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TABLE OF CONTENTS

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WAITING FOR TRUTH: METAPHYSICS, ANALYTICAL PHILOSOPHY, AND THEORETICAL SCIENCE

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Abstract

Contemporary paradigms in philosophy seek to answer questions concerning the issue of truth by appeal to phenomenological or linguistic analysis. These two schools of thought are to be seen as successors to metaphysics, at one time the dominant school of thought in philosophy. Metaphysics eventually had to yield ground as empirical science began to prove itself more effective in the quest for knowledge as truth. But it was philosophy itself that gave rise to the special disciplines of empirical science. As a result philosophy continues to play its historically creative role in the guise of the theoretical work pursued by the scientist in the natural or social sciences. In this regard, analytic philosophy could be interesting as an aspect of linguistics but is ill equipped to deal seriously with issues concerning truth. This enterprise properly belongs to the enterprise of philosophy embedded in the structure of theoretical science whether expressed as natural science or social science.

Introduction

How do we understand the world in which we find ourselves? How does the universe behave? What is the nature of reality? Where did all this come from? Did the universe need a creator? Traditionally these are questions for philosophy, but philosophy is dead Philosophy has not kept up with modern developments in science, particularly physics. Scientists have become the bearers of the torch of discovery in our quest for knowledge.[1]

Stephen Hawking

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[1] Stephen Hawking. *The Grand Design* (2010), p.5

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Stephen Hawking claims in his recent text *The Grand Design* that "philosophy is dead", yet undoubtedly offers a philosophical answer to his assertion. This paper is mainly an attempt to answer the question on the status of philosophy at a time when Hawking's view of philosophy is rather widely accepted. This is not to say that philosophy's only concern is the seeking after truth, it is just its central concern. But philosophy is also concerned with questions of judgment (aesthetics, etc.) and appraisal (ethics, etc.). But such questions are not divorced from the issue of truth given that judgment and appraisal must operate within a context where truth claims are made.

Introduction

Humans as thinking beings invented what became known as philosophy for the purpose of making sense of their thoughts and sensory experiences so as to arrive at certitude concerning the former. But such activities were necessarily made from within the context of human languages. The statement and analysis of things as they actually are experienced requires that language be the vehicle of the expressions of such. Thus it seems that two results follow from this observation. First, there can be no extra-linguistic analysis of the content of human sensory experience. Second, statements of the 'contents of experience are necessarily compromised by the structure of the linguistic vehicle employed. Yet these restrictions do not deter those engaged in philosophical inquiry from believing that with adequate analysis accurate claims about the nature of human sensory experience could eventually be formulated. To put it more succinctly, the activity of philosophy was from its inception geared towards discovering and formulating what could be variously and inter-linguistically described as "the truth".

But over time the techniques of philosophical inquiry evolved as humans acquired increased knowledge of their environments. General philosophy developed into the triple divisions of natural philosophy, moral philosophy, and metaphysics. The main instrument of inquiry for the three branches was what became known as epistemology. After being subjected to relentless scrutiny by epistemological analysis, metaphysics lost its status as that branch of inquiry that was most apt to yield "truth". As knowledge - in the form of assumed facts about the world - increased, natural philosophy and moral philosophy were transformed into natural science and moral, then later, "social" science.

Philosophy was increasingly seen as offering less substantive claims about the world as relayed to humans by way of their sensory apparatus.

But philosophy has continued to seek. to maintain its historical role as inquirer and arbiter of the "truth" in spite of the great inroads made in this regard by its intellectual descendant, theoretical and empirical science. One philosophical school of thought has refashioned philosophical analysis to be mainly concerned with the parsing and analysis of language. This appeal to linguistic analysis is seen as the most efficient way to arrive at some resolution of the question of truth. But there are limitations to this approach. The impressive yield of empirical science would seem, therefore, to restrict philosophical inquiry to the activity of meta-philosophical analysis of the findings of the natural and social sciences themselves.

Traditional philosophical inquiry has had as one of its chief goals, inquiry into the actual nature of what humans call reality. The term variously formulated for such has been "the truth", that is, a description of what actually obtains in the world. But establishing the truth has proven to be a rather difficult task given that its claimants must necessarily subject their claims to epistemological query. It is for this reason that early epistemological analysis, as in the case of Greek philosophy, arrived at the conclusion that the sense data of the empirically experienced world were not fully reliable as candidates for the infrastructure of a secure ontology. The claim from Plato and others was that truth or the genuine state of affairs must not be seriously sought in an epistemologically fallible empirical world. Others claimed that the experienced world is all that could be accounted for and that forays into abstract ideations and speculations fostered by the imagination and unfettered thought were not to be encouraged.

But those who sought truth in the realm of abstraction held sway for centuries on account of the limitations and the potential fallibility of empirically experienced data. This long period constituted the golden age of philosophy as "queen of the sciences" in the guise of abstract metaphysics. But the persistent belief that the quest for truth should be confined to the world of sensory experience was eventually justified with the great advances in empirical inquiry in the form of natural philosophy, that is, the philosophy of the natural world. Empiricism won the epistemological game because it became obvious that more

was being learned about the structure of the universe, as the technological tools for scientific investigation improved and provided a more substantial empirical yield than any metaphysical theory. One recalls David Hume's strictures against metaphysics and Immanuel Kant's attempt to salvage an epistemological place for it with his invention of the synthetic *a priori*. Even Kant had to agree that knowledge begins with experience even though it does not all arise out of experience. And further, modern physics tends to lean to the theory that concepts such as space and time are just as empirically real as other objects and are not *a priori* conditions of knowledge.

What is evident in the history of ideas is that as empirical science grew in stature, traditional philosophy as metaphysics or moral philosophy was rendered increasingly innocuous from a cognitive standpoint. In its bid for survival, metaphysics transformed itself into *positivismas* — the handmaid of natural philosophy, now having won its independence as "science", — and phenomenology as a kind of substitute for science. The names of G. W. F Hegel, Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger come to mind in this regard. But positivism, and subsequently, logical positivism were the names only for the methodology of empirical research which yielded both the philosophy of science and analytic philosophy as its research disciplines.

In all of this the original goal of philosophy, which is to sort out the truth about human sensory experiences, has been overlooked. Phenomenology seeks to make sense of human sensory experiences from the standpoint of a kind of *ersatz* science but it does not possess the investigatory tools that science possesses. One cannot really investigate "Being" without delving into theoretical and experimental physics. Similar considerations apply to attempts to unveil the truth by the linguistic analysis of terms within natural languages. It is for this reason that some philosophers have despaired at the reduced role for philosophy in its traditional goal of seeking truth, once it was recognized that philosophy as metaphysics was limited in both its ontological and epistemological scope. Heidegger comes to mind in this regard.

I mentioned above that one of the post-metaphysical ploys of philosophy was to examine the concept of truth by way of linguistic analysis. This has been the task of modern analytic philosophy. But its practitioners are quite modest in their goals, given that they restrict

their cognitive efforts to discussing the concept of truth rather than what exactly might constitute the set of true propositions. Of course, this sceptical approach to the question of truth has its obvious limitations. After all, analytic philosophers, as strict empiricists, do vouch pragmatically for the realness of the technology they employ to disseminate their symbolically presented ideas. On the other hand, empirical analysis, itself an evolutionary product of philosophy, has inquired after the truth by another route, that of seeking to unravel our sensory experiences by appeal to scientific analysis.

Here, I will elaborate on this position concerning the career and development of philosophy. I will begin with a discussion of the crisis experienced by philosophy at the fall from grace of metaphysics as the core of philosophy. I will briefly examine this idea in terms of Heidegger's text *The End of Philosophy*. I will then explore this idea further by way of Rorty's critique of analytic philosophy and his attempts to salvage philosophy by recourse to a neo-pragmatism that he perceived to be cognitively on par with scientific theory. Yet Rorty's critique has not had much impact on the continuing dominance of analytic philosophy as compared to other paradigms of research. Thus, I will focus much of my critique on analytic philosophy and its treatment of the question of truth.

I will argue that the analysis of the idea of truth as engaged in by analytic philosophy is an unsuccessful one and that the optimal path to follow would be that of the meta-analysis of the findings of empirical science in all its dimensions. I will show, therefore, that the different theories of truth as discussed by analytic philosophers are much limited in what they seek to deliver. I will first discuss the various theories of truth then I will argue that the quest for truth or its approximations would be better served by an involved discourse on the content, meaning and significance of diverse scientific theories. I will argue finally that although philosophy proper has evolved into "science" in all its dimensions, the yield of natural science research has been so impressive that its methodology and epistemology have been fully adopted by those disciplines now called the social or human sciences that have human behaviour as the object of their inquiry. But in their adoption of the nomenclature "science" the human or social sciences have divorced themselves in theory from the evaluative concerns of

their ancestor disciplines, the moral sciences. I argue that no science that treats of human behaviour could realistically divorce itself from considerations of value and human significance.

Heidegger and the end of philosophy

Martin Heidegger and some other philosophers tend to equate philosophy with metaphysics. Thus when philosophy witnessed the diminution of its role as arbiter on traditional issues such as that of the truth, directly caused by the advancements in scientific inquiry, its central function in the human quest for knowledge was questioned. It is this idea that Heidegger sought to explore in his text, *The End of Philosophy*. As he put it:

> With Nietzsche's metaphysics, philosophy is completed. That means: It has gone through the sphere of prefigured possibilities. Completed metaphysics, which is the ground for the planetary manner of thinking, gives the scaffolding for an order of the earth which will supposedly last for a long time. The order no longer needs philosophy because philosophy is already its foundation. But with the end of philosophy, thinking is not also at its end, but in transition to another beginning.[2]

Heidegger also write that with the completion of metaphysics the following ensues:

> Philosophy in the age of completed metaphysics is anthropology. Whether or not one says 'philosophical anthropology' makes no difference. In the meantime philosophy has become anthropology and in this way a prey to the derivatives of metaphysics, that is, physics in the broadest sense, which includes the physics of life and man, biology and psychology. Having become anthropology, philosophy itself perishes of metaphysics.[3]

Heidegger's general philosophy as expressed in *Being and Time* is an attempt to salvage metaphysics from an advancing science by offering up an analysis of substantial matter in time. This was also an instance of the old attempt to resolve the issue of "Being" as abstract substance

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[2] M. Heidegger, *The End of Philosophy*. (Chicago:The University of Chicago Press, 1973), pp 95-96.

[3] Ibid, p.99

and its different material instantiations. It was the issue, as Heidegger put it, of Being and beings. But this approach was doomed to failure given the impending completion of metaphysics. After all, the study of Being has been usurped by quantum mechanics and the study of beings is now firmly in the provinces of biology and molecular genetics.

Heidegger recognized all this in his public pronouncements as in "*The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking*":

> *The sciences are now taking over as their own task what philosophy in the course of its history tried to present in certain places and there only inadequately, that is, the ontologies of the various regions of beings(nature, history, law, art)....However, the sciences still speak about Being of beings in the unavoidable supposition of their regional categories. They just don't say so. They can deny their origin from philosophy, but never dispense with it. For in the scientific attitude of the sciences, the document of their birth of philosophy still speaks. The end of philosophy proves to be the triumph of the manipulable arrangement of a scientific-technological world and the social order proper to this world.[4]*

As stated above the golden age of philosophy was its metaphysical period. And as an intellectual quest it was dominant inter-culturally. Its essential epistemological virtue was its rationality about abstract ideas. In this regard, Aristotle was its founding father and his influence, after a long period of quiescence, spread far and wide from the Andalusian school to that of Timbuktu. The names of Ibn Sina, Ibn Rushd , Ahmed Baba come to mind all before the fall of Andalusia. The torch of metaphysics was later taken up in the Neo-Platonist and Neo-Aristotelian schools of Western Europe, first with the Medieval Schoolmen then with the Rationalists (Descartes, Spinoza, and Leibniz). But all to a final point with Kant who could not really answer Hume, the herald of the age of Newtonian mechanics and empiricism.

Rorty and the critique of analytic philosophy
Richard Rorty's text *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* constitutes another attempt to challenge Analytic Philosophy and its attempt to

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[4] M. Heidergger, "*The End of Philosophy and the Art of thinking,*" German Television Interview with Richard Wisser, 1969.

illuminate the concept of truth. For Rorty, the claim that the epistemological methods of analytic philosophy could lead us to the foundations of representational claims about our sensory experiences is problematic. Rorty's thesis reduces to the argument that there are epistemological limitations in questing after the foundations of knowledge and that all that we can hope for are the pragmatic yield of our sensory experiences. Rorty's epistemological theorem then is: give up on the search for truth and focus instead on how reliable our experiences are for the practical business of living.

One important element of Rorty's philosophy is his claim that the same epistemological blockages that affect analytic philosophy and its search for truth also affect scientific analysis. One startling result of this epistemological egalitarianism is that for Rorty the cognitive content of those disciplines that "represent" a supposed reality are of equal status to those that historically have been viewed as "non-representational".

In "Science and Solidarity" Rorty argues that were the established scheme-content dichotomy, that now characterises the science-humanities cognitive paradigm, to be breached, there would no basis for distinguishing the cognitive content between the sciences and the non-sciences. Rorty writes:

> *Suppose that Dewey was[sic] right about this, and that eventually we learn to find the fuzziness which results from breaking down such oppositions spiritually comforting rather than morally offensive. What would the rhetoric of the culture and in particular the humanities, sound like? Presumably it would be more Kuhnian, in the sense that it would mention particular concrete achievements - paradigms - more and 'methods' less. There would be less talk about rigour and more about originality....If all this happened, the term 'science,' and thus the oppositions between the humanities, the arts, and the sciences, might gradually fade away.*[5]

The result of this would be that the cognitive status of the theories of all academic disciplines would be on par and that concerns over objectivity would give way to "reciprocal loyalty" of the members of

[5]   R. Rorty, "Science as Solidarity." In R. Rorty, ed., *Objectivity, Relativism and Truth - Philosopical Papers*, vol. 1. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Présss, 1991), p. 35-45

the different academic communities. Rorty makes essentially the same point about the established qualitative distinction between ethics and empirical science. Thus the propositions "there goes a neutrino" and "that's morally despicable" would be epistemologically on par.[6] For Rorty, it is all a question of "respective 'psychologies and sensibilities".[7]

It is obvious then that Rorty's critique of analytical philosophy did not mean that it constituted a weak and ineffective substitute for science but rather that a post-metaphysics philosophy could be salvaged by downgrading the epistemological power of empirical science itself. This approach was certainly not enough to cause any significant shifting of epistemological commitments on the part of those who worked within the contours of analytic philosophy. Given the evident limitations of analytical philosophy in terms of its ontological scope - the fact that it has no instrumentation other than the context-bound morphemes of idiosyncratic natural languages - this particular philosophical school has reduced itself from exploring the core issues of appearance and reality, truth and opinion, etc., to merely discussing the concept of truth.

As stated above, analytic philosophy is one of the dominant schools of post-metaphysics philosophy. It is countered by phenomenology which presented itself as an epistemologically superior programme than empirical science itself. But there has not been any genuine advancement of knowledge within this school of thought despite the theoretical efforts of pioneers such as Husserl and Heidegger. For Heidegger eventually had to admit that philosophy, in order engage in its most important pursuits, had to give birth to empirical science. But analytic philosophy has not made such concessions given that it assumes that because it aims at rigour, that, therefore, it is somewhat on par with science on account of its self-ascribed meta-analytical activities.

Sensory inputs, language, and knowledge
It is evident that for humans a sufficient condition for existence is subjective sensory experience. Objects may exist but the recognition

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[6] ibid, p.45

[7] R. Rorty, "Is National Science a Natural Kind?" In R. Rorty, ed., *Objectivity, Relativism and Truth-Philosophical Papers,* (Cambridge: Cambridge Press, 1991), p. 56

of such derives from sensory experience. In fact, the issue of sensory experience applies not only to humans but also to all living organisms. All living organisms respond to particular stimuli even when they may not be conscious of such. In the case of humans an unassailable *a priori* claim is that an experiential world exists. This world is known experientially only because of the sensing of stimuli that impinge on human sensory receptors, the consciousness of which is established on account of the central human sensory organ referred to as the brain.

On account of the substantial nature of these stimuli, humans over their evolutionary career as earthbound entities, have developed mechanisms whereby experienced sensory stimuli are codified for communication purposes. The term used to describe the most important of these mechanisms is language. The physiology of the human brain explains why language may be expressed directly by the creation and vocal emission of a complex set of sounds. Language may also be expressed at a second level by the abstract representation of these complex vocal sounds by another set of sensory stimuli. Vocally emitted sounds which sensorily are just "puffs of air" may be represented by other sensorily identified stimuli, that is written language, which bears no direct relationship to the vocally emitted sounds. The value of written language derives from the fact that it carries what may be called diachronic value. A sensory experience recorded at time T1 may be recorded by written language and communicated at some later time at time T2.

One of the significant features of language in whatever form is that modes of linguistic expression first establish meaning for purposes of communication, and are then ranked as to their significance. Experiential stimuli expressed linguistically are to be understood in evaluative terms as representing genuine stimuli. It is in this context that the meta-linguistic concepts "truth" and "falsity" arise. So too for the concept of knowledge which is merely a synonym for the set of linguistic claims accorded the valuation of truth.

In the context of normal human communication this ranking of linguistic claims according to their truth content is taken for granted and valued greatly for their practical significance. But matters just do not end there. The very nature of the ranking mechanism may be put under further scrutiny because, after all, the ranking mechanism may not be consensually agreed on. Knowledge matrices may differ widely

for different individuals with intersections and divergences occurring at different points. It is in this context that terms such as opinion, belief, evidence, proof, and so on, assume importance. On account of the historical interest in these matters and the solutions offered concerning the determination of the contours and boundaries of knowledge matrices, individuals who reflect on such have recognized that meaningful linguistic claims may be compartmentalized not only in one general knowledge bank but in perhaps three.

Traditionally, theorists of knowledge compartmentalize knowledge into factual claims, value judgments, and meaningful propositions that are true or false purely in terms of their linguistic constructions. In any language, factual claims are accepted or rejected based on consistency of sensory experience. Propositions that are taken to mean the equivalent of "there is a river five kilometers to the east" are viewed as confirmable or not based on consistency of sensory experience. The idea of truth or falsity is another qualifier for propositions that are sensorily confirmable or not regardless of linguistic context.

Value judgments constitute another set of propositional claims in any language that could constitute grounds for disagreement purely on opinion or taste. In any language, statements about the character of persons, the tastiness of foods, and so on, have always been candidates for disagreement on grounds purely of opinion or taste. Unlike factual statements value judgments are easily viewed as legitimately questioned or debated. Speakers of any language could eventually be persuaded to regard evaluative propositions as being qualitatively different from those making factual claims. What is of much interest though is that there has been much debate on whether propositions viewed by some as evaluative may be redefined as possessing genuine ontological content of the kind reserved for factual propositions. Propositional claims concerning notions such as good, evil or bad fall under such a consideration. There are those who would argue colloquially that "evil exists" and is a palpable characteristic of some individuals.

But there is another set of propositions that possess a kind of structure that speakers of any language would recognize as logically true. Some of these statements are axiomatically trivial but others though tautologous are not evidently so. Mathematical statements and proofs constitute this latter type. Examples of trivially true statements are as follows: "I am the same as myself" and "my uncle's only brother is

11

my father." Curiously enough, in their search for criteria of truth many philosophers have placed the greatest stock in these kinds of propositions as exemplars of truth. We recall in this context David Hume's trenchant talk of "matters of fact and relations of ideas". Although these kinds of propositions are regarded as true on the grounds that confirmation requires only consistent or logical thought, they do not easily advance the human programme concerning the acquisition of knowledge. Humans tend to be mainly concerned with sensorily confirmable factual propositions. Factually confirmable propositions advance pragmatic concerns and interests in our experiential world. It is on this basis that the essence of inquiry into knowledge is what constitutes epistemology. And epistemology is the necessary auditor of knowledge claims. This is what produces the perennial debate concerning the idea of truth. As a result, diverse theories of truth have been formulated. I will now survey them.

Theories of truth revisited

For those concerned to examine the question of truth systematically, the debate, for the past decades, has emphasized mainly the following theories: the correspondence, coherence, semantic, pragmatic and deflationary. The standard analysis reports that the correspondence theory is founded on the testable correspondence between a propositional claim and what it reports. One could argue in this vein that confirmable scientific theories seek justification in terms of versions of the correspondence theory. In this context we may regard Boyle's Law and Newton's Second Law as instances of the correspondence theory of truth. What I mean by this is that $PV = k$ (Boyle's Law) may be shown to correspond to what it claims. Similarly for $F=ma$ (Newton's Second Law) in the case of Newton's second law. The reason for science's commitment to the correspondence theory of truth is that scientists assume that the physical universe actually exists and that it is the function of scientific research to construct theories and propositions that would accurately depict that existent reality. And even when constructed scientific theories are coherent and seem reasonable they are ultimately accepted when they have been shown to describe reality accurately, even if only on a pragmatic basis.

The coherence theory, no doubt, springs from a formalist approach to knowledge. The contingency of claims about the empirical world

weakens the truth claims of propositions based on sensorily derived empirical claims, So genuine truth must reside in the ontology of formally valid claims. All the coherence theory of truth requires is that the parts of the system of claims be logically related to each other. Theorems in mathematics and similar kinds of formal statements are no doubt fit candidates to satisfy the coherence theory. The coherence theory of truth could also be justified for cases where propositional claims are meaningful and acquire truth value only within the boundaries of some linguistic context. Thus the proposition that "The sun rises in the East and sets in the West" is a true proposition according to the linguistic context to which it belongs. The truth value criteria for the coherence theory do not depend on a strictly empiricist epistemology but on an epistemology that is founded on linguistic meaningfulness. It is in this sense that the coherence theory is to be considered less epistemologically demanding than the correspondence theory.

Despite claims of contingency, the sensory world cannot be bypassed. For even though the epistemological standards for the coherence theory do not require strict empirical evidence, the truth values of propositional claims do depend on empirical evidence according to the theory. It is for this reason that the proposition that "Horus is an Egyptian god" is an empirically symbolic proposition that is taken to mean that Horus is an Egyptian god within the context of Egyptian mythology. The issue here is that before significance could be attributed to their symbolic representations they must be sensorily experienced. Even the coherence theory of truth itself and its instantiations must be expressed in terms that must be first sensorily recognized. Thus at base it would seem that the coherence theory itself necessarily relies on the same strict empiricist criteria as the correspondence theory.

A problem with the coherence theory is that there may be ostensible claims formulated from within the context of a logically interconnected set of truths that may be inconsistent with another set of claims. For example, the proposition that "The sun rises in the East and sets in the West" is deemed true in one linguistic context but false in the linguistic context of astronomy. In astronomy the idea of the sun "rising" or "setting" is simply wrong. At this juncture the debate about establishing genuine criteria for knowledge claims is reduced to a mere theoretical one. But the idea of knowledge cannot just be a mere exercise in theoretical and logical analysis. In the quest for knowledge there is the

13

obvious problem of how to evaluate competing theories or frameworks about the same phenomena that conform to the coherence theory's criteria of coherent discourse and internal consistency.

Another problem with the coherence theory is that at the theoretical level it belongs principally to the same area of philosophy as linguistic analysis. At the practical level, the coherence theory may be seen as equally attractive to those who reject foundationalist epistemologies and argue that epistemological relativism is justified wherever there are diverse and conflicting modes and theories of analysis. In general, the coherence theory has found fertile expression in those areas where differing value judgments expressive of different modes of analysis are evident. In the area of analytic philosophy which limits philosophical analysis mainly to questions of meaning within the context of language, the coherence theory is a preferred mode of epistemological analysis. Examples of such are the various debates between minimalist supporters such as Donald Davidson and cautious realists like Hilary Putnam. The same holds for the neo-pragmatism of theorists such as Rorty and others. The common premise is that knowledge claims are always theory-laden. Under these constraints the most that the epistemologist could hope for are knowledge claims joined together by meanings of terms that are carefully honed and propositions linked together by logical inference.

The intrinsic problem with the coherence theory is just this: it wants to deny that the empirical world could be genuinely knowable on account of the fact that language in all its complexities mediates truth claims about the experienced world. But the purpose of language is not principally about providing provable certification about the sensory world on the basis of consensus building criteria. Language is concerned mainly with meaning. On account of this emphasis the phenomenal worlds and their constituent linguistic items referred to can be based on any particular ontology. It is on this basis that the inter-linguistic translation of terms could be highly problematic. Those who are skilled at inter-linguistic translation gear their translations to satisfy proper meanings rather than seek referents for particular linguistic items. But even so, there are no perfect inter-linguistic fits. Quine, for example, makes this point in his discussions on the ontological pitfalls of inter-linguistic translation.[8]

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[8] See W.V. Quine, *Word and Object*. (Cambridge M. A.: MIT Press, 1960)

What the coherence theory would tolerate is that the reports of each language and its particular notions of truth and falsity would be justified within those particular language contexts as long as meaning is intra-contextually preserved. It is evident therefore that natural languages are not fit instruments for discourse concerning the ontology of experience and the epistemological certification of such. Thus theories about knowledge such as the coherence theory and its more formal counterpart, the semantic theory of truth must be seen as inadequate for purposes of ontological inquiry.

The semantic theory of truth springs from the belief that truth claims are necessarily based on linguistic context. After Tarski, we are told that propositions such as "snow is white" is true, if and only if snow is white. The problem with this theory of truth is that it really gets us nowhere in terms of exploring the questions concerning the nature of knowledge. The weakness of the semantic theory of truth is that it lacks potential ontological content given that its truth content is evidently founded on bi-conditionality, hence is tautological. To state that "snow is white" is true if and only if snow is white tells us nothing about whether the proposition "snow is white" is actually true. The pursuit of genuine knowledge requires that there be some leeway for skepticism. There is an obvious formal connection between the stated minimalist theory of truth and the correspondence theory. The difference between the two theories, however, is significant. There is no room for skepticism, an important aspect of epistemological inquiry, with regard to the claims made by propositions couched in the language of linguistic minimalism.

The same argument applies to the context-bound discussions of truth as it applies to linguistic propositions and those portions of reality that they describe. Analytic philosophy is intrinsically wedded to the philosophy of language. One of the central concepts in this genre of philosophical analysis is that of truth. It is this that has exercised the reflections of natural language theorists such as Davidson, Putnam, Rorty, Dummett, and others in recent times. In all of this one should, of course, recognise, the seminal work produced by Gettier concerning the conditions for knowledge and its relationship to truth.[9] But it should be obvious to those who confine themselves

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See E. Gettier, "Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?" *Analysis*, 23, pp. 121-123.

epistemologically to natural languages that the very idea of truth itself is a natural language creation that is semantically confined to the contexts of specific languages.

An obvious critique of the deflationary theory of truth is that the mere assertion of some proposition tells us little as to the amount of epistemological investment that the speaker places in the proposition itself. The proposition "snow is white" needs an epistemological input that falls within the probabilistic range of zero to one. The point is that propositions that are asserted must be qualified by some form of subjective appraisal. Thus "snow is white" is true carries much more epistemological heft than the assertion "snow is white" is possibly true.

Thus granted that the term "true" exists in natural languages in one form or another and is inter-linguistically translatable in terms of meaning, truth in whatever form is not easily dismissed. There is nothing mysterious about truth; it is merely a linguistic qualifier asserted by individual agents expressing subjectively warrantable beliefs about particular states of affairs. Of course, this definition of things brings us back to the central issue of epistemology: what is the relationship between subjectively warrantable propositions and states of affairs as they are actually? A possible answer to this question could begin by returning to our sensory givens. Without subjective consciousness no agent would ever be able to formulate theories of truth of any kind. And subjective consciousness is manifest only with coherent recognitions of sensory states mediated by an acknowledgement of the world of phenomena out there.

Yet despite the fact that users of natural languages take the concept of truth for granted even when thoughts and ideas are expressed in disquotational terms, some philosophers have argued that truth is an indefinable concept. As Davidson puts it: "Truth is, as G.E. Moore, Bertrand Russell, and Gottlob Frege maintained, and Alfred Tarski proved, an indefinable concept....Nor does the indefinability of truth imply that the concept is mysterious, ambiguous, or untrustworthy".[10] I would not argue that truth is impervious to definition given its central role in natural language discourse but

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[10]   D. Davidson, "The Folly of Trying to Define the Truth". *The Journal of Philosophy,* 93 (6), pp. 262-278.

would argue that its ordinary definition is a prosaic one restricted as it is to the contexts of ordinary language discourse. In courts of law, for example, truth as adequately confirmable evidence is constantly redefined. And when it is incontrovertibly established there is cognitive acknowledgement - willing or unwilling - of the claims and assertions consistent with the provided evidence. Despite its necessity for linguistic discourse, the standard mode of communication is to discuss matters involving truth claims in deflationary terms.

The deflationary approach to truth most likely developed because some philosophers believed that the most efficient framework for formulating the truth was one in which there was no linguistic intermediary between particular propositions and what they actually asserted. Thus Tarski's much discussed proposition that "snow is white" is true if and only if snow is white is reducible, according to this approach, to the mere assertion that "snow is white." There is perhaps some merit to the deflationary theory in that in all forms of linguistic propositions that purport to relay the facts, there are no automatic predicates of "is true" appended to each proposition that is asserted to be factual. But this would not satisfy epistemological queries because what is at stake is not whether particular propositions are held to be true, but on what basis or criteria are they judged to be such. What the deflationary theory lacks is some kind of checking mechanism that is afforded by the other theories of truth. The assertion that "S is P" does not yet satisfy the required epistemological criteria that constitute standard debates about "truth". For after all, it is quite possible that "S is P" is false in the sense of not satisfying even basic epistemological criteria. The fact that epistemological analyses of scientific theories have jettisoned the idea of "true theories" in favour of "confirmed theories" offers support for the point made above about the deflationary theory of truth.

Similar considerations apply to the pragmatic theory of truth. The pragmatic theory of truth states that some proposition is true if it is useful or contextually convenient to uphold the truth of that proposition. This approach to truth has been expounded by thinkers such as Dewey and Pierce, with later elaborations from Habermas and Rorty. Obviously, there is a close connection between the correspondence theory and the pragmatic theory on the grounds

that humans are biologically structured to ensure that the content of their linguistic communications correspond actually to what is reported to their senses, if only to satisfy the practical requirements of existence. The problem with the pragmatic theory of truth though is that different individuals might ascribe truth to patently contradictory propositions on the grounds that it is useful to assign truth to such propositions. Clearly, a proper theory of truth cannot countenance propositions that are true in one context and false in another. One of the problematic results of the pragmatic theory of truth is that all "truth" claims are epistemologically on par as long as they satisfy consensually agreed on community standards.[11]

The problematic of language and analytic philosophy

Natural language analysis gets us only so far. Consciousness presupposes a world of sensory data and the natural languages developed by humans constitute a key mechanism by which such data are accounted for. But the function of natural language was not to probe the content of sensory experience but rather to serve as a practical instrument to communicate meaning-signals about experienced empirical sense data and the emotive responses to such when appropriate. For those who are strictly interested in examining the full significance of sensorily received data, natural languages are clearly ontologically inadequate. What then is the epistemological function of analytic philosophy? A plausible answer is that given its restrictedness to natural language, it can be not much more than a branch of linguistics emphasizing questions of semantics.

It is for this reason that ontologists interested in probing the structure of the experienced world have eschewed the modalities offered by natural language. It is the language of empirical science that has replaced natural language for those interested in interpreting sensory experience and validating or invalidating claims made thereon. Natural languages, of course, are the primary mode of communication for humans and in such communication the issue of truth is necessarily central. To facilitate the business of practical living, accuracy of representation or "truth" whether to oneself or others has always been assigned great value. There have always been established criteria for such as expressed in any natural language regardless of linguistic structure. To ensure the

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[11]   Rorty, op cit.

possibility of intra or interpersonal communication it has been incumbent on the members of all linguistic communities to grasp, even if implicitly, the concepts of identity, contradiction and excluded middle. Perhaps the most stringent attempts at parsing the concept of truth within the context of natural languages have rested in matters concerning the application of the law within society. But what is aimed at here is mere confirmation of the truth by way of certifiable reports buttressed with the basic principles of universal logic.

But this is not the kind of truth that philosophers have traditionally sought to uncover. The kind of truth that philosophers have traditionally aimed at is "truth" as a synonym for those states of affairs that transcend language and are independent of language or observer. In this regard, attempts to debate truth within the context of natural languages would not be adequate. First of all, there is the important question of whether the observation claims of natural languages are necessarily theory laden. And if so, what effect does that have on the ontological claims of these languages themselves? Matters are compounded in this instance by the fact that natural languages themselves are not directly inter-linguistically translatable.[12] Linguistic signs are mere objective signifiers and are understood purely in terms of their meanings. The problems of meaning and truth naturally arise because there is no universal language into which all natural languages are translatable. And even if that were the case, there is no guarantee that meanings would be shared within some universal community. The putative structure of some universal natural language is such that its constituent morphemes would necessarily allow for fluidity of meaning. What this means is that "truth" in its strongest sense, if it existed, would not be found by way of discussions of the morphemic and syntactic contents of natural languages.

It is a fact though that "truth" as a concept is taken seriously by natural language speakers in a strictly empiricist sense. Thus the natural language claim that "there are three chairs in this room" is a proposition to which truth status is easily ascribable. As is the case with propositions that satisfy the correspondence theory of truth, such natural language propositions must also satisfy the criteria of intra-linguistic coherence.

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[12] Quine, op cit

It is in this sense that the correspondence theory of truth is meaningful at the level of the colloquial. But this would not satisfy the cognitive needs of philosophy. To answer the important questions concerning truth one must seek to eschew the answers offered by natural language analysis. Quine's concerns about the indeterminacy of inter-linguistic translations are not insurmountable given the sociological record of inter-human interaction and communication. To support this point one has only to point to individuals who speak a multiplicity of natural languages. The answer to Quine is that the problem of "gavagai" is easily surmountable.

Of more importance though has been the question of whether truth could exist independently of the propositions of natural language. The answer is that it does, given the fact that the language invented to describe sensory experiences as they are received is not some natural language but the language of physics. The sparse language of physics is tailored just to describe the diverse configurations that matter assumes in the sensed dimensions of space and time. The real furniture of the universe is nothing more than what physicists have labeled as atoms and their constituent parts. The diverse forms according to which matter configures itself so that such configurations are sensorily differentiable are to be understood metaphorically as nature carved at its joints.

The upshot of all this is that the tools and framework that linguistic and analytic philosophy employ to discuss the concept of truth are inadequate. Such tools and framework are adequate only for the practical interactions of individuals in society as they seek to arrange and settle their daily accounts. It is quite evident that our sensory experiences reflect an existing phenomenal world and that the content of such experiences reflect reality in its myriad dimensions. The description of this reality is what "epistemological truth" and its cognates are warranted to qualify. The epistemological task at hand is not only to develop adequate criteria establishing propositionally what actually obtains but also to state what those propositions actually are. It is only by proceeding along the lines of methodologies of inquiry employed by empirical science and their certifiable claims could such answers be obtained. This is the recommended approach whether one seeks answers by way of analytic philosophy or more holistic phenomenologies. There is no alternative path given the structural progress of philosophy from a single discipline to a moral and natural philosophy then to a multiplicity of

20

research areas in both the natural and social sciences. The epistemological goal now should be to inquire after what is the actual nature of our sensory experiences by appeal to the most effective instruments created in this regard. It should be noted though that the limitations of analytic philosophy are not lost on some of its proponents, in that after a period of demolition, analytic philosophy ought now to be seeking to adopt a constructive approach to the idea of truth. Gila Sher, for example, seeks to establish a "substantive theory of truth". Sher tells us that she seeks to "connect the methodological challenges facing the theorist of truth with those facing the natural (and social) scientist. This will enable me to place the debate on truth in a new, broader perspective, and point to new ways of approaching the issues[13]".

In defence of realism
Those who seek illumination on the question of truth by way of disquisitions in natural language will progress no further than constructing theories in linguistic analysis. It is necessary to step outside the shallow contexts of natural languages in order to seek answers to perhaps the most important questions that could be posed by the human mind. The question again is what is the actual state of affairs that could be reported by the human sensory apparatus? In this regard, theories founded on epistemological relativism, pragmatism or anti-realism cannot make much progress simply because they must assume some version of realism if they are to convince others of their soundness. The position taken by pragmatists such as Rorty cannot be supported because the claim that "usefulness" is sufficient to confer epistemic acceptability on propositional claims would just result in relativistic confusions. Theorists such as John Searle support an attenuated realism with the claim that "All representation, and *a fortiori* all truthful representation, is always under certain aspects and not others"[14]. And "strictly speaking, there is an indefinitely large number of different points of view, different aspects, and different conceptual systems under which anything can be represented....In short, it is only from a point of view that we represent reality, but ontologically objective reality does not have a point of

[13] G. Sher, "In Search of a Substantive Theory of Truth", *The Journal of Philosophy.* 51, 1, pp5-36
[14] J. Searle, *The Social Construction of Reality* (New York: The Free Press, 1995), p. 176

view"[15]. Searle offers as an example the different representations of "water" and "H_2O" under two different conceptual schemes[16]. But there is a problem with this approach since it is the same conceptual scheme that allows for both descriptions to be used without ambiguity. The individual elements of water when dissected are themselves composed of two atoms of hydrogen and one of oxygen.

Similar considerations apply to the general discussions mounted by major philosophers of language - Strawson, Dummett, Davidson, Putnam, Quine, Rorty, et al.- concerning the perennial question of truth. To seek to know the facts of the totality of our sensory experiences requires more than interminable exchanges on linguistic criteria appropriate for establishing truth. Although humans receive the same sensory inputs regardless of the language employed to express such inputs it is a fact that natural languages are not concordant when it comes to morphemic and inter and intra-linguistic translation. Linguists themselves are much aware of the problematic concerning meaning when the task is inter-linguistic translation. Thus it may be argued that natural languages do not constitute proper vehicles to seek after the facts of what reality actually is. The tools of inquiry must include those that actually delve into the structures of nature, because ultimately, there are very few questions of significance that could be posed about human sensory experiences. Such questions are: What are the ultimate constituents of matter? How extensive is the universe? How is matter dispersed within it? What is time? Could there possibly be nothing at all? What is consciousness? There are other questions of course concerning humans, apart from those about whether that species is just another biological form. Such questions are necessarily normative and are ultimately, in the general ontological scheme of things, epistemologically vacuous. They are of the form, what kinds of decisions should humans as conscious beings make? And how should such decisions be assigned value?

The claim that there may be phenomena that are in principle unobservable is to be regarded as mere conjecture because one would have to prove how such phenomena may themselves be knowable. Kant's interesting claim that phenomena may be known only within the

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[15] ibid
[16] ibid

conditional parameters of space and time can be criticized on the grounds that space and time themselves are empirical phenomena. This approach would certainly raise questions about the claim that sensorily sanctioned empirical knowledge is intrinsically theory laden. Natural languages and scientific languages do operate on the basis of theory construction for the purposes of meaning, but that does not discount the fact that nature presents itself to human sensory apparatuses in ways that do not require distortion for understanding. Proof of this is that the questions raised by theorists of language are of little significance for those engaged in scientific research. The assumption is that the universe exists and that its contents are differentiated only by their constituent atomic and molecular structures.

In this regard, most scientific researchers seem to have jettisoned all assumptions that belong only to the cognitive realms of metaphysics and idealism. This is not the case with many contemporary philosophers including those who are sympathetic to an empiricist paradigm. Consider the case of the theory of constructive empiricism developed by Bas van Fraassen. In his text *The Scientific Image* van Fraassen argues for a "constructive empiricism" that seeks to support the view of the empirical adequacy of scientific theories without committing himself to the notion that the best explanations of phenomena are no more than the best explanations available.[17] There should be epistemological caution exercised here because there is no proof that the current best explanation is final. This could mean for van Fraassen that a theory could be successful in the sense of being empirically adequate yet not be an accurate reflection of reality.

In fact, it is this debate between realism and forms of anti-realism that fuels current discussion in the philosophy of science. And what is significant in all this is that the debate is largely ignored by scientific researchers themselves who no doubt have embraced the notion that the universe exists and is knowable or potentially knowable. They recognize that there are puzzles concerning matter at its most fundamental level as is expressed in the many debates concerning quantum mechanics. There are also puzzles about the nature of reality at the macroscopic level concerning the contents and extent of the universe. Issues about the nature of "dark energy," "dark matter," black holes and the empirical

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[17]   B. van Fraassen, *The Scientific Image* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980)

plausibility of string theory are of major importance for researchers in contemporary theoretical physics. Despite these puzzles scientific researchers who explore the basic constituents of matter and the kind of structure that holds all these constituents together do embrace an ontology of strict realism. Matters can be summed up in the following way: a sensorily accessible world exists and can be knowable even though human error may lead to misperceptions of this reality.

Alternative searches for the truth

I argue that the restructuring of philosophy over the centuries derives from the advances made by empirical science. The fact that the question of meaningful truth always seeks answers in terms of epistemological warrant in the form of "evidence" has meant that empirical science, armed with its various experimental methods, would eventually push philosophy as speculative metaphysics into the background. The development of analytical philosophy offers evidence of this: philosophy is no longer "queen of the sciences" but "maid of the sciences". This is the predicted outcome of logical positivism. To understand the nature of things requires confronting nature at its base representations with the direct probes afforded by experiment.

The reason behind this evolution is that philosophy in its most successful guise has always tracked science with the result being that the increasing influence of the latter would lead to a decrease in influence of the former. Hence the evident innocuousness of analytic philosophy. But until there is a theory of everything, alternative approaches will continue to be generated. This is the basis for mention here of the approaches taken by those thinkers who approached the question of truth from the subjectivist stance of phenomenology. Reference is made here to the efforts of thinkers such as Husserl and Heidegger to the question of truth and its relatedness to the goals of empirical science. The phenomenological approach fails because its approach is essentially subjectivist and because concepts such as "epoche," "eidectic reduction," "Dasein," "Alethia," are of no relevance or use to researchers in theoretical science.

Of course, there are issues concerning the human condition with its attendant questions on ethics and human conduct. Such questions are indeed important, but issues of values, as the logical

positivists pointed out, cannot be settled by the methods of science. In fact the theoretical and ideological conflicts that characterize the social sciences are at base really about questions of value. It is in these "moral sciences" that philosophy has an obvious role to play by pointing out the constant attempts by working social science theorists to garner epistemological warrant by their covert reification of ideologically derived positions.

But concerns about the conduct and values of humans are not of special importance in the grand scheme of things. The really important question is how to make sense of the sensory world. In other words: what is true of everything? Research in empirical science is the most effective step in that direction. Other approaches, such as the phenomenology of Husserl and Heidegger, or the semantics of analytical philosophy will yield little of note concerning the overarching questions and puzzles about the empirical world.

Epistemology and the theory of scientific knowledge

It was argued above that ordinary language was inadequate for the purpose of formulating and examining genuine knowledge claims. It was on this basis that more appropriate languages specific to the scientific were developed. The languages of scientific discourse that developed over time were required to satisfy two criteria: measurement and objective description. And the reason for this was obvious.

The world presents itself to humans in the form of sensory inputs of diverse and variegated forms, characterized by shape, size, hardness, malleability, and so on. Now these are all ordinary language terms but the natural language terms used to describe these appearances are often vague, relativistic, and hence liable to subjective interpretation. For purposes of accurate measurement the language of mathematics and number was necessarily employed. Once systems of calibration were consensually agreed on, sensory description in terms of number were easily seen to be epistemologically more effective than ordinary language qualifiers. So sensory objects were described as having qualities such as particular masses (as opposed to weight), shapes (in terms of definable and measurements) and colour (in terms of reflected light waves).

Quantitative measurement was also of importance not only for accurate description of objects in terms of mass but also in terms of motion. The principles of mechanics dealt with the latter issue while

25

quantum mechanics sought to measure both the position and motion of elementary particles. The stability of the structure of human sensory experiences were understood not in terms of natural language propositions but in terms of what practitioners of science referred to as scientific principles and law, either general or statistical.

But there are cases in which the human codification of sensory experiences requires not so much the language of mathematics but the language of pure description and classification. The cases referred to here are found mainly in those sciences that explore the structures of organisms that are viewed as being alive. Here we have the well-known division between animate and inanimate matter. In this instance, taxonomic analysis is the scientific methodology with the goal being the formulation of discrete structures and their classification according to genus and type.

But how appropriate would be the use of natural languages in this regard? As was pointed out above: for proper identification of gross sensory experience, the terms and ambiguous concepts of natural language are not appropriate. The solution offered by science was to appeal to the lexicon of extinct languages. In the case of the modern West, the languages chosen were Greek and Latin. Since these languages were no longer spoken, they were not subject to the dynamic interpretations as is the case of living languages. Thus in modern natural science the important terms of "atom" and "molecule" are derivable from Greek and Latin respectively. It is for this reason that the taxonomic terms of natural science are unfamiliar and not generally used by individuals in colloquial natural language discourse.

The human quest for knowledge, natural languages are just not adequate for capturing the sensory inputs experienced by human agents. The purpose of the languages and the disciplines developed to this end are descriptions and explanations that could consensually be shared. Assumptions about the stability of the external world as it is sensorily experienced are frequently tested by subjecting them to the rigourous testing of prediction and control.

Scientific research and its external questions

As mentioned above, once natural philosophy matured into natural science on account of its strictly empiricist approach, epistemologically

buttressed by experimental methods, philosophical analysis, as the epistemological critique of scientifically formulated sensory data, was in danger of becoming obsolescent. At this point the philosophical branch of empiricism transmuted into logical positivism. Yet despite its methodological intent its actual influence on scientific practice was minimal. Only Popper's formulations were of some passing interest to natural scientists in practice.

In response to this troubling situation a novel approach to the analysis of the scientific enterprise was instituted. This was the birth of the critical evaluation of science not from the standpoint of its methodology but from the standpoint of its history and sociology. The critical turning point saw its inception with Kuhn's *Structure of Scientific Revolutions.* Kuhn's key thesis was that methodological analysis of the practice of science did not capture its actual practice. In this regard, formal methodological analysis could be seen as a prescriptive ideal type. The diachronic study of science from the analysis of its sociological and psychological perspectives would be the basis for this novel approach. The idea of the "paradigm" became central to Kuhn's analysis in that the linear growth of knowledge as postulated by orthodox methodological analysis was problematic. Scientific research progressed by revolution rather than by incremental growths of knowledge. But what was important about Kuhn's thesis was that different scientific paradigms dealing with the same issue could be incommensurable and that their eventual obsolescence depended somewhat less on their predictive and explanatory capacities than on the paradigmatic popularity of newer paradigms.

Kuhn's approach to the question of science, founded on whether scientific investigation is the most reliable path to answering epistemological and ontological questions as to the nature of reality as experienced, could be reduced to just one major claim. This claim was that accepted scientific theories in different eras could be epistemologically incompatible. In Kuhn's language "theoretical incommensurability" could be characteristic of different research paradigms. This approach certainly opened the door to arguments in favour of epistemological relativism. Some of the major examples in the history of science appealed to by Kuhn are as follows: the incompatible paradigms of Aristotelian dynamics and Newtonian dynamics, that of phlogistic and Lavoisierian chemistry, and that of

27

Ptolemaic and Copernican astronomy. The examples of paradigm incompatibility are problematic, I am inclined to argue, because pre-modern science as in the case of Aristotelian dynamics, Ptolemaic astronomy, and so on, was still in its developmental stage and not yet fully mature.

One of the reasons why Kuhn's approach to progress in science became so popular was that researchers in areas outside those of the natural sciences, often frustrated in their attempts to establish research paradigms with universal scope, now felt some epistemological comfort at the idea that even that goal was unachievable in the natural sciences. As Kuhn himself put it: "To one last reaction to this book, my answer must be of a different sort . A number of those who have taken pleasure from it have done so less because it illuminates science than because they read its main theses as applicable to many other fields as well"[18]. And Kuhn cautioned about making the claim that research and its findings in the natural sciences were qualitatively similar to those in other areas. He attempts to establish this claimed difference with the argument that there is a "relative scarcity of competing schools in the developed sciences"[19]. Kuhn's point is that the research activities of scientists springing from their education in the methods of their research paradigms eventually lead to the kinds of consensus one finds within specific communities[20].

But Kuhn has not really explained why the differences in research practices in the natural sciences as distinct from those of other areas lead to the qualitative methodological differences he endorses. The question is whether these differences are such that could cast into question the whole Kuhnian enterprise. Surely, if notions such as gestalt switch, crisis, anomaly, revolution and paradigm incommensurability, crucial to Kuhn's thesis, are sound, then the idea of epistemological relativism applicable to all areas of knowledge necessarily arises. Kuhn cannot argue on the one hand for paradigm incommensurability as a major characteristic of the history of science and also argue for qualitative difference between the activities and goals of scientists and the researchers in other areas.

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[18] T. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolution* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1970), p. 208
[19] ibid., p. 209
[20] ibid.

What Kuhn's thesis would seem to demonstrate is that human psychology tends to dominate in areas where there is interpersonal competition, prestige of rank, and so forth. That is indeed the case where there are competing groups of individuals in areas such as scientific research with its traditions of separate paradigms and schools. But regardless of the psychology of research, the stated goal of science, which is to offer testable explanatory accounts of events in the phenomenal world, would always hold pre-eminence over the contingencies of the research itself. It is in this regard that the internal-external question, posed and discussed in the aftermath of Kuhn's sociology and psychology of scientific research, has been rendered moot. The goal of science has been and is distinct from the set of research paths and procedures embarked upon.

Parsing scientific realism

No one denies that there are genuine scientific puzzles and that incommensurable hypotheses could be argued for as being equally explanatory. But that does not confer equal validity on such theories. Human sensory experience necessarily guarantees that some form of reality exists and that ultimately theories that are incommensurable must resolve their problematic status.

It is on this basis that the critical theories of epistemological relativists such as Paul Feyerabend are of note.[21] The idea that different theories that seek to explain the same phenomenon may be equally valid yet incommensurable at the end of research cannot be supported logically. It is important, of course, to have some idea of the sociological circumstances that produce different scientific theories. But ultimately a scientific theory is evaluated according to its empirical and pragmatic yield. We bear in mind too that the important cognitive question in all of this is whether humans can have at their disposal the mechanisms to determine which of our sensory experiences report accurately the genuine structure and nature of phenomena. Foundationalists answer this question positively; anti-foundationalists and others of similar disposition argue otherwise. But the anti-foundationalists are faced with a problem. If they deny the possibility of human thought and inquiry ever coming to terms with actuality then they must ultimately deny the reality of their

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[21]   See P. Feyerabend, *Against Method.* (London: New Left Books, 1975).

29

own existences including their own thoughts. There are Cartesian implications here.

The epistemological problem concerning knowledge derives from two sources: the natural world impinges on the human sensory apparatus in certain ways that lead humans to believe that the structure of nature could be carved up at its "natural joints." Thus scientists would claim that chunks of matter may be broken down into molecules and atoms, and that atoms may in turn be divided up into neutrons, protons, electrons, etc. The assumption here is that nature is structured in just this way. Thus the theoretical terms constructed to describe these entities are supposed to capture them ontologically. In this instance, therefore, theory is supposed to reflect observation. But the human mind has not limited itself to what it views as mere description. It has the capacity to construct theoretical entities that do not seem to be naturally compatible with sensed data.

This is where the problem arises: it is not always whether theoretical constructs actually impose structure on sensed phenomena or merely report phenomena as they are. This brings us to the well known question of in what form do phenomena exist independently of some sentient observer. I believe that they do, on the grounds that the human sensory apparatus is a product of the phenomenal world and must be compatible with it. There is also the fact that genuine puzzles are also presented to the human sensory apparatus thereby belying the claim that reality is the phenomenological product of the human mind. Consider the cases of the puzzles of Quantum Mechanics and the reactions to it by Einstein (see the Einstein-Podolsky-Rosen Paradox) and by later theorists such as David Bohm and J.S. Bell. One might add to that the exchanges between Schrodinger and Einstein on the structure of the physical universe. Were reality essentially a configuration of the human mind then the puzzles presented by quantum mechanics would have been restructured to be consistent with prevailing deterministic theory.

So the perennial questions about the nature of the universe in terms of its most minute constituent parts and in terms of it actual extent are indeed meaningful questions in search of answers. Those involved in physical research are naturally concerned with such questions. This is the context in which the questions concerning quarks, leptons, dark grey matter, and so on, should be understood. But it must be borne in mind

that the epistemological problematic of quantum mechanics does not lend support to the theory of a disjunctive reality as Kuhn's history of science has argued for.

I should emphasize that the experienced world in itself is a puzzle, and solving that puzzle was in a general way the task of philosophy. But possible solutions to the puzzle cannot be had by mere analysis of terms in ordinary languages. That task has been bequeathed to the probing analyses of empirical science with its reliance both on empirical analysis and inferential thinking founded on the principles of logic. The position taken here is consistent with the view expressed some years ago by Moritz Schlick who argued that "in most cases future philosophers will have to be scientists because it will be necessary for them to have a certain subject matter on which to work - and they will find cases of confused or vague meaning particularly in the foundations of the sciences"[22]. Schlick's thesis would apply not only to the physical sciences but also to the erstwhile "moral sciences" - the modern social and human sciences. The social and human sciences are all compromised necessarily by human interests usually masked as scientific theory but rightly revealed as ideology after epistemological scrutiny. In this regard the unmasking of "truth" in social science theory would require that the philosopher be fully knowledgeable of economic theory, political theory, legal and jurisprudential theory, sociological theory, anthropological theory, and so on. It is this regard that philosophy as a "living" discipline renders itself distinct from philosophy as the history of ideas.

As examples of this more meaningful approach to philosophy one might consider the philosophical approaches to the questions of theoretical science as philosophy undertaken by researchers such as Roger Penrose and Stephen Hawking and their exchanges with other scholars on the puzzles of scientifically obtained findings.[23] In the area of the social sciences the theoretical work done by theorists such as Amartya Sen in the area of economics affords another example of philosophy in a more meaningful guise.

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[22]   M. Schlick, "The Future of Philosophy". In Y Balashov and A. Rosenberg, ed., *Philosophy of Science - A Contemporary Reading.* (London: Routledge, 2002), p.21

[23]   R. Penrose, *The Lagos, the Small Human Mind.* (Cambridge University Press, 1997)

There is indeed some merit in the argument that the idea of "the truth" writ large, the search for which fell under the preserved purview of philosophy as metaphysics, can no longer be the sought-after goal of philosophy given the epistemological restrictions placed on it by empirical science, the most effective of the offspring of philosophy itself. The implicit point here is that even if science were able to arrive at the formulation of some grand unified theory that would still be mere description. The intriguing question of the meaning and significance of it all would still remain. But answers to that question may be provided only by taking the route of empirical science. Yet there are other immediate considerations which fall back on the important questions concerning the inquiring human subject. Humans know the world through the operations of the conscious human brain but there is the immediate problem of how consciousness is possible from the mere physical configurations of physically observable neurons. The peculiarity of this puzzle is constantly being explored by theoretical and experimental neuroscientists.[24] I have argued above that realism is supportable because the human brain is the product of a material universe and physical reductionism has been empirically provable except in the important areas of consciousness and brain states and the world of quantum mechanics as it relates to the observed patterns of the gross empirical world.

Out of all this is the question of if it is one of the peculiarities of human thinking that cognitive closure in terms of ultimate questions is one of its features. Hence the perennial dissatisfaction with the agnostic answers offered by empirical science. The answer cannot derive from metaphysical theory at all.

A question of terminology: natural and moral philosophy

Some of the most important works in modern science were initially labeled works of natural philosophy. The works of Isaac Newton and James Clerk Maxwell come to mind. It was only in the 1840s that the preference for the term science, rather than philosophy, to describe research into the natural world became popular. Yet it should be noted that at the time when scientific research was conducted by natural

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[24]   M. Bennett, et al, *Neuroscience and Philosophy.* (New Your: Columbia University Press, 2007)

philosophers the term "science" simply meant knowledge of phenomena in terms of their intrinsic essences. Presumably the terminological shift was engendered when natural philosophy chose to limit its activities to research of what could be directly experimented on. In other words Newton's *hypotheses non fingo* became the limiting motto for scientific research.

This was the way in which the term "science" came to be associated with research goals that were limited in scope with little considerations given to metaphysical concerns. But there is an error here given that there have always been areas of natural science about which there have been intense discussions given that such areas were not yet settled in terms of the validity of their constituent hypotheses. One might consider ongoing discussions on quantum mechanics, dark energy, black hole singularities, string theory, and so on.

One possible reason for this could be that the influence of positivism on empirical research was such that it came to be believed that genuine scientific research did not just involve the stringing together of empirically certifiable data at the macroscopic level, but also imaginative thinking at the purely theoretical level expressed in the language of mathematics. In this regard, theoretical physics, for example, would be an instance of natural philosophy.

Similar considerations apply to the historical moral sciences. In his *Treatise of Human Nature*, Hume's goal was to apply the experimental methods of Newtonian mechanics to human behaviour, that is, the behaviour of humans as decision-making agents. This is necessarily so, given that humans are not mere mechanical or non-conscious contraptions. Hume, and Mill (in Mill's *The Logic of the Moral Sciences*) had to recognize that human behaviour sprang not only from physiological causes but also from mentally derived reasons. And not only that; "moral" scientists had to recognize that humans necessarily inhabited sociological universes in which their interactive actions carried different amount of evaluative freight.

The influence of positivism on scientific research is such that not only was the term "natural philosophy" transmuted into "natural science" but also the term "moral philosophy" became "social science". Thus, the contemporary social or human sciences in their attempts to establish their methodologies according to the positivistic principles of natural science research are concerned mainly to describe and not to

evaluate. The upshot of this point is to suggest that the post-Enlightenment terminology on the switch from philosophy to science has left philosophy bereft of its most important historic goals on issues of "truth" and "value". For after all, natural science has hardly established a theory of everything and the social sciences have not settled the question of what exactly is humankind.

Properly speaking then, natural science at its core and at its frontiers really amounts to natural philosophy if only because every extant theory whether well-confirmed or not is subject to further discussion and analysis. The problem with the idea of natural science arises principally because of nomenclature. The intellectual assumption is that the term "science" represents unassailable apodictic knowledge as distinct from "philosophy". But as long as there are unanswered questions concerning the world of natural phenomena, natural philosophy lives on. The transition from philosophy to science came to a head with the development of logical positivism under the aegis of the philosopher-scientists of the Vienna Circle. This movement spread to the English-speaking world by way of Ayer's *Language, Truth and Logic*[25]. But Popper's scepticism about "scientific truth" through his "falsifiability criterion" further sharpened the debate. His texts, *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*[26] and *Conjectures and Refutations,*[27] are evidence of ongoing queries about "truth" in scientific research.

The same may be said for the mistakenly labelled "social sciences". There can be no purely empirical science of human behaviour as long as humans are creatures whose social environments acquire significance only within contexts of value. Thus there is no social science; only moral science given its phenomenological and normative dimensions. Again, what we have here is a branch of cognitive inquiry compromised by its nomenclature. And moral science - despite the epistemological damage done to it by positivism, especially in areas such as economics - will survive as long as there are the perennially discussed questions of value concerning humankind. And in all of this philosophy has to work with both natural and moral science if it is going to be

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[25] A. J. Ayer, *Language, Truth and Logic* (New York Dover Publications, 1946).

[26] K. Popper, *The Logic Scientific Discovery*: (London: Toutledge, 1959)

[27] K. Popper, *Conjectures and Refutations*: The Growth of Scientific Knowledge (London: Routledge, 1963)

effective. Both areas - philosophy and science - are seeking truth but philosophy is more like physics in that it seeks to understand things in their totalities. Physics - as the foundational science - seeks to answer "why" questions with "how" answers, but there are ultimate "why" questions that just cannot be answered by "how" answers. It is here that philosophy joins the epistemological fray and seeks answers in conjunction with physics and biology - the science of life - in terms of ultimate "meaning". Theology - a rational explanation of religion - and metaphysics have been surpassed in this regard because they are not ultimately anchored in reality. Philosophy conjoined with the master sciences of physics and biology are better equipped to answer the question of ultimate "meaning". Put prosaically "meaning" reduces to just "what is the sense of it all"?

Conclusion

The question of truth has long been the major preoccupation of philosophers. One of the assumptions made by traditional philosophy has been that truth could be established essentially by the exercise of reason within the context of metaphysical analysis. But as natural philosophy developed more sophisticated methods of analysis, it became evident that in the search for the truth about phenomena, reason unaided by empirical analysis yielded unsatisfactory results. It is for this reason that science as hard empirical knowledge usurped philosophy's traditional role. The result of this was that philosophy shorn of metaphysics sought refuge in phenomenological analysis on the one hand and the linguistic analysis of analytic philosophy on the other.

In the discussion above, it was pointed out that in its quest for truth phenomenology had to yield to empirical science, courtesy Heidegger. Rorty's rear-guard defence of philosophy was not much better in his attempt to downgrade the epistemology of empirical science. In the case of analytical philosophy I argued that the mere analysis of language was inadequate for the task of fully defining "the truth". Linguistic analysis in the guise of analytic philosophy though appealing to strictly logical discourse has its limitations. One problem is that discourse is necessarily confined to a particular linguistic context. There are various theories of the truth but the

35

only one that could pass muster is the one adopted by the theory of science itself. What are entailed here are versions of the coherence and correspondence theories combined. In this regard, seeking out the significance of experience by appeal to the phenomenological has its obvious limitations.

It is the open nature of scientific research in principle that makes the search for the truth still open to epistemological controversy. The question of what exactly are the facts of the physical world is of fundamental and ultimate importance, so the debate must continue. The most important question for those who study the social sciences would be how to examine them epistemologically in terms of purported fact, relativism and ideology. This would mean that we are back to the larger scope of natural philosophy and moral science. In all of this the fact remains that philosophical inquiry is still the most meaningful activity in which any human may engage. But metaphysics approaches the subject wrongly, and analytic philosophy has neither the tools nor the scope to approach the topic seriously. Genuine philosophy is now embedded in the special natural and human sciences, but practiced mainly by those who should be properly called natural and moral philosophers. For after all, it is the theoretical scientist as natural philosopher to whom has been bequeathed the question of how to ponder the age-old question of Being. And it is the theorist of the human sciences as philosopher who must deal with the question concerning the "Being" of humankind.

NIELSEN'S CRITIQUE OF RAWL'S DIFFERENCE PRINCIPLE: A SOCIALIST EVALUATION

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Abstract

The paper evaluates Nielsen's second principle of justice comparing it with Rawls' difference principle, and the conclusion I arrive at is that their difference is that of degree since they both promote inequalities. I propose drastic reduction of differential incentives. I also argue against Beiner's perspective that regards political citizenship as the sole end worthy of pursuit. I maintain that economic equality also ought to be pursued as an end.

Introduction

Socialism as a political theory, is unfortunately commonly misinterpreted by liberals, especially those on the far right. Williamson, for instance, holds the view that "Socialists and communists themselves acknowledge that socialism is not separate from communism"[1]. He further maintains that "Communism is utopia - everyone is equal, there is no money, everyone just gets what they need"[2].

Briefly, socialism is a political theory that regards political and economic equality to be the basic ideal. Socialism justifies only those coercive institutions that promote equality. On the other hand, communism is a political system whose final end is a classless society. Marx himself never identified socialism with communism. In his *Philosophy of History*, Marx identifies six stages of the evolution of the human society, namely: primitive communalism; slavery; feudalism (which is a refined form of slavery); capitalism (which is also a refined form of feudalism and slavery); socialism (the intermediate stage between capitalism and communism); and communism. According to Marx, communism is the last stage when most of the work that the

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[1] Kevin Williamson, *The Politcally Incorrect Guide to Socialism*. (Washingto DC: Regnery Publishing, Inc., 2011), p.1

[2] ibid., p.18

workers perform becomes its own reward. At this stage differential monetary reward will generally become unnecessary. Correctly conceived, socialism simply aims at drastically reducing inequalities that enables some people to be rich enough to buy others and some poor enough to sell themselves. It also aims at achieving political equality for all citizens of a socialist society. So, it is inherently wrong to think that socialism and communism are not separate. Although I concur with Marx's principle that from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs, I am a socialist who does not regard himself falling on the communist camp.

Nielsen's critique of Rawls' egalitarian liberalism

In his celebrated *Equality and Liberty*, Nielsen argues that Rawls' own interpretation of his second principle, that is, the difference principle, is such that it allows inequalities which undermine any effective application of the equal liberty principle. Nielsen also argues that given Rawls' own interpretation of his difference principle, it is nearly impossible that citizens of Rawls' well-ordered society can obtain a fair equality of opportunity. Nielsen does not only criticize Rawls' principles of justice, he also provides an alternative. Nielsen's two principles of justice: his first principle runs as follows:

Each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive total system of equal

Liberties and opportunities (including equal opportunities for meaningful work, for self-determination and political and economic participation) compatible with a similar treatment of all. This principle gives expression to a commitment to attain and/or sustain equal moral autonomy and equal self-respect[3].

Insofar as the first principle is concerned, Nielsen holds that his principle and Rawls' are basically the same. Concerning the equal liberty principle, Nielsen maintains that "there is no serious difference between us and I am plainly indebted to Rawls here"[4]. For Nielsen, "the crucial thing about the first principle is its insistence that in a through and through just society we must all... be in a position to control the design

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[3] Kai Nielsen, *Equality and Liberty* (New Jersey: Rowman & Allandheld Pbublishers 1985), p. 48

[4] Ibid., p. 49

of our own lives and we must in our collective decisions have right to equal say."[5] In this sense, Nielsen and Rawls have the same conception of equal liberty principle since they respectively maintain that citizens of a just society must be in a position to control the designs of their own lives. Their first principles respectively seem to be derived from a Kantian background since they similarly, in their own words, give expression to the value of moral autonomy.

But, there already exists serious differences between the two since Nielsen places the principle of fair equality of opportunity on the same footing with equal liberty principle. Perhaps this is because Nielsen holds that although he shares the same conception of equal liberty principle with Rawls, he does not however claim the strict priority for his first principle over the second principle as Rawls does. But if Nielsen is indebted to Rawls is as far as the liberty principle is concerned, he must agree with Rousseau's and Kant's arguments for liberty, arguments which Rawls relies on when saying that liberty is most important. If Nielsen shares these arguments with Rawls, arguments that make liberty so important, it is hard to see why he cannot claim the strict priority for the principle of liberty.

Nielsen formulates his second principle such that,

> *After provisions are made for common social (community) values, for capital overhead to preserve the society's productive capacity, allowances made for differing unmanipulated needs and preferences, and due weight is given to the just entitlements of individuals, the income and wealth (the common stock of means) is to be so divided that each person will have a right to an equal share. The necessary burdens requisite to enhance human well-being are also to be equally shared, subject, of course, to limitations by differing abilities and differing situations*[6].

What distinguishes Nielsen's second principle from Rawls' is his emphasis that the distribution of our resources must be such that they are to be divided such that each person will have a right to an equal share. Nielsen puts more emphasis on the common social values. He stresses that the community has a right to an equal share to the common

[5]   ibid
[6]   ibid., p. 48

stock of means. On social and economic values, Nielsen maintains that income and wealth must be shared equally as far as possible. I presume that it is because of his insistence and emphasis on social communal values that Nielsen maintains that there exists sharp differences between his second principle and Rawls' difference principle.

Nielsen's claim that the community has a right to an equal share of resources depicts his second principle of justice as being more egalitarian than Rawls' difference principle in as far as the commitment to equality is concerned. While acknowledging the importance of equal basic liberties in his first principle of justice, Nielsen correctly includes equal opportunities for meaningful work. This inclusion can be instrumental in the pursuit of equality. If the state could make providing equal opportunities for meaningful work to all one of its priorities, perhaps citizens themselves could play a vital role in our pursuit of equality.

However, when explaining his principles, Nielsen does not tell us why citizens must feel obliged to commit themselves to communal responsibility. Undoubtedly, the pursuit of equality will necessarily oblige some people to sacrifice some of the belongings they are entitled to. But this attitude is vehemently opposed by the right-wing liberals who maintain that individuals are entitled to what they have legitimately acquired, and that no one has a right to claim it without violating their right to personal property. In defense of his liberty principle, Rawls maintains that sacrificing some for others is injustice. But a serious commitment to equality unavoidably involves sacrifice of some for others. Nielsen seems to be taking his commitment to equality seriously by maintaining that income and wealth must be shared equally as far as possible. However, given that this sharing involves more sacrifice on others, he should have justified why they must sacrifice what they are entitled to. He seems to have omitted an explanation that his liberal critics demand.

Nielsen also owes us an explanation as to how he will handle the different types of the worst off people in his pursuit of equality. A more thorough classification of the worst off people is as follows: some people are worst off because they are naturally disadvantaged, least talented, involuntarily unemployed, and others because they chose to be so. The last category is that of those who are unemployed voluntarily, have a sense of expensive taste, and those who voluntarily develop a risk-

gambling habit such as smoking. I assume that Nielsen will deploy a generally accepted income tax scheme to pursue his commitment to equality. Given, that people are worst off for different reasons, Nielsen should explain to us how he will handle the situation in his pursuit of equality while bearing in mind the liberty principle that he respects.

The impact of Rawls' difference principle on the liberty principle
Nielsen's main argument against Rawls' difference principle is that Rawls' own interpretation of the difference principle is such that it allows and justifies inequalities that undermine any effective application of the liberty principle. According to Nielsen, Rawls subordinates the second principle to the first in order to secure equal basic liberties of all the free and equal citizens of a well-ordered society. But it is precisely this subordination, Nielsen maintains, which in practice undermines an effective application of equal liberty principle. The present inequalities justified by the difference principle beget unintended inequalities of liberty rights between the well off and the worst off.

Presumably, Rawls would respond by restating his main claim for the difference principle, a claim that Nielsen would undoubtedly concur with. For Rawls, inequalities are allowed primarily to alleviate the least fortunate members of society from their unwanted conditions. If entrepreneurs are given their just entitlements, they will advance their skills and so provide more jobs for unskilled labourers. Of course, they will consequently become wealthier. However, this arrangement which unavoidably leads to the disparity of economic standing is advantageous to the worst off people because in the long run they will become better off. Should inequalities not be allowed, Rawls would argue, either the least advantaged would remain where they are or they will end up being in a more miserable condition. So, it is preferable to allow inequalities and make them better off, than not allow them and make them more miserable.

However, Nielsen's main complaint is that it is the very disparities allowed by the difference principle which beget unintended consequences with regard to the most important liberty principle. Rawls gives priority to the liberty principle and maintains that each citizen must have an equal right to the most extensive basic liberties compatible with a similar scheme of liberties for all. But the allowed inequalities, Nielsen argues, are such that the worst off cannot effectively exercise

some of their basic liberties because of some external constraints. The rich members of society, for example, have more access to exercise their right to the freedom of speech through the media than the poor because in a capitalist society one must pay in order to convey one's message through the media. In this case, the least advantaged members of society have in principle a right to the freedom of speech and press, a right which in practice is inoperable. So, Nielsen correctly holds that "a liberty that we cannot effectively exercise, particularly because of some powerful external constraints, is hardly a liberty."[7] Opting for the difference principle, Nielsen argues, makes it hard for people to actually achieve equal liberty. According to Nielsen, regardless of the claim that the allowed inequalities are likely to make the worst off better off, if they make the equal liberty principle inoperable, even Rawls would not opt for the difference principle.

A similar critique of the inadequacy of Rawls' difference principle is made by Daniels. According to Daniels, "inequalities of wealth and accompanying inequalities in power tend to produce inequalities of liberty."[8] Daniels supports his claim by citing instances whereby the allowed inequalities in wealth tend to lead to a disparity in treatment between persons. Both the rich and the poor, Daniels maintains, are equal before the law and are equally entitled to have a fair trial. However, the rich have more access to a better legal counsel, and as a result stand in a better position to have more influence in the administration of justice in the determination of what crimes will be prosecuted, and they stand a better chance of securing the laws that will suit their own interests. Again, if an unskilled parent is unable to freely choose which school her child will attend, it means she is not free to do so. Her failure to afford to send her child to the school of her choice means she has no freedom of choice. But nothing prohibits an entrepreneur to send his child to the school of his choice because he has the money required. However, some may argue that failing to send her child to some chosen school, particularly a private school, does not mean that she has no freedom of choice, instead, she has freedom among fewer choices. But, my point is that if her economic situation is such that she cannot send her child to a private school, even if she would have preferred, it is hard

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[7] Ibid., p. 52

[8] Norman Daniels, ed., *Reading Rawls*, (Stanford:Stanford University Press, 1975), p.256

to see how we can still maintain that she has a choice between sending her child either to a private school or a public school. If by saying that she has fewer choices we mean choosing between public schools only, then, the wealthy have more choices because they can either send their children to private or public schools. But Rawls' citizens are entitled to have equal basic liberties, and in this case they do not have equal basic right of the freedom of choice. It follows, therefore, that inequalities of wealth tend to produce inequalities of liberties. The least fortunate cannot effectively exercise some of their basic liberties due to the disparities allowed by the difference principle.

For Rawls, the representatives in the original position are exposed to a variety of principles of social justice, that is, principles required for making a choice among the various social arrangements which determine the division of advantages and for underwriting an agreement on the proper distributive shares. The parties in the original position, Rawls maintains, will choose the two principles of justice.

In response to the criticism brought against his difference principle, Rawls is not unaware that inequalities in some basic liberties are likely to emerge due to the inequalities in wealth allowed by the difference principle. With regard to education, for instance, Rawls holds that "the difference principle would allocate resources in education, say, so as to improve the long term expectation of the least favoured."[9] In order to meet the urgent needs of those born in the less favourable social conditions, the difference principle requires that greater resources be spent on their education more than on those born in wealthy families. The differences still exist, of course, however, the difference principle is arranged such that everyone, particularly the least fortunate, benefit from economic and social inequalities.

Rawls acknowledges that the worth of liberty is not the same for everyone. Entrepreneurs possess more wealth, and consequently have more opportunities to attain their goals and secure their liberties. However, Rawls claims, "the lesser worth of liberty is compensated for, since the capacity of the less fortunate members of society to achieve their aims would be even less were they not to accept the existing inequalities whenever the difference principle is satisfied."[10] The

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[9] John Rawls, op cit., p.101
[10] ibid., p.204

difference principle encourages and allows entrepreneurs to acquire more wealth primarily in view of raising the long term prospects of the representative man who is worst off. The entrepreneurs' better prospects act as incentives to produce a more efficient economic process. As the process runs its course, ultimately the conditions of the less fortunate members of society is improved. Should inequalities not be justified by the difference principle, Rawls argues, either the situation of the least fortunate will remain where it is, or it will be worse than it is. So, it is better to opt for half a loaf than for no bread at all.

However, despite the fact that the difference principle is beneficial to the worst off people, it hampers some of their basic liberties. It is the case, as Nielsen and Daniels have shown, the allowed inequalities tend to undermine some of their basic liberties, Rawls fails to attain one of his most important goals, namely, liberty. Now, Nielsen holds that with his second principle of justice, a principle which differs sharply with Rawls' difference principle, liberty can be attained. For me, the serious difference consists in that Nielsen places more emphasis on common social values. However, there exists a similarity between Rawls' second principle of justice and Nielsen's second egalitarian principle of justice.

A notable similarity consists in that their respective second principles are committed to reducing inequalities and have equality as their end. For Rawls, unless there is a distribution that makes persons better off, an equal distribution is to be preferred. Since inequalities are unavoidable, the difference principle justifies only those inequalities that will make the worst off better off. If his difference principle is committed to making the worst off better off, it is not implausible to claim that it has equality as its ultimate goal. Similarly, Nielsen states that after just entitlements are made, the distribution must be such that each person has a right to an equal share. He emphasizes that resources must be shared equally as far as possible. The notable difference in this regard is that of degree that determines whose theory appears more egalitarian.

Nielsen correctly holds that there exists a serious difference between his second principle and Rawls' difference principle. The following apparent similarity between their second principles will lead us to the fundamental difference. Nielsen maintains that the primary aim of his second principle of justice that is more egalitarian than Rawls' is to

44

reduce inequalities in primary social goods. But at the same time he specifies that his radical egalitarian principle does not claim that wealth should be divided equally like dividing up a pie equally.[11] It seems to me that the main claim of Nielsen's radical egalitarian principle of justice is that it argues for a distribution of income and wealth which is such that its outcome will be compatible with people having different abilities and needs, and that such benefits and burdens be equally shared as far as possible by all citizens of a just society. But it seems to me also that there is an apparent similarity between Nielsen's second principle of justice and Rawls' difference principle.

First, there seems to be a similarity in that the second principles of both theorists respectively permit inequalities. Rawls' difference principle states that while the distribution of income and wealth need not be equal, they must be to everyone's advantage. For Rawls, the talented members of society are entitled to receive the wages their labour deserves. The advantage of just entitlements of individuals is that while the society's productive capacity is preserved, the talented rich people are encouraged to utilize all their abilities, in the long run they improve the long-term expectations of the least talented members of society. As I have shown, these allowed inequalities serve as incentives that render the economic process to become more efficient. In the last analysis, the inequalities justified by the difference principle make the worst off better off.

In a similar fashion, Nielsen's second principle states that 'due weight is given to the just entitlements of individuals'. To preserve the society's productive capacity, individuals are first entitled to receive just wages. Presumably, this will serve as an incentive for them. If due weight is not given to the just entitlements of individuals, there will be no motivating factor for them to produce more.

According to Nielsen, it is only after 'due weight is given to the just entitlements of individuals' that 'the income and wealth is to be so divided that each person will have a right to an equal share'. In my view, when an equal distribution is made, inequalities still exist because all simply share the remaining pieces of bread while some have already received their full just entitlements. It is unlikely that the talented individuals will sacrifice their just entitlements so that all may have an

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[11] Kai Nielsen , op cit., p.53

equal share. Presumably, the talented individuals will demand their just entitlements which act as incentives for them to produce more so that their production can be arranged so as to meet the needs of the community. Inequalities between the talented individuals who receive their just entitlements and the least talented individuals of Nielsen's just society seem to be unavoidable. If inequalities allowed by Rawls' difference principle fail to secure some basic liberties of the least advantaged members of a well-ordered society, are not unavoidable inequalities in Nielsen's second principle failing to secure some basic liberties of the least talented members of a just society? However, as noted earlier, Nielsen's second principle of justice is more egalitarian than Rawls' difference since his second principle posits more emphasis on common social values.

Surprisingly, without revoking what he said in one of his earlier writings, Nielsen opposes the idea of providing incentives. In his "Impediments to Radical Egalitarianism", he emphatically maintains that the talented people need not to be awarded inequalities of differential incentives. He holds the view that in an egalitarian society everyone is materially secured; and if talented people regard additional training as a form of sacrifice that deserves special reward, then the years of training could be prolonged. According to Nielsen, if the pace in additional training is slowed down, this should no longer be seen as a form of sacrifice. Therefore, there is no need to provide special incentives.

Elsewhere, I have thus responded to Nielsen's abolition of incentives: "Absolute abolition of incentives is a high risk for the entire social economy. People who are naturally endowed with exceptional talents, talents which, if deployed could bring about a tremendous contribution to the growth of the economy of their society, could easily change careers in Nielsen radical egalitarianism."[12] Inevitably, if it is the case that in an egalitarian society everyone would be materially secured, most people would abandon their careers to avoid stress and strain. I have therefore, suggested that incentives be drastically reduced, not absolutely abolished to ensure the stability of the economy in an egalitarian society. In other words, I opt for a moderate socialism. Unlike in Rawls' apparent egalitarian society where provisions of incentives to the talented people is encouraged, drastic reduction of inequalities of

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[12] Louise Manyeli, op cit., p. 330

differential incentives will at least be useful to all members of an egalitarian society in that they themselves will be in a better position to protect their own basic liberties.

Liberal citizenship

In his *Social Justice in the Liberal State,* Ackerman conceives a citizen as any creature capable of engaging in a mutual dialogue about power. According to Ackerman, in the liberal state any person who can claim a legitimate right to the distribution of resources qualifies to be a citizen. In this sense, Ackerman's conception of citizenship is primarily based on active participation in political dialogue and having a say in the distribution of material resources. Individuals merely compete for individual goods. In fact, this is in accordance with liberalism's main claim that individuals as citizens should pursue their own plans and projects.

Beiner correctly maintains the view that Ackerman's citizens are exclusively individualistic in the sense that economic dialogue about collective resources is such a crucial and important issue that they cannot shun. Their main concern centers around the distribution of material resources for exclusive individual ends. Their community is so shallow that they neglect to debate collectively about important topics such as political conversation. Deliberation about the substance of civic ties that can in fact enrich their community is as a matter of fact the least they can do. I concur with Beiner's critic taking into consideration the fact that the conception of liberal citizens is such that individuals are prior to the community to which they belong. But this view is hard to come in terms with when we take into consideration an undeniable fact that individuals are born and grow in communities. It is inconceivable that they can survive without their respective communities.

Discontent with the liberal conception of citizenship, Beiner defines his ideal conception of citizenship as: "active participation in a dialogue that indeed weighs the substantive merit of competing conceptions of the good and that aims at transforming social arrangements in the direction of what is judged, in this active public dialogue, as the best possible (individual and collective) good."[13] In contrast to Ackerman's conception of citizenship, a conception that runs along monadological

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[13] Ronald Beiner, op cit., p.104

47

lines, Beiner's definition of citizenship has a social dimension. His ideal conception of citizenship is that of members of a political community participating actively in the shaping of a shared collective destiny. In my view, this ideal socialist conception of citizenship correctly empowers members in a political community to be involved actively in a political dialogue when social arrangements geared towards a shared collective goal are being deliberated upon. I regard this view to be ideal as community values are inclusive to all members of a social political community.

Socialism and citizenship

Socialism is a political theory that posits equal emphasis on equality and liberty. While acknowledging the importance of the liberty of individuals, socialism equally asserts the equality of human beings. It follows, therefore, that equality and liberty are essential constituents of socialism. It is worth noting that by 'equality' socialists refer to both economic and political equality. It is precisely the inclusion of the former element, that is, economic equality that entitles socialists to claim the political theory they cherish as being strongly egalitarian.

Fundamental to socialism is the claim that given the proper interpretation, liberty and equality are mutually supporting. Liberty requires equality, in particular, an equality of power. "Freedom and equality, far from being opposed ideals, actually coincide."[14] In arguing for a coincidence of liberty and equality, socialists pave the way for the claim that strongly egalitarian democratic governments enhance freedom. Socialists do not regard private property as the enemy of freedom. But they correctly do regard some private enterprises producing inegalitarian concentrations of property as being the enemy of freedom. In this sense, the view that socialists place equality (particularly economic equality) in a supreme position, relegating liberty to secondary status, is clearly flawed. This mode of thought may be due to the serious error that since liberalism and socialism are opposed theories, as standard bearers of equality, socialists uphold equality over liberty.

While not discounting the concept of equality (in particular, economic equality) in defining socialism, Beiner sets out to construct

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[5] Norman Daniels, op cit. p. 133

what he regards as a preferable alternative case for socialism. He constructs "an alternative case for socialism that revolves around citizenship rather than social justice, around political enfranchisement rather than economic entitlements, and that substitutes the concept of solidarity for that of social equality as its pivotal term."[15] According to Beiner, making a case for socialism strictly on social and distributive justice runs the risk of leaning towards liberalism as a political theory that centers on the language of rights and entitlements.

Beiner further clarifies his case by maintaining that his point "is that it is quite intelligible to assert the priority of politics over economics, which in this context means that as citizens we are prepared to subordinate questions of social and economic distribution to questions of political membership."[16] He contends that the questions of economic distribution and entitlement claims are contingent. Given that economics is contingent, he sets out to establish an independent argument for egalitarian political commitments. Therefore, following this mode of thought it can be concluded that politics is prior to economics. According to Beiner, social equality is not an end in itself, but rather, a means to an end. His contention is that social equality is simply sought to make us better citizens and to share experience of a political community.

For Beiner, "A major turn toward socialist ideals and the corresponding political objectives would not come about unless people in very large numbers took an extremely active interest in politics and seriously concerned themselves with problems of political change. In short, they would have to exercise citizenship in the fullest way."[17] When defining socialism I have specified that by 'equality' socialists refer to both economic and political equality. If people are considered and do regard themselves as equals, they are in a better position to collectively engage themselves in enhancing political change. In the case whereby politics is reserved to the government and the few exceptionally wealthy, the remaining majority is deprived of their right to exercise citizenship in the fullest way.

But, Beiner's contention that 'the standard case for socialism turns on an argument about distributive justice,... and that it has the concept

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[15] Ronald Beiner, op cit., p.143

[16] Ronald Beiner, *What's the Mattr with Liberalism?* (Berkelay: University of California Press, 1995), p.45

[17] ibid., p.147

of equality as its defining term', implies that socialism is a homogenous concept. The standard case of socialism that Beiner talks about, that confines the concept of equality to economic equality is not the only one universally accepted definition of socialism. As a matter of fact, there are many variations in the concept of socialism, depending on points of emphasis. When defining socialism, I specified that by 'equality' socialists refer to both economic and political equality. It is unfortunate that the concept of equality be confined to economic equality. But the fact remains true that the term equality encompasses politics and economics. It may be the case that due to the prevailing disparities of wealth, some socialists may have overemphasized the concept of economic equality at the detriment of undermining the importance of political equality. Given the alarming existing inequalities of wealth, especially in the developing nations, it is possible that some socialists may mistakenly posit more emphasis on economic equality while explaining socialism. But that does not rule out the fact that political equality is also a defining concept in as far as socialism is concerned. Socialists are pioneers of political equality. So, I do not cherish the standard case of socialism that revolves around social justice or economic entitlements since it is confined to one concept of socialism.

While elaborating his standpoint view on socialism and citizenship, Beiner asserts the priority of politics over economics, and maintains that, that is quite intelligible. He holds the view that citizens of a socialist society are ready to 'subordinate question of social and economic distribution to questions of political membership'. At this juncture, I want to recall Rawls' theory of justice. Rawls expressly states that "the principles of justice are to be ranked in lexical order and therefore liberty can be restricted only for the sake of liberty."[18] The lexical order of Rawls' two principles of justice is such that the liberty principle is prior to the principle of distributive justice. Rawls does not permit an exchange between basic liberties and economic and social gains. But, the lexical order of Rawls' principles of justice is detrimental to the liberty principle itself. It must be borne in mind that wealth and power are inseparable. Rawls' subordination of his second principle to the first, and his allowing social and economic inequalities creates a society of rich powerful individuals and that of poor and powerless ones.

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[18]   John Rawls, op cit., p.302

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Consequently, the wealthy powerful individuals are more privileged to exercise political liberty, while the poor powerless individuals simply talk about political liberty that in actual fact they cannot effectively exercise.

Similarly, Beiner's subordination of economics to politics is destined to inequalities in citizenship. Beiner must admit that in the real world of politics the inseparability of wealth and power is inevitable. The inequalities of wealth and the accompanying inequalities in power will tend to produce unwanted inequalities of citizenship. Political liberty comprises, for instance, the right to be eligible for office, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and so on. In the case whereby questions of social and economic distribution are relegated to the secondary status, Beiner must admit that citizens cannot fully participate in effective political voice. So, instead of asserting the priority of politics over economics, I propose that questions of social and economic distribution and questions of political membership be regarded as ends that must be pursued. Social equality must be sought for its own sake since it enables citizens to have a common experience of political community. It is worth noting that it is useless to talk about citizens having political voice while, because of financial constraints, they cannot effectively exercise citizenship fully. Beiner holds the view that socialist ideals and political objectives could be realizable if people in great numbers actively participate in politics. But if the problem of economic inequalities is not adequately addressed, people cannot exercise citizenship in the fullest way.

However, Beiner makes an important observation. He correctly notes that there is "one important respect in which egalitarian social conditions certainly do foster citizenship and civic solidarity. If there exists substantial disparities of wealth and opportunity, the common exercise of citizenship will be blocked by social divisions and feelings of relative deprivation."[19] Inevitably, the prevailing substantial disparities of wealth is the main barrier for people to exercise citizenship in the fullest way. In the real world of politics it is useless to talk about people having effective political voice if they are economically constrained. There is a tight link between wealth and power. Given the utmost importance of economic equality, it ought not to be subordinated

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[19] Ronald Beiner, op cit., p.148

to politics since it is precisely this subordination that is an impediment for people to have an effective political voice.

Discontent with the socialist contention that regards politics as the means and economic equality as the end, Beiner reverses this perspective and suggests that economic equality be regarded as the means and greater exercise of political citizenship be conceived as the end. I propose that both economic equality and politics be regarded as ends. Economic equality ought not to be a pursuit merely for the greater exercise of political citizenship. It is above all most crucially needed for the general welfare and well-being of the people. With the existing economic inequalities, only the chosen few wealthy people are privileged to exercise political citizenship fully and can afford to meet nearly all their basic needs. I believe that the pursuit of economic equality as an end can enable the masses living below poverty line, whose task currently is to further enrich the well off, live a normal life and exercise political citizenship too. In my view, by relegating economic equality to secondary status Beiner is, unaware, restating the position of the right-wing liberals who are comfortable with the situation of the worst off people. Beiner misses the point by regarding politics as the sole end worthy of pursuit. Economic equality too ought to be pursued as an end.

I want to end this discussion with a right-wing liberal who is vehemently opposed to the idea of economic equality. In his *Shakedown Socialism*, Atbashian holds the view that:

> *Since economic equality cannot be attained by bringing everyone up to the level of the achievers, the achievers will have to be brought down to the level of mediocrity, with most of their earnings and property taken by the government. Even the most "progressive" achievers wouldn't submit to this voluntarily...., so it has to be a forced measure. To do this on a national scale, the state must assume supremacy over private citizens and limit certain freedoms. What's more, forced extraction and redistribution corrupts the government by giving it arbitrary powers to determine various people's needs, for which there can be no objective standards... A complete economic equality is unattainable. Since all of us have different talents, experiences, knowledge, skills, ambitions, and physical*

*characteristics, the only way to make us equal is to bring us
down to the lowest common denominator.*[20]

First, that a complete economic equality is unattainable is a fact that is
inevitable. That is why I have suggested drastic reduction of differential
incentives. The kind of socialism I have construed and argued for is
such that a complete economic equality cannot be attained. My
standpoint view is that allowing economic inequality can be detrimental
to the dignity of the worst off since poverty is such that people can
accept any offer for survival. As I have said, the rich can end up being
rich enough to buy others and the worst off poor enough to sell
themselves

Second, Atbashian holds the view that the only way for socialists to
attain economic equality is to bring down the achievers to the level of
the have-nots. But, socialists do not aim at impoverishing the rich in
order to attain economic equality. Contrary to Atbashian's assumption,
socialists maintain the view that the achievers ought to work hand in
hand with the least talented in view of bridging the gap between the two
groups. That is why I have suggested reduction and not absolute abolition
of incentives. Reduction of differential incentives cannot bring down
the achievers to the level of mediocrity.

Third, Atbashian maintains that bringing down the achievers to the
level of mediocrity in view of attaining economic equality can only be
done by the government by forcefully depriving the achievers of their
personal property. I have already shown that socialism cannot aim at
equating the achievers with the worst off without heading towards the
decline of the economy. In a socialist society private ownership is
permissible in the area of personal property. Fundamental to socialism
is that there is no moral right to the private ownership and control of
private productive resources since they beget large unwanted economic
inequalities if handled by selfish talented individuals.

Fourth, for Atbashian, given that people have different talents, the
only way to attain equality is to bring down the successful naturally
endowed to the lowest common denominator. It is a fact that some
people are more talented than others. But it is by sheer luck that some
people happen to be more talented; and it is by brute bad luck that some

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[20] Oleg Atbashian, *Shakedwon Socialism* (Lebanon TN: Greenleaf Press, 2010), pp.86-89

people are born less endowed, it is not a matter of choice. So, if internal endowments are morally arbitrary, the naturally advantaged have no reason to complain if we can distribute resources such that those who do not deserve to have been born with less talents can also enjoy the benefits. I am not surprised that Atbashian does not even mention the people who are naturally disadvantaged since for liberal capitalist survival of the fittest is a normal practice. Real socialist talented citizens cannot complain when partaking in the endeavour to work towards coming closer to economic equality.

Conclusion

I have shown that Nielsen's second principle of justice differs slightly with Rawls' difference principle. Rawls' difference principle allows inequalities under the umbrella and pretence of making the worst off better off. Nielsen's second principle permits inequalities by giving just entitlements prior to sharing equally the common stock, it is just a difference of degree. I have proposed drastic reduction of differential incentives as a preferable solution that can at least lead to the socialist ideal of equality.

I have argued against what Beiner regards as the standard case of socialism that confines socialism on an argument about distributive justice. I have also rejected Beiner's own claim that economic equality be regarded as a mere means of political citizenship. Socialism correctly construed has both economic and political equality as its defining concepts. Contrary to Beiner's view, economic equality is worth pursuit for its own sake for the general welfare and well-being of a socialist society.

I end this paper responding to Williamson's unfounded claim that socialism promotes large inequalities. He holds that "The planners are the biggest beneficiaries of socialism... there is another group of people with an even stronger set of incentives: the central planners themselves."[21] Elsewhere, I have plainly shown that the task of what Williamson calls central planners is to monitor incentives which induce people to work harder, not to be beneficiaries of socialism.[22] If central planners are a group of people with an even stronger set of incentives

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[21] Kevin Williamson, op cit., pp 85 - 89

and are at the same time entrusted with the task of drastically reducing differential incentives, amounting to a contradiction that can lead to the destruction of socialism itself. If Williamson has seen central planners in socialism with an even stronger set of incentives, they must be liberal capitalists who pretend to be socialists. Capitalists cannot perform if not offered stronger set of incentives. Real socialists who are convinced of equality as the socialist ideal of equality cannot provide themselves with huge set of incentive without contradicting themselves.

[22] Louis Manyeli "A Critique of Rawlsian Egalitarian Libralism." *Anals of Humanities and Development Studies*. 2012, pp.44-54

THE HERMENEUTICAL DELINEATION OF RECOGNITION

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Abstract

This paper focuses on the concept of recognition from its epistemic paradigm to its political interpretation. In the History of Philosophy, the social nature of the individual has been a growing subject of thought through various periods. Antiquity has it that the social life for the sage is a weakness and as such needs a total self reliance through knowledge. However, it was the modern period that propounded the notion of dignity of the individual for philosophers to develop the innate idea of human recognition. It is against this background that this paper explores the works of some ancient Greek philosophers (Plato, Aristotle) on recognition, even though not explicit but more specifically the interpretations given by modern and contemporary philosophers such as Hegel, Paul Ricoeur and Axel Honneth. Consequently, the paper argues that more than a solitary act of consciousness, recognition presents political implications that encapsulate the essence of human existence.

Key Words: Human existence, Identity, Recognition.

Introduction

The concept of recognition is as old as the history of Western philosophy. From a period of gestation in the classical or ancient Greek Philosophy to its blooming in modern philosophy and precisely, German Idealism as exemplified in Fichte and Hegel, recognition as a concept generates a wide range of inquiries and research in areas of study ranging from ontology, epistemology, moral and political philosophy, etc. Philosophers working at the forefront of a philosophy, of recognition strive to build comprehensive and well-defined theses drawing from a conceptual inventory of different uses of the notion. It is against this background that this study examines the paradigms of the theory of recognition. It

57

became necessary as only few philosophers such as Hegel, explicitly used the word "recognition" as it is in Hegel's works while others cognate. However, in a broad sense it is obvious that philosophers employ a set of ideas and related concepts such as perception, memory, desire, violence, freedom, etc. fundamentally rooted in the philosophical discourse on recognition. As such, studies on recognition as a philosophical concept reassert the dynamism that permeates and characterizes desire as a key allied notion of recognition and defined it as an unending process in human existence.

The polysemous nature of recognition

The *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*[1] gives different interpretations of recognition. Recognition, it explains, is the act of realizing and the act of accepting that something is true or important. The second meaning is the public respect and thanks for someone's work or achievements. The third is the act of knowing someone or something because you have known or learned about such a person or thing in the past. The fourth is the act of officially accepting that an organization, government or person has legal or official authority. The fifth and last meaning is related to modern technologies and indicates the ability of a computer, for instance, to recognize a speech or an information sent into it. In essence, recognition expresses an act of intellectual apprehension or a form of identification.

It is also worthy of note that all these meanings are systematically ideas of action. They all signify an "act of…" which corroborates the statement I made on desire as an allied concept that also illustrates action as a vessel of the dynamism of life. Besides, the epistemic, phenomenological, existential or political meanings attributed to the concept, recognition theorists go further and assert that it can help form and determine our sense of "who" we are and the values accorded to us by the society. Their views are justified by the interactions we establish with others as we identify ourselves with a group or a community. Notwithstanding, philosophical interests in recognition from the gestation period in ancient Greek philosophy to Rousseau's *amour propre* became more pronounced with the phrase coined by the German

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[1] The Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (2007 Ed.) The Living Dictionary. Pearson Education Limited. London

philosopher G. W. F. Hegel: *Kampf um anerkennung* meaning "struggle for recognition". From then on, the concept of recognition generated interesting philosophical interest in different areas of study including action theory, legal philosophy, philosophical anthropology etc.[2] Meanwhile, the French contemporary philosopher, Paul Ricoeur (1913-2005), in my own view, had a better approach and a clearer and concise picture of the basic features of the concept of recognition.

In *The Course of Recognition*[3] Ricoeur analyses three main manifestations of recognition thus:
1. Identification (identify anything)
2. Recognition of oneself
3. Recognition of others

Ricoeur proceeded to a thorough analysis of the meaning of the word "recognition" by consulting two known French dictionaries namely, the *Grand Robert de la Langue Française* and the *Littré Dictionaire de la langue Française*[4] the French philosopher came out with twenty-three meanings. Indeed, my focus is to point out some observations of Ricoeur on recognition and more importantly, to examine another terminology related to it which is self recognition. The word is found in other dictionaries such as the *English Merrian Webster*. Also, Ricoeur observes that it is unavoidable to have a situation of recognition with negation which represents "misrecognition" either by false perception, troubled memory or simply the will that does not will to recognize someone, something which the French philosopher classifies as moral in nature. From these few observations we come now to the major understanding and interpretations of recognition.

Recognition as identification
The French contemporary philosopher, in his lexicography study, was cautious of a steady sequence in his delivery in a way that according to

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[2] Schmidt (Han-Christoph am Busch) and Zurn, Christopher F. (2008). *"The Philosophy of Recognition. Historical and Contemporary Perceptive,"* Retrieved from the Internet 04/06/2012 08.03 P.M.

[3] Paul Ricoeur (2005) The Course of Recognition - Trans. David Pellawer - Cambridge, M. A: Harvard University Press.

[4] Paul Ricoeur, p.5, 6 & 19. Also Reagan Charles - (2006) "Paul Ricoeur's *The Course of Recognition: His Last Work and His Last Days*". In Journal of French Philosophy, Vol. 16, Nos 1 & 2, p.10

[5] Reagan Charles (2006), p.10

him: "it flows like a continuous stream of meanings".[5] As a matter of fact, Ricoeur's intention by enumerating the twenty-three meanings of the word recognition was to find a rule-governed polysemy that coordinates in a rational manner these interpretations of the word. The inquiry brought in the first instance about determining from the epistemic meaning the moral interpretation of the notion. Thus, he made a clear distinction between recognition as an epistemic identification and recognition as a moral identification.[6] First of all let us examine the epistemic angle of recognition.

In the same line of thought with the dictionary, Robert, the French philosopher says: "To grasp (an object)" with the mind through thought, in joining together images, perceptions having to do with it, to distinguish or identify the judgment or actions, know it by memory"[7] is recognition by distinguishing elements of nature. For example, recognizing a location, someone by his voice, or an animal. It is possible through perception and the combination of human transcendence that memory makes possible. Recognition brings also some ideas of truth as in recognizing someone's innocence at a trial or in a case. In the History of Philosophy, Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, Kant, etc. laid emphasis on the mental act of recognition, through the intellect and human reasoning. However, I will not go through all the above mentioned philosophers.

In Ancient Greek Philosophy, Plato was the philosopher that first gave an insight into the philosophical approach to recognition. Though, not explicitly said, but the idea was in germination in Book Four of *The Republic*, Plato divided the soul into three parts namely reason, appetites and what he called "high spirited" or emotions. In Greek, it is called *Thymos*. Plato's presentation of *Thymos* gives an idea of an early understanding of recognition in Philosophy. This is how he goes about it. With a close analogy between social and individual levels, between the state and the soul, Plato distinguishes between the rational part of the soul which is man's reason and the second part which is the irrational and appetitive part. Plato observes that the appetitive part, based on its nature of desire, is often at war with itself as it pushes man to find something outside his being and reach. Whereas reason as a mediator, intervenes to direct to the proper way through which the desires are

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6 Paul Ricoeur, (2005), p.19
7 Paul Ricoeur, (2005), p.20.

satisfied. Meanwhile, Plato notes that generally, human behaviour is the result of the interplay between reason and desire, and this often, ends in the wish to be recognized. This wish, many a times, is recognition of a value, a worth and what is also known as self-esteem. Francis Fukuyama in *The End of History and the Last Man*[8] concurs with Plato and stresses that "the propensity to feel self-esteem arises out the part of the soul called *emos* (from emotion). It is like an innate sense of justice. The self-esteem feeling translates the desire of an individual to have from his group, his community or the society, an appropriate response and adequate answer to his demand for the purpose of dignity and identity. Plato's approach to recognition also spread to the meaning Ricoeur gave as reminiscence. This meaning is found in the *Meno* where Socrates in one of the *aporetic* dialogues of Plato, led the slave of the wealthy Thessalinian Meno, to discover through questioning that knowledge is reminiscence. For Socrates, no one will teach the slave boy anything. He will recover his knowledge for himself if he is only asked questions[9]. This process of recovery of knowledge, Plato calls the recollection through memory.

The modern era with the French Rationalist, René Descartes undertook a study on one of the several meanings of recognition through perception as mentioned by Paul Ricoeur, who incidentally was his countryman. In *Meditations on First Philosophy*, Meditation Two, Descartes did a beautiful analysis of a piece of wax taken from the honeycomb and brought closer to the fire. He says:

> ...*The remaining traces of the honey flavour will disappear, the scent will vanish, the colour will change, and the original shape will not be there anymore. Its size will increase; it will become liquid and hot. You can hardly touch it. And now when you rap on it, it no longer emits any sound. Does the same wax still remain?*[10]

Descartes' question is not unconnected with his willingness to demonstrate that the wax going through a process of transformation is

[8]   Francis Fukuyama(1992), *The End of History and The Last Man*. Introduction. Pengiun Publishers.

[9]   Jowett, B. (1871) *The Works of Plato*. 4 volumes. (New York: Tudor Publishing Company) p.84.

[10]   Stanley Rosen (2000) *Selection from the Works of the Western World's Greatest Thinkers*. (New York: Gramercy Books) pp. 434 - 436.

already registered in the memory and identified as such despite the modifications. In the same Meditations Two, Descartes further states that:

> ...*The perception of the wax is neither a seeing, nor a touching, nor an imagining. Nor has it ever been, even though it preciously seemed so; rather it is an inspection on the part of the mind alone. This inspection can be imperfect and confused as it was before, or clear and distinct as it is now, depending on how closely I pay attention to the things in which the piece of wax consists.*[11]

Descartes' concern is based on the rapport existing between perception and the object perceived or the relationship between the knower and the known. His intention is to establish that the link existing between reality and perception is not based on resemblances, images, but on the rapport that coordinates signs and meanings.

As Descartes rightly pointed out, the inspection which is the function of the mind makes it possible for my perception to be imperfect or confused. All depend on the attention I pay to it. As a matter of fact, it explains why there could be misrecognition and false recognition through false perception or troubled memory. In the same vein, Ricoeur in the course of his analysis sound a note of warning. He says "the work of recognition must struggle with the threat of the unrecognizable"[12].

He illustrated this claim by using Marcel Proust's work entitled *Time Regained,* volume eight of the series of his work *In Search of Lost Time*[13] in which the Prince of Guermante organized a dinner for friends. To his greatest surprise all his guests who happened to be his old acquaintances were caught up by age and were wearing different appearances to what they used to be. He identified them. In the process he recognizes their individual characters marked as Proust himself puts it by the seal of time. Consequently, this metaphor brings to bear that there is an idea of change and constant transformation in the process of recognition and identification. It is precisely the time factor that Ricoeur points out as critical in the process of recognition. This view falls in line with Kant's appraisal of time along with space as the basic structuring principles of

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[11] Ricoeur. Ibid, 66

[12] Ibid. See also Charles, Reagan – Ibid p. 12

[13] Marcel Proust. *Time Regained. In Search of Lost Time* Translated by Stephen Hudson, eBooks (2009)

all experience. However, this reality does not exclude the fact that as Ricoeur noticed it the malfunctioning of perception and memory occasionally as they are human organs of communicating and contact with the external world. Given the above, it is obvious that perception, as a philosophical concept, takes a central stage in an individual's quest to know the world around us. By extension recognition as a way of identifying the world takes place through sensible qualities innate in us from complex information channels. Certainly, these are the factors Descartes queried as he interrogated the piece of wax before and after the fire experience. The crux of the matter is that either through perception or through memory the act of identifying which connects the notion of recognition poses the problem of the power of the mind to think of a past it had contact with which though no longer exists, but tries to bring it to present.

And so, as it is represented through the power of imagination, it brings to the fore empirical questions, psychological inquires and more philosophical problems such as perception and meaning, perception as interpretation of signs, consciousness and perception, being as being perceived and memory and the function of the mind, reality and appearance, etc. which are not the focus of this paper.

Recognize oneself

Recognition of the self represents the second major subdivision of Ricoeur's work. It may at first look give a signal of self appraisal. But recognizing oneself more than an apprehension of self-knowledge encompasses, self-consciousness, self-awareness, self-esteem self-attestation and even self-assertion. Possibly, Ricoeur's journey to the Greek mythology of Oedipus' return from exile after a ban from Thebes, the city he once ruled was a deliberate choice of his understanding of recognition associated with the concept of time. His analysis becomes clearer as he centered the discussion on the "reflective consciousness of oneself", or the capacity of an individual to exhibit a constancy of character through time despite all changes of appearance that may occur. What Ricoeur emphasizes on is the ability to recognize the same person on different occasions at different moments even if time has changed some features of him.

Interestingly, Ricoeur finds the recognition of oneself in two key concepts: memory and promises. He says:

> *In memory and promises, the problematic of self recognition
> reaches two high points simultaneously. The one is tuned towards
> the past, the other towards the future. But they need to be
> considered together within the living question of self recognition,
> thanks to several features they have in common.* [14]

An understanding of the above quotation brings together the twin
concepts of memory and promises in line with life experience within
the framework of the categories of time and space in Kant's terminology.
Therefore, Ricoeur adds that memory is seen as sameness and promises
of the self. Even though memory could be threatened by forgetfulness
and promises by betrayal, the French philosopher in a practical approach
to life, posits that the characteristics of self recognition is fundamentally
the capacity of a man to recognize himself in his capacities. Simply this
statement implies that as an individual recognizing myself in my identity,
I am committed to fulfilling my promises even though circumstances
are different. Indeed, Ricoeur sees the marriage vow as the concrete
example where promises and memory meet and also depart when it is
renounced.[15]

Recognition by others

Following Ricoeur's analysis, recognition by others also interpreted as
mutual recognition or interpersonal recognition has some political
inclinations. It is on this premise that I align with Ricoeur that this third
form of recognition involves the recognition of the social and political
levels and hence initiate an act of judgment of the self and of others. In
this case as well, misrecognition can become a possibility.

The point to note here is that, modern philosophy, through Jean-
Jacques Rousseau, registered itself as the first period of philosophical
inquiry on the struggle for recognition, thereby placing it at the
mainstream of human existence. As a matter of fact, recognition as a
concept became of concern to moral, and socio-political philosophy,
which then developed into different theories of interpersonal relationship
reminiscent of Aristotle's political communitarianism.

In *Discourse on the Origin and Foundations of Inequality among
Men* and *Emile*, Jean-Jacques Rousseau registered his disdain for

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[14] Paul Ricoeur, Ibid. 105

[15] Ibid. 91

contemporary culture and politics. For him, God, and the state of nature, were perfect. Man only meddled with them and they became evil. In *Emile ou De l'Education*, Rousseau conceived a fictional son and pupil (Emile) that he relocated to a rural setting. In Rousseau's understanding, the child in his upbringing far away from the artificial, evil and harmful contemporary society would not develop illusory feelings of jealousy and pride in his rapport with others. In Rousseau's mind, it is precisely this negative attitudes that prompted the *amour propre* (self-esteem) or natural inclinations towards self-interest (*amour de soi*).[16] Considering Rousseau's study of the contemporary society, I can logically infer that if our practice of recognition does not institute or sustain good behaviour, then recognition becomes an alienated rather than a reconciliatory one.

Meanwhile, contemporary recognition theory is known to be firmly rooted in German Idealism, especially in the work of Fichte and Hegel. However, it was Hegel's analysis that presented the actual social political challenges of comprehending the complex rapport emanating from the struggle for recognition. Hegel believes that all creatures have natural needs and by so doing want things that are not in their presence. They desire things that are not with their nature to preserve themselves. However, Hegel notes that man's needs are different from the rest of the creatures because not only that he desires something; he also desires to be desired. In essence he wants somebody out there to recognize him. The desire solicited from the other human being is not for him to be considered as an object but as a subject, a human being with a worth of dignity. In Hegel's mind, the desire to be recognized as a human being with dignity is the essence of his master–slave dialectic in the *Phenomenology of the Spirit*.[17] Hegel presents the story in a way of justifying his concept of Absolute knowledge, which he says cannot come into its presence, revealing itself without the act of recognition. Hegel explains basically the process of becoming or *Aufhebung* that permeates all lives and moves from consciousness to self-consciousness and to freedom. Probably it is this submission of Hegel that prompted Axel Honneth another contemporary theorist of recognition theory to affirm that the young Hegel missed the point by abandoning his original idea of building a social theory based on his intersubjectivity of struggle

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[16] Rousseau, *Emile*, 1st Ed. Barbara Foxley, trans. (London: Dent, 1993)

[17] G.W.F. Hegel, (1941) *La Phénoménologie de l'Esprit*, vol.1 Traduction Jean Hyppolite. Editions Aubier Montaigne. Paris p.161-164.

for recognition and embracing the philosophy of the spirit. In his work, *The Struggle for Recognition: The Moral Grammar of Social Conflicts,*[18] Honneth asserts the struggle for recognition needs an empirical touch that builds self confidence, rights, self respect, self esteem in the individual based on the three fundamental concepts that shape Honneth's work namely love, right and solidarity.

Schmidt and Zurn[19] see Honneth's account between intersubjective recognition and social change as exemplary. Their argument is that Honneth's account is more promising in the analysis of most of the central social struggles evinced in modern, complex societies by demonstrating the internal connection between individual experiences of misrecognition and disrespect and the development of broader social struggles for an expanded and more social recognition. Meanwhile Honneth's approach seems to be accepted and shared by Charles Taylor, another contemporary key figure in recognition theory, whose account of recognition is both a right and an ethical obligation. Taylof is particularly concerned by the desire for an identity through social recognition. In his *Multiculturalism and the Politics of Recognition*, Taylor stresses the need for our individual recognition in the society through dialogue with others. It is only at that point that we negotiate our identity, to which he associates a new concept, articulation. He says in articulating our uniqueness, originality and identity, then when define ourselves in the world.[20]

Obviously, Honneth and Taylor's accounts of recognition in my own view are not any different from Hegel's struggle for recognition between two consciences. Even though criticized for his abstract oriented recognition Hegel's position expresses virtually the same message that one recognizes oneself as mediated through the other.[21] The German Philosopher is more consistent with his idea as he notes in the master slave dialectic that if one of the consciousness should die in the process of the struggle, then the goal of achieving self consciousness will be defeated. The process of self consciousness in Hegel's perspective is achieved only if both consciences live. The recognition of one comes

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[18] Axel Honneth, (1995) *The Struggle for Recognition: The Moral grammar of Social Conflicts.* Polity Press
[19] Schmidt and Zurn (2008) Ibid
[20] Charles Taylor, (1994) *Multiculturalism and the Politics of Recognition.* New Jersey: Princeton University Press, p.31
[21] G.W.F. Hegel, Ibid

through the recognition of the other. For Hegel, the whole history of human life is founded on the notion of "struggle for recognition" which motivates, and gives an impetus to fulfill the desired goal of life.

Conclusion

I would like to conclude this study by examining Paul Ricoeur's question on Struggle for Recognition. The French Philosopher raises the question if all forms of recognition are best understood as struggles just as it is presented by Hegel on the one hand and Honneth and Taylor on the other hand. I believe that the advocacy of some theorists of recognition for peaceful experiences of mutual recognition, even though morally acceptable, does not do justice to the reality of life experience. Struggle, desire, and violence are also essences of life. We are essentially human because we have desires that need to be satisfied. Since the expression of desire and its satisfaction always connects us with the other, it means that desire, necessarily leads to the recognition of others. But substantially, desire is difficult to fulfill, because as one desire is being satisfied, another springs up.

We desire because we are finite and desire is the way in which we persist as beings destined to freedom in the dialectical process of self-becoming and self-transformation. It is common knowledge that Classical Western philosophy did not paint desire in good colour as it advocates a mediation of it by Reason. However, I align myself with Hegel by saying that desire is the incessant human effort to overcome needs and wants, a project to become a self sufficient and self conscious subject. Through desire and the desire to be desired which is to be recognized by the other, recognition is made possible. The historicity of human existence which establishes recognition is practically impossible without struggle and violence which come with desire. As a matter of fact, humans always seek to be recognized by others, this, incidentally and persistently forms the essence of human existence, after all, desire is never totally fulfilled, making humans, condemned passions onto recognition.

67

THE CONTESTED TERRAIN OF EPISTEMOLOGY: A CRITICAL REVIEW OF THE GOAL OF NATURALISING EPISTEMOLOGY

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Abstract

*The nature, purpose, methods, and relevance of philosophy
are widely misunderstood. In consequence, philosophy has
come to be burlesqued and travestied by a few scholars
outside this intellectual discipline. The misunderstanding
or misconception has matured into prejudice and resilient
scepticism about the relevance of philosophy to public
affairs in particular and human purpose in general.*[1]

Introduction

Epistemology, for so long, has laid claim to being first philosophy and
saddles itself with the responsibility of dealing with the foundation of
knowledge. However, the challenges to this claim, championed by
proponents of naturalised epistemology, is that epistemologists should
desist from handling epistemology as a normative, *a priori*, philosophical
enterprise that seeks to evaluate the aims, procedures, and results of
scientific inquiry. They would rather have epistemology treated as an
arm of science that seeks to describe and explain how knowledge is
acquired. Although, as has been rightly pointed out, one cannot address
in one essay the entire project of naturalised epistemology,[2] this essay
seeks to examine the goal naturalised epistemology has set out to replace
the philosophical method of conducting epistemological inquiries with
the scientific method.

Our contention is that the proposal for naturalised epistemology
undermines the importance of the methodology of conducting

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[1] Kwame Gyekye, *Tradition and Modernity: Philosophical Reflections on the African Experience.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997. p. 3.
[2] Loraine Code, "What is Natural about Epistemology Naturalised?," *American Philosophical Quarterly.* Vol. 33, No.1, 1996, p. 1.

philosophical inquiries. Consequently, it also undermines the philosophical treatment of the branch of philosophy that deals with the theory of the origin, nature and limits of knowledge, as well as the importance of the discipline (i.e. epistemology) to science. We will further argue that the modification of the claim that rather than totally replacing epistemology with science, that what we should have is a collaboration between epistemology and science, in other words that the method of studying epistemology need only consider progress made in science, says nothing new that had not hitherto been accommodated. The essay thus considers why traditional epistemology, even if other means of analysing knowledge should emerge, will have to continue to evaluate human knowledge philosophically. This essay thus sets out to consider such research questions like: in what ways is epistemology a branch of philosophy? And why is the philosophical engagement of knowledge as done in traditional epistemology important?

The naturalist's proposal about epistemology

The various genres of naturalised epistemology differ in their conceptions of the relationship that should exist between science and epistemology. In fact, it makes more sense to speak of naturalised epistemologies rather than naturalised epistemology. This is because

> *naturalism in philosophy is by no means as simple a doctrine as it appears at first sight. Because of inherent ambiguities and because of the curious turns in its recent evolution, it is not really one coherent philosophical theory. When two naturalists say the same, they do not (necessarily) mean the same. It should not be surprising, therefore, if one naturalist feels puzzled or even indignant when reading pages written by another.[3]*

While to some proponents argue, science should entirely take over how epistemology is done, to others epistemology needs only take into consideration the method and findings of science. There is also disagreement as to which scientific discipline the study of epistemology should be modelled after. For Quine, for instance, it is psychology, while

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[3]   Jerzy Giedymin, "Quine's Philosophical Naturalism,' *The British Journal of the Philosophy of Science*, Vol. 23. No. 1, 1972. p. 45.

[4]   This is the position of Code in his essay, Loraine Code, "What is Natural about Epistemology Naturalised." *American Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. 33. No. 1. 1996.

Code holds that it should be ecology.[4] However, the scientific discipline that naturalists put forward as the model for epistemology matters less because there is a unity of the sciences. Although these scientific disciplines differ in specific objects of study, they share something in common and it is that: "scientists are brought together by their belief that their work will result in the discovery of verifiable facts".[5]

In the light of this unity of the sciences, what advocates of naturalised epistemology (that requires us to model epistemology after a particular scientific discipline) are advocating is that there is need for the discovery of natural properties of, and veritable fact about, knowledge, rather than reflectively aiming at the discoveries of ideals of knowledge. In the final analysis, the various naturalised epistemologies are lauded for the promise of shifting epistemology "away from idealised abstraction to established connections with epistemic practice that could enable theories of knowledge to engage constructively and critically with everyday cognitive activities."[6]

Quine is of the view that the attempt directed at finding the meaning and truths of science philosophically has failed. He seeks, therefore, to move the theory of knowledge into the field of psychology, where knowledge may be adjudged based on sensory input-output relationship of a person. Quine, thus, proposes that "epistemology, or something like it, simply falls into place as a chapter of psychology and hence of natural science. It studies a natural phenomenon, viz., a physical human subject."[7] Reducing epistemology to a branch of psychology and hence science, for Quine, is due to his belief that there are only two unassailable cardinal tenets of empiricism so far. "One is that whatever evidence there is for science is sensory evidence. The other... is that all inculcations of meaning of words must rest ultimately on sensory evidence...."[8] Quine made this claim, most probably, because he believes that "people can survive only to the extent that they can process the information available from their environments, understanding their

[4] G. Rota and J.T. Crants, "Introduction: Ten Philosophical (and Contradictory) Predictions," in Stanley Rosen (ed.), *The Philosopher's Handbook: Essential Readings from Plato to Kant* (New York: Random House Reference, 2000), p. 475.
[5] Code, "What is Natural about Epistemology Naturalised,"... p. 1.
[7] W.V.O. Quine, "Epistemology Naturalized" in Linda Martin Alcoef (ed.), *Epistemology: The Big Questions* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 1998), p. 260.

information processing capacities should yield an epistemology more adequate to human purposes than one that directs its recommendations towards an ideal of epistemic perfection that no human knower could achieve."[9] Epistemology is thus reduced to the business of saying what cogniser's psychological state is in various circumstances, or the states in which it would be rational or intelligent for a cogniser to be in.[10] Advocates of naturalised epistemology are, therefore, neither committed

> to analysing what ideal knowers ought to do nor constrained to devoting their best efforts to silencing the sceptic, [instead] naturalists assume that knowledge is possible and seek to understand its real-world (natural) conditions. They abandon any quest for a priori, necessary and sufficient conditions for knowledge in general, to examine how epistemic agents actually produce knowledge, variously, within the scope and limits of human cognitive powers as these powers are revealed in the same projects of inquiry.[11]

In spite of the differences between the various types of naturalised epistemology, the basic claim is that we should abandon the traditional treatment of knowledge as it had hitherto is in traditional epistemology, which is speculative in nature. This is to be replaced with the empirical process of knowledge acquisition.

Epistemologists are required "to understand how human beings generate their beliefs, how perception works, and how the brain processes sensory input. In other words, epistemology should be based, not on ideal abstract conditions, or on how we *think* we know based merely on introspection, but on the real processes of human perceiving and knowing."[12]

This attempt of "scientisising" epistemology is not new in the history of scholarship, and it can be attributed to the arrogance that the scientific method is *the method*. As far as the scientific method is concerned, the pursuit of knowledge, has over time, been linked to it with so many disciplines appropriating the methodology of science because of the

[8]   Quine, op. cit., p. 256.
[9]   Code, op. cit., p. 3.
[10] Alvin I. Goldman, "Epistemology and the Psychology of Belief," *The Monist*, 1978. p. 525.
[11] Code, op. cit., p. 1.
[12] Linda Martin Alcoef, "Introduction," in Linda Martin Alcoef (ed.), *Epistemology: The Big Questions* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 1998), p. 251.

belief that this method is the sure and most reliable way to knowledge acquisition as well as the surest way of discovering nature's secrets and how nature works through the discovery of laws and facts that reveal what nature is. It is this aim of this project that has been arrogantly extended to a cardinal branch of philosophy, epistemology. The belief informing this claim is that the attempt at understanding phenomena intuitively and speculatively has so far failed and therefore that "the method of natural science is the only legitimate or appropriate method to be used in attempting to acquire knowledge of whatever kind,"[13] or even in solving any human problem. This claim in itself may be traced to the realisation of what the scientific method had enabled humanity to achieve in its history. According to Kwasi Wiredu,

> as for the specific case of the superiority of scientific methods, the claim is based on such considerations as their greater efficacy in giving us control over various factors in our environment. And here it should be understood that the comparison is between methods of a certain kind of knowing not methods of living in general or even of knowing in general. That methods of inquiry based on exact measurement, controlled experiment and mathematical sophisticated theorising are superior to those based on rope-measurement and uncodified memories of previous observations seems hardly debatable.[14]

Nature of the problems, methodology, and results of philosophical inquiry

There is a lot of misconception about philosophy. This has led to a situation in which philosophers are charged with preoccupying themselves with abstract theoretical concerns, with elitism, *a priorism*, and uninvolvement in the practical affairs of life. The result of these misconceptions on the part of nonphilosophers is that philosophy is seen as the quintessence of ivory towerism and irrelevance.[15] It is not only nonphilosophers that have questioned the relevance of the philosophy enterprise. Academic philosophers have sometimes been involved in metaphilosophy requesting that we do away with parts of

[13] Jerzy Giedymin, op. cit., np. 45.

[14] Kwasi Wiredu, "Knowledge, Truth and Fallibility," in Kucuradi and R.S. Cohen (eds.), *The Concept of Knowledge* (Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1995), p. 136.

[15] Gyekye, op. cit., p. 3.

the discipline, for instance, metaphysics, or even contesting the relevance of certain methodologies. It is thus important to clear such misconceptions and shed more light on what philosophy is.

Three factors have been identified as being responsible for conferring on disciplines their distinguishing features. These are: the nature and genesis of the problems they tackle or study; the accepted method of studying these problems; and the results that are hoped for and the method of evaluating the relative merits of propounded solutions.[16]

In the case of philosophy, the problems tackled in philosophy are fundamental in nature. The questioning of the fundamental assumption of life has since inception till date constituted the main essence of philosophy. It is a discipline that "refers to attempts on the part of serious thinkers to get at the basis of things. Not the superficial, trivial detail, but the underlying fundamentals."[17] Kwame Gyekye rightly conceives philosophy essentially as critical and systematic inquiry into the fundamental ideas or principles underlying human thought, conduct, and experience, ideas, beliefs and assumptions.[18] In this regard, G. M. Presbey, K. J. Struhl, and R. E. Olsen, have rightly held that, "philosophers go to the 'root' of ideas by clarifying, questioning and evaluating our most basic assumptions. Often this challenge to accept norms and ideas can lead to views that are at odds with one's culture.... Philosophy is, in short, a radical critical inquiry into the fundamental assumptions of any field of inquiry [idea, concept, belief], including itself."[19] In what ways are philosophical problems fundamental in nature? According to Olusegun Oladipo, philosophical problems are fundamental in nature,

> *first, because the answers to them, implicit or explicit, are at the basis of the beliefs in terms of which people organise their lives and social relations. In other words, they influence our judgements and actions in various ways. But these questions*

[16] P. O. Budunrin, "Philosophy: Meaning and Method," *Ibadan Journal of Humanistic Studies*, 1981. p. 13.

[17] David Stewart and H. Gene Blocker, *Fundamentals of Philosophy*, 2nd Ed. (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1987), p. 3.

[18] Gyekye, op. cit., p. 5.

[19] Gail M. Presbey, *et. al.*, *The Philosophical Quest: A Cross-Cultural Reader* (New-York: McGraw-Hill Higher Education, 2000), p. xiv.

*are fundamental in another sense, namely, the ramifications
of the answers they elicit go beyond the purview of the concerns
that immediately led to them to touch areas of life from which
they appear to be quite remote.*[20]

Philosophers also address themselves to certain questions which
are general in nature. By being general in nature is meant that these
questions "are beyond the scope of specific areas of knowledge, for
example, physics, chemistry, biology, psychology, history, political
science, and so on."[21] It entails also that, even though these problems
had their origin in human experience, they cannot be tackled by resort
to empirical methods. As Brooke Noel Moore and Kenneth Bruder have
rightly held "one important feature of philosophical questions is that
they cannot be answered, in any straightforward way, by the discovery
of some fact or collection of facts... facts are often relevant to a
philosophical question, but they cannot themselves provide an answer."[22]
Oladipo also reiterates that these problems are not problems that can be
tackled through the accumulation of facts. Instead, "they involve a careful
consideration of how best to describe the facts that are available, with a
view to generating insights about them, which although tentative, are,
nonetheless, clear and self-consistent."[23]

Although scholars and professionals in the existing intellectual
disciplines tackle quite a number of questions to which philosophers
address themselves, yet the pondering of a philosopher on these issues
makes the philosopher consider these issues outside the purview of the
limited scope of the professionals in those fields. The aim of
philosophers, in addressing themselves to questions that are general in
nature, "is to provide a broad or general guide for perceiving, feeling
and transforming reality."[24]

Philosophers also address themselves to questions that deal with
norms. "Normative questions ask about the value of something. The
sciences are interested in finding out how things are, but they cannot
tell us how things ought to be. When we decide that something is good

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[20] Olusegun Oladipo, *Thinking About Philosophy: A General Guide* (Ibadan: Hope Publications Ltd., 2008), pp. 33-34.

[21] Ibid., p. 20.

[22] Brooke Noel Moore and Kenneth Bruder, *Philosophy: The Power of Ideas* (Boston: McGraw-Hill Higher Education, 2002), p. 3.

[23] Oladipo, op. cit., pp. 32-33.

[24] Oladipo, op. cit., p. 13.

or bad, right or wrong, beautiful or ugly, we are applying norms or standards."[25] Epistemology shares in this nature of philosophy as do every other branch of the discipline. This is because epistemic terms are essentially normative and as such epistemology is itself a normative inquiry with the ultimate goal of ensuring systematic study of the conditions of justified belief.[26]

Finally, the problems that philosophy tackles are abstract in nature. This arises, in itself, because philosophical questions are general. Operating at this abstract level, offers the philosopher "a vantage point from which to beam her analytical searchlight on the inarticulate and woolly beliefs and thoughts of people."[27] The abstract nature of the problems philosophy tackles has erroneously made many to conclude that philosophy bears little or no relevance to the concrete and specific problems of humanity. Much has been said about the nature of the problems addressed in philosophy generally. Let's briefly address ourselves to the nature of the problems of epistemology, before considering the other two factors that are responsible for conferring on philosophy its distinguishing features, seeing that each branch of philosophy deals with its own specific issues and problems.

Michael Williams, in his *Problems of Knowledge: A Critical Introduction to Epistemology*, holds that in order to understand what is distinctive about a given type of theorising one may consider the problem(s) addressed therein. With respect to epistemology, he identifies five problems tackled in it as a cardinal branch of philosophy. The first is the analytic problem, as focus is on clarifying what knowledge is and how knowledge is to be distinguished from mere belief and opinion. The second is the problem of demarcation. This, in itself is further divided into two, the external problem in which attempt is directed at determining in a principled way what sort of things we might reasonably know about, i.e. determining the scope and limits of human knowledge. The other division which addresses internal problems considers whether there are important boundaries within the province of knowledge itself. This is where the distinction between *a posteriori* and *a priori* knowledge is discoursed. The third relates to the problem of method. This deals

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[25] Moore and Bruder, op. cit., p. 3.

[26] Jaegwon Kim, "What is "Naturalized Epistemology?" in Linda Martin Alcoff (ed.), *Epistemology: The Big Question* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 1998), pp. 266-267.

[27] Gyekye, op. cit., p. 6.

with how knowledge is to be obtained or sought. This is further subdivided into three problems: the problem of unity, which seeks to know whether there is just one way of acquiring knowledge, or whether there are several depending on the nature of knowledge in question; the ameliorative problem, which considers the possibility of knowing if our means of acquiring knowledge can be improved on. The third subdivision deals with the problem of reason or rationality. Here, the concern is aimed at knowing whether there are methods of inquiry that are distinctively rational, and if so, what they are. The fourth is the problem of scepticism that addresses itself to whether it is possible to obtain knowledge at all. Finally, there is the problem of value which considers whether knowledge is worth having, why and what for? Williams' conclusion is that how a given philosopher judges the relative importance of these problems will shape the philosopher's sense of what an epistemological theory needs to accomplish and how it might be argued for.[28]

Regarding the genesis of problems tackled in philosophy: they begin in wonder. As Plato says in his *Theaetetus* that "Wonder is the special affection of a philosopher; for philosophy has no other starting point than this." As Aristotle says in his *Metaphysics*, "it is through wonder that men now begin and originally began to philosophise." Human beings became perplexed upon noticing the baffling and contradictory features - change and permanence, life and death, universals and particulars - of the world. And as a result, men began to wonder what explanations there are to them and thus through wonder, philosophy kicked off. Still, philosophical issues have continued to be generated as a result of wonder, as a result of philosophers wondering whether better explanations do not exist other than the ones provided; as a result of philosophers wondering about the perplexities that arise out of conflicting and contradictory positions that philosophers, scholars, and humans generally put forward. In short, philosophy begins when one is puzzled by something and when as a result of wonder one begins to raise questions in the hope of finding answers.

Another reason that accounts for the genesis of philosophical problem is doubt. "In the specific case of philosophical inquiry, the

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[28] Cf. Michael Williams, *Problems of Knowledge: A Critical introduction to Epistemology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 1-3.

77

central motivation derives from the observation that things are not usually what they appear to be and the realisation that many of the assurances of common sense can be mistaken."[29] Because of the difference between the noumena and the phenomena, the way things are in themselves and the way they appear to us, philosophical reflection springs up in the bid to supply rational explanations to dispel doubt.

Although, the method of handling philosophical issues differ from tradition to tradition, from one philosopher to the other (and may even vary, depending on the issue handled by a philosopher at a particular time or epoch); and although "we cannot pinpoint a method as the philosophical method, the way we talk of *scientific method*, for instance,"[30] the method of approaching philosophical problems include among others: conceptual reasoning or conceptual analysis, reflection, and speculation. In relation to its methodology, philosophy may be conceived as the discipline that subjects to rigorous examination the basic or fundamental assumptions and/or issues of life. It is that discipline which engages its subject-matter, whatever it may be, in whatever field of knowledge by being critical, analytical, logical, argumentative, reflective, rational and normative. As a cognitive enterprise philosophy aims at the production of knowledge of some sort. Philosophy, thus, presents us with "a new interpretation and a new awareness of the basic assumption that underlie our everyday life."[31] It requires of us to question all things, challenge all assumptions and beliefs until we find beliefs that are sacrosanct.

Unlike in science where consensus on an issue is fundamental in resolving a nutty issue, in philosophy the consensus of the community of philosophers may not be necessary. What is required of a philosopher is the presentation of arguments of high quality and clarity of expression. The acceptance of the point of view of the philosopher will depend, to a large extent, on the profundity and the logical force of the arguments put forward regarding an idea. Whether people, or other philosophers, accept the arguments depends on their intellectual outlook and ideological leanings. However, it is not the case that "in philosophy anything goes, that one can say anything and make any speculation that

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[29] Oladipo, op. cit., pp. 31-32.
[30] ibid., p. 11.
[31] Bodunrin, Philosophy, op. cit.,p. 23.

one likes. On the contrary, precisely because we lack established empirical or mathematical methods for investigating philosophical problems, we have to be all the more rigorous and precise in our philosophical analyses."[32] These features reflect through every branch of philosophy in the interrogation of their subject matter either as first order disciplines or as second order ones that interrogate the aims, procedures and outcomes of other disciplines.

The nature of philosophy and its concerns with the discipline of science

We turn the focus of the discussion now to how the nature of philosophy as a discipline determines its engagement with the discipline of science. According to H. S. Staniland, a person is engaged in philosophising if the person is engaged in a train of thought whose ultimate purpose is the criticism of certain vitally important ideas.[33] This opinion, which defines philosophy as the criticism of the ideas we live by, rightly places the activity of criticism as an essential activity in the act of philosophising. Philosophy, as a critical exercise, is "critical if and only if it avoids any kind of dogma however trivial."[34] In philosophy, we achieve our aim "by probing criticism – letting loose our entire intellectual activity in the consideration of a problem and pursuing our enquiry with a preparedness to abandon our most cherished beliefs if reason demands that we so do."[35]

Philosophy as a discipline criticises received opinions; it is critical of views internal to its field of study and at the same time critical of views expressed in other fields of study. This critical nature of philosophy is directed at making clear all ideas in order to avoid the esoteric and the mystical and in order to provide the justification, where necessary, or refutation, as the case may demand in certain cases, for all beliefs and knowledge claims. In this regard, K. A. Owolabi posits that "philosophy, by its very nature avoids those ideas that are mysterious, dogmatic and complicated. It is true that philosophy mingles with religion

[32] R. Searle, "The Future of Philosophy," *Philosophical Transactions: Biological Sciences*, Vol. 354, No. 1392. 1999. p. 2070.

[33] H.S. Staniland, "What is Philosophy?," in K. A. Owolabi (ed.), *Issues and Problems in Philosophy* (Ibadan: GROVACS Network, 2000), p. 4.

[34] K. A. Owolabi, "Introduction," in K. A. Owolabi (ed.), *ibid.*, p. xi.

[35] Bodunrin, op. cit., p. 23.

and science. But not for the purpose of adopting their subjects and methodology. But for the simple reason of supplying rational arguments for the justification or rejection of those aspects that deserve either acceptance and rejection."[36] Philosophy is therefore interested, as a second order enterprise, in criticising and justifying the grounds of the knowledge claims made in other disciplines, including science. It is interested in interrogating how knowledge is acquired and justified in these other areas. In relation to the discipline of science, philosophy is interested in the evaluation of scientific claims and or knowledge. Philosophy saddles itself with this responsibility because the philosophic spirit "leaves no valuations and aspirations unexamined and no piece of knowledge isolated; it seeks the grounds for the validity of whatever is valid."[37]

Another defining feature of philosophy, apart from criticism, is scepticism. In line with its sceptical nature, philosophy challenges science's knowledge claims and demands that we be not easily satisfied with simple or superficial scientific evidence. It demands that there is need to cast doubt on scientific claims and that unless certain criteria are satisfied, we should deny such claims. Philosophy makes this demand because science relies heavily for its claims on sense experience which is unfortunately prone to error. We do know from experience, for instance, that our senses are, in some cases, deceitful or unreliable. And inasmuch as this is true, we are cautioned in relying on them for deriving absolutely certain knowledge of phenomena as they are and, beyond that predicting the future. In the light of the above description of philosophy, we will proceed in evaluating the mission of those who have argued for the severing of epistemology as a cardinal branch of philosophy, just as other branches of knowledge, with developed methodologies, have over time been severed.

Should science be the method?
One of the reasons for the naturalist's proposal for replacing traditional ways of addressing epistemological issues with the methodologies of science is that traditional epistemology has failed to achieve Cartesian certainty. However, certainty is definitely elusive to man. To err is human,

[36] Owolabi, op. cit.
[37] H. P. Rickman (ed.), *Dilthey: Selected Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), p. 129.

and the fact remains that in all human endeavours errors occur, more so in science. Wiredu has rightly concluded that: "knowledge, whether it be *a priori* or empirical or about necessary or contingent propositions, can have only a certainty compatible with human fallibility. In every case it is bound to the conditions of human existence, biological and cultural."[38] This is why explanations, theories, and laws change in science. Since change is the one constant thing in nature (change, not necessarily in the sense that nature itself changes but that our understanding of nature changes), scientific claims, knowledge, and theories can only at best be transitory since "what we say about reality is the product of certain orientation of being, certain interest, certain motivation, our individual will and arbitrariness."[39] Scientific claims, knowledge, and theories are susceptible to change. This is why scientists in their efforts to provide a better understanding of nature constantly attempt to make new discoveries and develop new concepts, laws, theories, that better enhance our understanding of natural phenomena. In doing this, scientists attempt to dislodge or modify old explanatory models by causing paradigm shift. Of a truth then, "the precision and the reliability of mathematics and the experimental sciences seem to make these the definitive types of knowledge," says Rosen, "even though it would be difficult to say that such knowledge is unchangeable."[40] Derry therefore rightly posits, "this body of scientific results changes from year to year, and may sometimes be unrecognizable from one generation to another."[41] Oladipo makes the same point when he posits that:

> *our knowledge of the world, in spite of the giant strides that has been taken by science in the growth of knowledge, is still limited, just as the resources - spiritual, intellectual and moral - available to us for coping with the challenges of life are characteristically inadequate. Given this situation, the ideas and ideals - core aspects of world-views- we live by are best regarded as tentative guides, which can be re-examined from*

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[38] Wiredu, op. cit., p. 146.

[39] Jim I. Unah, "Some Perennial Questions of Metaphysics," in Jim I. Unah (ed.), *Metaphysics, Phenomenology and African Philosophy* (Lagos: FADEC Publishers, 2004), p. 63.

[40] Stanley Rosen, "Introduction," *The Philosopher's Handbook: Essential Readings from Plato to Kant* (New York: Random House Reference, 2000), p. xiv.

[41] Gregory N. Derry, "Prologue: What is Science," *What science is and how it works* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1999), p. 4.

time to time in the light of new knowledge or information and
our understanding of our socio-cultural condition and its
existential demands at any given time.[42]

Given the fact that the specialised knowledge possessed by scientists is
highly fallible leading to a situation in which today's scientific
knowledge may turn out to have been today's scientific error, philosophy
needs to scrutinise the claims in the sciences in order to eliminate
erroneous beliefs. Science as a body of knowledge that is also prune to
imperfection can hence not be taken as the paradigm for attaining the
normative aim of the philosopher in arriving at what knowledge is indeed.
Gyekye rightly hold then, "that philosophy speculates about the whole
range of the human experience: it provides conceptual interpretation
and analysis of that experience, necessarily doing so not only by
responding to the basic issues and problems generated by that experience
but also by suggesting new or alternative ways of thought and action."[43]
Indeed then, the philosophical quest for absolute certainty, for perfection,
is not out of place. It is a reminder that we can be better than we are,
that there are lofty heights of ideals yet to be attained and the search for
which we must not relent. That philosophical quest hence keeps the
insatiable human spirit searching, researching and further researching
for the perfection, which according to Plato, resides in the world of
forms. At the heart of this search is the conviction that certainty, absolute
truth, is radically different from human's opinion or judgement of it.

Furthermore, since there is a distinction between appearance and
reality, there is cause for the philosopher to question the scientist as to
whether the later had really dealt with reality of a phenomenon in itself
or its appearance. This concern is justified in the light of the view
expressed by agnostic materialism that holds that even though ultimate
reality is material in nature, yet that even with all the advances in
knowledge about matter made possible by science now we are ignorant
of its essential nature. Human ignorance cannot be totally eliminated,
even in the future, given the fact that even the increase in our knowledge
about the ultimate and fundamental reality in the future will not imply
that we have laid hold of reality's essential nature. There is more to
matter than what human understanding can capture given the limitation

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[42] Oladipo, op. cit., p. 16.
[43] Gyekye, op. cit., p. 24.

of our conceptual scheme, the limitation of man's devised measuring instruments of matter and the fact that we can only know the revealed aspect of matter.

Raymond N. Osei captures this point. According to him,

> ...*though we have accumulated across the centuries a great deal of information about the underlying stuff and workings of this world - thanks to the advances in science - yet we are far from clear as regards the intrinsic nature of this reality. As contemporary philosophers remind us again and again, the question is not that it is a matter of time, and not the inadequacy of our conceptual systems (common sense and scientific), that accounts for our ignorance of this reality. It is true that in time we will come to acquire more knowledge of the workings of this ubiquitous stuff by deploying our existing conceptual systems (enriched by time and experience). Yet, in spite of these advances in the past and possible advances in the future, we despair that the basic structure of our present conceptual systems could in the final analysis reveal to us this reality. This scepticism is sustained by the fact that we have epistemic access to two distinct kinds of phenomena: the mental and the physical, or the experiential and the non-experiential; we also have strong intuition that there is an intimate relationship between the two phenomena; but our current conceptual systems seem wholly inadequate in offering a coherent account of this relationship. This is the perplexity that afflicts our human condition.*[44]

Jim I. Unah has also argued that reality is, on the one hand, multi-faceted and, on the other, perpetually in process. Being multi-faceted implies that reality has many faces or many perspectives, while being perpetually in process entails that reality is not localizable, meaning that reality is always unfolding itself, always more than what it is at any time. The implication of these, according to Unah, is that "there can be no adequate conceptualizations of it. If there can be no total conceptualization of it, there is always something left to be seen and said. There is always

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[44] Raymond N. Osei, *The Mind-Body Problem in Philosophy: An Analysis of the Core Issues* (Ibadan: Hope Publications Ltd., 2006), pp. 9-10.

something to excite our ontological wonder, something to give rise to further questioning."[45]

Moreover, since the knowledge expressed in science is a tentative expression of, and partial understanding of the events and natural phenomena in our world, these expressions inevitably have their weaknesses and strength. It is the task of philosophy to expose the weaknesses and, if possible, further strengthen the area of strength.

Furthermore, philosophy is interested in science in order to rein in the excesses of science. Science ought to look to philosophy, in one form or another, not simply for justification of its achievements or immense power but for insight into its legitimate purpose and its wise limitations.[46] Like a mother that keeps her children in check, philosophy stimulates rich discourses about the values that ought to guide the discipline of science so that the discipline can indeed realise the highest good for humanity. To understand the importance of this interest of philosophy we should just evaluate the threat that unbridled development in science has contributed to environmental crisis in our world today, availability of weapon of mass destruction which increasingly make chaos, calamity and destruction to stare humanity in the face. Olu-Owolabi reinforces this position that:

> with the feats of science in the modern age, scientific enterprise is allowed to have a field day and the philosophical wisdom that ought to be the guiding and directing force is therefore sent out of the arena of performance .... This is the situation of things today. Science is the performing dog; philosophy is the guardian-police. There is the need to bring in the philosophical enterprise with its attendant wisdom to temper the excesses of sciences.[47]

In the light of this, we are convinced that rather than having epistemology integrated into the discipline of science what we should seek to have is the dialogue of the disciplines. As Obafemi Kujore had rightly noted, "certainly, in a properly conceived development of national character, scientific knowledge and technical expertise should go hand-in-hand

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[45] Unah, op. cit., p. 63.
[46] Rosen, op. cit., p. xxvi.
[47] K. A. Olu-Owolabi, *My People Perish for Lack of Philosophy*. An inaugural lecture delivered at the University of Ibadan on Thursday, 11 August, 2011. p. 31.

with a well-adjusted sense of human values and a conscious discipline of character."[48] He further holds,

> ... *there is nothing to be gained in creating an unnecessary gap between the sciences and the humanities and in regarding both as implacable rivals; the sciences can, and should, be studied in a humanistic spirit, and the humanities can, and should, be cultivated in a scientific spirit. I believe also we can now realise that we do not stand to lose, but rather have much to profit from, by sharing the common and great experiences of the past of humanity.*[49]

What is this common and great experience of the past of humanity, especially as it relates to the production of knowledge? It is that the production of knowledge at its inception did not suffer the kind of deficient demarcation now known in the generation of knowledge. The situation was such that the sciences (in the general understanding of the word) kicked off as philosophy.

It is in the light of this that the proposal of those who advocate a genre of naturalised epistemology that rejects the basic tenet of the Quinean type of epistemology (that seeks to totally replace the philosophical inquiry into epistemology with scientific inquiry and would rather have us have an epistemology that takes cognisance of development in science) says nothing new other than requiring us to return to the ancient track abandoned in contemporary scholarship.

According to Quine, "knowledge, mind and meaning are part of the same world that they have to do, and that they are to be studied in the same empirical spirit that animates natural science. There is no place for *a prior* [i] philosophy."[50] The aim of the proponents of naturalised epistemology that seeks to have epistemology as a branch of science, ignores the fact that science is a branch of knowledge and that just as it has a claim to its method of generating knowledge other branches of knowledge should equally be permitted to thrive on methodologies adjudged suitable for making progress in those disciplines, taking into cognisance, the objects they study. We doubt, for instance, whether philosophical problems and issues can be solved by the empirical method

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[48] Obafemi Kujore, *The Classical Discipline: A Luxury or a Necessity?* An Inaugural lecture delivered at the University of Ibadan on Thursday, 27th October, 1977. p. 19.
[49] ibid, p. 21.

for there is no amount of observation that can determine the knowledge about whether or not the universe has a purpose and whether, and in what sense, human beings have free will.[51] We cannot agree less with Jerzy Gieldymin that "knowledge, in the form of scientific and mathematical theories belongs to the world of ideas and is to be studied not with the methods of psychology but by analysing, developing and criticising the content of theories in relation to problems which are likewise susceptible to similar scrutiny...."[52] This is best done in philosophy in the light of the qualities it possesses. John R. Searle has argued rightly, to some extent, that there is no sharp line of division between philosophy and science for both, in principle, are universal in subject matter and both aim at the truth. However, according to him,

> though there is no sharp dividing line, there are important differences in method, style and presuppositions. Philosophical problems tend to have three related features that scientific problems do not have. First, philosophy is in large part concerned with questions that we have not yet found satisfactory and systematic way to answer. Second, philosophical questions tend to be what I will call 'framework' questions; that is, they tend to deal with frameworks of phenomena, rather than with specific individual questions. And third, philosophical questions are typically about our concepts and the relationship between our concepts and the world they represent.[53]

Conclusion

In the final analysis some things are not amenable to treatment scientifically. In fact, Quine's claims were philosophically argued for and not scientifically proven. Says Andras Kertesz, "the arguments which Quine puts forward in order to prove this conclusion is of exactly the *same philosophical nature* which characterised both scepticism and traditional epistemology."[54]

It lies also within the power of philosophy to expose certain hidden ideologies driving certain scientific research and projects. In the case of Africa, for instance, there is a reason why philosophy needs to be

[52] ibid.
[53] ibid.
[54] ibid.

involved in other disciplines and it is to ensure that ideological underpinnings of theories generated in other disciplines are properly examined in order to separate bad ideology from good ideology. As Olusegun Oladipo says,

> another aspect of the critique of ideology which African philosophers should not neglect is the critical engagement with other academic disciplines, whether in the social sciences, the humanities or even the natural sciences, as a way of exposing the ideological underpinnings of received, usually moribund, theoretical models or research programmes which are dominant in African academic establishments... This kind of critique should be pursued more vigorously, given the widespread tendency in African academic establishments to regard received theoretical; models or research programmes as ready-made tools which can only be applied, not examined. [55]

The philosopher must thus become critical of views presenting degrading misconceptions of Africa. Helen Lauer has, for instance, criticised the false ideology of incapacity, which presents economic rehabilitation programmes based on the idea that Africa is a *deficient* continent. This she says presupposed a notion of economic maturity that connotes a unidirectional, asymmetric process of development according to fixed *criteria* of civilisation and which measures social progress by how a society approximates to the European ideal of cultural sophistication known as modernity even though the European model is not the only ideal operating model in the world. [56]

The critical evaluation of ideologies underlying disciplines should enable humans to reject certain degrading notions about Africans, or any race whatsoever, which in line with acclaimed scientific discoveries show the African, or any race whatsoever, to be inferior to others.

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55 ibid.
56 ibid.

ROBERT NOZICK ON THE MINIMUM STATE, AN ENTITLEMENT THEORY OF JUSTICE: AND THE NIGER-DELTA QUESTION

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Abstract

This paper is a hermeneutic application of Robert Nozick's conception of the minimal state and an entitlement theory of Justice to the Niger-Delta question in Nigeria. The first observation that the paper makes is that an intellectual and scholarly browse through Nozick's book, Anarchy, State and Utopia *would appear to make it relevant to the quest of the Niger-Deltans to be "entitled" to control the crude oil resource within their earth-crust. The paper further argues, in agreement with Nozick, that despite the seeming "extensiveness" of the nature of the (Nigerian) State, the obvious anarchy exhibited by the Niger-Delta militants do not provide an alternative. The paper's methodological approach is to look at Nozick's expressions and arguments and then look at the unfolding scenario in Nigeria to see how they relate. It concludes with two revolutionary suggestions: that the best way to solve the problem of "resource-control" is for the Nigerian State to suspend oil exploration in Nigeria for 30 years so as to invest time and efforts in developing other areas of resource-availability, and that political leadership in Nigeria should be on a part-time basis without monetary incentives to enable credible, sincere and servant leaders emerge and to create a just society.*

Introduction

There are various conceptions of the nature of the state. They have ranged from the Hegelian organic theory of the state, through the liberal view, to the Marxist version. In recent times, however, there has come to the fore, the need to review these conceptions, especially bearing in mind

89

the enormous size of the modern nation-state, coupled with its wide-range scope of activities. This review has been given a fillip by the realization that the Marxist state has refused to "wither away" while the liberal state is not, as it was previously conceived, a negatively "necessary evil". The state arose to play positive roles in contemporary time, thereby making the liberal view point inadequate and the Marxist position spurious and untenable.

Although there are various perceptions of the "question of the state" (its origin, meaning, etc), it would seem that the question of *scope* or problem of obligation, have become central in any discussion of the existence of the state. The pre-occupation has largely been with "the relations of the state and the individual, with the citizen's rights, if any, against the state, with the rights of the state to punish, to promote morality, or to regulate the affairs of other associates."[1]

It is, therefore, against the backdrop of the state and individual rights, of legitimacy, justification, and nature of the state, that Robert *Nozick's Anarchy, State and Utopia*[2] arose as a contribution; as a "philosophical explanation" of issues, not a "political tract". Is it any wonder that Nozick begins the book with, as he puts it, "a strong formulation of individual rights"?[3]

We shall see that, following the historical emergence of what Nozick calls the "minimal State", he also, in contradistinction to earlier prevailing theories of justice, which are *distributive* in nature, advocates for an "entitlement theory of justice", and a critical x-ray of both positions would reveal that Nozick's attempt to shield the inadequacies of those position(s) within a Utopian framework was unsuccessful. We shall also see that Nozick attempts to give justification to the 18th century individualism, which became the fundamental ontology of liberalism as well as the 19th century *laissez-faire* capitalism with its rigid emphasis on property rights. Nozick attacks socialist and utilitarian principles, as well as egalitarian ones. In fact when *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* "came out in 1974, it was out of tune with the *Zeitgeist* of the time".[4]

[1] Stanly I. Benn, "State", in, Paul Edward (ed), *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Vol. 7 (New York: Macmillan, 1967).

[2] Robert Nozick, *Anarchy, State and Utopia* (New York: Basic Books Inc., (c) 1974). All quotations by Nozick in this article is taken from this edition

[3] ibid, p. xi

[4] See Dipo Irele, *Introduction To Contemporary Social And Political Thinkers* (Ibadan: New Horn, 1993), p. 26

Utopias are good for they provide a basis for idealism. With utopia, one can have the intellectual courage to ruminate on the "best possible world". This is why we believe that no case can make Nozick's thoughts more applicatory than the Niger-Delta question in Nigeria. The Hobbesian "state of nature" situation appears to be playing out in the Niger-Delta Region with all the various militant groups within the Niger-Delta Creeks acting in ways similar to what Nozick refers to as "Protective Agencies". We also discover that what Nozick refers to as an "extensive State" appears to be similar to the Nigerian State, that has undertaken to give the Niger-Deltans what have been referred to as "handouts"[5] - 13 percent derivation formular, Niger-Delta Development Commission (NDDC), Ministry of the Niger-Delta, (recently) amnesty, Vice-Presidency and then Presidency.

The most far reaching of these "handouts" is the amnesty. A guerrilla warfare is going on at the Creeks. The "extensive state" government of Nigeria knows that such wars are never won or lost. For to allow the militancy to continue is to endanger lives, business and a compromise of the sovereignty of the Nigerian State. Conversely, to go all out to, as it were, "smoke out" the militants by the sheer use of naked brute force would even cause more damage; first, to the economic intentions of the western bourgeoisie, and secondly, to lives. The sheer employment and monopoly of the instruments of coercion failed. The Joint Task Force (JTF) thought that a mere commando–like action would silence the militants. But it wasn't working. And so, "amnesty" was introduced so that the militants could be lured out of the Creeks, so that the crude oil business by the Transnational Corporations (TNCs) would continue as before. Yet the real point the militants appear to be making is that, following Nozick, the redistributive theory of justice is not working and not fair where it is working. They insist that they are "entitled" to decide what to do with the oil beneath their earth-crust.

What we intend to do is to present the crux of Nozick's arguments, juxtapose them with or apply them to the quest by the Niger-Deltans of Nigeria to control the oil resources, and then allow the reader to draw his or her own conclusions.

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[5] Joseph N. Agbo, "Causality, Freedom of the Will and the Question of the Justification of Punishment" *Journal of Journal of Law and International Security*, vol. 3, No.2 (2009), Department of Public Law, Ambrose Ali University, Ekpoma, Edo State Nigeria, pp. 50-65

Nozick on the minimal state

Where does the minimal state emerge from? How does it emerge? What is the nature and function of that state? Why does one even need a state at all? In other words, would it be better to live in a state-less environment? Can or could such decision (to live without a state) be taken *a priori*, that is, without any experience of life in a particular state-organized and controlled society? Or is the state an inevitable entity?

Nozick's book, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*, is divided into 3 parts: part one, justifies the minimal state; part two argues that an extensive state can neither be justified nor required. Nozick uses a hypothetical description of how that state might emerge to render it unattractive or unappealing. By an "extensive state", Nozick has in mind a state with wide ranging powers to "do and undo", in fact, he means the type of state that does exist now in contemporary political societies. In part three, Nozick culminates his arguments by positing that what can possibly be saved from Utopian theory is actually the structure of a minimal state.

Before his full discussion of his "minimal state" theory, Nozick had to shove-aside the argument of the Anarchists. The left-wing anarchists are opposed to any form of state organization. A classical expression of their position can be best captured by the words of the Marxist, J.P. Proudhon;

> *To be governed is to be watched; inspected, spied up, directed, law-driven, numbered, regulated, enrolled, indoctrinated, preached at, controlled, checked, estimated, valued, censored, commanded, by creatures who have neither the right nor the wisdom nor the virtue to do so. To be governed is to be at every operation, at every transaction noted, registered, counted, taxed, stamped, authorized, admonished, prevented, forbidden, reformed, corrected, punished.*[6]

This was vintage Proudhon driving a wedge into any conception of "state" and the "government" within that state. However, the fact that Nozick takes issues against the anarchists does not imply that we should invent a state. That would be inimical to his style of dealing with them.

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[6] J.P Proudhon, *General Idea of The Revolution In the Nineteenth Century*, trans. by John Beverly Robinson (London: Freedom Press, 1923), pp. 293-294. I have also added some alterations from Benjamin Tucker's translation, *in, Instead of A Book* (New York: no, 1893), p.26.

Nozick rides on the back of the anarchists' argument by saying that "a state will arise from anarchy (as represented by John Locke's state of nature), even though no one intended this or tried to bring this about, by a process which need not violate anyone's rights".[7] He argues that his "main conclusions about the state are that a minimal state, limited to the narrow functions of protection against force, theft, enforcement of contracts, and so on, is justified; that any more extensive state will violate persons' rights not to be forced to do certain things and is unjustified; and that the minimal state is inspiring as well as right".[8]

Having stated his conclusions and laid aside the anarchists, Nozick equates the Lockean "state of nature" as "the best anarchic situation one reasonably could hope for. Hence investigating its nature and defects is of crucial importance to deciding whether there should be a state rather than anarchy".[9] Nozick agrees with the picture of anarchy painted by Proudhon. However, he agues that a state, minimal in activity, would inevitably emerge from that anarchical situation, because for him considerations of both political philosophy and explanltory political theory converge upon Locke's state of nature.

Nozick agrees (with Locke) that there are "inconveniences in the state of nature". Of all these "inconveniences", the need for protection might rank the highest. Locke says, concerning these inconveniences, "I easily grant that civil government is the proper remedy".[10] Nozick argues that the important need for protection in the state-of-nature leads to the emergence of Protective Agencies to which people, in that state or situation, would pay to belong. The clients of these different contending protective agencies would give up to these agencies their rights to punish those that violate their rights. However, because of the contending protective agencies; that is to say, that "out of anarchy, pressed by spontaneous groupings, mutual-protective associations, division of labour, market pressures, economies of scale, and rational self-interest, there arises something very much resembling a minimal state or group of geographically distinct minimal states"[11]

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[7] Nozick, op cit., p. xi

[8] ibid, p.ix

[9] ibid, p. 5.

[10] John Locke, *Two Treatise of Government* 2nd Ed. by Peter Laslett (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1967), see esp. sect. 13.

Nozick argues that through the twin processes of filtering and equilibrium, through a process that was not intended to produce a particular pattern or design when it began, a dominant protective association would emerge from the state of nature, through an ultra minimal state, and then culminate in a minimal state situation- "after Adam Smith, we shall call such explanations *invisible-hand explanation*".[12] The idea of "filtering and equilibrium" and the process that Nozick attaches to it, resembles Darwin's theory of "Natural Selection" in the survival of biological species, wherein only the fittest survive. The amnesty granted to the Niger-Delta militants by President Yar'Adua led to a wonderful discovery. It revealed that the militant groups within the region are legion, each, like Nozick's protective agency, controlling an area within the region.

The fact that there are people who would choose to be independent of any protective association, the fact that the dominant protective agency lacks (a) the requisite monopoly over the use of force, and (b) the ability to provide protection over all the people within its territory (for what happens if the independent decides to exert justice, based on his own procedure, from a client of the dominant protective agency?) make it obvious that the conditions for the minimal conception of a state has not yet been satisfied. Nozick argues that an independent can be forbidden or prohibited from privately exerting justice because his procedure is known to be too risking and dangerous and may cause harm to others. He uses this theory of disadvantage to formulate a "principle of compensation", which states that "those who are disadvantaged by being forbidden to do actions that *might* harm others must be compensated for these disadvantages foisted upon them in order to provide security for others".[13]

But why is it that no private protective association, no matter how dominant, would be able to handle a situation where there are many independents who all want to exert their own justice? Or even others who also are entitled to group together and prohibit the totality of the activities of the independents? Nozick says that, "the legitimate powers of protective associations are merely the *sum* of the individual rights

[11] Nozick, op. cit., pp. 16-17.
[12] ibid, p. 18
[13] ibid, pp. 82-83.

that its members or clients transfer to the association. No new rights and powers arise".[14] But this still does not justify a movement from a dominant protective agency to a minimal state, just like that. For even if the dominant protective association finally succeeds in capitulating all other protective associations, how does it take care of the independents in order to win them to its side and still (this is crucial) be able to maintain a position that is morally permissible to the individuals' (the independents') rights?

Nozick argues that the inability to intervene in non-clients' conflicts does not make the dominant agency a non-state any more than it would make the traditional-state. In order, therefore, for the dominant protective agency to morally get the independents into its confidence, Nozick has to return to the principle of compensation. He says; "the clients of the dominant protective agency, then, must compensate the independents from the disadvantages imposed upon them... undoubtedly, the least expensive way to compensate the independents would be to supply them with protective services to cover those situations of conflict with the paying customers of the protective agency.[15] Is this "principle of compensation" not in palpable display in the Niger-Delta of Nigeria? While Asare Dukubo, Ateke Tom, etc are "compensated" with contracts worth billions of naira by the dominant protective agency called Nigeria, for "playing along", Henry Okah is in detention in South Africa, for insisting on being an "Independent".

There appears to be a moral undertone in the offer of amnesty by the Nigerian State to the Niger-Delta militants. The Nigerian State, as presently constituted, is feeling the pain of the immorality of the denial of the legitimacy embedded in the seeming illegitimacy of the militancy of the Niger-Delta Youths. But because it is an "extensive", not a "minimal" State, it cannot admit this immorality. On the other hand, the Nigerian State equally realizes that, as Nozick observes, she does not "claim monopoly of the use of force". And in this guerrilla warfare at the Creeks, it would be difficult to decide (*a priori*) who would win. And when one realizes that the arms, ammunitions and artillery are being displayed in the land where the geese that lay the "golden petroleum eggs" are, then caution is a natural utilitarian option.

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14 ibid, p. 89
15 ibid, p. 110.

It would, therefore, seem to suggest that this "supply of protective services" would curl the favour of the independents to then surrender to the dominant protective association. Lawrence Krader argues that; "the concentration of all physical force in the hands of the central authority is the primary function of the state and is its decisive characteristics... No one person or group can stand in place of the state. The state's acts can only be performed directly or by express delegation". [16]

It is statements such as Krader's that make the Marxist position on the State attractive. The Marxists have always maintained that the State arose as an instrument of class oppression in the history of society. Otherwise, how can the State's acts be "performed directly"? Who is this abstract entity called the State? When we talk of the interest of the Nigerian State, for e.g., who decides, articulates and executes that interest? Is this interest not the interest of those wielding daily governmental power?

Another very necessary condition for the state which Nozick takes from the Weberian tradition is the condition that the state should claim to be the sole authorizer of violence. But against this view,[17] Nozick says that his "dominant protective association makes no such claim", while on monopoly, he argues that the notion of the monopoly of the use of force is difficult to state precisely, and so cannot be used to answer with confidence the question: "Does the dominant protective agency within a territory (which as described is a state within that territory) function as "a state-like entity" rather than just "a state".[18] Nozick ends his initial discourse on the minimal state by stating that;

> The minimal state is the most extensive state that can be justified. Any state more extensive violates people's rights... There is no central distribution; no person or group entitled to control all the resources, jointly deciding how they are to be doled out. What each person gets, he gets from others who give to him in exchange for something, or as a gift. In a free society, diverse persons control different resource, and new holdings arise out of the voluntary exchanges and actions of others.[19]

[16] Lawrence Krader, *Formation of The State* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1968), p. 22.

[17] Nozick, op. cit, p. 117.

[18] ibid, p. 115.

[19] ibid, p. 118

If the above is not the Nigerian State, then I don't know which else can be implied therein. There is a "central distribution" of the Petro-dollars from the Niger-Delta by a "person" (The President) or "group" (his Ministers and Legislators). We call the group "government". They "control all the resources jointly deciding how they are to be doled out", by the Federal Executive Council (FEC).

Nozick's entitlement theory of justice

Nozick's entitlement theory is constructed to show why a minimal state is morally justified and why anything else cannot be justified or justifiable. Although Nozick speaks of John Rawls' "undeniably great advance over utilitarianism"[20], and calls Rawls' book, *A Theory of Justice,*[21] "a powerful, deep, subtle, wide ranging, systematic work in political and moral philosophy which has not seen its like since the writings of John Stuart Mill"[22]. He, however, rejects Rawls' theory of Justice on the ground that it is "to distribute" in nature. He opines that it is this desire to distribute the holdings in society that political theorists have used to justify an extensive state that would do just that.

Nozick uses the word "holdings" to characterize the goods, money, and property of all kinds which people may have possession of in a society. For Nozick, any claim to any holdings can only be guaranteed by tracing the *historical origin* of such holdings; without such information (on past acquisition and transfer of holdings), no possible rectification can be undertaken. For him; "current time-slice principles of justice hold that the justice of a distribution is determined by how things are distributed (who has what) as judged by some structural principle (s) of just distribution"[23].

What Nozick is saying here is that the distributive theory of justice puts out a "structure" of what justice should be in a society, and then tries to fit in its justice within this structure. Anything that does not fit in is thrown out or the apparatus of the state is invoked to make sure distribution is, *de facto* or *de jure,* affected. Any wonder then that Nozick calls this sort of unhistorical principles of distributive justice, *end-result principles* or *end-state principles?*

[20] ibid, p. 150.

[21] John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (London: Oxford University Press, 1972).

[22] Nozick, op. cit., p. 183.

[23] ibid, p. 153.

Nozick states the crux of his entitlement theory of justice in the following words:

> If the world were wholly just, the following inductive definition would exhaustively cover the subject of justice in holdings:
> 1) A person who acquires a holding in accordance with the principle of justice in acquisition is entitled to that holding;
> 2) A person who acquires a holding in accordance with the principle of justice in transfer is entitled to the holding; [and]
> 3) No one is entitled to a holding except by (repeated) application of 1 and 2[24].

The No 3 part of the "inductive definition" actually relates to the principle of rectification; that is, a rectification of the violations of the first two (i.e. Nos 1 and 2) principles. But, just how far into the past shall we go in rectifying holdings that were unjustly acquired or unjustly transferred? This is crucial because Nozick's historical conception of justice "depends on what actually happened" at a particular point in time for "whether a distribution is right depends upon how it came about"[25]. Nozick does not appear to have offered us a way of determining, for example, how the land I live in now was acquired (probably from a state of nature situation).

How does the fact that I appropriate a previously unowed object not worsen the position or situation or condition of others? Can I just, as Locke said, mix my labour with any object, and therefore, claim to own it *forever?* Nozick's strategy was to invoke the same Lockean proviso: there should be enough good enough holdings left in common for others. Locke's proviso can be sub-divided into two; the stronger one states that someone can be made worse-off by another's appropriation by losing the opportunity to improve his situation by a particular appropriation; or (the weaker one) by no longer being able to use freely (without appropriation) what he previously could. The proviso excludes someone from indiscriminate appropriation. He cannot appropriate the only waterhole in a desert, for example, and then charge what he likes. The solution to the question of control of resources within the Niger-Delta earth crust appears to hinge on Nozick's third principle - that of

[24] ibid p. 151.
[25] ibid, p. 176.

rectification. That is how do we rectify the claim by the Niger-Deltans that the "principle of justice in acquisition" has given them entitlement to the oil wealth? On the other hand, if we remember that the Nigerian State did not dig her drilling claws into the Niger-Delta earth crust on the ground of the "principle of justice in transfer" by the Niger-Delta, then we again see that this "rectification" would not be a 100 meters dash; it would involve marathon relay races. And it appears we have to run faster because we are racing against time.

Or do we say that the Niger-Deltans have not left "enough good-enough holdings" for other parts of the Nigerian State? The *struggle* over the oil "holding" appears to be doing two things to the Nigerian psyche. One, it is reducing Nigeria to a nation of leaders people who want to *feed* on the somewhat ready-made oil meal. This explains why there is so much life-and-death battle to occupy one political position or the other. The second thing that the craze-maze focus on oil money is doing is that it is creating the impression that if Niger-Delta were to be a country of its own; the rest of Nigeria cannot survive! If these claims are not true, then someone needs to sincerely and courageously call the bluff of the Niger-Deltans and dare to channel attention to Agriculture, Tourism, Human capacity development, etc. Or is the world not watching with awe what Malaysia is doing with the palm nut seedlings she came to collect from Nigeria? Did Nigeria only start existing in 1957 when crude oil exploitation began at Oloibiri?

While discussing the 1998 Jesse oil Pipeline inferno that consumed over 1,000 lives in Jesse, Ethiope West L.G.A., Delta State Nigeria, Obi Iwuagwu wrote that;

> *The Jesse tragedy has once again brought to the fore the woes of the oil communities. These range from the loss of farmlands to oil companies for oil exploration and exploitation, environmental pollution in form of oil spillage and the consequent destruction of aquatic resources, to the persistent burning of gaseous substances, thereby causing serious air pollution in these areas.* [26]

Nozick confronts the egalitarians and says that his entitlement theory makes no pretensions in favour of equality (of opportunity, life, and so

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[26] "On The Avoidable Jesse Tragedy", *Sunday Diet* Newspapers, November 1, 1998, p.8.

on). He argues that, "it cannot merely be *assumed* that equality must be built into any theory of justice"[27]. He argues that rights to equality are dependent on other conditions, situations, and people and so cannot be built into a sacrosanct structure. For him, if someone's right to something depends on or "requires certain uses of things and activities that other people have rights and entitlements over"[28], then, that someone actually has no real right to that something. Any attempt to achieve a goal that is in compatible with enlisting other people's voluntary cooperation can only lead to a craze-maze desire that would not mind the processes used in achieving it. Nozick, as a corollary, concludes that; "the minimal state best reduces the chances of such take over or manipulation of a state by persons desiring power or economic benefits..."[29].

With this, Nozick brings to a conclusion how the minimal state and the entitlement theory of justice would converge at a point where historical considerations, both of the emergence of the former from a Lockean state of nature and the tracing of rectification of injustice to the point of initial acquisition/transfer, for the latter, are made. But does this minimal state not look uninspiring (to people for struggle or sacrifice)? How can it be brought about?

Nozick is well aware of the esoteric nature of his theory and that is why he strives to locate it within the confines of "the best possible world". The minimal state appears amoral. As J.R. Lucas observes; "a state which was really morally neutral, which was indifferent to all values, other than that of maintaining law and order, would not command enough allegiance to survive at all". [30] Nozick is bothered about the fact that it is impossible to simultaneously and continually realize all political goods as well as social ones within a society, noting that, "it is a regrettable fact about the human condition, worth investigating and bemoaning"[31]. He argues, therefore, that the minimal state is a form of utopia. He notes that in our actual, earth-bound world, what corresponds to the model of the utopia world is a society in which different styles of life can be lived, and alternative visions of the good can be individually or jointly pursued. He gives three reasons for taking a utopian route; (a)

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[27] Nozick., p. 233.
[28] Nozick, p. 238.
[29] Nozick, p. 272.
[30] J.R. Lucas, *The Principles of Politics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), p. 292.
[31] Nozick, p. 297.

the fact that people are different and this difference would lead each one to construct a best possible world, (b) no one unique system of trading off, the not-realizable-at-the-same-time goods in society, will command universal acceptance, and (c) the fact that people are complex, with the webs of possible relations among them equally complex[32].

The utopian argument, according to Nozick, *converges* with the minimal state argument from an independent direction. This convergence is because; "the only morally legitimate state, the only morally tolerable one, we now see is the one that best realizes the utopian aspirations of untold dreamers and visionaries. It preserves what we all can keep from the utopian tradition and opens the rest of that tradition to our individual aspirations"[33]. Nozick's conception of a minimal state is not only a utopia, it is actually a "meta-utopia"- a framework for the realization of trial communities whose authority would be to protect individuals in their holdings.

Critical reflections

It can be seen from the initial and concluding arguments of Nozick that even as early as the 1970s, he can be said to have shown a disdain for the usual style of "system building" that is characteristic of modern philosophy. This method of philosophizing constructs a rigid structure and *forces* everything into it or attempts to deduce every other reality from it. But Nozick lays no claim to his theory as the ultimate Truth; in fact, he abhors it. He laments that; "the usual manner of presenting philosophical work puzzles me. Works of philosophy are written as though their authors believe them to be the absolutely final word on their subjects"[34].

One of the greatest criticisms leveled against Nozick relates to his argument on how a minimal state emerges from the state of nature. The criticism is that his arguments fail to justify a minimal state; or, if his arguments are valid and sound, they justify more than a minimal state. In the first group (that Nozick's argument fails to justify a minimum state) are Robert Holmes and Jeffery Paul. Their argument is as follows:

1. *Either the use of certain risky procedures is rights-violating or it is not.*

[32] Nozick, pp. 333, 334.
[33] Nozick, pp. 120-146.
[34] Nozick, p. Xii

2. *If right-violating, then its prohibition does not require compensation.*

3. *If not rights-violating, then its prohibition would not be morally justified.*

4. *So either the prohibition of the use of certain risky procedures does not require compensation or that prohibition would not be morally justified.*[35]

Holmes and Paul criticise Nozick because he says that even though my action is known (before its performance) to be risky, it should still be compensated. So they wonder why someone should be compensated for being prohibited from using a procedure of procuring or exerting justice that is known to be risky and harmful to others. Again Nozick says that it is morally justified to prohibit (by the minimal state) the use of such risky procedure(s)[36].

This is, perhaps, where the interpretation of the Niger-Delta issue via Nozick's theory would need a re-consideration. For indeed, the "procedure" of militancy, the actions of Kidnapping and vandalism/ sabotage of oil installations, would (at the end of the day), run contrary to their plans and become counter-productive. Besides, the continuation of militancy would eventually return us to the anarchical condition which the minimal state was meant to positively transcend. It militarily began about 43 years ago in the Niger Delta. On February 23, 1966, Jasper Isaac Adaka Boro addressed his 159-member Niger-Delta Volunteer Service (NDVS) "troops" as they were about to embark on their attempt to bring about an independent Niger-Delta State, just 39 days after Nigeria's first military coup. He said: today, we shall move in to remove the scales of injustice from the eyes of our peoples... remember your poverty-stricken peoples and then remember too your petroleum which is being pumped out daily from your towns, and then fight for freedom"[37]. However, without holding brief for Nozick, Paul and Holmes should note that he (Nozick) insists on the compensation on the ground that though there are certain knowledge of the risky nature of the procedure,

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[35] Quoted in, James P. Sterba, "Recent Works On Alternative Conceptions of Justice." *American Philosophical Quarterly.* Vol. 23, No. 1, (1986), p.2.

[36] Nozick, p. 114.

[37] I quoted this in my piece, "Oil Wealth: The Myth, Reality", in, *Vanguard* Newspaper, Thursday October 22, 1998, p.7.

prior to its practical application, it is still possible that these risky acts "might actually have turned out to be harmless"[38].

Nevertheless, beyond the objections of Holmes and Paul and Nozick's position that the minimal state arose out of "the self-interest and rational acts of person in a Lockean state of nature", it would appear that people who are so "rational" may not have existed in the state of nature, at least if we take cognizance of the "solitary, nasty, brutish, and short" life of man in the Hobbesian state of nature. And so, if we go Hobbesian, the personal irrationality that characterized man in the state of nature may be improbable in giving birth to a minimal state, especially since Nozick agrees that the actions in that situation were geared toward pursuing "self-interest".

Nozick's minimal state has also been criticized for being more than "minimal". Murray Rothbard and Erick Mack[39] have noted that if the minimal state is left to punish independents and other associations, then its functions are not different from that of the traditional states. In other words, with all the powers left in the possession of the minimal state, it would appear that its powers are as extensive as that of the state we all live in today. Perhaps, Nozick imagines that a semantic addition of the word "minimal" would result in a fundamental difference between his state and the one he rejects.

The entitlement theory of justice can also be criticized on the ground that it is too historical. How far into the past shall we go in order to rectify an act of injustice? Nozick is well aware of this problem but he does not offer his readers any help. This inability to determine how far-back we can go would make a distributive theory of justice inevitable. People like D.D. Raphael[40] have argued that political theory cannot be totally historical. Nozick's entitlement theory also assaults our moral intuition by giving priority to market forces. These market forces can lead to unfair distribution of resources. Who or what is the "invisible-hand" that is the Grand Commander of the whirlwind of the different social forces that eventually result into a minimal state? Is it not the truth that the way wealth is distributed now in society, no historical back-pedaling would help us in determining how that wealth can be redistributed?

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[38] Nozick, op. cit., p. 118.

[39] Quoted and explained in, James P. Sterba, p.2.

[40] D.D. Raphael, *Problems of Political Philosophy* (London: Macmillian, 1979), pp. 12-13.

Therefore, this difficulty to determine "how far back" we should go vitiates the adoption and application of the entitlement theory to the Niger-Delta quest for control of the oil-resources. What happens if we go too far back into the past and it suddenly dawns on us that the original settlers (owners) of the Niger-Delta area were the Tutsis or the Idomas, the Ashantis or some other people? Again, the type of market economy that we operate today presumes that "environment" ensures freedom. But G. A. Cohen[41] argues that some people (the proletarians) are not as free because economic power (the basic ingredient of freedom) is not placed within their disposal? In other words, market relationships make some people free and others unfree.

The truth is that this capitalistic resignation of the economy of Nigeria to the so-called "market forces" is the genesis of the problem in the Niger-Delta. The Multi-National Corporations (MNCs) in Nigeria don't care if the Niger-Deltans all die of oil pollution as long as they are allowed to make their dollars. In an earlier contribution, I had written that, "the agonizing fact that the Niger Delta area is in ferment can be explained by two reasons: one, our thorough-going, dog-eat-dog capitalism, and two, our myopic concentration on the oil sector with the consequent neglect of other sources of the "national income" especially agriculture and tourism"[42].

Conclusion

Utopia provides a veritable platform for us to seek after ideals; and as we focus on these ideals, we are bound to achieve a better organization of society. The Nigerian situation requires unconventional, unorthodox and revolutionary approaches. We need to do two things to get out of this quagmire.

First of all, we need to carry-out a "planned suspension" of oil exploration in Nigeria. This may sound alarming and unusual and we also know that the first thought that would come to the mind on hearing such suggestion is "is it feasible even if it is plausible"? But we know that where there is a will, there is a way. We argue for "planned

[41] G.A Cohen, "Robert Nozick and Wilt Chamberlain". In, C.J. Arthur and W. Shaw (ed.) *Justice and Economics Distribution* (New Jersey: Macmillian, 1978), pp. 107-130; and also G.A Cohen, "Capitalism, Freedom, and the Proletariat". In, Alan Ryan (ed.), *The Idea of Freedom* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), pp. 75-91.
[42] Agbo, "Oil Wealth: The Myth, Reality", p.7

suspension" because it is not immediate and sudden. We would require 5 years to "plan" the suspension; and during the five years, we channel what we save from oil and use it as a cushion to develop other sources of revenue. Then, we suspend oil exploration for 30 years and we see if the Nigerian nation would collapse! This may be bad news to Multi-national and Trans-national Corporations that are scrambling for the "black gold" in the Niger-Delta and we know that they would mobilize all the imperialistic arsenal at their disposal to fight it. But who cares? It is a revolution! And revolutions always affect the *status quo* the most!

Two reasons rank highest, among other reasons, for this suggestion. One, our "lazy" dependence on oil would cease and all the component parts of Nigeria would be compelled to develop the resources in their areas for the survival of the country. There are several countries, even in Africa, that have no single solid mineral (talk more of crude oil), yet they survive and even live better than Nigerians - just on Tourism and Agriculture alone. The second thing our 30-year suspension of oil exploration would do is that it would afford the rest of Nigeria the opportunity to "compensate" the Niger-Deltans with resources from other parts of Nigeria, and then, they would also be able to breathe-in fresh air and see if their environment would recover. The second revolutionary suggestion would be a fall out from the suspension of oil exploration. There is no doubt that the availability of readily-procured oil money makes politics in Nigeria a do-or-die affair. Everyone wants to get into local, state or federal appointment so that they could get their own chunk of the "oil cake". But why should we have "professional politicians" in Nigeria? Why must someone's *El Dorado li*e in getting a political role? Why must an ordinary senator earn more money than other citizens who have even better educational qualification than him, a University teacher, for example? Why should an ordinary local government chairman be better remunerated than a career civil servant who rose through the ranks/years to become a permanent secretary? Why must a local government councillor get a car loan, but a teacher in primary or secondary school (who taught him) would not be paid enough money to transport himself to work?

There is, therefore, a need to de-professionalize and de-glamoralize political power in Nigeria. People should be able to present their skillful services to the nation, earn what they were earning where they came

from (with little additional allowances) and return to their original career after political service. We are advocating for altruistic statesmen (not politicians - for a politician thinks of the next *election*, but a statesman thinks of the next *generation*).[43] Unless we make political leadership monetarily unattractive, we are going to keep going round and round. We must have a way of raising leaders with sincerity, not those who wants to enjoy oil money. This is the only way we can bring justice and peace into what we do. Peace is the first fruit of the seeds of justice. If we want peace, we must sow the seeds of justice; otherwise, we would keep spending money on security, an un-securable security. St. Augustine of Hippo, once said; "remove justice, and what are kingdoms, but gangs of criminals on a large scale".[44]

The "extensive" nature of the Nigerian state exists because the government at the centre has too many resources in its côntrol and so is saddled with the job of "redistribution". But if every component part realizes that its survival depends on what it can "contribute to" not "receive from" the Nigerian state, there would be a wake-up call. The "contribute or collapse" approach would make Nigeria an economic confederation and a political federation that is true federalism.

The decay in the Nigerian State can only be addressed through a combination of both revolutionary thinking and acting! Does Nozick's system of "appropriation and permanent property"[45] not worsen the possibility of others to appropriate, because there are no more accessible and useful unowed objects? Since we have argued that it is impossible to go way-back into the past to remedy unjust situations, how can those who owe nothing now (as a result of the fact that they have neither been able to *acquire* any nor have any *transferred* to them) be in possession of society's holding?

The implication of this kind of historical, entitlement theory of justice is that those who were *lucky* to come by society's goods would continue to enjoy it and (possibly) transfer it to their family members, while the worse-off members, the "common people" would remain at their mercy. The same set of people who were able to (to use Nozick's

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[43] I had contributed some thoughts along this line in my column "Cruise Missile", titled, "Wanted: Leaders Without Pay", in, *Sunday Times* Newspaper, April 7, 2002, p.4.

[44] Quoted in, Ogidi Light, *The Unjust Society, The Way Out: A Christian Perspective* (Lagos: Light Publishing Outfit, 2002), p.6.

[45] Nozick, p. 177.

word) "acquire" political power at the dawn of independence have remained at the corridors of power. No wonder there was an agitation for "power shift" or "transfer of power" in Nigeria today. The only problem is that this "transfer" did not appear to have been as voluntary as the one advocated by Nozick. There are so much to be said in eulogy and attack of Nozick's position[46] and although if we are Marxists, egalitarians, or utilitarian's, his position might revolt against our moral intuitions, any libertarian would be compelled to follow most of his arguments to their conclusions.

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[46] H. Steiner, "Anarchy, State, and Utopia: Book Review", *Mind*, Vol. 86. (1977), pp. 151-176; and also Brian Barry, "Review of Anarchy, State, and Utopia," in, *Political Theory*, Vol. 3 (1975), pp. 315-334.

POSTMODERNISM, DIVERSITY AND THE QUESTION OF RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL PLURALISM

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Abstract

Thinkers have been divided regarding what constitutes a better concept for addressing challenges of interreligious and intercultural relationships posed by globalization. This article is of the view that neither the solitary application of the concept of diversity nor the concept of pluralism can be an adequate solution to the problems of interreligious and intercultural conversations and encounters that we face today. It proposes that a synthesis of both concepts will be a way forward in our search for an agent of tolerance and acceptance in the multi-religious and multicultural world in which we live today.

Introduction

That we live in a global village is an inalienable fact of the impossibility of cultures and peoples of the world today to live in isolationism. Cultures and peoples of the world today live in proximity by time of distance, and many also live together in same localities, and therefore cultural affectations and influences have not been uncommon among them. To speak today therefore of a 'homogeneity' of a particular people and culture may be problematic. Again, to speak of the world today as being a global village is also to recognize the problems and challenges that nearness of peoples and cultures beget.

The challenges globalization poses today make the calls by thinkers for addressing relationships between and among traditions and cultures important and urgent. The calls for the need for addressing interrelationships of traditions and cultures also call for addressing issues of diversity, multiculturalism, difference, and commonality.

In this article, I will mainly explore some of the current conceptual issues in the debate concerning the encounters of religions and cultures. Thinkers have been divided regarding what constitutes a better and workable theory or concept for addressing challenges and difficulties

of interreligious and intercultural encounters and conversations. The directions of the debate among scholars today seem to converge particularly on the suitability or not of the usage of the concept of pluralism that entails commonality and dialogue and that of postmodernist diversity that emphasizes difference.

Drawing considerably on the works of a few thinkers whose thoughts I think represent current trends in the debate, I will argue here that neither the lone application of the concept of diversity which emphasizes differences nor that of pluralism which entails commonalities and dialogue can be the solution to the problems of interreligious and intercultural conversations and encounters that we face today. A more fruitful paradigm is needed. I will therefore recommend a version of pluralism that vigorously engages diversity and difference. In other words, I will suggest that a new paradigm that hybridizes or synthesizes - in Hegelian sense - the ideals of both pluralism and diversity is a way forward in our search for an agent of tolerance and acceptance in our present global situations, particularly, of religious and cultural intolerance and conflicts. Thus in the first part of this article, I will simply point to key points of the arguments the thinkers I will refer to have raised in the debate, and leave discussions for the second part and a brief reference to historical events in the conclusion.

There is generally a consensus among scholars that 'postmodernism' is indefinable because it is a term that is used in a wide variety of areas of study, and understood differently depending on the context in which it is used. By postmodernism in this article, I mean the term that is used in social or political philosophy which advocates the rejection or dissolution of what is modern, although itself given birth to by modernism. Thus it champions a systematic skepticism of "Grand" narratives - theories and ideologies that are purportedly of universal application - espoused by modernism. In contrast to modernism's vision of the world which is rationalistic, technocratic, and positivistic - thus, "identified with the belief in linear progress, absolute truths, the rational planning of ideal social orders, and the standardization of knowledge and production", postmodernism "privileges 'heterogeneity and difference as liberative forces in the redefinition of cultural discourse'."[1]

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[1] David Harvey. *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change*. Cambridge, MA: Basil Blackwell Ltd.,1992, p.9

Debunking 'pluralism'?

It is argued that emphasis on and respect for differences would be a more promising beginning for interreligious and intercultural encounters and conversations. Thinkers insist that there is the need for re-accessing the use of some terms when addressing or discussing the subject of dialogue. Mention is made of the issue of the uncritical use of terms like 'religious pluralism.' The argument is that the term 'religious pluralism' should be abandoned for a more suitable and fruitful alternative term 'religious diversity' which can focus more sharply on some issues than the term 'religious pluralism.' The term 'religious diversity' permits and also demands wrestling with issues that are more radical and deeper imposed by the thorny differences among the religions. The word diversity accentuates differences which permit some learning to occur, whereas pluralism emphasizes commonality and minimizes or dismisses differences as unimportant. [2]

Another pair of terms that have gained currency among thinkers are 'the Other' and 'difference.' In fact, the use of the term 'the Other' has been a source of problem as it has with its emergence racial/cultural frame of reference. According to Biakolo, the problem of the notion of 'the Other' has considerably occupied the minds of thinkers from the time of Plato. However the knowing subject and its relation to the object began to receive much attention in philosophy from the seventeenth century when Cartesian rationalism and Lockean empiricism were given birth. Philosophical interpretation and discourse in this direction centred mainly on the individual subject. But it did not take long before these interpretations began to influence the much younger discipline of anthropology. The determinant factor in this new science of culture was race - "how to think the non-Caucasian races, 'the Other'" that the West had come to know since the fifteenth century.[3] These interpretations over the years manifested themselves in various areas of analysis in the disciplines in terms of relation between the knowing subject and the object. Cultural paradigms of 'the Other' emerged as a means of situating

[2] James B. Wiggins, *In Praise of Religious Diversity.* (New York: Routledge Inc. 1996), p.6
[3] ibid.

or contrasting the Western and 'the Other' (non-Western) races and cultures.[4]

Paired with the term 'the Other,' as indicated above, is the term 'difference.' The argument is that the notion of 'other' suggests "a division within being itself" - thus rather than being an "anthropological distinction," the notion has become "an ontological cleavage." [5] In this regard an absolute and unbridgeable chasm is maintained so long as one partner characterizes the prospective or real dialogical partner as 'the Other'. The language that is therefore preferable and appropriate is the "language of difference," for it is as "relational and relative a terminology as 'the Other' is absolute." In contrast, there is much to be gained when much attention is given to 'difference' as it invites and requires thinking and negotiating. Difference contrasts 'otherness' which obscures language and thinking.[6]

Construction of differences in peoples and cultures is a result of human observation of differences between them. According to Wiggins, human beings imaginatively create differences between them so as to understand each other and then "think away the very differences that they have created." And to think away the differences in the end requires conceiving "some homology between humans, either across time or space, or both."[7] This observation, obviously, raises an important implication and problem of homology. Wiggins therefore states that "[i]f we quickly rush to think away the difference, or, even worse, if we posit any insurmountable ontological split in the creation [read cultures and religions] of human beings, we may not adequately attend to the differences we have thought up."[8] That failure, which is also found in the concept of 'religious pluralism,' has given rise to unprovable claim that basically all religions emanate from the same source, "even if none completely catches that source in either practice or dogma."[9] Such a claim is seen as not giving sufficient respect to the differences that are

[4]   Cultural paradigms of the Other that Biakolo mentions are "Savage versus Civilized", "Pre-logical versus Logical", "Perceptual versus Conceptual", "Oral versus Written", "Religious versus Scientific".

[5]   Emevwo Biakolo. "Categories of cross-cultural cognition and the African Condition". In Pieter H. Coetzee, and A. P. J. Roux (eds). *The African Philosophy Reader*, 2nd edition. (New York: Routledge Inc. 2003) p.9

[6]   James B. Wiggins, op. cit., p.13

[7]   ibid.

[8]   ibid.

[9]   ibid.

found in the diversity of religions. So the terms 'religious pluralism' and 'the Other' must be discarded as both terms "participate in absolutistic, abstract thought."[10] The concepts that are adequate for use in the discussion of interreligious interaction and conversation are the concepts 'difference' and 'religious diversity,' for both concepts "participate in concrete, relational thinking." A more promising starting point for interreligious encounters and conversations would be attained if deep respect is given for differences.[11]

In similar lines, Tinu Ruparell argues that it is high time that we jettisoned the notion of religious pluralism and the other categories like inclusivism and exclusivism for other terms as those categories are tired terms. The categories also fail to comprehend the dynamic and fluid nature of religious traditions. So, there might be a need to question the impetus of dialogue. Here, dialogue especially undertaken, with an understandable reason, by the heirs of early Orientalist missionaries to try to right the wrongs of their forebears whose attitudes and actions sometimes were insensitive or even immoral during the centuries of colonial subjugation. To do so is to peddle, if not purely patronizing, a profound illusion of "the myth of human unity which proclaims the sheer equality of all people..."[12] Ruparell argues that we have treated the followers of other religions so poorly in the past and to assuage our guilt, we try in the first place to engage in interreligious dialogue justifying the dialogue by relying on an ideology of human equality that is purely mythical. He insists:

> ...but this equality is actually only another form of totalizing narrative, one which systematically flattens out real difference under the weight of our shared "human nature" - whatever that is. By saying that we need to talk together as equals because we are, in the end, all the same under the skin, is simply to ignore the real differences between people, to discount the other's irreducible alterity. Thus interreligious dialogue done in the name of humanity unwittingly homogenizes common humans.[13]

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[10] ibid

[11] ibid, p.ix

[12] Tinu Ruparrell, "The Dialogue Party: Dialogue, Hybridity, and the Reluctant Other." In Mortensen, Viggo, ed. *Theology and the Religions: A Dialogue.* (Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003), p236

In this light, Ruparell argues that we must not allow ourselves to be hamstrung through our habitual use of the term religious pluralism. We must throw the term out for a better metaphor, for the ideology of religious pluralism and its inherent interreligious dialogue and 'common ground' "are no less globalizing, no less covertly monological, and no less modern, and no less capitalist."[14] A new paradigm is needed. The new paradigm that he puts forward is what he calls "interstitial theology." Briefly, this model is based on two pillars. The first is a mitigated form of incommensurability, and the other is the derivation from Paul Ricoeur's interactionist view of metaphor. By this paradigm, Ruparell calls for construction of "liminal, redescriptive hybrids of oneself to both create options for other's religious *experience* as well as, possibly, to further the pluralization of religious forms of life."[15] In other words, one can, through the use of interstitial theology, "consciously and carefully seek to hybridize one's own religious commitments, practices, and beliefs with those of the reluctant other." [16]

Sanneh contributes to the debate. For him, when we emphasize the notion of the common heritage, common ground, that we share as faith adherents - Muslim and Christian, to mention just the two - when we do interreligious dialogue, we go no where. According to him, "there are two ways of getting home: one is to stay there, and the other is to travel in a straight line until you come back where you started." So for Sanneh, "Common ground means simply staying put."[17] And when we strive to find common values as basis for our interactions, we throw out the distinctions between and among us.

> So the West opted for a second approach by designating a comparative intercultural formula in which similarities, religious and cultural, get mainframe attention while differences, religious or otherwise, get deleted. Whatever its limitations, that view of religion is a change from Enlightenment position that all we need in order to live are facts, not norms and values. Still, the present stress on common

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[13] ibid., p.237
[14] ibid., p.238
[15] ibid., p.248
[16] ibid., p.244
[17] Lamin Sanneh, "Secular Values in the Middle of Faiths." In Viggo Mortensen, ed., op cit., p.145

> *values has its own shortcomings; it leaves us with the irony of*
> *diversity as a remedy, if not as enemy, of difference.* [18]

On the issue of civic policy and truth claim, (with reference to the current conflict between a radical Muslim ideology and the West), and which relates to the relationships between religions, Sanneh argues that human policy does not invent religion; so religion "cannot depend for its truth claims on human enforcement."

> *Faith has fruits for the public good, but its fruits lie in another*
> *realm. That means the fruits of religion have untainted public*
> *use while the roots of religion have unreserved divine*
> *safeguard. Usefulness, accordingly, is not a truth claim, just*
> *as faith is not just a public convenience. The uses of religion*
> *should not be confused with the sources of religion. The costs*
> *of postponing public discussion of how in that light religion*
> *may impinge on politics to tame doctrinaire secularism, and*
> *to thwart its radical religious nemesis, are high. The modern*
> *cultural project of acceptance and difference and tolerance*
> *of diversity is at stake.*[19]

The relations of religious traditions, as we know, have drawn and continue to draw more interests in academic disciplines and, also in relatively recent times, among faith traditions - Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, and the others. People who engage in the conversation do so for various reasons. As Wiggins points out, some join in the debate out of academic (intellectual) curiosity and interests in questions of truth. Some will engage in it because they want to learn and perhaps benefit from the significant alternatives in truth-claims, stories, rituals, ethical views and patterns of social arrangements that they perceive different religions seem to respectively offer. Those individuals are those who seek and are eager to learn anything from whatever source available that may contribute to deepening their religious understanding. There are others still who engage in it as a response to decrees that authorities in their own tradition have made that oblige them to be open and be willing, as participants in their specific traditions, to engage in interreligious dialogue. Whatever one's reason and or position might be in engaging in the debate, I think it is important

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[18] ibid.
[19] ibid.

that due prominence is also given, as I will argue below, to explaining and promoting both 'differences' and 'commonalities' of values in religious traditions and cultures so as to adequately effect acceptance, recognition of and respect for one another's religious tradition and culture by participants of interreligious and intercultural conversations and encounters.

Toward a new paradigm of pluralism

The debate of what constitutes a better or the best theory or concept in addressing a particular issue or issues is an important one. I believe that the application of appropriate and workable concepts or means of engaging people of different religious traditions and cultures is essential in any fruitful engagement of interreligious and intercultural conversations and interactions. The call for recognition of 'difference' and 'diversity' in our postmodern world where there is increasing interrelationships and interdependence of cultures and nations is cogently relevant as, indeed, recognition of 'difference' and 'diversity,' is one of the very relevant things that initiates a process and awareness which results in appreciation, tolerance, and respect.

Suffice it to state however that in our present situations, particularly of religious tensions and conflicts, a mere emphasis on or application of the ideals of any of these notions alone - diversity and difference versus pluralism and commonality and dialogue - as some are arguing for, cannot be the answer to problems of interreligious encounters and conversations, as our experiences of world events in this regard have shown so far. What is required and relevant now is development of a new creative and workable means by which people of different religious traditions and cultures can encounter one another in deep, meaningful and respectful conversations that can lead to recognition and understanding. The creative and workable means that can be far more adequate and promising in this direction that I suggest is a hybridization or synthesis of models, particularly of the ideals of both concepts of diversity and pluralism.

Recognition of the distinctions between or among terminologies is always necessary, it is also however a fact that in the literature, the concepts of diversity and pluralism have often been used interchangeably.

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[20] Lene Kühle, "Religious pluralism in multireligiosity." In Viggo Mortensen, ed. op cit., p.425

As Kühle indicates: "Some scholars - and most journalists, politicians, etc. - have used a definition of pluralism which takes it to mean nothing more than "diversity".[20] In fact, shifts of interpretations and also expansions of terms have not always been impossible undertakings in the academy, as indeed concepts are not static but shift their internal arguments and meanings while renewing and recreating themselves. Moreover, the directions of some recent academic discussions and understandings, and also religious conversations and interactions among adherents of different religious traditions seem already to chart new ways for the resolution and reconciling of some difficulties inherent in the notions of religious pluralism and religious diversity. Now there is a sense of emerging openness, and also of the realization of the necessity of placement of equal weights on practical as on the cognitive and theoretical concerns.

Again, in general sense, the direction and the understanding of the term pluralism point to the embracement of the tenets of the concept of diversity: pluralism has been regarded to always comprise "two things: diversity and unity (or commonality) which is the foundation for and limit to this diversity".[21] Pluralism regarded in this sense, then, implies recognition of diversity.

This not withstanding, I think there is a need for furthering the project, a new way of shaping and positioning pluralism such that it clearly and characteristically emphasizes and conveys the ideals of other concepts, particularly diversity and difference, as key elements of and conditions for its (pluralism) own meaning, understanding and application. The pluralism that I suggest here is a pluralism understood in a Hegelian sense - the Hegelian process,[22] in which two seemingly opposing concepts, in our case diversity and pluralism (or difference and commonality), are combined to form a unified concept; a sort of "unified pluralism." In this way, diversity and difference, on one hand, and pluralism and commonality and dialogue, on the other hand, are

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[21] Joachim Track, "Theology of Religions: A Challenge for the Churches." In Viggo Mortensen, ed. op. cit., p. 373

[22] For a comprehensive understanding of Hegel's dialectic, see Taylor, Charles, *Hegel*, Cambridge University Press, New York, New York, 1999; Kojève, Alexandre, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*, Bloom, Allan, (ed.), Nicols, J. H. Jr. (trans.), New York, Basic Books, 1969; Gadamer, Hans-Georg, *Hegel's Dialectic: Five Hermeneutical Studies*, Smith P. Christopher, Yale University Press, 1976; Stephen Houlgate, *The Hegel Reader*, Blackwell, 1998; Beiser, Frederick C., *Hegel*, New York and London, Routledge, 2005.

117

synthesized - without being reduced to the other - to give a new, radicalized outlook and a deeper meaning and understanding to the concept of pluralism. Pluralism in this sense acts like a prism by which different concepts can see spectrums of their commitments clearly and evenly casted yet in a combined whole with those of other concepts. Also, in this way, a common, equal platform, devoid of distrust and skepticism, is created for adherents of different religions and cultures when they meet to do interreligious and intercultural dialogue.

Diana L. Eck indicates some four important points when she explains pluralism that are insightful and helpful in elaborating on the "unified" concept of pluralism that we are proposing here. Firstly, pluralism, as being suggested in this article, is no longer only diversity, but *"the energetic engagement with diversity."*[23] In other words, pluralism that has always connoted diversity, as I have indicated above, now clearly and vigorously engages, and thus demonstrates its commitment to diversity. Secondly, "pluralism is ... [no longer] just tolerance, but *the active seeking of understanding across lines of difference.*" Although tolerance is a public virtue, it does not require religious adherents and ardent secularists to know anything about one another. Tolerance is not an adequate foundation for a world of religious difference and proximity, because it does nothing to help us rid ourselves of our ignorance of one another. Rather, what it does is, it "leaves in place the stereotype, the half-truth, the fear that underline old patterns of division and violence. In the world in which we live today, our ignorance of one another will be increasingly costly".[24]

The postmodernist call and emphasis on tolerance and recognition of difference is important. However, as we are arguing here, mere tolerance and recognition of difference simply do not offer adequate solutions to resolve problems we face in today's interreligious and intercultural relationships. In fact, mere tolerance and recognition of difference may lead us to de-emphasize, if not ignore completely, at our own peril, some important aspects of our differences as human beings that need knowing, and that need understanding and possible collaboration for our mutual benefits, and vice versa. Mere tolerance

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[23] Diana L. Eck, The Pluralism Project: What is Pluralism? *The Pluralism Project at Harvard University* @ http://www.pluralism.org/pluralism/what_is_pluralism.php

[24] Thomas E. Reynolds, *The Broken Whole: Philosophical Steps Toward A Theology of Global Solidarity.* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2006), p.74

can indeed lead to intolerance and divisiveness and conflicts as there can be no centre-point of reference uniting humanity in its religious and cultural differences. As it is argued:

> ...postmodern "tolerance" can be just as...repressive of difference as the rationalist-assimilationist liberal version. Lyotard's characterization of the postmodern as an "ability to tolerate the incommensurable" might then be seen as a paraphrase of "anything goes." The result is the trivializing of difference, the reduction of plurality to a monistic centerlessness that is polycentric in name but not in substance. ...Genuine pluralism, however, is not sheer numerical plurality, but the recognition that many distinct, localized centers of meaning are in a certain sense unobjectifiable and irreducible to each other or to one specific way of thinking. Such a recognition is not trivializing but salient, dependent upon substantive evaluations and judgments about the plural character of human reality.[25]

This observation above is insightful for us as we mention that pluralism is "*the encounter of commitments,*" and therefore it is not relativism (Eck's third point). In the new paradigm of pluralism we are not required to leave our identities and our commitments behind in our encounters, for we encounter one another with our identities and commitments. In other words, we hold our deepest differences, even religious and cultural differences, in relationship to another, and not in isolation.

Dialogue is the foundation of pluralism (Eck's fourth point). Pluralism has dialogue and encounter as its language: it is give and take, evaluation and self-evaluation, criticism and self-criticism, and self-awareness and freedom of thought. What constitutes dialogue then is both speaking and listening. And it is that process that reveals real differences as well as common understanding. It does not mean that in dialogue everyone at the "table" will agree with one another. "Pluralism involves the commitment to being at the table - with one's commitments".[26] In other words, our commitment to be at the table with our individual commitments to dialogue facilitates our search for what is different in our similarities and similar in our differences.

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[25] Diana L. Eck, op cit.
[26] ibid.

It is necessary to recall here Ruparrel's interstitial theology model that we have mentioned above. We note that although in his model he calls for the conscious and careful hybridization of religious commitments, beliefs and practices by dialogians of different religions, Ruparrel strongly rejects pluralism and its constituents of common grounds and dialogue; what he affirms and insists on are diversity and difference. And that is where the difference, if we may emphasize, is between his paradigm and the one we are proposing. What is also of significant note is the fact that the end result of his model, it seems to me, is not theoretically and analytically different from the 'common grounds' between and among religions that the concept of pluralism seeks and which he rejects. For what will serve as foundation, one may wish to ask, for one to will to open oneself for hybridization of one's own religious beliefs, practices, and commitments with those of another person? There must certainly be (1) some act of dialogue or reflection and (2) some realization of some worth in the other person's religious beliefs, practices, and commitments for one to will to hybridize them with one's own. When one hybridizes that which is of worth in the other's, then it can be logically inferred that one is thereby accepting, recognizing, and also sharing in what is worthy in the other's religious commitments, beliefs and practices. That which is of worth in the other's that one hybridizes with one's own then becomes for both individuals a 'common ground.' So even if we attempt to discard the 'common ground' that we may already share as adherents of different religions, and come together as dialogians to consciously and carefully hybridize our religious commitments, beliefs and practices, we may *only* create anew a common ground or grounds that we may already share.

The paradigm of pluralism we are articulating now calls for vigorous engagement of differences and commonalities. It calls our deepest differences and our cherished values, identities and commitments to face to face and in relationships to one another in genuine dialogue - in non-overbearing and non-judgmental encounters - that leads to genuine recognition and acceptance. A new way of "differences-in-relation" that enriches and does not lessen or obstruct passage between or among religions and cultures. It is a paradigm that unifies and embodies difference, distinctiveness, as well as common values of different religious traditions and cultures.

It is important that we address here also the issue of the notion that is frequently seen to mar the concept of religious pluralism: the idea of 'dialogue.' As has been indicated above, the often cited "problem" with pluralism is that it dismisses differences as unimportant and emphasizes commonalities. The common ground that religious pluralism seeks between what already exists in the different religions obviously presupposes dialogue - dialogue between and among adherents of different religious traditions. So it is the notion of dialogue - which can lead to realization of common grounds or common values inherent in different religious traditions - entailed in the concept of religious pluralism, as we know, that has become objectionable to critics. But honest and robust dialogue, I believe, that leads to realization of common grounds or common values, also leads to realization of differences. Indeed, it is our knowledge of our similarities that informs us of our differences, and vice versa. The propagation of and emphasis on difference alone cannot be helpful; it undermines itself and so poses its own problem. As Reynolds emphasizes:

> ...*post-modern particularism often yields the equally problematic inverse image of what it so adamantly rejects - becoming instead an empty universalism, a kind of polymorphous centerlessness.... In this empty universalism, gravity does not exist, for no center can hold weight, and the sheer heterogeneity of sociocultural differences scatters all into what might be best described as a "pluralism of dispersion".... [a] democratized "free-play" of a plurality without substance.*"[27]

So while we hold on to our cherished differences, we must equally hold on to our cherished similarities. The remodeling of pluralism into this new, unified paradigm is the way forward because in this synthesized model of pluralism equal weights and importance are given to our shared similarities and our real differences when we meet as adherents of different religious traditions and cultures to do interreligious and intercultural dialogue.

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[27]   Thomas E. Reynolds, op cit., p.73, Diana L. Eck, op cit.

Conclusion

Championing for the recognition of differences, I believe, is imperative especially today when people of different religions and cultures reside in close proximity of one another, and when dominance and suppression and intolerance cannot any longer be accepted as the orders of the day. In fact, differences in religions and cultures must be acknowledged among peoples of the world. It is upon these differences that they must build and also sustain their identities. At the same time, some events in human history that have shaped our present day cultural, religious, political, and economic relationships call for reflections, on our way forward, on issues regarding human interactions and associations. For example, it was the mainframe attention given to and insistence on "the Others'" *real differences* (of skin colour and other human physical features and characteristics, religions, cultures, values, environments, etc.) only without any attention to basic and authentic commonality or commonalities (in "deep encounter" and "dialogue") as it were that led to the cultural imperialism of the West over other cultures.

As Narayan - writing from a feminist perspective on the dangers of 'insistence on Difference' among women of different cultures as stressed by some feminists) - indicates, "...cultural imperialism often proceeds by means of an 'insistence on Difference'..." This happens by projecting on "[i]maginary 'differences' that constitutes one's Others as Other, rather than via an 'insistence on Sameness'."[28]

Reducing 'cultural imperialism' to the problem of 'the imposition of Sameness' conceals the importance of the role that sharply-contrasting essentialist pictures of 'cultural differences' between 'Western culture' and its various others played during colonial times, in both justification for colonial rule and in the scripts of various nationalist movements that challenged and sought to overthrow colonialism, pictures that resurface in post-colonial attempts at engaging with issues of cultural difference.

Narayan argues that:

> *A post-colonial...perspective that strives to be attentive to differences...needs to acknowledge the degree to which the colonial encounter depended on an 'insistence of Difference'; on sharp, virtually absolute, contrasts between 'Western*

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[28] U. Narayan, 'Essence of Cultures and a Sense of History: A Feminist Critique of Cultural Essentialism', in P.H. Coetzee and A.P.J. Roux, eds., p.418

> *culture' and 'Other cultures'. After all, Kipling's lines 'Oh,*
> *East is East and West is West and never the twain shall meet'*
> *were written at a historical moment when East and West were*
> *engaged in a seriously protracted encounter.*[29]

Concerning the contrast between Western and Non-Western cultures that is frequently reiterated, Narayan points out that that was politically motivated colonial construction, because "[p]rofound similarities between Western culture and many of its Others, such as hierarchical social systems, huge economic disparities between members, and the mistreatment and inequality of women, were systematically ignored in this construction of 'Western culture'."[30]

History is replete with many such situations where the insistence on differences by others, which did not give attention to similarities, bred intolerance and lack of respect that resulted in many racial, ethnic, religious, cultural, and international wars and conflicts and tensions which, in turn, have brought (and are still bringing) deaths and other destructions, displacements, divisions, mistrusts, instabilities, and many other hardships to many peoples of the world. The Nazi treatment of the Jews in Germany in the 1930s and 40s; the Kosovo wars; the Protestant and Catholic clashes in Ireland; the South African apartheid system; the Nigerian-Biafran War, the Middle East conflicts, Ethiopia Eritrea conflict, and more recently the Somalia Civil War, the Rwandan Genocide, Sudan's Darfur conflict, the Northern Ghana conflicts; the Northern Nigeria conflicts, Cote D'Ivoire conflict, and many more are arguably examples of religious or ethnic or racial or political - or combinations of those - motivated conflicts arising out of intolerance, disrespect and insistence of differences.

The forces of globalization today indeed thrust into our faces the fact of our connectedness with the rest of the world and our dependency on one another. It is imperative therefore that we demand and also formulate approaches and policies that will promote mutual respect in human interactions and conversations. In other words, strategies for interracial, intercultural, and interreligious conversations and encounters must emerge out of constructive insights gained from different concepts and approaches to help promote understanding, peace and solidarity amidst differences in the present day global village in which we live.

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[29] ibid.
[30] ibid.

INTERROGATING SOCIO-MORAL CHALLENGS OF VIOLENCE AND WOMEN

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Abstract

This paper looks at violence and peace issues through a gendered lens, paying particular attention to sexual violence against women in armed conflict situations. It highlights the inherent paradox and contradiction in the act of sexually violating women during a war and the desire to achieve peace by utilizing women after a war. It addresses the question of whether violence and non-violence can be reconciled. This is done against the backdrop that recognizes women as victims in war situations and paradoxically, agents of peace in conflict resolution. The paper reveals that violence against women dehumanizes and lowers their self-worth or dignity as persons. It takes a look at the Western conception of human dignity stressing at the same time that this conception is inadequate. The paper offers a religious account of human dignity. This religious account also has implications for African conception of human dignity.

Key Words: Violence, Religion, Peace, Rape, Dignity, and Conflict.

Introduction

Violence against women takes various FORMS. In the family, it could be in form of intimate partner violence; harmful traditional practices such as female infanticide, early or forced marriage, female genital mutilation (FGM), etc. In the community, it is manifested in forms such as sexual/dating violence, sexual harassment and girl child trafficking. In armed conflict, it is exhibited in forms of murder, torture, abduction, rape, sexual slavery, forced marriages and prostitution.[1] This suggests

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[1] Reddy, R. (2011), (ed.) 'Violence Against Women: Harmful Traditional and Cultural Practices in the Asian and Pacific Region'. Gender Equality and Empowerment Section, Social Development Division, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok, Thailand. Available online at www.unescap.org. Accessed 15th April.

that a woman is endangered all her life. Before birth, cultural practices which view the girl child as inferior sometimes encourage sex-selective abortion. Sometimes, the mother is battered, and the unborn child harmed in the womb, born underweight, miscarried or stillborn. As an infant, she may be one of the victims of wars who is murdered by female infanticide. In girlhood, she may suffer physical, sexual or psychological abuse. In adolescence, she is married off and becomes pregnant before she is physically and emotionally ready. In a UNICEF review of twenty-one studies of violence in South Asia, over 70% of women in India reported physical abuse by their husbands. Widows are harassed, abused and murdered on the death of their husbands. Throughout her life, depression and suicide are two predictable outcomes of a life endured under these conditions. Consequently, Rita Reddy opines that violence pervades the whole of the female life cycle form pre-natal to adulthood.[2]

Conceptualizing the problem

Violence against women is common in many patriarchal societies. Up to six out of every ten women in the world experience physical or sexual violence in their lifetime.[3] The United Nations defined violence against women as 'any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivations of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life'.[4] This definition includes a broad range of harmful acts directed at women. The term 'gender-based' is used to emphasize that a good number of violence against women stems from an unequal gender social order.

Sexual violence against girls and women is one of the clearest manifestations of patriarchal cultural values, norms and traditions that encourage men to believe that they have the right to control women's bodies and sexualities. Jewkes and others define sexual violence as 'any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or acts to traffic, or otherwise directed,

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[2] ibid.

[3] UNIFEM (2009). *Violence against women.* UNIFEM Website: http://www.unifem.org/ gender_issues/violence_against_women. Accessed March, 2011.

[4] L. Heise, M. Ellsberg, M. Gottemoeller, (1999), A population series report on 'Ending Violence against Women', *Population Reports Series* L. No. 11. Available online at: http://www.vawnet.org/ Assoc_Files_VAWnet/PopulationReports.pdf: 1- 44. Accessed 25th July, 2011.

against a person's sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of relationship to the victim, in any setting, including but not limited to home and work'.[5] However, a United Nations report of 2006 has defined coercion as a broad concept that includes psychological intimidation and threats of harm but not just physical force. As conceptualized by the World Health Organization and the United Nations, sexual violence includes a broad range of acts, including attempted or forced sexual intercourse, unwanted sexual contact, making a woman or child engage in a sexual act without consent, unwanted sexual comments, sexual molestation of children, genital mutilation, sexual harassment, forced sexual initiation, forced prostitution, trafficking with sexual purposes, and the like.[6]

A woman's experience of violence is caused by factors such as economic status, race, ethnicity, class, age, sexual orientation, disability, nationality, religion and culture. Hence, violence against women is both a means and a consequence of women's subordination. It is often argued that men use violence when male authority is threatened. In most cases, culture is used to justify violence against women, through claims that such practices are part of 'culture'. Women suffer from negative aspects of culture; these harmful traditional practices constitute violence against women and consequently violate their rights. They include virginity testing, sex-selective abortion, harmful practices related to menstruation and childbirth, polygamy and polyandry, witch-hunting, child marriage and forced marriage, unmatched marriage (whereby a young girl is married to a much older man), honour killing, practices whereby girls are dedicated to temples or monasteries and may be treated as prostitutes, practices whereby women of low status are introduced to prostitution, girl-child trafficking, forced commercial sexual exploitation of the girl child and women, date rape and the like.[7] All these can be attributed to lack of economic independence on the part of women. Consequently reduces their capacity to act thereby increasing their vulnerability. Restrictions on women's control over economic resources also constitute a form of family violence.

[5] R. Jewkes, P. Sen, and C. Garcia-Moreno, (2002) 'Sexual Violence'. In: E.G. Kerug et al. (eds.) *World Report on Violence and Health* (Geneva: World Health Organization) pp. 147-182.
[6] pp.47-49
[7] ibid

Both at the community and individual levels, sexual violence is rooted in unequal gender social order and power relations between men and women in society. In particular, researchers have linked sexual violence with social norms such as the legitimization of violence against women by intimate partners, blaming women for rape and other types of sexual violence, the justification of male violence, for example due to their 'inherent sexual desires', and viewing women as sexual objects.[8] At the community level, a central factor associated with sexual violence is the lack of support for women's right to sexual autonomy and for women who are victims of sexual violence. This lack of support may be from their own communities, from key institutions such as law enforcement agents, the health sector, workplaces and their families. Individual risk factors for those experiencing and perpetrating sexual violence include being young, living in a marginalized society, the experience of violence during childhood and having rigid attitudes about gender roles.[9]

Rita Reddy identifies other discriminatory values and practices as causal factors of sexual violence against women. These include the bride price practice, early and forced marriage, polygamy, widows required to remarry a husband's family member, marital rape, female genital mutilation, honour killings, and celibacy/virginity tests (for instance, in Bangladesh, women are required to notify authorities whether they are virgins, divorcees or widows).[10]

Sexual violence: a substantive health and human rights problem

Survivors of sexual violence often suffer from short-term and long-term consequences with regard to their health, psychological well-being, and social integration. Apart from physical injuries, potential health consequences include sexually transmitted diseases (including HIV/ AIDS), miscarriages, forced pregnancy, and traumatic fistula –

[8] R. Jewkes, (2002), 'Intimate Partner Violence: Causes and Prevention', *The Lancet*, Vol.359: 1423-1429.

[9] I. M. Contrarae, S. Bott, A. Geunden, and E. Bartman, (eds) (2010), Sexual Violence in Latin America and the Caribbean: A Desk Review. Sexual Violence Research initiative, Gender and Health Research Unit, Medical Research Council, Pretoria, South Africa. Available online at www.svri.org. Accessed 16th April, 2011.

[10] R. Reddy, ed., "Violence Against Women: Harmful Traditional and Cultural Practices in Asian and Pacific Region.

debilitating tears in the tissue of the vagina, bladder, and rectum.[11] Access to treatment and follow-up care is particularly challenging in conflict settings, where facilities and trained staff are often insufficient, located in places that are difficult for rural inhabitants to reach, or under threat from combatants. This lingering health and reproductive effects of sexual assault can contribute to and entrench victim's social isolation.

Researchers and advocates of human rights have reported cases of family rejections of, and societal stigma against rape victims in West African conflict settings.[12] There are also cases in which survivors of sexual violence are shunned by spouses, their families and their communities, as are the children born to women who have been raped. Survivors often fear reprisals by the perpetrators of abuse, who are rarely prosecuted. Victims who attempt to report assaults may also face reprisals from law-enforcement agents or military forces. In some Islamic countries, laws concerning sexual violence are unfavourable to the victim. A sexually assaulted woman may be prosecuted for adultery. Such societal impunity for perpetrators may reinforce norms in which rape and other forms of sexual abuse are further tolerated.

Apart from the victim suffering what can be described as double-jeopardy, sexual violence can also have profound socio-economic consequences. It lowers the dignity of a woman and consequently causes reduced socio-economic status, lower levels of political and labour force participation of women and the inter-generational cycle of violence.[13] If violence against women truly lowers their dignity, it is imperative to examine the idea of human dignity.

The idea of human dignity
Sexual violence is a social crime. It violates the dignity in a woman. Human dignity has been described as a characteristic possessed by human beings by virtue of their humanity.[14] Many scholars have attemmpted to define the nature and extent of human rights and obligations in order

[11] United Nations. Secretary General, 2006.

[12] L. R. Jefferson, L.R. (ed.), (2004), "In War as in Peace: Sexual Violence and Women's Status". Available online at: http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/pdfid/402bac094.pdf. Accessed 25th August, 2011.

[13] Jewkes, et al., op. cit.

[14] J. Malpas and N. Lickiss (eds.), (2007), *Perspectives on Human Dignity: A Conversation* (A.A Dordrecht: The Netherlands).

to explain what constitutes human dignity. Ronald Dworkin, for instance, explains that intrinsic dignity is the foundation of all human rights.[15] We respect rights because we recognize intrinsic dignity. We do not bestow dignity to the extent that we bestow rights. Human beings have rights that must be respected because of the value they have by virtue of being the kinds of things that they are. Sulmasyn sees human beings as possessing intrinsic value, which is the value something has of itself - the value it has by virtue of its being the kind of thing that it is. It is independent of any valuer's purposes, beliefs, desires, interests, or expectations. Dignity, in its fundamental moral sense, is defined in terms of simply being human.[16]

By intrinsic dignity, Sulmasyn means the worth or value of people simply because they are human, not by virtue of any social standing, ability to evoke admiration, or any particular set of talents, skills, or powers. Intrinsic value is the value something has by virtue of being the kind of thing that it is. Intrinsic value is not conferred or created by human choices, individual or collective, but is prior to human attribution.[17] Sulmasyn further opines that dignity is not respect for autonomy or equity, but the ground of both concepts. Dignity is the answer to the more fundamental questions: 'Why should I respect people's autonomy?' And 'why should I treat people with equity?' Dignity is the ground of rights, not a synonym for rights.

Immanuel Kant's notion of dignity is intrinsic. He writes: 'the respect I bear others or which another can claim from me *(osservantia aliis praestanda)* is the acknowledgement of the dignity *(dignitas)* of another man, that is, a worth which has no price, no equivalent for which the object of valuation *(aestimii)* could be exchanged'.[18] Kant connects this to human freedom - as the capacity for moral agency that is intrinsic to the nature of human beings. He insists elsewhere that 'Humanity itself is a dignity'. This autonomy-centered philosophy of personhood which originates from Kant has been described by Leon Kass as a denial of human dignity. This is because it dualistically set up the concept of

[15] R. Dworkin, (1977), *Taking Rights Seriously* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press).
[16] D. Sulmasyn, (2007), "Human Dignity and Human Worth", In: Jeff Malpas and Norell Liekiss, (eds.), *Perspectives on Human Dignity: A Conversation* (A.A Dordrecht: The Netherlands), p.15
[17] ibid, p.16
[18] J. W. Ellington, (trans.) (1993), *Immanuel Kant: Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett), p.127

personhood in opposition to nature and the body; it fails to do justice to the concrete reality of our embodied lives, lives of begetting and belonging, no less than of willing and thinking'.[19] Nevertheless, Ronald Dworkin notes that the very idea of human rights depends upon 'the vague but powerful idea of human dignity'.[20] Similarly, Harris and Sulston argue that dignity can be reduced to a Benthamite belief in human equity, "the idea that each is entitled to the same concern, respect, and protection as is accorded to any other".[21]

One of the first applications of human dignity in international documents is in the preamble of the Charter of the United Nations (1945). Where it is stated that "we the people of the United Nations determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind, and to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small".[22] A similar reference is made in the preamble of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) which begins with an emphatic recognition of human dignity as the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world. The normative implication of human dignity is that every human being should be acknowledged as an inherently valuable member of the human community and as unique expression of life with an integrated bodily and spiritual nature (United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, 1948).

One can discern that human dignity and human rights are two separate but interdependent concepts, although this interdependence is not yet explained in its hierarchical and explicit formulation. Two other conventions of the United Nations clarify the affinity between these concepts in the following statement: 'Considering that, in accordance with the principles proclaimed in the Charter of the United Nations, recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice

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[19] L. Kass, (2007), 'Defending Human dignity', Bradley Lecture at the American Enterprise Institute, February 5. Available online at http://www.bioethics.gov. Accesed 17th April, 2011.

[20] R. Dworkin, op. cit., pp.198-199

[21] J. Harris and J. Sulston, op. cit pp. 796-800

[22] D. Shultziner, (2007), "Human Dignity: Functions and Meanings". In Jeff Malpas and Norelle Lickiss. (eds.), *Perspectives on Human Dignity: A Conversation* (A.A Dordrecht: The Netherlands).

and peace in the world, recognizing that these rights derive from the inherent dignity of the human person'.[23]

Human dignity is a frequent and very important theme in religious and moral perspectives. In the theistic religious schools, human dignity has a real source in God's will, and its importance is similar among main theistic religions in the world. From the Catholic perspective, the notion of human dignity is rooted in the concept of *imago Dei* which denotes the theological theory that human beings are made in the likeness and image of God.[24] According to the Jewish conception of human dignity, the original source of human dignity is not intrinsic to the human being but extrinsic, namely in God. Also, it is argued that 'the dignity of the people' has precedence over personal dignity and liberty, which are secular and liberal principles. The implication of this is that,in cases of conflict between personal autonomy (liberty) and God's commandments, the Jewish and secular (liberal) conceptions obviously pull in different directions. For Christians, therefore, human dignity derives from God's creative love. Genesis records that at each stage of creation God saw what He had created and found it to be good. In the case of mankind, He bestowed a special gift - participation in His own life cycle. He made humanity in His image. Human beings became part of His perception of Himself, a perception so intense that it is personified in the word or Logos.[25]

One of the most emphasized themes in Islamic theology is human dignity. This can also be used as a basis for gender discourse. For instance, Qur'an 15:29 says: 'He created human beings by his hand and gave human beings the best form and He called the spirit of human beings His spirit to give honour and dignity to human beings'. He says: 'I breathed into him my spirit'. Similarly, 'He gave human beings intellect and freedom of the will (Q 16:78, Q23: 78, Q32:9, Q 46:26, Q 67:23) and he made human beings his Khalifah (representative on earth) (Q 2:30, Q333:72).[26] Islam inculcates the love of God's creation in general and of the human family in particular 'the best of you is he who is best to God's family, that is humanity' says the holy prophet Hazrat

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[23] p.xxi

[24] Imago Dei. Available online at www.ascensionhealth.org. Accessed 20thFebruary, 2011

[25] Malpas and N. Lickiss, op. cit., p.v

[26] M. Siddiqi, 'Muslims for Human Dignity'. Available online at Http:// www.crescenlife.com Accessed 15th February, 2011.

Mohammed (P.B.U.H). Islam regards humanity as 'one fraternity inside which it affirms the existence of Islamic brotherhood, wherein all distinctions of caste and tribe, race, colour, language and territory are superseded and obliterated.[27]

The implication that can be drawn from the theistic account of human dignity is that this account provides an account of human dignity that is divine. Both the Christian and the Islamic accounts consider the dignity of the human person as one that is rooted in his creation by God and in God's will. It is against this background that Kiarash Aramesh opines that concepts such as that of human dignity should have independent logical basis; they could be found by reason but emphasized by the scripture; they should be rooted in the scripture or prophetic tradition.[28] Also, Mark Penninga is of the view that relationships are integral to human dignity and that we are made for relationships with God and each other and that dignity comes by upholding these relationships through love rather than turning inwards as the autonomy-centered account of dignity presents.[29] Understanding the religious origin of the concept of person is essential for understanding why humans have a dignity that goes far beyond the limited secular account. It forms the foundation for understanding human dignity as relational, intrinsic, inviolable, and teleological.

The theme of inviolability refers to how dignity is possessed intrinsically by all humans regardless of their physical or mental state and consequently should not be usurped or violated by others. The theme of teleology refers to the purpose and end of human dignity which can be understood by looking at our origins - the *imago Dei*. It reveals that humanity has been given a high calling to image God. Since, as humans, we all share the same calling to love God and our neighbours, it means that there are no humans who do not have intrinsic dignity. According to Berkouwer:

> *Anyone who attacks his fellow man or curses him violates the mysterious essence of man, not because man is mikrotheus or demi-god, but because he is man. In all his relations and acts, he*

[27] (http://www.Islamicacademy.org)

[28] K. Aramesh, (2007), "Human Dignity in Islamic Bioethics", *Iranian Journal of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology* (Supplement): 25-28.

[29] M. Penninga, (2011), "A Judeo Christian account of Human Dignity in Canadian Law and Public Policy". Available online at: http://www.uleth.ca/dspace/bitstream/10133/671/peninga%20mark Accessed 22 May, 2011.

*is never man-in-himself, but always man-in-relation, in relation
to this history of God's deeds in creation, to this origin of an
inalienable relation to his creator.*[30]

The above religious account of human dignity has implications for the
African conception of human dignity. According to Nkem Emeghara,
human dignity is seen in the African view of human origin, worship,
morals and community life. He explains that one of the ways by which
Africans accord high dignity to the human person has to do with the
origin of human beings.[31] In the story of how Africans were created,
God and humanity were closely connected that one cannot exist without
the other. Due to the omnipotent and omniscient nature of God as
conceived by Africans, they realize that 'God's imprint is within human
beings who imperatively acknowledge God's existence and worship
accordingly'.[32] In essence, the human person remains the highest of all
God's creations. Humanity is therefore the highest point of God's creative
actions and it is around the human person that the creative and spiritual
dimensions of life seem to cohere.[33] One can add following Emeghara
that African society was what it was because the need to uphold human
dignity was of concern to many. Being a religious being, the African
sees the greatest indication of worship in respecting and taking care of
others, a value which was taught from childhood.

Women as victims of violence in Africa

Widespread sexual violence is a feature of conflicts in Africa. Most
prominent are the conflicts in Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Nigeria to
mention just a few. It is one of the most heinous violations of human
dignity when one considers the nature of the atrocities and the number
of women affected. Yet history has hardly recorded war crimes against
women. One of the most reasons for this denial is that violations
perpetrated against women are often not considered important in war
situations. Some rape is wrongly viewed as an inevitable fact of war; as
part of the reality of the behaviour of the rebel groups or armed forces.[34]

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[30] Berkouwer (1962), *Man. The Image of God* (Grand: Eerdmans Publishing Co.).

[31] N. Emeghara, (1991), 'The Dignity of the Human Person in African Belief', *Theology Annual*, Vol. 14.: 126-137.

[32] ibid., p.128

[33] ibid., p.131

[34] ibid.

During the war in Sierra Leone crimes of sexual violence committed against women and girls were extraordinarily brutal and often accompanied by other egregious abuses of the victims and their families. Women of all ages were raped. Most women died or suffered as a consequence of the violence. Young women and girls who the rebels thought were virgins were particularly targeted for rape and sexual slavery. Numerous pregnant women had their bellies slit open by rebels who placed bets on the sex of the fetus.[35] Similarly, sexual violence became a way of life in Liberia during its civil wars, with everyone - women, young girls, babies - victimized.

There are also direct forms of violence against women in conflict settings in Nigeria such as in Jos and in the Niger Delta. In discussing the impact of the activities of militias, cults and security forces on women in the Niger Delta, Emem Okon explains that.

> *When a culture of armed gang violence takes root in a society that does not recognize and respect women's rights, the result is a higher level of gender-based violence against women. In this case, the proliferation of guns in the Niger Delta has increased the risk that girls and women will be targets of sexual assault. The consequence has been disastrous, as women have suffered massive massacre, rape, sexual abuse, social and psychological trauma, aggravated poverty, unemployment, hunger, anger, low self esteem, bitterness, frustration, desperation, fear, tension and more conflicts.[36]*

On the 9th of July, 2011 the JTF cordoned off the Kaleri Ngomari Custain area in Maiduguri after a Boko Haram bombing. Going from house to house, they reportedly shot dead at least twenty five people. Many people both male and female were reported missing. The JTF also burned down several houses, forcing occupants to flee. At least forty five people were reportedly injured. Women were allegedly also raped by the security forces. Again, on the 20th of March, 2010, Sa'adatu Umar (a female) was arrested in Bauchi and detained with her three children, all aged

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[35] ibid.

[36] E. Okon, (2011), 'The Gender Implications of Violent Conflict: A Case of Women in the Niger Delta' Unpublished Paper from a Round table by Environmental Rights Action. Also see Omoyemen Odigie-Emmanuel, 'Assessing women's rights in Nigeria'. In: Pambazuka News: Pan –African voices for Freedom and Justice, 2010, 11-24, issue 507. Available online at http://pambazuka.org. Accessed 28th June, 2011.

135

below six. She was not charged with any crime and was unlawfully detained for several months, reportedly because her husband was a suspected Boko Haram member. On the 17th of October, 2010, a court ordered the police to release her and her children and to pay one million naira (approximately US$6,200) in damages. [37]

In all the above instances of conflict situation, domestic violence, rape and other forms of sexual violence against women and girls by state officials and individuals remained rife. The authorities consistently failed to prevent and address sexual violence, or to hold perpetrators to account. Within the family, the girl child is also susceptible to sexual assault. An Amnesty International report of 2007 illuminates a 1999 case in Lagos (Nigeria) in which an uncle sexually assaulted a little girl of six years old. The matter was however taken to court and prosecuted. When judgment was given, it favoured the offender because the magistrate sets him free for lack of witness (corroboration). This was in spite of the bloodied pants, the testimony of the mother who noticed the pains while bathing her, and the medical evidence from a government hospital. The magistrate said collaboration meant testimony from another person who witnessed the alleged act and since nobody witnessed it, there was no corroboration.

Following examined the foregoing, the question that requires immediate answer is: why sexual violence during armed conflict situations? Sexual violence may be 'systematically employed for a variety of reasons, including intimidation, humiliation, political terror, extracting information, rewarding soldiers, and 'ethnic cleansing'. In several ongoing conflicts in West African countries, notably those in Liberia, Nigeria and Sierra Leone, sexual violence has reportedly been used by one or more conflicting parties as a weapon of war. Sexual violence is also sometimes carried out as 'revenge' for an armed assault carried out by opposing forces. Instances of this have been reported in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria as well as in the other conflicts earlier cited. By terrorizing or incapacitating women in rural areas, in particular, combatants may also seek to deprive communities of food security and

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[37] Amnesty International, (2007), Nigeria's unheard voices: widespread violence against women in the family. Available online at: http://www.nigeriavillagesquare.com/features/nigeria-in-global-news/nigerias-unheard-voices-15.html. Accessed, 15th October, 2012.

nutrition, as women are often responsible for food gathering and cultivation.

Sexual violence has long been described as the 'collateral damage' of fighting or war. Its prevalence in West Africa is often seen as a by-product of internal conflicts involving irregular forces, which frequently result in disproportionate civilian casualties. Sexual violence in conflict settings is sometimes employed as a 'benefit' for victorious troops and commanders, as means of initiation and social bonding between combatants, as punishment meted out to civilians associated with opposing groups, as means of humiliating male opponents who were not able to protect 'their' women, as method of destroying communities and cultures associated with conflict opponents, and as means of ethnic cleansing by impregnating women or forcing their displacement.[38] In such cases, sexual violence is often portrayed as a 'weapon' or 'tool of war'.

Sexual violence may be more or less opportunistic and indiscriminate, as combatants experience a sense of impunity for their actions. In Kenya, sexual violence (including rape, gang rape, and mutilation) was a feature of the violence that erupted in early 2008 following disputed presidential elections. Subsequent investigations suggest that the violence in Kenya was carried out by members of the government security forces as well as militias, humanitarian workers, and other individuals, often on the basis of perceived ethnic or political affiliation, but also opportunistically.[39]

Ellis noted that when one examines the frequency with which male fighters committed rape or abducted women as concubines and servants, one would realize that women were also included in the category of consumer items ripe for plunder.[40] Paradoxically, women are victims of war and agents of peace during conflict resolution. What then accounts

[38] M. Richters, (1998), "Sexual Violence in Wartime: Psycho-sociocultural Wounds and Healing Processes: The Example of the Former Yugoslavia'". In: Bracken, P.J. and Petty, C., (eds.), *Rethinking the Trauma of War*, (London: Save the Children Fund):10-38.

[39] A. Arieff, Analyst in African Affairs (2010), 'Sexual Violence in African Conflicts', Congressional Research Service, CRS Report for Congress Prepared for Members and Committees of Congress. Available online at: http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R40956.pdf. Accessed 15°, June, 2011.

[40] S. Ellis, (1999), *The Mask of Anarchy: The Destruction of Liberia and the Religious Dimension of an African Civil War* (U.S.A: New York University Press).

for such paradox and contradiction in terms (violence and peace) and why is this so?

Women as agents of peace

Women and children remain the most vulnerable in conflicts, with other forms of vulnerability to which women are generally susceptible making them the most affected. As a result, one can argue that any attempt to rebuild a community in the wake of violent religious or ethnic conflicts should ensure that women are carried along in peace processes. It has become increasingly important to employ women in order to bring about civil society in situations of conflict and to deal with the trauma of conflict thereby ensuring peace and civic education for changed attitude and mentalities. For instance, as a result of the internal conflict in Northern Mali in 1990, Mali's Women's National Movement for Peacekeeping and National Unity was set up to restore peace and help the displaced to return. The movement organized humanitarian aids to victims on the basis of neutrality such that civilians as well as soldiers and other groups that were affected by war assisted with the return of the displaced. Many women who have survived conflicts, often with their fathers, brothers and husbands dead or away fighting, imprisoned or exiled, take on larger roles in community and family leadership, in agriculture and marketing, in industry, in armies and militias. Relief operations often find that they must target women especially, because of their strong roles in the family and in the community networks of supply and demand. Relief aids distributed through women tend to have a large multiplier effect in a community, given the extended nature of women's networking. Also, women have contributed to bringing about peace in conflict situations by helping to improve men's understanding and awareness of violence against women. This has also extended to:

> using men to engage men - through male facilitators and educators, allowing women and men to work together, using all-male groups and workshops, creating safe spaces for men to talk and learn, offering programs which are: comprehensive, intensive, relevant to the audience, based on positive messages and address cognitive, affective or emotional and behavioural domains, making interventions culturally appropriate – including sensitive to gender cultures, addressing culturally-specific supports for gender inequality, drawing on local resources and

texts in promoting gender equality, matching interventions to men's stage of change, using innovative and engaging techniques to foster men's support for, and commitment to, gender equality, being prepared for, and responding to, resistance, focusing on the practical action men can take, assessing the impact of work. The crux of the issue is power relations; men must realize that they must let go of some privileges to enhance the lives of both men and women. [41]

Among key elements that characterize effective strategies in working with men to end violence against women are programmes that challenge the beliefs, values and discourses which support sexual violence, challenge the patriarchal power relations that sustain sexual violence and promote alternative constructions of masculinity which foster non-violence. Women have also engaged, strengthened and mobilized communities by trying to change the social norms, gender roles and power relations which feed into sexual violence against women and pursuing promising strategies of community engagement. This aims to build community capacity and address the social contexts of violence. Promising community education strategies involve media campaigns, schools and community action teams, community leadership and media industry awards programmes and holding accountable religious and political leaders for conveying that gender violence cannot be acceptable. Additional strategies involve family supportive policies and programmes that promote shared decision-making. Linking sexual violence with other issues of critical importance to communities, such as poverty reduction or access to health services, will also have mutually synergizing effect on conditions associated with violence. It is against this backdrop that Saudatu Mahdi identifies five ways through which women contribute to peace keeping. [42] These include:

- Monitoring and intervening to stabilize a potentially violent conflict before its outbreak by initiating activities that address the root causes as well as the triggers of a dispute.

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[41] R. Reddy, op. cit., p.51

[42] S. Mahdi, (2005) "Gender Inclusiveness in Managing Religious Conflicts in Nigeria: The Role of Nigerian Women". In Bridget Usifo-Osakwe and Bukola Ilemobola Akosile (eds.), *Peace and Human Security in Nigeria: Women's Perspective. A Report of WIPNET Nigeria Annual National Lessons learnt Conference.* (Lagos: Traders and Investors Nig. Ltd.): 43-53.

- Establishing mechanisms that detect early warning, signs and record specific indicators that may help to predict impending violence. Women are well placed to note and craft means of extracting and countering possible issues that may breed tension.

- Using planned coordination to prevent the creation of conflict when delivering humanity aid. Women's capacity to decimate responsibility as well as the higher potential for transparency among them makes the management and delivery of post-conflict support a satisfactory exercise when they are in charge.

- Institutionalizing the idea of preventing conflict at the local, regional and international levels. The capacity and proven ability of women to influence behavior patterns and attitudes through ethos and moral lessons among youths, entrenching the values of peace, tolerance as well as benefits of peace over those conflicts is a role best fit for women who nurture young members of the society.

- The final stage of conflict management is state building in post-conflict reconstruction and conflict prevention. Reconstruction of lives and infrastructure will facilitate the return of the displaced to their homes, security, governance and control, transport of food and supplies and production and commerce to begin rebuilding of the economy.

During armed conflict situations, women's' roles in preserving social order and working as peace educators both within the family and in the wider society cannot be underestimated. Women play important roles of fostering the culture of peace in strife-torn communities and societies in spite of what they suffered during war. Despite all they endured in towns and villages across the war zones, women still pick up the pieces and carry on with their lives. They continue to care for the young, the old, and the sick in their communities often shouldering the burdens of their families single-handedly. Even in worst and dangerous circumstances, women have shown their courage and leadership as problem solvers and peacemakers, reaching across the conflict divide to seek resolution and common ground.[43]

However, it has been said that bringing women to the peace table improves the quality of agreements reached and increases the chances

[43] H. T. AbdulKarim, (2012), Conflict Prevention and Post Conflict Peace-Building in Nigeria: Gender Perspective. Available online @:http://www.humanityknights.net/pdfs Conflict_Prevention_And_Post_Conflict_Peace_Building_In_Nigeria_Gender_Perspective.pdf. Accessed 17th June.

of success in implementing, just as involving women in post-conflict governance reduces the likelihood of returning to war.[44] Unfortunately, many factors limit women's capacities as peace-makers. First among these is gender stereotype roles assigned to women and men by society which restricts women's involvement in discussions concerning peace-building and security. This is a major obstacle to women participating in peace-building. Also, tradition, culture and religion have historically confined women and prevented them from participating in public life, and by extension, peace-building. Again, wrong perception of women's activities can be an obstacle to women's participation in peace-building. In spite of the fact that women's reconciliatory activities manifest in peace and stability at the family and community levels, this is not considered as a political issue, as women are often seen as lacking in ability to exhibit the much needed diplomacy associated with peace-building and security, hence their exclusion.

Furthermore, sources of negotiating team are drawn from the high echelon of political class, which includes very few women due to patriarchy and other factors resulting in marginalization of women both in politics and power. Lastly is what can be described as logistic problems. Most peace-building processes occur far away from the original abode of women, sometimes, lasting for days, weeks or months. The peculiar roles of mothers as home managers further jeopardize their involvement in peace-building as their reproductive roles are used to undermine their productive roles.[45]

It has been observed that recommendations work best and is in fact, rapidly executed when women are involved as planners, implementers and beneficiaries. The need for government to insist on full accountability for actions against women during conflict has been described as being essential to the rule of law. Other means of ensuring that women are effectively employed by government in ensuring peace has been discussed in detail by Hauwa Abdulkarim.[46] Some of these include: implementing the inclusion of women in conflict prevention, resolution and post-conflict peace-building activities at all levels of decision making, strengthening grass-roots institutions for peace-building, paying special attention to the roles of women, documenting

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[44] ibid

[45] ibid, p.60

[46] Hauwa T. Abdulkarim, op. cit.

conflict prevention, resolution and peace-building efforts of women in different parts of the world and sharing this knowledge as widely as possible, encouraging women to seek decision-making positions and building mechanisms which will enable women have access to such positions whether in the traditional or modern governance systems, providing technical and financial assistance to women to build their capacity of effectively participating in conflict resolution and peace-building efforts.

Other recommended means of strengthening women's peace-keeping capacities include: encouraging women to use the media to highlight their suffering during wars and violent conflicts stressing at the same time, their perspectives and recommendations on how to bring about peace and development in their territories, inclusion of women in International agencies, NGOs and donor communities especially in the analysis of conflict and peace-building processes and in the assessments of the economic, social, political and cultural situation pre and post-conflict, involving the mass media in awareness raising programmes for women towards conflict prevention and post-conflict peace building and its impact on the improvement of the quality of life for their families and the whole society, reforming the educational system such that it reflects the views and values of women, promotes respect, tolerance and acceptance of cultural differences; education should become a conduct for cultural survival, and conducting in-depth research on conflict prevention, resolution and post-conflict peace-building with a focus on both actual and potential roles of women in conflict resolution.[47]

Conclusion

Thus far, this paper has examined war situations in some West African countries such as Sierra Leone, Liberia and Nigeria particularly the paradoxical situation of women as victims of rape in armed conflict settings and agents of peace in conflict resolution. The paper argued that rape violates the dignity in a woman. It examined the Western conception of human dignity showing that this conception is inadequate. It drew on the religious account of human dignity which also has implications for African conception of human dignity. The paper

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[47] ibid

underscored the fact that women are better able to prevail on husbands, children and brothers to imbibe religious tolerance and consequently avoid any act that is likely to trigger conflict or violence under any guise. The paper concluded by emphasizing that because women are the worst hit and the largest victims of conflict and war, their contribution to peace-building will be of immense benefit to all. If the escalation of conflict and war is to be drastically reduced, the reconciliatory roles of women should not be underestimated.

A Review of

A WINDOW INTO PHILOSOPHY: Second Edition by
Karo Ogbinaka (pp x+128. Bibliog. Refs. Index; Lagos: Joja
Educational Research and Publishers Limited, 2010)
By

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A Bird-Eye View of Philosophy

A glimpse at the title, *A Window into Philosophy,* brings to mind a venture at an overview of philosophy. Specifically, the author picks out for detailed analysis the core branches of philosophy, namely: metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, aesthetics and logic before delving into the sphere of philosophy of the infrastructure of disciplines as defined by C. S. Momoh (2000). Perhaps, if the topic were sequentially arranged according to the above mentioned order the text would have been a substitute for *Philosophy and Logic* (i.e. one of the required courses of study in Nigerian Universities prescribed by the National Universities Commission - NUC). However, we noticed an attempt by the author to discuss the main branches of philosophy from a new perspective altogether (cf. pp. 4-17).

Contrary to what should naturally come to mind regarding the title, the author's aim as stated book's blurb is "to provide a simple and straightforward answer to the constitutive elements of the question: What is Philosophy? ...and further explore the scope, the method and other essential features of philosophy" (cf. about the book). To accomplish this goal, Karo Ogbinaka divides the essay into six chapters; *Philosophy: Its Definition and Character; Method and Philosophical Problems; Social Foundation and Philosophical Development; The Branches of Philosophy; Logic: Its Nature and Scope,* and finally; *The General Character and Value of Philosophy.*

While being commendably organized, the first aspect of the book, *A Window Into Philosophy* explores what philosophers down the age consider as the most important and difficult challenge any new entrant into the study of philosophy is ordinarily confronted with, i.e., the task of learning to draw the line between what is it that constitute

philosophical questions on the one hand, and those that are questions of logic, history, science and common sense fact on the other. This indisputably remains crucial in the enterprise of philosophy.

In trying to conceptualize the term 'philosophy', the author thinks it is limiting in terms of scope and problems-interrogation providing a univocal definition of philosophy. He thinks that from a multiplicity of definitions, we can reach at the real meaning of the term. Hence his consideration of James K. Feibleman's list of four possible definitions of philosophy thus: "Philosophy is the rational explanation of reality and human experience. Philosophy is the general principle under which all facts could be explained. Philosophy is the science of the first principle of being; the presupposition of ultimate reality. Philosophy is the science of science: the criticism and systematization or organization of all knowledge, drawn from the empirical science, rational learning, common experience or whatever" (pp. 8-9). On the basis of these comprehensive definitions of philosophy, the author clarifies that a central question with which we must be well-acquainted is that regarding why we philosophize. As usual and without any iota of doubt, he posits that "curiosity and wonder may easily be given as the primary grounds why we philosophize"; taking into cognizance the fact that man has an innate quest to know more about himself and his immediate environment. The author further clarifies on the point that the term 'philosophy' by its etymology is from the Greek terms *philein* (to love) and *sophia* (wisdom). The author adds that "Philosophy is not only the seeking of wisdom; it is also the 'wisdom sought'… 'Love of wisdom', took its origin from the famous retort which Pythagoras made when he was called 'wise'". (p. 18).

The second chapter of the book focuses on the various methods postulated in philosophy and how they have been used by their proponents ranging from the Socratic era down to the modern period. Ogbinaka makes reference to R. G. Collingwood's *An Essay on Philosophical Method*, where the latter maintained that Socrates, Plato, Rene Descartes and Immanuel Kant as well as Francis Bacon, Gottleb Leibnitz, Baruch Spinoza, Karl Marx and the Analytic philosophers among others were those who explicitly developed methods in the history of philosophy (cf. pp. 23-34). These philosophers argued that the adoption of a right method would put philosophy on a progressive path. Nevertheless, the author, having considered the long history of

philosophy itself, tends to be against the idea of a one-method approach to philosophising on the basis that the introduction of one method in philosophy would be flawed. He states, "good as the methods proffered by philosophers may be, they are inadequate because the philosophical problems for which they are meant vary in types and forms... being that philosophical problems are of different types in terms of objective and subjective reality, there cannot be a single way of solving them" (p. 35).

The third chapter of the book focuses on the social basis and foundations for philosophical development. The author begins this section with a splendid quotation that establishes a metaphysical connection between man's nature and developmental quest in nation building; taking a clue from Aristotle, Bochenski and Bertrand Russell. The author remarks in the introduction that "philosophy attempts to solve the fundamental problems of man and his environment" (p. 39). The point to underscore here, however, is that man, out of his curiosity, becomes the nucleus of any sort of developmental project. But human activities revolve around the social sphere. He (author) also stresses further that conflict is an inevitable part of the human nature which in turn resurfaces in the perennial problems of philosophy. In bringing this point home he submitted that the "question of value and judgment, *what is* and *what ought to be*; the question of happiness, freedom, goodness, etc. are indeed, all ontological and teleological, and have continued to remain perennial problems of philosophy" (p. 41). Hence the author locates Thales' philosophy and those of the Milesian philosophers within the cultural context of the Greeks. According to him, "before Thales, the Greeks had always explained things in terms of religion, man and nature" (p. 50), the reason being that the Greeks were guided by *myths*. Finally, just like many other philosophers, the author posits that since some scholars argue that truth is relative, the question of objectivity of any knowledge claim becomes controversial.

The fourth chapter explores the different areas of philosophy. Specifically, the author touches on (Metaphysics, Epistemology, Ethics, Aesthetics, Applied philosophy and History of Philosophy). His elaboration of these core branches (i.e. Metaphysics, Epistemology, and Ethics) is meant to showcase philosophy as an action theory for social change. Ogbinaka advocates for logic where he exclaimed that "logic is also studied and regarded as a branch of philosophy due to its centrality" (p. 55). Under the analysis of metaphysics the author submits a regulatory

147

key that: metaphysics itself is the philosophical corporate name for *cosmology* (the structure of what exist), *cosmogony* (the origin of what exist), and *ontology* (the constituents or make-up of what exist) (p. 57). The author attempts to shed light on the age-long metaphysical, ethical, and epistemological schools of thought as well as *aesthetikos* which means perception (p. 65). In the final analysis the author reiterates the popular view that the history of philosophy affords us the opportunity to study how philosophical problems have been discussed by philosophers from the earliest era to the contemporary period.

The fifth chapter of the book focuses on the science of reasoning, its characterization as well as the range of its activity (i.e. Logic). The author must have taken cognizance of Aristotelian's logic when he acknowledged that *all men are rational* (i.e. we all carry out reasonable action in one way or the other). Propositions (i.e. declarative statements) are pivotal in arguments. In order to provide a clearer understanding of what constitutes a standard argument, the author lists its components; "these are inference, proposition, premise and conclusion" (p. 81). Immediate and mediate inferences are addressed as forms of mental processes whereby we use agreed premise(s) to justify and validate a conclusion. The author at the end of this analysis advanced a number of methods and principles that are used to detect valid from invalid arguments... and sometimes true from false arguments.

Chapter six, the last chapter of the book, deals with what constitutes African philosophy as well as the importance of philosophy. The author reveals the relevance of African philosophical thinking. For him, African philosophy is that body of knowledge that is "a product of second order reflections on the African authentic ways of doing and being" (p. 98). It suffices to note that as an intellectual activity, the study of African philosophy is likely to open vistas for enriching and advancing African culture and the material well-being of the African. The most thrilling aspect in this exposition is the discovery that African philosophy presents a holistic ontology.

A Window into Philosophy makes a significant contribution to scholarship. Apart from being theoretically and practically informative, there are some typographical errors. Even though they did not affect the book's contents they should be corrected in a subsequent edition. Thus, starting from the front page precisely the dedication page (i.e. iii although not specified in the book) where "..............but" is typed instead of

"…but" this simply disregarded the rules of ellipse (…). Similarly, in page 1 quotation immediately after the table of contents for the section line 5 has "&n" instead of "on". Quotation 2, page 4 omitted both the initials of the author and page number where the citation was drawn. Similar problems occurred elsewhere the author equally omitted full-stop (.) in some of the pages such as p. x line 14, p. 5 line 29, p. 7 line 9, p. 26 line 2, p. 41 lines 5 and 30, p. 55 line 14, p. 64 line 13, p. 88 line 4, p. 90 lines 3 and 11.

Irrespective of the above observations, the book displays meticulous creativity towards the re-orientation of philosophy in general with clarity of language. That it was published by a leading publishing house of philosophical text is a major achievement by the author. This clearly puts him along the same part with Joseph I. Omoregbe as it concerns the publisher. *A Window into Philosophy* is worth recommending for the following reasons: first, it accomplishes its objectives on various definitions as well as states the characteristics of philosophy, these definitions and nature of the subject-matter has been undermined or ignored by a reasonable number of texts of this status. Secondly, it explores the scope, the method and other essential features of philosophy which invariably serve as a recipe for interested readers and beginners in the area of study. Finally, to the best of our knowledge, this book is another masterpiece in philosophy.

A Review of

PLAYING WITH SOUND: A THEORY OF INTERACTING WITH
SOUND AND MUSIC IN VIDEO GAMES by Karen Collins (pp. xii
+185. Bibliog. Refs. Index; Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Press)

By

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Sound Philosophy in Video Games

In her carefully researched work, Karen Collins recounts how "video
game players interact with, through, in and about sound" (p. 1). This
book is a sequel of her previous book, *Game Sound: An Introduction to
the History, Theory, and Practice of Video Game Music and Sound
Design*, published in 2008. The player's relationship with the sound is
the focus of her work, and to do so, she develops a theory of the
interactive sound experience where she hypothesizes that interacting
with sounds is different from experiencing them. Our interaction with
sounds, she further says, can be of listening, evoking, and creating
sounds.

The book is organized into five thematic chapters, supplemented
by an introduction and a brief conclusion. The author demonstrates a
close reading of cyber, music, and games' literature, including diagrams,
figures, photographs, snapshots, posters, spectrograms, graphics, and
images. Her theory and hypothesis are informed by the growing
scholarship and references from 1927 to 2012.

A Canada Research Chair from Waterloo, Collins' idea for the book
originated at *Music and the Moving Image Conference* 2010 where Chris
Salter's interrogation about "But what about the body?" made a shift in
her theoretical perspective from the importance of video games and of
game sound to the gestural involvement in a video game (p. x). The
author actively acknowledges that a part of this book (chapter1, 2 & 5)
has been adopted from the forthcoming books from the University of
Oxford Publication and from a conference paper *Audio Mostly* 2011
respectively. Some ideas have been incorporated from her students' thesis
paper for *Game Studies*. The bulk of the book was written while on a
sabbatical provided by the University of Waterloo, and the author offers

her gratitude to various funding agencies, including Canada Foundation for Innovation, Google Inc., the Research Institute of Electronics at Shizuoka University, and others.

The video gaming experience has been changed and improved; they are now not considered as texts but as "sites of participation where players construct meanings" (p. ix). The author believes that these realistic indulgences have resulted due to certain factors, including improved internet speeds and social networking, free and cheap affordability and accessibility of apps, the success of Wii, Microsoft's Kinect, and Sony's Move.

Collins employs a combination of an embodied cognition approach with practice theory in her work to explore the interaction and perception of sound in games. In music games there is interplay between music and sound, music and noise, and sound effects as voice. She gives examples of *Quake* (1996), *Silent Hill* (1999), *Mushroom Men* (2006), *Mario and Luigi: Bowser's inside Story* (2006), *etc*. She says that there is difference between listening to and interacting with sound where the former involves causal listening, semantic listening, and retentive listening; the later interacts with evoking, selecting, shaping, and creating a sound.

She justifies her selection for Leman's embodied cognition approach by giving a brief account of previous works in the development of physical and psychological aspects of experience, *e.g.* the dualism theory of Rene Descartes, the phenomenology of Edmund Husserl, Heidegger, and Merleau-Ponty, and Idhe's extended embodiment. She says that in embodied cognition theory "our cognitive processes use reactivations of sensory and motor states from our past experiences" (p. 17). She further says that players are not an amorphous mass but they are interactive audience of different types: gender, age, playing habits with various attitudes towards gaming. She says that interactivity has various dimensions; it involves decision-making, active reception and participation of the players.

In Chapter 1, the author says that interacting with sound is in fact a theory of action, image, and sound. She introspects and interrogates how interacting with sound is different from listening to it? Though there are different methods of mixing available: we can differentiate sound from the source (schizophonic), fuse sound with any visual (synchresis), and create haptic visuality, she says that this newly

developed technology-mediated interactivity used in sound video games is different. She calls it kinesonic synchresis: "sounds are fused not to image but to action" (p. 31). She further adds that interactive sound is event-driven and controlled by an action that is initiated by a player. Though randomization of sounds increases the believability of scenes yet the more sounds are repeatable, the more changes to get a prompt feedback and acknowledgement of the player. Collins says how *Guitar Hero* (2005) and *Rock Band* (2007) have maintained and ushered kinesonic congruent sound events. She gives the term kinesonic fidelity, and raises an open question/challenge for sound designers: how can they make sample sound more technically realistic and matching to the player's action as interactive sounds are unpredictable and kinesonic synchresis remains in flux.

In the next chapter, Collins talks about the mirror neurons and how they are responsible for user's identification and experience in the game. She says that a game controller may become an extension of the self into the virtual world. In her progress to show how sound plays a significant role in the creation of space (Huizinga's magical circle), she discusses Rochat's tests on infants for kinesthetic and proprioceptive feedback, Jones's *mise-en-space* where a player controls a camera in the virtual three-dimensional space, on-screen and off-screen view in a first & second-person-perspectives of Stevens and Raybound and Grimshaw and Stockburger, and Järvinen's point of perceptions with reference to *The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers* (2002), *Need for Speed: Shift 2 Unleashed* (2011), *Kinect Adventures* (2010), *Legend of Zelda : Ocarina of Time* (1998), *Deus Ex* (2000), *New Super Mario Bros Wii* (2009), and *The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess* (2006).

She says that an interactive sound places the player into the space of the game, and this peripersonal space acts as an intermediary space between the real worlds and the virtual and between the player and the character. It extends the body schema and delineates the boundary between self/character and other. She concludes this chapter saying "sound reconciles the intermediary play space of the world and the game, helps players to identify with the character, and envelops them in the game space" (p. 58).

In Chapter 3 and 4, Collins recounts how a video game extends its boundaries. She describes three means- identification, performance, and cocreativity- by which role-playing in games enables users to experience

sound and music in new ways with the help of gestural controllers and gestural input devices. The players explore potential and transreal identities by mimicking of posture and gesture. She employs Cage's term and states that "listeners have a kinesthetic sympathy with the creator of a sound source" and this results in kinesonic congruence (p. 61). She says, in games like *Guitar Hero*, the players can evoke and shape sounds and in *Zelda, Halo 2, Mysims 3* (2009), *Dragon Age: Origins* (2009), *Skyrim* (2011) and *Professor Layton* (2007) they can partially create sounds. Sounds acts as a mediator between technology and body, and between real and the virtual, and encourages bodily engagement with games. Interactivity of game sound enables many types of per formative activities which were not actually desired or designed by the developers. This type of interactivity represents a desire of players "to personalize games and make products their own" (p. 120). Though this cocreativity is not liked by the game designers, they lose control over their games.

The author quotes Gibson, emphasizing that present culture does not bother about appropriation and borrowing. Chapter 5 largely deals with the customization and personalization of product but the focus is on the game sound. Fans take these products from simply "the production of meaning" to "the production of their own meaning" (p. 122). Collins makes a distinction between and customization and personalization of product by the player. Personalization is an unplanned activity, unlike customization, and usually hacked by the users. These cocreative activities and practices are developed out-of-the-game, and they are not only unsanctioned but also illegal. The author investigates the hacker aesthetic in the game world. She borrowed a term the *fourth wall* from the dramatic theory to describe modding activities and modders. She says that modders spend a considerable time in creating and adding of custom-created content, including changes in sound of weapons or in graphics in *Quake* (1996), *Castle Wolfenstein* (1981), *Doom* (1993), *Half-Life* 2 (2004) alike. But cultural theorists believe that despite some legal battles, the ability to alter media content is an essential component of interactive media, and it should be treated as a democratic and empowering step.

The author concludes that like other forms of narrative media, video games too have generated new icons, legends, and aesthetics that can

be further studied by the researchers. And she further says that can we apply the ideas and theoretical approaches about sound in video games to other media?

The author employs jargon from psychology to philosophy and from technology to cultural studies but she actively delivers their explanations with reference to the game sound. Overall the book is worth reading and informative, and written in reader's friendly style.

AUTHOR'S GUIDELINE

Articles intended for publication, philosophical books for review, and subscription should be sent to

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Notes and references will be printed as footnotes and should be typed (double-spacing) on a separate sheet, numbered consecutively. They should be referred to in the text by superscript. Citations should be as follows:

[1]   J. I. Omoregbe, *Knowing Philosophy* (Lagos: Joja Educational Research & Publishers LTD, 1999), p. 30

[2]   Benjamin B. Olshin, "The I Ching or 'Book of Changes': A Chinese Space-Time Model and a Philosophy of Divination", *Journal of Philosophy and Culture*, vol. 2, No. 2, (July 2005), pp. 17-21.

[3]   J. I. Omoregbe, op. cit., P. 50

[4]   William Hare, "Open-Minded Inquiry: A Glossary of Key Concepts", available at htt://www.criticalthinking.org/articles /open-minded-inquiry.cf. Last visit: June 04, 2008

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CONTENTS

Vol.25, No.1, 2014

Pages