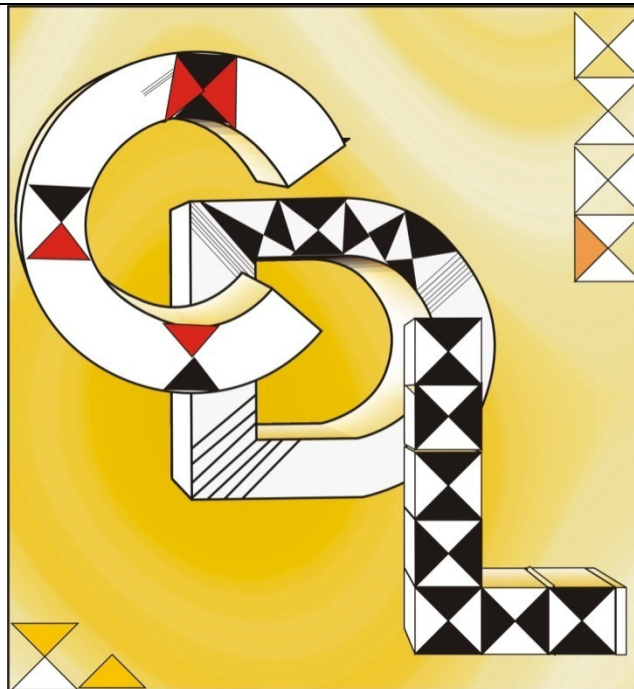




UNIVERSITY OF MAIDUGURI
Maiduguri, Nigeria
CENTRE FOR DISTANCE LEARNING

ARTS



GST 212: PHYLOSOPHY & HUMAN EXISTANCE (2 UNITS)

STUDY GUIDE

GENERAL INFORMATION

Course Code and Title: GST 212: Philosophy & Human Existence

Credit Unit: 2

Year: 2015

Total Hours - 28 hours @ two per Week of Study.

For any queries or Questions contact the Course Lecturer Using your email through the Centre for Distance Learning Portal.

You are welcome to this study Unit. Each Unit is arranged to simplify your study. In each topic of the Unit we have introduction, learning outcome, in-text information, in-text questions and answers, summary and self assessment exercises. In-text questions and answers serve as motivation for your reading and to encourage to pay attention to major points in the text. Tutors will be available at designated contact Centre for Tutorial. Meet them to resolve your questions and other guide. The Centre expects you to plan your work well. Should you wish to read further you could supplement the study with more information from the list of references and suggested reading available in each study Unit.

PRACTICE EXERCISES

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISES (SAES)

This is provided at the end of each topic or Study Session. The exercises can help you to assess whether or not you have actually studied and understood the topic/study session. Solutions to the exercises are provided at the end of the Study Unit for you to assess yourself.

HOW TO PREPARE FOR EXAMINATION

To prepare for the examination you should read and understand the Study Materials provided for you on C.D.ROM, prints or downloads from the Portal.

Other things you need to prepare for examination include understanding all sample questions at the end of every Study Session/topic Reading the suggested/recommended reading texts.

ASSESSMENTS

- The continuous assessment for all courses consist of 30%.
- The Examination shall make up 70% of the total Marks.
- Feedback and advice is a component of the continuous assessment

The Examination shall be conducted at the Centre for Distance learning (Centre). Students are to come to the Centre on the Examination date with all the necessary requirements. The Examination is Computer based or e-testing one.

**DIVISION OF GENERAL STUDIES
(PHILOSOPHY AND HUMAN EXISTANCE)**

GST 212

IDRIS MU'AZU

Course Content

(1) Nature and the subject matter of philosophy

- i. Meaning and the origin of the term philosophy
- ii. Different concepts of philosophy

(2) Major branches of philosophy

- i. Epistemology (the philosophy of knowledge)
 - a. what is knowledge?
 - b. How do we acquire knowledge?
 - c. What do people know?
- ii. Aesthetics (the philosophy of knowing things via senses)
- iii. Ethics (the philosophy of action or moral reasoning)
- iv Logic (the philosophy of reasoning)
- v. Metaphysics (the philosophy that study the nature of the world)

(3) Philosophy and the essence of human existence

- i. Meaning of existentialism
- ii. Meaning of idealism
- iii. The meaning of materialism

Course Description

This course is a general introduction to Philosophy and human existence. The course will cover topics such as the nature and scope of philosophy, the traditional and special fields of philosophy. We shall look at the different conceptions of the term 'philosophy'. After this, selected problems in the major branches of philosophy, namely, epistemology, aesthetics, ethics, logic and metaphysics will be discussed. In epistemology, we shall attempt to define and discuss epistemology as a theory of knowledge and also look at the major theories of truth, nature of human knowledge, domain of knowledge, sources of knowledge and the types of knowledge as well as the psychological ideas on knowledge acquisition. In aesthetics, we shall be able to define aesthetics as well as the judgments in aesthetics. In ethics, we shall define ethics; discuss the scope of ethics and practical moral problems. We shall look at a number of theories that are required in making correct moral judgments. We shall also attempt a definition of logic in the strict, technical and professional sense and evaluate arguments and critical thinking which are indispensable to national development. Finally, in metaphysics, we shall define metaphysics; discuss the two theories of reality, the problem of universals and particulars and the problem of substances and quality.

Aims and Objectives

- The course will develop your verbal, analytical and critical thinking skills.
- It will help you to cultivate the ability to isolate and examine the principles and issues involved both in complex theoretical situations and in concrete, actual problems.
- It will widen intellectual perspectives within the context of a humanistic educational experience.
- It will enhance your knowledge of the nature of reality, the meaning of life, social structure and development, knowledge and values, and the governing principles of the universe.

Study Session 1 Foundation of Philosophy and Human Existence

Introduction

The course GST 212 Philosophy and human existence (2 Units) is aimed at developing students' ability to know the existence of things in the physical world philosophically, ideally and historically and to use the outcome in problem solving and to also produce graduates with reasoning and focus minds to predict, speculate facts on anything that comes to their way. The course also provides the opportunity for you to acquire desirable knowledge about the nature and scope of philosophy. You will gain mastery of the competencies needed to be able to identify and distinguish crooked reasoning from logical and philosophical reasoning. You will also gain competencies in examining and discussing the epistemological, aesthetics, logical issues about reality and life as well as metaphysical issues.

The discipline of philosophy easily attracts apprehension or apathy from students and especially people not familiar with its basic tenets. While to some philosophy is unnecessarily abstract, imaginative and speculative, to others the discipline is no more than any other discipline that is not directly related to them or their ways of life. Yet to others philosophy is so convoluted and difficult a subject that it is seen as the exclusive preserve of the extraordinarily gifted. For others, philosophy is a discipline that concerns itself with things which other people take for granted, asking questions and seeking answers to questions that appear, at the onset, to be simple or mundane and therefore worth neither the time nor the effort being expended. But a more detailed and objective consideration of the field of philosophy would reveal that there is more to it than contained in these views concerning the discipline.

However, Philosophy is a search for a general understanding of values and reality by chiefly speculative rather than observational means. It signifies a natural and necessary urge in human beings to know themselves and the world in which they live and move and have their being. Western philosophy remained more or less true to the etymological meaning of philosophy in being essentially an intellectual quest for truth. Philosophy is intensely spiritual and has always emphasized the need for practical realization of Truth. Philosophy is a comprehensive system of ideas about human nature and the nature of the reality we live in. It is a guide for living, because the issues it addresses are basic and pervasive, determining the course we take in life and how we treat other people. Hence we can say that all the of human life are influenced and governed by the philosophical consideration. As a field of study philosophy is one of the oldest disciplines. It

is considered as a mother of all the sciences. In fact it is at the root of all knowledge. Education has also drawn its material from different philosophical bases.

Learning Outcomes for Study Session 1

When you have studied this session, you should be able to:

1.0 Nature and Subject Matter of Philosophy

1.1 Explain the meaning and origin of the term philosophy

1.2 Discuss the different concept of philosophy

1.1: meaning and origin of the term philosophy

This topic is to intimate you with the controversy associated with attempts to define philosophy. There is no univocal definition of philosophy.

There are different definitions given by different notable philosophers such as Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Bertrand Russell, among others. The only common element in most of the definitions is posture as a critical inquiry into the nature of things.

Etymologically, Philosophy has been traced to two Greek Words, 'Philo' and 'Sophia' which means 'Love' and 'wisdom' respectively. From this, Philosophy can be defined as love for wisdom. As love for wisdom, Philosophy does not claim to be wisdom, but a constant and persistent search for wisdom. This search for wisdom presupposes a critical attitude. In their search for wisdom, philosophers do not take any received opinions as knowledge. Opinions are subjected to critical examinations and only those which survive the critical tests are qualified to be held tentatively until they are confronted by superior opinions.

Philosophy has also been defined as a no-man's land between science and theology. It is like science because it engages in critical understanding of the world and like theology because it inquires into the world beyond sense-experience. It differs, because of its critical nature, from science which uses empirical examination and experimentation to study the world. It differs from theology which relies on faith and is mainly concerned with the world beyond sense-experience.

Philosophy is also defined as a Gad-fly because it is a discipline that keeps human beings always on their toes in respect of received opinions. In various ways, philosophy has been defined as the attitude and skills for thinking critically about the world and the universe.

However, the story does not end here and so the term philosophy has remained, to date, extremely difficult to define neatly. This is largely because of the different fields of human endeavours with which philosophy is concerned. Nevertheless, this does not mean that the field is indefinable.

For, the Penguin Dictionary of Philosophy defines it as the study of "the most fundamental and general concepts and principles involved in thought, action, and reality". It further observes that philosophy differs from science in that philosophy does not apply empirical methods in solving its problems. In other words, the assumptions and arguments of philosophy cannot be obtained by mere observation or experiment. It also differs from religion since it does not necessarily rely on faith, dogma or revealed knowledge for their sake. On the contrary, philosophy relies on imaginative and speculative reasoning to arrive at its conclusions and arguments. Furthermore, various philosophers have, in their various ways, defined the subject.

According to Plato, philosophy is simply 'the acquisition of knowledge'. This implies that the field knows no bounds in its search for knowledge, limitless knowledge. The same can be said of George Berkeley's and Brush G.S (1973) simple definition when he says, 'Philosophy, being nothing but the study of wisdom and truth. In the same vein, Francis Bacon and Russel B (1945) specified it a bit further by asserting that philosophy only is the true one which reproduces most faithfully the statements of nature, and is written down, as it were, from nature's dictation, so that it is nothing but a copy and a reflection of nature, and adds nothing of its own, but is merely a repetition and echo. Arthur Schopenhauer and Copleston F. (1962) is very much in the same line with Bacon, when he concurs that: To repeat abstractly, universally, and distinctly in concepts the whole inner nature of the world, and thus to deposit it as a reflected image in permanent concepts always ready for the faculty of reason, this and nothing else is **philosophy**. Jacques Maritain sees philosophy as: the science by which the natural light of reason studies the first causes or highest principles of all things - is, in other words, the science of things in their first causes, in so far as these belong to the natural order. In his *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, Ludwig Wittgenstein maintains that the object of philosophy is the logical clarification of thoughts. Philosophy is not a theory but an activity. A philosophical work consists essentially of elucidations. The result of philosophy is not a number of 'philosophical propositions', but to make propositions clear. Philosophy should make clear and delimit sharply the thoughts which otherwise are, as it were, opaque and blurred.

In other words, philosophy is the body of principles that operate knowledge about phenomena in the universe. According to Afenabor (2001) “philosophy is the study of principles underlying conducts, thought and knowledge” it is an academic discipline and an intellectual enterprise.

1.2: Different Conception of Philosophy

Going by the fact that there is no univocal definition of philosophy; attempts are made by scholars to capture the definition by classifying the different ways of doing philosophy under some conceptions. For instance, there can be,

a) The Socratic conception of philosophy according to which philosophy should be critical and philosophers must live by examples, be moral exemplaries, be ready to stand by the truth, and should not be dogmatic, etc. This conception is usually associated with Socrates and Plato.

b) Philosophy as Contemplation according to which philosophical questions and answers are open-ended. Philosophers are citizens of the universe, versatile in the knowledge of the world, and do not believe in the compartmentalization of knowledge. This is usually associated with Bertrand Russell.

c) Philosophy as Analysis according to which philosophy should be contented with linguistic clarification and conceptual analysis. This is represented by Wittgenstein's idea of philosophy as a method of therapy.

d) Philosophy as the Unity of Theory and Practice according to which philosophy can be seen as a way of uniting theory and practice to enable us makes the world better than it is. Examples can be found in the Marxist eleventh thesis in his critique of Feuerbach and the earlier idealists and materialists.

In-text questions and answers (ITQs and ITAs)

ITQ: What is philosophy?

ITA: Philosophy is defined as the study of "the most fundamental and general concepts and principles involved in thought, action, and reality”.

Conclusion

The above session explains the meaning and the term philosophy. Philosophy is the study of love or wisdom or the acquisition of knowledge in the physical world. Sometimes, philosophy deals with the imaginative and speculative reasoning to arrive at its conclusion and argument.

Summary of study session 1

In study session 1, you have learnt that:

- 1) Philosophy concerned with the study of wisdom and truth which required knowledge acquisition to predict and account facts in the physical world.
- 2) The concept of philosophy dealt with how philosophers perceive the world in different points of view.

Self – Assessment Questions (SAQs) for Study Session 1

It is assumed that since you have completed this study session 1, you should be able to answer the following questions.

SAQ 1.1 (test learning outcomes 1.1)

- What do you understand by the term philosophy?

SAQ 1.2 (test learning outcomes 1.2)

- Explain the different conceptions of philosophy known to you

References/Further Reading

Afenabor G. (2001), *Philosophical Psychology: Selected Readings*. Ikejah, Malthouse press ltd.

Arthur S. and Copleston, F. (1962) *A History of philosophy*. Vol. 1. New York: Image Books.

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Konstantinous F.V., A. Bogamolov, et.al. (1982) *the fundamentals of Marxist – Leninist philosophy*. Moscow: Progress publishers.

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Passmore J.(1972) "philosophy". *The Encyclopedia of philosophy*, Vol. 6. New York: Macmillan and the free press.

Russell, B. and Francis B. (1945) *A History of western philosophy*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

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Study Session 2 Branches of Philosophy and Human Existence

Introduction

Philosophy is a field of study that includes diverse subfields, in which people ask questions which are otherwise taken for granted, such as whether God exists, what is the nature of reality, whether knowledge is possible, and what makes actions right or wrong. From there, the ground would be said to have been set for a rigorous search for the ‘Truth Absolute’ about the nature of things. The fundamental method of philosophy is the use of reasoning to evaluate arguments concerning these questions. However, the exact scope and methodology of philosophy vary, so that there is no general agreement regarding the areas that constitute the main branches of philosophy. But for our present purpose, we take five main branches which are seen, one way or the other, as constituting some major concerns of philosophy. These are:

- 1. Epistemology**
- 2. Aesthetics**
- 3. Ethics**
- 4. Logic**
- 5. Metaphysics**

Each of these branches has its own area of concern and outside these five broad categories are other areas of philosophical inquiry such as religion or theology, ontology, cosmology, politics, etc which, nevertheless, are subsumed by some philosophers under one of these five branches.

Learning Outcomes for Study Session 2

When you have studied this session, you should be able to know:

2.0 Major Branches of Philosophy

- 2.1 explain the concept of epistemology
 - 2.1.1 What is knowledge?
 - 2.1.2 How do we acquire knowledge?
 - 2.1.3 What do people know?

2.2 explain the concept of aesthetics

2.2.1 Judgement in aesthetics

2.3 explain the concept of ethics

2.3.1 Types or forms of ethics

2.4 explain the concept of logic

2.4.1 Forms and nature of logic

2.4.2 Properties of logic

2.4.3 Reasoning in logic

2.4.4 Philosophical logic

2.5 explain the concept of metaphysics

2.5.1 Branches of metaphysics

2.1: Epistemology (The philosophy of knowledge)

The term "epistemology" is derived from two Greek words. "Episteme" means “knowledge” and the "logos” means “study, discourse, explanation or reasoning”. Epistemology is a branch of philosophy that is concerned with the nature and scope of knowledge. Much interest in this field centered on the attempt to provide answers to three basic important questions which have dominated the minds of philosophers. These questions are:

What is knowledge?

How do we acquire knowledge?

What do we know?

2.1.1 What is knowledge?

The Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary defines knowledge as ‘familiarity gained by experience or “organized body of information”’. Knowledge is what we claim to know. That thing that we claim to know may be specialized, scientific or every day common knowledge. Knowledge sometimes it is expressed in formal preposition which we believe to be true.

Philosophers are contended with this definition. Thus, their enquiry into what knowledge is goes much deeper, for this is among the most prominent questions in epistemology, having remained unsatisfactorily addressed for several millennia. In defining knowledge, philosophers insist that three conditions must be met for an individual to possess knowledge. This line of thought, held for several millennia and known as the tripartite theory of knowledge sees knowledge as a justified true belief. In other words, knowledge of anything must be true, has to be believed by the person possessing it and that person must have justification (reason/proof) for his/her belief. Unless all these conditions are met, the theory says, knowledge cannot be said to exist.

For instance, an individual may see the truth in something and have justification for that. But if he does not believe in it, he cannot say he has acquired knowledge of such a thing. Consider someone saying, "I know that A is true, but I don't think that A is true." The person making this utterance, it seems, contradicts himself or herself. If one knows A, then, among other things, one thinks that A is indeed true. If one thinks that A is true, then one believes A. This is a clear indication that knowledge requires belief.

Similarly, one may believe something and have justification for doing so. But if that thing is not true, then the person does not know it. For example, suppose that Walida thinks that a particular bridge is safe, and attempts to cross it. Unfortunately the bridge collapses under her weight. We might say that Walida believed that the bridge was safe, but that her belief was mistaken. We would not (accurately) say that she knew that the bridge was safe, because plainly it was not. For something to count as knowledge, it must be true.

Finally, even if a person sees the truth in something and believes it, that person cannot be knowledgeable of that thing unless if he has a justification. In other words, one must not only believe the truth, but must also have good reason for doing so. Thus knowledge is seen as a true belief 'that has been given account of something.

Epistemology is also concerned with the problems of Truth. One of such problems is 'what is truth?' There are some various types of truth.

Types of Truth

There are two types of truth, they include:-

Correspondent truth

Coherence truth

Pragmatist truth

1. Correspondent Truth

According to this theory, a statement is true if it corresponds to reality or an actual state of affairs. In other words, a statement is true if it conforms to a fact. This theory emphasizes agreement between beliefs and facts. Proposition is true when it respondent exist with fact.

2. Coherence Truth

According to this theory, a statement is true if it coheres with an already established system of truth. This theory sees truth as a relation between judgment and the system to which it belongs. This theory emphasizes agreements among beliefs. Proposition is seen as conforming to coherent truth if there is coherence of one proposition with another. Truth by coherence does not necessarily make the statement correct.

3. Pragmatist Truth

This theory considers the idea of truth to be an affair of practical experience. That is, the truth of a statement or proposition is determined by its practicability. Therefore, a proposition is true if what it affirms is practicable or realizable.

Nature of Human Knowledge

The nature of human knowledge is characterized by the specific ideas which are acquired by a person in order to understand things in terms of experience in the natural world. Human knowledge is very important toward understanding the existence of a particular thing in the society.

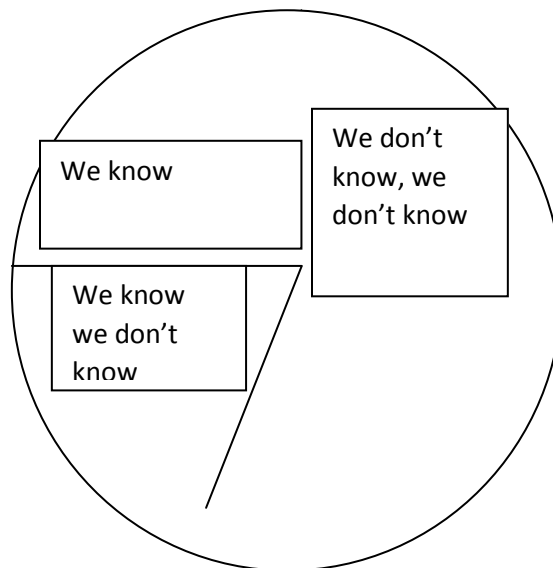
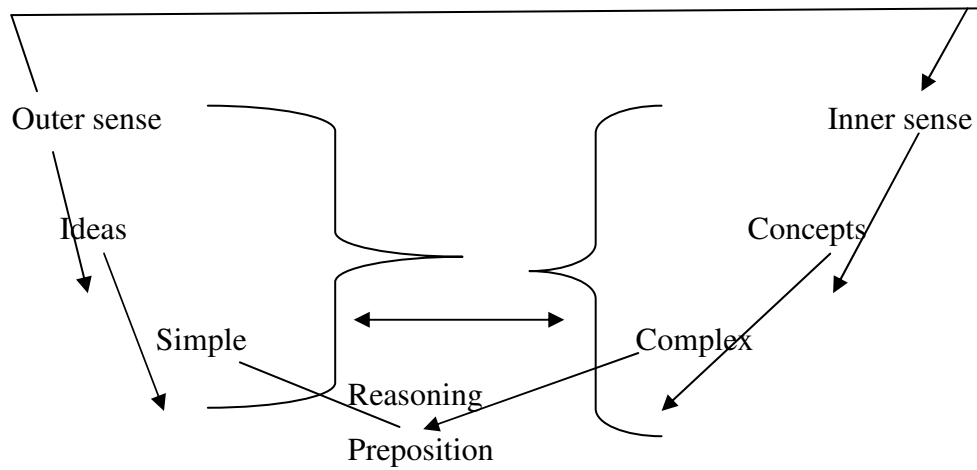
However, according to the nature of human knowledge for a person to acquire a good knowledge such person must possess at least the five (5) sensory organs in human body which include the following:

1. Smelling
2. Hearing
3. Touch

4. Sight
5. Testing

Domain of knowledge

Sensory experience



Sources of Knowledge

The following are the major sources of knowledge.

1. Sensory experience
2. Reasoning
3. Authority
4. Intuition

1. Sensory Experience

According to sources of knowledge a person cannot make sensing without having the five sensory organs indicated in human body because it makes someone to prove the existence of something.

2. Reasoning

Reasoning is the ability to think. For example, if you sense something you need to reason so as to know it's important.

3. Authority

Authority as a source of knowledge occurs when we make certain claim to knowledge based on the authority of someone who is a specialist in the particular field of knowledge. For instance, I know it is true because Dr Mrs Yakaka said so. Here Dr. Mrs Yakaka becomes an authority in her subjects or field of study.

Authority is the power, command or right given to a particular person in an organization or working places to enable him discharge duties that will guide and protect the conducts and behaviour of his/her members with the aim of achieving a particular purposes in respect to their territories.

However, authority is the root of the society which protects his/her members with the use of power to enact law that will guide the organisation. For example, we have different types of

authority as identified by Max Weber (1864- 1920) they include: charismatic authority, traditional authority and rational legal authority. These types of authorities deal with the society in a different format.

4. Intuition

Intuition is the phenomenon of mind which describes the ability to acquire knowledge without inference or the use of reasoning. Intuition gives us the ability to know something directly without analytic reasoning, bridging the gap between the conscious and non-conscious parts of our mind, and also between instinct and reason.

In other words, Intuition is something that you don't have any ideas on it nor seeing, feeling, and hearing. It happens without notice, and for someone to know it such person need to set out a questionnaire and distribute it to respondents so as to get the actual facts about his or her appearance.

Conditions for Knowing

There are (3) conditions for knowing

1. Objective requirement
2. Subjective requirement.
3. Evidential requirement

1. Objective Requirement

Objective is a central philosophical concept related to reality and truth which has been variously defined as a state or quality of being true even outside of subject's individual biases, interpretations, feelings and imagination. A proposition is generally true when its truth conditions met without biases caused by feelings, ideas, opinions; etc.

In other words, objective requirement it has to do with the factual requirement or actual things. For example, it is believe that crude oil exists.

2. Subjective Requirement

Subjective refers to a thing which we deem as true or existing contingent on our observation. However, what we claim to know must not only be through factual. For example since we have agreed that crude oil exist factually, so it has gone through subjective requirement.

3. Evidential Requirement

This has to do with prove of the existence of something. For example since we have agreed that crude oil exist factually. Then, let it be seeing physically and touch.

Types of knowledge

Three types of knowledge are commonly identified by philosophers. These are:

Propositional knowledge

Personal knowledge and

Procedural knowledge

1. Propositional knowledge

Propositional knowledge is sometimes called descriptive or declarative knowledge. It is the primary concern of epistemology. It refers to knowledge of facts, as in X is Y or X is the case. This may be the general knowledge of things, without the accompanying details that mark out one thing from another. For instance, one may have the knowledge that all buildings have certain features or looks. For instance windows, doors, roof, floor etc. This is called propositional knowledge. However, this would not enable one to know what a bank or a hospital looks like. In other words, propositional knowledge is not enough to make one have personal or procedural knowledge. Hence, for one to tell that a particular building is a bank or hospital, such a person must have had some acquaintance with the type of building in question. That is, one must have seen and had a personal knowledge of the building. It can be said, therefore, that propositional knowledge concerns some sort of generalized knowledge, while personal knowledge is somewhat particularized, so that should one see a figure moving, one only requires propositional knowledge to say that it is a man, but requires personal knowledge to say that it is John or Walida.

2. Personal knowledge

From the above explanation, it should be clear on what a personal knowledge (or ‘knowledge by acquaintance’) is all about? Unlike propositional knowledge, it does not stop at just knowing this or that, but it entails being familiar with something. For instance, for one to have known John or Walida, one must have met them. Otherwise one would not claim to know them. This means that personal knowledge entails more than mere propositions about someone or something, but knowing such propositions in a particular way.

3. Procedural knowledge

Procedural knowledge is sometimes classified as ‘knowledge of how’. This evidently differs from propositional knowledge in the sense that it involves being familiar with a procedure of doing something, to the extent that one is able to actually do it. For instance, it is one thing to know the principles involved in operating a computer or building a house, but it is also quite another thing to be able to actually do it. In this instance, procedural knowledge is that which enables you to do the act. In simple terms, therefore, the distinction between propositional and procedural knowledge is that propositional knowledge is more of theoretical while the procedural knowledge is practical in nature.

2.1.2 How do we acquire knowledge?

The second question that philosophers seek to answer with regards to knowledge is how do people acquire or gain knowledge. In explaining this, philosophers often make a distinction between two kinds of knowledge that an individual possesses.

A priori and

A posteriori knowledge

Although the distinction between these two has been a source of dispute among philosophers, they can, nevertheless, be explained as follows:

1. **A priori knowledge** is a knowledge that is independent of experience (that is, it is non-empirical).
2. **A posteriori knowledge** is a knowledge that is dependent on experience (that is, it is empirical).

Based on this distinction, two important rival schools of thought have emerged, namely: Empiricism and Rationalism

1. Empiricism

Empiricism holds that knowledge is a product of experience ‘that all ideas come to us through experience, either through the five external senses or through such inner sensations as pain and pleasure, and thus, knowledge is essentially based on or derived from experience’. In empiricism, what is emphasized is sense experience, as a root of knowledge, meaning that experience is a necessary precondition to gaining knowledge.

2. Rationalism

Rationalism is ‘any view appealing to reason as a source of knowledge or justification’ (Lacey 286). It is, in other words, a method or a theory ‘in which the criterion of truth is not sensory but intellectual and deductive’ (Bourke 263). Some rationalists argue that it is possible to gain all form of knowledge, including science, solely by means of reason.

Psychological ideas on knowledge acquisition

Knowledge, as far as psychologists/educationists are concerned, can be generally acquired in one of three ways, as outlined by Holt (1972), depending on what manner of knowledge it is. The three psychological ideas are as follows:

1. Discipline of Nature:

This kind of discipline allows an individual to acquire knowledge by observing phenomena around him or by undergoing certain experiences. In this respect, it is argued that knowledge is largely a product of error, otherwise phrased as trial and error’. This means that the individual concerned continues trying and failing until he/she succeeds one day. One distinguishing feature of this type of discipline is that nature, the ultimate teacher, always allows a second chance. In other words, it is impersonal, impartial and therefore does not hold any grudges against past failures, misconducts or successes. That is, irrespective of an individual’s past records, one always gets a fresh start.

2. Discipline of Society or culture:

This is also known as learning through imitation. In this instance, it is contended that a child largely learns from the behaviours and acts of his elders as well as peers. What he sees them

doing he imitates and takes on; he grows to like what his roles models like and to detest what they do not like.

3. Discipline of Superior Force:

From the name, it is clear that the driving force in the acquisition of this kind of discipline is force itself. It is the so called 'sergeant to private' discipline. While in many circumstances children are left to obtain knowledge either through trial and error or through imitation, there are many other cases in which we cannot afford the luxury of these. In other words, there are cases in which it is too risky to let a child learn all by himself. We cannot, for instance, allow a child to learn the pain of being run over by a car or motorcycle through experience. Thus, instead of letting him play in a busy street, we punish him or threaten to punish him, in such a way that he can clearly discern our disapproval of such acts. Hence between him and the danger of being hit by a car (which is too remote for him to imagine) we put a lesser danger of being spanked or reprimanded, until he is old enough to make out these dangers for himself.

2.1.3 What do people know?

This is an issue that has remained to date hotly debated in epistemology and even philosophy in general. Much of this debate revolves around the philosophical tradition of skepticism, which attempts to put to doubt the claim that human beings can ever arrive at any kind of certain knowledge. According to **skepticism** the following need to be paced:

1. There is no such thing as certainty in human knowledge.
2. All human knowledge is only probably true, that is, true most of the time, or not true.

From this have arisen different arguments and counterarguments, both in defence and support of **skepticism**. Generally, philosophic **skepticism** puts to question the availability of enough evidence as to help us decide whether indeed what we claim to have as knowledge is in fact reality or simply an illusion.

Skeptics tend to take the latter position, insisting that not only do we not possess knowledge in the strictest sense, but also that we do not have the means to judge whether indeed we are knowledgeable or not.

2.2 Aesthetics

This is one of the major branches of philosophy and comes from the Greek "aisthetike", meaning "the science of how things are known via the senses. **Aesthetics** is concerned with sensory or

sensori-emotional values, sometimes called judgments of sentiment or taste. For instance, what makes something beautiful, sublime, disgusting, fun, cute, silly, entertaining, boring, humorous, or tragic? It is difficult to objectively answer these since all these are relative and value laden, depending on an individual's or group's idea of what is or is not, any of these. It is therefore the concern of aesthetics to ponder on these and provide answers to the questions in an objective way.

2.2.1 Aesthetic judgment

Central to the study of aesthetics is the extent to which values can be objectively applied to entities or conditions. Needless to say, this largely depends on our ability to use our senses and discriminate, so that if any of our senses are not sharp or normal, then we are very likely to have a different perception, and therefore judgments, of whatever it is that is being evaluated.

Factors in aesthetic judgment

Apart from the senses, a lot of other issues affect Judgments of aesthetic value. For instance, aesthetic judgments may be linked to

1. Emotions: That is to say, our emotions play an important role in determining our evaluation of things or objects liable to subjective judgment. Thus, if we have a negative emotion or attitude towards something, we are very likely to let this influence us when we make a judgment.

2. Culturally conditioned: to some extent. For instance, many tribes in Africa regard a tribal mark not just as a marker of identity but also a sign of beauty, whereas non- Africans, especially Europeans, look down on it with contempt and derision. Evaluations of beauty can also be determined by our level of **desirability**.

Thus, judgments of aesthetic value can go hand in hand with judgments such as those of:

3. Economic, political, or moral value: Thus, while to some a flashy car or a beautiful mansion can be positively evaluated or regarded because it reflects a sign of good living or social prestige, to others it may be viewed negatively, as an index of extravagance.

Similarly, while some people regard nudity as utterly disgusting, others see it as pleasurable or artistic expression. Judgments of aesthetic value can also depend on our **intellectual and interpretative** capacity, so that we are able to judge in a particular thing only that which is readily accessible to us. Thus, if our intellectual or interpretive capacity is limited, we might miss a lot of things relating to the entity or phenomena being evaluated. For instance, a person who is

well versed or trained in appreciating poetry or any work of art is bound to more readily discern and judge their sublime or lack thereof, than someone who is a novice. From the foregoing, it is apparent that the aesthetic judgments can be seen to be based on 'the senses, emotions, intellectual opinions, will, desires, culture, preferences, values, subconscious behaviour, conscious decision, training, instinct, sociological institutions, or some complex combination of these, depending on exactly which theory one employs.

However, even though aesthetic judgment is seen to be largely subjective (beauty is in the eye of the beholder), there are, nonetheless, certain things that are almost universally regarded in the same light, either as disgusting or sublime and beautiful. For instance, insects like cockroaches are largely regarded with contempt (even though they may be delicacies in other places), while butterflies, roses, peacocks, etc are seen as possessing some beauty. Such things are so regarded because in other words, some elements of our aesthetic judgments of beauty or disgust have objective socio biological base. (Thus) judgments of beauty are subjective but universal, because they stem from traits that all humans share.

2.3 Ethics as a Philosophical Theory of Morality

Ethic is also referred to as moral philosophy or morality of human action (Omeregbe, 1982:2). Ethics is another major branch of philosophy that studies value or quality (e.g good, evil, moral, immoral, right, wrong etc), which was derived from the Ancient Greek "ethikos", meaning "arising from habit or character".

2.3.1 Types or forms of ethics

- 1) Descriptive ethics
- 2) Meta-ethics
- 3) Normative ethics and
- 4) Applied ethics

1. Descriptive ethic

This is the branch of ethics that uses the descriptive method of science in describing the phenomenon of morality. This approach can be by mere description or comparison. It may describe morality across time or culture.

2. Meta-ethics

Meta-ethics is the aspect of ethics which examines the meaning, nature and origin of moral standards. Meta-ethics raises questions about what an ethical standard really means. An example of meta-ethics is the distinction identified by the Analytic school in the Twentieth century. Another example is that of the question of the origin of moral codes. There have been various explanations to this. Some people hold that moral codes have their origin in God, while some other moral philosophers explain that they originate from society.

Meta-ethics is primarily concerned with the sources and meaning of our ethical principles. It can thus be defined, according to the Internet Encyclopaedia of Philosophy, as the study of ‘the origin and meaning of ethical concepts’. In discussing meta-ethics, we shall be mainly concerned with two issues which, as outlined and exhaustively discussed in the Internet Encyclopaedia of Philosophy, are very prominent to the field. Hence, in explaining the sources of our ethical codes, philosophers usually resort to metaphysical and psychological issues.

Metaphysical explanation of morality

Being the study of the things or entities that exist in the universe, including physical and spiritual ones, metaphysics has been used by moral philosophers to explain where morality originates from. In this regard, ethicists have been divided into two opposing camps, the advocates of the ‘other worldly’ and those of the ‘this-worldly’.

a. Moral objectivism

Those who take the ‘other-worldly’ stance (also known as moral objectivism) proffer that moral value are objective, in that they exist ‘in a spirit-like realm beyond subjective human conventions’. In addition, such values are at once absolute or eternal, since they never change, as well as universal, since they concern all rational creatures throughout the world (IEP). These values could be exemplified with mathematical principles, which are axiomatic in nature. Thus, if we take a simple mathematical concept like $2+2$, the answer is always 4, irrespective of where and when it is applied. Thus, no matter the amount of ingenuity expended, such remain constant and insusceptible to change.

Hence, philosophers such as Plato, who tow this line of thought, build on this to assert that moral values are absolute truths that are not only impervious to alterations, but also apply everywhere

and anytime. Belonging to the same category of the other-worldly argument are divine commands, which originate from the will of God. This view, also called voluntarism, draws inspiration from the attribute of God as Omni-potent, able to do or control anything and everything. Thus, according to the proponents of this view, just in the same way as He wills everything and they become reality, God also wills all moral values and they become reality. They then argue that God implants such moral commands as 'murder is immoral' in the minds of humans or through scriptures and they become aware of it and adhere to it.

b. Moral relativism

As opposed to moral objectivism, this line of thought is seen as this-worldly. Articulated by such philosophers as Sextus Empiricus, moral relativism rejects the so-called objective or divine status of moral values, arguing that such values are primarily a product of human conventions. This argument is further articulated from two fronts, namely individual relativism and cultural relativism. The first of these contends that moral standards or values are a creation of individual whims and caprices or desires, while the second one maintains that 'morality is grounded in the approval of one's society - and not simply in the preferences of individual people'. In addition, this approach also repudiates the claim held by moral objectivism that moral values are absolute and universal, insisting that such values actually change to accommodate the pressures of time and space. This stance can be defended, so they argue, by the presence in our world of values that radically differ from one another, such as views about homosexuality, slavery, dress, human sacrifice etc.

Psychological explanation of morality

The second argument for morality is explained in terms of a psychological basis of moral values or judgments. Central to this is the issue of coming to terms with the motivations of being moral. This psychological explanation is particularly important because it is one thing to know moral codes and their sources, but it is also quite another thing to be forced to act on them. This implies that a person may be moral for reasons other than being religious or law abiding. Some of the motives behind being moral, says law abiding person, might be 'to avoid punishment, to gain praise, to attain happiness, to be dignified, or to fit in with society'. The law abiding person goes ahead to distinguish three main headings, two of which are discussed here, under which the psychological basis of morality can be explained. Top on the list is the issue of egoism and altruism. Philosophers such as Thomas Hobbes maintained that most of our actions and

judgments are influenced by egoistic or selfish interests. That is, most of the things we do can be seen as self-centred, so that even if an action appears to be selfless at the surface, there is always a selfish motivation lurking behind. For instance, behind the outward urge to help the poor and needy may be the hidden, if subconscious, motive of gaining self respect or control over these subjects. This view, referred to as psychological egoism, holds that 'self-oriented interests ultimately motivate all human actions'.

On the other hand, psychological hedonism holds that 'pleasure is the specific driving force behind all of our actions', while psychological altruism argues that some of our actions are the result of inherent benevolence to help others.

Next in line in the issue of moral psychology is that which involves argument as to whether the motivation to be moral is derived from rational decisions or simply emotional leanings. For instance, if an individual desists from doing something because he believes it to be immoral, or insists on doing something in an effort to be moral, his decision, according to philosophers, might be explained in terms of two motives. On the one hand is the argument that the individual's decision could only have been motivated by reason, in as much as humans are rational beings.

However, on the other hand is the view propounded by such philosophers as David Hume, who sees reason as slave to emotion, that such moral decisions largely involve emotion, rather than reason.

3. Normative ethics

The main duty of normative ethics is to prescribe what ought to be both for human and society. In other words, it prescribes that criteria for human actions properly be judged as morally good or bad. Normative ethics is concerned with the practical application of moral values to arrive at standards that take on a more practical task, which is to arrive at moral standards that control right and wrong acts, involving ourselves as well as others. A catch all principle of normative ethics is subsumed in the so-called Golden Rule: 'do unto others what you have others do unto you'. This, according to philosophers 'may involve articulating the good habits that we should acquire, the duties that we should follow, or the consequences of our behaviour on ourselves and others'. From these emerge three 'strategies' come into existence namely:

Virtue theories

Duty theories and
Consequentiality theories

a. Virtue Theories

Although philosophers generally hold that learning and following certain laid down rules is a path to achieving morality, virtue theorists, however, do not place emphasis on learning rules.

Rather, they stress that the only effective means to achieving morality is through acquiring ‘good habits or character’, so that once such habits are developed by an individual, he will then naturally act in a good way. For instance, if a person develops such a virtue as kindness, he will then be inclined to automatically act in a kind manner.

Taking this line of thought, Plato identified four virtues, which came to be known as the cardinal virtues. These are: wisdom, courage, temperance and justice. To these are later added other important virtues such as fortitude, generosity, self-respect, good temper, and sincerity. Apart from acquiring good habits, virtue theorists stressed that it is also part of morality to avoid such bad dispositions as cowardice, insensibility, injustice, and vanity. Side by side with these are the three theological virtues: faith, hope, and charity, as outlined by medieval theologians.

b. Duty Theories

Duty theorists see morality as the actual execution of good deeds. Such deeds are often obligatory and are therefore expected to be executed by the individual concerned, irrespective of the consequences arising from them. One of the most prominent duty theories is that propounded by the 17th century German philosopher Samuel Pufendorf, in which several duties are identified. These duties are classified under three main headings, namely, duties to God, duties to oneself, and duties to others. Pufendorf further divided each of these into two types of duties or obligations.

Duties towards God involve gaining knowledge of the existence and nature of god as well as practically worshipping Him, both inwardly and outwardly.

Duties towards oneself involve duties of the soul and duties of the body. The first of these concerns self development in terms of acquiring wisdom or developing one’s talent and skills, while the second, which is physical in nature, involves preserving or protecting our bodies or ourselves from anything harmful. In this regard, it is duty bound on us not to engage in such acts as drunkenness, gluttony, suicide or any such things that may harm us.

Duties towards others, Pufendorf distinguishes between absolute and conditional duties. Absolute duties are universal in nature, since they are binding on everybody regardless of whether or not, conditions exist. These are divided into three: (1) avoid wronging others; (2) treat people as equals, and (3) promote the good of others.

Conditional duties, on the other hand, arise as contracts or agreements reached between individuals. For instance, if you promise to help somebody or pay somebody his debt, it is duty bound on you to carry out your own part of the bargain, if you are to be moral.

Another duty-based theory is that propounded by W.D. Ross, who maintains that our duties are "part of the fundamental nature of the universe". Unlike Pufendorf's, Ross's list of duties is not broadly categorized and also shorter. Nevertheless, he believes that the list, quoted below 'reflects our actual moral convictions'

Fidelity: the duty to keep promises

Reparation: the duty to compensate others when we harm them

Gratitude: the duty to thank those who help us

Justice: the duty to recognize merit

Beneficence: the duty to improve the conditions of others

Self-improvement: improving our virtue and intelligence.

Non-maleficent: the duty to not injure others

c. Consequentiality Theories

The consequentiality theorists see morality in terms of a cost benefit analysis of our actions. This is to say that the moral basis of an action can be determined by weighing the results it yields, so that if the result is a positive one, the action is adjudged to be moral, otherwise it is immoral. This derives from this general principle that says:

An action is morally right if the consequences of that action are more favourable than unfavourable. This principle requires that we first compare the good and the bad sides of an action and see which outweighs which. If the good outweighs the bad, then the action is morally right. But if the reverse is the case, then the action is morally wrong. However, there are instances in which the dividing line between 'proper' and 'improper' may not be all that sharp, especially when multiple groups with opposing interests are involved. This called for a more precisely defined principle.

Hence, these three subdivisions of consequentialism have emerged in order to explain more about ethical principles.

Ethical Egoism: an action is morally right if the consequences of that action are more favourable than unfavourable only to the agent performing the action.

Ethical Altruism: an action is morally right if the consequences of that action are more favourable than unfavourable to everyone except the agent.

Utilitarianism: an action is morally right if the consequences of that action are more favourable than unfavourable to everyone.

Although each of these principles focuses on actions and their consequences, they are, never the less, seen as opposed to one another since each of them yields a different conclusion.

4. Applied ethics

Applied ethics is the branch of ethics which applies ethical principles or codes to real life, analyzing issues that are seen to trigger controversy as regards their moral status. What, for instance, is the position of abortion or euthanasia in human societies? Apart from this, ethics has also been applied to professions, such as medicine, business, environmental issues and even sexual practices. In each of these, norms exist as to how one may conduct oneself. Such norms have become a focus of heated debate among those concerned. Generally, for an issue to be considered an "applied ethical issue", it has to at once be a moral issue as well as a controversial one. Thus, issues such as those of euthanasia or abortion on medical grounds or even family planning are necessarily controversial since people are bound to take opposing sides regarding their moral status.

In other words, applied ethics refers to the branch of ethics which examines the moral status of concrete social issues. It does this by using ethical theories which we have in normative ethics to assess practical issues of everyday life. When faced with making a moral decision on any particular or definite moral issue, more often than not, we usually desire to know what the moral status of such an issue generally is.

2.4 Logic - A Reasoned Philosophical Inquiry

The term Logic came from the Greek words (logos), originally meaning the word, or what is spoken. But it later came to mean thought or reason'. Although the exact definition of logic has remained a bone of contention among philosophers, it can be generally seen as the study of criteria for the evaluation of arguments. One thing, however, is clear: that the task of the logician is 'to advance an account of valid and fallacious inference to allow one to distinguish logical

from flawed arguments'. In addition, logic is also involved in the investigation and classification of the forms of statements and arguments. In so doing, it applies formal methods of inference as well as natural language arguments.

According to Copi (1972) defined logic as the study of the methods and principles used in distinguishing well (correct) from bad (incorrect) reasoning. Nancy (1990:34) sees logic "as the science that appraises reasoning as correct or incorrect argument.

2.4.1 Forms and nature of logic

Crucial to the discussion logic is the classification in terms of the typical activity involved in the logical reasoning. In this regard, logic has been broadly categorized into three forms namely:

1. Formal logic

Formal logic is the study of inference with purely formal content, where that content is made explicit. (An inference possesses a **purely formal content** if it can be expressed as a particular application of a wholly abstract rule, that is, a rule that is not about any particular thing or property.

2. Informal logic

Informal logic is the study of natural language arguments. This concerns the critical assessment of utterances or statements with the view to detecting the validity or fallacies of such arguments. In this instance, we can, using the power of logic, determine whether or not a particular argument is sound.

3. Symbolic logic

Symbolic logic is the study of symbolic abstractions that capture the formal features of logical inference. (Extracted from the logical arguments or inferences generally require formal systems, made up of a formal language which specifies rules for creating and deriving inferences. Such systems, in turn, require axioms which must always be consistent within the scope the formal language allows. For instance, a system may have a standing rule like 'If P implies Q and P is the case, then Q is the case' or 'if $A=B$ and $B=C$, then $C=A$ '. From these can be generated an infinite number of logical arguments or inferences, known as theorems.

2.4.2 Properties of Logic

Logical arguments and inferences, being products of formal systems, require three valuable properties.

Consistency requires that the formal system of inference remain constant, so that no room is allowed for any form of contradiction.

Soundness is the second valuable property of a formal system and it requires that the rules or principles set aside for deriving inferences always result to inferences that are true or 'logically valid'. That is to say, such rules should never lead you to false conclusion, in as much as you base your inference on true premises.

Completeness, the third property of a formal system, requires that the laid down rules of inference be exhaustive to such an extent that they are capable of proving the veracity or otherwise of all statements or inferences within the system.

2.4.3 Reasoning in Logic

Reasoning in logic generally takes two varying forms, namely

Deductive and

Inductive reasoning

1. Deductive reasoning

In deductive reasoning the conclusion necessarily tallies with the premises that is to say, if the premises are true, the conclusion is also necessarily true. That is from general premises to a particular one. Deductive reasoning infers from general to general, general to particular and particular to particular.

Deductive Inference from General to Particular:

All human beings are mortal

All men are human beings

Therefore, all men are mortal

All Nigerians are Africans

All Adamawians are Nigerians

Therefore, all Adamawians are Africans.

Deductive Inference from General to Particular:

All Men are mortal

Mr. John is a man

Therefore, Mr. John is mortal

All Lecturers are academics
Some Doctors are lecturer
So, some Doctors are academics

All students can read and write
Mary is a student
Therefore Mary can read and write.

Deductive Inference from Particular to Particular:

Some politicians are corrupt
Some northerners are politicians
Therefore, some northerners are corrupt

Four is greater than two
Six is greater than four
So, six is greater than two.

From the above, it follows that the veracity of the conclusion is necessarily dependent on the first two statements. Thus, if one or both of them is false, then the conclusion must also be false. To evaluate the soundness of deductive arguments, we basically use the principle of contradiction, which holds that the same truth or statement cannot be affirmed and denied at the same time. That is to say, going by the premises in the example above, there is no way we can conclude that all men are not mortal or Adamawians are not Africans, Mr John is not mortal, some doctors are not academic, Mary cannot read and write or some northerners are not corrupt and six can never be greater than two.

2. Inductive Reasoning

In the inductive argument, the conclusion does not necessarily tally with the premises. Rather, it is just a matter of probability, since it is merely a process of deriving reliable generalization from observations. This means that there is as much a chance of the conclusion varying with the premises as it would tally. (That is from particular to general) Consider the example below:

Inductive Inference from Particular to General:

Most sciences have hardworking students

All Engineering departments are sciences

So, All Engineering departments have hardworking students.

Inductive Inference from Particular to Particular:

Some students are lazy

Your class representative is a student

Therefore, your class representative is lazy.

From the above, the conclusion may not necessarily be valid all the time, since there may be exceptions to general rules. This means that inductive inferences do not always yield a valid conclusion or argument.

2.4.4 Philosophical logic

Philosophical logic is concerned with the formal descriptions of natural language. Philosophical logic is very much related to the philosophy of language which, on the other hand, is concerned with how our 'language engages and interacts with our thinking'. This has a direct bearing on our way of thinking and processing language, so that a person well grounded in logic stands a very good chance of being able to effectively structure his own arguments as well as critically evaluate the arguments of others.

One of the major concerns of philosophical logic has to do with the many instances of flaws evident even in popular arguments. Consequently, a number of ideas were formulated with a view to better understanding the way language works, so that such flaws may be curtailed. One of these is the Speech Act Theory, variously explained by philosophers, logicians and linguists alike.

The Cooperative Principle

In his paper titled Logic and Conversation, Grice (1976) developed a concept of 'implicature', which is essentially about how people use language. He suggests that there is a set of 'overarching' assumptions, which guide people in the conduct of conversations. Grice thus identifies four basic guidelines underlying efficient co-operative use of language. These 'maxims' of conversation, as he calls them, flow from the following general idea that in every:

a. Communicative event:

Make your contribution such as is required at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged.

The Maxim of Quality:

Try to make your contribution one that is true; specifically

- i). Do not say what you believe to be false.
- ii). Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.

b. The Maxim of Quantity:

- i). Make your contribution as informative as is required for the current purpose of exchange.
- ii). Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.

c. The Maxim of Relation:

- i). Make your contribution relevant.

d. The Maxim of Manner:

Be perspicuous, and specifically:

- i). Avoid obscurity.
- ii). Avoid ambiguity.
- iii). be brief.
- iv). be orderly.

These 'Maxims', as identified by Grice, specify what participants have to do if they are to 'converse in a maximally efficient, rational, co-operative way: they should speak sincerely, relevantly and clearly, while providing sufficient information' (Levinson; 1983: 102). Whether speakers are bound by these maxims, if they are to communicate efficiently has for long been a subject of debate among scholars. What we do know, however, is that speakers need not adhere to all the maxims all the time. In fact, speakers oftentimes deliberately refrain from observing a maxim in order to imply another meaning. In line with this, Leech & Thomas (1990) offer an example. The exchange between A and B.

A: Where's Janet?

B: Uh - she was walking in the direction of the MPH five minutes ago

In truth-conditional terms, B has failed to answer A's question since he merely reports Janet behaviour five minutes ago. But when we make recourse to the intended – or better still implied meaning, we will actually see B's answer to have conveyed more than just that. To arrive at an implied meaning, therefore, we have to take into account matters such as 'general knowledge'

and 'shared contextual knowledge'. Then, and only then, can we draw inferences that enable us arrive at the intended speaker-meaning.

2.5 Metaphysics: (The Study of Nature or Reality)

The term metaphysics is derived from Greek: word (Meta) = "after"+ (phúsis) = "nature". It is the branch of philosophy that is concerned with explaining the nature of the world. In other words, it is the study of being or reality. It is interested in issues such as the nature of reality, the existence of a divine entity or entities, as well as man's place in the universe among others. Nowadays, metaphysics is even used with reference to phenomena outside the physical world, dealing with such things as spirits, faith healing, crystal power, occultism, among others.

2.5.1 Branches of Metaphysics

Although different philosophers may lay emphasis on varying aspects of the discipline, a general consensus exists, however, among most of them that the following constitute the major sub disciplines of metaphysics:

1. Natural philosophy
2. Ontology
3. Philosophy of religion
4. Philosophy of mind
5. Philosophy of perception

Below is a brief description of each of these sub disciplines.

1. Natural philosophy

Natural philosophy is sometime called the philosophy of nature; natural philosophy refers to the objective study of nature and the physical universe. It is seen to be what is now the physical or natural science including physics, biology among others.

2. Ontology

This is the study of being or existence, which describes basic categories and relationships by defining entities and types of entities within its framework. In other words, ontology seeks to study conceptions of reality. That is to say how reality is perceived and understood by human beings. In this regard, ontologists concentrate on seeking an answer to one basic question

namely: "What actually exists?" From this, a number of related questions emerge, as listed in by the philosophers.

- i. What is existence?
- ii. Is existence a property?
- iii. Why does anything exist rather than nothing?
- iv. What constitutes the identity of an object?
- v. What is a physical object?
- vi. What features are the essential, as opposed to merely accidental, attributes of a given object?
- vii. Can one give an account of what it means to say that a physical object exists?
- viii. What are an object's properties or relations and how are they related to the object itself?
- ix. When does an object go out of existence, as opposed to merely changing?
- x. Do souls exist?

These questions necessarily require various approaches, depending on a person's discipline or approach to answering them. In the social sciences, for instance, four main approaches can be used to solving these ontological questions they includes: realism, empiricism, positivism and postmodernism.

The realists: are concerned any ontological question can be solved by merely gathering facts, which are readily available in the outside world, just waiting to be discovered. This implies that answers to questions about existence are 'readymade' and all we need do is search for and discover them.

The empiricists: on the other hand, contend that mere facts are not enough to satisfy our curiosity in relation to such important questions. They, therefore, insist on subjecting these facts to observation and evaluation with a view to proving and explaining their 'where and wherefores' On their part.

The positivists: are not as interested in facts as they are in claims about them. In other words, they focus on the validity and appropriateness of the means through which conclusions are drawn about phenomena and what they stand for.

As for the postmodernists: facts can be fluid, elusive and therefore misleading or at best unreliable. For this reason, they advocate nothing else but basing all answers on observational claims.

3. Philosophy of religion

Philosophy of religion refers to the study of the meaning and justification of fundamental religious claims, particularly about the nature and existence of God (or gods, or the divine). Rather than studying the different tenets of religions and their characteristics, the philosophy of religion mainly bases its inquiry into the nature of God and religious belief, narrowing its primary inquiry to two basic questions:

1. What is God?
2. Are there any good reasons to think that God does or does not exist?

The answer to the question "What is God?" does not, and should not, just stop at the description of the word as a dictionary would. Rather, it explains the essence of what it means to be God.

However, in defining God, it is important to know the sense in which the concept is used. This is particularly necessary since there are widely different senses of the word 'God.' It is important, therefore, to be clear on the different conceptions of the term. In this regard, four different views are generally distinguished as below:

Theism - the belief that God exists.

Weak atheism - the lack of belief in any deity.

Strong atheism - the belief that no deity exists.

Agnosticism - the belief that the existence or non-existence of God is not known or cannot be known.

It goes without saying that only the first conception (theism) allows any reasonable definition, since it would not make any sense to define an entity in whose existence one does not believe.

Nevertheless, even among those who believe in the existence of a divine entity, perceptions differ. For instance, whereas some believe that only one God exists, others believe in the existence of several gods and goddesses.

Monotheism

Those who believe in only one God are known as monotheist (the practice is called monotheism), chief among whom are the three Abrahamic religions - **Judaism, Christianity and Islam** (in their order of appearance).

In Christian thought, God is traditionally described as a being that possesses at least three necessary properties: omniscience (all knowing), omnipotence (all-powerful), and Omni benevolence (supremely good). This means that God knows everything, can do anything, and is

perfectly good. In Islamic tradition, on the other hand, God is perceived of as having 99 attributes or names - All Beneficent, The Most Merciful, The Sovereign, The Most Holy, The Guarantor, the Preserver, The Almighty, the Self Sufficient, The Creator, The Ever Forgiving, The Ever Providing, The All Knowing, the Omniscient, The All Hearing, All Seeing, The Judge, The Majestic, The Giver of Life, The Ever Living, The First, The Last, The Owner of All Sovereignty, among others.

Polytheism

On the other hand are the polytheists, who believe in several deities (e.g. **Hinduism**, **Zoroastrianism** and some **traditional African religions**). Even among these, perceptions further differ. On the one hand are those who believe in several deities, out of which only one is worthy of worship because it is stronger or more powerful than the others. However, some others believe that each of the several deities has his/her separate responsibilities, as can be exemplified with Yoruba cultural beliefs, in which, apart from the supreme god Oludumare, others are attributed such responsibilities as rainmaking/thunderstorm(Shango), iron forging (Ogun), healing and prophecy (Ifa) and trickery (Eshu) among others. Further examples can be seen in Greek and Roman mythologies where, apart from Jupiter/Jupiter, the ruler of the gods, others like Ares/Mars (god of war), Aphrodite/Venus (goddess of beauty) are also recognised. The table below lists some of the main gods and goddesses and the roles they played in both Greek and Roman mythology.

Greek

Name

Roman

Name Role in Mythology

Aphrodite	Venus	Goddess of beauty and sexual desire	(Roman mythology: Goddess of gardens and fields)					
Apollo	Apollo	God of prophecy, medicine, and archery	(late Greek/Roman mythology: God of the sun)					
Ares	Mars	God of War	Artemis	Diana	Goddess of the hunt	(late Greek/Roman mythology: Goddess of moon)		
Asclepius	Aesculapius	God of medicine	Athena	Minerva	Goddess of arts and crafts, and war; Helper of heroes	(late Greek/Roman mythology: Goddess of wisdom)		
Cronus	Saturn	God of the sky; Ruler of the Titans	(Roman mythology: God of agriculture)					
Demeter	Ceres	Goddess of grain	Dionysus	Bacchus	God of wine and vegetation			
Eros	Cupid	God of love	Gaea	Terra	Mother Earth	Hephaestus	Vulcan	God of fire; Blacksmith of the gods
Hera	Juno	Goddess of marriage and childbirth; Protector of married women; Queen of						

the gods Hermes Mercury Messenger of the gods; Protector of travellers, thieves, and merchants Hestia Vesta Guardian of the home Hypnos Somnus God of sleep Hades Pluto God of the underworld; Lord of the dead Poseidon Neptune God of the sea and earthquakes Rhea Ops Wife of Cronus/Saturn; Mother Goddess Uranus Uranus God of the sky; Father of the Titans Zeus Jupiter Ruler of the gods.

It is also important to note that there exist, among monotheists and polytheists, a variety of possible perceptions of God. There are, for instance, the deists (or deism), who are the adherents of the view of God as ‘a blind watchmaker’ Who only created the world (‘wound up’) and has left everything to take its own course without any interference from Him. On the contrary, theism believes that God continues to fully intervene and participate in world affairs, both natural and manmade.

What, then, is God?

Philosophically, God is the deity believed to be the supreme reality. From varying perspectives, He is seen as the Creator and the Sustainers of the universe.

Theologians and philosophers see God as having some attributes which include omniscience, omnipotence, omnipresence, perfect goodness, divine simplicity, and eternal and necessary existence.

God is described as ‘incorporeal, a personal being, the source of all moral obligation, and the greatest conceivable existent’.

4. Philosophy of Mind

Philosophy of mind is defined as the study of the nature of the mind, mental events, mental functions, mental properties, and consciousness, and of the nature of their relationship with the physical body. This is known as the mind–body problem, which is the primary concern of philosophers of mind. It is generally agreed that there exist some form of relationship between what our mind stores and what we carry out as physical actions or reactions. This is dependent on stimuli which trigger changes in us by arriving at our sensory organs from outside. This causes some sort of sensation that makes us act in a certain way. For instance, the aroma of a well prepared plate of food could result in a stimulus which will in turn trigger a desire for the

food, whereupon we make some effort to seek and eat. But the hurdle here lies in this highly controversial question: how do our desires make our neurons to give our muscles the right command to act in the right way? This, among others, is one of the mysteries that philosophers of mind attempt to unearth. As a result, several schools of thought have emerged that attempt to answer the question. Dualism and monism are two major perspectives that are taken in an attempt to resolve the mind–body problem. While dualism maintains that the mind and the body exist separately, monism, on the other hand, asserts that the two are one and the same substance. The great Greek philosophers, Plato and Aristotle insisted that "intelligence" (found in the mind or soul) could neither be identified nor explained in terms of man's physical appearance. A further view in support of a separate existence of the mind and body is that of René Descartes (1641) who holds that the mind is a non-physical substance. Descartes was able to clearly explain that the mind possesses consciousness and self-awareness and therefore different from the brain which, on the other hand, houses intelligence. This is the view that exists up to today. Other perspectives from which the mind-body problems are addressed include behaviourism, functionalism and identity theory.

5. Philosophy of Perception

The philosophy of perception concerns how mental processes and symbols depend on the world internal and external to the perceiver. Philosophers often divide perception into two broad categories, namely internal and external perception.

Internal perception, also referred to as proprioception informs us of what happens within us or in our bodies. For instance, we can feel where our head is, whether we are hungry, tired, sitting, lying down or standing.

On the other hand, external or Sensory perception (also known as exteroception) enables us to feel the world outside our bodies. We are able to do this by means of our five sense organs – i.e. eyes (sight), ears (hearing), skin (touch), nose (smell), and tongue (taste).

In philosophy of perception, the major concern is with exteroception, so that when philosophers mention the word perception, they mostly have exteroception in mind.

In-text questions and answers (ITQs and ITAs)

ITQ: What is knowledge?

ITA: Knowledge is what we claim to know. It is a familiarity gained by experience or organised body of information.

Conclusion

The above session dealt with the branches of philosophy and their characteristics. The branches of philosophy is concerned with the aspect and procedures in determining human knowledge, reasoning, sensing, morality in human action as well as the nature of the world in relation to reality. Similarly, the branches also look at the rightness or wrongness in human mind as well as the goodness or badness of his or her behaviour in the physical world.

Summary of study session 2

In the study session 2 you have learnt that:

1. Epistemology as one of the branch of philosophy study knowledge and what then is knowledge, how do we acquire knowledge and what do people know.
2. Aesthetics is concerned with how people know things via senses.
3. Ethics study the morality in human action in the society. Then what is the proper cause for the action in human mind.
4. Logic is the study of argument which distinguishes well (correct) from bad (incorrect) reasoning.
5. Metaphysics study the ultimate reality in the nature or physical world. It attempt to look at the visible and the invisible in the existence of reality.

Self – Assessment Questions (SAQs) for Study Session 2

This session requires the students to examine their self based on what they have rated and understood under the study session 2.

SAQ 2.1 (test learning outcomes 2.1

- What do you understand by the term knowledge?
 - i. Identify two types of truth
 - ii. Discuss the nature of human knowledge
 - iii. Examine the domain of knowledge
 - iv. Explain the conditions for knowing

- v. Discuss the three types of knowledge known to you
- vi. What are the psychological explanation on knowledge acquisition
- vii. What then is skepticism?

SAQ 2.2 (test learning outcomes 2.2)

- What is aesthetic?
 - i. List and discuss the main judgement in aesthetics.

SAQ 2.3 (test learning outcomes 2.3)

- What do you understand by the term ethics?
 - i. Explain the types of ethics known to you.

SAQ 2.4 (test learning outcomes 2.4)

- What then is logic?
 - i. Explain the forms and nature of logic
 - ii. Discuss the reasoning in logic.
 - iii. Examine the philosophical logic.

SAQ 2.5 (test learning outcomes 2.5)

- What do you know by the term metaphysics?
 - i. List and explain the branches of metaphysics.

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Study Session 3 Philosophy and the Essence of Human Existence

Introduction

Up to this stage, we have concentrated on discussing the various forms of philosophy, and how and what enquiries are made in these fields. By way of conclusion, it is pertinent to dwell on how the field of philosophy attaches and makes meaning to human life and existence. This will take us to yet another field of philosophy, known as:

- 1) Existentialism
- 2) Idealism and
- 3) Materialism.

Learning Outcomes for Study Session 3

When you have studied this session, you should be able to:

3.0 The concept of Philosophy and the essence of human existence

- 3.1 Explain the meaning of existentialism
- 3.2 Explain the concept of idealism
- 3.3 Explain the meaning of the term materialism

3.1 Existentialism:

Kierkegaard, Jaspers, Heidegger and Sartre these writers have widely differing outlooks, although they share certain general themes which have come to form the philosophical attitude known as existentialism. Since existentialism is a tendency or attitude, rather than a philosophical school, few doctrines are common to all of its primary exponents. However, as indicated by the word itself, its one common characteristic is concern for human existence,

particularly man's freedom. A necessary feature of human existence is that men are active and creative whereas things are not. Things are merely what they are, but men have the power to choose and become what they are not. Existentialism, in general, represents a rebellion against established ideas and institutions that inhibit man's personal freedom and choice.

The 19th century Danish thinker Soren Kierkegaard was the founder of modern existentialism. Although others previously shared his protest against dominant rationalistic thought of the 17th and 18th centuries, it was Kierkegaard who formed the concepts and terms that influenced subsequent existentialist writers. Kierkegaard's works ranged from "fictional writings to philosophical studies to religious rhapsodies to bitter satirical diatribes." (Popkin, R. and Stroll, A. 1993. p. 303) he used various pseudonyms such as Johannes Climacus, Johannes de Silentio and Anti-Climacus for his series of strange works. Making only a slight impression during his lifetime, Kierkegaard was hardly known outside of his home land in Copenhagen. However, upon the translation of his works in German, French, and English, Kierkegaard's ideas became influential and widespread nearly a century after his death.

Kierkegaard's writing reflects his philosophical argument for his view of human existence. He established a distinction between existence and "real existence." Along with many of his basic concepts, this resulted from his view of Christian tradition. He related this distinction to the difference between admiring Christianity from a distance, talking and acting like a Christian, to really being or existing as a Christian. Kierkegaard felt that to exist is to struggle and act in the world of men. His basic idea is that personal existence cannot be comprehended in a system, as Hegel describes. Hegel attempted to demonstrate that the world is a rational system. However, his concept is based upon pure assumption, as no one is aware of what the world in its completed form will be. "If the world were a system it would take God Himself, not Hegel, and still less a reader of Hegel's books, to know it." (Benton, W. 1969. p.964) in opposition to Hegel's thoughts, Kierkegaard follows that no one can know his place or his purpose, but that each person must choose, irrationally, the direction of his own existence.

Kierkegaard's reputation as a religious thinker results from his two major works: the brief *Philosophical Fragments* and the lengthy *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*. Like his other works, they were both published under a pseudonym "Johannes Climacus" although Kierkegaard's name did appear as the "editor". Kierkegaard declares "Truth is subjectivity" and that "All essential knowledge relates to existence or only such knowledge as has an essential relationship

to existence is essential knowledge." (Wiener, P. 1973. p. 189) in other words, subjective illusions are true, but that truth is only meaningful as it appears to a personal subject.

Kierkegaard's meaning of the word "existence" results from his use of it in his *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*. He establishes the fundamental idea that each person exists and has a limited amount of time to choose and to make the decisions which matter to so much to him. In this short time, each person has urgent decisions to make and has the freedom to make them. However, this freedom may be the source of a person's anguish, as there can be found no certainty upon which these choices are made.

His concepts on truth and subjectivity and personal freedom are the basis for his religious outlook. A very religious man, Kierkegaard found himself having to make choices before God with no possibility of knowing whether the outcome of those choices would be his salvation or damnation. Since there was no way of proving God's existence as an object, one can only accept a belief, blindly and irrationally, that there is some agent called "God" who will effect one's enlightenment. Thus, religion can only be determined for each individual by a "leap" of faith. In his diary, Kierkegaard wrote, "When a concrete individual lacks faith, then neither does God exist, nor is God present, albeit God, eternally understood, is eternal." (Wiener, P. 1973. p. 192) therefore, each person has the freedom to choose a faith, and the freedom to choose the determining factors for this choice. To further understand the religious thought of Kierkegaard, it is necessary to refer to the concept of truth and subjectivity. In the following passage, he refers to distinct ways in which the issue of truth may arise. "When the question of truth is raised in an objective manner, reflection is directed objectively to the truth, as an object to which the knower is related ... If only the object to which he is related is the truth, the subject is accounted to be in the truth.

When the question of truth is raised subjectively, Reflection is directed subjectively to the nature of the individual's relationship; if only the mode of this relationship is in the truth, the individual is in the truth even if he should happen to be thus related to what is not true" (Gardiner, P. 1988. p.97). In the above passage, Kierkegaard stresses the need to differentiate between the two modes for assessing a belief that is objective and the subjective. The objective deals with "what". The subjective is concerned with "how". As far as religious belief is concerned, Kierkegaard emphasizes the subjective mode as the fundamental one. In *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, Kierkegaard describes the following situation: he compares two men. The first man, though having a "true conception" of God, prays to him in a "false spirit". The other man prays to an idol

with "the entire passion of the infinite." According to Kierkegaard, the "most truth" is to be found in the side of the second man. He explains that "the one prays in truth to God, though he worships an Idol; the other prays falsely to the true God, and hence worships in fact an Idol." (Gardiner, P. 1988. p. 98) Kierkegaard wrote during a time when organized Christianity was very strong. He criticized the formal, worldly Christian conformity, what he called "Christendom", in favour of a revival of the old religion. The moral and social upheavals of the time made Kierkegaard's descriptions of the anguish of choice in face of uncertainty seem unpleasantly opposite, but revealed Christianity called for a certain "leap" that many considered irrelevant to their situation." (Benton, W. 1969. p. 964) these circumstances allowed Kierkegaard's attitudes to be developed in a variety of ways.

In the 20th century, with Kierkegaard's works widespread, other writers further developed the themes he formed in his philosophy of existence. Probably the most substantial and through developments of existence in the 20th century are contained in the writings of Karl Jaspers. Like Kierkegaard, Jaspers rejects Hegel's rational metaphysical system. Jaspers, unlike other existentialist, had a scientific interest as his career moved from medicine and psychiatry to psychology. Although skeptical of religious faiths, Jaspers spoke not of God but insisted upon the importance of what he called "transcendence." By this, he appears to mean that some unknown and unknowable source of being is responsible for the incompleteness of our knowledge. According to Jaspers, "there exists no written or established disclosure to act as a basis for what we do. He further states that it is not even possible to prove that we are free; only what exists objectively can we refer to as proven, and freedom is not a characteristic of an object at all." (Benton, W. 1988. p. 965) therefore, Jaspers' development on existentialism maintained the conviction drawn from Kierkegaard that all fundamental thinking depends upon self comprehension. The German philosopher Martin Heidegger further influenced existential thought in his principal work *Sein und Zeit*, translated in English *Time and Being*. From the basis of Husserl's phenomenology and the existentialism of Kierkegaard, Heidegger built his ontology of human existence, especially with the experiences of anxiety, temporality, and awareness of death. Heidegger takes on a view of man as that of V, but with an atheistic rather than Christian outlook. In *Sein und Zeit*, the central concern is the analysis of "Dasein". Practically untranslatable in English "Dasein" refers to the way in which human beings, separate from things, exist. According to Heidegger, "Dasein" has three important characteristics: "facility", "existentiality", and "forfeiture". Heidegger further explains that "Dasein" reveals

itself through dread and death. According to Heidegger, it is necessary for each individual to "seek his own relation with Being via the contemplation of his own death." (Weiner, P. 1973. p. 193) Heidegger says that man is thrown without choice into a world; hence it sets limitations for him. Contrasting with Kierkegaard's "leap into faith", Heidegger answers the problem of existence through "resolute decision". In *Sein und Zeit*, Heidegger says that "the essence of man lies in his existence" (Wild, J. 1955. p. 65) it was Heidegger's negative analysis of human experience that made his ideas and work influential despite his expressed intention. The next generation of thinkers brought existentialism into the mainstream of modern philosophy. The most famous of them is the writer Jean-Paul Sartre. Sartre sought to establish an absolute freedom. Humans are separate from their situation. Unlike things, and can imagine alternatives. Sartre further argues the idea that such things as physical characteristics are limitations to a person's situation. For example, a physical disability is not really a limitation, but instead a particular way of existing in the world.

Sartre further places emphasis on man's values. According to Sartre, because values are chosen and not given, it is impossible to choose in accordance with them. He seeks to represent every choice as that of a choice of values. Thus, he finds no rational argument in favour of one choice over another. Although his view is often regarded as irrationalism, Sartre points out that even the elements of what is rational are not given by the nature of the universe, but must also be chosen. Like Heidegger, Sartre provides an overwhelming negative analysis of human existence. Sartre has found it easier to show what is wrong with human life than to describe the right way to live. Sartre observed that, man is condemned to be free" that his life is "an ineffective passion" and that "hell is other people". (Benton, W. 1969. p. 965) In studying the philosophers referred to as the existentialists, there are no boundaries surrounding this group of thinkers. However, it is clear that each existentialist thinker displays variations of the general themes established by Kierkegaard. Because of this, it is difficult to categorize existentialism as a philosophy of its own, as it entails so many different viewpoints. Although it may be difficult to define it as a specific philosophical view, existential thought has provided a great insight to human existence and personal freedom. "We are "trapped in existence," living in a completely meaningless world. No principles that we use for ordering or comprehending events have any basis. But we cannot escape having to deal with "existence," having to make sense out of it. All that we can tell is that this world we are confronted with is utterly arbitrary." (Popkin, R.H. and Stroll, A. 1993. p. 312)

According to Hymes and Dell (1962) in their philosophical point of view, existence is a movement that is generally considered a study that pursues meaning in existence and seeks value for the existing individual. It goes further to add that existentialism differs from other fields of philosophy in that it does not regard the individual as a concept, and 'values individual subjectivity over objectivity'. This means that issues concerning the meaning of life and subjective experience take precedence over all other scientific and philosophical pursuits. A position commonly taken by existentialist philosophers is that existence precedes essence. This means that existentialism holds that 'man exists and in that existence man defines himself and the world in his own subjectivity, and wanders between choice, freedom, and existential angst'. Existentialism is strongly opposed to the rationalist's view that humans are rational beings whose actions are guided by rational principles. It is also at variance with positivism as it rejects the view that human beings can be defined in terms of their behaviour as it looks to or is studied by others'. Instead, existentialism lays emphasis on action, freedom, and decision as fundamental issues in human existence. To existentialist philosophers; therefore, it is man's actions and interpretation of events and issues that provide meaning to his life.

3.2 Idealism:

This theory comes from "idea". It states that idea, spirit, or non-matter provides the origin and the ultimate constituent of the universe. This means that physical, external world that we see is a product of and depends on idea since ideas are conceived in the mind. In other words, the idealists believe that the physical world exists but its reality and existence depend on the mind. This confirms the common adage by the idealists that "To be is to be perceived".

3.3 Materialism:

The materialists hold the position that matter is the basic substance of everything, that is, the ultimate constituent of the universe is matter. It must be noted that the materialists do deny the existence of spirits and gods; what they are saying is that the existence of entities like gods, spirits, angels, mind, and so on must be explainable in material terms. In other words, while the idealists are saying that idea is primary, the materialists are saying matter is primary.

In-text questions and answers (ITQs and ITAs)

ITQ: What do you know by existentialism?

ITA: Existentialism can be defined as some ones actions and his interpretation of events and issues that provide meaning to his life.

Conclusion

The above session explained the content of existentialism, idealism and materialism which revealed that man exists and is that existence man defines himself and the world in his own subjectivity, and wonders between choice, freedom, and existential angst. So also, ideas and the material things are the basic aspect of life.

Summary of study session 3

In the study session 2 you have learnt that:

1. Existentialism as one of the main content of philosophy it has to do with freedoms of choice between subject and service to humanity.
2. Idealism idealists believe that the physical world exists but its reality and existence depend on the mind.
3. The materialists hold the position that matter is the basic substance of everything, that is, the ultimate constituent of the universe is matter.

Self – Assessment Questions (SAQs) for Study Session 3

This session requires the students to examine their self based on what they have rated and understood under the study session 3.

SAQ 3.1 (test learning outcomes 3.1)

- What do you understand by the term existentialism?

SAQ 3.2 (test learning outcomes 3.2)

- Explain the concept of idealism

SAQ 3.3 (test learning outcomes 3.3)

- Discuss what you understand by the term materialism

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