



NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA

SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

COURSE CODE: CTH 131

COURSE TITLE: INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY

Introduction to Philosophy is a general Course that opens the mind to the wide array of ideas in the history of thought. It examines what Philosophy is all about, its development and its methods. Focus is on issues that interest philosophers, that is, philosophy's object of concern. Major areas of Philosophy which include: Logic, Ethics, Metaphysics, Epistemology, Aesthetics, are also discussed. It leads the students to examine some problems of philosophy.

The material has been developed to encourage observation of reality with a more critical mind.

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**CTH 131
INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY**

Course Title Introduction to Philosophy

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Introduction

This is a foundational course for any student who is interested in philosophical studies, but also for students in higher institutions of learning.

The Course exposes the student to the meaning, nature and the discipline of Philosophy. It will help the student to be more reflective on the ordinary reality, which manifests itself in an extraordinary way. The Course helps the student to ask meaningful and soul-Searching questions about the world around him. The course will examine the major areas of Philosophy which include: Logic, Ethics, Metaphysics, Epistemology, Aesthetics, etc. It will lead the student to examine some of the major themes and problems of philosophy.

What You Will Learn in This Course

Introduction to Philosophy is a general Course that opens the student to the wide array of ideas in the history of thought. During this Course you will come to know what Philosophy is all about, its development and its methods. You will know what it is that interests philosophy, that is, its object of concern. But above all, you will learn to look at reality with a more critical mind.

Course Aims

The aims of this Course are to expose you to look at reality more objectively, to ask questions, and to judge reality based on that objectivity.

Course Objectives

In addition to the general aims of the Course above, each Unit of the Course has its specific objectives. And these will be given at the beginning of each Unit. You are therefore, encouraged to read through these objectives at the beginning of the Unit and at the end of it so as to judge whether the set objectives have been achieved. The following shall be considered as the main and general objectives of the Course:

- a. Various notions, definitions, branches, methods and nature of Philosophy;
- b. Themes and Problems in Philosophy;
- c. Major epochs, their representatives and relevance of Philosophy.

Working through this Course (Course Requirements)

For this Course to be completed, you must study each unit carefully. There are self-assessment exercises in each unit which you are required to do. Assignments have to be submitted to the appropriate quarters for corrections. This will be followed by the final examination. The following are the contents of the Course Pack:

1. Course Materials
2. Course Guide
3. Study Unit
4. Textbooks
5. Assignment File
6. Presentation

The Text materials are provided by the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN). In addition, your tutor will be of help to you should you encounter problems in getting the Text materials.

Study Units

There are sixteen Study Units in this Corpus:

1. Various Notions and Definitions of Philosophy
2. Origin and Development of Philosophy
3. The Different Branches of Philosophy
4. Methods of Philosophy
5. Philosophy and Other Sciences
6. Problems or the Concerns of Philosophy
7. Themes of Philosophy
8. Mind and Body Problems
9. Change, Movement and Time
10. Existence of God and related Issues
11. Ancient Philosophy
12. Medieval Philosophy
13. Modern Philosophy
14. Contemporary Philosophy
15. African Philosophy
16. Relevance of Philosophy

Each of these Units contains self-assessment test questions on the material you have studied. They are for your own good, because they assist you to assess your progress in the Course in general, and to see whether you meet up with the set objectives of the Unit in particular.

Textbooks Recommended

Maritain, Jacques. (1979). *An Introduction to Philosophy*. London: Sheed and Ward.

Wallace, William A. (1974). *The Elements of Philosophy*. New York: Alba House.

John-Terry, Chris. (1994). *For the Love of Wisdom: An Explanation of the Meaning and Purpose of Philosophy*. New York: Alba House.

Assignment File

Your Assignment File will be mailed to you. The File will contain the details of what you are expected to do for submission to your tutor for marking. Your scores in the Assignments form part of your final mark for the Course. The Assignments will cover all the Units.

Assessment

The assessment comprises two parts: In the first place, your assignments, that is, the tutor marked assignments and secondly, the written examination. The Assignment will take into consideration the materials provided for the Course not excluding your extended reading and other experiences gained there from. This will be submitted to your tutor within the stipulated dateline for marking. The Assignments attract 30% of your total score. The Final Examination will count for the remaining 70%.

Final Examination and Grading

The Final Examination will attract 70% of the total mark. The Examination Questions will cover all materials treated in the Course including your assignments and self-assessment test questions and will last for (3) Three Hours of writing time. You will have enough time for revision between the last Unit and the Examination date.

Course Making Scheme

The following table shows the breakdown of the actual marking scheme for the Course

Table 1: Course Marking Scheme

Assessment	Marks
Assignment 1-4	Four assignments, best three marks of the four count at 30% of course marks.
Final examination	70% of overall course marks
Total	100% of Course marks

Course Overview

The following table is the summary of the Units, the number of weeks needed to complete them and the assignments that accompany them.

Table 2: Course organizer

Unit	Title of Work	No. of weeks	Assessment
	Course Guide		
1	Notions and Definitions of philosophy	1	Assignment 1
2	Origin and Development of Philosophy	1	Assignment 2
3	Branches of Philosophy	1	Assignment 3
4	Methods of Philosophy	1	Assignment 4
5	Philosophy and Other Sciences	1	Assignment 5
6	Problems of Philosophy	1	Assignment 6
7	Themes in Philosophy	1	Assignment 7
8	Mind and Body Problems	1	Assignment 8
9	Change, Movement and Time	1	Assignment 9
10	Existence of God and Related Issues	1	Assignment 10
11	Ancient Philosophy	1	Assignment 11
12	Medieval Philosophy	1	Assignment 12
13	Modern Philosophy	1	Assignment 13
14	Contemporary Philosophy	1	Assignment 14

15	African Philosophy 1 Assignment	15	
16	Relevance of Philosophy 1 Assignment	16	
	Revision	1	
	Examination	1	
	Total	17	

How to get the most from this course

The Distance Learning Programme is to provide an opportunity for people who, due to various circumstances of life could not avail or are not able to avail themselves the privilege of the regular university programme. It offers you the advantages of studying at your own convenient time and place and at their own pace. The lectures are carefully arranged in Units. Each Unit is equivalent to a lecture period so that instead of listening to a lecturer, you are reading the lecture. Each Unit contains some self- assessment exercises and assignment as would be given by a lecturer in an ordinary lecture hall.

Each Unit follows a common pattern. It begins with an introduction of the subject matter of the Unit, connecting it with the previous Unit and leading to the sole aim of the course as a whole. This is followed by the set objectives of the Unit. The objectives help you to know what you are expected to learn by the end of the Unit. It is advisable, therefore, to read and understand the objectives at the beginning and at the end of the Unit. This will help to judge your progress in the course. The main corpus of the Unit is the lecture proper with relevant suggestion of materials for your further reading. This is followed by conclusion and summary.

The following are some tips that may help you in your studies. Should you encounter any difficulty, do not hesitate to contact your tutor.

- a. Read the Course Guide carefully;
- b. Organize yourself and your time properly so as to create a specific time and place under normal circumstances for your studies;
- c. Try to know exactly when the semester begins and when and where you are to meet for your tutorials;
- d. Under normal circumstances, try your very best to keep to your scheduled time for studies. And do not lack behind in your studies and exercises or assignments. Should there be any

eventuality, inform your tutor in time;

- e. Try to avail yourself the relevant or set textbooks for each Unit. It is most advisable to have the required texts handy as you study each Unit;
- f. The tutor marked assignments are not only for the purpose of examinations. They will help you to deepen your knowledge of the course you are doing. Therefore, take your time to do and submit the assignments promptly. When your assignment is returned, pay close attention to the comments made by your tutor;
- g. Do not jump to the Unit ahead without reading the previous Unit. Take each Unit step-by-step in the order in which they are given;
- h. Make sure that you keep to your schedule with the Units so that you will have well-enough time to review and prepare for the final examinations.

Tutors and Tutorials

There are 8 hours of tutorials provided to support this Course. The dates, times and locations of these tutorials will be made available to you, together with the name, telephone number and the address of your tutor. Each assignment will be marked by your tutor. Pay close attention to the comments your tutor might make on your assignments as these will help in your progress. Make sure that assignments reach your tutor on or before the due date. Your tutorials are important; therefore try not to skip any.

It is an opportunity to meet your tutor and your fellow students. It is also an opportunity to get the help of your tutor and discuss any difficulties encountered on your reading.

We wish success in your programme.

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MODULE 1

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- Unit 2 The Origin and Development of Philosophy
- Unit 3 Branches of Philosophy
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- Unit 5 Philosophy and other sciences

UNIT 1 BIRTH OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

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 - 3.1 Notions of Philosophy
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- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

It could be said that there is no field of study that has generated such mixed reactions among the general public than the discipline of Philosophy. Some people have a negative attitude towards the very mention of the word philosophy. For some others, it is associated with mysticism; while for a few others, it is the fountain of all knowledge, the lack of which deprives man of a true, meaningful and well-informed existence. Still for others, philosophy is empty, confusing, misleading, destructive and useless. This unit is set to give you a sense of what Philosophy truly is.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this unit are to open you to the study of theology and the very idea of philosophy. By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- analyse the notions of philosophy
- identify the etymology of philosophy
- define of philosophy.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 The Notions of Philosophy

To study philosophy is to take a risk - a risk of not being able to explain oneself to an average man in the street. If a man introduces himself as a Lawyer, one would easily know what his work is. So also other professions like Mathematician, Economist, Engineer, Accountant, Anthropologist, Physician, etc. But to say that one is a Philosopher, is to cast a spell on a common man who wonders what Philosophy is, in the first place. The man-in-the-street is probably familiar with the word philosophy as it is used in the day-to-day living. But we cannot rely on such for an adequate understanding or definition of philosophy. On the other hand, we cannot change the day-to-day application of the term philosophy.

For example, when one says of a man: “His philosophy of life is honesty”, the word philosophy here could be replaced with the word **attitude**. **Again, a political party’s philosophy may be liberal or conservative**, the word platform could easily take the place of philosophy. Or think of a business venture that uses service as its philosophy when it could as well use policy. These are various usages of the term philosophy. In themselves, they are not wrong, but they do not explain the meaning of philosophy. In addition to these, we also have various philosophies, for example, Philosophy of Science, Philosophy of Education, Philosophy of Law, etc. Again the application of the word philosophy in the above senses is different from the real meaning of philosophy, thus creating more puzzles as to what philosophy is all about.

The most unfortunate of all these seem to be the fact that even philosophers themselves do not have a significant agreement on the definition of philosophy. Each philosopher defines or applies the word philosophy to suit the method or the approach that he or she has adopted. Sometimes this is done with explanation, at other times it is done arbitrarily. More often than not, a philosopher may not concede or accept an opposing definition as true or sound as that might weaken his own concept of philosophy. Some definitions of philosophy are too broad that they remain vague. For example, to say that “Philosophy is a quest for a good life” or that “it is the pursuit of truth.” Some others are too narrow as to render philosophy meaningless. For example, to assert that “philosophy is the clarification of meanings.” Some definitions have words and concepts that are either erroneous or are themselves in need of further definitions.

For instance, if one says that philosophy is “the construction of theories about the nature of the universe” or saying that it is “the rational defense of faith propositions.” The divergence in the use of the word ‘philosophy’ makes its definition difficult. But we shall attempt at a possible working definition in order to give you a sense of direction.

3.2 Etymology

The word philosophy is said to have been invented by Pythagoras (c. 575 - 505 BC). Philosophy is derived from two Greek words - *philia* (love) *coined from the verb philein meaning to love and sophias* meaning wisdom. Simply, philosophy means the “the love of wisdom.” For Pythagoras, wisdom means the most comprehensive and profound knowledge of things. Consequently, wisdom in this sense was the privileged possession only of the gods. Therefore, no man could possess wisdom or could justify to call himself wise in this deep and profound sense. This was the reason why Pythagoras described the philosopher as the “lover” or the “seeker” of wisdom. This is not wisdom merely of good conduct or of practical life that consists in acting right. It is rather a wisdom whose very nature consists essentially in knowing. “Knowing” as Jacques Maritain observes, “in the fullest and strictest sense of the term, that is to say, with certainty, and in being able to state why a thing is what it is and cannot be otherwise, knowing by causes” (p.76). However, Pythagoras’ position was provoked by the Sophists (*sophos* - wise or learned) who claimed to be wise using sophistry as a tool.

Heraclitus was among the first philosophers of Greece who believed that wisdom does not consist in knowing multitude of facts but in having a unified view of reality. However, it was from Parmenides that philosophy gained its reputation as “severe discipline of reasoned knowledge.” For Plato, a true philosopher is a dialectician, that is, one who is skilled in dialectic - investigation of truth or testing the truth through discussion or logical disputation or argument. According to him, a philosopher is one who apprehends the essences or nature of things. Aristotle, who was Plato’s student, accepted his masters’ concept of true wisdom as consisting in a genuine knowledge of things. But he adds that since the wise man differs from other people by his knowledge of first principles, philosophy as wisdom should seek the first causes of things. Thomas Aquinas was of Aristotle’s opinion. But he further distinguished philosophy as a natural wisdom from sacred theology which is revealed wisdom.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

1. Who invented the word philosophy?
2. What are the two Greek words from which the word philosophy is derived?

3.3 Definition

The above analysis of the etymology of philosophy is to help us to gradually disengage our minds from the various ideas and notions that we might have had of philosophy. On the positive note, the analysis helps us to focus on what we are up to as we engage ourselves in the study of philosophy. You would remember we pointed out earlier that there is no general agreement among philosophers as to a single definition of philosophy. The definitions of philosophy could be as many as philosophy books or as many as photospheres themselves. We shall go on now to state just a few of them.

According to Jacques Maritain (1930, p.80), "Philosophy is a science which by the natural light of reason studies the first causes or highest principles of all things, in other words, the science of things in their first causes, in so far as this belongs to the natural order." William James (1977, p.3) opines that philosophy "is a habit of mind or a body of natural knowledge that results from a disciplined inquiry and that enables one to explain in a more or less profound way, the sum of human experiences." Aristotle refers to Philosophy as "the knowledge of truth." D. O'Connor (1963, p.45) describes philosophy as a "laborious piecemeal effort to criticize and clarify the foundations of our beliefs." Omoregbe (1990) offers the definition of philosophy in two ways:

- "Philosophy is rational search for answers to questions that arise in the mind when we reflect on human experience."
- And "Philosophy is a rational search for answers to the basic questions about the ultimate meaning of reality as a whole and human life in particular."

Harold Titus (1964) in his turn summarized philosophy in the following lines:

- Philosophy is a personal attitude toward life and the universe;
- Philosophy is a method of reflective thinking and reasoned enquiry;
- Philosophy is an attempt to gain a view of the whole;
- Philosophy is a logical analysis of language and the classification of the meaning of words and concepts. There are many more definitions of philosophy.

The Oxford Encyclopedic English Dictionary describes philosophy as: “The use of reason and argument in seeking truth and knowledge of reality, especially of the causes and nature of things and the principles governing existence, the material universe, perception of physical phenomena and human behaviour.” I am sure you will not let yourself be confused by these various and sometimes contradictory definitions of philosophy. It goes to confirm our earlier assertion that the definition of philosophy depends on who is philosophizing. We shall be contented with the very first definition in this series namely: that philosophy is “the science of things by their first causes, to the extent that it is attainable by the natural light of reason.”

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

1. How did Aristotle describe philosophy?
2. How many definitions of philosophy do we have?

4.0 CONCLUSION

You may notice that in all these definitions, certain features are outstanding. These include the fact that philosophy is a search for meaning, it is a pursuit for knowledge, it is reflection on reality and the experiences of life. It is an attempt to unravel the mystery of existence and all of this is done by the use of unaided human reason. I am also sure that by now you are already asking questions that are philosophical in nature and that require philosophical answers. In the subsequent lectures you will discover that every man and woman is a philosopher of some sort.

5.0 SUMMARY

The word philosophy has many senses. But as a discipline, it is a reflection on the deeper meaning of reality and the experiences of life. From its etymology, it is a search for wisdom from the natural light of reason.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Give the etymology of philosophy and how would you explain what philosophy is to a secondary school student?
2. What are the other uses and meaning of philosophy?

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

Maritain, Jacques. (1979). *An Introduction to Philosophy*. London: Sheed and Ward.

UNIT 2 THE ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

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- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Like every other human endeavour, philosophy is not without its beginnings and development. Philosophy started in time and developed with time. But philosophy is as old as man in the sense that from man's humble beginning he has always asked philosophical questions that demands philosophical answers. So we can actually say that philosophy has always existed from time immemorial.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- explain the origins and development of philosophy
- describe the characterizes a philosopher”
- demonstrate that every man is in a sense a philosopher.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Immanent Origin of Philosophy

This is not origin as “when”, that is, the origin in time. We are rather referring to the genesis, that is, what gives birth to philosophy. Philosophical thinking arises when one is confronted with reality whose causes are still unknown. Man is led to the province of philosophy by the difficulties he encounters in trying to make meaning out of human life. When he is faced with the basic questions about the ultimate meaning of reality as a whole and of human life in particular. What is the meaning of life? Why does death occur? Why do we experience failure? Why are there suffering and evil in the world? What is the nature of knowledge? What is truth? Can truth and falsehood be distinguished? Does God exist? These and many more are the difficulties that man ponders on and they are philosophical questions. The moment we ask these questions, we are at the same time beginning to philosophize.

No wonder the root, the origin, the foundation of philosophical act is the sense of wonder. Philosophy begins in wonder. This is why Socrates states that “the sense of wonder is the mark of the philosopher, philosophy indeed has no other origin...” (Theaetetus 155d) Aristotle confirms this statement (Met., 1,ii 982b 11-21). Thomas Aquinas is of the same opinion when he states:” the reason the philosopher is compared to the poet is that both are concerned with wonders” (Com. On Met. 1, 3, 55). Willaim James proclaims: Wonder is the mother of metaphysics” (Some Problems of Philosophy, p.38). Albert Einstein in his book: The World as I see it, says:

- “The fairest thing we can experience is the mysterious. It is the fundamental emotion which stands at the cradle of true art and true science. He who knows it not and can no longer wonder, no longer feels amazement, is as good as dead, a snuffed out candle.” (p.5)

What does it really mean to wonder? To wonder means to realize that there is something strange behind things that we ordinarily perceive. To wonder is to notice something extraordinary in the ordinary things we see. Therefore, wonder is the origin of philosophy. Wonder not only creates a desire to seek further but also gives the impetus to go on searching. According to Josef Pieper, wonder is “not merely the beginning but the source, the wellspring of philosophy” (Leisure the Basis of Culture, p.3). The more one wonders, the more one philosophizes. To philosophize means to enquire into the ultimate cause of things, to transcend the day-to-day world. This does not mean

working away or ignoring the concrete sensible world (abstract travel), but asking ultimate questions about the visible and ordinary reality of life. To philosophize is to have a childlike attitude, which is full of wonder. A child's world is fresh, new and beautiful, full of wonder and excitement. It is these wonder and excitement that lead to questioning. List five Things that make you wonder and what can you say about them?

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

1. How did philosophy begin?
2. How old is philosophy?

3.2 Development of Philosophy

We have just concluded the first part of the origin of philosophy. I believe by now you have realized that in some sense you are a philosopher especially when you wonder about the problems of life. In this section, we want to trace the development of this wondering mind to the level that can be called philosophical. Philosophy as philosophy, that is a science, was not known in the primitive times. If it was known at all, its distinctive character was not known. Philosophy only began to take shape in the late eighth and especially sixth centuries B.C. This is not to say that the elementary truths of philosophy were only not known, they were not known in an organized form of schools of thought. They were known from spontaneous and instinctive exercise of reason which is today called common sense and from primitive traditions, religion and mythology.

In other words, philosophy always existed and it is as old as man himself because man always raised sublime questions within the scope of reason. But these questions and their possible solutions were treated in the contexts of religion, mythology and supported by instinctive teachings of common sense. Thus they were known in pre-philosophic fashion and existed in pre-philosophic state. Even in the highly scientific culture of the Semites and the Egyptians, there was no philosophic speculation. The general ideas were embedded in religion. Religion took the place of philosophy and from religion, philosophic truths were known. The Jews even scorned human wisdom and the achievements of pure reason but were rich in prophecy and law.

The story however, was different among the Indo-European civilization. Their traditions were inclined to rational and philosophic speculations. It was not because they set out on the routes to philosophic speculations but because of the nature of their religions, which placed emphasis on purity. The whole idea of purity, yoga system of prayer, transcending

the ephemeral world, became the method to be in union with the Brahma or Atman; hence the turn to Metaphysics. All the Eastern Religions: Buddhism, Shintoism, Confucianism, and Taoism, among others, were slowly moving closer to philosophic speculation but all of this was based on moral principles not on purely rational thinking. It was only in Greece among the ancient world that the wisdom of man found its right path and attained its vigor and maturity. Thus the Hellenes became the organ of reason and human world while the Jews became the organ of revelation and the Word of God. In Greece, philosophy achieved its autonomy and distinguished itself from religion and at the same time defined its territory as the scientific study of purely rational truth. There is no doubt that the Greeks did abuse their reason by attempting to judge the things of God within the limit of human reason and Paul the Apostle refers to them as becoming "vain in their thought which is foolishness in the sight of God." (I Cor.) But we must agree to give credit to the Greeks who left their reason undefiled in their sole search for truth.

3.3 Formation Stages: The Pre-Socratics

There are three developmental stages of Greek Philosophy from Tales to Aristotle.

3.3.1 Ionians

At this time, human reason was out unaided in its power, to search for the causes of things. Man was first fascinated by the reality of the senses- material things. The first thinkers of Hellas naively took matter to be the complete explanation of things. This was even more evident because the most important phenomenon of nature was change. Tales (c. 624-546 B.C.) concluded that water was the sole substance, preserving its identity through all the transformation of bodies. Anaximenes (c. 588-524 B.C.) thought that the sole substance was air. For Heraclites, it was fire while Anaximander refers to his sole substance as the Boundless or the Indeterminate. These materials - Water, Air, Fire and the Boundless were seen as active, living and endowed by an internal force with unlimited powers. And so for Tales, all things "are full of gods."

3.3.2 The Physicists

These were the philosophers of sensible nature. They were represented by Heraclitus who was so captivated by change that for him, only change is real, all things are in the state of flux. We do not touch the same thing twice nor bathe twice in the same river. He was the philosopher of evolution.

3.3.3 The Italians

The Italians are represented by Pythagoras and the Eleatic schools of Philosophy. It is to Pythagoras that we owe the term philosophy. He is the first to give the universe the name "cosmos". He reduced reality to number. For him every essence has its number and every essence is number. The Eleatic has the credit of raising Greek thought to the metaphysical level. The oldest Eleatic was Xenophanes whose disciple was Parmenides (c. 540 B.C.), the father of metaphysics. Parmenides transcended the world of sensible phenomena and that of mathematical numbers and attained the world of reality which is strictly the object of the intellect. He reached this abstraction and was fascinated by it. He had his eyes on one thing alone - what is and cannot not be; being is; non-being is not. He was the first to formulate the principle of identity or non-contradiction - the first principle of thought.

3.4 The Period of Crises: The Sophists and Socrates

Sophistry is not a system of ideas, but a vicious attitude of the mind. The Sophists professed to be teachers of virtue. They did not seek the truth; their sole aim of intellectual activity was to convince themselves and others of their superiority. Their weapon which they considered the most desirable, was the art of refuting and disproving by skillful arguments all and every question. Theirs was intellectual game of conceptual content devoid of solid significance. It could be said that they believed in the pride of knowledge without believing in truth. Socrates (469-399 B.C.) brought sanity to Greek thought and rescued it from the Sophists. He reformed philosophic reasoning and directed it to truth which is its proper goal. He saw this as a divine mission. He saw himself as a physician of souls. His business was not to construct knowledge in others but to help men give birth to knowledge in them. This was mostly the way he used to conquer sophism of his time. Socrates was however, undoctinal.

3.5 The Period of Fruitful Maturity: Plato and Aristotle

Following the trends of events closely, you will soon understand the stages of the spread of the Early Church. As stated earlier, the initial persecution of the church during the stoning of Stephen had aided the spread of the Gospel throughout Palestine. It was said that some of the members of the young church at Jerusalem escaped to Damascus, other fled three hundred miles to Antioch, the capital of Syria, of which great province Palestine was a part. At Antioch these faithful members went into the Jewish synagogue, and there, gave their testimony to Jesus as the Messiah. It was also said that in every synagogue a place was set apart for Gentile worshippers. Many of these heard the gospel at

Antioch and embraced the faith of Christ; so that in that city a church grew up wherein Jews and Gentiles worshiped together as equals in privilege. Acts 11:22 said that when news of this condition, reached Jerusalem, the mother church was alarmed and sent a representative to examine this relation with the Gentiles. Fortunately, the choice of a delegate fell upon Barnabas, the broad-minded, open-hearted, and generous.

3.5.1 Plato (427-347 B.C.) was a Disciple of Socrates and also his Heir

He discovered important metaphysical truths. Since things are more or less perfect, more or less beautiful, good, loving, then there must be a Being who possesses these perfections in their absolute natures. This being is perfection or goodness itself. All other things participate in him.

He divided reality into two segments: the Ideas or the Forms in the Perfect World and are the true objects of the intellect while the sensible things are the imitations or shadows of the ideas and are the objects of the senses. According to him, the knowledge of the Ideas cannot be derived from the senses, they come from on high, and thus they are innate in our souls. The souls which pre-existed the body had intuitive knowledge of the Ideas. That knowledge still remains with us but darkened or clouded by the life of the body. The things of our sensible experience, since they are the shadows of the Ideas remind us of them. Through them we remember the original ideas.

3.5.2 Aristotle (384-322 B.C.)

Of all philosophers, holds a special and unique position. He was a rare genius. He extracted the truth latent in Platonic thought and synthesized whatever was true and valuable in all of ancient Greek thinkers. He founded for all time the true philosophy. Aristotle held that there exists in everything an intelligible and immaterial element called FORM, in virtue of which a thing possesses a specific nature. But it does not exist separate from things as Plato taught, it inheres in them as one of the factors which constitute their substance. Thus, sensible objects, though mutable and mortal, are not merely shadows, they are real. The world is subject to becoming or change, yet it contains enduring substantial realities. Thus the corporeal universe is the object of scientific knowledge - the science of physics. Aristotle was an achiever. For this reason, in spite of the mistakes defects and gaps, which may be found in his works - an evidence of the limitations of human wisdom - Aristotle is truly the philosopher per excellence.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

1. Name the three developmental stages of Greek philosophy;
2. Who occupies the most unique position among Greek philosophers?

4.0 CONCLUSION

Philosophy has had a long history and an exciting development. But like every human science it has not reached a level of perfection as not to need any improvement. To reach such level would also imply that man has stopped wondering on the reality around him. All of us are contributors to the development and improvement of philosophy.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learned that the genesis of philosophy is the sense of wonder. Philosophy asks questions on the things that perplex the mind. We have seen that man from the beginning has always been perplexed about many things. But the articulation of that perplexity and the possible solutions for them were gradual. It went through different stages to arrive at the point of philosophy. At a point man was fascinated by the sensible reality that the truth of reality was reduced to sensible matter. At another time, the truth of reality could only be attained through logical disputation and finally man could attain reality as it is in itself.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Why do we refer to the wisdom of the ancient as pre-philosophical?
2. The sense of wonder is the origin of philosophy. Explain!

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

John-Terry, Chris. (1994). *For the Love of Wisdom: An Explanation of the meaning and Purpose of Philosophy*. New York: Alba House.

Maritain, Jacques. (1930). *An Introduction to Philosophy*. London: Sheed and Ward.

UNIT 3 BRANCHES OF PHILOSOPHY

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Practical Philosophy
 - 3.2 Logic
 - 3.3 Ethics
 - 3.4 Theoretical Philosophy
 - 3.5 Ontology/Metaphysics
 - 3.6 Epistemology
 - 3.7 Cosmology
 - 3.8 Natural Theology/Theodicy
 - 3.9 Aesthetics
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

It is believed at this point that you can explain to somebody how philosophy originated and why it is yet an unfinished business. Let us now look at the branches of philosophy. Philosophy is not just a single subject. It is like a big tree with many branches. That is why in a University, for example, a school or a faculty or a department is created specifically for philosophy. A study of philosophy reveals that there are two main branches of philosophy namely: practical philosophy and speculative or theoretical philosophy. Practical philosophy is subdivided into Logic and Ethics while the speculative or theoretical philosophy is also subdivided into General Metaphysics and special metaphysics. General Metaphysics is further divided into Ontology or Metaphysics and Epistemology while the Special Metaphysics is further subdivided into Cosmology/Philosophy of Nature, Natural Theology/Theodicy and Aesthetics. We shall explain each of these branches in turns.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- identify with the different branches of philosophy and their specific object of concentration
- to lead the student to adopt a specific field of philosophy.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Practical Philosophy

This is subdivided into two namely: Logic and Ethics. Let us look at the divisions in detail.

3.2 Logic

The word Logic is derived from the Greek noun *logike* which takes its origin from *logos* meaning word, speech, reason or study. Thus logic has to do with reasoning and the provision of rational justification or reasons for our claims. Logic can be defined as the study of the methods and principles used in distinguishing correct from the incorrect argument. Logic is not the study of human mind. The proper domain of logic is to show how to think and reason correctly, how to reach a true and certain conclusion. Irving Copi (1954) refers to logic as “the science of the laws of thought or the science of reasoning.” According to Patrick Hurley (1988), the aim of logic is to develop a system of methods and principles that we may use as criteria for evaluating the arguments of others and as guides in constructing arguments of our own. Thomas Aquinas opines that Logic is the art which directs the act of reason itself, through which man may proceed in the act of reason itself in an orderly fashion, easily and without error. Logic is practical in that it is a tool used in directing the reasoning mind. Logic concerns itself with the being of reason.

3.3 Ethics

Ethics is a philosophical science of human conduct or the practical science of living right or of good moral living. It is one of the two branches of practical philosophy. It is also called Moral Philosophy or Deontology. Ethics is derived from the Greek word ethos meaning custom or character while the word moral comes from the Latin word mos (*mores, moralis*) meaning custom. *The derivation of these words* gives us some indication that the subject matter of Ethics or moral philosophy has to do with the study of human customs and human behaviour with a view to the fashioning of character. It may interest us to note that the word character is derived from the Greek word *charassein* which means to stamp, impress, cut, engrave, thus suggesting that the type of life a man leads is in a way, stamped or engraved upon his very self in such a way as to form his character. Ethics is also referred to as an art of living, which means that each person is, so to say, an artist and the sculpture that he carves by the way he/she lives - his character. Ethics is practical because it directs man's conduct of life.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

1. How is logic practical?
2. What are the other names for ethics?

3.4 Speculative/Theoretical Philosophy

Speculative philosophy is subdivided into general metaphysics and special metaphysics. The general metaphysics is further divided into ontology/metaphysics and epistemology while the special metaphysics is in its turn subdivided into cosmology, natural theology and aesthetics. We now look at each of them.

3.5 Ontology/Metaphysics

The general name for ontology is metaphysics. Ontology is a combination of two Greek words *ontos* and *logos* meaning being and study respectively. Thus ontology is the science of being. On the other hand, it was Andronicus of Rhodes who coined the phrase *ta meta ta physika biblia* meaning, “*after the books on nature*”. *Andronicus used* this phrase to describe Aristotle’s untitled works, when he was classifying and cataloguing Aristotle’s works. He came across the corpus that was neither about physical things, nor about politics, nor about ethics or biology. He referred to them simply as the “Books after the Books on Nature”. Aristotle himself referred to this corpus as the First Philosophy or Theology or simply Wisdom. Thus metaphysics means beyond the natural. The word came to be used in reference to studies that dealt with things that were beyond the physical world, things that are considered to be in existence yet cannot be perceived by the senses. It is also used in reference to the study of the ultimate causes of things. From its etymological derivation, it can be understood in three senses:

- The BOOKS that were written after the books on nature;
- The THINGS that were studied after the things of nature;
- The SCIENCE that was done after the science of natural things.

In modern philosophical usage, metaphysics generally refers to the field of philosophy dealing with questions about the kinds of things that are and their modes of being. Its subject matter include the concept of existence, thing, property, event, distinctions between particulars and universals, individuals, classes, change, causality, nature of relations of mind, matter, space and time.

3.6 Epistemology

The word epistemology comes from two Greek words episteme and *logos meaning knowledge and theory or discourse. It literally means* theory of knowledge or theory of knowing or discourse on knowledge. This branch of metaphysics is also called CRITERIOLOGY from the Greek word kriterion meaning criterion or the rule by which one may test knowledge to distinguish truth from falsehood or truth from error. It is sometimes also called criticism which is derived from the Greek word *krites meaning a judge. Thus epistemology has the task of judging and* evaluating knowledge itself. There are many definitions of epistemology. Here are some examples. The Dictionary of Philosophy defines epistemology as “The branch of philosophy which investigates the origin, structure, methods, and validity of knowledge.” Vaan Steenberghen defines epistemology as “an objective and disinterested inquiry which studies the nature, conditions and value of knowledge without deciding before hand what the result and consequences of its study will be.” It is that branch of philosophy, which is concerned with the nature and scope of knowledge. However, whatever definition is given to it, one thing is clear, that it is a philosophical study of knowledge. Epistemology deals with the problems of knowledge in all its aspects. It critically investigates and establishes the very capacity of the mind to know things as they are themselves and thus refuting scepticism and agnosticism. Epistemology upholds the value of metaphysical knowledge against the attacks of empiricism. It demonstrates that what the mind knows is reality existing independently of the knowing mind, as against all forms of idealism or subjectivism. It should be clear that epistemology is not merely an apologetic or defensive science fighting the extremists. On the positive note, epistemology is a metaphysics of knowledge. It considers human knowing in the context of everything that exists.

3.7 Cosmology/Philosophy of Nature

Again, cosmology comes from two Greek words cosmos and logos meaning universe and study or science. It is the science of the material universe. Cosmology is the philosophical study of the inorganic or non-living world and tries to find ultimate causes and explanations to account for it. Before looking for the ultimate explanations, cosmology takes into considerations the proximate or less profound explanations and findings of the natural sciences, such as Chemistry, Physics, Nuclear Physics, Astronomy, Physical Geography, and Mechanics, among others, about the inorganic world. Nothing observed or proven in the natural sciences is irrelevant in cosmology, and a good explanation in cosmology must be consistent with what has already been proven true in the natural sciences. Cosmology is mostly concerned with the material

and the formal causes of inorganic things. It leaves to Ontology to investigate efficient and final causes of the inorganic world, aided by natural theology which is next in the line of our explanation.

3.8 Natural Theology/Theodicy

The word theodicy is a combination of two Greek words: *theos* which means God and *dike* which means justice. Literally therefore, theodicy is a defence of the justice or goodness of God in the face of doubts or objections arising from the phenomenon of evil in the world. Theology on the other hand, is derived from two Greek words *theos* and *logos* meaning God and study respectively. Therefore, natural theology is the study of God from the natural light of reason as different from revelation. Natural theology therefore, is a philosophical theology. It is different in kind from Sacred Theology. It is the culmination of philosophy. Philosophy, as all knowledge, starts from the data of experience and the principles it apprehends from these data. Philosophy then climbs, as it were, the "ladder of causes" until it comes to realize that the only conceivable explanation of things which exist, when to exist is not part of their very nature, is a Supreme Cause, God. In other words, theodicy is a philosophy of God. Philosophy reaches its climax when it affirms that there is a God. Philosophy perceives God merely as the First Efficient Cause of being. This truth that there is a God is proportionate to the natural capacity of man's intellect and does not exceed it. This is to say philosophically, that man is capable, by his natural reason, based on insight, of arriving at the conclusion that God exists. This is contrary to what most people erroneously believe or think that philosophers do not believe in God or that philosophers are atheists.

3.9 Aesthetics

This is derived from the Greek word *aisthanomai* which means "to perceive". The term "aesthetic" was coined by Baumgarten in his *Reflection on Poetry* (1735) as a name for one of the two branches of the study of knowledge. In other words, for the study of sensory experience coupled with feeling, which according to him, provide a different type of knowledge from a distinct abstract ideas studied by logic. Aesthetic is intimately connected with sensory experience and the kind of feelings it arouses. As a branch of philosophy, aesthetic examines the nature of art and the character of our experience of art and of the natural environment. Recognition of aesthetic as a separate branch of philosophy coincided with the development of theories of art in the Eighteenth Century in England and in the Continent. These theories grouped together painting, poetry, sculpture, music and dance as the same kind of thing or the fine arts. Aesthetics is the philosophy of beauty, that is, physical beauty. It studies art forms. It raises such

questions as: What is the purpose of art? What is the nature of beauty? How does one recognize a great work of art? Are there objective standards to beauty? Is there a special object of attention that we call aesthetic object? Is there a distinctive value, aesthetic value, comparable with moral, epistemic and religious values?

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

1. What are the subdivisions of special metaphysics?
2. What does theodicy literally mean?

4.0 CONCLUSION

Surely, now you know the different branches of philosophy. To one who is a philosopher you can ask what his area of specialization is. I believe also that this lecture has aroused some interest in you about a particular aspect of philosophy. The most important thing is that you should not be left in ignorance if and when you hear some of the above terms being mentioned in a conversation or discussion.

5.0 SUMMARY

In the above lecture, we have seen the various divisions of philosophy and their specific objects of interest. We have seen that philosophy has two main branches: practical and speculative. Under practical, we have Logic and Ethics; under speculative, we have two major divisions general and special metaphysics which are again subdivided. Under general metaphysics, we have Ontology and Epistemology whereas under special metaphysics, we have Cosmology, Natural Theology and Aesthetics. Philosophy is indeed interesting.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. What are the branches of philosophy?
2. Write short notes on any two of your choice.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

Wallace, William A. (1977). *The Elements of Philosophy: A Compendium for Philosophers and Theologians*. New York: Alba House.

UNIT 4 METHODS OF PHILOSOPHY

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Natural reason
 - 3.2 Speculative method
 - 3.3 Analytic method
 - 3.4 Prescriptive method
 - 3.5 Historical method
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Having known the branches of philosophy, we should now look at various methods of philosophizing. Every science has its method that is to say that every science is characterized by a particular manner in which it approaches the object of its study. Philosophy is not left out in this common characteristic. We shall see that first of all the tool of philosophy is human reason in its unaided state. With his reason a philosopher speculates and analyses the reality as presented to him. He also establishes certain criteria by which he draws his conclusions. Sometimes too he relies on the experience of the past in order to shape his propositions.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- state the ways and manner in which philosophy operates
- demonstrate that the last court of appeal for philosophy is unaided human reason. You will see that philosophy is speculative, analytic and prescriptive in character
- identify the speculative, analytic and prescriptive character of philosophy.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Natural Reason

A philosopher uses reason to analyse reality as presented to him. A desire to know can be for various reasons or motives. In philosophy the desire to know is the desire to understand, a desire to find the causes of things so as to render the world intelligible. Do you remember our definition of philosophy? We defined philosophy as “a science of things by their first causes to the extent that it is attainable by the natural light of reason.”

This sets the tone for this enquiry. Philosophy seeks the first causes of things as far as they can be established rationally by unaided human reason. In other words, the last court of appeal for philosophy is objective evidence and logical reasoning and not Divine revelation. It must be said that even though philosophy arrives at God and his attributes as objects of its study, yet it is still a human science and the knowledge of God is only insofar as it is humanly possible. Philosophy does not venture into the inner life of God, for example the Trinity, and Incarnation are beyond the reach of philosophy. However, philosophy knows that God exists; it establishes his attributes and recognizes his actions in human history.

In its search, philosophy relies solely on common sense and human experience. However, it must be said that philosophy does not rely solely on experience that are accessible to the senses and to the laboratory investigations. Rather philosophy derives its primary notions from the experience of human kind. It is from the primary sensible data that the search for ultimate principles begins. These consist of the ordinary experiences that everyone has, such as the experience of moving or remaining at rest, the experience of growing up, seeing, feeling, thinking and loving. These are common experiences that people in all places and ages have, and on which they build their primary philosophical notions. This however, is different from experimental sciences whose laws are based on the investigations of the movable, observable, the measurable and whose experience is available to the investigator through a painstaking search. On the other hand, philosophy does not need this painstaking investigation or experimentation to arrive at any philosophical reflection. The fact that the philosophy needs does not require special experiences. The facts are readily available to him because they consist of his own day-to-day experiences.

Since philosophy depends on common experience not on special experiences, philosophy is an autonomous science. It may use facts from other sciences to illustrate its principles but its conclusions and

principles are not necessarily affected by scientific discoveries nor are they invalidated by these discoveries. This is not to say that philosophical conclusions are immutable and infallible, it does mean that changes in philosophical conclusions are the results of the movements in philosophical enquiry itself. Philosophical enquiry does not require the gathering of data as it is in other sciences. The philosophical data present themselves in the common experience. Again philosophical conclusions do not require experimentation to determine their validity. The validity of philosophical conclusions is determined by the degree to which they are in agreement with the common experience.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

1. What is the last court of appeal for philosophy?
2. What does philosophy relies on?

3.2 Speculative Method

Whatever knowledge we gain in this life, it is either practical or speculative/theoretical, depending on whether it is sought for useful ends or sought simply for its own sake. However, it is important to note that it is one and the same intellect in man that is both speculative and practical depending on the directive. Philosophy is essentially speculative in nature and method because its objective is to know or understand. But philosophy is not a mere speculation - guess work, or unscientific forecast. It is speculative in a more profound sense. The word speculative comes from the Latin word *speculari* meaning to spy out, to investigate, uncover, watch or observe. And the word theoretical is derived from the Greek word *theorein* which means to look at, to view or to contemplate. It is in the senses of these words (speculative and theoretical) that Pythagoras compared all men to those who attend the Olympic Games. He placed the buyers and the sellers in the lowest class. He put the competitors in the second class while the spectators occupied the highest class. By this he indicated that philosophical or contemplative life enjoys the greatest dignity.

Therefore, to philosophize means to look at reality, to observe, to investigate and to uncover reality. This exercise is not directed to or by any specific practical purpose or consideration. It is not to change or model reality. It is not to seek advantage or to manipulate reality for any personal or communal use. It is a method of seeking for knowledge specifically for the sake of knowledge. In philosophy, the intellect does not measure reality but reality measures the intellect. Truth measures the mind. It is knowledge on the highest level of enquiry. Philosophy is not ordered for action. This, probably seems vague, classical and academic, it seems to have no relevance to the mind and makes no appeals to the

contemporary world which is saturated with the passion for practical knowledge. The world is interested in “how -to -fix -it” type of knowledge. Thus the very word contemplation or contemplative knowledge is regarded as otiose (functionless) serving no practical purpose. Hence the study of philosophy (for many) is a waste of time, it is a burden. Its method is not even attractive and inviting. Philosophy is different from the modern sciences, like medicine, and engineering. These methodically have some action or operation to be carried out - medicine is concerned with health and healing the sick, while engineering is about building and construction. This is not so with philosophy. Though philosophy is a science but it is not science in the restricted, limited or narrow sense of experimentation. Philosophy is a science in the original sense of the word, that is, a certain and evident knowledge of things as known through their principles and causes, and as acquired by the use of demonstrations. Demonstration here is not the same thing as experimentation.

3.3 Analytic Method

In this method, the philosopher’s main occupation is to clarify the meaning of concepts, particularly in the context in which they are used. The point here is that words or concepts have different meanings and these meanings also vary depending on the context in which they are used. Sometimes we hear of questions such as: what exactly do you mean? or How do you mean? Questions of this nature are not far from the lips of the philosopher. It is the task of philosophy to analyse and examine words and concepts closely in order to determine their meanings in their proper contexts. Philosophy in its analytic method cannot but expose or bring out inconsistencies in a system of thought. This is one other reason why most people do not enjoy the company of philosophers. The analytic method of philosophy involves detailed examination of language as a way of understanding problems which confront man. The philosophical analyst believes that at the root of several human experiences that sometimes escalate to unimaginable proportion, there is a grave misunderstanding of the contents of such experiences. The assumptions and the conclusions we make, for instance, substitution of facts for value or vice versa, sometimes complicate matters. In consequence, no solutions of such problems are conceivable without the proper clarification of the concepts involved. It should be clear that although these clarifications do not always, as a matter of fact, solve problems; at least they disentangle the complications. One may ask: what do concepts such as freedom, right, belief, authority, bad, and good, mean? In the analytic approach of philosophy, these may have several different meanings but what is even more crucial is that we must allow the mind to be free and lay bare their meaning in particular usages, if we are to understand what is being said.

On the strength of this, the philosophical analyst uses the tools of logic to analyse statements or arguments in order to ascertain the validity of one's philosophy. Broadly speaking, there are two aspects of linguistic analysis in philosophy and these include:

- a. Analysis of particular words or concepts in their own right; and
- b. An enquiry into relations among words or simply the context in which they are used in statements or arguments.

3.4 Prescriptive Method

There is yet another method of philosophy known as prescriptive method or approach. While the analytic approach is concerned with the analysis of words, concepts and issues, the prescriptive method of philosophizing goes beyond this. After having a clear idea of the issue at hand, prescriptive method attempts to arrive at criteria or conditions which will guide our judgment of concepts and issues to establish criteria for evaluating them. As you may have known, prescription is a law or a norm which requires that something be done or not done, done in this way and not that way. It tends to compel or force behaviour. According to Kneller (1964, p.2) "prescriptive philosophy seeks to establish standards for assessing values, judging conduct and appraising art." It should be noted here that like in speculative method of philosophizing, prescriptive method is not an arbitrary affair. On the contrary, it involves "systematically, imaginatively constructing general standards or norms based on our synthesis of facts and beliefs which we feel may be of future assistance in deciding behaviour" (Marler, 1975, p.7).

Prescriptive method of philosophizing often serves as hypothesis or guides on how to act in given situations and expressing its conclusions in terms such as ought, should, obligation and duty. Some ethical and religious philosophers employ prescriptive method in their philosophy.

3.5 Historical Method

Historical method is another approach in the study of philosophy. Generally, historians of philosophy adopt this method. It involves tracing the development of philosophy over a period of time. It can also be referred to as the "Great Minds" approach. In examining concepts, for example, using the historical method, one refers to what has been said about the concept in the past and its developments. We must add that philosophy by its very nature is not cumulative, and consequently, historical method is not very popular. Philosophy is an independent discipline. It depends and relies on an individual to reflect on reality and

to speculate about it. Reality is always fresh and new to the wondering mind and so each person is differently mystified by reality.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

1. Why is the historical method of philosophizing not popular?
2. Who employ prescriptive method most?

4.0 CONCLUSION

The various methods of philosophizing outlined above should not confuse the student of philosophy to begin to wonder what method am I to use in philosophizing. A philosopher uses all the methods at different time as he reflects on reality. He speculates, he questions, analyses his questions and tries to find possible answers.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this lecture we have seen the various methods of philosophy. We started by saying that the philosopher relies on his natural reason in reflecting on the experiences of life. He speculates about them, he analyses them he sets norm that may help him based on what has gone in the past. Let reality speak to you in your own way.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. What do you understand by the statement: Philosophy is a speculative science?
2. Describe the prescriptive method of philosophizing.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

John-Terry, Chris. (1994). *For the Love of Wisdom: An Explanation of the Meaning and Purpose of Philosophy*. New York: Alba House.

UNIT 5 PHILOSOPHY AND OTHER SCIENCES

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Philosophy as a Science
 - 3.2 The Object of Philosophy
 - 3.3 Philosophy and Experimental Sciences
 - 3.4 Philosophy and Theology
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

We have just seen the various approaches and methods in studying philosophy. You don't need to worry which of the methods you are going to use. All you need to remember is that philosophy is a reflective exercise. It is now time to know not just the relationship that philosophy has with other fields of study but also the differences that exist between philosophy and other sciences. But we must first of all show that philosophy is a science and as a science, we must point out its object of study.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- demonstrate that philosophy is a science and consequently
- demonstrate that philosophy has its object of interest
- compare philosophy with experimental science
- analyse the relationship between philosophy and theology.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Philosophy as Science

The question here is: Can philosophy as a discipline be called a science? The answer is truly yes. Philosophy is a science. But it is not a science in the limited concept of experimental sciences. It is science in its original signification of the word science - knowledge of things attained by an investigation of their causes. The word science comes from the Latin word scire which means to know. But a mere knowledge of things

does not qualify one to be called a scientist. A man has science or can be called a scientist only if he has the knowledge of the causes of what he knows. In other words, it is not just enough to know a thing without knowing its cause. Such knowledge is knowledge of the fact but not the reason for the fact - knowledge of the reasoned fact. So it is very easy then to distinguish a man of experience from the man of science. A man of experience is a practical man, he knows that a combination of certain things work in a certain way, but a man of science in addition, has the understanding of the reasons "why" the combination of those things work. He has knowledge of the "why" of things. This is why Aristotle is of the opinion that it is only a man of science who can teach, a man of experience cannot (Aristotle, Met. 1,I 981b 5-10).

This is the sense in which philosophy is a science because it is a knowledge of things together with their causes. Philosophy is not only interested in the fact that things exist, but it goes further to ask: Why do things exist when they could as well not exist? Thus philosophy is a science because it is a knowledge when followed to its conclusion results in certitude. However, it must be said that like every other human science, philosophy is still developing. It has not reached its perfection or final stage. Inasmuch as it has arrived at some indubitable truths there are still many philosophical conclusions that are probable.

Philosophy is not only a science, it is a universal science. There is always a tendency to think that philosophy deals with mere speculations and abstractions that have nothing to do with or no bearing on reality. And this probably accounts for the reason why many people are afraid or are intimidated by the mere mention of the word philosophy. Many people stay away from philosophy because it is dry. The truth is that philosophy studies beings that are real and concrete things of our experience but not limited to the beings of our experience. Philosophy seeks to understand the ultimate structure of reality and why it is at all. There is no doubt that philosophy uses abstract concepts in order to understand concrete facts. But the facts themselves are not abstract but those of our experience. Thus philosophy is concerned with contingent things, that is, beings that exist but do not have in their very nature to exist; beings that stand in need or require explanation for their very existence. Since everything, but God is contingent, then the whole material world and the world of spiritual creatures, fall under the broad range of philosophy. So philosophy is a universal science. This brings us to the specific object of philosophy.

3.2 The Object of Philosophy

Every science is defined or specified by its object and there are as many sciences as there are objects to be studied. In every science, there is a material object and formal object. The material object of a science is the concrete object which a particular science considers, whereas the formal object of a science is the particular aspect of the object which it studies, that is, the point of view from which the science looks at the object. Philosophy is not left out in this common characteristic of every science. Philosophy has a material object as well as a formal object. The material object of philosophy is every being in an unqualified sense and including all reality whatever it may be, in whatever manifestations or modes, whether material or immaterial, sensible or not sensible.

The formal object of philosophy then is being simply and precisely as being. That is being insofar as it is being and that which pertains to being as such - its principles and causes, its attributes and modes. We know for sure that all knowledge is knowledge of being, but at the same time all knowledge is not philosophical knowledge. Other sciences study beings in their limited and particular aspects but philosophy abstracts or disregards all the limited aspects of being and considers being in general, that is, being simply as being. Obviously, it demands a great intellectual effort to focus one's mind on being in this fashion. It means simply to allow one's mind to be saturated by being disregarding its mode, quality or quantity.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

1. Why do you think that philosophy is a science?
2. What is the formal object of philosophy?

3.3 Philosophy and Experimental Sciences

I am sure you still remember the definition of philosophy as a science of things by their first causes. This means that philosophy asks the question "why?" In other words, what is it that explains a particular being? In doing this it is the aim of philosophy to obtain or find the ultimate answer or to push the mind as far as it can go. For example, philosophy would want to know what "B" is if it discovers that "A" is contingent upon "B". And if "B" is contingent upon another, for example "C", philosophy will ask for the why of "C". This process can continue until it ultimately discovers something that requires no explanation for its being. It is this search for the ultimate cause that makes philosophy merit the name "wisdom". This is not just a certain knowledge but a profound knowledge. It is not just the knowledge of causes but of the first and highest causes. This is what distinguishes philosophy from

empirical sciences like physics, biology and other sciences of phenomena. These sciences do not carry knowledge beyond the knowledge of the immediate secondary causes. The goal of empirical sciences is to describe reality in its measurable terms or its observable features. But the goal of philosophy is not merely to describe but to explain contingent being; it seeks to find the ultimate explanation or cause of the actual existence of contingent reality.

While the empirical sciences are preoccupied with the description of how the beings of the universe act and interact with the others to bring certain result, philosophy is preoccupied with why there is being at all rather than nothing. Moreover, since the sciences of phenomena do not pursue the knowledge of the highest causes, they definitely do not have answers to the questions of ultimate significance, for example, the meaning and purpose of life or what is morally good or evil. These are philosophical questions that can only be answered by reference to the ultimate purpose of human life or human existence. If philosophy is different and distinct as it is, from the empirical sciences, it means that human knowledge is not only knowledge of the sciences of phenomena. There are other objects of knowledge beyond the visible and the material.

3.4 Philosophy and Theology

Philosophy and theology are two autonomous sciences. But there is an interesting relationship between the two in that there is a point at which the two sciences meet though from different perspectives. The word theology comes from two Greek words: *theos* and *logos* meaning God and science respectively. Literally speaking, theology means the science or the study of God. But at its summit, philosophy becomes theology - the science of God. However, we must say that there is a distinction between this philosophical theology and the theology proper, that is, revealed theology. We shall try, on the one hand, to draw the line of distinction and on the other, establish their harmony.

As we have said, theology and philosophy have the same material object namely God. But they differ fundamentally both in the manner in which they find this object and in the way they perceive it. Philosophy finds its object only at the end of a long process of systematic reflection. As all sciences, philosophy begins from the data of experience and climbs the ladder of causes until it comes to realize that the only conceivable explanation of things which exist, whose existence is not their nature, is a supreme cause - First Cause or God. In other words, philosophical speculation reaches its climax when it affirms that there is a God. Philosophy perceives God merely as First Efficient Cause of being.

According to Karl Rahner, "For metaphysical perception God is seen as the absolute cause of existent things He remains knowable only as the remote cause of that which is" (Hearers of the Word, p.8). This is an indirect knowledge of God. It is the crowning achievement of philosophy and it is proportionate to the natural capacity of human intellect and does not exceed it. The truth of philosophy culminates in the Supreme Cause -that God exists. It is based on insight, that is, on understanding. This is to say that philosophy depends solely on human reason.

Theology, on the other hand, proceeds the other way round, it starts from Divine Revelation. It begins in God as he has chosen to reveal himself in human history and goes on to consider created things as related to God. "By Divine Revelation God wished to manifest and communicate both himself and the eternal decrees of his will concerning the salvation of mankind" (Dei Verbum, ch.1,6). Theology attains God as God, it is oriented to God's knowledge of himself in contrast to philosophy which perceives God as first cause. The inner life of God utterly surpasses the natural capacity of the human intellect. It can only be known and assented to when human reason has been informed by the gift of faith. This assent is based not on insight but on the authority of him who reveals. Theology presupposes faith and is itself the science of the truth known by faith.

From the above, it is clear that there is a distinction between theology and philosophy or put it differently, there is a distinction between faith and reason. But the distinction does not place them in opposition or that they are unrelated. There is a harmony between them - a harmony which is founded on the unity of truth. The truth of reason does not oppose the truth of faith. But we can say that the truth of reason falls short of the truth of faith. If God is the highest truth, which he is, then it is impossible that what he enables man to know by reason should be contradicted by what he enables him to know by faith. If reason contradicts faith then one would have to be false, and the other true. But this is absurd because they both come from God and that means that God would be the author of falsehood, which is impossible. We all know that man has limitations and so also his reason. That means that his truth about God is a limited truth. Reason can attain truth, even though limited, it does so because reason itself is a faculty of truth, it was made to know truth, and as soon as it knows being, it naturally knows the truth of the first principles. Reason cannot contradict faith because they are harmonized or united in one truth. They attain the same goal though from different angles.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

1. What kind of causes does philosophy seek?
2. Where do philosophy and theology meet?

4.0 CONCLUSION

You can now see that philosophy is interesting. If all the sciences seek for truth then philosophy, which seeks for the highest truth must be the mother of all the sciences. That is why philosophy is the universal science as distinguished from particular sciences.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, we have established the fact that philosophy is a science with its specific object. We have also distinguished philosophical science from the empirical sciences.

Finally we have shown that even though philosophy reaches its climax when discovers the existence of God, which is the proper object of Revealed Theology, yet still, philosophy is different from theology.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. What are the differences and similarities between philosophy and theology?
2. How philosophy different from empirical sciences?

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

John-Terry, Chris. (1994). *For the Love of Wisdom: An Explanation of the Meaning and Purpose of Philosophy*. New York: Alba House.

MODULE 2

- Unit 1 Some problems of philosophy
- Unit 2 Themes of Philosophy
- Unit 3 Mind and body and the problem of universal
- Unit 4 Change/movement, time and place
- Unit 5 Existence of God and evolution

UNIT 1 SOME PROBLEMS OF PHILOSOPHY

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Knowledge
 - 3.2 Truth
 - 3.3 Belief
 - 3.4 Skepticism
 - 3.5 Agnosticism
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

We ended the last Unit of the last section with the note that human reason is a faculty of truth and that it was made to know truth. In this Unit, we shall first of all, try to establish the fact of knowledge and go on to see what truth is. The whole idea of belief, skepticism and dogmatism will be briefly treated here.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this Unit are to help you to have a general knowledge of the philosophical understanding of knowledge, truth, belief, skepticism and dogmatism.

At the end of this Unit you should be will be able to

- demonstrate whether man can really have knowledge, and whether his knowledge is true
- analyse the true nature of knowledge
- explain: truth, belief, skepticism and dogmatism

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Knowledge

What is knowledge? It is often not easy to discuss knowledge because it is like a vicious circle. The object to be discussed is already in the discussion. In other words, we are using knowledge to talk about knowledge. Probably one of the best way to talk about knowledge and to know what knowledge is, is to compare knowing things - that is beings that know with beings that cannot and do not know. This is to compare knowers with non-knowers. We know that the universe as a whole is beautiful and indeed a perfection. But this beauty or perfection is distributed among the individual things of the universe. This means that as beautiful as each individual thing may be, it is still a limited beauty and thus imperfect because it is merely a part of the whole beauty. But there is a way out to remedy this limitation or imperfection. The only way out is through knowledge. In knowledge, the perfection belonging to one thing can be found in another by the reception of the form of the known thing by the knower. That means that things that are capable of knowing are different and more privileged than things that do not have that capacity.

Let us take a rock (non-knower) for example, a rock will always remain a rock, it does not have the potentiality or the capacity to receive another form. Therefore, rock is limited and cannot overcome its limitation. But man, for example, a knowing being, can overcome such limitation by his ability to receive the forms of other things or objects in knowledge, thus acquiring some immaterial or spiritual expansion. In simple terms therefore, knowledge is the reception of form without matter. This is to say that knowledge takes place when the knower immaterially receives the form of another thing into himself. Jacques Maritain puts it this way: "By an apparent scandal to the principle of identity, to know is to be, in a way, something other than what one is, it is to be or become a thing other than the self ... to be or become the other as other" (Degrees of Knowledge, p. 112). Knowing takes place when the knower becomes or assimilates what it knows and makes it part of itself. Thomas Aquinas has this to say: "We cannot understand things unless they are truly united to our intellect in such a way that the knower and the known become one" (Truth, 8,9).

Knowledge is an immaterial act. Immateriality explains knowledge. It is the reason why a thing is a knowing being and the reason why being is knowable or intelligible. The implication of all this is that, when something is known, it has two modes of existence:

- a. As it exists in itself outside the knowing mind; and
- b. As it exists in the mind of the knower.

It exists in the knower in an immaterial form. There is sense knowledge and there is intellectual knowledge. Knowledge in animals stops only on the sense level, the form is immaterial but with the material conditions (image). If knowledge is an intellectual one, the form is completely immaterial according to the mode of existence of the intellect because the intellect is completely immaterial.

3.2 Truth

The classical or the philosophical definition of truth is: “the conformity of mind and reality or the adequacy of mind and reality.” But what does this really mean? What does it mean to say that truth is the conformity of mind and reality? In order to explain this point, we will use an example of false situation. Imagine your mother telling you when you were small not to swim in your local stream or river because there are dangerous snakes. But as you grow up you see people swimming and you yourself join in swimming in the same river without seeing a single snake. I am sure by now you have come to know the real reason why your mother gave you this instruction (your safety).

The fact is that there is no conformity between the reality in the stream and what your mother made you to understand. Or again, think of the many instances that people tell you one thing and the opposite turn out to be the case. Do you now understand what truth is? Truth exists when what you have in your mind corresponds with what is in reality. Truth is concerned with being and it is found in judgment. When you say, for example, there is a policeman at the junction. The truth of this statement is not in the concept of policeman but it is in the actual presence of the policeman at the junction. It means that what is in your mind that is the concept or idea of policeman, is in exact correspondence with the physical presence of the police at the junction.

Truth generally involves a relation between being and intellect. But this means that this relationship is a-two way traffic. Firstly, being can conform itself to the intellect. This is called metaphysical or ontological truth; but the human intellect can also conform itself to real being so that reality may cause mental representation of itself in the intellect. This is called logical truth or truth of judgment. What this means, in effect, is that being is capable of manifesting itself or making itself known to the intellect. On the other hand, the intellect is capable of grasping being and making it mentally present in the intellect.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

1. Knowledge is an act, what kind of act?
2. Truth is a relation between what and what?

3.3 Belief

Belief is different from knowledge even though knowledge and belief can have the same object. Belief is a kind of conviction, conviction that something is or something is true even when I do not know it or cannot justify it by any empirical evidence. Belief and faith are closely connected. It is an intellectual accent to certain conviction. In this case belief is connected in some way with thinking because it would be impossible for one to believe something that one has never heard or could never think. The object of belief is more often than not, a non-verifiable object and so it is possible that one may not have the knowledge of what one believes in. But again, not having the knowledge of the object of one's belief is not the same thing as not experiencing it. Belief can arise from a compelling testimony or based on the authority of one who testifies. Or again, a belief can come by way of personal encounter with reality that cannot be cognitively conceptualized. Belief therefore is more personal or individualistic than knowledge. People believe in different things that may conflict with other people's belief. Belief, as such, may not always serve as the basis of knowledge. But on the other hand, belief expresses confidence, reliability and trustworthiness. Such may be justified on the basis of experience based on past behaviour or record. This means that even though belief is an intellectual accent to something for which there is no evidence, yet belief cannot be completely devoid of experience.

3.4 Skepticism

Generally speaking, skepticism is a refusal to accept that there is any knowledge or justification to knowledge. Skepticism can be either total or partial it can be theoretical or practical. Total skepticism occurs when it is open to all fields of knowledge or belief. But it is partial when it is restricted to particular fields of belief, for example the skepticism in religion as the opium of the people. Skepticism is theoretical if it holds that there is no knowledge of a certain kind or of certain kinds. Theoretical skepticism is radical and total if it denies knowledge of all kinds. On the other hand, practical skepticism has to do with a deliberate withholding both of belief and disbelief accompanied by some commitment to encourage others to do likewise.

In simple terms, skepticism is an attitude of the mind in which it places a doubt on all or certain belief or knowledge of a certain kind.

Historically skepticism dates back to the time of Socrates in his attitude of epistemic modesty. All I know is that I know nothing. But philosophically, skepticism has surfaced in different traditions of philosophizing and in various ways. Skepticism is instrumental in the birth of modern epistemology and modern philosophy at the hands of Descartes, whose skepticism is methodological but sophisticated and well informed by that of the ancients. Skepticism has played important role in Western Philosophy from Descartes to Hegel. Academic skepticism is a position either that no knowledge is possible or that there is no sufficient or adequate evidence to tell if knowledge is possible. In either case, the result is to suspend judgment on all questions concerning knowledge. In other words, what we think we know by our senses may be unreliable, and we cannot be sure about the reliability of our reasoning. Skepticism is a position that nothing is certain. The best we can attain is probable information.

3.5 Agnosticism

This is derived from a combination of two Greek words: a meaning not and gnastos which means known. Literally translated, agnosticism means not known. This term was invented in 1869 by Thomas Henry Huxley to denote the philosophical and religious attitude of those who claim that metaphysical ideas can be neither proved nor disproved. Agnosticism is a form of skepticism but applied to metaphysics, especially theism. The German philosopher Immanuel Kant is sometimes identified with this position because he holds that we cannot have knowledge of God or immortality but must be content with faith. However, agnosticism should not be confused with atheism. Atheism is the belief that God does not exist, it is different from the belief that we cannot know God.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

1. According to the skeptic, what kind of knowledge can man attain?
2. Agnosticism literally means what?

4.0 CONCLUSION

I am sure that by now you are beginning to appreciate philosophy. Philosophy has a lot to contend with. These problems are not mathematical hence their solutions are not clear-cut. But the human mind should not be deterred by them rather man should continue to seek clarifications on issues that baffle the mind.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit we have attempted to throw some light on the questions of knowledge, truth, belief, skepticism, and agnosticism. I am sure you have a better understanding of these terms and can explain them to your friends. We described knowledge as a reception of form without matter and truth as the correspondent of mind and reality. Belief on the other hand is an intellectual assent to things that we do not properly know. Skepticism was seen as placing a doubt on some of our claims whereas agnosticism is a denial of our claims.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Compare and contrast skepticism and agnosticism;
2. Explain what you understand by the term truth.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

Wallace, William. (1974). The Elements of Philosophy. New York: Alba House.

UNIT 2 THEMES OF PHILOSOPHY

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Essence and Existence
 - 3.2 Potency and Act
 - 3.3 Matter and Form
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit, we pointed out to you some of the problems and concerns of philosophy. I believe you have understood what knowledge, truth, belief, skepticism and agnosticism are from the point of view of philosophy. In this unit, we want to lead you to some of the main themes of philosophy. I am sure you have been hearing some of the teachers and students of philosophy talk about essence and existence, potency and act, matter and form. What are these concepts? You will know them in this Unit.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this unit are to: clarify the meaning of concepts that are often used in reference to being which the main object of philosophy is. You will come to know that these terms do not refer any concrete being but that they are within the structure of being. Pay attention to their meanings and explanations.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Essence and Existence

The concept of being is the first of all concepts. When we know anything at all, it is being that we primarily know. Whatever the knowledge, whatever the name, whatever the definition, it is nothing else but the knowledge, the name or the definition of being - what already exists. All other concepts are various modes and determinations of the concept of being. That is to say that the concept of being is implicit in all other concepts.

However, the concept of being includes within itself essence and existence. But we must emphasize from the outset that essence and existence are not things. They are not two things coming together to form one thing. They are rather principles of being, principles from which the actual existent or being is constituted. It must be clear also that essence and existence are not identical. There is a distinction between them. Such a distinction is minor real distinction since it concerns the absence of identity in the principles or elements of being. Though the intellect can distinguish essence and existence, yet in concrete reality or being, essence and existence can never be isolated. They constitute an indissoluble entity.

What then is essence? Essence is that by which a thing is what it is. The essence of a man, for instance (human), is that by which he is human as distinct from stone or beast or plant. An essence of a thing is the whatness or the quiddity of that thing. In On Being and Essence (1983), Thomas Aquinas states that “The essence is that by which the thing is constituted in its proper genus or species, and which we signify by the definition which states what something is.” Aristotle refers to essence as “what something was to be”. It is also referred to as quiddity or form because form signifies the determination of each thing. Another term used for essence is “nature”. In this sense, a thing is called nature which the intellect can grasp in any way, for a thing is intelligible only through its definition and essence. In the existential order or in reality, essence is individual or concrete, but when considered in the intellect, essence is specific and abstract. The intellect grasps what an individual has in common with other individuals of the same class

Existence, which is a co-principle with essence of being, is that by which something is or that by which something has being. Existence is that which manifests essence thus making reality actual. Again Thomas Aquinas has this to say: “Being furthermore is a name of an act, for a thing is not said to be because it is in potency but because it is in act” (cf. *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 1,22). The act of existing is the highest act in which all things can participate, but the act existing itself does not participate in anything at all. “It is evidence that existence is other than essence or quiddity, unless perhaps there is something whose essence is its very existence” (On Being and Essence).

3.2 Potency and Act

Potency and act are yet another concepts which are essential to being. They are metaphysical principles which can be mentally distinguished but which in themselves do not exist as two things. They constitute each created being. Like essence and existence, they have no identity. They are useful in explaining changes.

What is act? In philosophy, the term act signifies the primary act of all. It means the act of existence. Whatever exists is in act. Every existing being is in act. Every being exercises the act of existence. The chair on which you sit, the table on which you write, and the book you are reading are all actual chair, actual table and actual book. They are beings in act. Truly speaking, act means being. In other words, every being is itself and nothing else, it is a particular thing, and it has its own identity. But this identity or particular-thing-ness of the being does not chain or enclose or confine that being to remaining only that being and all the time. This brings us to the concept of potency. In other words, in addition to being the particular being that a thing is, that being or thing possesses a power or capacity or ability to become or to be made into something else. It is this power or ability or capacity that is called potency in philosophy. That is to say that the being is itself, but it has in itself what enables it to acquire a new determination or perfection or a new being.

This power or capacity or ability, however, is yet unrealized. It is not active but a passive power. It is not yet something or being, at the same time it is not nothing or non-entity. It is a medium or an intermediary between actual being and absolute nothingness. This is what is called potency.

I suspect that your brain is turning upside down by these difficult concepts. Let us use an illustration to try to explain them. Take for example a log of wood which exists in itself; it is an actual log of wood and nothing else. This log of wood has something that we do not see but is inherent in it. It has a power or capacity to be carved into a statue. Right now it is not a statue; it is only a log of wood. It is a log of wood in act but a statue in potency. The carvable nature of the log of wood is referred to as the potency. Let us take another example, Think of the maize that we plant and eat. It is a maize in act. But this maize has within itself an ability to be made into pap (akamu). Maize is not pap. Pap only exists in the maize potentially. It is maize in act and pap in potency. With these examples, I am sure you can make a distinction between potency and act and you know that there is actual being and potential being - that which already is and that which can be - the actual existing log of wood and the possible or potential statue; the actual existing maize and the possible or potential pap. Every created being therefore is constituted of potency and act. In addition to being the particular thing that it is, it possesses a capacity to become what it is not yet.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

1. Philosophically, what is another name for Act?
2. What other terms would you use for the word Essence?
 - Simple
 - Clear
 - Down-to-earth

3.3 Matter and Form

As you have seen above, we have emphasized that potency and act are co-principles of being and they extend to every created being and is not limited to or by any class or category of being within the realm of created reality. However, in corporeal things (things that have bodies), a further distinction is made between primary matter and substantial form. Primary matter and substantial form or simply put, matter and form, are co-principles of corporeal being. They are metaphysical in nature in that they are not things that can be seen, touched or felt. They constitute material reality. Every material thing is composed of matter and form. They are not two identical things united into one but complementary aspects of a corporeal being.

Considering the things of our experience, for example, hibiscus flower, banana, cow, John, Zuma rock, etc., one may ask: What is it that makes a thing what it is? That is to say what makes a particular thing manifests qualities and perform certain activities distinguished from other things? What makes a thing the kind of thing that something is? The answer to these questions is simple. It is the substantial form of that thing. It is the form that distinguishes one thing from another and makes the thing the kind of thing that it is and not another. Substantial form makes a thing what it is. If we are to define it, we can say: "A form is that which makes a thing to be what it is. Matter on the other hand is that of which a thing is made.

Primary matter, however, is entirely without form - it is amorphous, undetermined but determinable. The best way, I believe, to explain these two terms, is in the context of change and I mean substantial change in which one thing becomes something different in nature. That is to say, one substantial form gives way to another substantial form. In every change, we must remember that there are two distinct termini - the beginning point and the end point. Let us consider maize, for example, which is to be made into pap. The maize is the beginning point and pap is the end point. What makes maize to be maize is the form of maize and matter is that of which the maize is made. Now when the maize is made into pap, what makes pap to be pap is the form of pap and matter is that

of which the pap is made. In this change, one form gives way to another. There is a common factor that links the two forms. This factor is the matter (the material aspect of maize and the material aspect of the pap).

In this explanation, we must note that substantial change involves a discontinuity, for example, at one point maize and at another point, pap. But the discontinuity here does not imply annihilation and creation. That is, maize is not annihilated (reduced to nothing) and pap is not created (from nothing); we must rather say that there is an element of continuity which persists throughout the change. This is a permanent substratum - it is the foundation and carrier of the change. It is common both to the beginning and the terminal points. This is what is called primary matter.

When maize is changed into pap, the substantial form of maize disappears, but the primary matter which underlies that form does not disappear. In this change the primary matter loses the form of maize, and acquires a new form, that of pap. This means that primary matter can pass under several forms in succession and it means that primary matter is in potency to all forms. Therefore, primary matter is a pure potentiality and nothing else. Primary matter can only be defined negatively: it is not nothingness; it is not privation of form, not quiddity, not quantity or anything of this kind. It is noumenon, the basis of all phenomena. Primary matter is distinguishable from form but it cannot exist deprived of form. It is capable of existing successively with an indefinite multiplicity of forms. Just as the distinction between potency and act makes possible the explanation of change, becoming and multiplicity in being, so does the distinction between the primary matter and substantial form makes possible the explanation of substantial change.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

1. Matter and form are two concrete things. True or false?
2. What kind of change takes place when maize is changed into pap?

4.0 CONCLUSION

Being is rich and complex. The richness and complexity of being revealed that being is all there is. Being is not a quality or like a concept that is added to a thing. The notion of being is the only existing notion. Every concrete being is being in itself but a possibility to many others. But in all, being is what is most striking and what is deepest in everything. We shall never exhaust the notion of being.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt that everything of our experience is constituted of metaphysical principles called essence and existence. What a thing is and the fact that it is. Again you have learned that in addition to what a thing is, that thing has a power or a capacity to become something else. In other words, every being of our experience has some potentiality. And finally, we have told you that every material or corporeal being is a composite of matter and form. But do not forget that being in itself is one.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Explain what you understand by potency and act?
2. What do you understand by the terms matter and form?

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

Aquinas, Thomas. (1968). *On Being and Essence*. Trans. Armand Maurer. Canada: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies.

UNIT 3 MIND AND BODY AND THE PROBLEM OF UNIVERSALS

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Mind and Body
 - 3.2 The Problem of Universals
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

I have the feeling that you are having a sense of relieve from those difficult concepts - I mean the concepts of essence and existence, potency and act, and matter and form. They were quite abstract but not too difficult to grasp if you just do a bit of thinking. In this unit we want to venture into another controversial area of philosophy, and these have to do with the mind/body and the problems of universals and particulars. The main questions here are: Is there anything like the mind? If there is; can it be distinguished from the body? Only particular things exist: what do we mean by universals? We believe that these questions will be clarified in this unit.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

The aim of this Unit is to help you become more aware of yourself and your activities. It is to help you know that you are not just the organic structure that is visible to the senses, and thus your activities have a superior source. Again you will learn that the concept you have in your mind is always the concept of a particular thing but the concept itself is not particular, because it represents all the individuals of a class or group or species. Try to follow the lecture carefully and attentively.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Mind and Body

Aristotle has this to say as the opening statement of his work On the Soul, 1.1 (402a1-4): “We regard all knowledge as beautiful and valuable, but one kind more so than another, either in virtue of its accuracy, or because it relates to higher and more wonderful things. On both these counts it is reasonable to regard the inquiry concerning the soul [mind] as the first importance.” The above quotation sets the tone for this inquiry. And let me emphasize from the outset that the word intellect or even soul may be used interchangeably with the word mind. When we look at the animate world, we notice that there are three (3) levels of living things - plants, animals and man (human). When we compare plants and animals, there is an unsurpassable gap that creates a distinction between man and the rest of the animate world. Man surpasses plants and animals in establishing relationship with other existing things. Man because of his mind or reason, enjoys a special privilege of relating to the whole of reality, that is the totality of existing things.

Relationship here implies the establishment of a link between a subject and every other thing outside that subject. Particularly, it means a link between a dynamic center of life and activity with that which is apart from that center. In the vegetative world, plants establish relationship with the soil and air by taking from them the nutrients they need and assimilating them into their lives. This is to say that plants have their own world and relate themselves to that world. Animals on their part advance beyond the vegetative world into the sensitive or perceptive world and establish their relationship with other things in a higher and more extensive manner than plants. Animals possess sense of awareness with which they relate to their environment. Man on the other hand, has his own class, thus his relationship with other things is determined by what he is and the class to which he belongs. Man is endowed with intellect or mind and will in addition to his senses. He is an embodied spirit. The mind or the soul or the intellect is immaterial, it is spiritual. Again, Aristotle asserts: “But the mind seems to be an independent substance engendered in us, and to be imperishable Presumably the mind is something more divine, and is unaffected” (bk.1,ch.4). Thus it becomes clear that man is a composite of body and mind or as it is commonly said, of body and soul. The body is the material aspect while the mind or the soul is the immaterial or spiritual aspect of man. According to Aristotle, “the soul is that whereby we live and perceive and think in the primary sense; so that the soul would be the motion or form and not the matter or substrate.” So man is a substance composed of body and soul. It is the compound (mind and body) that is an. And so

man is not the body just as man is not the soul; and the soul is not the body just as the body is not the soul. While it is true that the soul is in the body, it is also true that the soul is associated with the body and therefore resides in the body, and in a body of a particular kind.

Now because man has something in him, which is immaterial or spiritual, the capacity of man to establish relationship with other things is not hemmed in or limited in any way. He can relate with reality as a whole, that is, with the totality of existing things. Aristotle is right in saying that the soul is in a sense all things (3.8). It is the mind or the soul that gives life to the body, the opposite is not the case. In other words, it is not the body that gives life to the soul. And because of this, the soul can live independently because it outlives the body. The soul is immortal, it is indestructible. Aristotle supports this opinion when he says: "It is necessary then that mind since it thinks all things should be uncontaminated ... when isolated it is its true self and nothing more and this alone is immortal and everlasting ... and without this nothing thinks" (3,4-5).

Do you ever wonder why you perceive things? Why there is sensation or intellection in you? We can locate physical things, events and processes in space. They take place somewhere. But where is sensation, for example? Hearing or the auditory sensation is not just the sound or your ears. Between the sound and your ears, something has happened. It is possible to physiologically describe the process of hearing but the process is not the actual sensation. It means that there is a power, which is not visible because it is spiritual and immaterial and yet responsible for the physical process. Or again, have you ever thought about your ability to learn a language? This is because there is an immaterial power in man with the ability to understand the abstract symbols. And again, we know that man yearns for and indeed pursues immaterial concepts such as love, justice, beauty, happiness, etc. These are not material things that can be possessed, but they are more and still more desirable than material things. This is the evidence of a spiritual power in man. Therefore while we may not know the exact nature of the relationship between mind and body, we may not doubt the fact that man is a composite of mind and body.

3.2 The Problem of Universals

The problem of universals is a complex one and a big concern of philosophy. It forms a central problem in both the metaphysics of knowledge and the metaphysics of being - epistemology and ontology. This problem has led to different doctrines and ideologies such as idealism, empiricism, materialism and realism and above all different understanding of reality. We know that human knowledge begins in

sense perception and that knowledge is completed in the intellect, when the intellect grasps the essential nature of the thing. Sense knowledge is of particular and individual things but what the intellect grasps is universal. Let us try to explain this. What exists and what we know are particular things, individual objects. They are independent of our knowing, they exist before we know them and they exist even without our knowing them. To know something means to receive that thing and to think that thing, in other words, to make that thing an object of thought. The concept formed of my thought is universal even though what I know is individual. This is to say that the judgment I make of the object of my knowledge is a universal judgment. Take for instance; I know an elephant or an apple or vulture, etc. My concept or judgment of elephant, apple or vulture represents the multitudes of individual elephants or apples or vultures, existing in all parts of the world. Let us suppose that I met an elephant in a zoo in Ibadan and I form a concept of elephant, my concept is universal and applicable to all elephants whether in India or South Africa or Brazil or Denmark; but I have only known a particular elephant. Now the big question or problem is this: What is the relationship between the individual things that I know and which exist extra-mentally and the universal concepts which exist in my mind? This has been a cardinal problem in metaphysics because of its importance in the realism of knowledge and the affirmation of reality. Many philosophers have battled with this question in the course of history of philosophy. We shall look at just a few of them

PLATO: Plato, no doubt is one of the greatest Greek philosophers. He lived between 428/7 -348 BC. He was the first to introduce the problem of universals. Plato believed and in fact held that alongside the concrete world of individual objects, there exists a realm of perfect and eternal entities which he called Forms or Ideas. Whenever plurality of individual things has a common idea, there is a corresponding reality of that concept existing in the eternal realm. In other words, for Plato, there are two worlds: the world of idea which is not assessable to humans in this life and the world of the individual sensible objects. For example the concept or the idea of elephant exists concretely as an archetype in the eternal world different and separated from the particular elephant that I met in Ibadan zoo. So what then is the relationship between the two worlds? According to Plato's teaching, there is no real relationship between them except that the sensible things of our world are merely imitations of the idea or the archetype. They exist separately. The sensible objects serve only to trigger off the process of recollection or remembrance of the idea which was already intuited in the previous world.

Plato was not alone in tackling the problem of universals. There were the Nominalists, here represented by Peter Abelard (1079-1142) and William of Ockham (c 1280-1349). They believed that universals exist neither in themselves nor in the things of our experience. They observed that there is nothing in the sensible world that fits the definition of universals - one-common-to-many because only individual things exist. Nothing in the world corresponds to the universal in the mind. Therefore, they described universals merely as words, or names or terms. Universals are words or names used to describe things which resemble each other. Ockham went as far as saying they are mental fiction fashioned by the intellect to represent what it knows. He described universal as isolated because it is not sensible; bare because it is an abstract concept, and pure because it is not identified with any single thing. Thus according to the nominalists, universals are mere names applied to things that resemble, hence no relationship with the sensible objects.

We should not forget the position of Aristotle which was later adopted by Thomas Aquinas known as moderate realism. Aristotle believed in the existence of universals as well as particulars. Universals exist "out there" though not in a separate world. They do not only exist in our minds and their existence does not depend on our minds. They would still exist without our knowing them. According to Aristotle, universal is simply a property that is common to number of instances. It is a kind of property that is shared by individuals of a specific class. For example, there are many human beings in the world but they all share a common nature or property namely, rationality. Thus each individual human being is an instance of that general property or essence or nature - rationality.

Rationality does not exist as an entity anywhere separate from an individual human person. We arrive at this general property or essence by the process of abstraction from particulars. We see Nkechi or Kehinde or Abdul or Amos, each of these is a rational being and by abstracting, we arrive at rationality.

Therefore there could be no universals without particulars just as there could be no particulars without universals. In simple terms we can say that there are no qualities or properties which do not exist in something, on the other hand, there are no beings without properties or qualities. The two are logically dependent on one another. Universals have their foundations in the individual existences or individual sensible realities. As we have seen there are no universal realities. For example, there is no universal elephant or no universal man existing outside the mind. But there are individual elephants and individual men. Universality, as such, is in the mind only. Nonetheless, the universal concept has its

foundation in the individual sensible object that we know. Put it simply, a thing exists in reality as individual but in the mind as universal.

4.0 CONCLUSION

The problem of philosophy is continuous because man will never stop pondering on reality and reality itself can never be exhausted by the human mind.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit we have seen that man is both material and immaterial. He is a composite of mind and body. The mind is immaterial while the body is material. We have also seen that things exist differently in our minds and in reality. In our minds they exist universally and in reality, they exist individually. Thus universals have foundations in reality.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. How would you explain to a secondary school student that man is a composite of mind and body?
2. What do you understand by universals?

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

Hospers, John.(1956). An Introduction to Philosophical Analysis.
London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Limited.

UNIT 4 CHANGE/MOVEMENT; TIME AND PLACE

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 The Nature of Movement or Change
 - 3.2 Time and Place
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

From the previous unit, I want to believe that you can offer your own opinion in discussions about mind and body and you will not lack behind where the problems of universals is discussed. Let us turn our attention to something else. The world as we know it seems to be characterized by change and or movement. There is a tendency therefore to conclude that reality is nothing else but change or movement. In this unit, we are going to look closely at the phenomenon of change or movement with the eyes of philosophy so as to know what the nature of change or movement is. Time also seems to be the greatest illusion of all. What is it? This unit will shed some light on it.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- analyse the nature of change
- identify what motion is
- distinguish between time and place.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 The Nature of Movement or Change

According to the New Catholic Encyclopedia, "Motion can be taken in a wide and in a strict sense. In the wide sense it stands for any change, for any transition from one state or condition to another. In a strict sense it means succession and continuous change, usually spoken of as movement." In this lecture, we shall consider movement in its strict sense. Strictly speaking therefore we shall consider movement in these various forms: locally - movement from one place or position to another;

quantitatively - increase or decrease in size; and qualitatively - alteration in quality. However, according to Aristotle, it is not necessary to prove the existence of movement (in the above cases) since it is evident in nature. That notwithstanding, it is not difficult to note that the concept of movement constitutes one of the problems in philosophy. But it must be added that the study of movement has helped philosophy to gain a significant insight into the nature of reality itself.

There are necessary factors which must be presumed in movement. They include:

- The subject which moves locally, quantitatively or qualitatively;
- Two distinct termini - the beginning point which the subject is and the point at which the subject finds itself at the end of the movement;
- A permanent substratum which underlies the change or movement and which is common to both ends;
- It includes also a certain determination which serves as the goal of the movement - a determination which exists merely in potency before the movement;
- A real possibility or an unrealized capacity which the subject has to receive the new determination.

As mentioned earlier, the study of movement has helped in understanding the nature of being and movement is found to exist in different categories of being. Therefore, any attempt at the definition of movement must go beyond these different categories and touch on concepts which are essential to being. These concepts are act and potency. As we have already known, in philosophy, the term act means the primary act of all, that is, the act of existence. Whatever exists is in act. Strictly speaking act means being. Potency on the other hand, is not being in its full sense, it is a power of being - a capacity to be. We can see now that even though movement exists in several categories of being, yet movement is different from act and different from potency. It is neither act nor potency.

Aristotle in his Physics defines movement as: "The fulfillment of what exists in potentiality, in so far as it exists in potentiality" (Phy. 3, 1 (202b3)). In other words, movement implies the actual process or the actual fulfillment of becoming. Movement or motion situates midway between potentiality and full actuality. When the subject is only in potency, it is not yet in motion, when it has been fully actualized, movement ceases. Therefore, movement is the act of a being in potency precisely as still in potency.

Let us use an illustration to explain this process. A plank of wood is an actual plank of wood, but it has the capacity or the potency to be made into a table. Movement is neither the plank of wood nor the potency nor the table into which the plank of wood can be made; because the plank of wood is not in motion before the carpenter begins work on it nor is it in motion after the carpenter has worked on it. Movement or motion begins at the moment the carpenter starts the making of the table and continues till the table is produced. Until the table is produced, the wood is still in potency and the movement is incomplete. The plank of wood and the table, that is, the point of departure and the point of arrival are distinct and are often called contraries though they admit intermediaries. The motion between them is continuous and successive. We can see now that movement is not instantaneous, it takes time. It follows also that properly speaking, movement belongs only to bodies since only bodies can undergo the gradual process.

Therefore, in the process of carpentry, that is, when the carpenter is engaged in the making of the table, the plank of wood gradually actualizes its potentiality to be a table. At that point the plank of wood is in motion, on the way to being a table. The plank of wood is in perfect act before the making of the table and the table is in perfect act after it has been made. It is to be said that movement is an imperfect act. It is the act of a being in potency as it is still in potency. It is the act of a being capable of becoming something else. What stands out in this explanation of movement is the reality of change and becoming in being. Change or movement necessarily is a process in which one thing loses its identity in order to assume another. G. Lagrange supports this view when he states: "Becoming [change or movement] involves a certain absence of identity which can be explained by something other than act, and this other something can only be a real capacity..." (Reality, p. 361). We can see now that change or movement does not invalidate the principle of identity. We have to say rather that every created thing has a capacity to become one or more things successively.

3.2 Time and Place

Place: The Latin word for place is locus from which is derived the word locomotion. A place answers the question "where?" Ubi in Latin. The physical concept of place is tied to the nature of a thing. Place is defined as the measure of moveable bodies. Place remains unchanged when the body leaves. Thus place is different from the body, which it contains. This is why Aristotle defines place as "the primary motionless boundary of that which contains." Let us take for example the milk in a jar: If we ask: where is the milk? The answer is that it is in a jar. Thus the jar serves as the motionless boundary, vessel or the container for the milk, it

is the place for the milk and different from the milk Place is the inner surface of the body in place. It is a distance connected to quantity.

Time: Time is another difficult concept to grasp. Time is associated with motion and, in fact, it is the measure of motion. Motion is not uniform but time is uniform and physically universal. Time is the number in motion. Let us take this diagram for example 1st now _____ 2nd now between the first point and the second point, there is a passage of time. The first now stands for the moment and so also the second now. Time is the distance between the first now and the second now. So time is the number of motion according to before and after or the measure of motion according to before and after. It is the distance between the before and after. Time is a continuum, it flows. Continuum itself is a species of quantity. Time is that indivisible part joining the past and the future. The past is no longer and the future is not yet. Time is existence by reason of the past or the future but not by reason of its indivisibles. The now of time give reality to the past and the future. Time is a being of reason.

4.0 CONCLUSION

The realities of change and movement, time and place, are very evident in our world but their explanation from the philosophical point of view are not that easy. What is given here is to stimulate your thinking so that you may pay more attention to what is usually taken for granted.

5.0 SUMMARY

Change or movement is successive in nature while time and place are associated with motion and bodies.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Describe the movement between the plank of wood and the table;
2. What do you understand by the notion "Place?"

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

Aristotle. (1941). *Physics*. In *The Basic Works of Aristotle*. Trans. Richard McKeon. New York: Random House.

UNIT 5 EXISTENCE OF GOD AND EVOLUTION**CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Existence of God According to the Ancient Mind
 - 3.2 Existence of God According to the Medieval Mind
 - 3.3 Existence of God According to the Modern Mind
 - 3.4 Evolution
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

No one has a final answer to philosophical questions. So we have not heard the last words on the whole idea of change and time. There are other problems that philosophy has to battle with. This time around it is the question of the existence of God. There is no age or generation that the question of God's existence has not presented itself. But also different generations have always had a way of dealing with it philosophically. Here in this Unit, we shall not involve ourselves with all the polemics. We shall rather present a few philosophical positions on the existence of God. I am sure you have your own reasons to either believe or disbelieve the existence of God.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- discuss some philosophers who have reflected on the existence of the Absolute Being and who have convinced themselves and their followers that such a being actually exists
- distinguish between a doctrine or a dogmatic belief in God through the reasoning of some philosophers about the existence of God.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Existence of God According To the Ancient Minds

The existence of God is not a self-evident truth. It cannot be demonstrated by way of experiment neither can it be proven like a mathematical theory. It can only be derived or inferred or arrived at through the experience of the sensible universe and the general experience of life. According to Plato, the Supreme Being which we call God is nothing else but the "Absolute Beauty" in which all the other beautiful things participate. "It seems to me", he says, "that whatever else is beautiful apart from the Absolute Beauty is beautiful because it partakes of that Absolute Beauty, and for no other reason" (Phaedo, 100c). Plato did not so much prove the existence of God but rather derived it from the experience of love and beauty. So God is that perfect love and beauty that does not exist in something else but exists in itself and neither has a beginning nor an end. It is that from which all the lovely things derive their loveliness and beautiful things derive their beauty (cf. Symposium 211a-e).

Aristotle approaches the existence of God from another perspective. According to him, the only beings that exist independently of themselves are substances. He divides substance into three (3) categories:

1. the perishable sensible substances which is the object of empirical sciences;
2. the eternal sensible substances - the objects of mathematical sciences; and
3. unmovable non-sensible substances - the pure objects of thought.
According to him, thought is the most divine of all things. Evidently therefore, the divine thinks of the most divine and the most precious.

This is to say that the divine thought thinks of nothing else but itself. God is a self-thinking-thought. The Divine thought thinks of itself since it is the most excellent of things, and its thinking is thinking on thinking. To put this in a layman's language, Aristotle is saying that God is knowledge and the knowledge of God consists in thinking about himself. That was Aristotle, but the existence of God continued to pose a problem to human mind.

3.2 Existence of God According To The Medieval Minds

Anselm of Canterbury (1033-1109) lived in the middle Ages. He was already a Theologian but he set out to give a philosophical argument for the existence of God. He came up with a three- point argument often referred as the ontological argument. "God", he said, "is that than which nothing greater can be thought." Such a being cannot only be in the thought but must exist in reality because if he exists only in the thought, he cannot be that than which nothing greater can be thought, but if he exists both in thought and in reality, then he is that than which nothing greater can be thought. Therefore that than which nothing greater can be thought truly exists. Secondly he said God cannot be thought as not existing because to be thought as not existing means that he is not that than which nothing greater can be thought, but if he is thought as existing, then he is truly that than which nothing greater can be thought. Therefore God truly exists. In the third point Anselm wonders how the fool has said in his heart what cannot be thought. According to Anselm, it is possible to think of God as not existing if one is only thinking of the word and not understanding the reality signified by the word. But if one understands the reality that the word signifies, namely that than which nothing greater can be thought, then it is impossible to think of God as not existing.

Then came Thomas Aquinas (c.1225-1274) with the famous five ways. He argues that:

1. If change is not self-explanatory, it necessitates a first mover which is itself immovable in the sense that it possesses within itself the source of its own activity and has no need of being moved by another. Therefore, God is the Unmoved Mover;
2. If efficient causes are now actually operating, there has to be a supreme cause which is itself uncaused and which both produces and sustains these causes in being. Therefore, God is the Uncaused Cause;
3. If there are contingent beings, that is, beings which can just as well not be, then there must be a necessary being - a being which cannot not be, which of itself is existence and gives existence to these contingent beings. Therefore, God is a necessary Being;
4. If the things of our experience display varying degrees of being and the perfection, which flow from it, this is because these things merely share or participate in these perfections. There must be one being which possesses these perfections in their fullness and from which all the other beings derive them. There must be a being which does not participate in or have existence but which is existence (truth, goodness, beauty, etc);

5. If animate and inanimate things display purposefulness in acts - activities directed toward an end, this presupposes an intelligence which produces and sustains these activities. It is to be noted here that the five ways of Thomas Aquinas hinge on the existential dependence of creatures on the creator and this can only be grasped on the level of metaphysical reflection.

3.3 Existence of God According to the Modern Minds

Rene Descartes (1596-1650) was not left out in the search for existence of God. He set out to construct a system of truth in which nothing would be taken for granted except that which is self-evident. According to him the criteria for truth are "clear" and "distinct". In other words, whatever is known or perceived clearly and distinctly pertaining to something really belong to that thing. The idea of God was so clear and distinct for Descartes that God could not but exist. Just as one cannot think of a mountain without a valley or a triangle without the three sides equal to 180 degrees, so also one cannot think of God without the perfection of existence. "But from the fact that I cannot think of God except as existing, it follows that existence is inseparable from God; for this reason he truly exists." In other words, God has to be. He exists necessarily and the idea of God is innate or inborn. Descartes argument for God's existence is also known as ontological argument.

Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) also had something to say regarding the existence of God. According to Kant, the existence of God can neither be proven nor disproved, it is rather a postulate. He argued that as rational beings, there is recognition of a virtue or the highest good. The attainment of this highest good brings about a proportionate happiness. And there is a moral law which is self-imposed in the rational will and which obliges man to strive for the highest good or summum bonum. It is not within the power of man to bring about the harmony between the highest good and the proportionate happiness because man is neither the cause of the world nor of nature. It is beyond man's power to ensure the happiness that goes with morality. Accordingly, the existence of the cause of all nature, distinct from nature itself and containing the principle of this connection namely, of the exact harmony of happiness with morality is postulated. Therefore, the summum bonum is possible in the world only on the supposition of a supreme being having a causality corresponding to moral character. That is how Kant posits the existence of God. We can go on and on and enumerate different approaches to the question of God's existence but it will do us no good. What is important is that philosophy speculates on every being and if God is the ultimate being, then he is included in the object of philosophy.

3.4 Evolution

The question here is what does philosophy say about evolution and God whose existence we have tried to demonstrate? Evolutionary, there are two main theories to explain the origin of living beings in the universe among whom man occupies the prime of place.

1. Fixism: This holds that God is the direct creator of all the various species that exist in the universe - simultaneous or at different times;
2. Evolution: This claims that all the species, forms of life evolved gradually from one or few original living beings. Scientists favour this latter. In other words, that evolution occurs is a scientifically accepted fact, the point of difference is however on "how".

Philosophically the difference between animal and man is attributed to the First Cause - God whose existence we have tried to establish. This is not to say that God created everything in the universe individually as we know them today once and for all, and only conserves or maintains them in existence. Philosophy rather admits that God created and continues to create the universe throughout time. His creative act is coextensive with the universe. This is consequent upon the philosophical believe that God is a pure act. God however, does not create new realities or substances out of nothing, neither does he simply maintain, but he creates in the sense that he draws the higher out of the lower only gradually and unfolding the master lines or plans of his creation. In this way the creatures themselves participate in the act of creation. God uses them not merely as instruments or tools, but as material and efficient causes. In other words, the combination of the causality of the First Cause and that of the creatures themselves seems to offer a better explanation of evolution. Neither suffices to explain evolution. The Supreme Cause makes the organism capable of transcending their own virtualities of producing effects whose perfection surpasses theirs. As Donceel expresses it: "...evolution is best explained as a process of creative transformation. This is an activity which, using a pre-existing creature, enlarges it into totally new being. It is both creation and transformation.

Creation, because the resulting reality possesses more being than the reality with which the process started. A transformation too, because this "more being" is not a substance, it is incorporated in a pre-existing subject, within whose potentiality it was not precontained" (J.F.Donceel 1967 p.84).

4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit we have tried to show you why many philosophers think that God exists. The argument is not conclusive. I am sure you have your own convictions about the existence or the non-existence of God. Follow your convictions. Evolution is another big puzzle for scientists. It is an open-ended question. You can participate in the discussion.

5.0 SUMMARY

The question of the existence of God is not new in philosophy. It has always existed and probably will continue to exist. We have presented the different views of different philosophers. The conclusion is that the existence of God can be attained by natural reason. The question of evolution is continuous discussion by scientists. You can let your voice be heard as a philosopher.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. How did Anselm demonstrate the existence of God?
2. Would you agree with Immanuel Kant that we cannot prove or disprove the existence of God?

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

Hick, John. (1979). The Existence of God. New York: MacMillan Publishing Co.; Inc..

MODULE 3

- Unit 1 Ancient Philosophy
- Unit 2 Medieval Philosophy
- Unit 3 Modern Philosophy
- Unit 4 Contemporary Philosophy
- Unit 5 African Philosophy
- Unit 6 The Relevance of philosophy

UNIT 1 ANCIENT PHILOSOPHY

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Ancient Philosophy
 - 3.2 Classical Greek period

- 3.3 Post Aristotelian Period
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the foregone unit of Module 2, we have presented you with some of the problems that confront philosophy. We have also made serious effort to highlight the various ways that philosophy approaches those problems. There is no final solution to those problems just as there is no conclusive answer to every question. You should see yourself now as one of the questing minds for the unveiling of the mystery of being. In this Module and its Units, we set out to give you or to acquaint you with the main epochs of philosophical development. Particularly in this Unit you will be led to the first period of philosophical beginnings. That is the Ancient Philosophy, a period which ranges from the 8th Century B.C. to approximately 6th Century A.D. Enjoy the interesting development of philosophy.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

The aim of this Unit is to: help you to know the formation years of philosophy from its very beginning. You will also become familiar with the thinking pattern of the era.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Ancient Philosophy

The phrase Ancient Philosophy is generally used to refer to the Ancient Western Philosophy from its humble beginning among the Greeks on the Ionian Coast of Asia Minor to its final manifestation in Neo-Platonism. However, the expression is also used to include the Eastern forms of thoughts which while being philosophical, were embedded in morality and religion. By Eastern here is meant the Chinese and the Indians. As Aristotle points out, "Man by nature desires to know." But this desire to know is fan into flame when man began to wonder at the marvels of nature and so man began to ask deeper questions about the nature of things. Philosophy was born by seeking for reasons or causes of things that men then knew by experience. It became philosophy when the questions and the reasoning of men were free from the traditional, mythological and religious explanations of events and reality. The ancient teachers, no doubt, spoke the truth, but their truth was in the

context of belief and not so much of proof by reason. Greek philosophy emerged as a conscious reaction to such dogmatism when rational investigation became the order of the day.

In contrast to the Greeks or the West, the Eastern philosophical thinking was still embedded in religious beliefs and national culture. The Chinese philosophy of Kung or Confucius was contented with transmitting moral teachings of the ancient without rational invocation. Taoism was perhaps more metaphysical yet under the influence of mysticism. The Indian philosophy as rational as it was, could not be free of mysticism because it was a formulation of the priestly caste primarily as wisdom of solution, a quest for union with the higher being, and as such, it was endowed with the attribute of religion. Buddhism which is a corruption of Bramanism, proposed an anthropocentric philosophy of self-salvation. The Persian Zoroaster dualism on the other hand, was a mixture of religion, mythology and reason in a non-philosophical form. However, it should be noted that if the Greek quest for philosophical wisdom was a reaction to the uncritical tradition, it did not completely brake away from the general culture of the race.

The Greeks had a great regard for the development of the whole person. Thus in the pre-Socratic the main pre-occupation was to search for the one source, the physis or the nature from which came the scattered particulars of everyday experience. That was why the Ionian philosophers looked for principles from which other things evolved. For Thales, it was water, for Anaximander, it was Boundless or Unlimited, Anaximenes posited air while the Pythagorians adopted number, all was a search for the harmony and inner unity of the cosmos.

Then came Heraclitus and Parmenides who inaugurated a more metaphysical turn by penetrating into the nature of reality to know what it truly is. Heraclitus was obsessed with change and for him change was all that there is. Parmenides was on his part overwhelmed with reality - that which is - in opposition to change and illusion in the universe. He raised the problem of being and argued that reality does not consist of what the senses reveal as many and changing, but rather something whole, indivisible, motionless and perfect. Zeno of Elea, the follower of Parmenides even tried to prove that there is no such thing as many.

3.2 Classical Greek Period

None of the above mentioned philosophers lived on the mainland of Greece or even in Athens. But there was a gradual shift with the coming of classical period of Greek philosophy. The emphasis also shifted from the concentration on the world of nature to a more metaphysical interest. It was at this time that the Sophists emerged on the scene, but they were

very short lived because their emphasis was rhetoric and eloquence at the expense of truth. In reaction to their ideal of speaking, Socrates came up with the new wisdom, the wisdom of thinking well. This is the wisdom of the inner man who lived what he thought - the true philosopher. Thus Socrates set the stage for Plato and Aristotle, the true lovers of wisdom who sought to penetrate reality and human life to their ultimate.

According to Plato, a true philosopher is one who is liberated from the slavery of the senses and ruled by the rational part of his soul which guides him to attain knowledge of true reality found only in the Forms or Ideas. Such a man pursues virtue and wisdom and so his conduct is not based on opinions but modeled on the transcendent Forms of justice and temperance. True knowledge is not found in sense experience but in the world of Forms and Ideas which lead ultimately to the highest Forms - the Good itself. Aristotle does not believe that philosophy has the final answers to the deepest question but he believed that it spurs the philosopher ever upward to a more perfect vision of the absolute. Aristotle was the philosopher personified. He was more scientific in his pursuit of knowledge. He did not separate philosophy from life, but he was convinced that philosophical knowledge is not concerned with sensible things but with the essences of things and their ultimate causes and principles. He did not believe that the problem of being lies in the separate world of Forms as did Aristotle. But rather, he saw forms within beings as explaining the being attributed to them. He however, posited supra-sensible beings which are actual and imperishable and beyond them is the perfect principle which is pure act. The God of Aristotle is the First Unmoved Mover of the heavenly spheres. And it is the final cause that produces motion by being desired. The inner life of this god is thought thinking itself, it does not produce, govern nor is it related to the world of nature. The forms in living things he called the soul. He is not very clear whether the human soul survives the body. His ethics and politics are earthbound and centered on the perfection of the individual within the city-state. Despite his limitations, Aristotle's philosophy represents the peak of Greek thought. Other philosophers after him whether Greek, Arabian, Christian or Modern, stand in some debt to Aristotle.

3.3 Post Aristotelian Period

The Greek philosophy after Aristotle brought in Greek political outlook. The conquest of Alexander the Great brought Greek thought from the confines of the city-state into the world of Commonwealth. The Cynics became citizens of the world rather than of particular city-state. With their influence, the Stoics and later Chrysippus elaborated a physics whose monistic materialism made the world a harmonious whole

activated by a principle called god, fire, mind, fate or logos. The ethical ideal of the Stoic was life in agreement with nature detached from self-love and worldly interests. Then came Epicureanism whose goal was pleasure, peace of mind and freedom from pain. Death is the end of life and the gods have nothing to do with men or with the world. All this was intended to be a step toward happiness.

Further witnessing of the spread of Hellenistic culture is found in the Jewish philosophy of Philo Judaeus and the Roman philosophy that appeared in the (book) republic and empire. Philo however, was an exception because Jewish tradition was marked by a distrust of reason and philosophy. After him there was no speculative thought among the Jews until Avicbron who was neo-Platonic and Moses Maimonides who was mainly Aristotelian. Among the Romans, their philosophy was mainly a reflection of Greek thought though colored by the Roman spirit. Stoicism as expounded by Seneca, Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius was more of an appeal to the moral formation of the good citizen.

The last great philosophical movement of pagan antiquity was the arrival of Platonism reaching its climax in what is now known as Neo-Platonism. In many instances this movement had a deeply religious coloring because philosophy came to be used as a medium for union with the Divine. Middle Platonism as expounded by Phetarch, Celsus and others accepted the transcendence of God, multiplied intermediaries between God and the world and laid great emphasis on revelation, mysticism and ecstasy. This led to the teaching of Plotinus, the first Neo-Platonist who drew his teaching from Plato, Aristotle and the Stoics to construct a synthesis that was the last stand of intellectual paganism against the growing appeal of Christianity. The school of Plotinus thrived in such disciples as Porphyry and Prochus. These deeply influenced the Patristic culture.

The direct descendants of Plato, Aristotle and Plotinus were the proponents of Arabian philosophy. Ancient philosophy came to an end in 529 A.D. when Justinian banished philosophers from Athens and confiscated their schools. By that time however, Ancient Philosophy had left its mark on Christian thinkers and had produced the new movement of Christian Philosophy.

4.0 CONCLUSION

Like the biblical mustard seed, philosophy has grown from its humble beginning to become a force to be reckoned with. The fact that you are studying philosophy today indicates that, you have become part of the web of that development.

5.0 SUMMARY

The Ancient Philosophy emerged from the confines of religion and mythology and gradually freed itself to the state of independence. Thanks to the power of reason that man can think without depending on influences around him. Ancient Philosophy reached its maturity in Aristotle - The Philosopher.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Write briefly on two of the major figures of Ancient Philosophy;
2. Why does Aristotle receive the pride of place in Philosophy?

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

Wallace, William. (1974). The Elements of Philosophy. New York: Alba House.

UNIT 2 MEDIEVAL PHILOSOPHY

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Patristic Philosophy
 - 3.2 Prelude to Scholasticism
 - 3.3 Scholasticism at its peak
 - 3.4 Late Scholasticism
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Ancient Philosophy which we have just finished showed the development and maturity of rational thinking. During the Medieval Period, philosophy was raised to another level as it witnessed a dialogue between itself (philosophy) and the revealed Christian faith. It was however, not a dialogue of conflict it was rather a dialogue of understanding and cooperation that leads to a harmony between them. Medieval philosophy is the kind of philosophy that came out during the Medieval or the Middle Ages which spans between the 4th - 15th Centuries.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of unit you should be able to:

- discuss the period in history known as the Medieval Period or Middle Ages; and
- identify the type of philosophical speculation distinctive of that period.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Patristic Philosophy

We must begin by stating a wellknown fact that Christianity is not a philosophy but a revealed religion that leads to salvation. But the two are not in opposition because the truth of reason does not contradict the revealed truth. Christianity first encountered philosophy in the Areopagus of Athens. This encounter however, was not a pleasant one because of the distrust that existed between the two. On the one philosopher ridiculed the wisdom of Christ as foolishness and looked at it with contempt. On the other hand, Christians were suspicious of philosophy as the invention of the devil and the source of errors and heresies. But the good news is that, the newly converted philosophers into Christianity did not just abandon their natural wisdom. They put it to use in the service of Christ: Justin Martyr and Clement of Alexander are instances of this. Others like Clement and Eusebius of Caesarea saw

Greek philosophy as preparing the way for the acceptance of the gospel of Christ.

This was the beginning of greater collaboration between philosophy and Christian faith. Origin used philosophy to explain and defend Christian dogma. Methodius of Olypus became a great admirer of Plato. However, in the 4th Century, the problem of either absorbing or being absorbed by philosophy was brought to rest by three great thinkers - Gregory of Nazianzus, Basil the Great and Gregory of Nysa. In the early 6th century, the writings of the enigmatic Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite made their appearance in Syria, presenting a serious blending of Christian teaching and Neo-Platonic thought.

These writings had a great influence among Christians of both East and West. The last of the Greek Fathers to enter the scene was John Damascene who summarized Greek Patristic thought in his Exposition of the Orthodox Faith and made use of Dionysius' Doctrines. Among the Latin Fathers before Augustine, one can mention a few names who drew inspiration from Greek philosophy. These include Minucius Felix whose writings were influenced by Seneca; Tertulian who relied on the Stoic to explain the nature of the soul and Marius Victorinus who remained Neo-Platonist even after his conversion and used it to explain the Trinity. St Augustine was a great beneficiary of the latter without whom he would not have had the concept of the spiritual since he was deep into Manichean materialism. Augustine came to the Church with whatever good he could find in philosophy and used it to build the Christian structure of the deeper wisdom. For Augustine, philosophy was not so much an independent discipline as it was part of the general search for God and every one of its branches was made to contribute for that search.

After Augustine, there was very little to show with regard to philosophical speculation. But we should mention Boethius who made his mark in Logic, the Problem of Universals and Liberal Arts. Cassidorus also introduced learning and intellectual culture into monastic life. This is to say that learning and intellectual activity had left the public arena and concentrated in the Monasteries.

3.2 Prelude to Scholasticism

When Charlemagne became the Emperor, he revived philosophy and intellectual culture. He made philosophy and secular knowledge, the hand maid of faith. At the same time there was a philosophical controversy at the court of Charles the Bald on the nature of the soul between Ralsamnus of Cobie and Hincmar of Rheims, and was intrigued by the bold thinking and writing of John Scotus Erigena. He undertook

the synthesis of philosophy in his De Divisione Naturae to show that the multiplicity of things proceed from the oneness of God and is in turn brought back to him. At this time philosophy was still a reflection on the Holy Scriptures and Faith and was not the exercise of reason for its own sake.

It was only after John Scotus Erigena that a distinction was made between philosophy and revealed doctrine. Logic and Dialectics were studied in their own right. This was the beginning of the movement known as Scholasticism which reached its peak in the 13th Century. Peter Abelard undertook to solve the problem of the universals and to explain the mysteries of faith using logic and dialectics as tools. This period also witnessed intellectuals such as Anselm of Canterbury, Richard of Saint Victor, Peter Lombard, Isaac of Stella, William of Saint Thierry. All these helped in shaping philosophy and systematizing theology. Paris became the center of intellectual activity and could only be rivaled by the School of Chartres which was the center of philosophy and a seat of classical humanism. These schools were said to organize 1200 guilds or the University of the Masters and scholars of Paris. These prepared the way for the flourishing of Scholasticism in the 13th century which was boosted by the numerous translations of Aristotle's works and those of Arabian and Jewish philosophers. Aristotelianism was harmonized with neo-Platonism and placed alternately in the service of, and in confrontation with the Moslem belief. The principal writers at this time were: Alkindi Alfarabi, Avicenna and Averroes. Averroes became influential as a guide to the thought of Aristotle, with consequences that soon gave rise to the crises at Paris.

3.3 Scholasticism at Its Peak

The middle of Thirteenth century is said to be the peak of Scholasticism. At Paris, the foremost Franciscan to use philosophy in the service of theology included Alexander of Hales, John of La Rochelle and Bonaventure. They used their learning to sift truth from error and were proficient in the tradition of Augustinianism. Some of their thought are the following: Emphasis on the primacy of faith over reason; the doctrine of Divine illumination in knowledge; plurality of forms in created composites; impossibility of creation from eternity; among others. In contrast to the Franciscans were the Dominicans such as Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas. Albert earned the title "the Great" in his life time for being the first to appreciate the importance of Greek - Arabic learning for science and philosophy and making encyclopedic summaries of it for his students.

Thomas Aquinas on his part, though had great respect for Augustine, yet rejected the doctrine of illumination in knowledge. He was called the

“Angelic Doctor” for the honorary titles of other scholastics. He brought Aristotelian natural philosophy and metaphysics into the heart of theology and developed a unique synthesis known as Thomism that put the pagan knowledge at the service of faith. He is well known for his teaching on: pure potentiality of primary matter and its actualization by substantial form; matter as principle of individuation, rejection of spiritual matter, God as Pure Act; etc. His knowledge of Aristotle and Averroes put him in good position to oppose the Latin Averroism. He opposed the doctrine of double truth and that there is only one possible intellect for the entire human race. These doctrines were condemned which led to series of rejoinders between the Franciscans and the Dominicans. In the midst of this intellectual controversy, John Duns Scotus emerged seeking to create a new synthesis. In a critical yet positive spirit, he undertook to examine anew the limit of reason contrasted to faith, the problem of knowledge generally, the object of metaphysics, and the doctrine of being, giving greater emphasis to divine freedom and for the metaphysical proofs for God’s existence.

3.4 Late Scholasticism

The last of the great scholastics was William of Ockham. He epitomized the spirit of criticism that pervaded the early 14th century. His position was referred to as the modern way in contrast to the old way of Aquinas and Duns Scotus, and this exerted a pronounced influence, along with Thomism and Scotism in the later development of Scholasticism. Ockhamism is a variety of nominalism, that among others, expounded the following doctrines: Concepts are universals in a purely functional sense and do not refer to a common nature possessed by things individually; reality is a collection of absolute singulars, the distinguishable units of which are substances and qualities; motion does not exist as an entity really distinct from the moving body; etc. Under the influence of Ockham, scholastic thought after 1350 moved away from metaphysics and began to examine new questions. The 14th century witnessed the development of philosophy of language, logic of terms and suppositions patterned on the writings of Peter of Spain and William of Sherwood. Mathematical physics of space and motion began at Oxford. Even though developed in an Aristotelian framework, it was a clear departure from the classical physics of antiquity.

Thomism which had become the official doctrine of the Dominicans was championed by Harvey Nedellec, John Naples, John of Capreolus while the champions of Scotism included Antonius Andreas, Francis Meyronnes, Hugh of Newcastle. Within the Augustinian Order, the doctrines of Giles of Rome were made official during his life time, these were developed by James of Viterbo and Augustine of Ancona among others. With all this, Paris became a city of conflict and confusion. Some

religious scholars revolted against it while others sought to restore the classical concept of liberal arts and return to pre-Scholastic type of culture. In Germany the attack of Martin Luther on the schoolmen and on philosophy and the ravages of Reformation, destroyed whatever was left of scholasticism. Only in Spain did the movement show new life with the rise of middle scholasticism.

4.0 CONCLUSION

The Middle Ages is often forgotten in the History of Philosophy but as we can see, it was a very eventful period of intellectual development. Knowledge like every human activity is a process and that process continues with you even today.

5.0 SUMMARY

What started as a conflict and a mixture between religion and philosophy or between faith and reason was to be distinguished with each autonomy established. Thus philosophy has come to stay as an autonomous and independent discipline solely relying on human reason.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. What were the major contributions of Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas to Medieval Philosophy?
2. Do you think the conflict between philosophy and theology still exists?

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

Wallace, William. (1977). The Elements of Philosophy. New York: Alba House.

UNIT 3 MODERN PHILOSOPHY**CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Renaissance Philosophy
 - 3.2 Mechanical Philosophy and Empiricism
 - 3.3 Rationalism and other Movements
 - 3.4 Philosophical Reconstruction
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Modern Period from which Modern Philosophy is derived spans from 1400 to 1900 Centuries. There is however, no clear cut demarcation between a period or Contemporary time. Modern philosophy can be divided into 3 broad phases: The Renaissance 1400 - 1600, Empiricism and Rationalism 1600 - 1800 and Philosophical Reconstruction 1900. Each of these phases made a distinctive contribution to the whole corpus of Modern philosophy. I invite you to read with interest and attention so as to discover the wealth of the modern period.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

The aim of this Unit is to give you the highlight of the philosophical trend of thought that characterized what is generally referred to as the Modern Period.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Renaissance Philosophy

This was the fruit of an apparent disenchantment with the medieval systems, its epistemological uneasiness and its special concern to rethink man's relationship with God and the world. This was embodied in the works of Nicholas of Cusa which led to the development of logical methodology and natural philosophy. Then came Renaissance Stoicism and Skepticism which arose from a continued dissatisfaction with the account human knowledge and conduct. According this movement, Platonism was too cabalistic while Aristotelianism ran contrary to faith. This produced crises by regarding man's knowing powers as unreliable. It was this skeptical attitude that provided a spur for the great systematic thinkers of the 17th century. This could be captured in the thought of Niccolo Machiavelli who ignored the precepts of Christianity in his drive for power and political management of men to achieve a stable political society. The counterpart to all these movements was the steady current of Renaissance Scholasticism which took a new form. And this period witnessed the great commentaries on Thomas Aquinas and the new development of the law of nations and the teaching manual as the main instrument of tradition. The Dominicans also exerted a strong influence as they produced the manuals of philosophy and theology. It was during this period also that the Jesuits came into existence and they produced a good number of writers and thinkers for the renewal of Catholic thought.

3.2 Mechanical Philosophy and Empiricism

The 17th century system came with the mechanical philosophers and Descartes to counter-balance skepticism. Francis Bacon kicked off the movement with his philosophy of "Knowledge is power." But it was Galileo Galilei who regarded nature as a divinely grounded system of mathematical intelligibles. Isaac Newton worked out their explanatory functions with unsurpassed thoroughness. But how does man fair in the mechanical ordered universe? Thomas Hobbes responded by the postulation of the "State of nature" from which man emerges as he builds his political and social world battling his freedom through a "social contract" that provides security but forfeits any objective order of values to be recognized and implemented. Descartes on his part had methodic doubt as his starting point which led to the clear and distinct idea as the criterion for truth, and to invoke God's existence so as to extend the universality of this criterion beyond its starting principle (cogito ergo sum) "think therefore I am" From man's clear and distinct idea of soul and body he further deduced a dualism of mind and matter, regarding both as substances but never satisfactorily explain how they unite. Yet in all this, the empiricists were less confident about metaphysical principles and the dependence of moral judgment upon a metaphysical account of the God /man relationship. John Locke rejected innate ideas and insisted that the sources of knowledge are experiential - through sensation and reflection. From sensation man derives ideas while from reflection he becomes aware of such internal operations as thinking, willing and desiring. George Berkeley's central idea was that the whole being of sensible thing consists in its being perceived with the result that the primary qualities of bodies are as mind independent as the secondary. David Hume on his part denied reality to any kind of substance, material or immaterial. He also rejected the traditional concept of causality, replacing it by the phenomena list notions of constant conjunction and temporal succession, and rendering useless for proofs of the existence of God.

3.3 Rationalism and Other Movements

The second half of the 17th century was plagued by skeptical doubts over the relationship between empirical reality and clear and distinct ideas. This gave birth to Newtonian Physics. Benedict Spinoza stressed the reforming function of the theory of method, which had to regard man as a finite composite modification and dynamic expression of the unique and powerful divine substance. G.W. Leibniz, who defended the doctrine of innate idea, had Monad as the central theme of his metaphysics and God as the Monad of all monads - the substance that makes all other substances possible.

The great genius of Immanuel Kant was to transcend and transform the traditional way of philosophizing. Unconvinced by metaphysics in its

dogmatic form, Kant proposed a kind of Copernican revolution wherein object are made to conform to the knowing intellect rather than the reverse as in the traditional account. This led him to the doctrine of synthetic a priori judgment as a consequence, man can only know appearances (phenomena) of things and not things in themselves (noumena). Metaphysics is then reduced to transcendental illusion. In his morality, Kant focused on man's awareness of the sense of duty. The categorical imperative became the fundamental law of pure practical reason. Kant was agnostic with regard to the existence of God, yet he saw religion as essential for regulating human behaviour and so confined it to the field of morals. To justify this possibility he proposed immortality, freedom and God's existence as postulates of pure reason, accepted not through insight or rational conviction, but only on the basis of pure practical faith.

3.4 Philosophical Reconstruction

Kantianism was too precarious to last since it rested upon the dualism of self and appearances. The German idealists were confronted with the need to join Kant's methodic control over concepts with the Romantics feel for the unity and divinity of life. J.G. Fichte proposed that all phases of reality and thought respond to a common pattern of positional thesis, counter positional antithesis, and revolving synthesis, and that they do so respond because these three-fold pattern is the graven law of the absolute and its activity. F.W.J. Schelling tested this hypothesis from two sides: firstly from nature in order to reach the spirit and from the spirit to nature. But it was G.W.F. Hegel who worked out the dialectical development of spirit in all modes of experience. The dialectical law in process was this: each achieved degree of consciousness advances through self-contradiction to a higher degree that resolves the contradiction, so the highest contradiction of consciousness, the duality of subject and object is finally resolved in Absolute Mind. For Hegel, this spiritualization of the Absolute perfects itself in the collective history of man, for history itself is the process by which Absolute spirit unfolds. Soren Kierkegaard located these perfections primarily in the free individual, taken in his search for happiness, his moral responsibility and his religious faith in the transcendent personal God. For Ludwig Feuerbach and Karl Marx, man is not fully real except in his social relations with men and the natural world. They stress the activity of work, class struggle, classless society as embodied in the system of world communism.

Auguste Comte came up with joining the search for the unity of knowledge with social aspirations; hence his objective synthesis placed these sciences at the disposal of man's moral aims and the positivist religion. John Stuart Mill on his part was prolonging the empiricist

analysis of knowledge and the calculus of social happiness known as utilitarianism. The 19th century was indeed attracted toward the philosophy of life. After the works of Charles Darwin on Evolution had appeared, philosophy became expressly evolutionary. In counter reaction, Friedrich Nietzsche analyzed the idea of God and the absolute truth as nothing. He proclaimed the “death of God” and preach the new gospel of biological social Darwinism. The will-to-power will give rise to superman and the slave morality of Christianity will be superceded by a master morality beyond good and evil.

According him, “eternal recurrent” or eternal return” would become the cosmological law and functioning without the divine law-giver and will justify a joyous affirmation of all existence signaling a final victory over nihilism. In the later part of the 19th century, there was a revival of Kant’s thought in the movement known as Neo-Kantianism and a spread of idealism beyond Germany in Neo-Hegelianism and its associated schools, which pertain more to the domain of contemporary philosophy.

4.0 CONCLUSION

The history of thought is somewhat close to the stream of imagination which flow from one thing to the other. And let us not think that it will stop with us. In fact we are today part of the big picture of the history of ideas.

5.0 SUMMARY

The Modern period witnessed a big shift from the theo-centric approach to reality to the anthro-centric approach. Man himself has become the center and the object of thought.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. What was the disenchantment among modern minds that the shift from God-centered approach to reality to man-centered?
2. Why did Immanuel Kant think that God’s existence can neither be demonstrated nor denied?

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

Wallace, William. (1977). *The Elements of Philosophy*. New York: Alba House.

UNIT 4 CONTEMPORARY PHILOSOPHY

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Life, Idea and Spirit
 - 3.2 American Philosophy
 - 3.3 Phenomenology and Existentialism
 - 3.4 Existential and Transcendental Thomism
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Contemporary Philosophy as the terms suggest refers to the philosophical trend that is current within our time. Contemporary philosophy can be understood in two senses: In a narrow sense and in a broad sense. In a narrow sense it means the problems and positions that are at the center of interest and discussion at the present time. In a broader sense, it refers to the major currents active in the 20th and 21st centuries and relevant for continued inquiries. We shall work with the broader meaning since this includes the significant prolongations of previous philosophies as well as the new approaches developed within these centuries. However, we must point out that studying contemporary philosophy presents a problem. First of all the process of selecting what is relevant enough to deserve the attention of philosophy and secondly, contemporary philosophy is still evolving, hence the consequences are not systematized.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- discuss ongoing ideas and discussions that are yet still developing.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Life, Idea and Spirit

The theme of life has lingered on especially in the direction of man's interior activities. Henry Bergson cited the difference between the physicalist meaning of time as discrete movement along a spatial line and the deductive human meaning of time as interior duration. This has opened to a metaphysical view of evolution. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin gave a theistic and personalistic interpretation of the evolutionary character of life: it comes from God and is moving towards God in a community form, to the Omega Point, the divine spiritual goal of the entire universe. In the first part of the twentieth century, idealism flourished in Europe and America. Bernard Bosanquet wrote about the ideal and the absolute factor in art and the tension in practical life between the absolute standards and particular situations. F.H. Bradley argued that the absolute is the totality of experience but denied direct

knowledge of the absolute reality as the union of all differences. The expression philosophy of the spirit is used to designate an association between some French and Italian thinkers who examined the life of the spirit apart from the Hegelian framework in order to preserve the integrity of the human person and his religious relationship to the personal God.

3.2 American Philosophy

This came of age with the impact of evolutionary thought, the interest aroused in scientific method, and the questions unanswered by the idealistic interpretation of evolution, science and morality. William James argued that a pluralistic and melioristic universe, complete with a developing God, is not only more stimulating to man's moral fiber, but also closer to the truth about being. John Dewey's naturalism on the other hand, aimed at being anti-dualistic in respect to the soul-body and God-world distinctions, and yet anti-reductionist in respect to the evolutionary levels of experience. He identified the knowable real with the totality of nature that can be investigated by the scientific method.

The Process Philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead is a speculative theory combining cosmological and metaphysical features. In it, events or actual occasions are the primary actualities and things or the enduring substances are simply sequences or societies of these occasions, each repeating society's common defining characteristic. Each occasion is self-creative. American realism is yet another philosophical movement that arose in the United States in reaction to the idealism philosophy and continued to evolve into various forms. Its main thesis is that things are independent of man's experience of them: critical realist differ from new realists in that the latter affirm that things are perceived immediately whereas the former denies this position.

3.3 Phenomenology and Existentialism

Phenomenology is not a philosophy in itself, it is rather a method of philosophizing. As its etymology indicates, it aims merely to set forth or articulate what shows itself. It can rightly be said that Edmund Husserl is the founding father of phenomenology. He distinguished between the act of judging as a psychic phenomenon and the judgment content or structure of meaning itself. He sought to make philosophy a rigorous science.

Max Scheler and Maurice Merleau-Ponty developed phenomenology in the moral-religious and the psychological spheres respectively. Scheler used the theory of intentionality to examine the religious believers' ordination to God, as well as his self realization through prayer and love

of neighbour. Merleau-Ponty on his part used the theme of the living body and man's relation to his life in the world as a means of regulating the sciences and of vindicating the act of human visible reality.

Existentialism developed as a form of existential phenomenology, although it had its remote origins in the writing of Kierkegaard. The existentialists made their own return to the existent reality of man, partly to liberate him from being a moralized phase of the idealistic absolute, partly to discover the sense of freedom and moral decision, and partly to gain orientation for the study of being. Martin Heidegger's analysis of being (Dasein) in the world, being alone with others and being related to instruments and to integral things, are clues to the metaphysics of being for which he sought. Jean Paul Sartre on the other hand thinks that both the social and religious project of man are unavoidable and yet doomed to frustration. Gabriel Marcel and Karl Jaspers maintain a three-fold kinship.

They are highly critical of depersonalizing effects of technological civilization; they regard the free human existence as being related to transcendence as well as to the world; and they recognize the limiting effect of life situation upon the project of reaching God.

Marcel worked out a theory of recollection and participation in being whereby the human searcher is united to God, whereas Jaspers remains fundamentally ambiguous about this relationship.

3.4 Existential and Transcendental Thomism

After the Encyclical letter Aeterni Patris of Pope Leo XIII, there was a renewal within Scholasticism which was sometimes referred to as Neo-Scholasticism or Neo-Thomism. Jacques Maritain and Etienne Gilson have been at the forefront of this development. Jacques Maritain brought the thought of Aquinas into the market place of the modern world. His deepest and most lasting achievements have been in the area of epistemology, in elucidating the different degrees of knowledge and their inter-relationships, and more generally in his pursuit of the various degrees of integral, Christian humanism. His contributions to social and political philosophy, and to constructive critiques of modern culture and art, have also been substantial. For Etienne Gilson, one of his central thesis is that the philosophy of the Middle Ages in general is a Christian philosophy, by this he means a philosophy that, while keeping the order of faith and reason distinct, nevertheless consider Christian revelation as an inseparable auxiliary to reason. In Thomas, he found the metaphysics

of existence that conceives God as the very act of being and creatures as being centered on the act of existing.

Transcendental Thomism can be traced back to the works of Maurice Blondel and Joseph Marechal. Marechal countered Kant's rejection of metaphysics by first distinguishing the representational from the existential character of knowledge and locating the latter in judgment as the intellect activity not of receiving of its object but of structuring it from sense data. Transcendental Thomism provides a knowledge of God in the tradition of

Catholic theism, and by an act of intelligence, but one rooted in love. A viable alternative to this recent Thomism, both existential and transcendental has been worked out by Edward Schillebeeckx. His theory of implicit intuition conceives knowledge as a dynamism also, but one entirely objective in kind and not subjective in the sense of that inspired by Marechal. In this theory, a dynamism of the knowing subject gives way to the dynamism of the contents of knowledge. Thomism is the most extensively developed systematic philosophy in the present day, and possibly has the greatest number of adherents.

4.0 CONCLUSION

Philosophy is dynamic in character. The reason is that being which is the object of philosophy is itself dynamic and consequently, there is always a renewed understanding of the old ideas, or rather old ideas are colored with new understanding. The process is ongoing.

5.0 SUMMARY

I am sure now that you are almost breathing a sigh of relieve. But you should know that there is no rest for the weary. We have brought philosophy to your own backyard. You have no excuse but to tell the world your opinion about your understanding of the events and reality around you. It is an interesting adventure.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. What are the senses in which you understand the terms Contemporary Philosophy?
2. Do you think Philosophy has exhausted all discussions about everything?

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

Wallace, William. (1977). *The Elements of Philosophy*. New York: Alba House.

UNIT 5 AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 African Philosophy
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the above units, we have been discussing what is generally known as the Western Philosophy. According to opinion leaders and thinkers, the

Western philosophy had its origins among the Ionians and the Greeks and spread to all parts of the world. We have already known what philosophy is all about: It is a critical reflection on reality as perceived by the Western minds. African Philosophy also has to do with reflection on reality as perceived by the Africans.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

The aim of this Unit is not to give you a new philosophy that is different in essence, but a philosophy that is different in practice. But we must warn you that African philosophy is still in its infancy stages. Thus African Philosophy is still developing.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 African Philosophy

African Philosophy is said to have originated in Egypt which is said to have been the cradle of civilization and the center of all learning in the ancient world. The Pre-Socratics, Plato and the rests are said to have studied in Egypt. Egypt was responsible for the Hellenistic advancement in knowledge and philosophy. In Africa, man is the center of everything. This means also that African Philosophy is man centered. African philosophy concerns man as he lives and interacts with other humans in his cultural environment and how that cultural environment affects man. Thus African philosophy is more real and dynamic than the abstract nature of Western philosophy. In Africa, reality is like a web of interlocking forces in one harmonious existence. God, being the highest of all forces and thus responsible for the existence of other forces. God or the Supreme Being interacts with man and the forces of nature which otherwise are called spirits in a forward and backward movements. From man through the spirits to the Supreme Being and vice versa. It is a philosophy of one-for-all and all-for-one. I am because you are and because you are therefore I am. African Philosophy is communitarian in nature. Wisdom in Africa does not consist in knowing how to read and write, but in good life which is manifested in a harmonious existence with God, the spirits and the fellow humans. It is a life of virtue which portrays the harmony of knowledge, wisdom, justice, prudence, honesty and the values of family life, community living and good behaviour in the wider society. African wisdom is contained in wise sayings which are associated with old age. African philosophy is not so much in the book as it is in the rhythm of African life.

4.0 CONCLUSION

You may have thought that Africa has no philosophy. That may be

because of your particular understanding of philosophy. African philosophy does actually exist. Do not forget that your manner or method of reflection is influenced by your environment.

5.0 SUMMARY

Remember that if you do not say here I am, no one will say there you are. If you deny yourself what you have, no one will claim that you have it. Therefore, we must acknowledge our rich heritage and values and know also that we have something to offer to the world.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. What is the center of African philosophizing?
2. Where would you normally find African Philosophy?

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

Eneh, J.O. (1999). An Introduction to African and Thought. Enugu: Satellite Press Limited.

UNIT 6 THE RELEVANCE OF PHILOSOPHY

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 The Value of Philosophy
 - 3.2 Philosophy and Society
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

I am sure this has been a breath-taking enterprise for you. You must be wondering when will it end and what actually is the value of all this abstract thinking? I should tell you to relax. This is the last unit of this course. And in this unit we shall try to give a sense of the value of philosophy in your personal life and in the life of the society. You will realize that though philosophy appears to be useless, yet its usefulness cannot really be quantified.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- demonstrate that philosophical knowledge is more a treasure than it is for utility
- discuss philosophy as not only good for life but as necessary for a good life.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 The Value of Philosophy

You will remember in the introductory sections of this course, we repeatedly said that philosophical knowledge is not a useful knowledge; it is rather a free knowledge. It is sought for the sole purpose of truth or knowledge itself. If this is the case, it means that philosophy is “useless”, it has no value and therefore probably should not be studied at all. It is a waste of time.

Well let us think again. The fact that philosophy is sought not for any production or extrinsic end, does not mean it is useless; it is actually a sign of nobility and dignity. Aristotle explains it, as follows “Clearly then it is not for extrinsic advantage that we seek this knowledge; for just as we call a man independent who exists for himself and not for another, so we call this the only independent science since it alone exists for itself. For this reason its acquisition might justly be supposed to be beyond human power, since in many respect human nature is servile, in which case ... God alone can have this privilege, and man should only seek the knowledge which is within his reach” (Met. 1.2 (982b25-30)). This is why philosophy, although not an art, is in the curriculum of the liberal art. It serves no other end beyond itself and is pursued for its own sake. On the other hand servile art are not free. They serve the external purposes and satisfy temporal needs: for example, Engineering for bridge building; Economics for increase in production; Medicine for curing disease; etc. But a philosopher simply studies for the love of wisdom. Therefore, to say that philosophy is not useful in the sense of producing external effects does not render it without value. On the

contrary, it is because philosophy is precious and precious like jewel, it is not to be used, but to be treasured. Philosophy has a higher value above and beyond other sciences. It is knowledge of the first and highest cause, and in a way, it is a divine science.

It is always the desire of man to overcome his limitations. That desire is rooted in the very nature of man. That which makes man specifically human is his intellect, according to Aristotle, which in him is something divine (Ethics 10.7). By his intellect man shares the nature of pure spirit. Since spirits have no material cares, wisdom alone is their food.

This is also the case with human mind. This is why Thomas Aquinas says: "To live a life of pleasure is beastly; to live the active social life is human; but to live the contemplative life is angelic or superhuman. According to Jacques Maritain, although he/she remains truly human, the contemplative person lives a life better than the purely human life.

Again, to say that philosophy is useless does not mean that philosophy has no benefit to human kind. The service of truth or the contemplation of truth is a great benefit to man, it answers the need of man's rational nature. It gives man a profound view of reality, it enables him to give a stable orientation to his entire conscious life, it makes man more truly human and indeed more than human. Without philosophy man would only be limited to the practical concerns of life and the things that bring material success but he would fail to see the true interest of man. This is why Chesterton notes that the most impractical man is the practical man.

We can see now that philosophy is not altogether useless. It is useless only for those who do not want to make use of it. Its usefulness is not as a means, it is not a means of making life more comfortable, but it helps us to understand the very purpose of life and the reasons for caring, suffering and of course hoping. Science and technology are useful in the sense that they provide us with the means to master the forces of nature. This is the sense in which knowledge is power, using the words of Francis Bacon. But we also know that knowledge can be put to a good use or a bad use. Philosophy does not give us power but it gives us the direction on how to use the power in service of the ultimate end of human life. It is in line with this that Mortimer J. Adler rightly notes: "The more science we possess, the more we need philosophy; for the more power we have, the more we need direction" (Great Ideas from Great Books, pt.1,ch.4).

3.2 Philosophy and Society

For the Greeks, the value of philosophy was so strong that even knowledge for practical purposes was looked down upon. This is why Plato believes that the one who is most fit to govern a city is the philosopher. This was because the philosopher was believed to have achieved the knowledge of the first principles, one who was not merely satisfied with the appearances. Therefore, just as reason must rule the perfect soul, so the philosophers rule the ideal city. (Rep. 473d) "Until philosophers are kings and princess of this world have the spirit and power of philosophy, and political greatness and wisdom meet in one ... cities will never have rest from their evils - no, nor the human race."

Therefore, in the society today, philosophers should not shy away from discussing contemporary social problems. It is only the wise man who can give counsel in matters requiring direction. The wise man does not have to rule, but he has the responsibility even to teach and instruct the kings, the rulers or the leaders.

A philosopher who wants to discuss social and political problems should first of all acquaint himself with the nature and details of such problems. However, philosophers are not advised to be rulers since this will pose a danger to their vocation of contemplating the truth. According to Immanuel Kant, "That kings should be philosophers, or philosophers kings, can scarce be expected; nor is it to be wished, since the enjoyment of power inevitably corrupts the judgment of reason, and perverts its liberty." In other words, to ask a philosopher to assume the responsibility and power of the king is to punish him. The function of the philosopher as a philosopher is to contemplate the truth and not to rule. He can teach the necessary principles of social order, and not even to offer practical solutions to transitory problems of the state. What we need in matters of government is not just the virtue of wisdom, but also the virtue of prudence. Thus we can go by the saying which is attributed to Thomas Aquinas: Let the wise teach us, the prudent govern us, and the good pray for us.

4.0 CONCLUSION

Philosophy is useless because it is supper useful. It is a priceless knowledge. You are lucky if you possess the wisdom of philosophy.

5.0 SUMMARY

This has been a long intellectual journey. What we have presented to you is the summary of the body of knowledge called philosophy. It is reflective, it is argumentative but above all, it is an exercise of reason. I believe you have enjoyed it and I wish you good luck in your tests and examinations.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Why do people think that philosophy is not a useful science?
2. Why do you think the philosopher should not rule?

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

John-Terry, Chris. (1994). For the Love of Wisdom. New York: Alba House.