

GNS 112

**PHILOSOPHY, LOGIC AND HUMAN
EXISTENCE**

PART TWO : PHILOSOPHY

COURSE OUTLINE

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1. THE CONCEPT PHILOSOPHY

1.1 THE CONCEPT OF PHILOSOPHY

The attempt to explain the concept of Philosophy has itself posed a philosophical problem. People look at Philosophy as an esoteric, mystical, metaphysical and, transcendental study, which has little or nothing to do with the physical or human nature and character. It is therefore a matter of first important to clear the mystifications, misconceptions and suspicions, which characterize beginners' attitude to the concept of philosophy.

Philosophy is the science which investigates the ultimate causes of all things in so far as they are knowable by reason. For St. Thomas Aquinas, philosophy is strictly confined to the natural order of reason.

Philosophy, being an intellectual exercise always has it as its goal to get to the heart of the truth by seeking to understanding reality and making it more understandable to any enquiring mind. Unlike other disciplines based on laws and theories which can be either true or false, philosophical positions are not reckoned in terms of truth or falsity, but in terms of validity and cogency.

Philosophy is a worthwhile exercise for, besides seeking to clarify issues, it also tries to get something positive out of the uncertainty and confusion that accompany human existence.

1.2. WHAT IS PHILOSOPHY?

Our position on the definition of the concept of philosophy is predicated on our understanding of how philosophical problems arise. The fact here is that the curious mind of a philosopher does not only scrutinise nature and its enigmas. It also ponders on the problems that arise in the social, political, ethical, cultural, religious, and intellectual development of man society.

Philosophy is a term that is not amendable to any uniform definition. Different definitions are offer-able for it. The term philosophy is that pattern of thinking which transcended the anti-rationalistic or superstitious thinking which preceded it. It is the new attitude or frame of mind with which old challenges are met, old questions are re-examined in a critical light and

more satisfactory answers offered in their piece. In other words, it is the new attitude of rationality, criticality, naturalism, systematicity and rigor which characterized or attended old curiosities, injuries, challenges and explanations.

Philosophy is the science which investigates the highest causes of all things in so far as they are knowable by reason. The word philosophy comes from the Greek words “philos” (philia) which means love and “Sophia” which means wisdom. The two concepts of “Philos” and “Sophia” would combine to form ‘PHILOSOPHIA’ or PHILOSOPHY” which one can liberally translate as “Love of wisdom”.

The word Philosophy was first used by the Greek thinker and Mathematician Pythagoras (600 BC) who likened philosophers to spectators at the ancient games. In the order of importance, the philosophers whom he compared with the spectator whose sole interest is the game itself are superior to the competitors (contestants) who are out to win prizes, and commerciants (vendors) who are out to make money from sales. Pythagoras is said to have described himself as a “Lover of wisdom” in the sense that he regarded every aspect of reality with thought attention for the purpose of achieving a clearer and more comprehensive understanding. When Leon, the Tyrant of Philus asked him who he was, Pythagoras replied ‘A philosopher’ and went on to compare life to the great games, where some went to compete for prize and others went with wares and cards to sell. In his assessment, the best among them all were those who went as spectators, since their interest in the game is simply to relax, analyze and enjoy the game. He compared the situation with the situation in real life where some grow up with servile natures, and others are greedy for fame and gain. Unlike both classes of people, the philosopher seeks for ‘Truth’.

The Philosopher’s superiority over those other classes of people lies in his or her constant disposition to spurn fame and profit and go for the truth. ‘Seeking the Truth is Wisdom’. Philosophy includes both the seeking of wisdom and the wisdom that is sought.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Attempt an etymological definition of Philosophy.
2. Highlight on the distinguishing factor of the Philosopher.
3. Would you really prefer to be grouped among the spectators rather than the contestants or the vendors? Give your reasons.

2. THE NATURE OF PHILOSOPHY

Paul Tillich pointed out in his work *The concept and Nature of Philosophy* in “Twentieth Century Theology in the Making” edited by R.A. Wilson, that the nature of philosophy can only be identified by philosophy itself for there is nothing beyond philosophy to which a further appeal can be made. That means that the understanding of a philosophical statement can never be derived from outside of philosophy. Philosophy is the most radical form of enquiry which never begins anywhere except at the beginning.

The nature of philosophy is about the tools that we employ in the discourse of philosophy. Philosophy is essentially a rational and critical activity and it is these features of rationality and criticality of an unending sort that distinguish philosophy from any other discipline. We should note that the rational and critical nature of philosophy is quite different from the scientific method of observation and experimentation.

We seem to be aware that only science uses observation and experiment for its method and nature but philosophy probes into the scientific assumptions rationally and critically. Thus by nature, philosophy is abstract, general, rigorous, self – critical and rational.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Make a defence of the nature of Philosophy
2. How would you differentiate the ‘Rational’ and ‘Critical’ nature of Philosophy?

3. SCOPE/BRANCHES OF PHILOSOPHY

Philosophy as the foundation of knowledge has the status of a mother to all other disciplines. This perhaps explains why other disciplines both in humanities and the sciences all remain in one way or the other dependent on philosophy. Philosophy is thus the queen of the sciences. Given this privileged status which philosophy enjoys, it is therefore naturally unlimited in scope. Since every form of reasoning needs philosophy for its justification, philosophy naturally enquires into every ambience of learning.

The growing urgency of need for a comprehensive philosophy to guide mankind through its current crisis includes the urgency for recognizing and understanding the interdependent contributions each philosophical sciences or specialization has to make. This gleans towards the Traditional Branches of Philosophy.

3.1 TRADITIONAL BRANCHES OF PHILOSOPHY

The traditional branches of philosophy are those which have an original and enduing claim to philosophy. They are.

- (1) Ethics
- (2) Epistemology
- (3) Metaphysics
- (4) Logic
- (5) Social and Political Philosophy
- (6) Aesthetics

- (1) **ETHICS:** Ethics is derived from the Greek word “*ethos*” meaning custom, conduct or habit. It is the philosophy of the morality of human conduct. Ethics examines man’s moral convictions and standards and tries to question the basis of morality. Some philosophers who have made important achievements in Ethics include Socrates, Immanuel Kant, J.S. Mill, J. Bentham etc

Ethics is studied under three broad areas namely;

- (i) Normative ethics
- (ii) Descriptive ethics
- (iii) Meta ethics

- (i) **Normative ethics:** Normative ethics concerns itself with norms, principles and standards of human conduct. It studies moral norms, moral judgment and values and is usually regarded as the most prominent division of ethics.
- (ii) **Descriptive Ethics:** This examines the nature of morality according to various people or societies. It studies the universality and limitations of ethical views.
- (iii) **Meta-Ethics:** Meta-ethics attempts to clarify the meaning and implications of such ethical terms as good, bad, obligation, duty etc in order to enhance our understanding of the appropriate use of such terms in ethical judgments and proposition.

(2) **EPISTEMOLOGY:** The term epistemology is derived from the Greek word “*episteme*”, meaning knowledge. Thus epistemology is the branch of philosophy which deals with theories of knowledge. It also asks such questions as “What is Knowledge? What can we know? How do we know we have gained knowledge? What are the standards by which we can justify the truth or falsity of our knowledge”? It examines the basis of our knowledge claims and attempts to provide a justification for what we claim to know. Such philosophers that contributed towards the area of Epistemology are Rene Descartes, David Hume, George Berkeley, John Locke, Immanuel Kant etc.

(3) **METAPHYSICS:** The word metaphysics comes from the Greek word “*meta ta physika*” meaning after the physics. The word was originally employed by Andronicus of Rhodes at about 70 BC. Andronicus was an ancient collector and commentator on Aristotle’s works and he employed the term to designate the works of Aristotle that came after the discussions on the physical sciences. Although he applied the word to mean “that which followed after physics”. The term however, given the coincidence that Aristotle’s works which came under this name “treated realities which were beyond the physical properties of things. Hence metaphysics has come to mean that which is hyperphysical, super physical, immaterial and therefore beyond the physical.

Metaphysical issues deliberate on the problems of one and many, the problem of substance, the problem of appearance and reality, the problem of essence and existence etc.

(4) **LOGIC:** Logic is variously defined as the science of good reasoning, the science of the laws of thought, the art of argumentation. I.M. Copi defines it as the study of the method and principles by which we differentiate good reasoning from bad reasoning and correct reasoning from incorrect reasoning. Logic aims at providing valid reasoning ensuring that we avoid error in reasoning or fallacies. Logic studies human judgments, concepts, proofs, validity, and invalidity and analyses the logical structure of human reasoning.

(5) **SOCIAL & POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY:** This branch of philosophy examines the question of the state. It reflects on the nature and origins of the state and attempts a critical consideration of the rightful place of man in the state. This branch of philosophy ponders on such questions as how the state caters for the individual, should the state be subordinate to the will of the individual or the individual subordinate to the state?, What is the ideal state?, What makes law justified? What is civil obedience? Etc.

This branch of philosophy examines the basis of such social institutions as law, constitution, government, democracy etc. Some social and political philosophers include G.W.F Hegel, John Locke, Thomas Hobbes, Mao, Kwame Nkrumah etc.

(6) **AESTHETICS:** This branch of philosophy, also known as philosophy of art deals with the concepts of arts and beauty. It attempts to reflect on such issues as the creation and experience of art. Aestheticians try to achieve a deep understanding of the basis of the work of art. They also examine such metaphysical issues as the universal or particular nature of the work of art. It examines the grounds or basis for appreciating the work of art.

3.2 MINOR BRANCHES OF PHILOSOPHY

Apart from the major branches of philosophy discussed above, there are other latest dimensions of philosophy. They include the following:-

- (i) Philosophy of Religion
- (ii) Philosophy of Education
- (iii) Philosophy of Mind
- (iv) Philosophy of Science
- (v) Philosophy of Social Science
- (vi) Philosophy of Law
- (vii) Philosophy of literature
- (viii) Philosophy History
- (ix) Medical Ethics
- (x) Philosophy of Language
- (xi) Philosophy of Art
- (xii) Philosophy of Mathematics

To the above, philosophy means a critical analysis and evaluation of the fundamentals of any particular branch of knowledge. Philosophy analyzes and evaluates the methods, divisions, scope, nature and criteria of all other areas of enquiry. It lifts it from opinion level to knowledge level.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. It is believed that every form of reasoning needs Philosophy for its justification.
Explain critically
2. Write short but critical notes on the following: Ethics, Epistemology, Metaphysics, Social and Political Philosophy.

4. BACKGROUND TO THE HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY

According to Samuel Enoch Stumpf in his book *Philosophy: History and Problems*, “the birth place of Philosophy was the seaport town of Miletus, located across the Aegean Sea from Athens on the Western Shores of Ionia in Miletus”. Bertrand Russell in his own *History of Western Philosophy* writes that “in every history of Philosophy. For students, the first thing mentioned is that Philosophy began with Thales who said that everything began with water”. In recent times however, there have been attempt by some African historians of Philosophy to locate the origin of Greek philosophy and indeed Western philosophy in Africa. Innocent Onyewuenyi, for instance, argues that “philosophy like other disciplines was not exempt in having its origin in Africa” and G. M. James in his book, *Stolen legacies* posits that the “Greeks were not the authors of Greek philosophy but the people of North Africa commonly called the Egyptians”.

We were told that Egypt and its luxurious commerce existed as a highly advanced civilization at least two or three thousand years before Crete which was the first Greek civilization to come into being. We are told that Greece was a colony of Egypt for many centuries. We are told further that Egypt had a kind of University known as the mystery system where every kind of discipline was taught by Egyptian Temple Priests and many people therefore flocked from Greece, Asia and even other parts of Africa to study at the feet of these learned priests of the Egyptian mystery system. We are told that Thales, Pythagoras, Heraclitus, Aristotle, Plato and other notable philosophers visited Egypt and underwent apprenticeship under the priests of the Egyptian mystery system. Therefore there is a stem of African origin of Greek Philosophy.

One approach to studying philosophy is by examining its history and that is our main concern in this section. This study of the history of Philosophy is usually divided into four epochs namely; The Ancient period, The Medieval Period, The Modern Period and The Contemporary Period. The Ancient period spans from the 6th century BC to the 4th century AD and it marks the rule of the Greek kingdom. The Medieval Period marks the conquest of Greece by the Romans which spans from the 11th century up to the later part of the 14th century. While the Modern Period which started with the Renaissance conquest of the 15th and 16th centuries spelt out the superiority of the British over the Roman-Italians. The Modern Period which was a period of reformation and scientific movement was celebrated more in the 17th C which created the two greatest traditions-Rationalism and Empiricism.

Then the Contemporary Period pronounced the American philosophies of the late 18th, 19th and 20th centuries.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What was the part played by the Egyptian Temple Priests and the Egyptian Mystery System towards the history of philosophy?
2. Carefully and critically highlight on the evidences of African origin of Greek philosophy.
3. List the four major epochs of the history of Western philosophy.

5. THE ANCIENT PERIOD OF PHILOSOPHY

The ancient period of philosophy may be divided into three, namely; the Pre-Socratic Period, The Socratic Period which is also called The Golden Age Philosophy and The Post-Socratic Period. Philosophy it is said, citing the authority of Aristotle, began with wonder. This wonder was characteristic of the Ionians of the 6th century B.C. Reflective analysis in the form regarded as Philosophy began, in a technical sense, in the Western world about 600 B.C. The Greeks were the first people who inaugurated the art of learning to think abstractly and with exactness. Let us note that we are not implying that other people do not think abstractly with exactness, rather our claim is that the Greeks made this a preoccupation. The Greeks were also successful in using generalisations which aimed at universal validity.

Going by its etymology, Philosophy is derived from two Greek words *Philo* (love) and *Sophia* (wisdom). Let us note that the main concern of the early Greek Philosophers was in the areas of cosmology, that is, the nature of the universe, ontology, that is, the nature of being or reality, epistemology, that is, the nature of knowledge and ethics, that is, human moral conducts. These different spheres were however not neatly separated as we have them today. The Greeks tried to explain the universe, especially from naturalistic point of view. According to Baker,

All their explanations proceeded on the assumption of an inherent and permanent order, regularity, and pattern subsisting beneath the changes and chances of appearances. Permanence and change were to become the two great themes of Greek Philosophy and the Ionians were the first to realize the significance of the themes.

The Greeks like many other races emerged from Barbarism into the iron-age. For instance, the Ionians had conquered the bronze age Mycenaen cultures which provided the eclectic nature from which they enjoyed the best of these cultures. Philosophy, it should be noted grew in two principal areas namely the Ionian cities of Asia minor especially Miletus and the Southern cities of Italy and Sicily. The Greeks were involved in sea related commerce and this enabled them to have a deep sense of space and geometry. As merchants on the sea, they were exposed to different cultures.

Although the Greeks had their Gods like Homer, Hesoid, Olympius, Zeus and so forth, they did not deify these Gods unlike the Babylonians and the Egyptians. For instance, the

Babylonians and the Egyptians had a class of priests who also doubled up as custodians of knowledge concerning human existence whereas the Greeks were free-thinkers who did not deify any form of reality.

A look at some of the Greek literatures shows that Greek Gods had independent existence and in some cases the Gods were portrayed as drunks or as beings who could engage in violent passions. On the other hand, the Egyptian Gods dictated social and economic life of the people. The Greeks also pursued such disciplines like astronomy and arithmetic for their own intrinsic sake.

We may then ask at this juncture, why the need to study ancient philosophy? As Edim puts it: “Why must a student study ancient philosophy such as the refuted philosophy of Thales and many others?”⁴ We may provide some answers for this question:

1. Studying ancient philosophy may help a philosopher avoid the errors of the past.
2. It may help us to avoid dogmatism seeing that no philosophical system is error-free.
3. It may greatly enhance our understanding of the discipline of Philosophy. The reason is that it is the study of Philosophical issues in the light of their background and outcome.
4. Ancient Philosophy can make us to be more aware of the level of discussion in the ancient time and to what extent one can meaningfully contribute to the discussion.
5. It may also reveal a lot about the relationship between Philosophy and other disciplines. For instance, it may help us to know how other disciplines such as Physics, Psychology, and Political Science emerged from Philosophy.
6. The study of ancient Philosophy may help us to see and appreciate the impact of Philosophy on the development of cultures and civilizations.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Highlight on the major differences between the Greek gods and the Egyptian gods. What impact did they play towards the development of philosophy?
2. State the three sub-divisions of the ancient period of philosophy.
3. What was the major prerogative of the ancient thinkers?

6. THE PRE-SOCRATIC PERIOD

6.1. THE MILESIAN TRIAD: THALES, ANAXIMANDER AND ANAXIMENES AND THEIR METAPHYSICAL, EPISTEMOLOGICAL AND ETHICAL CONCERNS

The Pre-Socratic period refers to the period before the emergence of Socrates, the great Athenian moral philosopher. The major characteristics of this period are the Milesian or Ionian thinkers who are Thales, Anaximander and Anaximenes. Others are Pythagoras, Heraclitus, Parmenides, Zeno, Empedocles, The Atomists, Anaxagoras and the Sophists. Highlights on their teachings are presented subsequently. Thales (624 – 546 B.C.), Anaximander (610 – 546 B.C.) and Anaximenes (585 – 528 B.C.) came from Miletus, a city on the Ionian Seaboard of Asia Minor. They inaugurated the enterprise of Philosophy through their cosmological speculation on the nature of reality, especially the constituents of the universe. Their method was naturalistic. In examining the views of these early philosophers, it is necessary to shed more light on the prevailing temperament of their epoch.

At the outset of the sixth century BC, we witness a combination of “native brilliance, broad-mindedness and insatiable intellectual curiosity of the Ionian Greeks” which with time and space produced the first European Philosophy. And the two basic problems the Ionian Philosophers attempted to solve can be posited thus:

- 1) What is the real nature of the universe like? and
- 2) How is the universe as we perceive it generated by the universe as it actually is?

According to Fuller, the positing of these questions presupposes a suspicion that the universe is not altogether what it seems to be, and a further recognition of a difference and even an opposition between appearance and reality. However, this distinction did not imply for them an opposition of illusion or sense deception to fact and truth. This is because for them, the sensible world was to them just as real and truly existent as that of which it was composed.

What marked out the Milesian triad from their counterpart was their general disinterested curiosity regarding the nature of the universe rather than “any special moral interest in showing it to be congenial with and congealed about prior human preferences as to its make-up”. We can then safely say that the Ionians, who were mainly interested in matter and its

transformations, exhibited a candid indifference to ethical and moral problems that were to dominate post-Socratic thought. To them the universe was to be philosophically understood and not religiously venerated and worshipped to the mystery encompassed in it.

The Milesian triad was thus primarily concerned on identifying and defining the primary stuff which they believed to be the material basis of all things – the *arche*, that is, the irreducible element which underlies all appearances and manifestations of sense. The *arche* they thought, as recorded by Aristotle, are:

The principles which were of the nature of matter were the only principles of all things. That of which all things that are consist, the first from which they come to be, the last into which they are resolved (the substance remaining, but changing in its modifications), this they say is the element and this the principle of things and therefore they think nothing is either generated or destroyed, since this sort of entity is always conserved.

THALES OF MILETUS (624 – 546 BC)

The knowledge of Thales' works has come to us through the writings of others, especially Aristotle, for nothing of his own writing survived. Thales is regarded as the father of Western Philosophy. Apart from this, he was a statesman of great wisdom and vision and a successful businessman. His ingenuity in business stems from his ability to establish a monopoly in olive oil, which he used to demonstrate that the philosopher can also be very successful in the acquisition of material wealth.

The first known Greek philosopher who offered a rational explanation about the nature of the universe was Thales. Philosophy, it is said, began with Thales. He like many other Greeks must have been baffled and perplexed by the phenomena of life and death, and of growth and decay. It is therefore not surprising that he, like other Greek philosophers, was in search of permanence in the face of change. The Greek cities were also in constant fighting among themselves. It is therefore not surprising that these philosophers were in search of unity in the face of diversity and conflict.

What is unity? What is that element that makes up reality? According to Thales, it is water. To him, water is the basic constituent of reality. It is the fundamental element that makes up

the universe. He must have arrived at this conclusion after observing the prominence of moisture in things that have life, especially plants and animals.

We do not know much about Thales of Miletus because his works have been lost in antiquity. The little we know of him is from the writings of Aristotle. To Thales, water is substance. He was the first philosopher to have asked the question “what is substance?” Although he used a different terminology as we find in the later writings of Aristotle, substance in a sense is the essence of a thing. Thales was therefore in search of the essences of things.

He is said to have been the first philosopher to predict an eclipse. According to him, the earth rests on water, there are also ‘waters’ above which is the source of rainfall. To him, the magnet has a soul and all things are full of gods.

ANAXIMANDER OF MILETUS (611 – 547 BC)

Anaximander was a much younger man than Thales. He is said to have been the first man to construct a map. He is also said to have been the first to suggest that men evolved from animals. Furthermore, he said that the earth is a cylinder; the sun is as large as the earth or 27 times larger. What is important however about Anaximander’s philosophy is his theory on substance, that is, the ultimate reality.

What is the ultimate nature of reality? What is the basic element that makes up reality? According to Anaximander, it can neither be earth nor air nor water nor fire nor any of the basic elements. This is because each of these elements is finite and they are opposites. Thus, if any of these were the ultimate principle of life and existence, it would swallow or encompass the rest. If water were the ultimate principle, it will swallow the other elements. But substance cannot be any of these. What then is substance? Anaximander said it is the “APEIRON”.

What is the Apeiron? It is the indeterminate; it is infinite, external, ageless and encompasses the world, for our world is only one of many worlds. Water is moist, fire is hot, earth is dry, and each is capable of committing injustice to another, each capable of expanding and extending its boundary. That which makes up reality must be neutral and be able to arbitrate. It is that from which things take their rise and to which things pass away. Thus, Anaximander writes “into that from which things take their rise, they pass away once more, as is ordained,

for they make reparation and satisfaction to one another for their injustice according to the ordering of time”.

ANAXIMENES OF MILETUS (588 – 524 BC)

Anaximenes was the last of the Milesian triad. According to him, air is the basic elements of reality. He is the first philosopher to have gone ahead to state how the basic element leads to the formation of other elements. To him, this is achieved by the process of rarefaction and condensation. Air is fundamental to life.

Air in its natural rarefied state is invisible, but as it condenses it changes into other elements. It first changes into wind, later clouds and then water. As the process of condensation continues so also does it change into yet other concrete elements like earth and stone. According to him: “Just as our souls, being air hold us together, so also breath and air encompasses the world”.

In 494 BC, Ionia was conquered by Darius of Persia. The period marked the end of the milesian civilization. It should be noted that these three milesian philosophers had distinguished themselves from the unscientific and mythical speculations of the ancient Egyptians and Babylonians. Whereas the Egyptians and Babylonians had multiplied the functions of their Gods and had deified the basic elements like earth and fire, the Greeks made their gods impersonal.

6.2 . PYTHAGORAS OF SAMOS (572 – 497 BC)

Pythagoras was born in the Island of Samos. Samos was then ruled by the tyrant Polycrates, so Pythagoras had to leave his native city. It is said that he travelled to Egypt where he must have acquired his philosophic wisdom. He later came to settle in Kroton where he founded a society of disciples. He was a mythical figure ascribed with supernatural powers. He founded a religion whose basic tenets were the transmigration of souls and the sinfulness of eating beans (because beans look like human embryo). The religious doctrine of Orphism had some influence on the Pythagoreans who also shed the influence on Plato. The doctrine sees man as a mixture of both divine and human elements.

Pythagoras came from one of the Southern cities of Italy. At his time, the great civilization was dying and there was an air of pessimism surrounding Greek Philosophy. Men became disenchanted and disinterested in practical life. They sought to secure the health of their souls. In short there was a religious revival around this period. Neither the Greek cosmology nor the Olympian mythology could satisfy the yearnings of the Greek philosophers. Perhaps this was why Pythagoreanism emerged in the history of Greek philosophy as an alternative to discredited frameworks.

The Pythagoreans according to Aristotle “devoted themselves to the study of Mathematics. They were the first to advance this study and having been brought up in it. They thought that its first principles were the principles of all things”.

Silence, the influence of mystery and the study of Mathematics were valuable to the health of the soul. According to Pythagoras, things are not only numerable, they are also numerical. Numbers are the first principle of life and existence. Reality is made of numbers and all things are numbers. The Tetractus is a sacred figure which shows that the number 10 is the sum of the numbers 1, 2, 3 and 4.

According to Pythagoras, the number 1 is a point, the number 2 is a line, the number 3 is a surface and the number 4 is a body. The juxtaposition of points produces lines, the juxtaposition of lines produces surfaces and the juxtaposition of surfaces produces bodies. Thus, bodies are the combination of points, lines and surfaces. Pythagoras is also well known for his theorem, popularly called the Pythagoras theorem. In this theorem, he stated that the sum of the squares on the adjoining sides of a right angled triangle is equal to the square on the hypotenuse. Furthermore, he maintained that the earth is spherical; it is not the centre of the universe. The earth, the sun and other planets revolve round the central fire of the universe. It should be noted that this crude theorem forms part of the basis of contemporary mathematics.

6.3. HERACLITUS OF EPHEBUS

Heraclitus lived around 500 B.C. Going by the words of F. Copleston, Heraclitus was “a melancholy man of aloof and solitary temperament”. Heraclitus believes in the conflict of

opposites but most of his works have reached us as fragments which when placed together can only be regarded as 'wise sayings'. He based his Philosophy on the following:

- 1) Change is inevitable
- 2) It is necessary for the sustenance of the one
- 3) The one is fire.

According to him, the conflict of opposites is not an injustice like Anaximander would hold, but it is necessary for the sustenance of the one. Reality thrives on the conflict of opposites. The whole universe is in a state of 'FLUX'. There is no stability anywhere. Change is the basic ingredient of life and existence. Heraclitus writes:

“There is no unity in the world, but it is a unity resulting from diversity.....furthermore you cannot step twice into the same river for fresh waters are ever flowing in upon you. You cannot even step into the same stream”.

Heraclitus is important not only because of his doctrine of change (after all other philosophers like Thales had suggested this) but he is important because he saw change as inevitable and that which maintains reality. Reality or the one ceases to be if there is no change. What is reality? According to Heraclitus, reality is fire. The whole universe is not only made of fire but the essence of fire is the essence of everything. All things are the exchange for fire and fire for everything.

Heraclitus identifies this fire of which he speaks with “the one”, i.e. the basic reality which exists in many forms and he also identifies it with God and finally with the *Logos*, the universal Reason, the universal law and the cosmic principle of intelligibility. Man's reason, according to him, is a participation of the universal reason, i.e. the logos. Hence, man should always live according to reason and in accordance with the process of the universe ruled by logos. In the philosophy of Heraclitus, God, “the one”, fire, logos, reason, the universal law, are one and the same thing.

He concludes, “The world is now, and ever shall be an everlasting fire with measures kindling and measures going out”. Perhaps, Heraclitus was driven to this conclusion after observing the inevitable phenomenon of change in fire. Fire lives by consuming and destroying and it dies by transforming itself into something else. He believes that everything has this character. To Heraclitus therefore, there should be no need to pray for the end of war and strife among men, as Homer was in the habit of doing¹. This is because if war and strife

were to end, then, it would automatically lead to the end of the universe and although there is conflict or strife in the universe, this phenomenon is not always a chaotic one.

6.4. **PARMENIDES OF ELEA**

Parmenides was from the city of Elea in Southern Italy. He was 65 years old in the year B.C 450. We know this because it was recorded that in that year he held an interview with the young Socrates. Most of his works have been lost in antiquity, only those preserved by Simplicius and a few other philosophers have reached us. To understand the philosophy of Parmenides, we must understand the following terminologies which are contained in his poem titled “On Nature”:

- 1) Being
- 2) Not being
- 3) Becoming
- 4) Way of truth as against way of opinion

BEING: That which exists, everything that exists is ‘being’. Whatever does not exist is referred to as “NOT BEING”. BECOMING refers to the process of change; change from one state to the other.

Parmenides argues that change and motion are impossible. The way of opinion reveals that they are possible but the way of truth shows that they are impossible. It should be recalled that Heraclitus had argued that change is inevitable, that it is necessary for the sustenance of being. Parmenides’ position is contrary to that of Heraclitus.

Parmenides attacked Heraclitus’ position. According to him, change is an illusion. Motion is impossible. Being is one, it is eternal and indestructible, nothing can be added to it nor can anything be taken out of it. Thus, being is, not-being is not, and becoming is an illusion. What Parmenides means is that everything exists as being, nothing exists as not-being and the process of change is an illusion. Becoming is an illusion because it must either come out of being or out of not-being. If it comes out of being, it means it already is and so cannot become (change). But it cannot come out of nothing. Therefore, being is, not-being is not, and becoming is an illusion.

The world has ever being, it has no beginning and no end, being cannot even be divided because that which must divide it must come outside of being. Nothing exists outside of being because only being is.

Although other pre-Socratic philosophers had implied the problem of appearance and reality in their philosophies, it was Parmenides who formally launched this problem in philosophic history. According to him, there is a difference between the way of opinion and the way of truth. The way of opinion represents the appearances made manifest to our senses, whereas the way of truth represents the reality behind these appearances.

The way of opinion shows us how things appear to our senses. It reveals for instance that change is possible but the way of truth shows that things do not really change, that motion is impossible. Thus, the way of truth reveals reality while the way of opinion reveals appearances. This Parmenidean position has had great impact on many metaphysical problems such as the problem of ‘appearance and reality’ and the problem of “substance and attributes”.

6.5. ZENO OF ELEA (490 – 430 B.C)

Zeno was the disciple of Parmenides. Parmenides’ attack on pluralism- change and motion- induced a certain amount of ridicule. This is because it is evident to our senses that things change from one state to the other and that things move from one place another. Zeno’s intention was to show that even Pythagorean pluralism is involved in difficulties and the doctrines of change and motion which are based on the pluralist hypothesis are also impossible. Zeno’s arguments point up some difficulties in metaphysical positions such as the problem of appearance and reality.

Attacking the position of his master’s critics, Zeno attempted to show change was an illusion. There were four major arguments in this direction:

Everywhere the average man sees things in flux, and to him this represents genuine change. But Zeno like his master Parmenides rejected the common-sense motion of change by his master’s distinction between appearance and reality. Change he said is the confusion of appearance with reality, and, therefore change is simply an illusion.

To prove the impossibility of motion, the four paradoxes of Zeno are formulated through the following four arguments:

- | | |
|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| (1) The Racecourse | (2) Achilles and the Tortoise |
| (3) The Arrow | (4) The Relativity of Motion |

ARGUMENT AGAINST MOTION 1

Pythagorean pluralism maintains that things are infinitely divisible. Thus a straight line has infinite number of units. Zeno asks us to imagine a race between Achilles, the fastest Greek sportsman and the tortoise. Let us suppose that Achilles gives the tortoise the start, that is, some steps ahead of him. Zeno argues following the Pythagorean doctrine of pluralism, that Achilles can never overtake the tortoise. This is because for him to overtake the tortoise, he has to traverse an infinite number of units within a finite distance.

For Achilles to even take a single step, he must have to take the half of that step, not only that, he must take the half of that half and so forth since they are infinite numbers of units. The tortoise also faced with infinite number of units has to traverse them within a finite distance. Thus, although Achilles, a faster runner, he can never overtake the tortoise.

SECOND ARGUMENT AGAINST MOTION 2

The Pythagoreans imagine that an arrow shot in the air is in motion. But Zeno argues that this cannot be the case because at any given point in time, the arrow is resting in space. Therefore, motion is impossible.

It should be noted that neither Parmenides nor Zeno was arguing that we do not experience change and motion as they will not wait for an arrow shot at them. They were not denying our experience of change and motion. All they were doing was to argue that the change and motion we experience are logically impossible. It leads to contradiction on careful reflection and so it is unreal. If motion is possible, then one should not say that there are infinite numbers of units between two points. This is because if one affirms that between a finite distance there are infinite number of units, motion cannot be possible because logically one cannot traverse an infinite number of units within a finite distance.

It should also be noted that Heraclitus argued that change is inevitable but that it sustains the one, that is, the many sustain the one. But Pythagoras went on to assert the many to the exclusion of the one, whereas Parmenides asserts the one to the exclusion of the many. If one admits the many, he ought to account for the one, and if one admits the one, he ought to account for the one, and if one admits the one, he ought to account for the many. Thus, the one leads to the many and the many back to the one. This is the problem of the many and the one in metaphysics. Because Pythagoras admitted only the many and Parmenides only the one, it seems as if they have presented partial philosophies or half truths. It was therefore necessary for compromise systems that would take care of both the many and the one to be built. Such a compromise system we find in Empedocles.

We may say therefore that Empedocles of Akragas took as his major task the duty of accounting for the one and the many, the basic thrust in the search for the constituents of reality.

6.6. EMPEDOCLES OF AKRAGAS

Empedocles was born in 440 B.C. Like most other pre-Socratic philosophers, most of his works have been lost in antiquity. According to Omoregbe, Empedocles was not only a philosopher but also a religious man who even claimed to a god.

Like Parmenides, Empedocles maintains that being is and that it is material. But like Heraclitus, he saw the reality of change. According to him, there are 4 basic elements: earth, air, fire and water. These elements are eternal and indestructible; they have no beginning and no end. But change comes about as a result of the combination and separation of these elements. What causes the separation and combination of these elements? To answer this, Empedocles introduced the concepts of LOVE and STRIFE. It is love that effects the combination of these elements, whereas strife effects their separation. Thus, love and strife are as primitive as earth, air, fire and water.

Empedocles was an evolutionist who proposed an evolutionary theory similar to that for which Darwin became famous several centuries later. According to Empedocles, all things come into existence by the chance combination of the four elements. The organs, the limbs, the shape of things as we now see them were not designed on purpose to be as they are now, nor were they like these at the beginning. For things had to struggle for existence. The less

fitted for survival perished, only those whose organs, limbs and shapes were fitted survived. This position is similar to that of Darwin who argued for the survival of the fittest in living environments.

6.7. THE ATHENIAN CIVILIZATION

So far most of the philosophers we have discussed in this course are either from Ionia or the southern cities of Italy and Sicily (Magna Graecia). It should be noted that the Ionians had been defeated by the Persians. They later revolted and their liberation was effected by the Athenians. The Athenians' victory over Persia was in two waves. First in 490 B.C in the battle of Marathon when they defeated Persia under Darius and secondly in 480 B.C when a combined Greek army defeated the Persians under Xerxes. This Greek army was a combination of Greek cities except Sparta. Sparta, it should be noted, was more interested in her own territory and so did not join the alliance. It is therefore not surprising that Athens transformed this alliance into the Athenian empire,

The Athenian civilization reached its heights under the leadership of Pericles who ruled for 30 years by the wish of the people. Pericles invited Anaxagoras to add a philosophic flavour to the Athenian civilization. Anaxagoras, it is said influenced Socrates. The sophists were also part of the Athenian culture. Young men rallied around them to learn the art of disputation.

Athens produced two of the greatest Greek thinkers, Socrates and Plato. Athens was however defeated by Sparta in the Peloponnesian war from 431 – 404 B.C. The defeat of Athens by Sparta led to a new wave of philosophical activities within Athens to ensure spiritual, ethical and political advancements.

6.8. ANAXAGORAS OF CLAZOMENAE (500 – 428 B.C)

Anaxagoras was invited by Pericles to Athens to give the Athenian culture a philosophic flavour. He agreed with Empedocles that being is and that it is indestructible, it has no beginning and no end, it neither comes into being, nor does it pass away. But he disagrees with Empedocles that being corresponds with the four elements – earth, air, fire and water. According to him, being is made up of particles of various qualities. These particles are in

motion; they are always coming together and separating. When they come together, the dominating particle makes the combination the substance of our sense experience. For instance, when particles of gold dominate in any combination, we have the gold of our sense experience.

Anaxagoras is important because he was the first to introduce mind in philosophical discourse. Mind or *Nous*, as he calls it, is that which separates living matter from dead matter. It is infinite and the source of motion and it is as primitive as the particles. The mind is also referred to as intelligence, consciousness or spirit. It is the mind that rules the world and also causes everything in it. Accordingly, mind is the only reality that is not part of anything else, but is completely separated off from every other thing. According to Omoregbe, the mind as described by Anaxagoras is obviously an infinite, spiritual and divine being which we would call God.

6.9. THE ATOMISTS (LEUCIPPUS AND DEMOCRITUS)

Leucippus and Democritus were the founders of the atomist school. We know more about Democritus because most of his works were preserved. Although it is obvious that they must have differed in certain views or opinions we cannot disentangle them because the line between them has been lost in history. It should also be noted that the atomist theory was a further development of the theories of Empedocles and Anaxagoras.

The atomists were scientific in temperament. In fact, they postulated an ingenious hypothesis which was empirically confirmed two thousand years later. According to them, reality is made of atoms, the atoms are eternal and indestructible, and they are infinite in number and are of various shapes, qualities and sizes. The atoms have ever been in motion. The worlds are formed as a result of the movements of atoms. When they collide with one another, vortices are formed. There are spaces between the atoms. Atoms of heat are said to be spherical, so also are atoms of the soul. According to the atomists, the atoms intermingle in the course of their incessant movements.

The atomists also have a theory of knowledge and a moral philosophy besides their ontology. There are two types of knowledge: genuine knowledge and obscure knowledge. Whereas, knowledge through reason is genuine, knowledge by sense experience is obscure. Thus, when

sense knowledge contradicts rational knowledge, sense knowledge must be rejected. This is an echo of the rationalist and empiricist debate of modern philosophical period.

The Atomists do not have a moral philosophy based on theology. According to them, there is no divine source of morality. The private aim of good conduct is cheerfulness and tranquillity whereas the social aim is the maintenance of cordial relationship with one another. There are no eternal punishments or rewards because, although the gods exist, they are too busy with their own affairs to bother about the affairs of men.

6.10. THE SOPHISTS

The Sophists were professional educators who exchanged their wisdom for money. They flourished in the 5th century B.C and were very popular among the young generation of Athenians. Before the era of the sophists, education in Greece was free. The education of the youth was left in the hand of members of his family or of a powerful friend or protector. But this kind of education proved insufficient to the demands of a new Athenian civilization. After the Persian wars, most people became interested in public life; the Athenian youth needed a kind of training that would equip them on public life. This kind of education was offered by Sophists but not without a cost.

According to the Sophists, the attempt to arrive at objective knowledge or absolute truth which was the major pre-occupation of the pre-Socratic philosophers was futile. To them, the most important thing was to train a child to live successfully, to make him live up to the challenges of practical life. The search for the absolute is vain because there is no absolute as such, what is real to one person may be unreal to another. In fact, if there were an absolute truth, we cannot know it. The Sophists taught men how to win law suits and win votes, they could argue for or against any position as they taught young men the art of disputation. It is therefore not surprising that these young men rallied around them.

Protagoras of Abdera, one of the earliest and greatest Sophists, maintained that “man is the measure of all things, of that which is, that is, of that which is not, that is not”. This means that there is no absolute knowledge, what constitutes knowledge or truth is relative to men. To Protagoras “of the gods, we cannot know them whether they exist or in what form they do exist. This is because the subject is obscure and human life is short. **Gorgias of Leontini** denied that there was any truth at all. Gorgias propounded the motions (1) that nothing exists

(2) that if anything exists it is in comprehensible, and (3) that even if it is comprehensible, it cannot be communicated. **Thrasymachus** asserted that injustice is to be preferred to the life of justice. Thrasymachus held that a person should aggressively pursue his own interests in a virtually unlimited form of self-assertion. He regards justice as being the interest of the stronger and believed that “might is right”. Laws he said are made by the ruling party for its own interests. These laws define what is right. According to him, in all states alike “right” has the same meaning for “right” is the interest of the party established in power. To the Sophists, the purpose or the end of morality is worldly success.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Highlight on the fundamental reality for which the universe was comprised especially for the Milesians.
2. “The only thing that is permanent is change”. Critically assess this statement expressing the views held by Heraclitus and Parmenides.
3. How did Pythagoras arrive at the sacred figure?

7. THE GOLDEN AGE PHILOSOPHY – SOCRATES, PLATO AND ARISTOTLE.

7.1. SOCRATES

Socrates was one of the greatest philosophers in the history of philosophy. His influence is far-reaching. Cynicism, Cyrenaic, hedonism, the school of Megara and Platonic idealism grew out of his teachings. In fact, through Plato and Aristotle (Plato's pupil), the ethical and theological course of man's thinking has been influenced ever since. Born in 469 B.C, Socrates lived all his life in Athens. Many history books on Philosophy give us the picture of Socrates as the best, most just and wisest of all men, who was indifferent to heat and cold, hunger and thirst.

Socrates displayed real valour in the battle field, going about in the ice with bare feet. Furthermore, he was giving to feats of abstraction while meditating on the problems of life and existence. He could remain in a trance for hours, deep in thought. His early education was the typical Athenian education which emphasized athletics, arts, poetry and mathematics. He also had opportunity of listening to the Sophists. In fact, he reacted sharply against the relativist ethical stance of the Sophists.

Sophists by their thesis "man is the measure of all things" had introduced a subjective philosophy which could only end in scepticism. According to them, what constitutes knowledge depends on individual circumstances or points of view. Socrates rejected this position. To him, the sophists had drawn the whole process of logical reasoning into disrepute. He argued that there is absolute knowledge and that universal moral judgements are possible. He claims that the sophists had abused Greek education and that he was to restore the proper education fit or suitable for the new Athenian civilization. It is not easy to point at the precise contributions of Socrates to philosophy. This is because he left no written works. What we know of him is from the notes of his pupils Xenophon and Plato.

Xenophon was a military man and not a philosopher. It is difficult therefore to know how much of his account to accept. It is held that only a philosopher can properly relate the arguments of another philosopher. But we also face a problem in Plato's account because Plato makes Socrates one of his speakers, in fact, the chief speaker in most of his *dialogues*. We do not therefore know the views of the historical Socrates because Plato uses the Socrates of his dialogues to air or state the views of both the historical Socrates and himself (Plato).

In spite of these difficulties, we can identify at least 3 contributions of Socrates to philosophy:

1. He developed the dialectics
2. He attempted to give precise definition of ethical concepts.
3. He presented an ethical theory based on knowledge.

The dialectics is a process of argumentation which consists of 3 stages. The first stage is when a proposition is introduced; this proposition is known as the thesis. The second stage is when that proposition is contradicted with another proposition. This second proposition is known as antithesis. The ensuing conflict between the propositions will yield the third stage of the dialectics which is the emergence of a new proposition apparently higher than the previous two. This third proposition is known as the synthesis. It should be noted that Zeno of Elea was one of the earliest philosophers to use the dialectics. Socrates had to develop it. He used it to arrive at universal judgements.

According to Socrates, ethical concepts can be defined by means of the dialectics. To define a concept like justice, Socrates had to contradict nearly all the postulations of his listeners. He also felt that through the dialectics, one can know what moral rights consist of. Furthermore, he maintained that “virtue” is based on knowledge. He rested his ethical theory on knowledge when he stated that, “nobody can do what is evil if he knows that which is evil”. He argued that “one cannot act morally unless one knows what morality consists in”. The dialectics could afford one the opportunity of embracing absolute moral truth.

Because Socrates wanted to establish a universal foundation of morality and because he pursued relentlessly his dialectics, he was bound to contradict not only influential men in government but the demands of tradition. He was arrested and charged with impiety and corruption of the youth, he was found guilty and sentenced to death. Socrates is a teleologist. He believes that nature exhibits a purpose in all its branches.

7.2. PLATO

It is generally thought that Plato is one of the most influential philosophers in the history of philosophy. Plato was born in 428 or 427 B.C into a wealthy aristocratic family. It was thought that he would be a politician but the circumstances of his master's death, Socrates, discouraged him from public life. He was disenchanted with the socio-political circumstances in Athens. Athenian democracy, he felt, led to his master's death. It also led to the defeat of Athens by Sparta in the Peloponnesian war. He therefore withdrew from public life to pursue his master's cause, that of preparing the youths of Athens for the future rulership of their country. He built a university- The Academy, one of the earliest known institutions of higher learning. It is interesting to note that this institution lasted for about 7 centuries after his death.

Plato was a prolific writer, about 20 *dialogues* are attributed to him in most of which Socrates is presented as the chief speaker. We shall be concerned with his ideal state, his theory of universals and the major influences on him.

PLATO'S IDEAL STATE (PLATO'S REPUBLIC)

In the *Republic*, one of his dialogues, Socrates opens the discussion by asking the question "what is justice?" After a series of arguments and counter arguments, Socrates thinks that it is better and easy to look for justice in a state than in an individual since a state is made of individuals. What constitutes justice in the state, according to Plato, will be a pointer to what constitutes justice in the individual. What is justice in the individual? What is justice in a state? Plato divides the citizens of a state into 3 classes:

- 1) The producers or peasants
- 2) The auxiliaries or soldiers
- 3) The guardians or rulers

According to Plato, the rulership of the cities will rest on the shoulders of the guardians. The guardians will be fewer in number than members of the other classes. In the first instance, exceptionally gifted children are to be selected to form the guardian class. After this, any child born within a particular class will automatically belong to that class. In exceptional

cases however, inferior children born in the guardian class will be demoted to the lower classes whereas exceptionally gifted children born in the lower classes will be upgraded.

The education of the guardians will emphasize athletics and culture. The purpose of course will be to produce brilliant, healthy and courageous gentlemen. What they read or hear will be censored. They will not be told any stories about gods behaving badly. They will not be allowed to hear sorrowful music but only such music as would breed courage and temperance. They would not be told stories about wicked people being happy or good people being unhappy. Dramatists are to be banned in the cities except when plays will feature faultless characters. There will be austere physical training. Although they shall be exposed to war they will not fight any. They will also not be allowed to see any ugliness until a certain age. Plato from here proceeds to give an outline of his communism. The guardians are to live together in camps. In their cities, they will neither be wealth nor poverty. They will share everything in common. They will share wives and children in common too. To every child, all elders will be addressed as fathers or mothers whereas to one another, they will call themselves brothers and sisters. Women will receive equal education with men. The education of women will emphasize the vocation of the guardian class. Courage and temperance will be the object of such training.

The citizens will be told one royal lie that the gods created 3 kinds of people; those made of gold, those made of silver and those made of bronze, brass and iron. They will be told that the guardians were made of gold, the auxiliaries of silver and the peasants of brass and iron.

What is justice in a state? According to Plato, justice is achieved in a state when members of the various classes perform only the functions they were meant to perform by virtue of their class. Thus, justice in a state consists in the specialization by the producers in production, by the soldiers to defend the state and by the guardians to rule over the rest.

It is interesting to note that having defined justice in a state, Plato goes on to define justice in an individual. According to him, the human soul is made up of three parts:

- 1) The rational part i.e. reason
- 2) The spirited part i.e. courage and
- 3) Appetitive part.

To him, justice in the individual is achieved when reason rules over the rest.

PLATO'S THEORY OF IDEAS

In the later of books of Plato's *Republic*, Plato states that unless philosophers become kings and kings become philosophers, the problems of the city states, the problem of the society, would never be solved. Who is a philosopher? Etymologically, philosophy means love of wisdom being coined from two Greek words- *philo* meaning love and *Sophia* meaning wisdom. According to Plato, this is not a proper definition of philosophy because one who loves wisdom merely out of vulgar curiosity cannot be a philosopher. To him, a philosopher is one who loves the vision of truth. What is the vision of truth? One who loves the vision of truth is one who goes beyond particular objects in the sensible world to contemplate perfect objects in world of ideas. Thus, Plato gives us a two-world model, the sensible world and the world of ideas.

The sensible world contains particular objects like black cat, white cat, big cat and so forth. The items in this world are perishable and imperfect. They can change from one state to another. In fact, they are all poor copies of the perfect objects in the world of ideas. The world of ideas contains ideal objects or universals. These objects are perfect and imperishable. They give the objects in the sensible world their being. For instance, the many cats in the sensible world are different instances of the ideal cats in the world of ideas.

In the sensible world, there are many beautiful objects, but these are all were instances or poor copies of the perfect universal beauty that exists in the world of ideas.

PLATO'S TWO-WORLD MODEL

World of ideas (universal objects)
KNOWLEDGE
Sensible World (particular objects)
OPINION

It is not possible to attain knowledge in the sensible world, the sensible world is the realm of opinion; non philosophers who cannot go beyond his world do not know anything but mainly have opinions. Knowledge is only possible when one has gone beyond the sensible world to contemplate eternal objects in the world of ideas. According to Plato, the philosopher, the lover of the vision of truth is what he is because he can go beyond the sensible world to attain

knowledge in the world of ideas. Plato illustrates his point in his famous ‘Allegory of the Cave’. In this allegory, he compares non philosophers with prisoners bound in a cave. They are bound in such a way that they can only look in one direction; in the direction of the wall in front of them. There is nothing between them and the wall but behind them, there are real objects. Behind these objects is a fire that casts shadows of these objects on the wall in front of them. Because they have never seen any real objects, they think that the shadows are the real objects. Plato asks us to imagine that one of these prisoners escapes from that cave to contemplate real objects in the outside or external world. He will be baffled and will realize that what he has seen in the cave were shadows. According to Plato, if he is the philosopher fit to be a guardian, he will go back into the cave to educate the people properly on what constitutes reality. But this is going to be a difficult task because having seeing real objects; he will not be able to see the shadows as clearly as the prisoners in the cave.

In this allegory, Plato makes us to know who the philosopher is, and what his duty entails. The philosopher is one who has gone beyond the world of shadows to attain knowledge in the world of real entities. His duty involves leading people to knowledge and truth.

7.3. **ARISTOTLE (384 – 322 B.C)**

Aristotle was born in 384 B.C at Stagira in Thrace. By this time Philips of Macedon had conquered Athens. At the age of 18, he travelled to Athens to enrol in Plato’s school- The Academy, where he spent 20 years of his life until Plato’s death in 348 B.C. In 343 B.C, Aristotle became Alexander’s tutor, the son of king Philips. At this time, Alexander was 13 years old and Aristotle played this role for 3 years. At the age of 16, Alexander’s father felt that the boy was old enough to hold public office. Between 335 – 323 B.C, Aristotle lived in Athens where he wrote most of his works and founded his school, ‘The Lyceum’. When Alexander died, the Athenians revolted and turned against most of his friend. Even Aristotle was indicted for impiety. Aristotle fled to avoid punishment because according to him, “he did not want the Athenians to sin against philosophy a second time. The first time was when they killed Socrates”. He however died in 322 B.C.

Aristotle was one of the greatest and most influential philosophers in the history of philosophy. Although he spent 20 years in Plato’s academy, his philosophy can be described as an antithesis to Plato’s philosophy. Whereas Plato had given the picture of two worlds: the

world of ideas and the sensible world. Aristotle saw this division as unnecessary. He had faith in sensible world whereas Plato identifies universal as existing outside particular objects. Aristotle saw universals as existing in particular objects. His approach was scientific and he drew his conclusions after careful observations.

ARISTOTLE'S METAPHYSICS

According to Aristotle, the philosopher is one who seeks the ultimate nature of reality. He is one who goes beyond immediate causes of things to discover their ultimate causes. Thus, the philosopher is interested in ultimate causes. Talking about causes, Aristotle distinguishes 4 causes: the material cause, the efficient cause, the formal cause and the final cause

Material cause: This is bare primitive matter which gives rise to things. It is that from which things take their rise and that unto which things pass away. For proper understanding of Aristotle's views on causes, let us use wood as an example of material cause. We shall use this example to explain the other causes.

Formal cause: This is the form which bare matter assumes. It is that which distinguishes one material from another. It is the essence of a thing. An example of formal cause is a table or a chair or a ruler. All these have the same material cause – wood. It is their forms that distinguish one from another.

Efficient cause: Aristotle uses the efficient cause as the source of motion. It is that which acts on matter to give it a form. Using our example, the hammer and nails we use to build table and chairs are efficient causes.

Final causes: The final cause is the purpose of which all forms strive. It is the final realization of matter, the end of forms. In this case, the final purpose or end to which the chair is put is the final cause.

Aristotle criticizes the pre-Socratic philosophers for not incorporating the 4 causes in their philosophy.

ARISTOTLE'S THEORY OF UNIVERSALS

Universals are general qualities which have particular instances. They are the common qualities which are shared by many particular entities. Blue, for instance is a universal which is shared by such particular entities like blue shirt, blue shoes, blue cars etc. The metaphysical problem of universals and particulars is a problem regarding the relationship between universals and its particulars. When we say blue, what comes to our mind is a particular colour and when we ask ourselves where this colour exists, we cannot answer in just a few words because there is a problem of location. Does the colour exist in our mind? Or does it exist on the black board where we write blue or does it exist in particular blue objects? The temptation to quickly reply that it exists in particular blue objects is often resisted when one reflects on the fact that the word blue does not lose its meaning even when we destroy all particular blue entities. Where then is the colour blue?

Plato holds a realist position on universals. The realist maintains that universals do have a real existence but according to Plato, the universals do not exist in our sensible world. They exist in the world of ideas. Blue for instance, exists in the world of ideas and its instantiated in particular objects in the sensible world. The particular blue objects in the sensible world derive their blueness according to Plato from merely poor copies of the perfect blue, the universal in the world of ideas.

Aristotle did not believe in Plato's two worlds. For him, universals do not need another world to exist, although he holds a realist position like Plato. He maintains that universals do not exist outside the particulars; they exist in the particular objects. The universal blue for instance exists in particular blue objects. What Aristotle is saying is that universals cannot exist without particulars neither can particulars exist without universals. One cannot imagine the colours blue existing independently of particular blue things neither can one expect particular objects existing without shape or colour or any universal quantities.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Highlight on the major contributions of Socrates to philosophy.
2. Critically comment on Plato's two world models.
3. Aristotle distinguishes 4 causes. Outline and explain in details.

8. THE POST – SOCRATIC PHILOSOPHY

After Aristotle, the history of Western philosophy records the work carried out by what is most times called the Hellenistic philosophies namely: Epicureanism, Cynicism, Stoicism and Scepticism. It is pertinent to note that the view of life they portray is generally pessimistic, and the way of life they recommend is individualistic rather than social. Let us highlight on a few of them.

8.1. EPICUREANISM: Epicurus, the founder Epicureanism was born in 342 B.C. Epicurus held the view which is sometimes called *Hedonism*. This is the view that pleasure is the sole good. Epicurus considered pleasure to be the sole good, but he also realised that if a person pursues pleasure too arduously, pain will follow. If a man drinks too much, he will suffer headache and stomach pain the next day. The proper way to proceed in life is to live pleasantly without suffering from any of the undesirable effects of such living.

Epicureanism should be understood as containing instructions which are designated not only to enable one to acquire pleasure but also to enable one to avoid pain. For Epicurus, if one indulges in pleasure which later on brings pain, then one is living a bad life. Since some pleasures are obviously accompanied by pain, Epicurus distinguished between those pleasures which are accompanied by pain and those which are not, and regarded only the later as good. He called the former Dynamic pleasure and the later Passive pleasure. Sexual love, for instance is bad because it is accompanied by fatigue, remorse and depression. Other Dynamic pleasures are gluttony, fame, drinking and marriage. All of these are bad because they are accompanied by pain: gluttony will lead to distress, drinking will lead to a hang-over with the attendant headaches and nausea, disease, etc. The result is that Epicurus advocated a highly ascetic life. This is because he was convinced that it is better to avoid pain than to seek pleasure. He also encouraged the cultivation of friendship.

8.2. CYNICISM: The Cynic School was founded by Antisthenes, who met Socrates at Athens and became one of his disciples and admirers. What he admired most in Socrates was the latter's self-discipline and asceticism. The Cynics, led by Diogenes, taught that man must be liberated from desire; man must be indifferent to the goods that fortune has to bestow so that he will be emancipated from fear.

8.3. STOICISM: Stoicism developed from Cynicism. Zeno the founder of Stoicism was born in 335 BC in Cyprus but later came to Athens. He was also an admirer of Socrates. The main importance of the Stoics was ethical. The central point in Stoic ethics is their insistence that man should follow nature or leave according to nature. Again, they insist that man should live according to reason. By this they suggest that man should conform to the laws of nature, man should obey the laws of nature if he wants to be happy. These laws of nature are discoverable by reason and exist necessarily. Whether man likes it or not, he is subject to them and must comply with them if he wants to be happy – man has no freedom to comply or not to comply, for the laws of nature are inexorable laws of necessity which rule everything and every event.

Leading figures of the Stoic movement were Zeno (not Parmenides' disciple), Cleanthes, Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius etc. their teaching also yielded fruits in theory of knowledge. In theory of knowledge, they accepted perception. They held that deceptiveness of the senses are really false judgement and could be a little care. They however still held a belief in innate ideas and principles. The doctrine of natural rights which was predominant in the 16th and 18th centuries was a revival of a Stoic doctrine, though with important modifications. It was the Stoics who distinguished *Jus natural* from *jus gentium*. They were the earliest Philosophers to express the view that by nature all human beings are equal.

8.4. SCEPTICISM: A school of Scepticism was founded by Pyrrho of Elis who lived around 360 to 270 BC. Pyrrho was a sceptic who denied the possibility of certainty in knowledge. According to him, we can never know what things are because the human mind can never penetrate into the inner nature of things. All we can know is how things appear to us, but not what they really are. Things however, appear differently to different people. Consequently, everybody is only entitled to say the way things appear to him. There is therefore no absolutely certain and objective knowledge of anything. Nobody can be sure about what the true nature of things is apart from the way he sees them.

Pyrrho left no writings behind, for he wrote nothing. His teachings however, were continued by his school, and he was succeeded as head of the school by his pupil, Timon of Philus (320 – 230 BC). Timon, following in the footsteps of his Master, held that neither reason nor the senses could be relied upon for certainty in knowledge.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Highlight on the term Hedonism.
2. Explain Epicurean comments on Pleasure.
3. Which of the Hellenistic Philosophies centred on the law of nature.

9. THE MEDIEVAL PERIOD OF PHILOSOPHY

The Medieval period of Philosophy spans from the period beginning around the 11th C up to the latter 14th and 15th centuries. This period witnessed a seeming decline in philosophy which was a result of the confluence or synthesis of philosophy and Theology. The major characteristics in the medieval period were mainly theologians and saw no difference between Theology and Philosophy. They sought to use philosophy to rationalise or justify their religious truths.

Fresh problems were introduced into philosophy during this period. For instance, there was the question concerning the relationship between reason and faith, the question concerning the relationship between philosophy and theology, there were proofs of God's existence. But they also concerned themselves with some of the traditional problems of philosophy which were raised by the philosophers of the classical ancient period.

Notable figures of the Medieval period were St. Anselm, St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Bonaventure, William of Ockham, Don Scotus and some others. But it was St. Augustine of Tagaste who led the foundation for the emergence of the scholastic philosophy of the period, though he is not often classified by historians of philosophy to belong strictly to the Medieval period. The major figures we shall discuss in this section are St. Augustine, St. Anselm and St. Thomas Aquinas.

Both St. Augustine and St. Anselm propounded the ontological proof of God's existence which tried to explain the existence of God from his being. St. Thomas Aquinas on the other hand maintained on the cosmological proof of God's existence through his *Quin qua via* (the five proofs or ways) namely: Proof from Motion, Proof from Efficient Cause, Proof from Necessary versus Possible Being, Proof from the degree of perfection, and Proof from the Order of the Universe.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Highlight on St. Thomas Aquinas' *Quin qua via*.
2. What are the major differences between the ontological and cosmological proofs of God's existence.

10. THE RENAISSANCE:

The renaissance period which began in Italy and later spread all over Europe marked the end of one era (the middle Ages) and the beginning of a new era (the modern era).

It began as a humanistic movement for the revival of arts and literature and as a result renewed interest in ancient Greek writings. It later developed into humanistic movement and scientific movement with emphasis on man and experimental science. The emphasis on theology in the middle ages was replaced by emphasis on man and experimental science. In the middle ages, theology was said to be the queen of all sciences, but during the renaissance the queen of all sciences was no longer theology but experimental science. The authority of the church or the bible as a guide to truth was replaced by the authority of science.

It was in the renaissance interlude that the Ptolemaic transition moved to the Copernican tradition. It featured such names as Luther (a passionate reformer), Machiavelli (the man who equated the right with the expedient, and argued that morality must give way to share power if the ruler must succeed) and Montaigne (the man who tried to revive ancient scepticism).

In summary, there was shift in emphasis from theology to science and from God to man.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Explain the term Renaissance.
2. Highlight on the major contributions of science within the Renaissance interlude.

11. MODERN PERIOD OF PHILOSOPHY

The Modern period of Western philosophy is said to have started with the Renaissance which is also known as the period of enlightenment. This is so because of the new philosophical and scientific turn of mind that greeted this era. It was a period during which we witnessed the beginning of mercantilist economy, a period characterised by scientific breakthroughs.

The major event in the modern period of Western philosophy was emergence of the two great traditions in the seventeenth century, Rationalism and Empiricism.

RATIONALISM: This is a philosophical school of thought which holds that Knowledge is reached through logico-mathematical reasoning. Rationalism holds that reason alone is capable of leading us to certain knowledge. The Rationalist philosophers see the senses as grossly unreliable in supplying us with information about the external world and as such they argue that, it is through the method of deduction, intuition and logic that the mind can reach indubitable certainty. The rationalist philosophers include Rene Descartes, Benedict Baruch Spinoza and Gottfried Leibnitz. Rene Descartes is popular for his dictum “*Cogito ergo sum*” (I think therefore I am), Spinoza for his Pantheism that God is synonymous with nature u.e. *Deus-Sive-Natura* (God or Nature) Leibnitz is popular for his Monadology.

EMPIRICISM: Empiricism is opposed to rationalism. This is a philosophical school of thought which holds that Knowledge is got through sense experience. The five senses of hearing, smelling, tasting, feeling and seeing are the five important ways of getting acquainted with our external world. For the empiricist philosophers, there is nothing in the intellect which was not originally in the senses. The empiricists generally hold that ideas are the raw data of experience. Knowledge of the external world is got through sensation and reflection. Though the empiricist philosophers differ in their views, but they all agree that ideas, impressions, sense-data are the objects of sensation. The notable empiricist philosophers are John Locke, George Berkeley and David Hume. Thomas Hobbes was also associated with the empiricists.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Highlight on the etymological ruminations of rationalism and empiricism.
2. What were the major contributions of Descartes, Spinoza and Leibnitz.

12. CONTEMPORARY PERIOD OF PHILOSOPHY

This is noted as the philosophies of the 19th and 20th centuries. The Contemporary period is often traced from the materialism of Feuerbach, Marx, and Engels, then spanning through the analytical period of Russell, Moore, Wittgenstein, Frege, Whitehead, Wisdom etc, and embracing the period of atomism, Logical positivism and language philosophy which is still alive till today.

Philosophy became internationalised in the 19th and 20th centuries. The Contemporary period Western philosophy included such schools as Pragmatism, Logical Atomism, Positivism, Phenomenology, Existentialism, Behaviourism, Naturalism, etc. Not actually dominated the scene.

It is pertinent to note that the Contemporary period first started with the some philosophers of evolution such as Herbert Spenser (1820-1903), Henry Bergson (1859-1941) and Teilhard de Chardin. All of them saw cosmic development as the evolution of life.

PRAGMATISM: Pragmatism is from the Latin word, *Pragmo* which variously mean practice, utility, or workability. Pragmatism is an American movement founded by C. S. Pierce and developed by William James and John Dewey as a philosophical theory of meaning and truth. According to the pragmatic theory of truth, the truth or meaning of an idea depends on its 'cash value' i.e. on its function and practical effects if it is accepted and acted upon.

EXISTENTIALISM: This is the philosophy of human existence. It is about the most influential movement in the 20th century. All existentialists agree that 'existence precedes essence. Some of the main themes of existentialism are ; irrationalism, man as a being-in-the-world, man as a being-with-others, freedom, anguish, commitment, the facticity of human existence, death etc. The major existentialist thinkers of the 20th century are Karl Jaspers, Martin Heidegger, Gabriel Marcel, Maurice Merleau Ponty, Albert Camus, J. P. Sartre etc.

LOGICAL POSITIVISM: Logical Positivism is a movement in contemporary analytic philosophy in the 1920's formed by a group of thinkers drawn from different disciplines such as philosophy, mathematics and science. They styled themselves as "Vienna Circle" basically

because their meeting place was in Vienna. Their approach was rigorously empirical. As a result, they proceeded to reject the whole enterprise of metaphysics. Their aim was the unification of the sciences and consequently to have a unified system of meaning and valid knowledge. Among this group were such men as Moritz Schlick, Otto Neurath, Rudolf Carnap, Friedrich Waismann, Herbert Feigl and Kurt Godel. Ludwig Wittgenstein, whose book *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* greatly influenced the Vienna Circle. Wittgenstein had so many conversations with the members of the Vienna Circle though he was not a member of the Circle.

LOGICAL ATOMISM: Roughly, Logical Atomism is the philosophy of mathematics or symbolic logic. Bertrand Russell and A. N. Whitehead propounded Logical Atomism, according to which the words of a proposition correspond by one with the components of the corresponding facts.

PHENOMENOLOGY: This was propounded by Edmund Husserl (1859-1938). Phenomenology is concerned with the essence of things and not with their concrete existence as individuals.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. The contemporary analytic philosophy in the 1920's heralded the Vienna circle. Critically comment and highlight on the major contributions of the Vienna circle.
2. Explain the term pragmatism and outline the major actors.
3. What is phenomenology?

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: References and Titles for Further Reading

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Appendix II: General Review Test.

1. Thales takes the ultimate reality to be.....
2. Thales, Anaximander and were the Milesian triad.
3. Empedocles tried to reconcile the four basic elements with and.....
4. Heraclitus is known for change and fire while Parmenides is known for
and.....
5. Plato was a pupil to Socrates, just as Aristotle was a pupil to.....
6. The Ancient Atomists were and.....
7. Pythagoras and his disciples were popular for their love for.....
8. The statement “Man is the Measure of all things” is credited to.....
9. Aristotle’s ethics is based on..... which lies in the middle of any course of
action.
10. The most superior class in Plato’s Republic is the.....
11. The citizens of Plato’s republic will be told a royal lie that God
created.....
12. The main object of Plato in the republic was to discover.....in the.....
through the.....
13. Socrates’ ethical doctrine was based on.....
14. Name the four causes in Aristotle’s metaphysics
15. According to Parmenides, becoming is an.....
16. Anaxagoras was the first to introduce..... formally into ancient philosophy.
17. The moral doctrine of the sophists can be described as.....
18. According to Plato, it is only a philosopher that can contemplate.....
19. Socrates’ ethical doctrine is developed using the principle of.....
20. The philosopher who recorded and presented most of the philosophical views of
Socrates is.....

Appendix III: Review Essay Questions

1. State five important reasons why there is need to study ancient philosophy.
2. State the views of Aristotle on property. What are the strength and shortcomings of his position?
3. State the arguments of Thales, Anaximander and Anaximenes on the basic constituents of reality. Which of the elements will you take to be the most superior and why?
4. Critically examine the following:
 - a. Plato's theory of Ideas or universals
 - b. The notion of justice in Plato's Republic.
 - c. The major influences on Plato's philosophy
5. "Is change a reality or an illusion? Answer this question taking a critical notice of the positions of Heraclitus and Parmenides on the phenomena of change and permanence.
6. Discuss any two of the following:
 - a. Socrates' reaction to sophists' moral relativism.
 - b. Aristotle on happiness and moral virtue
 - c. Aristotle on the four causes.
7. Using any ancient philosopher(s) you have studied, attempt an analysis of the relevance or otherwise of ancient philosophy.
8. State and criticise the position of Empedocles on love and strife in reconciling the primitive elements.
9. Critically explain the atomic theories of Leucippus and Democritus. What is the relevance of their theories to the contemporary scientific development?
10. What is the relationship between Pythagoras and numbers and metaphysics/
11. Was Zeno and his disciples able to refute Pythagorean pluralism? Defend your answer.

Appendix IV: Answers to Review Test

1. Water
2. Anaximenes
3. Love and strife
4. Permanence and Being
5. Plato
6. Leucippus and Democritus
7. Numbers
8. Sophist, Protagoras
9. Virtue
10. Guardian class
11. 3 kinds of people: the guardians, the auxiliaries and the producers.
12. Justice in the individual though justice in the state.
13. Knowledge as the basis for virtue
14. The material, formal, efficient and final causes.
15. Illusion
16. Mind/*Nous*
17. Moral relativism.
18. Real objects in the world of ideas.
19. Dialectics
20. Plato.