, contemporary philosophy of technology can be categorized into several socio-philosophical paradigms of evaluation: *technicism*, *anti-technicism*, and *synthetic programs*.

Technicism builds upon the traditions of technological determinism. It finds its clearest expression in various technocratic concepts — such as industrialism, post-industrialism, and information society theory — which evaluate technology uncritically and deem any interference with technological progress to be irrational. However, absolutizing the role of technology while ignoring the place of nature within the cultural system has caused technocracy, as a sociocultural trend, to culminate in a civilizational strategy that almost entirely neglects ecological boundaries and the humanitarian dimensions of human activity.

Conversely, **anti-technicism** (incorporating anthropological and axiological perspectives) is rooted in the philosophy of life (*Lebensphilosophie*) and existentialism. Anti-technicism denies the possibility of technology ever exerting a humanizing influence on the individual.

Finally, **the synthetic program** asserts the necessity of humanizing and modernizing the cultural foundations of technology. On the one hand, it recognizes the decisive role of technology in civilizational development as a prerequisite for preserving human life, maintaining it at a decent standard, and serving as a crucible for human creativity. On the other hand, it acknowledges the impossibility of rendering technology entirely non-repressive toward humans so long as it remains a social consequence of treating the world purely as an object of consumption. Therefore, projects aiming at the humanization, socialization, and ethical reorientation of technology must target not merely its external instruments, but the very foundations of human culture, needs, and our thoroughly “technologized” worldview.

4.2.3. CIVILIZATION AND THE PROCESSES OF GLOBALIZATION IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD

Globalization, one of the paramount challenges of the twenty-first century, has become a defining megatrend in global development, increasingly shaping both the contemporary world and the trajectory of civilization in the foreseeable future. Today, it permeates all spheres of public life, including economics, politics, social affairs, ecology, security, and both spiritual and material culture. According to some experts, global dynamics over the next fifty years will be

driven by integration forces, advancing through regionalization toward total globalization. From this perspective, nation-states that fail to participate in this process risk finding themselves on the margins of world history, excluded from the advancements and opportunities of the emergent post-industrial, information civilization.

The term “globalization” emerged in its contemporary sense during the mid-1980s. Conceptually, it implies a transition toward “worldliness” or globality — a shift toward a highly interconnected world system wherein interdependent networks and flows transcend traditional national boundaries. Thus, globalization signifies the erosion of distance and an immersion into transnational modes of life. Following Anthony Giddens’s influential definition, globalization entails an immersion in activities and co-existence that effectively collapse the distances between seemingly separate worlds, nation-states, religions, regions, and continents.

Despite the inherent ambiguity of the concept and the proliferation of divergent interpretations, several distinct paradigms in the socio-philosophical research on globalization can be identified. In contemporary academic literature, the following **primary approaches** are widely recognized:

1) **the cultural paradigm**, which examines globalization within a broad civilizational context;

2) **the economic paradigm**, which interprets globalization through the development of integrated global markets for goods, services, capital, and labor;

3) **the ecological perspective**, which links globalizing processes to the systemic deterioration of the planet’s environment;

4) **the comprehensive (multidimensional) perspective**, which analyzes globalization through political and informational lenses, as well as in the context of combating international crime and global poverty.

Thus, it can be concluded that globalization processes constitute an undeniable reality, fundamentally reshaping the facade of the modern world. While they unlock unprecedented prospects, they simultaneously introduce profound systemic dangers.

4.2.4. GLOBAL CHALLENGES OF MODERNITY AND THE RISKS OF A CONSUMER SOCIETY

Global problems constitute challenges of a planetary scale that arise from the intensive development of productive forces under the conditions of the technoscientific revolution, the resolution of which demands the concerted efforts of all humanity. The root causes of these global challenges are embedded in the historical formation of modern civilization, which has precipitated a profound crisis within industrial society and technocratically oriented culture as a whole. These global issues are generated not only by the heightened technical capacity of society to impact nature and the vast scale of its economic activities,

but also by the spontaneous and uneven nature of social development, alongside unequal economic relations between developed and developing nations.

Among these global challenges, several critical domains can be distinguished: the preservation of peace, international terrorism, overcoming the developmental backwardness of developing nations, establishing a new international economic order, securing energy and raw materials, environmental pollution, and demographic crises. Crucially, the global problems of our contemporary era are not merely economic, political, or scientific; they are, fundamentally, spiritual and moral crises. A number of theorists argue that the viable path forward lies in the self-limitation of production and consumption, alongside a collective reorientation toward spiritual and ethical values.

The international scientific community, most notably the Club of Rome, actively works on addressing ecological crises and charting future trajectories for global civilization. Today, the concept of sustainable development — or “organic growth” — is proclaimed as the foundational paradigm of the Club of Rome. Its core provisions include:

- **systemic coordination** of goals to ensure compatibility on a global scale;
- **the creation of resource-saving and waste-free technologies**, alongside methods for environmental remediation, recycling, and the secure disposal of hazardous waste;
- **the development of alternative energy sources** and the utilization of the ocean’s resource potentials;
- **the balanced, autonomous development** of the world system, strictly prohibiting the growth and prosperity of any single component at the expense of others;
- **development aligned with global needs**, which concurrently accounts for the distinct cultural and regional specificities of various parts of the world;
- **the comprehensive informatization of society** driven by computerization;
- **the cultivation of a planetary consciousness** understood as an organic synthesis of environmental awareness, humanization, and globalization.

Thus, humanity, functioning as a self-organizing living system, navigates these crises through trial and error, struggling for its existence and striving for a viable future. Concurrently, global problems leave humanity with no alternative but to transcend fragmentation and geopolitical disagreements to move toward unity, while scrupulously preserving the cultural uniqueness, centuries-old traditions, and distinct characteristics of individual nations.

However, recent scientific research increasingly highlights a transition from total globalization toward processes of regionalization and deglobalization. This shift is accompanied by a growing rejection of a monolithic Western model of modernity in favor of the concept of “multiple modernities” (S. Eisenstadt), which recognizes a diversity of developmental pathways. This dynamic is also analyzed through the lens of Immanuel Wallerstein’s world-systems theory, which identifies a structural division between the “core” and the “periphery.”

Deglobalization, a concept popularized by Walden Bello, describes the process of diminishing the dependence of national economies on global markets and reducing cross-border flows of goods and capital.

Regionalization denotes the formation of localized regional blocs and economic unions as substitutes for universal global integration.

The underlying causes of deglobalization and regionalization include the intensification of geopolitical contradictions, resource and oil crises, and systemic economic instability.

The concept of **multiple modernities**, advanced by Shmuel Eisenstadt, argues that modernity cannot be reduced exclusively to the Western model characterized by industrialization and liberal democracy. The key premise of this framework is that multiple pathways to modernization exist, each rooted in distinct cultural, historical, and civilizational contexts. For instance, diverse societies may adopt advanced technologies while remaining deeply committed to their traditional values, as evidenced by Asian models of modernization.

Concurrently, **world-systems theory**, formulated by Immanuel Wallerstein, posits that the world-system is a historical entity characterized by a spatial division of labor, wherein the production and exchange of basic commodities are essential for systemic survival. This system comprises three distinct tiers:

- 1) **the core**: developed nations that monopolize advanced technology and capital;
- 2) **the periphery**: developing regions that primarily supply raw materials and cheap labor;
- 3) **the semi-periphery**: an intermediate tier that cushions systemic shocks.

The internal dynamics of this world-system are sustained by constant conflicts and the structural redistribution of resources from the periphery to the core. While the overarching structure remains stable, it allows for occasional shifts in global hegemony and leadership. Collectively, these concepts indicate that the contemporary world is moving toward a polycentric model, where cultural uniqueness and regional economic integration supersede universal global unification.

In social science, the **consumer society** is a conceptual framework used to characterize a social order wherein the consumption of material goods and services becomes the driving force of social development and the dominant life motivation for its members. In sociological theory, the genesis of the consumer society is linked to late modernity (the twentieth century), characterized by the structural consolidation of mass society and the diffusion of mass culture values, primarily mediated by the impact of mass media on human consciousness and behavior. Early conceptualizations of this phenomenon are found in the works of Thorstein Veblen, who analyzed the social functions of conspicuous consumption, and Werner Sombart, who argued (contrasting Max Weber's thesis) that the birth of capitalism "from the spirit of luxury" was a significant historical catalyst alongside the "Protestant ethic."

While the term “consumer society” gained widespread currency during the 1950s and 1960s, and its values are fully manifested within “late capitalism,” contemporary analysts observe a global expansion of this trend. The mechanisms of “consumerization” are no longer confined to the economic domain; they encompass politics, science, and art. The consumption of diverse material and symbolic goods as a tool for constructing personal identity stands as a defining feature of the postmodern era, characterized by Zygmunt Bauman as “liquid modernity.”

The most conspicuous crisis associated with this social order is environmental. The planet’s resources are finite, as is its capacity for waste absorption. To avert crises of overproduction, the consumer society deliberately accelerates shifts in product fashions to stimulate artificial demand. Without continuous consumption, capitalist manufacturing would stall, leading to widespread business stagnation, mass unemployment, and a subsequent collapse of purchasing power.

While the hyper-stimulation of production makes commodities more accessible to the general population, this abundance relies entirely on maximizing labor productivity. When technological innovations and logistical optimizations are exhausted, capital seeks to enhance productivity by intensifying employee efficiency. This is typically achieved through heightened exploitation, the strict routinization of labor, increased reliance on quantitative metrics, ubiquitous surveillance, and psychological pressure. Consequently, workers experience chronic occupational stress, which they are then encouraged to alleviate through further cycles of compensatory consumption. Ultimately, the consumer society temporarily conceals deep-seated structural contradictions; however, because it denies individuals the socio-political vocabulary to articulate these grievances, it offers no mechanism to resolve them. Once these unresolved systemic tensions reach their zenith, they inevitably destabilize the very socio-economic foundations of modern civilization.

4.2.5. THE PHENOMENON OF THE INFORMATION SOCIETY AND THE RISKS OF VIRTUAL REALITY

The information society is a sociological and futurological concept that posits the production and utilization of scientific, technical, and other forms of information as the primary driver of social development. This framework serves as a specific variant of post-industrial society theory, the foundations of which were laid by Zbigniew Brzezinski, Daniel Bell, and Alvin Toffler. Conceptualizing social macro-dynamics as a sequential “succession of stages,” proponents of this theory link the emergence of the information society to the dominance of the information sector of the economy, which historically succeeds agriculture, manufacturing, and the service economy. Within this paradigm, it is argued that capital and labor — the structural pillars of industrial

society — give way to information and knowledge. The revolutionary impact of information technology alters social stratification to the extent that traditional classes are supplanted by socially undifferentiated “information communities” (Y. Masuda). Toffler famously contrasts conventional, cumbersome corporations with decentralized, small-scale economic forms: individualized domestic labor, or the “electronic cottage.” These forms are seamlessly integrated into the structural matrix of the information society, encompassing its distinct “infosphere,” “technosphere,” and other domains of human existence. Concurrently, a project for a “global electronic civilization” has been advanced, predicated on the convergence of television, computer networks, and energy resources into a unified system of “telecomputer energetics” (J. Pelton).

This “Computer Revolution” gradually displaces traditional print media with electronic books, reshapes societal ideology, and redefines unemployment as secure, state-backed leisure (H. Evans). Consequently, macro-social and political transformations are conceptualized within this framework as the direct causal outcomes of the ongoing “microelectronic revolution.”

Promising trajectories for the advancement of the information society center on the systemic intellectualization of social life and the implementation of novel social technologies leveraging society’s primary strategic resource: knowledge. Achieving this requires the engineering of unified, universal software architectures and semantic tools designed to streamline the description, integration, and identification of knowledge across disparate subject domains. Furthermore, it necessitates reforming educational systems to cultivate humanistically oriented, creative, and harmoniously developed future generations. This pedagogical shift must equip individuals with advanced epistemological methodologies to accurately comprehend and navigate a highly dynamic informational worldview. Ultimately, by grasping the unified laws of information exchange across nature and society, individuals can learn to purposefully and ethically construct this informational reality.

The systemic problems inherent in the information society include:

- ***the militarization of information technologies*** and resultant threats to national security, driven by the proliferation of cyber-weapons and the deployment of information resources for transnational criminal or terrorist activities;
- ***the algorithmization and top-down programmability*** of social processes;
- ***the structural bifurcation into “haves” and “have-nots,”*** which assumes an unprecedented configuration: a highly privileged stratum of informed communities emerges, contrasted against the “new poor” — the digitally excluded. Consequently, the locus of structural social conflict shifts from economic exploitation to the cultural and informational domains.

Every internet user is inevitably exposed to the pervasive ***influence of virtual reality*** — an engagement that has become structurally unavoidable. Virtual reality exerts a series of fundamental psychological and behavioral effects upon the individual. Crucially, users must recognize that the moment their personal

computer connects to the network, they immediately transform into a target and an object of analysis for a multitude of competing institutional agents. Cyberspace, much like physical territory, functions as a contested arena for ideological, political, economic, and cultural forces. Politicians seek electoral mobilization; corporations strive to maximize product consumption; religious denominations aim to convert new adherents; ideologists attempt to recruit loyal followers; and internet service providers design platforms to maximize screen time.

The entire apparatus of digital manipulation is deployed in this comprehensive struggle. Crucially, the manipulative risks of virtual spaces are highly individualized, depending heavily on the psychological profile of the user. Stimuli that remain superficial or insignificant for certain character types can serve as catalysts for personality destruction in others. Consequently, interactions with the virtual world are strictly idiosyncratic. The virtual domain poses a systemic threat not to humanity in its entirety, but rather to vulnerable individuals who lack the digital literacy or psychological resilience to withstand its destabilizing pressures.

4.2.6. DEMOGRAPHIC RISKS AND GLOBAL PANDEMICS AS NEW SOCIAL THREATS AND THEIR CONSEQUENCES

The *rapid demographic expansion* observed in recent decades has renewed the debate over whether Planet Earth can sustain a still-growing (albeit at a decelerating pace) global population while withstanding an escalating anthropogenic load. Attempts to calculate the Earth's carrying capacity date back to the seventeenth century; since then, the spectrum of estimates has remained exceptionally wide, ranging from one billion to one trillion people. By the mid-1990s, the academic consensus had largely coalesced around a range between 8 and 16 billion.

The United Nations' ultra-long-term median variant forecast projects the stabilization of the global population at approximately 9 billion people by 2075 — a trajectory closely aligned with the predictive estimates we obtained using our own mathematical models. Consequently, because global population stabilization is projected well below the ecological ceiling of the Earth's carrying capacity, there is little justification for global apocalyptic scenarios, at least regarding absolute demographic volume.

However, a critical challenge remains: a population level that breaches the carrying capacity ceiling within even a single, sufficiently large nation or specific region can precipitate severe negative repercussions for the global system as a whole. Historically, human societies have systematically encountered structural imbalances between population growth and available resources. The theory of socio-demographic cycles traces its lineage back to Thomas Robert Malthus, who posited in 1798 that population growth outstripping economic expansion inevitably triggers political upheavals, warfare, and epidemics.

Concurrently, the eighteenth-century Chinese scholar Hong Liangji concluded in 1793 that overpopulation constituted a primary catalyst for internal systemic instability, frequently culminating in mass mortality.

Conversely, *the demographic dilemma in developed nations* is traditionally manifested as a protracted decline in natural population growth, often culminating in negative reproduction rates. Crucially, despite the apparent synchronicity of demographic shifts across the developed world, the situation within each individual state is dictated not only by macro-paradigmatic changes but also by nation-specific variables, such as localized socio-economic conditions and deeply embedded cultural paradigms. Thus, while postulating the universality of these shifts — which can largely be conceptualized through various iterations of demographic transition theory — it is imperative to account for the highly diverse post-transition trajectories unique to each society. In this context, the necessity of an optimal, tailored demographic policy within each individual state becomes paramount, while simultaneously exposing the acute friction points generated by uncoordinated social and migration policies.

From the Justinian Plague and the Black Death to the 1918 influenza pandemic, history is replete with disease outbreaks that have triggered long-term, detrimental social mutations — spawning unprecedented state policies, fracturing the social fabric, and occasionally igniting civil unrest. This destabilization occurs primarily because epidemics expose and exacerbate pre-existing structural vulnerabilities, including underdeveloped social safety nets, institutional distrust, or perceived incompetence and corruption within governance structures. Historically, infectious disease outbreaks have frequently inflamed ethnic and religious grievances while sharply intensifying class tensions.

The COVID-19 pandemic forcefully exposed the systemic vulnerability and fragility of the contemporary world order. It abruptly upended established ways of life, placed the global population in jeopardy, and laid bare deep-seated structural inequalities. Frictions and disparities both among and within nation-states have worsened, disproportionately impacting historically marginalized and vulnerable demographics. Over a two-year period beginning in 2020, at least 150 million individuals contracted COVID-19, with more than three million succumbing to the infection. This dual shock to global public health and socio-economic stability represents one of the most severe disruptive crises in modern history — a catastrophe in every sense.

The new millennium has repeatedly confronted humanity with devastating global health threats, including Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), Ebola, and the Zika virus. Epistemological and public health experts have routinely warned of the looming threat of novel pandemic pathogens, calling for fundamental transformations in global biodefense architectures; however, the necessary structural reforms have consistently stagnated. Historically, the memory of a past epidemiological crisis is swiftly supplanted by systemic

complacency, thereby perpetuating the socio-political “cycle of panic and denial.” Breaking this cycle has become an urgent civilizational necessity.

In many respects, the COVID-19 pandemic functions as the contemporary equivalent of the Chernobyl disaster. While a viral outbreak shares few epidemiological traits with a nuclear accident, both events vividly demonstrate the catastrophic consequences of neglecting systemic threats to human health and ecological well-being. The unprecedented scale and severity of the recent crisis demand that heads of state, prime ministers, and leaders of international organizations assume direct responsibility for executing immediate, transformative overhauls in how the international community prepares for and mitigates global health emergencies. The current historical juncture offers the optimal window of opportunity for such systemic change.

4.2.7. THE BELARUSIAN MODEL OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND THE CIVILIZATIONAL CHOICE OF BELARUS IN A GLOBALIZING WORLD

Unlike a number of post-Soviet states, the Republic of Belarus abandoned radical market liberalization in its economic life, choosing instead a path of evolutionary transformation. The specific nature of the socioeconomic changes taking place within the country has been termed the “Belarusian development model.”

The paramount feature of the Belarusian economy is its explicit social orientation, which seeks to prevent extreme social stratification while maintaining the social security framework, healthcare, education, and culture at an optimal level. The Belarusian model of socioeconomic development presupposes that as new market institutions emerge, direct state participation in economic processes will be gradually and consistently reduced. However, regarding those strategic sectors of the economy where large-scale national tasks are being executed, the state’s position remains resolute: regulatory oversight will be maintained.

Accordingly, Belarus has chosen a framework based on selective, case-by-case privatization rather than mass privatization, aiming strictly at increasing production efficiency. The primary objective of this privatization strategy is to attract long-term investors into the real sector of the economy who are fundamentally interested in technological re-equipment and enhancing the competitiveness of privatized enterprises.

A major trajectory of state policy is the cultivation of conditions necessary for the formation of a robust “middle class.” The concept of a middle class dates back to antiquity, famously articulated by the Greek philosopher Aristotle. He posited that the population of any state can be structurally divided into three distinct segments: the very wealthy, the extremely impoverished, and a third layer situated intermediately between them. From an Aristotelian perspective, the “greatest well-being” for a polity occurs when citizens possess moderate but sufficient property. While the quantitative metrics and criteria used to define

the middle class vary across nations, in academic and sociological contexts it most frequently encompasses physicians, educators, civil servants, small business owners, trade workers, military personnel, journalists, highly skilled laborers, university professors, researchers, and farmers.

In contemporary developed nations, the middle class typically constitutes approximately 60 % of the total population. The presence of such a substantial socio-economic cushion between the wealthy and the impoverished fosters systemic stability, preventing the consolidation of polarized interest groups that historically serve as catalysts for social conflict and systemic instability.

The civilizational choice of Belarus in a globalizing world. Globalization is conceptualized as a process of macro-social change within contemporary societies, characterized by the formation of an integrated global market, universal informational openness facilitated by the internet, the proliferation of novel information technologies, and the intensification of cross-cultural connections. It is fundamentally recognized as a qualitatively unprecedented stage in the internationalization of global economic life, manifested primarily through the escalating interdependence of national economies. Furthermore, globalization entails the erosion and dismantling of traditional territorial, sociocultural, and geopolitical barriers that historically separated populations while simultaneously sheltering domestic markets from volatile external forces. Consequently, this process involves a relative diminution of state autonomy in the macroeconomic sphere alongside the structural crystallization of a new matrix of international interaction.

The expansion and deepening of globalizing processes exert a highly contradictory impact on the dynamics of socio-cultural identity. On the one hand, globalization precipitates the erosion of national and cultural identities across numerous countries. On the other hand, individuals in post-Soviet societies, particularly in Russia and to a certain degree in Belarus, experience a complex interference of value orientations and ideals. This shift is driven by an escalating social demand for the structures of the consumer society, which frequently culminates in the idealization of Western lifestyle stereotypes and an aspiration toward alignment with a convergent, yet conceptually ambiguous, global identity.

At present, globalization has ceased to be an abstract phenomenon for the Republic of Belarus, manifesting instead as a highly tangible economic process. The systemic advantages of globalization are well-documented:

- ***resource concentration:*** driven by transnationalization, nation-states can more effectively concentrate their strategic resources on highly profitable international trajectories;
- ***barrier reduction:*** structural barriers that impede or complicate the cross-border movement of goods, services, capital, and labor are systematically dismantled;
- ***legal harmonization:*** international cooperation gradually fosters a unified legal environment.

However, examining globalization from a critical socio-philosophical and economic perspective reveals that each systemic advantage is countered by **significant structural risks**:

- **economic vulnerability**: increased border transparency exposes the national economy to volatile external forces. Domestic producers face fierce competition that they may be unable to withstand. Furthermore, such openness accelerates the domestic circulation of foreign currencies (dollarization), undermining national monetary control;

- **erosion of state sovereignty**: as the influence of transnational corporations (TNCs) and international organizations expands, the regulatory role of the state diminishes, directly impacting national sovereignty;

- **subordination of national legislation**: the proliferation of supranational legal frameworks and international law reduces the primacy of domestic legislation, the fundamental function of which is to guarantee the security and welfare of its citizens;

- **cultural and national dissolution**: intensive transnationalization threatens to dissolve distinct national identities within monolithic global structures;

- **socioeconomic polarization**: globalization widens the structural gap between the wealthy and the impoverished. While nations that successfully integrate into the global architecture prosper, countries that remain marginalized on the periphery inevitably incur severe economic losses.

To summarize, globalization introduces a deeply complex matrix of systemic opportunities and acute vulnerabilities for participating states. Nevertheless, for the Republic of Belarus, the strategic engagement with globalizing processes is evaluated as a net positive, provided that national socioeconomic interests and sovereignty are systematically safeguarded.

TRAINING MATERIAL

Exercise 1. Read the excerpt from the primary source and answer the questions.

O. Spengler

The Decline of the West²¹

[...] The *Civilization* is the inevitable destiny of the *Culture*, and in this principle, we obtain the viewpoint from which the deepest and gravest problems of historical morphology become capable of solution. Civilizations are the most external and artificial states of which a species of developed humanity is capable. They are a conclusion, the thing-become succeeding the thing-becoming, death following life, rigidity following expansion, intellectual age and the stone-built, petrifying world-city following mother-earth and the spiritual childhood of Doric and Gothic. They are an end, irrevocable, yet by inward necessity reached again and again. [...]

²¹ Spengler, O. The decline of the West / O. Spengler. – New York : Alfred A. Knopf, 1978. – P. 31.

Questions:

1. What is the fundamental relationship between “Culture” and “Civilization” according to the author?
2. Which metaphors does Spengler use to demonstrate that civilization represents the final phase of development?
3. Why does the author view the “stone-built, petrifying world-city” as a sign of decline rather than progress?

Exercise 2. Read the excerpt from the primary source and answer the questions.

U. Beck

What is globalization?²²

[...] This means that the implementation of the globalization mechanism carries a threat factor, i.e., the policy of globalization is aimed at eliminating not only trade union restrictions but also national-state restrictions; it aims to weaken national-state policy. The rhetoric of economic representatives occupying important positions against the policies of the welfare state is extremely clear. Ultimately, the goal is to minimize the tasks assigned to the state and reduce the state apparatus, realizing the dream of an anarchic market — the utopia of a minimal state. At the same time, a rather paradoxical thing occurs: globalization often entails renationalization. [...]

Questions:

1. How does the policy of globalization threaten the existence of the welfare state according to the passage?
2. What is the ultimate goal of the economic representatives mentioned, and how does the author characterize this goal?
3. What is the “paradoxical thing” that occurs as a result of globalization, and why do you think it happens?

EXERCISES FOR ASSESSING COMPETENCY LEVEL

Exercise 3. Answer the following questions:

1. Explain the concept of “civilization.”
2. What main types of civilizations can be identified in the history of human development?
3. Define the role of technology in society.
4. Give a detailed description of the phenomenon of globalization.
5. Identify the main problems and risks of a consumer society.
6. Describe the phenomenon of the information society.
7. Identify the main risks of virtual reality.

²² Beck, U. What is globalization? / U. Beck. – Cambridge : Polity Press, 2015. – P. 12.

8. In your opinion, what are the main demographic threats and risks to the development of modern civilization?

9. What is the danger of a global pandemic?

10. Identify the main features of the Belarusian model of socio-economic development.

11. What factors influence the Belarusian civilizational choice in a globalizing world?

Exercise 4. Identify the social institutions that exist in modern Belarus. Discuss their specific features in groups.

Exercise 5. Is it possible to predict the developmental trajectories of modern society? Support your position with at least two arguments for and two arguments against.

Topics for reports:

1. The civilization-stage approach to the analysis of social dynamics.
2. Post-industrial society: characteristics and development prospects.
3. The technosphere and the future of humanity.
4. Characteristics of the formation and development of the information society.
5. Virtual reality and the network society.
6. Globalism and Anti-Globalism in the modern world.
7. The phenomenon of consumer society.
8. S. Huntington on the clash of civilizations.
9. Futurological ideas in modern philosophy.
10. Demographic risks of modern civilization. The demographic situation in Belarus.
11. Belarus in a situation of civilizational choice. Is a post-industrial perspective possible for Belarus?

Aphorisms and statements:

1. The Axial Age marks the definitive disappearance of the great ancient cultures that had existed for millennia; it dissolves them, absorbs them, and allows them to perish — regardless of whether the bearers of the new paradigm belong to an ancient civilization or to other peoples (*K. Jaspers*).

2. The development of cultural-historical types closely resembles those perennial monocarpic plants whose vegetative period is indefinitely long, but whose flowering and fruiting periods are relatively brief and exhaust their vitality once and for all (*N. Ya. Danilevsky*).

3. The destiny of individual cultures — successive, coexisting, intersecting, displacing, and suppressing one another — exhausts the entire content of human history (*O. Spengler*).

4. Globalization divides no less than it unites; it divides while uniting, as schisms occur for the very same reasons that drive the increasing uniformity of the world (*Z. Bauman*).

5. Technology manifests everywhere as the direct outcome of the encounter between the human spirit and nature, wherein the human spirit comprehends nature, shaping and transforming it according to its own intentions and goals (*U. Beck*).

6. I am fundamentally interested in three core dimensions that, in my view, must characterize the New Humanism: a sense of globality, a love of justice, and an intolerance of violence (*A. Peccei*).

SELF-ASSESSMENT OF TOPIC COMPREHENSION

1. The Industrial Revolution of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was a foundational catalyst for the emergence of which civilization?

- a) industrial;
- b) pre-industrial;
- c) post-industrial.

2. How is the term “technology” translated from ancient Greek?

- a) technology, mechanism, device;
- b) art, craftsmanship, teaching;
- c) life, existence, essence.

3. Who in the mid-20th century argued that the human habitat is no longer nature, but technology?

- a) J. Ellul;
- b) D. Bell;
- c) R. Dahrendorf.

4. Who is the founder of the modern theory of “risk society”?

- a) K. Jaspers;
- b) T. Litt;
- c) E. Fromm;
- d) H.-L. Bergson;
- e) W. Beck.

5. Unlike a number of post-Soviet states, the Republic of Belarus rejected radical market liberalization of economic life and opted for evolutionary transformations. Highlight the specific nature of the socioeconomic changes taking place in the country:

- a) Belarusian universalization of values;
- b) Belarusian model of a socially oriented market economy;
- c) Belarusian dialectical model.

SECTION 5

THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE AND PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE

TOPIC 5.1

THE DIVERSITY OF FORMS OF KNOWLEDGE AND THE PROBLEM OF TRUTH IN PHILOSOPHY. SCIENCE AND ITS SOCIOCULTURAL STATUS

Total lesson time: 2 hours.

Aim: to identify and characterize the foundational components of philosophical epistemology and the philosophy of science.

Objectives:

- to elucidate the specific nature of human cognitive orientations toward the world;
- to demonstrate the pluralistic diversity of modes of cognitive activity;
- to explicate the essence of cognition as the pursuit and comprehension of truth;
- to analyze the core concepts of truth, knowledge, and understanding;
- to examine science through its threefold manifestation: as a dynamic activity, a social institution, and a systematic framework of knowledge;
- to differentiate between the forms, levels, and methods of scientific inquiry;
- to evaluate the primary historical stages of scientific development: classical, non-classical, and post-non-classical;
- to determine the structural role of scientific ethics in shaping contemporary types of scientific rationality.

Questions:

1. The specific nature of human cognitive orientations toward the world: pluralistic modes of cognitive activity.
2. The problem of the cognizability of the world: skepticism, agnosticism, and epistemological optimism.
3. The structure and primary dimensions of the cognitive process: sensory and rational stages of cognition.
4. Beyond the rational: intuition, creative imagination, and the role of the irrational in the cognitive process.
5. Cognition as the comprehension of truth: major theories of truth and the philosophy of understanding.
6. The concept of science: the genesis, socio-cultural status, and historical dynamics of scientific knowledge.
7. The architecture of scientific knowledge: empirical, theoretical, and metatheoretical levels of research.
8. Epistemic forms of scientific knowledge: from scientific facts and problems to hypotheses and theories.

9. Method, methodology, and research design: classification of scientific methods.

10. Science, ethos, and society: the ethics of science and the social responsibility of the scientist.

Key concepts: epistemology, cognition, subject, object, knowledge, sensory, rational, theoretical and empirical levels of cognition, understanding, sensation, perception, representation, concept, judgment, inference, abstract, sign, meaning, thinking, reason, intelligence, intuition, feeling, truth, error, lie, experience, classical, non-classical, post-non-classical types of scientific rationality, ethics of science.

THEORETICAL MATERIAL

5.1.1. THE SPECIFIC NATURE OF HUMAN COGNITIVE ORIENTATIONS TOWARD THE WORLD: PLURALISTIC MODES OF COGNITIVE ACTIVITY

In a broad sense, knowledge constitutes an individual's comprehension of reality mediated through consciousness. **A cognitive orientation** (*cognitive attitude*) is a human activity aimed at adequately reproducing natural, spiritual, and social reality in the form of knowledge. The objects of reality acquire the epistemic status of knowledge precisely through the process of their conversion into an ideal, symbolic sign form.

The cognitive orientation of human beings toward the world is manifested in the following distinct configurations of spiritual-theoretical and spiritual-practical inquiry: *everyday, mythological, religious, artistic-figurative, philosophical, and scientific knowledge*. All of these forms are structurally shaped during the evolution of culture.

It is imperative to distinguish a specific mode of cognition: **everyday, or ordinary knowledge**, wherein knowledge emerges as the direct result of the observation of phenomena. The purpose of such knowledge is, as a rule, restricted to immediate practical tasks. At this stage, the human mind does not seek to penetrate the deep essence of phenomena, to discover underlying laws, or to construct formal theories. Ordinary cognition relies entirely on natural cognitive faculties: baseline reasoning, natural language, and the sensory organs. The foundational infrastructure of everyday knowledge comprises common sense, elementary generalizations, and the simplest cognitive techniques. This ordinary cognition is rooted in personal experience and generalized knowledge derived from the daily life of the individual. Ordinary knowledge is radically distinct from scientific knowledge, yet remains deeply interconnected with it. Historically, science emerges from everyday knowledge. In turn, scientific knowledge continuously impacts ordinary cognition, reconstructing it on a rigorous scientific basis.

Mythological knowledge was formed during the early stages of human cultural evolution, specifically within primitive society. It serves as a pre-theoretical explanation of reality mediated by sensory-visual images of supernatural beings and legendary heroes. Within the framework of mythology, foundational insights were developed regarding nature, the cosmos, human beings themselves, and their modes of existence. Mythological thinking is characterized by the following distinctive features: metaphor, personification (the projection of natural phenomena into the guise of deities), concreteness of thought, cyclicity, and anthropomorphism.

Artistic-figurative knowledge represents a pre-theoretical modality that is closely aligned in its content with mythological thought and can be conceptualized as its historical continuation. The development of this artistic-figurative form is embodied in art, including theatre, music, painting, and sculpture. A distinctive feature here is not merely the cognition of the world, but the imaginative creation of alternative universes within artistic works. Various signs, symbols, and aesthetic images serve as modes of reflecting reality, wherein rational and irrational elements are intricately intertwined.

Religious knowledge structurally bifurcates the world into earthly and divine realities. Alongside mythology, it stands as a pre-theoretical form of cognition that preserves the centuries-old existential experience of humanity. In religious cognition, the opposition between the immanent and the transcendent is starkly articulated: the earthly world is viewed as imperfect and material, whereas the divine realm is conceptualized as the highest, ideal mode of being. Religious knowledge treats divine Revelation as an unconditional and paramount truth, where the ultimate objective of such cognition is union with the Absolute. The primary constituents of this epistemic mode include an emotional orientation toward the world, the synthesized unity of knowledge and worship, and faith.

Scientific knowledge constitutes a rigorous, theoretical form of inquiry and stands as one of the most vital domains of human activity. It is essentially distinct from all other epistemic modes. Its overarching goal is to secure objective knowledge aimed at reflecting the immutable laws of nature, with truth serving as the primary criterion. Scientific knowledge addresses three imperative tasks: the description, explanation, and prediction of the processes and phenomena of cognizable reality. The defining characteristics of scientific inquiry include objectivity, systematicity, and a methodical drive to comprehend the essence of the objects under study. While scientific knowledge seeks to uncover what is universal and necessary across all investigated phenomena, it systematically arrives at these laws by analyzing the individual case.

Philosophical knowledge is simultaneously oriented toward objective truth and a highly personalized, existential vision of the world, balancing universal human values with individual spiritual and practical guidelines. It seeks to bridge the gap between scientific analysis and everyday, personal perceptions of reality, conceptually unifying mature philosophical wisdom with the spontaneous

immediacy of human experience. The primary goal of philosophy as a unique form of cognition is to formulate an overarching strategy for human life and to determine the place of the individual within the cosmos. Ultimately, philosophical knowledge endeavors to articulate the meaningful and axiological foundations of human existence.

5.1.2. THE PROBLEM OF THE COGNIZABILITY OF THE WORLD: SKEPTICISM, AGNOSTICISM, AND EPISTEMOLOGICAL OPTIMISM

In addressing the problem of the cognizability of the world, philosophers traditionally occupy three distinct positions: *epistemological optimism*, *skepticism*, and *agnosticism*.

Epistemological optimists maintain that the world is inherently knowable, asserting the possibility of acquiring reliable, objective knowledge. The theoretical foundation of epistemological optimism relies upon the following premises:

- 1) the world constitutes an objective reality that exists externally to, and independently of, the consciousness of the cognizing subject;
- 2) the concept of “reality” must concurrently apply to the human spiritual domain, which manifests as subjective reality;
- 3) the process of cognition and its epistemic results are inseparable from praxis; by knowing reality, human beings actively transform the world.

Among the prominent representatives of epistemological optimism are Aristotle, who formulated the correspondence theory of truth (*adequatio intellectus et rei*); René Descartes, who argued that reliable knowledge is attainable exclusively through the faculty of human reason; and Francis Bacon, who emphasized the primary role of empirical experience in the acquisition of knowledge. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel also championed an optimistic epistemological stance, demonstrating that the Absolute Mind (*Weltgeist*) ultimately achieves complete self-knowledge and arrives at absolute truth.

Conversely, epistemological optimists are opposed by proponents of **agnosticism** (derived from the Greek *agnostos*, meaning “unknowable” or “unknown”). Agnostics argue that the existence of subjective rational or sensory experience does not guarantee its validity as an objective criterion for cognizing reality. Because researchers cannot secure infallible knowledge about external reality, objective truth remains fundamentally unattainable and incomprehensible. In other words, individuals cannot judge reality solely on the basis of subjective representations; no matter how extensive prior human experience may be, it provides no epistemic justification for doing so. From this perspective, the content of our knowledge can never serve as a bridge to the comprehension of objective reality; consequently, the process of cognition possesses no intrinsic meaning, since its ultimate goal is structurally unachievable.

A paradigm of the agnostic tradition is the philosophy of Immanuel Kant, who posited the unknowability of the external world through his foundational

concept of “things-in-themselves” (*Dinge an sich*). Another influential figure within this trajectory is Bertrand Russell. Clarifying the agnostic position, Russell explicitly differentiates the agnostic from the atheist, noting that an atheist, much like a Christian, holds that we can know whether God exists or not, whereas the agnostic refrains from judgment, maintaining that there are insufficient grounds for either affirmation or denial.

Skepticism serves as an intermediate theoretical link between epistemological optimism and agnosticism. Proponents of skepticism neither dogmatically affirm nor categorically refute the possibility of cognizing objective reality. The central inquiry of skepticism is whether our knowledge of the external world can legitimately claim certainty — a problem primarily tied to the accessibility of the underlying essence of the cognizable object.

Historical exemplars of skepticism include Pyrrho of Elis, who argued that the proper philosophical disposition toward things entails a suspension of judgment (*epoche*); Michel de Montaigne, who asserted that absolute being is incomprehensible to human beings, veiled by a shroud of secrecy due to the inherent limitations of human reason; and David Hume, who identified a radical uncertainty within the cognizing subject, highlighting the frailty of our faculties of judgment and the pervasive susceptibility to error when evaluating the reliability of any proposition.

5.1.3. THE STRUCTURE AND PRIMARY DIMENSIONS OF THE COGNITIVE PROCESS: SENSORY AND RATIONAL STAGES OF COGNITION

Traditionally, the cognitive process is divided into two primary stages: *sensory and rational*. It is imperative to emphasize the profound intersection and mutual interpenetration of these elements: sensory knowledge is inextricably intertwined with the rational, and vice versa.

Sensory cognition constitutes an individual’s comprehension of the external world mediated by the sensory organs, the results of which are embodied in *sensations, perceptions, and representations*:

- *sensation* is the immediate reflection of the isolated, individual properties of objects and phenomena of the material world as they impact the sensory organs. It functions as the primordial form of cognition — the baseline starting point from which more complex epistemic structures subsequently arise;

- *perception* is a concrete, sensory image of real objects and phenomena arising from their direct impact on the sensory organs. It is synthesized on the basis of sensations but differs from them by virtue of its structural integrity. While sensation is characterized by “grasping” fragmented elements of reality, perception provides a complex, holistic representation;

- *representation (vorstellung)* is the highest form of sensory reflection, functioning as a mental image of an object that is no longer directly affecting the sensory organs of the cognizing subject. Its cognitive infrastructure relies on

a creative combination of prior sensations and perceptions, upon which a generalized component is subsequently formed — preserving the concrete sensory properties of objects. Nevertheless, at the sensory level, the underlying essence of objects remains concealed. This epistemic limitation is resolved only at the stage of rational cognition.

Rational cognition synthesizes and generalizes the data provided by sensory experience. Here, the defining characteristic is the human capacity for conceptual abstraction, analysis, and the isolation of universal, essential, and necessary features within sensually concrete, homogeneous objects and phenomena. At this level, the raw data of sensory experience are transformed into systematic knowledge through three fundamental forms: *concepts*, *judgments*, and *inferences*:

- *the concept* is a form of thought that reflects the unity of essential properties, connections, and relations of objects or phenomena, facilitating the categorization or generalization of a specific class of objects based on their shared and distinctive attributes. Crucially, the content of abstract concepts often defies visualization through concrete sensory images (e.g., *humanity*, *good*, *evil*);

- *the judgment* marks the next step in the cognitive process, structurally combining multiple concepts. A judgment is a form of thought in which, through the synthesis of concepts, a proposition is either affirmed or denied, thereby establishing the presence or absence of specific properties within an object (e.g., “A tulip is a flower”);

- *the inference* is formed by comparing existing judgments, resulting in a higher degree of epistemic generalization, deepening, and concretization. An inference is a process of reasoning whereby new knowledge is logically derived from several prior judgments (e.g., the classical Aristotelian syllogism: “All humans are mortal. Socrates is a human. Therefore, Socrates is mortal”).

In the history of philosophy, two diametrically opposed paradigms have emerged regarding the hierarchy of these cognitive stages. The first, which absolutizes the role of the sensory level of cognition, is **empiricism**. The second, which absolutizes the role of the rational stage, is **rationalism**.

5.1.4. BEYOND THE RATIONAL: INTUITION, CREATIVE IMAGINATION, AND THE ROLE OF THE IRRATIONAL IN THE COGNITIVE PROCESS

The cognitive process is not comprised exclusively of rational operations and logical procedures; rather, a significant role is occupied by non-rational operations. These are generated by diverse cognitive systems on the basis of complex biosocial patterns that operate independently of individual consciousness and volition. This domain encompasses processes such as imagination, fantasy, emotion, and, most notably, intuition.

Intuition is conceptualized as the capacity to comprehend truth through immediate apprehension, without the mediation of formal substantiation or logical evidence. The questions of what precedes intuition, what constitutes its

underlying essence, and what serves as its primary source have received divergent answers throughout the history of philosophy. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel termed it “immediate knowledge” (*unmittelbares Wissen*); Ludwig Feuerbach considered it a modality of sensory contemplation; Henri Bergson explored it as a refined instinct that dictates individual behavioral orientations without prior learning; and Sigmund Freud viewed it as a manifestation of the hidden, unconscious primordium of creativity. Despite this theoretical proliferation, philosophers across disparate traditions consistently emphasize two defining characteristics of intuition: the immediacy and the spontaneity of the acquired knowledge.

Because intuitive knowledge manifests instantly, it is frequently described within epistemological literature as an “insight.” Intuition routinely accompanies breakthrough scientific research. Historical paradigm shifts illustrate this dynamic, including Isaac Newton’s formulation of the law of universal gravitation, Archimedes’ discovery of the principle of displacement, Dmitri Mendeleev’s systematization of the periodic table of chemical elements, and August Kekulé’s visualization of the cyclic benzene ring structure. In this context, intuition plays an imperative role in transcending traditional, entrenched methodological frameworks. By abruptly shifting the conventional perspective on an object of inquiry, intuition enables the generation of novel knowledge and elevates research to a qualitatively unprecedented level.

Crucially, intuitive knowledge contains no mystical elements; it remains deeply rooted in the sensory and rational stages of cognition. The specificity of intuition is scientifically explained by the cognitive processing of underlying signs, data, and characteristics that remain below the threshold of conscious awareness yet form the tacit baseline of the logical inference.

Consequently, intuition is inextricably intertwined with **creativity**. Creativity is defined as the cognitive, interpretive, and transformative activity directed at the external world, serving as the primary crucible wherein sensory, rational, and non-rational dimensions of cognition are synthesized. Creativity is by no means confined exclusively to the domain of artists or writers; it is ubiquitously present within everyday life. Individuals routinely execute instantaneous decisions that demand cognitive originality and non-standard problem-solving strategies — actions that legitimately constitute creative acts.

The nature of creativity remains a central problem that has occupied social theorists and philosophers alike. Christianity traditionally conceptualizes creativity as a “divine spark” within human beings; Sigmund Freud identifies its roots in the unconscious; and Nikolai Berdyaev elevates creativity to a foundational “existential act of the individual.” Although the precise neurocognitive and metaphysical mechanisms of creativity remain an open debate, researchers suggest it must be analyzed through the lens of human biosocial evolution. While rudimentary creative impulses manifest in the behavioral adaptability of higher primates, for human beings, creativity

constitutes the very essence and functional characteristic of purposeful activity. Far from being diametrically opposed to sensory and rational cognition, the creative process significantly complements, contextualizes, and organizes these traditional stages.

5.1.5. COGNITION AS THE COMPREHENSION OF TRUTH: MAJOR THEORIES OF TRUTH AND THE PHILOSOPHY OF UNDERSTANDING

The concept of knowledge is inextricably linked to the category of **truth**, which serves as the primary gauge of its compliance with objective reality. Consequently, knowledge can be taxonomically differentiated as true, false, probabilistic, adequate, inadequate, logically contradictory, consistent, contingent, particular, or pragmatic.

Whether humanity can ever attain ultimate truth remains a central question debated throughout philosophical history. While epistemological responses vary significantly across disparate traditions, four primary paradigms can be distinguished: *the correspondence (classical) theory, the Marxist-dialectical theory, the coherent theory, and the pragmatic theory.*

The **correspondence concept of truth** (historically termed the classical concept) is among the most ancient, originating in antiquity and famously formulated by Aristotle. In the history of philosophy, its proponents include Francis Bacon, Baruch Spinoza, Denis Diderot, Claude Adrien Helvétius, and Paul-Henri Thiry, Baron d'Holbach. Within this framework, truth functions fundamentally as a relational property. A proposition such as “it is raining” is true if and only if it corresponds to the objective, mind-independent physical fact that precipitation is occurring. This theory relies on the existence of an external reality that can be objectively observed and described. However, within empirical practice, the correspondence theory encounters severe epistemic difficulties, which have prompted a critical analysis of its core postulates. These difficulties center on the definition of “reality” itself, the mechanisms of verification, and the criteria for establishing correspondence between linguistic propositions and external facts.

The **Marxist concept** deepens the correspondence tradition by incorporating historical materialism. Within Marxism, truth is inherently objective, representing a dialectical unity of absolute and relative dimensions. It is conceptualized as historical, social, and class-conditioned, and its ultimate validity must be rigorously tested through *praxis* (social practice).

The **coherent concept of truth** posits internal self-consistency and the mutual compatibility of judgments as the primary criteria of truth. Rudiments of this approach trace back to ancient philosophy; Parmenides and Zeno, while adhering to the classical notion of truth as correspondence, argued that this correspondence could not be verified by sensory observation, but only by establishing the logical consistency of knowledge. In the twentieth century, the coherent theory was revitalized by logical neopositivists, such as Otto

Neurath. From the neopositivist perspective, the truth of scientific knowledge resides not in its correspondence to an independent reality, but in the internal cohesion of the scientific framework as a self-consistent symbolic system.

The **pragmatic concept** defines the truth of knowledge based on its utility, successful application in practice, and positive, workable results for humanity.

Contemporary epistemology interprets truth not as a static state, but as an infinite, dynamic process characterized by the transition from incomplete, localized knowledge to increasingly comprehensive insights. This process operates through the dialectic of relative and absolute truth.

Relative truth is defined as incomplete, context-dependent knowledge that corresponds to a specific stage of socio-historical and scientific development. The relativity of truth demonstrates the dependence of knowledge on the specific conditions, space, and time of its acquisition. The actual process of human cognition operates primarily with relative truths, as human understanding of the cosmos and society evolves across eras. Relativism as a philosophical stance absolutizes this dimension, dogmatically asserting that all truth is exclusively relative.

Absolute truth constitutes exhaustive, infallible, and fully verified knowledge about nature, humanity, and society — knowledge that is absolute in its entirety and can never be refuted. While specific, incontrovertible historical or empirical facts (e.g., “The Earth rotates”) can function as absolute truths, in the grander evolutionary process of cognition, absolute truth remains a regulatory ideal toward which humanity perpetually aspires.

5.1.6. THE CONCEPT OF SCIENCE: THE GENESIS, SOCIO-CULTURAL STATUS, AND HISTORICAL DYNAMICS OF SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE

The philosophy of science, as a distinct domain of philosophical inquiry, endeavors to address fundamental questions regarding the nature and mechanics of scientific knowledge, the historical genesis of science, the methodologies of justification, and the mechanisms driving the emergence and transformation of scientific disciplines.

The concept of “science” is multi-dimensional. In contemporary academic language, it denotes three primary dimensions:

- 1) a unique mode of *cognitive activity* aimed at acquiring novel knowledge about the external world;
- 2) the systemic *epistemic result* of this activity, structured as a rigorous framework of knowledge;
- 3) a specialized *social institution*.

When analyzed as a mode of **cognitive activity**, science fundamentally diverges from ordinary, mythological, or religious knowledge by adhering to strict epistemic criteria. First, scientific inquiry is directed not merely toward gathering random data about nature, society, or humanity, but toward securing objective, verifiable, and reliable information. Furthermore, scientists seek to

uncover universal, law-like regularities (*nomothetic patterns*) within the structure of the cosmos, rather than merely documenting isolated empirical phenomena. To mitigate errors, scientific practice relies on standardized algorithmic methodologies, demanding that every inference be logically substantiated and experimentally verified. Additionally, scientific labor requires specialized instrumental apparatuses and a formalized language that stands in sharp contrast to ordinary vernacular.

As *an epistemic system*, science is organized into a network of distinct disciplines — specialized branches of knowledge categorized by their specific object of inquiry (e.g., physics, astronomy, anatomy, geography). Traditionally, these disciplines are partitioned into the *natural sciences* (the study of the physical cosmos), the *social and behavioral sciences* (the study of humanity and society), and the *formal or technical sciences* (the study of conceptual systems and anthropogenic artifacts). Regardless of their localized subject matter, all scientific disciplines must satisfy the following universal core parameters: universality (general validity); objectivity; validity (verifiable proof and logical demonstrability); systematicity; novelty and heuristic value.

In the contemporary era, science functions robustly as *a social institution*. This implies that researchers operate not in isolation, but as integrated members of an institutionalized academic community. Scientific activities are embedded within specialized organizations, such as universities, academies of sciences, and research centers. Within these infrastructures, scientists consolidate into formal research teams and global epistemic communities. A highly codified system of public and institutional recognition governs the hierarchy of outstanding scholars through the conferral of academic degrees and titles (such as the Candidate of Sciences, Doctor of Sciences, Professor, Academician, or Nobel Laureate). Furthermore, a robust communication network — comprising peer-reviewed journals, international conferences, and scholarly forums — facilitates the peer evaluation and dissemination of research.

The institutionalization of science originated in the seventeenth century with the establishment of the earliest scientific societies, most notably the Royal Society of London for Improving Natural Knowledge (1660). Subsequently, during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a systematic convergence occurred among science, higher education, and industrial production. By the mid-twentieth century, science had transformed into a primary driver of social macro-dynamics, as both macro-economic development and the survival of human civilization amidst ecological crises became dependent upon technoscientific advancements.

Historically, science has progressed through several distinct evolutionary epochs, preceded by a period of proto-science. Elements of systematic proto-scientific inquiry emerged within the ancient Near East (Egypt, Babylonia, India, China) and classical antiquity, laying the groundwork for theoretical thought. For instance, the axiomatic-deductive system of geometry formulated by Euclid of

Alexandria served as the golden standard for scientific knowledge for millennia. However, during this proto-scientific era, inquiry remained deeply enmeshed with mythological and religious worldviews, lacking standardized methodological norms, institutionalized experimentation, or rigorous proof.

The emergence of science in the modern sense — understood as a rigorous, rational-theoretical activity dedicated to comprehending the world through controlled empiricism — coincides with the Scientific Revolution of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This epoch institutionalized the experimental method and catalyzed the rapid development of the natural sciences.

Following the seventeenth century, the historical dynamics of science can be structured into three main periods based on the dominant ***type of scientific rationality*** — understood as the constellation of foundational mental attitudes, values, and conceptual boundaries governing the relationship between the subject, object, and methods of science:

Classical science (17–19th centuries): this epoch was dominated by a mechanistic worldview. All natural phenomena were analyzed by analogy to a clockwork mechanism — as objects subject to strict, deterministic physical laws. The task of the natural scientist was to objectively describe these laws, scrupulously eliminating any subjective, human components from the scientific narrative. The object of study was viewed as entirely isolated from the observer and their instruments.

Non-classical science (late 19th – mid-20th century): this stage was precipitated by radical paradigm shifts across major disciplines, including the discovery of atomic divisibility, Albert Einstein’s theories of relativity, the model of a non-stationary universe in astrophysics, and the rise of genetics in biology. Non-classical rationality recognizes the historically contingent and relative nature of scientific frameworks. Critically, it posits that the observer is not a passive mirror, but actively interacts with the object through the instrumental apparatus of measurement. A prime example is wave-particle duality in quantum mechanics: depending on the experimental apparatus a physicist deploys to study light, the object manifests either as a particle with specific mass and position or as a wave. Consequently, non-classical science tolerates the complementarity of multiple theoretical frameworks describing the same reality from different vantage points.

Post-non-classical science (mid-20th century – present): post-non-classical rationality is characterized by the total integration of technoscientific knowledge into all spheres of human existence, alongside the ubiquitous digitization and computerization of research design. Modern science is fundamentally interdisciplinary and problem-oriented, establishing a structural dialogue between the natural sciences and the humanities to investigate complex, self-organizing, and historically evolving systems (such as the biosphere, human-machine interfaces, or global social networks). At this stage, epistemologists realize that total value-neutrality is an illusion; the scientist is an ethically accountable agent

whose personal values, worldviews, and socio-political context are structurally embedded within the research process. Modern post-non-classical science must satisfy not only the strict requirements of objectivity and evidence, but also the ethical mandates of humanity, ecological boundaries, and social responsibility.

5.1.7. THE ARCHITECTURE OF SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE: EMPIRICAL, THEORETICAL, AND METATHEORETICAL LEVELS OF RESEARCH

Scientific knowledge constitutes a complex, stratified system within which three primary levels can be distinguished: *the empirical*, *the theoretical*, and *the metatheoretical*.

The empirical level (derived from the Greek *empeiria*, meaning “experience”) encompasses knowledge acquired through the systematic generalization of sensory data. The primary objective of the empirical dimension of science is the collection, systematization, and classification of scientific facts, alongside the exhaustive description of the phenomenon under study.

The theoretical level (derived from the Greek *theoria*, meaning “contemplation” or “research”) is associated with the intellectual pursuit of stable internal connections and invariant laws governing the phenomenon under study, which the scientist formalizes through abstract concepts, laws, and principles.

Although the empirical and theoretical levels of knowledge possess distinct characteristics, they exist in a state of deep, dialectical interdependence. On the one hand, empirical research, by unveiling novel data through observation and experimentation, generates unprecedented, unresolved problems that stimulate theoretical advancements. On the other hand, it is methodologically impossible to conduct rigorous empirical inquiry without prior theoretical frameworks regarding the object of study; theoretical knowledge fundamentally dictates the direction and design of empirical research. A paradigm of this dynamic is the discovery of the Higgs boson: this elementary particle was theoretically predicted in 1964 by the physicist Peter Higgs, yet its existence was empirically verified only in 2012 through experiments at the Large Hadron Collider.

The metatheoretical level comprises the constellation of ideals, norms, values, and mental attitudes that guide and regulate scientific activity. The architecture of the metatheoretical level of scientific knowledge includes three foundational components:

- 1) **the ideals and norms of research:** the procedural standards and epistemic values that scientists adhere to when designing research, validating hypotheses, and constructing formal scientific concepts;

- 2) **the scientific picture of the world:** the most generalized conceptual framework of reality synthesized at a specific stage of socio-historical development. For instance, early modern science was dominated by the mechanistic worldview, which analyzed all natural phenomena exclusively through the laws of classical mechanics. Subsequently, an evolutionary

worldview emerged, proclaiming development and transformation as the intrinsic attributes of nature. Contemporary science is characterized by a relativistic and quantum-mechanical picture of the world, rooted in Albert Einstein's theories of relativity;

3) ***philosophical foundations and principles***: the conceptual tools that bridge the gap between the scientific picture of the world and the overarching worldview of a specific historical epoch. To be integrated into the broader cultural worldview of society, any novel scientific paradigm must undergo a rigorous procedure of philosophical justification.

5.1.8. EPISTEMIC FORMS OF SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE: FROM SCIENTIFIC FACTS AND PROBLEMS TO HYPOTHESES AND THEORIES

The epistemic forms of scientific knowledge ***at the level of empirical research*** include *scientific facts*, *empirical regularities*, and *descriptive theories*.

A ***scientific fact*** is a generalized proposition describing a specific phenomenon under study, serving as a systematic summary of verified observational data.

An ***empirical regularity*** demonstrates stable, invariant relationships between phenomena identified through empirical research (e.g., "All metals are electrically conductive" or "All planets revolve around the Sun in elliptical orbits").

A ***descriptive (phenomenological) theory*** is an ordered and systematized ensemble of empirical laws and facts that characterizes a specific domain of reality. A classic historical paradigm is Johannes Kepler's laws of planetary motion. Because descriptive theories are constructed primarily on the basis of induction — the generalization of particular empirical cases — they possess a probabilistic character rather than absolute certainty.

Within the structural framework of ***the theoretical level of science***, a distinct hierarchy is maintained among *scientific problems*, *hypotheses*, *laws*, and *explanatory theories*.

A ***scientific problem*** is a formalized question that arises during the investigation of nature or society, signaling a gap in existing knowledge that demands a resolution.

A ***hypothesis*** is a proposed, tentative solution to a scientific problem. To transcend the status of mere opinion, a hypothesis must be rigorously substantiated; it must be empirically verifiable, logically compatible with the factual material that prompted it, consistent with established scientific knowledge, and applicable to a broad spectrum of phenomena. Once a hypothesis is conclusively verified and validated, it matures into a scientific theory.

A ***law*** is a theoretical formulation of the essential, recurring, and necessary connections between phenomena. Unlike empirical regularities, theoretical laws characterize idealized objects rather than raw, real-world phenomena. They are derived deductively through logic and mathematics, possessing a high degree of epistemic reliability and explanatory power.

A **theory** is a comprehensive system of verified knowledge that provides a holistic, unified representation of the laws and essential connections governing a specific domain of reality. Synthetically, scientific theories encompass empirical facts obtained through experimentation, core scientific postulates, theoretical laws describing idealized objects, rules of logical proof, and the cumulative body of derived results. To maintain its epistemic validity, a scientific theory must execute a series of imperative **functions**:

- *explanatory power*: explaining the maximum possible number of established scientific facts;
- *systematization*: organizing fragmented facts and mapping the causal connections between them;
- *predictive capacity*: forecasting novel, yet unexplored facts, anomalies, and phenomena;
- *methodological orientation*: serving as a foundational methodological framework for subsequent scientific inquiry.

5.1.9. METHOD, METHODOLOGY, AND RESEARCH DESIGN: CLASSIFICATION OF SCIENTIFIC METHODS

With the consolidation of modern science in the seventeenth century as a strictly ordered system of truth-seeking activities, the problem of method emerged as a paramount inquiry for both philosophers and practicing scientists. During this pivotal epoch, the English philosopher and naturalist Francis Bacon famously observed in *Novum Organum*: “Neither the bare hand nor the mind left to itself has much power. Results are achieved by instruments and helps, which the mind stands in no less need of than the hand.” In other words, a researcher fundamentally requires high-quality cognitive instruments to augment the intellect.

Method (derived from the Greek *methods*, meaning “the path of knowledge”) is defined as a systematic ensemble of rules, techniques, and operations deployed to achieve a specific cognitive or practical objective. Within scientific inquiry, a method serves as the most efficient and reliable path to secure objective knowledge regarding a phenomenon. The formal study of these methods is designated as **methodology**. The structural features of any given method are deeply intertwined with, and dependent upon, the ontology of the object under study, the specific tasks formulated by the researcher, and the broader developmental stage of the scientific discipline itself.

While discrete sciences utilize a vast array of unique, localized techniques, certain methods are comprehensively demanded across multiple scientific domains. Consequently, **scientific methodologies can be taxonomically structured into three primary levels**:

- 1) *general logical and philosophical methods*: foundational cognitive operations utilized not only within science but across other domains of human knowledge, possessing the highest degree of universality;

2) *general scientific methods*: conceptual and empirical procedures characteristic of both the empirical and theoretical levels of any scientific research design;

3) *discipline-specific (private) scientific methods*: specialized techniques operationalized exclusively within a distinct branch of scientific knowledge.

General logical methods encompass the following foundational operations:

- *analysis* is the mental decomposition of a complex object into its constituent parts to facilitate a detailed, isolated investigation of its structure;

- *synthesis* is the mental reintegration of fragmented parts, empirical facts, and structural details into a coherent, holistic image;

- *deduction* is a mode of reasoning whereby a particular conclusion is logically derived from an established, universally valid premise;

- *induction* is a mode of reasoning whereby a generalized proposition is formulated based on the accumulation of multiple specific, verified empirical facts.

General philosophical frameworks traditionally provide the overarching ontological and epistemological paradigms for research:

The metaphysical method: this approach examines phenomena as isolated, static, and immutable entities. Historically opposed to dialectics, it analyzes objects in structural isolation, disregarding internal dynamics or latent contradictions. It relies on a speculative approach aimed at uncovering unchanging, transcendental foundations of existence (*things-in-themselves*) through abstract definitions. Its defining features include:

- isolation (anti-systemicity): objects are evaluated strictly in themselves, abstracted from their environment and systemic interconnections;

- staticity (anti-historicism): phenomena are studied as frozen, unalterable essences, entirely ignoring the processes of qualitative development and historical transformation;

- the principle of absolute identity: the rejection of internal contradictions; it dogmatically asserts that “A is A” and cannot simultaneously contain its opposite;

- speculativeness (abstraction): cognition relies predominantly on pure reason and a priori theoretical abstractions rather than empiricism, striving toward supersensible domains.

The dialectical method: this paradigm posits that any phenomenon must be analyzed as deeply interconnected with other entities and as continuously evolving through the struggle and resolution of immanent internal contradictions.

The hermeneutical method: a framework directed toward the rigorous interpretation, textual analysis, and comprehensive understanding of linguistic texts and cultural phenomena.

Structuralist and phenomenological methods: approaches focused on uncovering latent structural matrices or describing the immediate structures of conscious experience.

General scientific methods span across disciplines and are divided based on the empirical and theoretical stages of research design.

Methods of empirical research:

- *observation*: the foundational empirical method, consisting of the deliberate, purposeful perception of an object to describe its attributes as fully and accurately as possible. To neutralize subjectivity, scientific observation must satisfy strict criteria: clear goal-setting, a predefined methodological plan, systematic execution, continuous data recording, and rigorous verification controls;

- *measurement*: a method wherein a specific property of the object under study is systematically correlated with a standardized unit of measurement (e.g., centimeter, second, gram) serving as an objective baseline. The purpose of measurement is to quantify qualitative attributes into precise numerical data;

- *experimentation*: a high-level empirical method whereby a phenomenon is investigated under strictly controlled, reproducible conditions. The researcher actively intervenes in the state of the object by introducing controlled variables to observe their causal consequences, routinely utilizing a *control group* that remains unexposed to the experimental manipulation. Thus, an experiment transcends mere description, facilitating the disclosure of an object's internal causal mechanisms and invariant laws.

Methods of theoretical research:

- *formalization*: the construction of an abstract, symbolic or mathematical model that maps and reveals the essence of real-world processes through a system of signs, artificial languages, and symbols;

- *abstraction*: the mental isolation of specific properties or relations of an object, enabling the researcher to purposefully disregard all other dimensions, thereby concentrating exclusively on a targeted aspect of reality;

- *idealization*: the mental construction of a conceptualized situation or object that does not exist in a pure state within physical reality. The results of this process are *idealized objects* (e.g., an ideal gas, a perfectly straight line, or a geometric point). Being simpler than real-world entities, idealized objects allow for the unhindered application of mathematical modeling and deduction, exposing laws in their purest, non-distorted form;

- *modeling*: the structural design and deployment of analogues (models) of real-world processes and phenomena to simulate and analyze their behavior.

Discipline-specific (private) scientific methods:

a) in the humanities and social sciences:

- *hermeneutical analysis/textual criticism* is a method used to interpret and decode the underlying meanings of historical or philosophical texts;

- *participant observation* is a qualitative method where the researcher deeply immerses themselves into a social group to study its dynamics from within;

- *prosopography* is a method that investigates the common characteristics of a historical group of actors by studying their collective biography;

b) in the natural sciences:

- *spectral analysis/spectroscopy* is a method used to determine the chemical composition of distant celestial bodies by analyzing their light spectrum;
- *X-ray crystallography* is a technique used to determine the precise atomic and molecular structure of crystals (crucial for DNA discovery);
- *radiocarbon dating* is a specialized method used to determine the age of organic materials by measuring their carbon-14 content;

c) in the formal and cognitive sciences:

- *mathematical induction* is a specific method of logical proof used to establish the validity of a statement for all natural numbers;
- *functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI)* is a discipline-specific empirical method used to map brain activity when investigating the nature of consciousness.

A distinction is made separately for ***the methods involved in constructing scientific theories***. The synthesis of theoretical frameworks relies primarily on two macro-methodological programs:

- *the axiomatic method*: a deductive procedure where the researcher first establishes a closed set of *axioms* — foundational propositions that are accepted without formal proof within the system. From these axioms, subsequent theorems and logical consequences are rigorously derived according to strict rules of inference. Euclid’s geometry stands as the classical historical paradigm of this methodology;

- *the hypothetico-deductive method*: a multi-stage dynamic framework that operates through the following systemic steps:

- 1) formulating a tentative hypothesis designed to resolve an explanatory gap or an unknown phenomenon;

- 2) deductively deriving specific, testable logical consequences from the proposed hypothesis;

- 3) rigorously testing and verifying these consequences against empirical data;

- 4) modifying or completely falsifying and discarding the hypothesis if its consequences fail empirical validation;

- 5) validating the hypothesis as verified scientific knowledge if its consequences are consistently confirmed.

**5.1.10. SCIENCE, ETHOS, AND SOCIETY: THE ETHICS OF SCIENCE
AND THE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY OF THE SCIENTIST**

The discourse surrounding the nexus between cognition and morality originated in classical antiquity. Two and a half millennia ago, Socrates argued that individuals commit evil actions solely due to ignorance of the good. For the Athenian sage, knowledge constituted the primary and indispensable prerequisite for a virtuous life. Nevertheless, for centuries, the regulatory ideal of

modern science remained the purely objective comprehension of the invariant laws of reality. It was dogmatically assumed that researchers must strictly eliminate personal variables from their work, avoiding value-laden judgments, including moral ones.

However, contemporary technoscience exerts an increasingly powerful impact on human life, society, and the biosphere as a whole, and it has become evident that this influence is not invariably positive. Certain scientific breakthroughs and technological innovations actively threaten the very survival of humanity. Consequently, the necessity of synthesizing scientific inquiry with moral values has become urgently relevant.

Ethics is the philosophical discipline dedicated to the study of morality — examining the normative patterns, behavioral ideals, and axiological frameworks associated with the concepts of good and evil. The academic community operates under its own specialized system of moral norms, designated as the **ethos of science**. While the scientific ethos is rooted in universal moral standards such as honesty, conscientiousness, and justice, it concurrently encompasses specialized norms unique to scientific activity:

- **universalism**: the epistemic validity of scientific results must be evaluated independently of the race, nationality, religion, or social status of their authors;
- **disinterestedness**: scientific inquiry must be driven by the pursuit of truth rather than personal enrichment or careerism;
- **organized skepticism**: the systemic suspension of judgment until empirical proof is secured, alongside a commitment to absolute methodological transparency to prevent the falsification of research;
- **originality**: the primary focus resides on the generation of novel, peer-verified knowledge;
- **academic integrity**: the scrupulous respect for authorship and the absolute prohibition of plagiarism.

The severe consequences of violating these ethical boundaries are illustrated by the widely publicized case of Raymond Gallis, a young biochemist working on intracerebral morphology in the mid-1970s. Gallis advanced an innovative hypothesis positing that plant-derived morphines and endogenous, intracerebral morphines exert identical effects on nervous tissue. Having conducted a series of experiments, Gallis could only secure indirect confirmation of his thesis. Fearing that competing researchers would preempt his discovery, he resorted to deliberate data fabrication, publishing fictitious experimental results that allegedly validated his hypothesis.

Although Gallis's "discovery" initially aroused immense interest, his peers consistently failed to replicate his findings. Consequently, the researcher was invited to conduct his experiments publicly at a specialized international symposium in Munich in 1977. Under the pressure of empirical scrutiny, Gallis confessed to data manipulation. The scientific community immediately imposed total academic ostracism, terminating all professional contacts, while his

co-authors retracted their joint publications. Ultimately, Gallis published a formal apology to his colleagues and permanently withdrew from scientific practice.

Another critical dimension of scientific ethics centers on the moral responsibility of scientists regarding the downstream applications of their discoveries and innovations. While scientific facts and natural laws are axiologically neutral in themselves, the deployment of technoscientific inventions — such as dynamite, thermonuclear weapons, weaponized pathogens, or human cloning architectures — precipitates far-reaching existential consequences that a researcher is ethically obligated to anticipate.

The problem of social and moral responsibility is particularly acute in modern big science, which is characterized by hyper-specialization and a fragmented division of labor. Individual scientists, operating within narrow empirical domains on isolated components of large-scale projects, frequently fail to comprehend the macroscopic objective of the research. Consequently, they cannot fully assess the systemic ethical implications of the aggregate results obtained by the collective team. To mitigate these structural blind spots, the international community since the mid-twentieth century has actively engineered specialized Codes of Ethics, Charters, and international Conventions. These regulatory instruments are designed to oversee scientific conduct, preserve ecological boundaries, and shield human subjects, animals, and the biosphere from the negative externalities of technoscientific progress.

TRAINING MATERIAL

Exercise 1. Read the excerpt from the primary source and answer the questions.

F. Bacon

The World of Philosophy²³

[...] Our only **hope** for good results in the sciences is for us to proceed thus: using a valid ladder, we move up gradually — not in leaps and bounds — from particulars to lower axioms, then to middle axioms, then up and up until at last we reach the most general axioms. The two ends of this ladder are relatively unimportant because the lowest axioms are not much different from reports on bare experience, while the highest and most general ones — or anyway the ones that we have now — are notional and abstract and without solid content. It's the middle axioms that are true and solid and alive; they are the ones on which the affairs and fortunes of men depend. Above them are the most general axioms, which also have value, but I am talking not about abstract axioms but rather about ones of which the middle axioms are limitations and which thus get content from the middle axioms. So, the human intellect should be supplied not with wings but rather weighed down with lead, to keep it from leaping and flying. This hasn't ever been done; when it is done we'll be entitled to better hopes of the sciences. [...]

²³ Bacon, F. *The new organon* / F. Bacon. – Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 2000. – P. 36.

Questions:

1. What method of cognition does F. Bacon write about?
2. What stages must a person pass through in the process of cognition on the way of truthful knowledge?

EXERCISES FOR ASSESSING COMPETENCY LEVEL

Exercise 2. Answer the questions:

1. What is the specific nature of a person's cognitive attitude to the world?
2. Describe the main types of cognitive activity.
3. Explain the concept of cognition as the comprehension of truth.
4. List and analyze the main concepts of truth.
5. How are the processes of cognition and understanding related?
6. Provide a detailed description of science as an activity, a social institution, and a knowledge system.
7. Identify the main forms, levels, and methods of scientific knowledge.
8. Describe the main stages of scientific development: classical, non-classical, and post-non-classical.
9. What is the role of scientific ethics in the development of the modern type of scientific rationality?

Exercise 3. Read the text excerpt and answer the questions:

"There is a well-known theory of knowledge." Its essence is expressed in the following words: "... for to seek and to know is precisely to remember... And to find knowledge within oneself is precisely to remember, isn't it?"

Questions:

1. What is the name of this theory?
2. Who was its author?
3. What is the meaning of "remembering"?
4. What does this theory have in common with the methods of scientific inquiry?

Exercise 4. Explain the meaning of F. Bacon's slogan "Knowledge is power" and answer the following questions:

1. What prospects does it open up for humanity?
2. What attitude toward nature does this slogan shape?
3. Isn't the possession of knowledge one of the causes of environmental disaster?

Exercise 5. Read the passage and answer the following questions: "The best of all proofs is experience... The way people now use experience is blind and foolish. And because they wander and wander without any sure path, and are guided only by the things that come their way, they turn to much, but make little progress..."

1. What method of knowledge does Bacon reject?
2. Why is experience, according to Bacon, the best way to obtain truth?

Exercise 6. Read the passage and answer the questions:

“There are four kinds of idols that haunt the minds of men... Let us call the first kind of idols the idols of the tribe, the second the idols of the cave, the third the idols of the marketplace, and the fourth the idols of the theater.”

1. What does F. Bacon mean by the concept of “idol”?
2. What meaning does each of these idols convey?
3. What method of getting rid of the idols of knowledge does Bacon propose?

Exercise 7. Read the excerpt from R. Descartes’ text and answer the questions:

“We come to the knowledge of things in two ways, namely, by experience and by deduction... Experience often misleads us, whereas deduction, or pure inference about one thing from another, cannot be poorly constructed, even in minds very little accustomed to thinking.”

1. What error follows from Descartes’ statement?
2. What is such a high evaluation of the deductive method based on?
3. What mode of thinking is revealed in Descartes’ statement?

Exercise 8. Read the statement by G. W. F. Hegel and answer the question:

Once, when remarked that his theories were inconsistent with the facts, Hegel replied: “So much the worse for the facts.” How are theory and reality related?

Exercise 9. Read Goethe’s statement and answer the question:

“A hypothesis is the scaffolding that is erected in front of a building and then dismantled when the building is finished; it is necessary for the designer; he should not simply mistake the scaffolding for the building.”

What errors in knowledge does Goethe warn against?

Exercise 10. Complete the table “Philosophy about the problem of the cognizability of the world”.

Philosophical position	Essence of views	Representatives
Gnoseological optimism	Stands on the position of the cognizability of the world, asserting the possibility of obtaining reliable knowledge about it	
Skepticism	...	Pyrrho ...
Agnosticism	The researcher cannot obtain reliable knowledge about reality, therefore, the truth is also unattainable and incomprehensible for him	

Exercise 11. Complete the “Fact-Problem-Hypothesis-Theory” table.

A scientific fact	A general statement describing some phenomenon under study; a summary of observational data
A scientific problem	...
Hypothesis	A proposed solution to a scientific problem
Theory	...

Exercise 12. Complete the table “Correlation of levels, forms and methods of scientific research”.

Level of scientific knowledge	Forms of scientific knowledge	Basic methods of scientific knowledge
Empirical	Fact	... Measurement ...
Theoretical	Problem	

Topics for reports:

1. Features of cognitive activity of a doctor.
2. Intuition and its role in the process of cognition.
3. Creativity as a phenomenon of human existence.
4. Practice and knowledge.
5. Concepts of truth in modern philosophy and science.
6. The problem of classification of sciences.
7. Scientific and extra-scientific knowledge in modern culture.
8. The phenomenon of the scientific revolution.
9. Science and power: the possibilities and boundaries of dialogue.
10. Features of post-non-classical science.
11. Ethics of science and norms of scientific ethos.

Aphorisms and statements:

1. Nothing exists; but even if something exists, it is unknowable; but even if it is knowable, it is inexplicable for another (*Gorgias*).
2. The human mind is greedy. He can neither stop nor remain at peace but rushes further and further (*F. Bacon*).
3. The desire of power in excess caused the angels to fall; the desire of knowledge in excess caused man to fall (*F. Bacon*).
4. All human knowledge begins with intuition, proceeds from thence to concepts, and ends with ideas (*I. Kant*).
5. The mere, but empirically determined, consciousness of my own existence proves the existence of objects in space outside me (*I. Kant*).

6. The essence of the universe, initially hidden and closed, has no power that could resist the daring of knowledge; it must reveal itself to it, show it its riches and its depths, and allow it to enjoy them (*G. W. F. Hegel*).

7. I say that agnosticism, although it wishes to be something different from atheism, putting forward the supposed impossibility of knowing, is essentially the same as atheism, because the root of everything is the non-recognition of God (*L. N. Tolstoy*).

8. It is impossible to foresee the limits of scientific knowledge and prediction (*D. I. Mendeleev*).

SELF-ASSESSMENT OF TOPIC COMPREHENSION

1. Identify the philosophical position embodied in the following statement by I. Kant: “All our contemplation is only an idea of a phenomenon... What objects are in themselves and apart from... the receptivity of our sensibility is completely unknown to us. We know nothing except the way in which we perceive them”:

- a) agnosticism;
- b) dualism;
- c) idealism;
- d) nominalism.

2. Indicate the position corresponding to the coherent conception of truth:

- a) truth is an idea which guidance leads to success;
- b) truth is knowledge that is an adequate reflection of the objective world;
- c) truth is logically consistent knowledge.

3. Epistemology is ...

- a) the study of society;
- b) the doctrine of the essence of cognitive activity, its prerequisites, and the conditions of adequacy;
- c) the doctrine of values.

4. Relativism is:

- a) the ability to comprehend the truth through direct observation without the need for evidence;
- b) a methodological principle of analyzing and interpreting knowledge, consisting in absolutizing the qualitative instability of phenomena and their dependence on various conditions and situations.

TOPIC 5.2

PHILOSOPHY OF MEDICINE.

BIOETHICS AS APPLIED PHILOSOPHY

Total lesson duration: 2 hours.

Aim: to analyze the conceptual framework of the philosophy of medicine and explicate the theoretical and practical dimensions of bioethical knowledge.

Objectives:

- to delineate the specific problematic field, epistemological boundaries, and ontological foundations of the philosophy of medicine;
- to trace the historical dynamics of medical ethics and identify the socio-cultural and scientific prerequisites that prompted the emergence of contemporary bioethics;
- to characterize the theoretical foundations, structural paradigms, and core dilemmas inherent in the field of bioethics;
- to investigate the foundational moral values, normative principles, and regulatory rules governing biomedical ethics.

Questions:

1. The problem field of the philosophy of medicine.
2. Historical background for the development of bioethics.
3. Theoretical foundations and problem field of bioethics.
4. Moral values, principles, and rules of biomedical ethics.

Key concepts: philosophy of medicine, ethics, medical ethics, bioethics, biomedical ethics, highest moral values, principles of biomedical ethics (respect for individual autonomy, “do no harm,” “do good,” justice), rules of biomedical ethics (confidentiality, informed consent, truthfulness).

THEORETICAL MATERIAL

5.2.1. THE PROBLEM FIELD OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF MEDICINE

The philosophy of medicine is a distinct metatheoretical branch of philosophical inquiry that investigates the foundational characteristics of medicine as a specialized domain of human theoretical and practical activity. Functioning as a system of generalizing judgments, it delineates the subject matter and methodologies of medical science, evaluates its position within the broader taxonomy of knowledge, and analyzes its cognitive and socio-cultural role in contemporary society as an integrated synthesis of the natural sciences and the humanities.

The philosophy of medicine is structured around *five foundational dimensions*:

Ontological dimension examines the fundamental categories through which medicine conceptualizes its specific domain of reality. It formalizes the concepts

of health and disease, treatment and prevention, normality and pathology, alongside the systemic impact of environmental, social, and spiritual variables on human beings.

Epistemological dimension analyzes the position of medicine within the hierarchy of sciences, its distinct research methodologies, diagnostic reasoning models, and the historical dynamics of medical knowledge. Beyond its unique subject matter, medicine possesses localized methods of inquiry aimed strictly at clinical validation.

Anthropological dimension investigates human self-understanding regarding the essence of existence, the meaning of life and death, suffering, and other core phenomenological conditions of being.

Ethical dimension regulates the moral architecture of the physician-patient relationship, addressing acute bioethical dilemmas in contemporary medical practice, such as fetal status, abortion, assisted reproductive technologies, euthanasia, organ transplantation, clinical experimentation, and genomic modifications.

Socio-cultural dimension analyzes the phenomenon of “medicalization” and the shifting authority and structural significance of institutionalized medical practices within modern society.

Functioning as the self-awareness of the medical community, the philosophy of medicine addresses existential questions that transcend purely empirical boundaries, including the rationale for a healthy life, the nature of consciousness, and the ethics of healthcare delivery. Historically, a philosophical component has consistently guided medicine. The works of Hippocrates and Galen contain profound methodology regarding the foundations of scientific medicine and professional deontology. Consequently, contemporary clinical education must utilize the history of medicine to cultivate critical thinking and prevent errors.

To view medicine exclusively as a field dedicated to treating disease is narrow and reductive. Broadly conceptualized, medicine is simultaneously the science of the sick and the healthy individual. Its ultimate objective is to prevent disease, optimize public health, and prolong active, creative human longevity. By prioritizing prevention, medical scientists have aligned the discipline with a humanistically oriented healthcare framework driven by scientific preventive strategies.

The philosophy of medicine is dedicated to developing a holistic, systemic vision of the human being. A systems approach is crucial in medicine because it operates with a complex living system whose essence cannot be reduced to the linear interaction of mechanical parts. Clinical treatment itself constitutes a specific theory of controlling a living system, designed to achieve the psychosomatic optimization of the individual’s condition.

The requirements of systemic thinking in medicine rely upon three core postulates:

1) **systemic integration:** conceptualizing the organism as a coherent hierarchy of micro-systems functioning according to unified biological laws;

2) **psychosomatic unity**: treating the patient as an integrated unity of mind and body — a psychosomatic system which developmental laws cannot be reduced to isolated somatic changes;

3) **theoretical synthesis**: striving to unify fragmented medical discoveries into a comprehensive, general theory of pathology as the foundation for modern clinical practice.

Currently, theoretical medicine — encompassing the study of disease etiology, compensatory-adaptive processes, and homeostatic mechanisms — remains fragmented rather than structured as a complete knowledge system. As Hans Selye observed in *At the Level of the Whole Organism* (1972): “Life is not a simple sum of its component parts... The further you dismember... living complexes, the further you move away from biology and, in the end, only the majestic, eternal and comprehensive laws of inanimate nature remain for you.”

Synthesizing a harmonious theoretical baseline from isolated empirical facts is impossible without consistent reliance on philosophical frameworks — including the methodology of science, philosophical anthropology, and axiology. A theoretician or clinician can execute the most expedient and effective interventions only when anchoring their private knowledge within the general laws of organismal functioning, viewing the individual as a complex, integrated biosocial system. Resolving this challenge demands the structural synthesis of philosophical and medical knowledge, interpreting the empirical data of medical science through the explanatory prism of epistemology.

5.2.2. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF BIOETHICS

The historical prerequisites for the formation of bioethical knowledge in the twentieth century include the emergence of ethics as a philosophical discipline and medical ethics within ancient culture, alongside their subsequent evolutionary development.

Ethics is a philosophical discipline whose primary subject of study is morality. The emergence of ethics as both a formal term and a specialized discipline in the fourth century BCE is associated with Aristotle. The Greek thinker conceptualized it as a practical philosophy whose ultimate goal is not abstract knowledge, but action, designed to provide normative guidelines for human behavior and foster moral improvement. Despite the immense diversity of ethical frameworks, the core of the problematic field of ethics consistently centers on enduring existential and normative questions: the nature of good and evil, virtues and vices, happiness, duty, conscience, and the meaning of life. Beyond these fundamental values, ethics analyzes the internal architecture, genesis, and historical transformations of divergent moral frameworks, providing the ultimate philosophical justification for moral imperatives while delineating the systemic role of morality among other cultural phenomena. Consequently, ethics can be defined as a systematic reflection on the moral foundations of human life.

Morality operates as a dynamic ensemble of principles, behavioral norms, values, and ideals that regulate interpersonal relations. Beyond a mechanistic code of conduct, morality manifests multidimensionally: as a universal social phenomenon reflecting necessary collective behavior, as a personal dimension governing individual motivation and character, and as a spiritual reality enabling human beings to align their finite existence with transcendent values.

Bioethics is an interdisciplinary research domain addressing the moral dimensions of human intervention in life, biology, and medicine. It emerged in the mid-twentieth century at the convergence of ethics, law, medicine, and the life sciences.

Biomedical ethics functions as an applied discipline investigating the moral dilemmas generated by rapid technoscientific advancements in modern medicine, biology, and biotechnology, specifically targeting the protection of human rights, dignity, and bodily autonomy. Its primary objective is to formulate normative guidelines for scientific and clinical practices within “open” medical territories such as genetic engineering, organ transplantation, reproductive technologies, euthanasia, and psychiatry.

Medical ethics is a professional framework regulating interpersonal relations within medicine both vertically (the physician-patient relationship) and horizontally (physician-physician dynamics) based on universal moral values and principles. To analyze the ethical architecture of medicine, the concept of **medical deontology** (derived from the Greek *deon*, meaning “due” or “duty”) is concurrently operationalized. Medical deontology constitutes the systematic study of professional obligation, detailing the absolute duties of healthcare providers toward patients. Crucially, while medical ethics emphasizes the universal philosophical context of the healthcare profession, deontology codifies concrete moral standards tailored to specialized domains of clinical practice, such as surgical, pediatric, or obstetric deontology.

The institutional history of medical ethics spans over three millennia. In ancient India, medical initiation required a strict oath binding the student to professional asceticism, self-sacrifice for the educator, absolute confidentiality, and the suppression of personal vices like greed and malice to prioritize patient welfare.

Within Western medicine, the ethical paradigm established by the **ancient Greek physician Hippocrates (c. 460 – c. 370 BCE)** within the *Hippocratic Corpus* — including the *Oath*, *Law*, *On the Doctor*, *On Decent Behavior*, and *Instructions* — remains foundational. The *Hippocratic Oath* structures traditional medical deontology into two primary dimensions. The first mandates institutional reverence and filial duty toward the educator. The second part codifies the clinician’s direct obligations to the patient, anchored in the following imperatives:

- absolute non-maleficence (“*Do no harm!*”), abstaining from causing injustice or injury;

- the strict prohibition against administering lethal substances, even upon explicit patient request;
- the prohibition against performing abortions;
- abstinence from unrighteous conduct, exploitation, and intimate relationships with patients;
- the proactive prioritization of therapeutic benefit;
- the absolute mandate to preserve medical confidentiality.

Furthermore, the *Hippocratic Corpus* establishes that a clinician must embody rigorous industriousness, continuous professional self-improvement, emotional gravity, empathy, and a dignified, immaculate appearance. Crucially, a virtuous practitioner must never seek material enrichment at the expense of clinical duty, as Hippocrates explicitly warned: *“If you first deal with the matter of remuneration... you will lead the patient to the idea that if an agreement is not made, you will leave them or you will treat them carelessly... We should not worry about establishing remuneration, since we believe that paying attention to this is harmful for the patient, especially in the case of an acute illness... a good doctor seeks not profit, but rather the acquisition of fame. It is better to reproach those who are saved than to rob those in danger in advance.”*

Hippocrates concurrently emphasized the necessity of interprofessional cooperation and horizontal solidarity, rejecting professional jealousy: *“There is nothing shameful if a doctor, having difficulty in some case with a patient and not seeing clearly due to inexperience, asks to invite other doctors with whom he could jointly evaluate the situation... Doctors examining a patient together should not quarrel with each other and ridicule each other. For... the judgment of one doctor should never arouse the envy of another; this would mean showing one’s weakness.”*

When analyzing the ideas of Hippocrates, it is necessary to take into account the sociocultural context in which they arose. Nevertheless, the fundamental axiom of the medical profession today remains the primordial principle established by Hippocrates: **“Do no harm!”** (*primum non nocere*).

During the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, the moral frameworks of the healthcare profession were structurally determined by Christian virtues: love for one’s neighbor, compassion, and mercy. The prominent Renaissance physician Paracelsus (1493–1541) instructed his students that the efficacy of a physician resides within the heart, and that clinical labor must be guided by the divine, illuminated by natural light and empirical experience, establishing love as the most vital foundation of medicine. This Christian worldview institutionalized a paramount moral imperative in medicine: **“Do good!”**

Medical ethics underwent comprehensive development during the Early Modern era. This period witnessed the emergence of the earliest medical associations and ethical codes, alongside a radical rethinking of the social utility of medicine; the overarching goal of clinical practice shifted from solely individual health toward public health management. The literature of this epoch,

most notably the works of Thomas Percival (1740–1804), reflected critical moral dimensions of professional relations within the medical community. In his foundational treatise, *Medical Ethics; or, a Code of Institutes and Precepts, Adapted to the Professional Conduct of Physicians and Surgeons* (originally drafted in 1794), Percival observed: “*The physicians of any charitable institution are, in some measure... the guardians of each other’s honor. No physician or surgeon, therefore, should speak officiously of any incidents in the hospital, which can tend to injure the reputation of any of their colleagues... All officious interference in a case under the care of another practitioner should be carefully avoided. No intrusive questions should be asked concerning the patient... nor should any insinuations be made that may directly or indirectly tend to diminish the patient’s confidence in another physician or surgeon.*”

The structural necessity of medical ethics was actively recognized by **Russian and Belarusian practitioners** in the nineteenth century. Based on the foundational tenets of the Hippocratic Oath, the “Faculty Pledge” (*Fakultetskoe Obeshchanie*) was institutionalized for medical graduates within the Russian Empire. The principles of Hippocratic deontology were rigorously propagated at the Faculty of Medicine of Moscow University by *Matvey Mudrov*. He emphasized that the primary vectors of a physician’s activity must comprise selflessness, integrity, patience, acute responsiveness to patient needs, the preservation of medical confidentiality, continuous professional self-improvement, and fraternal respect for colleagues.

A paradigm of the practical execution of these ethical principles was the medical career of Fyodor Haass, celebrated for his core aphorism: “**Hurry to do good!**” Haass dedicated his entire lifespan to the most marginalized demographics — exiles, convicts, and the impoverished — demonstrating profound compassion and mercy toward his patients. The systemic discussion of ethical challenges, including medical confidentiality, clinical errors, and human experimentation, remained central to the works of many nineteenth-century medical theorists and practitioners, including *Nikolay Pirogov*, *Vyacheslav Manassein*, and *Vikenty Veresaev*.

The ideas of philanthropy, charity, and compassion were also rigorously defended within the professional activities of prominent nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Belarusian physicians, including *Ivan Strzhalko*, *Iosif Feyertag*, *Ivan Zdanovich*, and *Adolf Niedzwiedzkiy*. Operating largely on a voluntary basis, many of these practitioners worked within the clinical institutions of charitable societies, providing essential medical care to impoverished demographics.

The development of medical ethics within the Soviet Union was extensively dictated by the consolidation of a new state ideology and the centralization of the healthcare system. While the systematic formulation of an entirely unprecedented medical ethics aligned with these altered socio-political realities was not explicitly executed, traditional moral dilemmas — including abortion,

medical confidentiality, and clinical error — remained the subject of intense debate. During the 1920s, heated discussions revolved around the status of medical confidentiality. The People's Commissar of Health, Nikolai Semashko, proclaimed a policy targeting the dismantling of medical confidentiality, conceptualizing it as a regressive relic of bourgeois medicine. Throughout this period, traditional medical ethics faced systematic ideological critique for allegedly justifying corporate-class bourgeois morality and maintaining ties to religious traditions alienated from the class interests of the proletariat.

Consequently, Soviet medicine largely supplanted the term “*medical ethics*” with “*deontology*,” which was defined as a pragmatic ensemble of operational rules tailored to specific fields of clinical practice. A paradigm of this framework was the surgical deontology formulated by *Nikolay Petrov*. In his influential 1940s treatise, *Issues of Surgical Deontology*, Petrov codified specific moral rules for surgical conduct: surgery is designed for the patient, not the patient for surgery; a surgeon must execute and advise only such interventions that they would consent to undergo under identical circumstances for themselves or their closest kin; and to secure the psychological well-being of patients, clinical visits are imperative on the eve of the operation and repeatedly on the day of the procedure, both pre- and post-operatively. For Petrov, the ideal of major surgery entailed operating with the comprehensive elimination of both physical pain and the patient's psychological anxiety. A broader institutional discussion of these deontological problems intensified between the 1960s and 1980s. In 1971, the state institutionalized the “Oath of the Doctor of the Soviet Union,” which all medical graduates were strictly required to take.

The mid-twentieth century witnessed the emergence of major intergovernmental and independent international organizations, including the World Medical Association (WMA), the World Health Organization (WHO), UNESCO, and the Council of Europe, all tasked with engineering ethical instruments to regulate modern medical science and clinical practice. A foundational role in codifying these professional standards was assumed by the WMA. Founded in 1947 as an independent international vehicle representing physicians globally, the WMA endeavors to serve humanity by establishing the highest international benchmarks for medical education, science, art, ethics, and healthcare delivery. The General Assembly of the WMA subsequently adopted the Declaration of Geneva (1948; serving as the International Physicians' Oath), the International Code of Medical Ethics (1949), the Declaration of Helsinki (1964; regulating human experimentation), and numerous other landmark deontological instruments.

In 1994, the Republic of Belarus officially institutionalized the “Doctor's Oath of the Republic of Belarus,” taken by higher medical education graduates upon receiving their diplomas. This was later augmented in 2018 by the adoption of the formal *Rules of Medical Ethics and Deontology*. These regulatory instruments legally and axiologically enshrine the foundational moral principles

and rules that physicians within the Republic of Belarus are obligated to observe throughout their professional activities.

During the final third of the twentieth century, a transformative stage in the history of medical deontology commenced. The discipline transcended its purely corporate, closed boundaries to become integrated into contemporary bioethics. This paradigm shift has opened the traditional physician-patient dyad to broad, interdisciplinary public discourse regarding the profound moral dilemmas triggered by the rapid acceleration of biomedical and genetic technologies.

5.2.3. THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS AND PROBLEM FIELD OF BIOETHICS

Bioethics as a distinct interdisciplinary direction coalesced during the final third of the twentieth century. The term “bioethics” was originally proposed in 1970 by the American biochemist Van Rensselaer Potter. In his seminal work, *Bioethics: Bridge to the Future*, Potter defines the field as a “science of survival” designed to integrate the “two cultures” — the natural sciences (primarily biological) and humanitarian knowledge. He envisioned it as an epistemic bridge between scientific insights regarding human life and universal human values, ideals, and goals.

One of the central dilemmas of contemporary society is the phenomenon of dangerous knowledge: scientific advancement and its empirical application yield not only systemic benefits but also potential existential threats to humanity. Consequently, as Potter suggests, humanity urgently requires a new wisdom understood as the “knowledge of how to use knowledge” for human survival and the improvement of the quality of life — a conceptual guiding framework he termed the *Science of Survival*. This discipline must anchor itself in biological knowledge while simultaneously transcending traditional boundaries, incorporating the essential elements of the social and human sciences, among which philosophy — understood as the “love of wisdom” — occupies a paramount position. Grounded in a philosophical commitment to human progress, bioethics evaluates the implications of novel technologies to ensure long-term human survival and well-being.

This conceptualization closely aligns bioethics with environmental ethics (eco-ethics), which investigates the moral relationship between human beings and both living and inanimate nature. The recognition of the intrinsic value of life and the ethical principle of *reverence for life*, formulated by Albert Schweitzer at the beginning of the twentieth century, underlies both ecological and bioethical thought. Schweitzer’s principle demands equal reverence for life, balancing an individual’s internal will to live with the identical will of any other entity; it establishes that the good constitutes that which preserves and optimizes life, whereas evil comprises that which destroys or hinders it.

In the late 1980s, Potter expanded this framework into the concept of **global bioethics** — an inclusive ethics targeting the acceptable survival of humanity.

Acceptable survival encompasses not merely biological continuation, but socio-political stability, sustainable developmental macro-dynamics, spiritual and moral improvement, and the preservation of a healthy ecosystem necessary for the long-term existence of the human race. Global bioethics is directed toward safeguarding contemporary populations, protecting the rights and interests of future generations, and preserving all living organisms and the biosphere. As an interdisciplinary field, global bioethics synthesizes medical and environmental ethics. While medical ethics focuses primarily on short-term solutions to optimize individual and public health, environmental ethics pursues long-term goals, dedicated to preserving the global ecosystem.

In contemporary scientific and educational literature, the term “bioethics” is deployed in both a broad and a narrow sense:

- ***in a broad sense:*** bioethics denotes the comprehensive study of moral problems arising within medicine, biology, and other life sciences as they apply to humanity and the human relationship with the biosphere;

- ***in a narrow sense:*** bioethics functions as a specialized domain of interdisciplinary research into the philosophical and ethical dilemmas triggered by the rapid progress of biomedical science and the introduction of novel technologies into healthcare delivery. In this aspect, it converges with medical deontology and is designated as ***biomedical ethics***. Biomedical ethics differs from traditional medical deontology due to its broader problematic field, its transcendence of closed corporate professional codes, and its active promotion of public discourse regarding clinical and scientific advancements.

The emergence and intensive development of bio- and biomedical ethics were driven by a series of interconnected structural factors:

- ***rapid technoscientific progress:*** the emergence of advanced biomedical technologies that destabilize traditional conceptions of life, death, human corporeality, and the boundaries of existential being;

- ***awareness of anthropological risks:*** a growing recognition of the potential negative externalities of technological progress, particularly widespread interventions that transform the foundational structures of human nature (e.g., assisted reproductive technologies, cloning, and genetic engineering);

- ***the rise of post-non-classical rationality:*** the epistemic shift toward correlating scientific objectives and objective knowledge with the value orientations of society and culture. Post-non-classical science targets *human-scale, historically developing systems* whose practical manipulation can be potentially dangerous. Consequently, the ethical accountability of the scientist increases, demanding a disinterested pursuit of truth, the absolute prohibition of data fabrication, and rigorous social responsibility;

- ***the proliferation of human rights discourses:*** the legal and ethical affirmation of individual autonomy — specifically the patient’s right to independent, self-governing free expression regarding their life and health;

– ***the acceleration of medicalization:*** the expansion of the institutional authority of medicine within modern society. This medicalization manifests through the encapsulation of the individual within medical spaces from birth to death, the hyper-differentiation of pathological conditions, the crystallization of new subjects of clinical discourse (such as the “embryo” or the “dying patient”), the escalating power of transnational pharmaceutical corporations, and widespread patient access to medical information;

– ***the dehumanization of healthcare:*** the growing trend of treating medicine as a commercial service sector, coupled with extreme clinical specialization. These processes trigger the mechanization of clinical reasoning, fracturing a holistic perception of the patient’s individuality;

– ***the demand for universal moral referencing:*** the urgent social necessity to evaluate moral conflicts and dilemmas arising within contemporary medicine through the lens of universal human principles and values.

During the mid-1990s, bioethical problems actively engaged the attention of philosophers, theologians, clinicians, politicians, and journalists within post-Soviet societies. Consequently, bioethics transformed into a formal academic discipline, leading to the establishment of research and educational centers, alongside the institutionalization of ethical review committees.

As a specialized branch of knowledge, bioethics possesses the following core characteristics:

– ***interdisciplinarity:*** existing at the systemic convergence of philosophical, clinical, natural science, humanitarian, theological, legal, and everyday social discourses;

– ***publicity:*** requiring the active participation of not only the professional scientific and medical communities but also philosophers, legal scholars, theologians, economists, politicians, patients, and the broader public in ethical debates;

– ***normativity:*** investigating the contextual application of universal moral values to clinical practice and novel scenarios generated by biotechnological progress;

– ***institutional character:*** functioning not merely as an abstract field of theoretical knowledge, but as a robust network of social and legal institutions — such as bioethics committees, legislative acts, international declarations, and institutional review boards — designed to actively regulate and oversee clinical and scientific practice.

The main problems of bioethics include the following:

– ***general theoretical problems:*** identifying the specifics of universal human moral values of goodness, compassion, duty, conscience, freedom in the activities of a scientist and a doctor; development of ethical principles and norms of bioethics; determination of the essential characteristics of life and death;

– ***“open” problems:*** determination of the status of the embryo, ethical analysis of new reproductive technologies, artificial abortion and contraception,

euthanasia, resuscitation, palliative care, transplantology, biomedical experiments involving humans and animals, gene technologies, etc. Since bioethics is an ethical reflection on the achievements of biomedical science and practice, the range of “open” problems is constantly expanding;

- *deontological problems*: development of ethical regulations for relationships in medicine vertically (“doctor-patient”) and horizontally (“doctor-doctor”), models of relationships between medical workers and patients; ethical analysis of medical errors and iatrogenics, patients’ rights, the specifics of moral problems in oncology, psychiatry, narcology, assistance to people living with HIV/AIDS;

- *institutional problems*: analysis of the activities of ethical committees, moral aspects of the functioning and development of modern healthcare systems, etc.

5.2.4. MORAL VALUES, PRINCIPLES AND RULES OF BIOMEDICAL ETHICS

The moral foundations of healing comprise universal human values, normative principles, and ethical rules. The highest moral values establishing the overarching vectors for the medical profession include goodness, compassion, mercy, freedom, duty, conscience, and justice. Within the conceptual matrix of bioethics, human life itself acquires paramount significance, functioning simultaneously as the core value and the ultimate objective of healing.

Good and evil serve as the central categories of ethical knowledge, acting as the criteria to differentiate between the moral and the immoral in any human activity, including medicine. The concept of goodness reflects generalized, stable representations of the beneficial, presupposing spiritual elevation and moral perfection. In medicine, goodness fundamentally directs the practitioner toward preserving human life and optimizing health. As a supreme value, goodness is absolute and unified; within empirical reality, it is actualized through diverse actions and manifests through the systematic resistance to evil and vice.

Contemporary clinical practice frequently presents scenarios requiring a complex moral choice between good and evil, or between a “lesser” and a “greater” evil. Executing a moral choice is impossible without moral freedom — defined as the individual’s capacity for self-determination, autonomy, and volition. In medicine, the moral freedom of a clinician enables decisive actions aimed at patient relief, the discovery and implementation of novel knowledge, and the ethical self-evaluation of professional conduct. The realization of freedom is inextricably intertwined with moral responsibility — the capacity of an individual to remain accountable for the downstream consequences of their actions.

Because a clinician routinely encounters patients experiencing physical or psychological suffering, the values of compassion and mercy assume vital importance. These virtues presuppose active sympathy and empathy for another individual, structurally synthesized with goodwill, care, and altruism, standing in stark opposition to indifference, hard-heartedness, malice, hostility, and violence.

Bioethical literature offers diverse frameworks for systematizing universal moral principles. The most universally recognized paradigm was formulated by the prominent American ethicists Tom Beauchamp and James Childress in their foundational treatise, ***Principles of Biomedical Ethics***. The authors put forward four principles as fundamental: respect for autonomy, non-maleficence, beneficence, and justice. While non-maleficence and beneficence have formed the deontological bedrock of traditional medicine since Hippocrates, the principles of respect for autonomy and justice have become exceptionally acute at the contemporary stage of bioethical development.

The principle of respect for personal autonomy is anchored in the recognition of the individual as an unconditional value. It presupposes the free choice of a self-governing agent regarding their own life and health, including the choice of a healthcare institution, the selection of an attending physician, and the consent to or refusal of medical intervention. Crucially, the autonomous choice executed by a patient, regardless of how drastically it diverges from the clinician's professional judgment, must dictate subsequent clinical action. Consequently, the right to choose and the subsequent responsibility are no longer concentrated monopolistically in the hands of the physician, but are shared dialogically between the clinician and the patient.

Epistemologically, a patient can execute a valid autonomous action if and only if they satisfy *three structural criteria*:

- 1) *competence*: the cognitive capacity to comprehend the clinical situation and remain aware of the consequences of the decision;
- 2) *information*: being fully informed regarding the diagnosis, the essence of the intervention, potential risks and benefits, and the prognosis;
- 3) *voluntariness*: executing the choice independently, completely free from external coercion or manipulation.

In clinical practice, scenarios frequently arise where patients *are non-competent and incapable* of making a fully informed decision. This demographic encompasses:

- *minors*: individuals who legally lack absolute autonomy due to age. Notably, as a child develops, their capacity for autonomy progressively increases. Legally, the threshold for complete competence is the age of majority (18 years), at which point an individual can independently consent to complex medical interventions. However, Article 44 (Consent to Medical Care) of the Law of the Republic of Belarus “On Health Care” emphasizes that minors aged 14 to 18 retain the right to independently consent to simple medical interventions;
- *patients with mental disorders*: individuals who, due to a psychiatric condition, cannot execute rational, informed choices regarding their health;
- *unconscious persons*: individuals in comatose or vegetative states;
- *intoxicated individuals*: persons under the acute influence of alcohol or narcotics resulting in severely impaired states of consciousness.

In these instances, the execution of autonomy is legally transferred to the patient's proxy decision-makers or legal representatives (close kin, adoptive parents, or guardians). If legal representatives are absent or unreachable, the clinical decision may be executed independently by the attending physician or a medical board. Crucially, the actions of healthcare workers in these emergency scenarios must be strictly justified by the overriding principles of non-maleficence and beneficence.

Conversely, a patient's autonomy may be limited by a third party (such as judicial authorities or public health institutions) if their choices pose an immediate, verifiable danger to their own life or the well-being of society. The legislation of the Republic of Belarus explicitly provides for compulsory psychiatric examination and involuntary hospitalization for individuals suffering from severe mental disorders or contracting highly infectious diseases that threaten public safety.

The principle of non-maleficence, historically formalized in Latin as *Primum non nocere!* ("First, do no harm"), traces its lineage back to Hippocratic deontology and serves as the moral foundation of medicine. This principle dictates the absolute obligation to avoid inflicting unnecessary harm upon the patient. The harm that a healthcare professional can potentially cause may be taxonomically classified along several dimensions: harm caused by clinical action versus clinical inaction; unintentional versus intentional (deliberate) harm; and physical versus psychological or moral harm.

The most prevalent catalysts of clinical harm encompass:

- *inaction and abandonment*: failing to provide timely medical assistance to an individual in critical need. Delivering care is both a moral imperative and a strict legal obligation. Article 161 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Belarus (Failure to Provide Medical Care to a Sick Person) enforces criminal liability for medical personnel who abandon a patient. Legally, a distinction is maintained between justifiable and unjustifiable reasons for non-assistance. Justifiable reasons include *force majeure* (natural disasters), the severe acute illness of the practitioner, or being actively engaged in treating another equally critical patient (state of urgent necessity). Conversely, being called outside official working hours, being on vacation, or a lack of personal convenience can never serve as legally or ethically valid grounds for withholding emergency care;

- *negligence and professional malpractice*: harm resulting from the improper, careless, or unskillful performance of duties by a medical professional. This category of harm presupposes both moral and legal accountability, as codified in Article 162 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Belarus (Improper Performance of Professional Duties by a Medical Worker);

- *medical errors*: involuntary cognitive or technical mistakes committed by a clinician without malicious intent or negligence;

- *rash or unqualified actions*: clinical interventions executed without adequate competence, diagnostic rigor, or adherence to established healthcare safety protocols;

– *deceptive and inattentive conduct*: the deliberate concealment of clinical information, the deception of the patient, the unauthorized disclosure of medical confidentiality, or a rude and dismissive attitude toward the individual.

Evidently, it is the fundamental moral duty of the clinician to eliminate harm arising from these causes. However, because any medical intervention inherently involves operational risks, completely avoiding harm is frequently unachievable. Therefore, when deciding to execute a therapeutic, diagnostic, or prophylactic procedure, a physician must constantly weigh the *benefit-to-risk ratio* associated with that specific intervention. It is imperative that the anticipated harm does not exceed the clinical benefit acquired through the intervention, and that the chosen course of action minimizes this unavoidable harm relative to all other alternative strategies.

The principle of beneficence (“*Do good!*”) demands proactive, positive actions aimed at preserving life, restoring health, and alleviating the patient’s pain and suffering. Unlike the principle of non-maleficence, which relies primarily on rational prohibitions and restraints, beneficence is structurally driven by moral sentiments such as active compassion and mercy. At the same time, the clinician is obligated to balance the welfare of the individual patient against the welfare of society (e.g., combating the spread of epidemics) and the advancement of medical science, without which technoscientific progress is impossible.

Ethical frictions arise when contradictions occur between these distinct domains of the good. From the standpoint of contemporary biomedical ethics, the interests of scientific progress must never override the rights and well-being of a specific individual. Nevertheless, in exceptional public health emergencies, it is considered morally and legally justifiable to restrict individual freedoms for the collective benefit of society.

At the level of the physician-patient relationship, **the principle of justice** involves providing clinical assistance equitably, regardless of the patient’s gender, age, race, nationality, socio-economic status, political convictions, religion, or the personal preferences of the clinician. At the macro-level of the healthcare system, justice demands equal access for all demographic groups to biomedical services, the universal availability of essential pharmacological agents, and the systematic protection of historically vulnerable populations.

When distributing scarce medical resources, policymakers must utilize specific criteria of distributive justice, such as equality, individual clinical need, contributions to society, or market dynamics. Because no single criterion can be treated as an absolute standard, modern healthcare allocation frameworks typically deploy a synthesized combination of these parameters.

Beyond this classical principalist tetrad, contemporary bioethics distinguishes several **supplementary principles**:

– *the principle of human dignity*: mandating the recognition of the intrinsic, unconditional value of every human being, including individuals who, due

to acute physical or cognitive pathologies, lack the capacity to express their autonomous will;

- *the principle of holistic integrity*: focusing on preserving the physical, psychological, and biographical identity of the individual, strictly prohibiting the unauthorized manipulation or destruction of this personal unity;

- *the principle of vulnerability*: recognizing the inherent fragility and finitude of human life, demanding heightened protection and institutional attention for vulnerable demographics, including the impoverished, the illiterate, children, and persons with disabilities.

To globally institutionalize these frameworks, the UNESCO General Conference adopted the *Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights* in October 2005. The Declaration addresses the complex ethical dimensions of medicine, life sciences, and associated technologies, establishing fifteen universal principles to guarantee respect for human dignity, human rights, and fundamental freedoms.

The abstract principles of biomedical ethics, which establish the general conditions for treating the patient as an autonomous individual, are operationally specified through three concrete **regulatory rules**: *informed consent*, *veracity*, and *confidentiality*.

The rule of informed consent dictates that any medical intervention or clinical research design must be executed exclusively with the voluntary consent of the patient or research subject, obtained on the basis of sufficient disclosure. Structurally, this rule presupposes two inseparable procedural stages:

- 1) comprehensive information disclosure by the clinician;
- 2) the voluntary, non-coerced validation of consent by the patient.

The rule of veracity prescribes that the clinician must truthfully, tactfully, and in an accessible format (accounting for the patient's psychological profile and developmental age) inform the patient regarding their health status. Reciprocally, the patient is ethically obligated to remain truthful when communicating with healthcare providers. Operationalizing the rule of veracity involves serious situational difficulties, particularly when utilizing placebos, treating non-competent patients, or managing individuals in terminal stages of oncological or chronic illnesses, thereby demanding flexible, context-dependent ethical decisions.

The rule of confidentiality mandates strict adherence to the institution of medical confidentiality. The proper scope of confidentiality encompasses all data regarding the fact of seeking medical assistance, health status metrics, diagnoses, prognoses, and any information obtained during the clinical examination and treatment. It concurrently protects non-medical information regarding the patient's personal life or relatives that became known to the clinician during their professional duties, extending post-mortem to the results of pathological examinations. This data may be transferred to third parties, including close kin, exclusively upon the explicit consent of the patient.

Methodologically, confidentiality also presupposes the total anonymization of patient data utilized in scientific publications and educational literature, the accessibility of anonymous diagnostic options, the minimization of intrusion into the patient's private sphere, and the secure storage of medical records with restricted access controls.

Ultimately, the unauthorized disclosure of medical confidentiality severely compromises patient candor and clinical trust, discouraging individuals from seeking timely medical care and undermining diagnostic efficiency. Within the legislative framework of the Republic of Belarus, medical and pharmaceutical professionals bear strict legal and civil liability for the breach of medical confidentiality.

TRAINING MATERIAL

Exercise 1. Read the excerpt from the original source and answer the questions.

R. Potter

Bioethics: Bridge to the Future²⁴

Chapter 1. Bioethics — the Science of Survival.

Biology and Wisdom in Action

[...] Humanity urgently needs a new wisdom, which would be “knowledge about how to use knowledge” for human survival and the improvement of human life. The concept of wisdom as a guide to action and knowledge necessary for achieving social good and improving quality of life is called the Science of Survival. I believe this science must be built on knowledge of biology and at the same time transcend its traditional concepts; it must incorporate the most essential elements of the social and human sciences, among which philosophy, understood as the “love of wisdom,” is particularly significant. The science of survival must not simply be a science, but a new wisdom that unites two most important and essential elements — biological knowledge and universal human values. Based on this, I propose a new term for it: “Bioethics.”

In this age of specialization, we seem to rarely remember the truth our ancestors grasped daily: humans cannot live without gathering plants or killing animals. If plants wither and die, and animals cannot reproduce, then humans too will soon fall ill and die, unable to procreate. We, as self-respecting individuals, cannot entrust our fate to scientists, engineers, technologists, and politicians who have forgotten (or never remembered) this simple truth. Most modern scientists — specialists in, for example, botany, which studies plants, or zoology, which studies animals — do not strive to expand their limited knowledge. Today, however, we need biologists who not only respect the fragile fabric of life but

²⁴ Potter, R. Bioethics: bridge to the future / R. Potter. – Minneapolis : Prentice-Hall, 1971. – P. 72–84.

also expand their knowledge to understand human nature and its relationship to the biological and physical world [...].

The new ethics can be defined as interdisciplinary ethics, where interdisciplinarity implies the unification of the natural and human sciences [...].

Chapter 5. Dangerous Knowledge: The Dilemma of modern science.

One of the dilemmas of modern society is the phenomenon of dangerous knowledge. Therefore, the task of any educated person, wherever they work, is to evaluate the significance of new knowledge and the potential for its misuse. Today, this is a necessity, whereas just half a century ago, it became obvious [...]

It should be noted that no one will ever possess everything necessary to evaluate the hidden potential of new knowledge. The best that can be hoped for is the development of a multidisciplinary approach in planning future scientific projects and the establishment of ongoing monitoring (based on the precautionary principle) those projects that are already underway [...]

When we speak of the dangers of knowledge, we must immediately acknowledge that knowledge, in itself, can be neither good nor bad. This idea is credible, since knowledge is power that is accessible, and therefore, whenever possible, it will be used by people to increase their power. The knowledge acquired by humanity will never gather dust in a library or be locked away in a safe. On the other hand, no one is interested in knowledge that is not applied anywhere. Knowledge becomes dangerous or useful only in the process of realizing the practical goals a person sets for themselves.

Often, knowledge is not considered dangerous at the time of its discovery. For example, a certain chemical drug may have been developed to treat cancer, then discovered to be effective in weed control, and finally, it is used as an herbicide, poisoning the food supply of an entire country. Similarly, nuclear fusion research did not initially envision the creation of an atomic bomb capable of destroying an entire city or wiping out a country's population; or, the creators of the sleeping pill thalidomide did not consider its side effects on a pregnant woman and her unborn child, who could be born without arms. Unfortunately, we learn about the dangers of knowledge too late.

Questions:

1. What role does philosophy play in Potter's concept of the "Science of Survival"?
2. What major limitation does Potter identify in modern specialized scientists, such as botanists and zoologists?
3. According to Chapter 5, what strategy does the author propose to manage the hidden dangers of scientific projects since no single person can foresee all outcomes?

EXERCISES FOR ASSESSING COMPETENCY LEVEL

Exercise 2. Answer the following questions:

1. Describe the problematic field of the philosophy of medicine.
2. What factors determined the emergence and intensive development of bioethics in the last third of the 20th century?
3. How are the concepts of “bioethics,” “biomedical ethics,” and “medical ethics” related?
4. List the achievements of biomedical science and practice that are changing our understanding of human corporeality, life and death, and the prospects for existence.
5. What dangers does scientific and technological progress pose to humanity? Should scientific knowledge be consistent with the moral guidelines of society and culture? Provide your arguments.
6. List the characteristics of biomedical ethics. What does the interdisciplinary nature of bioethical knowledge mean?
7. List the fundamental principles of biomedical ethics and explain their content.
8. What is the essence of the rule of truthfulness? In what cases does its implementation cause difficulties?
9. What is the subject of medical confidentiality? In what cases is its disclosure permitted?
10. Provide examples of violations of the principles and rules of biomedical ethics? What, in your opinion, are the reasons for these violations?

Exercise 3. Read the text excerpt and answer the questions:

The Russian thinker N. Berdyaev wrote: “The problem of ethics cannot even be posed without recognizing that a distinction has arisen between good and evil, and that the emergence of this distinction is preceded by a state of being ‘beyond good and evil’... Good and evil are correlative, and in a certain sense one can say that good arose only when evil arose, and declines with the decline of evil. This is the fundamental paradox of ethics...”

Questions:

1. Do you agree with the thinker’s position? Why?
2. Can evil exist without good? And good without evil? Does Absolute Good exist? Is it possible to realize it in specific actions, situations, moral norms, and principles?
3. What are the specific manifestations of good and evil in medicine?

Topics for reports:

1. Medicalization as a sociocultural phenomenon.
2. The Hippocratic Oath and modern ethical Codes.

3. The concept of “Bioethics” in R. Potter’s “Bioethics: A Bridge to the Future.”

4. Physician’s freedom and moral responsibility.

5. The principle of respect for individual autonomy and patient rights.

6. The specifics of informed consent for non-autonomous individuals.

7. The rule of truthfulness and the placebo problem.

Aphorisms and statements:

1. Indeed, there is little difference between wisdom and medicine, and everything sought after in wisdom is also found in medicine, namely: disdain for money, conscientiousness, modesty, simplicity of dress, respect, judgment, decisiveness, neatness, and abundance of thought (*Hippocrates*).

2. We do not treat diseases; we treat human beings suffering from diseases (*Avicenna*).

3. Some medicines are more dangerous than the diseases themselves (*Seneca*).

4. The efficacy of a physician resides within the heart; clinical labor must be guided by the divine and illuminated by natural light and empirical experience, establishing love as the greatest foundation of medicine (*Paracelsus*).

5. A virtuous practitioner is someone who knows the cure for specific ailments or, if the illness remains unknown, calls upon those who can provide help to the patient (*J. de La Bruyère*).

6. If a patient does not feel better after communicating with a physician, then the latter is not a true doctor (*V. M. Bekhterev*).

7. The medical profession constitutes a heroic deed; it demands selflessness, purity of soul, and purity of thoughts (*A. P. Chekhov*).

SELF-ASSESSMENT OF TOPIC COMPREHENSION

1. Medical ethics is:

a) a branch of applied ethics reflecting a set of moral norms and principles that regulate the behavior of a specialist, taking into account the specifics of their work and the specific situation;

b) the doctrine of duty in medicine, primarily the professional duty of doctors and medical workers to patients;

c) an applied ethical discipline the subject of which is a system of knowledge about the principles of moral regulation and the functioning of moral problems generated by the latest achievements of modern medicine, biology, and biotechnology and related to the protection of human rights and dignity, life, health, and death.

d) professional ethics, which regulates human relations in medicine “vertically” (“doctor-patient”) and “horizontally” (“doctor-doctor”) based on universal moral values and principles.

2. Highlight the ancient Greek thinker who is associated with the development of medical ethics:

- a) Plato;
- b) Aristotle;
- c) Hippocrates;
- d) Socrates;
- e) Epicurus.

3. Identify the moral principles of medicine set forth in the Hippocratic Oath:

- a) Do no harm;
- b) Respect for the teacher;
- c) Respect for individual autonomy;
- d) Prohibition of disclosure of medical confidentiality;
- e) Informed consent;
- f) Prohibition of abortion.

4. Highlight the international organization that developed and adopted the International Physicians' Oath and the International Code of Medical Ethics:

- a) WMA (World Medical Association);
- b) WHO (World Health Organization);
- c) UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization);
- d) Council of Europe;
- e) Military Medical Academy.

5. What concept did the American Oncologist R. Potter introduce to describe the science of survival, designed to unite “two cultures” — natural science (primarily biological) and humanitarian knowledge? Has it become a kind of connecting link between scientific ideas about human life and universal values, ideals, and goals?

6. When did bioethics arise?

- a) during the Middle Ages;
- b) in the 4th century BCE in Ancient Greece;
- c) during the Renaissance;
- d) in the last third of the 20th century;
- e) in Early Modern philosophy.

7. What general civilizational factors contributed to the formation of biomedical ethics:

- a) the emergence and application of new biomedical technologies in practical healthcare;
- b) attention to human rights, including patients' rights;
- c) the medicalization of society;
- d) the international activities of the UN;
- e) the experimental nature of modern medical knowledge.

8. Highlight the features of biomedical ethics:

- a) corporate character;
- b) public character;
- c) institutional character;
- d) universality and versatility;
- e) interdisciplinarity.

9. Highlight the traditional model of doctor-patient relationships that dominated in medicine until the mid-20th century and oriented doctors toward independent choice of treatment tactics and methods.

10. Which principles are not considered fundamental principles of bioethics:

- a) the principle of justice;
- b) the principle of respect for individual autonomy;
- c) the principle of “do no harm”;
- d) the principle of “do good”;
- e) the principle of “reverence for life”;
- f) the anthropic principle;
- g) the principle of global evolutionism.

ANSWERS TO SELF-ASSESSMENT TESTS

Topic 1.1. Philosophy and Worldview.

Answers: 1 — a, d, e; 2 — a, c, e, f; 3 — b; 4 — a; 5 — b.

Topic 1.2. Genesis of Philosophical Knowledge: Philosophy of the Ancient East and Classical Antiquity.

Answers: 1 — a; 2 — a; 3 — a; 4 — b; 5 — A-d, B-b, C-a, D-c, E-e.

Topic 1.3. Main Stages in the Development of Philosophical Thought in the Middle Ages and Renaissance.

Answers: 1 — b, c, d, g; 2 — b, a, c; 3 — c, d, f, g; 4 — Aristotle; 5 — 1-b, c; 2-a, c, d, e; 3-a, c, f.

Topic 1.4. Early Modern Philosophy and the Enlightenment. German Classical Philosophy.

Answers: 1 — b; 2 — a, c, e, g; 3 — a, c, d; 4 — b, c, e.

Topic 1.5. Main Trends of Non-Classical Philosophy.

Answers: 1 — b; 2 — a, c; 3 — a, b, c, d; 4 — a, c, d, e; 5 — c, d, f; 6 — b, e, f; 7 — b.

Topic 1.6. Belarusian and Russian Philosophical Thought.

Answers: 1 — b; 2 — a; 3 — a; 4 — e; 5 — c.

Topic 2.1. Ontology and Philosophy of Nature.

Answers: 1 — b; 2 — e; 3 — a; 4 — a, c, d, f, g; 5 — b.

Topic 2.2. Philosophical Understanding of the Problem of Development. Dialectics and Synergetics.

Answers: 1 — a; 2 — a; b; 3 — contradictions; 4 — b; 5 — development; 6 — d; 7 — chaos; 8 — a; 9 — e, f, g.

Topic 3.1. Human Problem in Philosophy and Science.

Answers: 1 — b; 2 — 1-b, 2-a, 3-d, 4-c; 3 — a; 4 — 1-c, 2-d, 3-a, 4-b; 5 — a, b; 6 — a, c, e, f; 7 — transhumanism.

Topic 3.2. Human Consciousness as a Subject of Philosophical Analysis. The Problem of Artificial Intelligence.

Answers: 1 — consciousness; 2 — a, b, c, d; 3 — b; 4 — b; 5 — c; 6 — Superego; 7 — d; 8 — 1-a, 2-b, 3-d, 4-c; 9 — b; 10 — artificial intelligence.

Topic 4.1. Society as a Developing System.

Answers: 1 — b; 2 — a, c, e; 3 — c; 4 — b; 5 — b, d, e; 6 — a.

Topic 4.2. Prospects and Risks of Modern Civilization. Belarus in the Modern Civilization Process.

Answers: **1** — a; **2** — b; **3** — a; **4** — e; **5** — b.

Topic 5.1. The Diversity of Forms of Knowledge and the Problem of Truth in Philosophy. Science and its Sociocultural Status.

Answers: **1** — a; **2** — c; **3** — b; **4** — b.

Topic 5.2. Philosophy of Medicine. Bioethics as Applied Philosophy

Answers: **1** — d; **2** — c; **3** — a, b, d, f; **4** — a; **5** — Bioethics; **6** — d; **7** — a, b, c; **8** — b, c, e; **9** — Paternalism; **10** — e, f, g.

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CONTENT

FOREWORD	3
SECTION 1. FORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF PHILOSOPHY	4
Topic 1.1. Philosophy and worldview.....	4
1.1.1. The concept of worldview, its structure and functions	4
1.1.2. Historical types of worldviews: the emergence of philosophy as a distinct worldview	6
1.1.3. The scope of philosophy and the structure of philosophical knowledge	9
1.1.4. A comparative analysis of philosophy, science, art, and religion	11
1.1.5. The relationship between philosophy and medicine	13
Topic 1.2. Genesis of philosophical knowledge: philosophy of the Ancient East and Classical Antiquity	20
1.2.1. Socio-historical and cultural prerequisites for the genesis of philosophy	21
1.2.2. The schools and traditions of Ancient Indian philosophy	24
1.2.3. The schools and traditions of Ancient Chinese philosophy	28
1.2.4. The evolution of the Ancient Greek philosophical tradition.....	31
1.2.4.1. Pre-Socratic philosophy: the problem of the first principle.....	32
1.2.4.2. Classical Antique philosophy.....	35
1.2.4.3. Philosophy of the Hellenism (Epicureism, Stoicism, Skepticism)	42
Topic 1.3. Main stages in the development of philosophical thought in the middle ages and Renaissance	51
1.3.1. The specificity and guiding principles of medieval philosophy	51
1.3.2. Historical stages in the evolution of Medieval philosophical thought	53
1.3.3. The Medieval philosophy of the Near and Middle East.....	58
1.3.4. The philosophy of the Renaissance: distinctive features and core problems.....	59
Topic 1.4. Early Modern Philosophy and the Enlightenment. German classical philosophy.....	66
1.4.1. The specificity of the Early Modern European philosophy of the 17–18th centuries	66
1.4.2. Empirical tradition of Early Modern philosophy (F. Bacon, J. Locke)	67
1.4.3. Rationalism in the philosophy of R. Descartes, B. Spinoza and G. Leibniz	69
1.4.4. Philosophical thought of the Enlightenment	72
1.4.5. The specificity of German Classical philosophy.....	74
1.4.6. Critical philosophy of I. Kant.....	75
1.4.7. System and method in the philosophy of G. W. F. Hegel.....	78

Topic 1.5. Main trends of Non-classical philosophy	86
1.5.1. The distinctive features and divergence of classical and non-classical philosophy	86
1.5.2. The philosophical framework of Marxism	88
1.5.3. The irrationalism of Arthur Schopenhauer, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Søren Kierkegaard	91
1.5.4. The historical evolution and main forms of positivist philosophy	95
1.5.5. The problem of human existence within existentialist philosophy	97
1.5.6. The foundations of Freudianism and neo-Freudianism	100
1.5.7. Core methodologies in post-classical philosophy: structuralism, hermeneutics, and postmodernism	101
Topic 1.6. Belarusian and Russian philosophical thought	108
1.6.1. Specific features of the Belarusian philosophical tradition	108
1.6.2. Typological features and directions of development of Russian philosophy	118
SECTION 2. PHILOSOPHICAL UNDERSTANDING OF THE PROBLEMS OF BEING	132
Topic 2.1. Ontology and philosophy of nature	132
2.1.1. Ontology as the philosophical doctrine of being: fundamental categories, modes of existence, and historical paradigms	133
2.1.2. The category of matter: the systemic organization of being, structural levels of reality, and physical substrates	135
2.1.3. The spatiotemporal organization of being: absolute, relational, and scientific frameworks of space and time	136
2.1.4. The concept of nature: the historical and epistemological evolution of ideas about the natural world in philosophy and science	139
2.1.5. The biosphere and the noosphere: the coevolutionary imperative, environmental ethics, and the ecological values of contemporary civilization....	141
Topic 2.2. Philosophical understanding of the problem of development. Dialectics and Synergetics	147
2.2.1. The dynamic organization of being: conceptual frameworks of motion and development	148
2.2.2. Dialectics: the historical and philosophical theory of systemic development	149
2.2.3. Synergetics: core principles of self-organization and their role in contemporary ontology	150
SECTION 3. PHILOSOPHICAL ANTHROPOLOGY	159
Topic 3.1. Human problem in philosophy and science	159
3.1.1. The human being as an object of philosophical inquiry: the ontological multidimensionality of human existence	160

3.1.2. Paradigms of human nature: comparative analysis of classical and non-classical strategies in philosophical anthropology	161
3.1.3. The origins of humanity and culture: contemporary scientific and philosophical frameworks of anthroposociogenesis and culturogenesis	164
3.1.4. The existential strata of being: fundamental characteristics and modes of human existence	167
Topic 3.2. Human consciousness as a subject of philosophical analysis.	
The problem of artificial intelligence	174
3.2.1. The nature of consciousness: primary frameworks in scientific and philosophical analysis	175
3.2.2. The mind-body problem in contemporary philosophy and science: the relationship between consciousness and the brain	177
3.2.3. The structure of consciousness: comparative dimensions of individual and collective consciousness	178
3.2.4. The problem of the unconscious: psychoanalysis as a therapeutic methodology and its intersection with psychosomatic medicine	179
3.2.5. Artificial intelligence as a philosophical inquiry: moral, ethical, and existential implications of AI development	181
SECTION 4. SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY	192
Topic 4.1. Society as a developing system	192
4.1.1. Social philosophy and its scope. Society as a system	192
4.1.2. The historical evolution of social thought	194
4.1.3. Interpretations of the historical process	196
4.1.4. The dynamics of social development	198
4.1.5. Philosophical paradigms of culture	200
Topic 4.2. Prospects and risks of modern civilization.	
Belarus in the modern civilization process	205
4.2.1. The concept of civilization: types of civilizations throughout human history	206
4.2.2. Technology, engineering, and their role in the history of civilization	208
4.2.3. Civilization and the processes of globalization in the contemporary world	209
4.2.4. Global challenges of modernity and the risks of a consumer society	210
4.2.5. The phenomenon of the information society and the risks of virtual reality	213
4.2.6. Demographic risks and global pandemics as new social threats and their consequences	215
4.2.7. The Belarusian model of socio-economic development and the civilizational choice of Belarus in a globalizing world	217

SECTION 5. THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE AND PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE.....	223
Topic 5.1. The diversity of forms of knowledge and the problem of truth in philosophy. Science and its sociocultural status	223
5.1.1. The specific nature of human cognitive orientations toward the world: pluralistic modes of cognitive activity	224
5.1.2. The problem of the cognizability of the world: skepticism, agnosticism, and epistemological optimism.....	226
5.1.3. The structure and primary dimensions of the cognitive process: sensory and rational stages of cognition.....	227
5.1.4. Beyond the rational: intuition, creative imagination, and the role of the irrational in the cognitive process	228
5.1.5. Cognition as the comprehension of truth: major theories of truth and the philosophy of understanding.....	230
5.1.6. The concept of science: the genesis, socio-cultural status, and historical dynamics of scientific knowledge.....	231
5.1.7. The architecture of scientific knowledge: empirical, theoretical, and metatheoretical levels of research.....	234
5.1.8. Epistemic forms of scientific knowledge: from scientific facts and problems to hypotheses and theories	235
5.1.9. Method, methodology, and research design: classification of scientific methods.....	236
5.1.10. Science, ethos, and society: the ethics of science and the social responsibility of the scientist	239
Topic 5.2. Philosophy of medicine. Bioethics as applied philosophy	246
5.2.1. The problem field of the philosophy of medicine	246
5.2.2. Historical background for the development of bioethics	248
5.2.3. Theoretical foundations and problem field of bioethics.....	253
5.2.4. Moral values, principles and rules of biomedical ethics	256
ANSWERS TO SELF-ASSESSMENT TESTS	267
REFERENCES	269

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