# UNIT 1 MASTERS OF SUSPICION (MARX, FREUD AND NIETZSCHE)

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### 1.0 OBJECTIVES

Paul Ricoueran terminology of describing the unsurpassed thinkers, namely Karl Marx, Sigmund Freud and Friedrich Nietzsche, as 'Masters of Suspicion,' is used as the title for this unit. These three thinkers left a legacy of their own in turning the history of human thought in different directions. The unit gives a gist of their critique and their vision.

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

At each stage in human history, men and women have worked out some sort of picture of the world and their place in it. They develop a Philosophy. The pieces they use to make up this picture have been obtained by observing nature and through generalizing their day-to-day experiences.

# 1.2 KARL MARX: CRITIC OF SYSTEMIC DOMINATION

Karl Marx was a remarkable era in the field of socialist theory and political economy. In his conception of reality as subject to turbulent change led to view

human beings as having potentiality to realize themselves in the struggle for freedom, equality and classlessness. Having been influenced tremendously by Hegel's dialectics, Marx developed his theory of historical and dialectical materialism. His contribution to world of philosophy is radical in a sense that he was not just providing critique of religion but worked for the change of view of the basics of everything to provide for human emancipation. He dismissed the illusion that reality as a whole is an expression of the Idea, the absolute rational order governing reality. Against this, Marx held a position that it is Man, not the Idea, who is the true subject. Secondly for him, political life and societal ideology and everything associated with are determined by the character of economic life. Everything of man consists in human labour. If it is just performed at dictates of the market forces, Man is 'alienated' from his own creative force. Humans can recognize themselves as what they are, i.e. true creators of history, only when labour recovers its collective character. Labour is 'not only a means of life but life's prime want'.

Marx presented history as a progress through stages. At every stage, the society's level of productivity and the requirements condition the form of society. In capitalism, as the means of production are owned privately and labour is bought and sold like a commodity, exploitation flows from an arrangement that is accepted without the need for coercion. It only reflects the fact that the ruling dominant class has a special influence over ideas in society. In Das Kapital, monumental work of Marx, he identifies the oppressive dynamics of capitalism with its deceptive objective of having a discrepancy between its essence and its appearance. In Marx's view, it is inevitable that capitalism should give way to socialism. With conflict evident in capitalism as far the ownership of means of production is concerned, growing consciousness for collective ownership in 'socialized' environment, Marx believed that the transition to collective ownership will be natural and inevitable. Of course till the end Marx nowhere explained how this collective ownership and social control was to be exercised. His maxim in the final vision of communism echoes 'from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs.' (Rosen 1998)

# 1.3 HISTORICAL AND DIALECTICAL MATERIALISM

When one looks at history, it appears to be a mass of contradictions. Events are lost in a maze of revolutions, wars, periods of progress and of decline. Conflicts of classes and nations swirl around in the chaos of social development. Marx attaches enormous importance to the study of history. Marxism is the science of perspectives, using its method of Dialectical Materialism to unravel the complex processes of historical development. Marxist philosophy examines things not as static entities but in their development, movement and life. Historical events are seen as processes. Evolution, however, is not simply the movement from the lower to the higher. Life and society develop in a contradictory way, as Lenin puts it, through, "spirals not in a straight line; a development by leaps, catastrophes, and revolutions; breaks in continuity; the transformation of quantity into quality; inner impulses towards development, imparted by the contradiction and conflict of the various forces and tendencies." As Marx explained, "the mode of production of material life conditioned the social, political and intellectual life processes in general. It is not the consciousness of men that determines

their being, but on the contrary their social being that determines their consciousness".

Using this method, Marx was able to indicate "the way to an all embracing and comprehensive study of the processes of the rise, development, and decline of social-economic systems. People make their own history." Marx drew attention and indicated the way to a scientific study of history as a single process, which, with all its immense variety and contradictoriness, is governed by definite laws. From primitive communism, through slave society and feudalism, the western society has evolved into capitalism. The socialist transformation ushers in a new and higher form of society by breaking the fetters on the development of the productive forces. With huge strides forward in production, based on the most advanced science and conscious planning, humanity enters the higher realms of real society. At each point in class society, the rising revolutionary class, aiming to change society, have to fight for a new world outlook and have to attack the old philosophy, which, being based on the old order, justified and defended it.

### 1.4 MARX ON ALIENATION

In capitalist society, man is not truly free. He is an alienated being. He is not at home in his world. The idea of alienation, Marx takes from Hegel and Feuerbach. The causes of alienation come to have an increasingly economic and social content. The alienation of labour takes place in the fact that the more the worker produces the less he has to consume. And the more values he creates the more he devalues him. The reason is His product and his labour is estranged from him. The life of the worker depends on capital. On things that he has created but that are not his. Instead of finding his rightful existence through his labour he loses it in this world of things that are external to him" no work, no pay. Under these conditions, labour denies the fullness of concrete man. Nature, his body, his spiritual essence become alien to him. "Man is made alien to man" Private property becomes the product of alienated labour. Alienated labour is seen as the consequence of market product, the division of labour, and the division of society into antagonistic classes.

#### **Economic Alienation**

As producers in society, men create goods only by their labour. These goods are exchangeable. Their value is the average amount of social labour spent to produce them. The alienation of the worker takes on its full dimension in that system of market production. In it part of the value of the goods is taken away from and transformed into surplus value. The capitalist appropriates this privately. Market production also intensifies the alienation. By encouraging specialization, piecework, and setting up of large enterprises. Thus the labour power of the worker is used along with that of others tools of production. Thus losing their quality as human products, the products of labour become alien and oppressive realities.

The fundamental economic alienation is accompanied by **political and ideological alienation.** The ideas that men form are closely bound up with their material activity and their material relation. This is true of human activity in political, intellectual, and spiritual. Men produce their representations and their ideas, but it is as living men, men acting as theory are determined by a definite development

of their powers of production. Law, morality, metaphysics, and religion do not have a history of their own. Men developing their material production modify together with their real existence their ways of thinking and the products of their ways of thinking. "It is not consciousness, which determines existence; it is existence, which determines consciousness. **Ideological alienation** takes different forms, appearing in economic, philosophical and legal theories. Ideological alienation expresses itself supremely in religion. Taking up the ideas about religion that were current in left post-Hegelian circles, together with the thought of Feuerbach, Marx considered religion to be a product of man's consciousness. It is a reflection of the situation of a man, who 'either has not conquered himself or has already lost himself again.

# 1.5 MARXIAN CRITIQUE OF RELIGION

In the famous words of Marx, 'Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people'. For Marx, the world of religion is a reflection of a particular form of society. The state or the society produces religion. In religious belief, Man finds himself reflected in the 'fantastic reality of heaven.' Religion provides a realm in which individuals can realize themselves. In a desperate world full and adequate self-realization is said to be impossible. In this way, religion attempts to preserve the social order of which it is a by-product. The fundamental points on which Marxian critique of religion rest are: (1) Religion is a by-product of the impoverished and distorted world. (2) The image of reality produced by religion is falsely transfigured. (3) Human beings are made to believe that religion has its origins in other than the mundane reality. (Rosen 1998)

Marx directs his critique of religion specifically on the final aspect of unacknowledged origins in social existence. His critique aims at calling people to abandon their illusions and move towards, with help of philosophy, unmasking human self-alienation in its secular forms. The critique of religion is to throw away all conditions in which human beings are debased, enslaved, neglected, contemptible. It asserts a doctrine that man is the supreme being for man. (Marx, 1843a: 251). For Marx, speculative philosophy must move beyond itself and makes use of means of *praxis* towards human emancipation. A truly successful critique of religion requires the transformation of the social conditions within which religion is generated and sustained.

### **Marxian Anthropology**

Human history is therefore living human seeking to satisfy certain primary needs. "The first historical fact is the production of the means to satisfy these needs." This satisfaction opens the way for new needs. Human activity is essentially a struggle with nature, which becomes the means of satisfying his needs. Humans are productive being who humanize themselves by their labour. Humans humanize nature while they naturalize themselves. By his creative activity, by his labour, he realizes his identity with the nature that he masters, while at the same time he achieves free consciousness. "All that is called history is nothing else than the process of creating man through human labour, the becoming of nature for man. Man has thus evident and irrefutable proof of his own creation by himself." Understood in its universal dimension, human activity reveals that 'for man, man is the supreme being.' It is thus vain to speak of god, creation, and metaphysical problems. Fully naturalized, man is sufficient unto himself: he has recaptured the fullness of man in his full liberty.

# 1.6 SIGMUND FREUD: ANALYST OF HUMAN PSYCHE

Freud who is well known psychologist and psychotherapist developed the theory and practice of psychoanalysis. On Freud's account everyday actions are determined by motives which are far more numerous and complex than people realize. The most basic and constant motives which influence our actions are unconscious. Such motives are residues of encounters with significant persons and situations from the past. They operate not to achieve realistic satisfaction, but rather to secure a form of pacification through representation. He gave the psychological accounts of neurosis and psychosis. He explicated how the past gives significance to the present in normal mental functioning. Past desires are continually re-articulated through symbolism and representational pacification throughout life. In this Freud provides both a radically holistic account of the causation of action and a naturalistic description of the generation of meaning in life. Significant desires can remain forever flexible, renewable and satisfiable in their expressions, precisely because they are immutable, frustrated and unrelenting at the root.

The childhood motives revealed by analysis characteristically included sensual love for one parent combined with rivalry and jealous hatred for the other, a constellation Freud called the 'Oedipus complex'. Children were liable to intense psychical conflict, as between desires to harm or displace each parent, envied and hated as a rival for the love of the other, and desires to preserve and protect that same parent, loved sensually and also as a caretaker, helper and model. Children apparently attached great emotional significance to their interactions with their parents in such basics of disciplined and cooperative activity as feeding and the expulsion and management of waste through various organs. Freud framed an account which systematically linked normal and abnormal sexual phenomena in the development of the individual.

Freud allocated the task of fostering the sense of reality to a hypothetical neural structure, or functional part of the mind, 'the ego.' He linked this structure with two others, the

'super-ego' and the primitive 'it', or *id*., The 'super-ego' judged or criticized the ego. It included the ego-ideal, representing the ideals or standards by which the ego was judged. "*Id*" is the natural matrix of basic and potentially conflicting instincts or drives. Overall the ego, super-ego and id are neural systems described in a functional way.

The drives constituting the *id* are divisible into two main categories: those which engender motives which are creative and constructive, such as affection, love and care, which he called the life instincts; and those which yield motives linked to aggression, such as envy and hate, which he called the destructive or death instincts.

# 1.7 FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE: UNSYMPATHETIC DETRACTOR

Nietzsche has left a deep imprint on most areas of Western intellectual and cultural life. He is one of Germany's greatest prose stylists and one of its most

important, if not controversial, philosophers. Nietzsche attacks almost everything that has been considered sacred: Socrates, scholarship, God, truth, morality, equality, democracy and most other modern values. He gives a large role to the will to power. He proposes to replace the values he attacks with new values and a new ideal of the human person, 'overhuman' or 'superhuman'. Nazi theoreticians attempted to associate these ideas with their own cause. Actually, Nietzsche despised and unambiguously rejected both German nationalism and anti-Semitism.

Nietzsche's philosophizing began from a deep sense of dissatisfaction with modern Western culture. In that, he found superficial and empty in comparison with that of the ancient Greeks. He located the source of the problem in the fact that modern culture gives priority to science. Pre-Socratic Greece had given priority to art and myth. He wanted modern culture to return to the Greek valuation of art, calling for a recognition of art as 'the highest task and the truly metaphysical activity of this life'. In the works of his middle period he rejects metaphysical truth but celebrates the valuing of science and empirical truth over myth as a sign of high culture. He committed his own philosophy to a thoroughgoing naturalistic understanding of human beings. (Clark 1998)

# 1.8 KNOWLEDGE, TRUTH AND METAPHYSICS

Nietzsche denies often that any of our theories and beliefs are really true. The rejection of metaphysics (a belief in a second world) forms the cornerstone of his later philosophy. Human, All Too Human offers a genealogy of this belief, first in the dreams and in considering empirical world as mere appearance. Metaphysics is purported knowledge of this non-empirical world. He shows that knowledge of a non-empirical world is cognitively superfluous. Although Enlightenment established the adequacy of empirical methods, belief in a metaphysical world persisted because that world is assumed to be necessary to account for the things of the highest value in the human world. Nietzsche offers a naturalistic account of higher things, which presents them as sublimations of despised things and therefore as 'human, all too human'.

Nietzche's position on knowledge is a combination of empiricism, antipositivism and perspectivism. 'All evidence of truth comes only from the senses.' He considers the rest of purported knowledge 'miscarriage and not yet science', or formal science, like pure logic and mathematics. Nietzsche's antipositivism involves a rejection of foundationalism. He denies that there is any experience that is unmediated by concepts, interpretation or theory. Sense experience, our only evidence of truth, is always already interpreted. Knowledge is therefore interpretation, as opposed to the apprehension of unmediated facts. Nietzsche's perspectivism is often thought to imply that empirical knowledge offers us 'only a perspective' and not truth. Nietzsche himself puts forward as truths not only perspectivism, but also many other claims. Perspectivism is a claim about knowledge; it is not a claim about truth, and it does not entail that truth is relative to perspective. Further, knowledge is always from the viewpoint of a particular set of beliefs and that there are always alternative sets that would ground equally good views of an object. Nietzsche's explicit point in describing knowledge as perspectival is to guard against conceiving of knowledge as 'disinterested contemplation'. This does not mean that true knowledge requires assuming as many perspectives as possible. knowledge does not require complete

knowledge, and complete knowledge is not Nietzsche's epistemological ideal. (Clark 1998)

# 1.9 AGAINST ASCETIC IDEAL

For him, ascetic ideal takes the highest human life to be one of self-denial, denial of the natural self, thereby treating natural or earthly existence as devoid of intrinsic value. Nietzsche saw this life-devaluing ideal at work in most religion and philosophy. Values always come into existence in support of some form of life. They gain the support of ascetic religions and philosophies only if they are given a life-devaluing interpretation. Ascetic priests interpret acts as wrong or 'sinful' because the acts are selfish or 'animal' - because they affirm natural instincts. Ascetic philosophers interpret whatever they value - truth, knowledge, philosophy, virtue - in non-natural terms. It is because they share the assumption that anything truly valuable must have a source outside the world of nature. The ascetic ideal itself undermines values. It deprives nature of value by placing the source of value outside nature. It promotes the value of truth above all else and it leads to a denial that there is anything besides nature.

Nietzsche proclaims that 'God is dead' and that morality will gradually perish. Morality has been brought about by the ascetic ideal as only possible form of ethical life. That ideal has little life left in it, according to Nietzsche. Morality now has little power to inspire human beings to virtue or anything else. It does not inspire human beings to take on the task of becoming more than they are. It only induces them to internalize their will to power against themselves. Nietzsche believes that we need a new ideal, a real alternative to the ascetic ideal. He calls the philosophers to create new values and not continue merely to codify and structure the value legislations of ascetic priests. But Nietzsche now saw that there was no way to go back to earlier values and recognized the need for new values. Thus, in his own writings he exhibits a new ideal, often exemplifying old virtues that are given a new, life-affirming interpretation. (Clark 1998)

# 1.10 NIETZSCHE'S CLAIM OF 'DEATH OF GOD' AND NIHILISM

Nietzsche proclaimed the death of God that churches are now 'tombs and sepulchres of God', and that we are all God's 'murderers'. The 'death of God' is a metaphor for a cultural event that he believes has already taken place. Belief in God has become unbelievable and the Christian idea of God is no longer a living force in Western culture. Nietzsche views all gods as human creations, reflections of what human beings value. Non-Christian gods were constructed from the qualities human beings saw and valued in themselves. The Christian God was given qualities that were the opposite of what humans perceived in themselves, the opposite of our inescapable animal instincts. Constructed thus to devalue human natural being it interpreted natural being as 'guilt before God.' and taken to indicate our unworthiness. Nietzsche views that Christian theism is nearing its end as a major cultural force. The development of atheism in the West and the will to truth, a commitment to truth 'at any price', undermine the whole Christian worldview. Science has given us reason to believe that we can explain all the explicable features of empirical reality

without appealing to God or any other transcendent reality. Theism has become cognitively superfluous. Atheism is 'the awe-inspiring catastrophe of a two-thousand year discipline in truth that finally forbids itself the lie involved in belief in God.'

Although atheism undoubtedly weakens Christianity, depriving it of both creative energy and prestige, it does not bring about the death of God by itself. Besides other factors that weaken the influence of Christianity and its ideal, Nietzsche includes the development of money-making and industriousness as ends in themselves, democracy, and the greater availability to more people of the fruits of materialistic pursuits. Loss of belief in God will initiate a 'monstrous logic of terror' and the collapse of all that was 'built upon this faith, propped up by it, grown into it.' Nietzsche calls this collapse of values 'nihilism;' and predicts 'the advent of nihilism' as 'the history of the next two centuries', and calls himself 'the first perfect nihilist of Europe'. However, he said that he has 'lived through the whole of nihilism, to the end, leaving it behind.' Nihilism is not his own doctrine. He does not believe that nothing is of value (or that 'everything is permitted') if God does not exist. (Clark 1998)

### 1.11 NIETZSCHE'S CRITICISM OF MORALITY

Every ethical code or system for evaluating conduct is 'a morality' in the wider. A system that determines the value of conduct solely in terms of 'the retroactive force of success or failure' is what Nietzsche counts it as 'pre-moral' in the narrower sense. Nietzsche calling himself an 'immoralist' (one who opposes all morality) repeatedly insists that morality 'negates life'. He turned against it inspired by an 'instinct that aligned itself with life.' However, his point is not that morality is 'unnatural' restricting the satisfaction of natural impulses. His objection to morality rests on the fact that it promotes and celebrates a kind of person in which he finds nothing to esteem. It makes him a 'herd animal' who has little idea of greatness and seeks above all else security, absence of fear, absence of suffering. His immoralism does not oppose all forms of ethical life. He called himself an 'immoralist' as a 'provocation.' The three main strands of morality are the good (in the sense of virtue), the right (or duty), and a general understanding of value. Nietzsche's ideal celebrates the affirmation of life even in the face of its greatest difficulties. It gives rise to a doctrine and valuation of life that is fundamentally opposed to the one he finds behind morality. Committed to finding the sources of value in life, he rejects all non-naturalistic interpretations of ethical life which make reference to a transcendent or metaphysical world.

What he opposes in morality is not the idea of virtue, or standards of right and wrong, but the moralization of virtue and duty brought about by the ascetic ideal. Morality 'negates life' because it is an ascetic interpretation of ethical life. By interpreting virtue and duty in non-natural terms that things of the highest value must have their source 'elsewhere' than in the natural world. He calls the morality of contemporary Europe 'herd animal morality' because of the almost complete agreement 'in all major moral judgments'. There is nothing in it to hold out an ideal of the human person that encourages individuals to take up the task of self-transformation, self-creation, and to funnel into it the aggressive impulses, will to power. As the ascetic ideal is now largely dead (as part of the 'death of God'), we need something to replace it: a great ideal that will inspire the striving, internalization, virtue and self-creation. (Clark 1998)

# 1.12 THE SUPER-HUMAN AND THE WILL TO POWER

As an alternative to 'herd-animal morality' is Nietzsche's 'super-human' or 'overman' to bring out the idea of a being who overcomes in itself what has defined us as human. In Thus Spoke Zarathustra, Nietzsche's work of philosophical fiction, Zarathustra is returning from ten years of solitude in the wilderness, bringing human beings a gift: his teaching that humanity is not an end or goal, but only a stage and bridge to a higher type of being, the overhuman. He teaches that now that God is dead, it is time for humanity to establish this higher type as the goal and meaning of human life, a goal that can be reached only if human beings overcome what they now are, overcome the merely human. Zarathustra commits himself to its central task: urging human beings to raise their sights above their usual immersion in materialistic pursuits to recognize the outlines of a higher form of being that calls them to go beyond themselves, to become something more than they are. Zarathustra's overhuman is a successor to the images of 'higher humanity' offered by traditional religions. It is not to encourage human beings to throw off the constraints and shackles of morality but to combat the forces of barbarism by encouraging us to take on a more demanding ethical task of becoming a 'true human being'. It applies only to 'those no-longer animals, the philosophers, artists, and saints'. In other words, the overhuman must overcome all the impulses that led human beings to accept the ascetic ideal, an ideal that has so far defined what counts as 'human'.

Nietzsche's central teaching is the will to power, which is one human drive among others, the striving for competence or mastery. It has apparent omnipresence in human life. It does not mean that that life is will to power (or that power is the only thing humans want). It does mean that power has a special relation to human happiness. He calls the will to power 'the most life-affirming drive', that is, the one whose satisfaction contributes most to finding life worth living. Zarathustra claims that this 'will to be master' is found in all that lives, and that this explains why life is 'struggle and becoming', always overcoming itself, always opposing what it has created and loved. Nietzsche does say that life, and even reality itself, is will to power. Reality consists of fields of force or dynamic quanta, each of which is essentially a drive to expand and thus to increase its power relative to all other such quanta. Philosophers' ultimate aim, he claims, is not to obtain knowledge or truth, but to interpret the world in terms of their own values. (Clark 1998)

### 1.13 LET US SUM UP

The unit aims at detailing of their 'suspicion' of the existing package of ideology handed down to their time. Instead of chewing what is given, they examined everything; criticised the existing and proposed their ideal vision of their own. Should their ideals be treated as a 'given' one and swallowed up uncritically? The students of philosophy are expected to follow the path of these masters of suspicion and critically accept or reject what is handed over to them. Mere critique may end up in ideological anarchy if not propped up by one's own vision and ideal.

### 1.14 KEY WORDS

Das Capital : Central teaching of Karl Marx on critique of capitalism

*Id* : pleasure principle

**Death of God** : a metaphor for a cultural event that he believes has

already taken place.

**'Super-human'** : idea of a being who overcomes in itself what has

defined us as human.

Will to power : one human drive among others, the striving for

competence or mastery

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