



UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

THE ROLE OF PHILOSOPHY AT THE UNIVERSITY

INAUGURAL LECTURE

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DEDICATION

This Inaugural Lecture is dedicated to all students, teaching staff and non-teaching staff in all the Universities in the Republic of Kenya.

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I also place on record, my sense of gratitude to one and all, who directly or indirectly gave me support in this venture.



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BIOGRAPHY

Professor Clement Meshack Peter Oniang'o was born in Ebuchenya village, Butere District, Kakamega County, the fifth child of the late Philista Matakale Amanyana and Petero Eshiyonzo Omusina. His parents were hardworking, and disciplinarians, and inculcated in Clement a desire to be the very best in whatever one sets out to do. Responsibility was ingrained in Clement from an early age, and perhaps this is why in primary school he was the school bell ringer (time keeper) at Buchenya, and school office boy at Ingotse, in high school, Clement served as the librarian and away from these responsibilities, he immensely enjoyed the game of soccer.

Prof. Oniang'o received his primary education at Lunza and Buchenya primary schools and his intermediate school education at Butere and Ingotse intermediate schools. He proceeded to the Friends School Kamusinga, for his high school education which he completed in 1962.

As a young man, Prof. Oniang'o's dream was to attend Lincoln University (USA) where his "idol" Dr. Kwame Nkrumah had been educated. Indeed, Prof. Oniang'o got the admission letter to this private institution, but did not have a full scholarship to undertake the studies. However, his dream of attaining a university education in America, came true when he won the Institute of International Education (IIE) Scholarship to study Biological Sciences at Wisconsin State University, Stevens Point, (USA), graduating with a B.Sc. degree in Biological Sciences, in 1969.

Between 1970 and 1973, Prof. Oniang'o enrolled for an M.A. degree in philosophy at the Washington State University, Pullman and defended his thesis entitled "*Epiphenomenalism or Interactionism: An Exposition and Critique of Marx's Theory of Historical Materialism.*"

While pursuing university education and nurturing an academic career, Prof. Oniang'o married Ruth Khasaya Barwa on 7th August, 1971 at The All Saints Cathedral, Nairobi. Ruth later became a university professor in

nutrition and they have five children: three daughters and two sons, whom I see have also attained academic degrees in varied fields and specializations.

Between 1972-1973, Prof. Oniang'o taught philosophy at The Loop College, Chicago; it was while in Chicago, serving as Assistant Professor of Philosophy, that besides his teaching career, his earlier sports interests came to the fore and was in addition as the coach of the college soccer team.

In 1973-1974, Prof. Oniang'o won a competitive grant from the US Government, to serve as a Joint Assistant Professor of Philosophy, at Tougaloo (an all-Black College), and Millsaps College (an all-White college). The two colleges were only three miles apart within the City of Mississippi and the package included a full three months Summer School Post Graduate enrolment at Columbia University, New York, in the Department of Philosophical Anthropology.

Prof. Oniang'o, transited to coming back home when in 1974, he was appointed lecturer, at Makerere University, Kampala Uganda; he was also at the time, a Ph.D. candidate in the same institution. He successfully completed his Ph.D. in Philosophy thesis entitled "*An Investigation of Jean-Paul Sartre's Philosophy of Existence as Relevant to the African Experience*", in 1978.

In 1976, Prof. Oniang'o had been appointed and reported as a lecturer at Kenyatta University, and was promoted to senior lecturer in 1981. Further promotion came in May 1988, when Prof. Oniang'o was appointed Associate Professor of Philosophy, and later in 1995, when he was promoted to Full Professor of Philosophy. Prof. Oniang'o has also held visiting professorships at the Institute for The History and Philosophy of Science and Technology (IHPST), University of Toronto, Senior Fulbright Visiting Research Scholar / Fellow at Michigan State University, East at Lansing MI (USA), University of Bamberg, Germany on the DAAD Senior Research Scientist Exchange Fellowship, and the John's Hopkins University Forgarty AIDs Research Program. In addition to being a visiting scholar, Professor Oniang'o has delivered

lectures at prestigious institutions including: Bahen Center for Information Technology, University of Toronto, York University, Ontario, Canada, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo U.S.A, and University of Manitoba. These lectures have focused in his area of specialization on Ethno-environmental consciousness in Kenya: past, present and future., the “Philosophy of Science in the Kenyan Context, the Untenable Marxist Philosophized Perspectives Towards Kenya’s Development Process, and his pet theory on the Marxist De-alienation Thesis Falls Apart as Interactionism is Emphasized.

Prof. Oniang'o has researched and published extensively in his area of specialization and to his credit has authored one textbook, published 14 articles in refereed international journals, presented over 25 papers in seminars and conferences and reviewed articles in 15 publications. Away from presentations Prof. Oniang'o has supervised and examined over 20 Ph.D. candidates and has distinguished himself in the laborious but important task of assessing candidates for promotion to associate and full professorial status in the eastern and southern Africa region.

Administratively, Prof. Oniang'o has served the University of Nairobi in different capacities, for instance, he was the Founder Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences in the then College of Education and External Studies (CEES), University of Nairobi between 1988-1997, Founder Chairman, Dept. of Philosophy and Religious Studies. Other roles within the university community included his election as a member of the Board of Trustees, University of Nairobi Pension Scheme (September 2005 - August 2008). Prof Oniang'o is a Fellow, Kenya National Academy of Sciences (FKNAS), and also takes part in area development of Kakamega County.

Prof. Oniang'o has initiated and formalized a number of memoranda of understanding (MOUs) for staff/student exchange programs as well as mutual research collaboration between the University of Nairobi and other universities, including the following: University of Toronto, Canada, University of Bamberg, Germany, Michigan State University, USA, Lock Haven University, PA. USA, and Lake Head University, Thunder Bay, Ontario, Canada.

1.0 THE ROLE OF PHILOSOPHY IN THE UNIVERSITY

1.1 What is Philosophy?

It is now my pleasure at this auspicious gathering to delve into the topic at hand by defining and developing the concept that is traditionally called “philosophy”, explain it in terms of meaning and scope; explain why philosophy is a theoretical perspective from which to judge man and his/her institutions both secular and reflective. We shall describe the aims of philosophy in general and in particular at the university laying special emphasis on its relevance in theory and practice in learning, teaching and research.

In this endeavor,

It is inescapable to NOTE that unlike other subjects taught and researched at the university level worldwide, philosophy is unique in many ways. For example:

The highest masterly of learning and research at the Doctoral level, the awardee is bestowed with **Doctor Of Philosophy (Ph.D.)**.

The philosopher earning the highest degree in philosophy is awarded: **Doctor Of Philosophy in Philosophy (Ph.D. in Philosophy)**.

A mathematician on the other hand is awarded: **Doctor Of Philosophy in Mathematics (Ph.D. in Math)**.

A medical Doctor is awarded: **Doctor Of Philosophy in Medicine (Ph.D. in Medicine)**.

Furthermore,

We shall elucidate on the unique characteristics of “philosophy”, its relevance in the articulation of other programs and subjects taught at the university level, highlighting its added value. For example:

1. A graduate in engineering studies who has been taught **professional ethics** will be a “better engineer” than one who was not taught this philosophy course.

NOTE: Philosophy in this introductory section will mutatis mutandis be understood as strictly Western Thought while the next section will be African Thought.

2. A graduating medical student who has been taught **medical ethics** will be a “better doctor” than one who was not taught this philosophy course.

Why?

Because the two “better students” will have been exposed to critical philosophical debates, exposing merits of upholding ethical standards and avoiding unethical shortcuts that often lead to corruption in engineering and in medicine. The students will be aware of the ethical and unethical choices in carrying out their professions.

The point here is not to argue that beyond the recognition of right and wrong, the ethics course will automatically lead to ethical decisions by the student who has been taught these philosophical courses under reference, but rather to trigger the conscience of the student in decision making in the light of debates covered in ethics. This is an advantage over the students who were not exposed to ethical debates in medicine and engineering in the context of medical and engineering principles, upholding the laws of the land against corrupt practices highlighted in the philosophical debates against corruption in similar cases.

In this specific regard, the teaching of philosophy at the university level not only adds value in theory and practice, to the university graduates in various departments, but more so to providing better citizens for the nation at large.

It trains them to take full responsibility for choices they make in their actions. Furthermore to be well prepared, students must adequately be trained in critical thinking which is the foundation or major characteristic of philosophy which is **only** taught at university level.

Philosophy as a concept is not easy to define. Some scholars have defined philosophy as the search for a comprehensive view of nature, an attempt at a universal explanation of things¹. Others have defined it

¹ See Oniang'o C.M.P. An Introduction to Philosophy East African Educational Publishers Ltd Nairobi PpI.

as both the summary of the sciences and their completion, forming a separate branch of study among manifestations of the human mind.

Yet others have defined philosophy as the theory of subject matter taken as a whole or organized unit containing principles which bind together a variety of particular truths and facts, and requiring a certain harmony of theory and practice. That is, philosophy is a kind of approach that can be applied to any branch of learning².

Having attempted to address the definition of philosophy, **What then is philosophizing?**

In addressing this question, one might pause a question: with the present world of problems of poverty and war, what is the point of studying philosophy? To put the question more cogently:

“Supposing a university student's parents died, one after the other, his girlfriend got pregnant by someone else, and he himself acquired some loathsome disease... Would he really go to his philosophy professor for advice?”

It should be understood, however, that philosophy does not pretend to have answers to all the problems of men and women.

1.1.1 What then, is the essence of philosophy?

The essence of philosophy is in the search for better understanding of the world as well as the nature of man and his/her place in the world. The history of philosophy records centuries of persistent attempts to further such understanding. These are attempts that have resulted in diverse and often conflicting accounts.

A review of history can of course only disappoint those who expect philosophy to yield final answers intellectually satisfying to all men and women.

To illustrate this point, we see that in the history of philosophy, Protagoras of Abdera (480– 410B.C) is the sophist who first coined the

² Ibid pp.5

term “philosopher” meaning lover of wisdom.

Secondly, as the etymology of the word suggests, philosophy consists of: Insight, Soundness of perspective and balance of proportion in judgment³.

In other words, a man/woman who possesses a great deal of facts has knowledge; this can be held by anyone with good memory, dedication and a modicum of intelligence.

The Pre-Socratic philosopher, Heraclitus, once said... “Much learning does not teach much understanding.”

1.1.2 What lesson can we learn from these observations?

We can learn that it is unwise for us university professors to spoon feed our students with facts in their educational programs. This is the essence of the role of Philosophy on the **HOW question** (methodology) of teaching at the University.

My preferred methodology of teaching philosophy is by way of dialogue between lecturer and student. **Why?**

Because it keeps the students thoughtful and reflective. It also makes the students to be active learners through the mutual participatory learning technique of question and answer.

For those who are reluctant in participation, I encourage them to respond to my questions and answers. This way all of us are on board. I avoid preaching as much as possible. **Why?**

Because, the University is the hallmark of sharpening, refining, articulating and expanding knowledge in theory and practice through analysis; by lecturer and student.

1.1.3 What is wisdom?

Wisdom is understood as the capacity for sound evaluation and integration of facts. In other words, wisdom is the capacity of judging

³ Ibid.p.42

rightly in matters relating to life and conduct. It entails soundness of judgment in the choice of means and ends in practical affairs by use of reason rather than emotion.

1.1.4 What then is knowledge?

Knowledge is a comprehension of facts. Knowledge may also be defined as personal acquaintance or familiarity with facts or range of information. It may also be defined as intellectual perception of truth.

Knowledge is theoretical or practical understanding of the fact or condition about which one is being instructed. Knowledge is the sum total of what is known or comprehension of facts. We have thus far been exposed to the distinction between knowledge and wisdom. Thus, Philosophy is the pursuit of wisdom and its formulation in words. The lover of wisdom “the philosopher” in the sense of Protagoras implies that, he/she must also call for the need to distinguish appearance from reality⁴.

One must, therefore, grasp the foundation of observation which falls in the areas of science. One cannot be wise about a situation in which one does not know the true facts.

1.1.5 What then is science?

Science is the Latinized name for **knowledge**. It is concerned with how things in nature come to be as man / woman experiences them. Science, in other words is knowledge discovered by observation. Science is the indispensable material foundation of **empirical philosophy**. It is knowledge discovered by observation.

In seeking the sort of understanding that the philosopher does, one may thereby achieve a better understanding of some more pressing practical problems of life.

1.1.6 What is the chief function of Philosophy?

A tradition dating back to the ancient Greeks holds that to illuminate the problems of conduct is ultimately the chief function of philosophy. For

⁴ Russell, Bertrand, **An Introduction to philosophy**, edited selections from his writings by Brian Carr, London pp. 126 – 128.

them, the study of the nature of reality had as its chief purpose, the aim of enabling men and women to understand better how they should live. Accordingly, they distinguished the theoretical from the practical uses of **reason**: the former to understand the world, and the latter to guide **conduct**. The attainment of excellence in each of these respects endowed man and woman with both theoretical and practical wisdom traits that exemplified the higher existence of men and women.

This is the point of the role of philosophy in the university whose product at graduation should be:

- A wholesome medical graduate who has excellence in theory and practice of medical practice as well as ethical practice in medicine.
- A wholesome engineer with excellence in theory and practice (professional ethics).
- A wholesome MBA graduate who has been taught business ethics, and be seen to conduct himself/herself ethically sound in theory as well as in practice.

These illustrative examples are a pointer to the positive role of philosophy in the university curriculum.

1.1.7 Problem of defining philosophy

While we may give recognition to Protagoras for coining the term “philosophy”, we must take note of the difficulty in giving a satisfactory formal definition of philosophy as a concept. **Why?**

Because unlike other disciplines, every definition of philosophy turns out to be an expression of an individual's limited conception, reflecting the practice of the enterprise in the definer's own culture and shutting out as much as it includes. **Why?**

Because, Philosophy, in other words, is to be seen in this sense as human enterprise to be inquired into rather than a term to be defined⁵.

⁵ The shorter Oxford English Dictionary prepared and edited by C.T. Onions, 3rd Edition Oxford at the Clarendon, 1970.

1.1.8 Modes of Understanding Philosophy

a) **Philosophy understood as critical and reflective thinking.**

When we speak of “the philosophy of x” where x stands for a particular person, what do we really mean?

Answer

We mean the sum total of beliefs X entertains or subscribes to either in theory or practice or both. For philosophical thinking, we must go beyond mere entertainment of beliefs.

Although it is true that every individual from his/her society has a certain philosophy or set of beliefs, it does not necessarily follow that every one of us is therefore a philosopher. Only a very small minority of the human race possess the critical or reflective attitude that is necessary in the proper thinking called philosophical.

We might at this juncture, pause the question:

“What is the difference between formulating and observing a philosophy?”

Formulating a philosophy means stating clearly and systematically, axioms, theories and principles of thought.

Observing a philosophy means understanding those principles of systematic thought as well as being able to give the correct account of their thought not only informatively but also being able to critically evaluate the thought and apply it in practice.

For example, by Socrates taking the poison (**hemlock**) proved that he was committed to his integrity as a Philosopher in theory and practice. He refused to be compromised.

Let us now pause and reflect on what philosophy consists in:

b) **Philosophy consists in concepts and theory.**

Philosophical thinking differs from ordinary reflective thinking in the sense that philosophical thought employs abstractions, formulating principles of laws while non-philosophical thought does not.

c) **Philosophy and science**

Science, like philosophy, formulates principles, laws and axioms, but unlike philosophy it applies these without

necessarily reflecting on them⁶. Philosophical thinking formulates theories while ordinary (non-philosophical) reflective thinking does not.

For example, one will decide which candidate to vote for in an election; the philosopher will state the principles on which he/she decides which candidate is best.

Philosophy and science are complementary in playing vital roles in human experience.

Let us now respond to the question:-

What is the relevance of philosophy in human experience?

d) Philosophy is relevant to the central tasks and problems of the meaning of human experience.

Philosophical thinking is not merely critical and reflective but rather, it is concerned about pursuit for wisdom in **solving problems in human experience**. This is the sense in which “philosophy” means the love for wisdom. Philosophy, therefore, is and must be relevant to making an inquiry into tasks and solutions of human problems.

In looking for solutions to these problems, what assumptions must we make in philosophy?

e) Philosophy presupposes existent knowledge.

While philosophical thinking is concerned with what is significantly relevant and meaningful in human experience, it also assumes familiarity, with what is thought to have been already found out about the world.

This enables the philosophers (scientists, psychologists, educators, researchers, engineers, doctors in medicine, sociologists and others) to move from the known to the unknown.

For example,

The correspondence theory of truth states that the truth of propositions is determined by the elements of the fact as well as the terms of the proposition.

⁶ See Russell, Bertrand, An introduction edited selections from his writings Brian Carr, London 1975 pp. 79.

f) Philosophy as an enterprise of interpretation and evaluation of knowledge.

Philosophy in this context raises fundamental questions of **importance, relevance, and value.**

This is the sense in which philosophy is understood as an interpretation of knowledge or of human experience in the light of already available knowledge.

The problem here, however, is that there has been, so far, little agreement concerning the correct account of reality, and conceptions developed according to various cultural, philosophical and literary influences upon thought of different philosophers.

Philosophical ideas are not spontaneous generations of the intellect in isolation both from its surroundings as well as from the personal temperament of its possessor.

The American pragmatist, William James, once wrote: "pretend what we may, the whole man within us is at work when we form our philosophical opinions."⁷

It has been once stated that the philosopher is the man or woman whose intellect is tuned to reality.

It has also been argued that different philosophers are, so to speak, tuned in at different wavelengths.

What each one conveys to us of his or her listening is inevitably influenced both by his/her personality and by the world around him/her.

In other words, it could be argued, a philosopher's thoughts reflect the spirit and temper of his / her time and space.

Let us pause and illustrate, with examples, various conceptualizations of reality:

Plato (427 – 347BC) for whom the prime motive was to meet the challenge of the Sophists, conceived reality in such a way as to provide an unshakable foundation for values of guiding conduct. This led him to postulate a higher order, supersensible realm of reality being apprehended solely through the intellect.

⁷ James, William (1969) *Essays in Pragmatism*, New York, pp 46-47.

By endowing such notions as justice and goodness with reality and enshrining them in this realm, he thought he had consecrated the foundation of human conduct for all time in the absolute sense as opposed to those who would make moral values relativistic like the **sophists** to whose ethical views, he was reacting to.

1.1.9 Major Branches of Philosophy.

There are two major branches of philosophy:

- i. Critical philosophy**
- ii. Speculative philosophy**

i. Critical Philosophy

What does critical philosophy entail? Critical philosophy entails critical examination and investigation of everything one knows and believes. There are two divisions of critical philosophy namely: **Epistemology** and **logic**.

A. Epistemology

What is epistemology? Epistemology is the science or theory of knowledge⁸. This is the branch of philosophy which investigates the origin, structure, methods and validity of knowledge.

What type of questions does epistemology respond to?

It responds to questions, such as:

- What are the sources and grounds of knowledge?
- What is the scope and extent of knowledge?
- When do we have assurance that we know?
- What is the difference between knowledge and faith?
- What is faith?
- Is faith the will to believe?
- What role does empirical science play in knowledge?
- What can we know?
- How do we know it?

⁸ Episteme means knowledge while logos means theory. The Oxford English dictionary p.623

For example,

If I state, “John knows that wizards exist,” I commit myself to their existence.

But if I state, “John believes wizards exist,” I do not commit myself to the existence of wizards.

Why not?

Because knowledge is justified true belief. But belief is a mere feeling which is not supported by any justification. Strictly, justification means “to demonstrate” rather than merely being able to “tell”.

For example:

1. George (who is dumb and therefore cannot report or tell), knows how to dress smartly. George’s demonstrated ability to dress smartly suffices his knowledge.
2. My dogs, Tommy and Sheila, guard my compound better than John, our former watchman.

Similarly, the fact that my dogs demonstrate their ability of guarding my compound entails their “knowledge” to guard despite the absence of their “telling” or “talking about it... their actions “speak” louder than words.⁹

Would I, postulate the same arguments for “non-thinking” objects like machines or robots?

My answer, is No. **Why?**

Because, dogs, like all thinking beings make choices such as to guard my compound well or poorly depending on many factors such as:-

- Their psychological moods about themselves vis-à-vis the family in our compound; how we treat them.
- Are they happy or not?
- Did we train them well or not?
- Do we treat them as part of the family or not?
- If the answer is yes, then they will defend “their” family.
- Do we love them or not?

⁹ Oniang'o Ibid p.20

- If yes, how do we demonstrate our love for Tommy and Sheila?

And the list goes on.

John might have his own story to demonstrate factors relevant to his poor performance as a guard compared to Sheila and Tommy.

For example, he dozes off at night or he is alcoholic. And again, the list goes on.

Types of Knowledge

a. A priori (analytic) knowledge.

This is knowledge by definition only.

Example:

- i. A triangle is a figure with three sides and three angles.
- ii. A bachelor is an unmarried man.

b. A posteriori (synthetic/empirical) knowledge.

This is knowledge based on sense experience.

A priori and a posteriori types of knowledge have been in controversy for many years on the basis of origin of knowledge.

What is my view on the controversy?

My view is that I recommend philosophers to embrace both sources of knowledge because they are complimentary in both philosophy of language (analytical knowledge) and (synthetic knowledge) in Philosophy of Science and Technology. Both branches are relevant and indispensable in philosophical research. Both are equally relevant and complimentary in philosophical discourse.

c. Propositional Knowledge

This entails knowing facts, e.g. knowing that Nairobi is the capital city of Kenya.

This type of knowledge is contrasted with knowing what Nairobi consists of e.g. streets, its location, interesting places in Nairobi e.g. parks, theatres, shopping malls.

d. Knowledge by Acquaintance

According to Bertrand Russell¹⁰: if I am acquainted with an object, say a human being, it can be a constituent of a proposition. I understand if I am also acquainted with this human being's proper name, say Kefa, this will be the subject of that proposition. If I know such a proposition to be true, I have knowledge of the object.

e. Knowing How and Knowing That

One way of distinguishing between knowing "How" and knowing "That" has been used in, for instance, ethics and philosophy of mind¹¹. For example, in moral knowledge we have prescribed knowledge of how one ought to behave, whereas in scientific knowledge we have factual knowledge, such as the earth is spherical rather than flat.

Rationalists and Empiricists on knowledge

Rationalists and empiricists have traditionally battled over the origin of knowledge.

What is my considered view on this battle?

My view is that by combining reason and empirical science in our philosophical inquiry we shall have a stronger tool and better results. Reason and empirical science are sine qua non to our research for the truth. For example in medical science, proper diagnosis is paramount to curability. Both need reason and applied science.

What is my conclusion?

The battle was misplaced, unnecessary and a waste of time. This is an issue of team spirit between reason and scientific research, in pursuit of solving problems such as the medical problem stated above.

B. Logic

What is logic? Logic is the normative science of thought, or rather, the systematic investigation of the fundamental process by which thought

¹⁰ Bertrand Russell: A History of Western Philosophy: The Philosophy of Logical Analysts p.828.

¹¹ Gilsent Ryle: Ethics and Philosophy of mind p.28.

becomes either verified and confirmed as true or falsified by inconsistency or for lack of evidence.

The central topic of logic is valid reasoning, its systematization and the study of notions relevant to it.

There are five sub-divisions in logic, namely:

a. Deductive Logic/ Aristotelian logic.

When is an argument deductive? An argument is deductive if it draws a conclusion from certain premises on the grounds that to deny the conclusion would be to contradict the premises.

In other words, it is an inference in which a conclusion follows necessarily from one or more given premises. The classical Aristotelian study of deductive logic centered on arguments involving propositions of a special kind called Categorical Propositions.

For example,

No athletes are vegetarians

All football players are athletes

Therefore, no football players are vegetarians.

b. Inductive Logic/Methodology/Applied logic.

It is concerned with critical investigation of facts.

What is induction?

In its widest sense, induction is any rational process where from premises about some things of a certain kind, a conclusion is drawn about some or all of the remaining things of that kind.

What then, is an inductive argument?

An argument is inductive in a strict sense if it draws a conclusion from premises directly in a single step. For example:

In a maize store of 100 bags, five bags of maize are found rotten.

Conclusion: The remaining sacks of maize are **probably** rotten.

OTHERS.

- c. Metaphysical Logic: Often referred to as Hegelian.**
- d. Symbolic Logic: This is mathematical.**
- e. Experimental Logic: often referred to as Dewey's logic**

ii. Speculative philosophy

What does speculative philosophy deal with?

This branch of philosophy deals with the first principles and recognizes values. Within speculative philosophy, there are two divisions namely, metaphysics and theory of value.

Metaphysics

This is the study of the ultimate reality of all things. It is an attempt to find a true account of reality. The study of first principles and ultimate problems has three sub-divisions under metaphysics, namely:

- i. Cosmology
- ii. Ontology
- iii. Metaphysical psychology

Cosmology: This deals with the Science of the universe as a whole. Cosmology also covers speculations (intelligent guesswork) about the universe as an orderly systematic whole. It also deals with the nature of cosmos; for example, is there a possibility of a form of life existing on other planets? If the answer is yes, this would offer a solution to the problem of population explosion on planet earth.

Ontology: This deals with speculations concerning pure being as well as the realm of human experiences.

For example, is it true or false that there is life after death? This is a serious concern of ontology. Until this is sorted out by ontology, "life after death" continues to be founded on faith/belief rather than facts.

Metaphysical psychology: This deals with mind, soul and personality. For example, can dreams foretell the future?

Theory of Value

This area of philosophy deals with the status of value in the universe for

instance, in ethics.

What is ethics? Ethics is the study of ideal human conduct. It is also referred to as moral philosophy. This discipline concerns itself with judgments of approval and disapproval of judgments about wrongness or rightness, goodness or badness, virtuous or vicious, desirability or undesirability of actions or affairs. Theory of value may concern itself with a psychological or sociological analysis and explanation of our ethical judgments, showing what our approvals and disapprovals consist in and why we approve or disapprove of what we do.

Challenges in Theory of Value.

Moral values are relativistic. What is virtuous in one community may be a vice in another community. The only level of agreeing on national virtues and vices can only be meaningfully agreed upon at the national level through a national referendum to make national laws to be observed by the community. In the absence of national referendum, ethnic communities will not settle their conflicting ethical values which are not in harmony with other communities leading to loss of peace and harmony.

1.2 Sophism

The term sophism comes from the Greek word “sophos” or “Sophia” (meaning “wise” or “wisdom”), and originally referred to any expertise in a specific domain of knowledge or craft. After a period where it mainly referred to poets, the word came to describe general wisdom about human affairs. Over time, it came to denote a class of itinerant intellectuals who taught courses in “excellence” or “virtue” (often charging high fees for it,) who speculated about the nature of language and culture, and who employed rhetoric to achieve their purpose (which was generally to persuade or convince others).

1.2.1 The Philosophy of the Sophists

- They asserted that each man/woman has his/her own perceptions.
- That one man's/woman's perceptions are as good as another's.
- That there is no truth binding on all alike.

- That man/woman in their particular nature is the measure of all things.
- That there are no fundamental principles of right.
- Their philosophy is relativistic while Plato's is absolute.

1.2.2 What is my assessment of Sophism?

I agree with the Sophists that in detail, each human being has his/her own perception. However, they can and do share some perceptions or values. Ethical values ipsofacto are not absolute like Plato demands.

On the issue that “one man's/woman's perceptions are as good as another's”, I contend that it depends:

If it is a matter of facts, then the experts' perception must be nearer to the humanly possible ideal standard than the learner's perception.

I shall illustrate my position:

As Professor of Philosophy, I am expected to be nearer to the academic standard of an ideal Ph.D. Proposal standard (as the advisor to my student) than the advisee (my student).

In this case the Sophists' position would undermine the University Senate Statutes, if my advisee's (student's) proposal standard would be as good as the advisor's.

Finally on this issue, the Sophists are mistaken that “there is no truth binding.”

I contend there is truth binding in accordance to which the advisor is the role model: there is an acceptable Ph.D. research proposal which will pass, and there will be an unacceptable Ph.D. research proposal which will FAIL.

The professor will assist the student to emulate his/her advisor's format. I disagree with the Sophists that “man in his particular nature is the measure of all things.”

I shall illustrate my position: A lady “Anyango” gives birth to a son at Pumwani Maternity ward at 8.00 a.m.

This morning Anyango’s cow “Debworu” gives birth to a calf in the cow shade at the same time 8.00 a.m. same morning.

Two hours later, compare the physical and psychological status of Anyango and Debworu. At the same time compare the physical and psychological status of Anyango’s son and Debworu’s calf with specific reference to:

- i. Motion individually unassisted. True (for the calf) but false for the baby.
- ii. Self service in suckling un-assisted. True (for the calf) but false for the baby.

Conclusion

The human team is inferior in terms of physical/mental development after birth.

- The calf can move, run and feed itself.
- The baby is still “under-developed” in similar circumstances.
- Anyango is off-duty with complete rest. Carefully assisting her son to breastfeed.
- Debworu is fit and continues on it’s grazing.

In this case the insistence by Sophists that “**man in his/her particular nature is the measure of all things**” is not true.

1.2.3 Who were the most prominent sophists?

Protagoras of Abdera (480-410 B.C).

This was the first man to call himself a Sophist.

- He proclaimed that the sensible world is a perpetual metamorphosis. Everything in the universe is in continuous change.
- Our empirical knowledge based on our sense perception is not reliable. It is deceptive.

My Comments on the Philosophy of Protagoras

By being the first man to call himself a Sophist, Protagoras distinguished himself as a man of integrity in ancient Greece. According to Bertrand Russell, the term “Sophist” had originally no bad connotation.¹²

A Sophist was a man who made his living by teaching young men things that would be useful to them in practical life.

What did Protagoras mean in his doctrine?

“Man is the measure of all things, of things that are that they are, and of things that are not that they are not.”

According to Protagoras, this should be interpreted as meaning that each man is the measure of all things, and that, when men differ, there is no objective truth in virtue of which one is right and which one is wrong.

The doctrine is essentially skeptical, and is presumably based on the “deceitfulness” of the senses.¹³

I am persuaded to contend that the Sophist Protagoras was the founder of **“Rational Skepticism”**.

For example, when a person has jaundice everything looks yellow. There is no sense in saying that things are really not yellow, but since the colour they present to a man in good health is different from yellow, we can say, however, that, since health is better than sickness, the opinion of the man in good health is better than that of the man who has jaundice. Since this point of view is a kin to **Pragmatism**, we can give credit to the Sophist Protagoras as the founder of the current American Pragmatic Philosophy.

¹² Ibid PP 143-146
Russell, Bertrand. A history of Western Philosophy pp73.

¹³ Ibid p.77

What the Sophists taught was the art of arguing. They were well prepared, like modern lawyers, to show how to argue for or against any opinions but not connected with religion or virtue (ethics). Our contemporary lawyers are indebted to the Sophists with regard to their art of oratory, logic, and persuasion.

1.3 Greek Philosophy

The starting point in Greek philosophy was the study of the ultimate reality in nature, which is metaphysics. The philosophy of the early Greeks was therefore, dominated by the search of the One Principle of ultimate cause which should explain phenomena. The first speculations were made by the early Ionian Physicists known as the School of Miletus.¹⁴

The most prominent scholar was Thales (640-550 B.C) who declared water and moisture to be the fundamental principle of life in the Philosophy of Nature. He was an astronomer, physicist and mathematician who stated:

“The principle of all things is water; all comes from water, and to water all returns.”¹⁵

Parmenides of Elea, unlike Heraclitus who maintained that everything changes, argued that nothing changes in time and space. According to Plato, Socrates in his youth (say about the year 450 B.C.) had an interview with Parmenides, then an old man and learned much from him. Whether or not this interview is historical, we may at least infer that Plato himself was influenced by the doctrines of Parmenides¹⁶.

¹⁴ Bentley, John Edward (1971) Philosophy: An Outline-History: PHILOSOPHY (Revised Edition Littlefield, Adams & Co. pp 120-122.

¹⁵ *ibid*

¹⁶ Russell, Bertrand, A History of Western Philosophy. Simon and Schuster, N.Y. pp48

1.3.1 What Parmenides of Elea Taught¹⁷

1. There is but one path which is the beginning of being; it is indestructible, without beginning or end, infinite, changeless, without parts and lacking nothing.
2. Thought is being. Therefore, Thought and Being is one. We cannot think non-being and therefore it does not exist.

It is noteworthy that Parmenides, who was influenced by Pythagoras, is historically important for inventing metaphysics based on logic. He is on record for influencing Socrates, Plato, Aristotle and Hegel who developed great respect for him.

1.3.1.1 Point of Clarification

Parmenides considered the senses deceptive with “the One” which is infinite and indivisible as the only true being. “The One” is not conceived by Parmenides as we conceive God. **Why not?**

Because he seems to think of it as material and extended for he speaks of it as a sphere, which cannot be divided, because the whole of it is present everywhere.

1.3.2 Classical Greek Philosophy (Socrates, Plato and Aristotle)

Socrates (469-399 B.C)

1.3.2.1 What is the summary of Socratic Philosophy?

Answer: Knowledge is virtue and virtue is happiness.

Socrates was responding to personal questions like:

1. What is life?
2. What is a good life?
3. How can we achieve it?

Socrates, who was a sculptor like his father, was attracted to the philosophy of the Sophists. His chief concern was to meet and react to the challenge the Sophists had created. His style of addressing his philosophy resembled the Sophists so much that he was mistaken for a Sophist.

¹⁷ Ibid

1.3.2.2 What is the background of Socrates' philosophy?

Socrates' Philosophy proceeds from the skepticism of Protagoras and the Sophists we have discussed. However, it differed from Protagoras in his assertion that moral ideas are fundamental to humanity.

Through his question/answer style referred to as **Socratic irony** or **feigned ignorance**, he made respondents discover truths for themselves. He never "preached" to his audience.

He entertained his audience individually with the objective of making them think correctly, with the intention of making them happy and useful citizens; he probed his hearer, involving him in contradictions and perplexities until ignorance was acknowledged.

1.3.2.3 Did Socrates leave any writings?

No, he left no writings. But his lectures were preserved by his enthusiastic pupils namely, Xenophon and Plato. Xenophon presents Socrates as a moral Philosopher and a natural religionist. For Plato, Socrates is regarded as a metaphysician, the rival of Heraclitus, Parmenides and Anaxagoras. Aristotle (his grand-student) regarded him to be the founder of ethics because he (Socrates) took up the unfinished philosophical problem of skeptics and the sophists.

He was obsessed with visions' contemplation in order to discover reason.

After Socrates' death, his doctrine dominated Greek thought. Socratism paved the way for Stoicism and Christianity. **Why?**

Because of his principle of universality, of providence and of the brotherhood of man.

1.3.2.4 Impact of Socratic Philosophy

Upon the death of Socrates, a number of schools arose. Each school professed to expound Socrates teaching.

For example,

- a. The school of Megara founded by Euclid of Megara who was a

disciple of Socrates focused on logic.

- b. The Elian school continued working with the technique of the Socratic dialogue.
- c. Cyrenaics held that pleasure was the highest good. When reason fails, seek pleasure.
- d. The Epicureans held that the wise man will take pleasure as it comes.
- e. The Cynics rejected the pleasure theory and made virtue for virtue's sake.
- f. The Stoics took up the teaching.

The schools made man sovereign in his own right. Finally, Socraticism flourished through Plato and Aristotle.

I disagree with Plato's emphasis that man/woman misbehaves or engages in wrong activities because of ignorance. According to Socrates "Knowledge is virtue and virtue is happiness."

It does not follow that human beings commit crimes because they are ignorant of the law. I contend that in spite of knowledge of what to do that is right, man breaks the law and commits a crime with impunity.

1.3.2.5 My Modus Operandi

I suggest that man/woman understands what he/she ought to do in compliance with the law and on top of this understanding; **man/woman must commit himself/herself to good** conduct in action. This is, in my view an addendum to Socratic prescription of good conduct that will produce happiness.

The commitment to knowledge will guarantee man's respect for the law and desire to be a good citizen. Knowledge alone without commitment is inadequate to yield good conduct or happiness.

In a rampantly corrupt society, law abiding, good and committed citizens to law and order, unfortunately, suffer most, while the law breakers go unpunished and are happy.

My second amendment is that man / woman must make good laws, where a good law is defined as: appropriate, reasonable, flexible and

capable of protecting law abiding citizens from the criminal minded ones. This will put good sense in every Kenyan citizen and will make all of us passionately committed to be law abiding citizens.

In the first book of the Republic, Plato argues that there is no justice except the interest of the stronger, that laws are made by governments for their own advantage; and that there is no impersonal standard to which to appeal in contests for power. He continues to add that power corrupts and excessive power corrupts absolutely.

1.3.2.6 Summary and Conclusion of Socrates' Philosophy.

In Socrates' view, moral ideas are fundamental to humanity. Fallacious thinking and wrong conduct are results of misconceived truth; that is, if man knows the truth, he will think correctly and behave well. Socrates maintained that man could never know exactly the nature of the world, its origin, and its end.

He argued that the man/woman who knows that he/she knows nothing is wiser than he/she who thinks that he/she knows something or everything. The former will seek knowledge, while the latter will be content; as a result he/she will be ignorant since he/she did not bother to gain knowledge.

1.3.2.7 Socrates' Notion of Evil in the Context of the Kenyan Acts of Impunity

For Socrates no man sins voluntarily. Sin or evil in this respect, is a form of intellectual error and defect.

Socrates believed in re-incarnation and the immortality of the soul. He claimed to be guided by his life and mission by an inward spirit and it is widely believed that Socrates had great powers by which he concentrated intensely.

Socrates maintained that men/women always aim at the good though they may be mistaken whether the good really is because of ignorance or passion. Socrates was concerned with the question: what does it mean for man/woman to be virtuous?

His answer was:

“To be virtuous is to know what is good through critical and philosophical reflection”.¹⁸

Again Socrates is mistaken and continues to create excuses for some human beings who commit evil acts knowingly (they are breaking the law) with impunity and if/when caught they are ready to bribe some law makers again, with impunity.

For example,

Over speeding, illegal U-turns, wrong parking, e.t.c

In all the above illustrations, there is none committed through intellectual error. These are instances of knowingly breaking the law.

Mega illustrations cover the Kenya's Anglo-leasing, Kamlesh Pattni and Goldenberg scandals in Kenya all ending in circuses with little evidence of well accomplished justice.

His method of cross-examination and bluntness made him unpopular when Athens was defeated in a war with Sparta in 404 B.C. This resulted to political turmoil. The government officials searched for political scapegoats and tried Socrates on charges of corrupting the youth with his teachings and failure to follow the Orthodox religions of his State. He was condemned and put to death in 399 B.C.

According to Plato's dialogue in Phaedo, the narrator of the scene in the last sentence of his dialogue states:

“Such was the end of our friend, concerning whom I may truly say of all men of his time whom I have known; he was the wisest and the most just and best.”¹⁹

1.3.2.8 The Socratic Paradox

This paradox lies in Socrates' contention that although men act

¹⁸ Oniang'o C.M.P pp75.

¹⁹ Ibid pp. 75

immorally, none does so deliberately. As it has been shown above, Socrates believed that when man knows what is good, he acts towards achieving it. Accordingly, evil is due to ignorance.

My Final Comment: With great humility and respect, I disagree with Socrates that evil is necessarily due to ignorance. Why?

Because intense emotional passion, temptation, and self-interest will most likely out-weigh man's wish to be virtuous and tip man's scale of choice in favour of evil action.

1.4 PLATO (427-347 B.C.)

1.4.1 Life of Plato

Born of a noble family, Plato was highly educated. He was the greatest pupil of Socrates and reconstructed his (Socrates') doctrine. He in turn was the teacher of Aristotle.

1.4.2 What were the philosophical tasks of Plato?

They were to think through the work begun by his master, Socrates. He offered:

- i. A theory of knowledge (epistemology)
- ii. A theory of conduct (ethics)
- iii. A theory of state (Political Science) and
- iv. A theory of the universe (cosmology)

1.4.3 Plato's theory of knowledge (epistemology)

Plato sought to comprehend knowledge in all its phases, namely, physical, mental and moral, which must come from a complete understanding of the nature of the world.

He argued that "if knowledge is derived from sense perception then the Sophists were right that there can be no genuine knowledge."

He contended that sense perception does not reveal the true reality of things while genuine knowledge, he argued, is based on reason, not sense perception or opinion.

For Plato, if the idea is to have any value as knowledge, something real must correspond to it. This is known as the **Correspondence theory of truth**. According to this theory, if the objects of our ideas were not real, our knowledge would not be genuine knowledge. That perceived by our senses is not the true world but is rather appearance or illusion. The true world is changeless and eternal.

1.4.4 Plato's Theory of the State (Political Science)

Plato's Republic is based on his ethics and provides for virtue, the highest good being realized in human society. The virtue of wisdom (courage, self control, and justice) must function in the good state in order to achieve happiness.

1.4.5 Why are laws needed?

Laws are needed because men are neither rational nor virtuous. Laws exist for the realization of man's true good. The state must be organized like the rational universe in which reason must rule.

1.4.6 What type of class system does Plato recommend for the government?

He recommends a three-class system in which philosophers must be the ruling class. He refers to this as a class of Philosopher Kings.

The Second class is that of warriors (soldiers) which should assume the task of defence because they represent the will which Plato refers to as the spirited element of courage.

The third class which is the lowest is represented by agriculturalists, merchants of the blue collar workers who are the producers of material goods. He refers to them as the Lower appetites.

For Plato, every citizen must have an occupation which contributes to the good of the state according to his or her natural capacity.

The ideal state is a complete unit founded on the highest knowledge obtainable.

On Education, Plato's view is that "The Ideal State" must undertake the education of children far away from their homes and treated equally for over thirty years, control of marriage and property and prepare its best fitted citizens for government and political power.

1.4.7 My critique to Plato's idea of philosopher kings

While I am committed to the relevance of academic credentials for academic promotions and appointments, I disagree with Plato's idea of philosopher kings. In the Kenyan human experience, we have had very credible and outstanding leaders without high academic credentials. We have also had very poor governors with high academic credentials. Plato's generalization is not correct. I propose strict scrutiny of credentials, elaborate interviews in (theory and practice) to establish meritocratic appointments.

1.4.8 Plato's Ethics (Study of Human Conduct)

It is difficult to determine where in the Republic writings, which were composed over a period of nearly fifty years, the views of Plato begin and where those of his teacher (Socrates) end.

This difficulty creates a problem of determining the boundary between the philosophical contributions between them.

It is quite possible that in the early dialogues, Plato is primarily a reporter of the views of his teacher Socrates. Like Socrates, Plato never definitely answers the basic ethical questions:

What is a good life for man?

How can it be attained?

Throughout his writings, Plato suggested one answer after another, but those he arrives at were either held tentatively or rejected elsewhere.²⁰ In the Protagoras, for instance, he entertains the hypothesis that the good life is a life of pleasure. Yet in the Gorgias and the Phaedo, he explicitly denies pleasure not to be good at all. But one hypothesis Plato is clear as, he contends that if man knows what is good, he will always act so as to attain it.

The problem of course is:

How do we ascertain what goodness consists in?

This he has yet to answer. Instead, Plato attempts to answer the question:

“How do we attain the knowledge of goodness?”

He contends that in order to discover the knowledge of the good life man must be subjected to a long period of intellectual training in the following subjects:

- Mathematics
- Astronomy
- Music
- Philosophy

He believes that through such intensive instruction, man can eventually acquire knowledge of the good life and upon having that knowledge man will understand the nature of the good and try to achieve it.

What does Plato seem to be suggesting?

He seems to be implying that the search for good life is tied to the theory of knowledge (epistemology).

1.4.9 What is the major thesis in this regard for Plato?

The major thesis in this regard is that goodness is an independent existing entity to be discovered or apprehended by an act of rational exercise in the same way as the truth of mathematical statement that one is equal to one.

²⁰Russell B.pp.105.

I contend that Plato is Mistaken, Why?

Because a mathematical statement is true whether we like it or not, approve or disapprove of it, believe or disbelieve of it.

Finally, Plato argues that moral standards are just as objective as the principles of physics or the theories of mathematics.

He contends that those who think morality is a matter of opinion do so because they lack the knowledge of judging otherwise.

For Plato, therefore, a statement like:

“It is wrong to lie” is true in the same sense of the statement:

“The distance from the earth to the moon is 239,000 miles.”

My Analysis

Plato is mistaken to contend that the first statement: “It is wrong to lie” is absolute and objective just as the second statement.

The first statement depends on circumstances: it can be either Yes or No. While the second statement is objective and can be authenticated as absolute and objective scientifically.

Illustration

Supposing my good friend comes to my house to hide from his enemy chasing after him, and I lock him in the closet. After a short while his enemy arrives looking for him to take his life and asks me whether I have seen the endangered friend. Should I tell the assailant the truth, or lie to him?

I will lie to him to save my friend. In so doing my action will be responding to the question: **“is lying sometimes the right thing for an honest person to do?”**

And my answer is **Yes**, lying is sometimes the right thing to do depending on circumstance. So, moral (ethical) principles like:

“Thou shall not Lie” should be reflected upon circumstantially i.e. relatively, rather than absolutely or factual.¹⁷

Conclusion

Plato, once again, is confusing mathematical facts with ethical (relativistic) statements.

As we have seen above, Plato's ethical view rests upon two basic assumptions:

- If man knows what is right or good in any circumstance he will act morally in that circumstance.

Accordingly, I knew what was right, appropriate and good in my circumstance, and critically reflected and lied in that circumstance. My lying gave me as well as my friend happiness.

Plato Continues

- Moral rules have an objective validity which in no way are dependent upon man's tastes, opinions or preferences.

In my lying case, I gave happiness to myself and my friend and sadness to the enemy of my friend (who could have hurt him if I had not lied). So my lying (Self interest) brought happiness to the two of us and here Plato is mistaken by stating that "This act in no way was dependent upon man's taste (it actually did depend on my taste, opinion and preference) to make the two of us happy at the expense of the enemy.

If (according to Plato) man/woman always aims at good or right actions, then how can we account for the obvious fact that man/woman often acts immorally?

Plato would respond to the question by asserting that such behavior always stems from the lack of knowledge. That sometimes one may be mistaken in believing in a choice or an act is worthwhile. Accordingly such a person may strive to attain a goal which is evil without realizing his/her mistake. He/she is ignorant of the fact. For Plato, ignorance is due to lack of knowledge so that in this case the person may indeed act immorally without ever having intended to do so.

To hold such a view is to maintain that evil is never committed

deliberately. But then this raises an ethical problem since the only actions which he/she intends to carry out voluntarily rather than those he does involuntarily.

If, for example, he/she breaks a plate accidentally, it would not make sense for anybody to blame him/her for doing so. On the basis of Plato's contention, it would appear that evil conduct falls into the same class as involuntary acts and therefore, nobody can properly be held responsible for the evil he/she does involuntarily.

If Plato's moral theory is taken seriously, then this principle cannot meaningfully account for the ordinary notion of responsibility.

On the other hand it can imply that people can be held responsible for acting morally, but not for acting immorally, which is absurd.

Either alternative is clearly unacceptable. No wonder Plato's moral theory leads to the dilemma known as Socratic Paradox.

Another difficulty in connection with the principle is that, as Plato formulates it, which implies that man/woman always behaves to further his/her interests whenever she or he can discover what these interests are.

Since the good, according to Plato is that which always furthers a person's interests it follows that in any given case when the good is known, man will always seek it. But this is not necessarily the case. Many people who smoke know that smoking is harmful to them yet they continue smoking. In this case, the smoker engages in the pleasurable act which is not the good for the man's/woman's health.

1.5 ARISTOTLE (383-322 B.C.)

1.5.1 Introduction

Aristotle the philosopher is radically different from the predecessors we have thus far discussed, namely, Socrates and Plato. **Why?**

Because Aristotle distinguishes himself in his scholarly achievement as

being the first to write like a professional philosopher. **How?**

All his work is systematic unlike Socrates and Plato. Aristotle writes as a professional teacher rather than an inspired preacher. Aristotle has enormously contributed to Physical science, literary criticism, Metaphysics, Ethics, Politics, Physics, Logic, Biology and much more.

1.5.2 Background

Aristotle was born fourteen years after the death of Socrates. His father was a court physician to the King of Macedon. He entered Plato's Academy in Athens at the age of 18. Plato, his teacher was 60 years old. He remained in the Academy until Plato's death. Later, Aristotle became the tutor of the son of King of Macedon, 13 years old boy who became Alexander the Great. About 335 B.C. Aristotle returned to Athens and founded his school. Twelve years later, he was threatened with persecution, so he went into exile. He died in 322 B.C.

In Aristotle's view, the chief good is happiness.

What is happiness?

For Aristotle, happiness is complete self-realization; it consists of contemplation of the truth.

In his moral theory, Aristotle contends that the greatest good is not pleasure but virtue which must be made a habit. A virtuous soul is a well ordered soul. It is the relation which exists between reason and desire.

A rational attitude should be assumed towards bodily desires or appetites. The virtuous must obey or observe The Principle of the Golden Mean. This principle is a law of moderation.

The intellectual virtues aim at the attainment of truth. The means for attainment of truth are Art, Science, Prudence, Wisdom, Initiative and Reason.

My Comment on Aristotle's Golden Mean

- Does Aristotle's doctrine of the mean provide an accurate analysis of the concept of virtue?

In particular, can't one conceptualize virtues which do not lie between:

1. Keeping a promise and not keeping it?

Is it not true that either one keeps a promise or doesn't?

2. What is the "Aristotelian" middle course between telling the truth and telling a lie?

Aristotle's doctrine of the Golden Mean fails to provide an accurate analysis of the concept of virtue. **Why?**

Because the principle waters down virtue to moderation. Since for Aristotle, intellectual virtues aim at the attainment of truth, the result will be moderate truth which fails to make sense whether something is either true or false, someone is either telling the truth or lying.

Mine is an existentialist solution to the Aristotelian dilemma:

Man/woman must make a decision and act according to his/her choice. But he/she should make sure that they give a full account of their choices.

This in my view is the most responsible opportunity of man's use of his/her freedom, rather than Aristotle's Golden Mean which amounts to indecisiveness.

My proposal on what is virtue

First, values vary from community to community and from culture to culture. What is virtuous in one culture may be a vice in another culture. Virtue as a concept is a quality of persons that drives them to act voluntarily in conformity with moral principles of a given community/culture at a given time. In other words, this person has the capacity of articulating the reasons why he/she made this moral choice. He/she is not a robot but is aware and willing to conform with the principles in his/her life or conduct.

Conclusion

Virtue is a full measure of capacity in human action and not partial measure as Aristotle falsely claims. In time and space, it is dynamic and not static. That is, it changes from time to time and from place to place.

1.5.3 Aristotle's Contribution to Philosophy

As a prolific writer and polymath, Aristotle radically transformed most; if not all areas of knowledge he touched.

Aristotle distinguishes between theoretical sciences (Mathematics, Physics and Metaphysics) and practical sciences (Ethics and politics), and applied sciences (Mechanical and Artistic production).

Aristotle is the founder of scientific logic. As the father of the field of logic, he was the first to develop a formalized system of reasoning.

Aristotle observed that the validity of any argument can be determined by its structure rather than its content.

A classic example of a valid argument is his syllogism.

A syllogism is a kind of logical argument that applies deductive reasoning to arrive to a conclusion based on two or more propositions that are asserted or assumed to be true.

In its earliest form, defined by Aristotle, from the combination of a general statement (the major premise) and a specific statement (the minor premise) a conclusion is deduced.

For example, knowing that all men are mortal (major premise) and that Plato is a man (minor premise); we may validly conclude that Plato is mortal.

Syllogistic arguments are usually represented in a three-line form (without sentence-terminating periods):

**“All men are mortal
Plato is a man
Therefore, Plato is mortal”**

Given the structure of this argument, as long as the premises are true, then the conclusion is also guaranteed to be true.

Aristotle's brand of logic dominated this area of thought until the rise of modern propositional logic and predicate logic 2000 years later.

In Metaphysics (the discovery of ultimate principles) Aristotle's decision about the knowledge of something was based on the idea of **causality**. He asserted that all things could be attributed to four kinds of causes:

1. Material cause
2. Formal cause
3. Efficient cause
4. Final cause

Material cause: This is the first type of causality discussed by Aristotle. This is a description of the material out of which something is composed. For example, the material cause of a statue can be wood, bronze, gold e.t.c.

Formal cause: This cause determines what an object is. For example, bronze or gold is melted and designed to be a statue. Similarly, wood is arranged into the form of a chair, which makes it a chair.

Efficient cause: This is what triggers the change that makes something what it is. For example, a sculptor carves bronze or gold into a statue, similarly, a carpenter arranges wood into a chair.

Final cause: This is the purpose of something. For example, a bronze or gold statue is meant to be a statue which makes it a statue. In the same case, a wooden chair is meant to be a chair which makes it a chair.

Aristotle's emphasis on good reasoning and his belief in the scientific method forms the pillar for most of his work. For example, in his work in ethics and politics, Aristotle identifies the highest good with intellectual virtue; that is, a moral person is one who cultivates certain virtues based on reasoning.

1.5.4 The Golden Mean

Aristotle in particular elaborated the concept of the golden mean. "The golden mean" is the desirable middle between two extremes, one of excess and the other of deficiency. It is the keeping of the mean between two extremes e.g. keeping the mean between full hardness (extreme of

excess) and cowardice (extreme of deficiency).

I have challenged this mode already in terms of difficulty in establishing exactitude in virtuous actions: An ethical person is either right or wrong with respect to established principles of a virtuous action/choice or a vicious action. This makes it difficult in practical terms to implement Aristotle's principle of the golden mean.

In his work on Psychology and the Soul, Aristotle distinguishes sense perception from reason, which unifies and interprets the sense perceptions and is the source of all knowledge.

1.5.5 Aristotle's distributive justice

Aristotle argues that since individuals differ in ability, justice demands that they be treated according to these differences. Specifically, Aristotle is on record for stating that slaves and women should not enjoy same justice as anybody else but rather, as inferior citizens. In other words, on this score Aristotle failed to demonstrate the wisdom of a non-discriminatory wise scholar on the issue of fair play for humanity in-itself as distinguished from "fair play for humanity-for-itself."

Aristotle's distributive justice holds that before the law, all men and women must be treated unequally.²¹

²¹ Bentley J.E. Philosophy: An outline History .The American University. Littlefield, Adams N.J.U.S.A pp.21

2.0 AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY

2.1 What is African Philosophy?

In defining African Philosophy, it is of paramount importance to understand sources of African philosophical thought.

African philosophical thought is expressed both in oral literature and in the thoughts and actions of the people. Thus a great deal of philosophical material is embedded in the proverbs, myths, folk songs, folk tales, rituals, beliefs, customs and traditions of the people; in their art symbols, socio-political institution and practices.

I am persuaded that we distinguish Traditional African Philosophical Thought (which I shall argue that exists) from Modern African Philosophy (which I contend is still in the making).

Indigenous Philosophical Thought in many African communities has been handed over from generation to generation.

By Modern African Philosophy, we refer to the philosophy that is being produced by contemporary African philosophers, but which reflects or has basis in African experience, thought categories and cultural values. This being so, the distinction between Traditional and Modern African Philosophy cannot be hard and fast. **Why?**

Because some of the elements of categories of traditional thought, due to their outstanding qualities their inseparability from the cultural life and thought of the people will naturally be reflected in the Modern African Philosophical presentations.

More importantly, it is relevant to refer to the following resolution passed at the second congress of the Negro Writers and Artists held in Rome in 1959 by the commission of philosophy:

“Considering the dominant part played by philosophic reflection in the elaboration of culture, considering that until now the West has claimed on monopoly of philosophic reflection, so that philosophic enterprise no longer seems conceivable outside the framework of the categories forged by

the West, considering that the philosophic effort of Traditional Africa has always been reflected in vital attitudes and has never had purely conceptual aims, the commission declares that:

1. For the African philosopher, philosophy can never consist of reducing the African reality to the Western systems.
2. The African philosopher must base his inquiries upon the fundamental certainty that the Western philosophic approach is not the only possible one; and therefore, urges that:
 - (a) The African philosopher should learn from the traditions, tales, myths, and proverbs of his people, so as to draw from them the laws of a true African wisdom complementing to the other forms of human wisdom and to bring out the specific categories of the African thought.
 - (b) Calls upon the African philosopher, faced by the totalitarian or egocentric philosophers of the West, to divest himself of a possible inferiority complex, which might prevent him from stating from his African being to judge the foreign contribution."²²

Why is this solution significant?

It is significant because it underlines and stresses the idea that modern African philosophers must be participants in the cultural life and experience of the community.

How? This can be demonstrated as follows in line with the laws of dialectics and add value to the Traditional African cultural thought:

Accordingly, the cultural life and experience of the community is the THESIS, the Modern African philosophers are **ANT-THESIS. THE PRODUCT OF THE DIALECTICAL IS THE SYNTHESIS.**

What are the characteristics of the synthesis?

In accordance with the laws of the dialectics and with special reference

²² Ibid pp.33

to Prof. Odera Oruka's philosophical sagacity, there must be a philosophical **dialogue**.

In the dialogue, there are two different camps of thinkers:

1. The sage camp: These are experts of the Traditional African cultural thought (cultural wisdom).
2. The professors of philosophy: These are University trained scholars in Western thought as well as African distinguished universities.

The sages are the Thesis "A" component.

The university professors are the Anti-thesis "B" component.

The two camps hold ideas which are different from and opposed to each other. ("A" component holds Traditional African values "B" component holds ideas on Modern Western Thought).

The interaction in the dialogue will yield to SYNTHESIS. The synthesis will consist in intrinsic ideas from "A" and "B".

The synthesis will become THESIS which (in time and space) will have ANTITHESIS. The same dialogue will develop.

NB: The process continues into infinity.

What does the synthesis consist in?

The synthesis consists in:

1. The product of the critical examination in the dialogue.
2. The refined truth or opinion.
3. The two contradictions will merge themselves into a higher qualitatively superior level that comprehends the two opposing sides.

2.2 My recommendation of dialectics

Both the African Traditional Thought and the sages must be subjected to the above thorough examination by the laws of the dialectics whose exponent was G.W.I Hegel, a German philosopher.

According to Hegel, the examination into the truth of the opinion must undergo thorough dialectical process which has been stated as thesis, ant-thesis, and synthesis. Hegel is the pioneer of the process of thought by which such contradictions are seen to merge themselves in a higher, qualitative superior truth that comprehends them and to the world process, which, in his view is but the thought process on its objective side and develops similarly by a continuous unification of opposites.²³

Why am I proposing Odera Oruka's sagacity to incorporate the Hegelian dialectics? Because this approach will eliminate the doctrinaire “worshiping” of our traditional ideas and values unexamined which is not compliant with the principles of critical thinking.

I contend (unlike Plato) that ideas, values and solutions to problems are changing from time to time and from place to place.

This approach will refine Traditional African thought to contemporary African thought and embrace future ideas, thoughts and philosophical analysis.

Even Western thought has tremendously changed from the sophism, classical Greek philosophy to contemporary thought.

This tool of dialectics does confirm that contemporary African Thought and practice is at a more unified level than the past.

2.3 Modes of African Thought

African philosophical thought has been classified into four categories:

2.3.1 Pre-modern African Philosophy

a) In North Africa e.g. Egyptian scientific thought in Mathematics, Engineering, Islamic thought and Christian thought.

These are on record and they all constitute Pre-modern African philosophy.

b) West Africa, the Horn of Africa, Southern Africa, Central Africa, and African Diaspora.

²³ Shorter Oxford English Dictionary, On Historical Principles pp.500-501.’

All the above areas of the African continent and African Diaspora have evidence of pre-modern African thought and practice that is philosophical and displayed in their proverbs.

2.3.2 Modern African Philosophy

According to Prof. Odera Orika there are four strands of Modern African philosophy namely:

- i. Ethnophilosophy
- ii. Philosophical sagacity
- iii. Ideological political philosophy
- iv. Professional philosophy

i. What is Ethnophilosophy?

This is the approach which treats African philosophy as consisting in a set of shared beliefs, values, categories and assumptions that are implicit in the language practices and beliefs of African cultures.²⁴

What does this mean?

It means that the metaphysical categories of, for example, the Bantu people (as researched by Placide Temples) are reflected in their linguistic categories about reality or world view. This has been reviewed and confirmed by similar works of E.J Algoa (University of Port Harcourt, Nigeria).

This professor of languages argues for existence of African Philosophy of History stemming from African traditional proverbs from Niger Delta in his paper: "An African philosophy of History in the oral tradition" He argues that in the African thought, age is as an important factor in gaining wisdom and interpreting the past.

In support of this view, he cites proverbs such as:

"More days more wisdom."

²⁴ Kwame Gyekye pp. 104

“What an old man sees seated, a youth does not see it standing.”
“Truth never rots.” Truth is seen in this culture as eternal and unchanging, but people are subject to error.
“Even a four-legged horse stumbles and falls.”
“Even a bird with a long neck cannot see the future.”

Wisdom in this culture reflects on history of man:

“One ignorant of his origin is inhuman.”

In this culture, historians “the sons of the soil” are held in high esteem:

“The son of the soil has a python’s eyes.”²⁵

Some African scholars have undermined the spirit of African Philosophical Thought e.g. Leopold Senghor of Senegal:

“The distinctive African approach to reality is based on emotion rather than logic, works out in participation rather than analysis, and manifests itself through the arts rather than sciences.”

This observed view by Senghor that Africans are inherently emotional is fallacious.

There is a historical evidence to prove that Egypt and Nubia both with African Culture had scholarly achievements on record e.g. Egypt’s achievements in Mathematics, Architecture and Philosophy.

There are well established trade networks in North Africa, West Africa and Central Africa.

In Great Zimbabwe, there are well established political systems in kingdoms.

Senghor’s view on the African mind and body is typical of the extreme racist view that the African mind has no logical foundations except bodily “Rhythm.”

ii. Philosophical sagacity

This is a sort of individual version of Ethnophilosophy of recorded beliefs of certain special members of a community.

What is the premise here?

The premise here is that although most societies demand some degree of conformity of beliefs and behaviors from their members,

²⁵ Ibid pp.108

a certain small percentage of these members reach a particularly high level of knowledge and understanding of their cultures' world views; these are sages. In some cases the sage goes beyond mere understanding and knowledge to reflection and questioning. These become the candidates of philosophical sagacity.

Critics of this approach note that not all reflection and questioning is philosophical, besides (they argue) if African philosophy were to be defined purely in terms of philosophical sagacity, then the thoughts of the sages could not be African philosophy. **Why not?** Because they did not record them from other sages.

I am reluctant to be persuaded by the conditionality of recording. I agree that not all "reflection and questioning is philosophical."

I contend that:

"Only a very small minority of the human race possesses the critical or reflective attitude that is necessarily in the proper thinking called philosophical."²⁶

Secondly the pointed out "weakness" on the ground that there are no records from other sages which becomes an argument denying Traditional African Thought as philosophy has no merit as follows:

Early Greek thought from the sophists was passed on from generation to generation without any records.

Why create a conditionality of "record keeping" to African Philosophy and not Western Thought?

- Heraclitus on "constant change" left no records.
- Socrates left no records for Plato yet we all respect Socratic thought as philosophy.
- We can also add the conditionality of logic to the African Thought. When did formal scientific logic in Western Thought start with Aristotle?

iii. Professional philosophy

Professional philosophy is usually identified as that produced by African philosophers trained in the Western philosophical tradition that

²⁶ Oniang'o, C.M.P. An Introduction to Philosophy. pp.4.

embraces a universal view of the methods and concerns of philosophy.

Those philosophers identified in this category often explicitly reject the assumptions of Ethnophilosophy and adopt a universal world view of philosophy that requires all philosophy to be accessible and applicable to all people and cultures in the world. Some African philosophers classified in this category are Paulin Houtondji, Peter Bodunrin, and Kwasi Wiredu to name but a few.

iv. Nationalist and Ideological philosophy.

This is a special case of philosophical sagacity in which not sages but ideologies are the subjects. Alternatively, it has been considered as a subcategory of professional political philosophy. e.g. Julius Nyerere's African Socialism (Ujamaa) ,Ubuntu of Southern Africa region (Zimbabwe Southern African Region, Kaunda's Humanism).

Here comes the big question: **Is there an African philosophy? Or does the African philosophy exist?**

Many scholars have responded to this question in different ways.

Let us address two main reasons for the resilient skepticism against the existence of African philosophy:

First objection against the existence of African philosophy is based on lack of texts or written records in Africa's historical past.

I have dismissed this argument as inadequate basis of denying African Traditional thought as philosophy. Traditional Greek thought which is the foundation of Western Thought from the sophists to Plato has no evidence of written text, yet is accepted as philosophical thought. The history of the Western thought exposes facts, shown, to prove that both cultures, Western and African, shared this characteristic. So justice demands that they both be treated equally i.e. both are philosophical cultures.

G.S. Kirk who has done much research on Pre-Socratic philosophy has

this to support my critiques:

“It is possible that Heraclitus wrote no book, in our sense of the word. The fragments, or many, have the appearance of being isolated statements... In or perhaps shortly after Heraclitus' lifetime, a collection of these sayings was made conceivably by a pupil. Originally Heraclitus utterances had been oral and so were put into an easily memorable form.”²⁷

The fragments were, thus, a collection of sayings (Greek sayings, aphorisms, maxims) and because of their philosophical content or relevance, surviving fragments were utilized by later thinkers engaged in the reconstruction as well as resurrection of early Greek philosophy.

Here are some examples of fragments attributed to Heraclitus.²⁸

- Much learning does not teach understanding.
- Unless you expect the unexpected you will never find truth for it is hard to discover and hard to attain.
- Everything flows and nothing abides.
- You cannot step twice into the same river, for other waters are continually flowing on.

Compare the many of the surviving fragments which are, to say the least, cryptic, elliptical, and pithy not UNLIKE African proverbs and maxims.

The use of proverbs, aphorisms, or sayings to formulate a philosophical proposition or doctrine was therefore not a method peculiar to African thinkers in the past. That method as we have seen was employed by the forerunners of Western and Indian philosophy.

2.4 MY CONCLUSION

It would be inconsistent, therefore, to recognize the fragments as embodying our earliest intimation of Greek philosophy and then to refuse to accept (some) African proverbs and sayings as a source of knowledge of African Traditional philosophy.

Therefore, from the foregoing analysis, African Philosophy exists.

²⁷ Gakye .K. PP.102.

²⁸ Ibid

2.5 Further grounds for the non-existence of African philosophy

The following are some of the sweeping claims by skeptics of the non-existence of African philosophy:

- That Africans are incapable of having a philosophy on the ground that they have a low caliber of IQ (Intelligence Quotient).
- That inherently, Africans have no philosophical inquiry but emotionalism. (E.g. Hegel and Levy Bruhl).
- That there is no logic in the African cultural mode.

2.5.1 MY CONSIDERED RESPONSE.

When one takes a serious and sustained look at the proverbs in the African culture, one will find these proverbs pointing at:

- Ethics: Human conduct.
- Metaphysics: Ultimate reality in nature.
- Epistemology: Knowledge/wisdom.
- Applied philosophy: Relevant to religion, education, society and political philosophy.
- Reason: Which some skeptics claim to be non-existence in African thought. It is very much emphasized in very many African cultures.

Let us illustrate:-

In Luhya: “eshifune”

In Luo: “Ang’o momiyō”

In Kikuyu: “Kihooto”

In Kikamba: “Niki kitumi”

Philosophy understood as “love for wisdom” features prominently in African cultural proverbs.

Keeness “to learn,” “to know” rather than “boasting” to know everything.

Which things are stressed to be known in the proverbs?

- Physical/Material.
- Psychological.

- Moral.
- Spiritual.

In other words, to understand to have knowledge of nature and its natural manifestations.

This is a type of wholesome knowledge of things in nature (in the existentialist sense):

Both “in- themselves as well as for-themselves.”

All the above listed are points or subjects of philosophy which are covered in the African cultural philosophy through proverbs.

2.6 CONCLUSION.

If the above listed topics are subject matter of philosophy and are found and articulated in African proverbs, then, African philosophy exists both in theory and practice.

3.0 WHAT IS THE UNIVERSITY?

3.1 DEFINITION OF THE UNIVERSITY.

The university is an institution of higher learning that facilitates teaching, research and on some campuses extension work. It offers and confers undergraduate degrees, masters and Ph.Ds.

The concept “university” comes from a Latin word *universitas* which grants academic degrees in various academic and professional subjects. It is a community of teachers, scholars and administrators.

It is compelling for the university as an institution to spell out its vision and mission in the public media. For instance here is the philosophy of the University of Nairobi:²⁹

Our vision.

A world class university committed to scholarly excellence.

Our mission.

To provide quality university education and training and to embody the aspirations of the Kenyan people and the global community through creation, preservation, integration, transmission and utilization of knowledge.

Our core values.

- Freedom of thought and expression.
- Innovativeness and creativity.
- Good corporate governance.
- Team spirit and team work.
- Professionalism.
- Quality customer service.
- Responsible corporate citizenship and stronger social responsibility.
- Respect for and conservation of the environment.

The university can also be defined as an institution in which the most

²⁹ University of Nairobi, Academic calendar. Almanac July 2012/June 2013.

advanced type of education is given and normally defined as a community of teachers and scholars.³⁰

In Kenya we have public universities as well as private universities.

Each university has its own Almanac, administrative staff, with vice chancellor the chief executive officer (C.E.O) who chairs senate as senior most officer answerable to the university council with ceremonial chancellor.

The ideal university has complete academic freedom. It receives partial financial aid from the treasury. To date a university must expand its funding through income generation like UNES (University of Nairobi Enterprises) through various modules. Financial support from the government is not enough and often times come in very late. This is what I observed as the senate elected member for the university of Nairobi council (1992-2002).

Treasury source of funding is diminished by many universities that have been created in the last two decades.

Therefore an ideal university like the University of Nairobi must be very innovative in income generation to service and maintain its leadership role as top Kenyan institution of higher learning. Its mission, vision and core values must be kept in "top gear" at all times in order for it to remain at the top not only nationally but also regionally.

University Entrance Joint Admission Board (JAB) was created to facilitate students entrance into the public universities. Private universities have their own university entrance conditions. The creation of central office for dealing with admission into public universities improved the placement of students which led to a great deal of difficulties before universities increased.

Since in Kenya we have public and private universities, I shall focus my analysis of the role of philosophy at the public universities, with the University of Nairobi as my key point of reference.

I shall now attempt to present a concise and compelling vision of the

³⁰ The New Universal Library Vol.14, International learning Systems Corporation limited, London 1969 pp.118.

role of philosophy at the university.

My presentation is not intended to be, by any means, exhaustive nor do I make any pretence that my points will apply to all public universities but rather as stated, the University of Nairobi and by extension other public universities which are comparable with the University of Nairobi in their:

- Vision
- Mission
- Core values

The University of Nairobi reviews her programs from time to time; she makes sure she is ISO compliant as first priority. Most students and potential students compare other institutions with the University of Nairobi for quality and relevance to their degree goals. The University of Nairobi receives more applicants for admission than other public universities.

Internal reassessment can be a sign of responsible self analysis for purposes of accreditation. This precise exercise of self evaluation is compliant to and characteristic of philosophical critical thinking to making sure that academic programs are focused and relevant to their institution's mission, vision and core values.

Occasions like these provide an opportunity for philosophers on the academic team to make their contribution to their institutions' mission.

It was in this compelling context that in 1994/5 sabbatical leave at Michigan State University (MSU) U.S.A. that I wrote to my vice chancellor Prof. Francis Gichaga about creating center for International Programs and Links (CIPL).

He gave me the mandate to write up the blue print for its establishment. I am very proud (as you will note on my biography) to have made my contribution to our mission as an Institution of the University of Nairobi:

“To provide quality university education and training and to embody the aspirations of the Kenyan people and the global community through creation, preservation, integration, transmission and utilization of knowledge.”³¹

³¹ Ibid Ibid

When I returned to Kenya, at the end of my sabbatical, I brought signed Memorandum of Understanding M.O.U.s with University of Nairobi:

- Lock Haven University of Pennsylvania U.S.A.
- University of Bamberg, Germany.
- Lakehead University, Ontario, Canada.
- University of Toronto, Canada.

My reasons of creating these links.

- Staff/student exchange program.
- Staff research collaboration.
- Equipment for learning.

In the students exchange program, students from the University of Nairobi with Second Class Upper minimum are recommended through CIPL (Center for International Programs and Links) to any of the member universities above and all their tuition fees is waived. We at the University of Nairobi welcome students from the overseas institutions usually for several months and we look after them.

3.2 Fundamental contribution of philosophy to university students.

- Instilling habits of critical thinking in students
- Enhancing their reading, writing and public speaking skills.
- Transmitting cultural heritage to them (African Philosophy)
- Stimulating them to engage fundamental questions about reality, knowledge and value. (Ethics)
- Challenging the students with fundamental ancient questions like:
 - What is life?
 - What is a good life?
 - How can I achieve it?
- Stimulate students' critical evaluation/discrimination between information and propaganda or misinformation.
- Ability to distinguish between what is central to a particular topic and what is peripheral.
- Ability to distinguish what is likely to be useful from what is

useless.

- Command in evaluating and engaging in intellectually stimulating topics, listening adequately with appropriate skills and attitudes.
- Basic balanced ability in taking criticism reasonably rather than emotionally.
- Ability to giving an intellectually fair criticism, avoiding emotionally loaded comments.
- Basic skill of picking the central theme in an argument and simplifying it through reconstruction and making it intelligible to someone unaware of significant issues involved.
- All philosophy courses stress clarity distinctive accuracy and understanding the authors' reasons for any given thesis.
- Philosophy lecturers impact active rather than passive learning; that is encouraging participatory learning.
- Encouraging motivation in learning process through curious question/answer model.
- Encouraging learners to learn how to challenge texts and their authors rather than seeing them as unquestionable authorities.
- Philosophy courses teach students to become more active, inquisitive and independent inquirers.

3.2.1 Logical emphasis and avoidance of fallacious orientations.

Philosophy students are encouraged to be alert on ambiguous and invalid inferences. Philosophy course texts are very demanding on their readers. This can be overcome by teaching our students how to read, understand and summarize conceptually difficult material by avoiding ambiguities and illogical inferences. In other words, philosophy courses instill active approach to reading.

The skills developed in learning how to manage difficult theoretical texts are skills that will serve students well in avoiding memorization.

In the end the students' learnt skills in philosophy courses will serve them in many other ways.

3.3 Uniqueness of philosophy courses to students.

Many philosophy courses beyond the introductory units stress the importance of learning how to do philosophy; that is, formulating, articulating and defending one's own position with reasons. No other discipline emphasizes, in the same ways, verbal argumentation and conceptual analysis. For other disciplines emphasize to the same degree (for example, Political Science) students providing their own theories, or critical assessments, as distinct from the exposition of existing material.

Again here, the Political Science or Literature course could be under Political Philosophy like African Social and political philosophy.

Equally, Literature is philosophical: Literal criticism which equally is philosophical.

The point here to note is the uniqueness of philosophy: It is the argument focused nature of philosophy which requires students to become better writers and speakers.

For this reason, many philosophy classes are, whenever appropriate, heavily discussion based. **How is this done?**

It is done through Socratic discussions.

The discussion can be Socratic in the sense that, students learn to subject opinions to logical scrutiny by asking pertinent questions, constructing relevant analogies and critically assessing the consequences of the viewpoints expressed. **What do the students learn?**

- They learn the importance of accurate interpretation
- Logical organization
- Clarity of expression
- Due consideration for others' viewpoints
- The use of concrete illustrative examples
- Staying focused on the issues at hand without deviation or sneaking in irrelevances.

Results.

Those qualities of philosophical training in writing and speaking make well taught courses in philosophy very valuable to pre-professional

students (pre-medical, pre-law, pre-engineering) as well as other courses.

3.4 Philosophy as a subject that studies the history of ideas.

I have argued in the African philosophy section in defense of the existence of African philosophy citing African proverbs as the foundation and reservoir of African thought in:

- Basic African ethical values.
- African political systems and ideals.
- African human rights (similar to Aristotle's distributive justice mode in which African elders and children were on different scales of human rights).
- The human good (Humanism) which involved being mindful of others' happiness, as contrasted with Western thought which embraces individualism.
- The nature of knowledge (epistemology) in African proverbs acknowledging "ignorance"...stressing "only God knows anything and everything"

Noteworthy.

The history of African philosophy is virtually the history of our African intellectual and cultural heritage.

Equally, the history of Western philosophy is virtually the history of Western intellectual thought and heritage (i.e. sophism, Socratic dialogues, Aristotelian Scientific logic, to name but a few).

This is why it is hard to overestimate the ways in which other contemporary thought has been globally influenced by such thinkers as sages, (in African thought proverbs and riddles), Plato, Aristotle and others (in Western thought).

3.4.1 The point to remember.

By reflecting on African proverbs and riddles as well as on texts on Plato, Aristotle and others, we are not only learning about the sages and classic

Greek thinkers but more importantly, we learn something about ourselves.

Finally the issues from these two historical groups (Western and African) raise issues, wisdom and arguments that are perennial as timely now as they were then.

3.4.2 CONCLUSIVE REMARK.

It is in this view of all the above opportune wisdom, reflections, cultural heritage, that in recent years, philosophy departments in world class universities regionally (University of Nairobi) have become increasingly mindful that their universities reflect a diversity of (plurality) of worldwide intellectual traditions. It is in this spirit that some departments now offer courses in African philosophy (Michigan State University, East Lansing U.S.A), Chinese, Japanese, Indian, African, American philosophies.

The University of Nairobi through CIPL (Center for International Programs and Links) students/staff exchange program is a vehicle to realize this cultural heritage transmission mode.

The spirit of transmission of cultural heritage at the University of Nairobi has established: **Confucius Institute at the University of Nairobi.**

In whose name is this institute?

The institute is named “Confucius.”

Confucius is a great philosopher and the father of Confucianism in Chinese history. His philosophical thinking has an overwhelming influence in China and throughout the world.

What is the vision of the Institute?

“Friendship, Cooperation, Development and Mutual benefits.”

Its mission.

To promote educational and cultural exchange between China and Kenya, to strengthen the friendship, to further the bilateral advantages, to carry forward the multicultural communication and advance the development together.

When was the institute launched?

Confucius Institute at the University of Nairobi was launched as the first Confucius Institute in Africa, on Monday, 19th of December 2005.³²

3.5 More contributions of philosophy to the university outside the natural sciences.

- Reality.
- Knowledge.
- Value.

Philosophy students will be stimulated to participate in metaphysical inquiries and debates and wonder whether the world described by the natural sciences is all that exists. They will also wonder whether human beings have freedom of will if the world is deterministic.

They will also wonder on the nature of life after death which is a concern of Ontology a sub-division under Metaphysics.

Philosophy programs will offer the students opportunity to engage in the following topics on Epistemology:

When they inquire about the scope and limits of human knowledge, how much, if not all can be known for sure?³³

- What are sources of knowledge?
- When is it reasonable to accept the arguments of others? And, On what grounds?
- Must we as human beings, defend our values dogmatically against the changes that they are nothing more than the product of our upbringing?

Other roles that philosophy offers.

- In solving problems, philosophy is committed to discovering the necessary and sufficient causal explanations. This guarantees meaningful solutions to the problems in human experience.
- Where there are no permanent solutions, philosophy will state

³² Ibid pp.744

³³ Oniag'o C.M.P PP.24-25

it and give reasons because philosophy is committed to searching for truth i.e. given this assumption, we expect that result, as well as highlighting exceptions to the given rule.

- Through philosophy, we learn that for every rule there is an exception.

This is the sense in which philosophy is NOT DOCTRINAIRE but open minded unlike other disciplines.

- Philosophy gives the university its unique inherent characteristic of inter-disciplinary merging. Unlike most disciplines, it is versatile and flexible with other disciplines.
- Every challenge in human experience is inescapable of philosophical significance and relevance to address, unlike many university disciplines at the university.

3.6 Special role of philosophers.

Philosophers must remember their duties to their students:

1. To assist them grapple deeply, systematically and intellectually with all these raised questions, not only in philosophy courses but also in various interdisciplinary programs in the university.
2. Philosophy departments are appropriately positioned to contribute to the university wide core curriculum in:
 - Critical thinking
 - Logical reasoning
 - Sensitivity to values
 - Global issues
 - Values

As they review their subjects from time to time, these could be included in the university wide core curriculum to be taken by students from different departments **through auditing** meaning; to enroll and attend philosophy classes, informally not for academic credit.

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- Must we as human beings, defend our values dogmatically against the changes that they are nothing more than the product of our upbringing?

Other roles that philosophy offers.

- In solving problems, philosophy is committed to discovering the necessary and sufficient causal explanations. This guarantees meaningful solutions to the problems in human experience.
- Where there are no permanent solutions, philosophy will state

³² Ibid pp.744

³³ Oniag'o C.M.P PP.24-25

it and give reasons because philosophy is committed to searching for truth i.e. given this assumption, we expect that result, as well as highlighting exceptions to the given rule.

- Through philosophy, we learn that for every rule there is an exception.

This is the sense in which philosophy is NOT DOCTRINAIRE but open minded unlike other disciplines.

- Philosophy gives the university its unique inherent characteristic of inter-disciplinary merging. Unlike most disciplines, it is versatile and flexible with other disciplines.
- Every challenge in human experience is inescapable of philosophical significance and relevance to address, unlike many university disciplines at the university.

3.6 Special role of philosophers.

Philosophers must remember their duties to their students:

1. To assist them grapple deeply, systematically and intellectually with all these raised questions, not only in philosophy courses but also in various interdisciplinary programs in the university.
2. Philosophy departments are appropriately positioned to contribute to the university wide core curriculum in:
 - Critical thinking
 - Logical reasoning
 - Sensitivity to values
 - Global issues
 - Values

As they review their subjects from time to time, these could be included in the university wide core curriculum to be taken by students from different departments **through auditing** meaning; to enroll and attend philosophy classes, informally not for academic credit.

3.7 PHILOSOPHY REACHES OUT TO OTHER AREAS OF UNIVERSITY INQUIRY (Inter-disciplinary role)

Unlike any other discipline in the university, philosophy fruitfully collaborates intellectually with other disciplines. For example:

- Philosophy of Mathematics
- Philosophy of law (Jurisprudence)
- Philosophy of science and Technology
- Philosophy of History
- Philosophy of Medicine
- Philosophy of Biology
- Philosophy of Education
- Business Ethics
- Medical Ethics
- African Social and Political Philosophy
- Philosophy of Art (Aesthetics)
- Women and gender studies
- Environmental philosophy

3.8 WHY THE ROLE OF PHILOSOPHY IN ALL UNIVERSITY CURRICULUM IS EXTREMELY ESSENTIAL.

As stressed earlier, the crucial and traditional role of philosophy at the university is:

- To foster deeper reflection on concepts, methods and issues that are fundamental within the particular disciplines.
- Philosophy courses also contribute positively to curricula that stress more formal modes of logical reasoning, emphasizing the goals of quantitative literacy and systematic reasoning. e.g. Mathematics, Statistics, Computer Science e.t.c
- Philosophy courses in formal logic focus on those skills that are common to all the above disciplines.
- Questions of value are among the most important and most difficult that students face.

In other words, philosophy courses in Ethics, Social and political philosophy, Philosophy of medicine (Veterinary and human), Bio-ethics, Environmental ethics and Aesthetics prepare students to be thoughtful, discriminating and responsible citizens.

- To critically examine methods of inquiry in natural and social sciences, engineering, religious thought, medicine and space science.
- Although scientific explanations are, in one form or another, common to all sciences, conceptual questions about its nature as well as comparative questions about its logic belong to the philosophy of science.

Although some of these questions have been treated by scientists, to attain the required synoptic level of understanding it comprehensively, philosophy is absolutely necessary.

- Philosophy has the ability to critically assess methods of inquiry in all subjects from nursery to the university. Every discipline generates some essential philosophical questions about itself.

Let us illustrate this with two examples with specific reference to the recent global issue of Lufthansa plane crash and the Garrissa University college terror attack.

The Lufthansa Plane Crash.

Psychology generates questions about what counts as a mind, the relation of mental states to brain states, and the compatibility of a scientific study of the mind with ethical assumptions about human conduct with specific reference to freedom and responsibility.

Law, on the other hand generates questions about what law is, what distinguishes good laws from bad laws and what conditions are necessary for there to be legitimate international law with specific reference to international security law protecting the Lufthansa air craft carrying 150 passengers of various citizenships from Barcelona, Spain to Dusseldorf, Germany that crashed in French Alps on 25th March, 2015 under the navigation of a pilot and a co-pilot?

3.8.1 What are the philosophical assumptions?

The assumptions are that the pilot and his co-pilot were well qualified aviation officers technically, that both were of sound mental status to shoulder the responsibility and trust of safety in navigating the

aeroplane without deliberately crashing it in the French mountains killing all the 150 innocent passengers, unknown number of the crew and themselves.

3.8.2 Three disciplines' assessments of the plane crash.

The three disciplines (Psychology, Aviation technology of pilots and International law) in this respect raise tacit questions about the plane crash:

- What is aviation science?
- What distinguishes a good pilot from a bad pilot?
- What conditions are necessary for there to be legitimate authorization of Germanwing flight 9525 of the plane in question to take off?

From the investigation, so far, the mechanical condition of the air craft was sound.

- If it is true that the mechanical/electrical conditions were sound, then what happened?
- What was the weather condition? (Visibility, windy, rainy e.t.c.)
- What was the metaphysical cause of the crash?
- What was the correct definition of the crash? Deliberate or accidental?
- Where was the pilot and his co-pilot?
- What human effort was accomplished/attempted before the crash?
- Why did these efforts (if any) fail?
- What caused the plane crash?

The fundamental inquiry is focusing on the co-pilot, Andreas Lubitz.

In examining the deliberate crashing of the air craft, let us examine responses from various disciplines: Psychology, Aviation technology/science, International law and philosophy.

3.8.2.1 Psychology

- Psychology will generate questions about what counts as the mind of the co-pilot.
- What is the history of the co-pilot's mental status?

- Did he have any mental problem in his 28 years life before he crashed the plane?

From the investigation results, the answer is YES. What is the source of evidence? The source of evidence is the medical records found in the trash can of the co-pilot's room.

- Was the co-pilot psychologically fit to do his job before entering the cock pit of the plane?

Reasoning answer is NO. **Why?**

Because this is a mental patient who ought not to have been entrusted with aviation responsibility.

- Would his doctors who treated him or any well trained medical doctor (of his mental case) have authorized him to do the job? The answer is NO.
- Why didn't his doctors alert the aviation authorities and advise their patient never to continue with his job being aware of his mental case and alert the appropriate authorities?
- Are these medical personnel fit for their jobs?
- Is Lufthansa Airways vigorous with security of its passengers by scrutinizing its pilots medically and periodically? The answer is NO.
- In view of the negative response, isn't Lufthansa liable to the deliberate crashing of the air plane? The answer is YES.

3.8.2.2 Aviation technology/Science.

What were the mechanical conditions of the air craft before taking off? The answer is SOUND.

According to the investigations there is no evidence of mechanical/electrical problem. In any case, the air craft was deliberately crashed into the French mountains. It was not an accident.

3.8.2.3 International law.

- What is the characteristic of international law? The international law is characterized by Peace and Harmony.
- Would the international law approve the co-pilot to enter the

cock pit to assist the pilot? The answer is NO. **Why not?** Because it distinguishes good laws from bad laws. Legitimate good law is for harmony and peace. The co-pilot would not measure up to peace and harmony with his bad mental history.

In fact law would further investigate the Lufthansa Company for the negligence and not only sue it but also withdraw its operational license until the air line proves over time, that it has established an operational culture concomitant with established conditions that guarantee safety of its passengers.

3.8.2.4 Philosophy

This issue is fundamentally in the mind/body relation: There exists an interactive relation between mind and body. Mental state impact on body (In this case brain state) and vice versa.

In accordance with the evidence, it is clear that the co-pilot Andreas Lubitz had a record of mental illness. Philosophy would demand to interrogate the doctors who treated the co-pilot. These doctors must have been aware that he was a pilot by profession.

The doctors are the first culprits: why didn't the doctors raise the alarm to all the authorities in aviation industry?

Medically why doesn't the Lufthansa airline routinely examine its pilots and co-pilots?

- Was there a cover-up of the medical history of the co-pilot?
- Who were involved in the training of the co-pilot in the U.S.A where he trained and in Germany?
- Don't the two authorities have mechanisms to establish worthy pilots to continue with the training and unworthy pilots to be discontinued?

From the ethical point of view, a person with mental issues is not responsible for his/her actions. He/she is not blame worthy nor should he/she be trusted with taking good care of himself/herself and 150 passengers as a pilot.

The philosophical field of epistemology, metaphysics and metaethics address comprehensively the most basic questions about the plane crash in terms of knowledge, reality and value.

Philosophy will go deeper in this deliberate crash than psychology, law, and aviation technology and articulate as follows:-

- Yes the co-pilot was intellectually above average according to the investigations, in the science of aviation.
- But is this required for a good co-pilot?
- If the doctors that treated him had blown the whistle and advised him to change his career to one with fewer responsibilities and less risks, this deliberate murder would not have occurred.
- On this grounds, the failure of his doctors to blow the whistle contributed to deliberate plane crash. I recommend the doctors to be sued in the court of law.
- If the Lufthansa had medically examined its pilots and co-pilots this co-pilot could not have committed suicide and mass murder of more than 150 people.
- I strongly recommend that all airlines, mass transport drivers (drivers on land, air and the sea), industrialists in huge industries and all workers be mentally examined and assessed from time to time. This is one way of protecting ourselves individually as well as collectively. A large number of people especially in air, over the seas, or even on land (e.g. huge buses, trains and ships) must be protected and guaranteed safety instead of feeling every time that we are taking risks.

In the last Eight minutes before the crashing of the Lufthansa air craft, all the 150 plus passengers knew they were perishing any time and all of them perished! Caution is the solution to this type of mental torture before crashing. Philosophically, we must learn from mistakes and avoid repeating them as articulated above.

The Garrissa University College Terror Attack.

3.8.3 Definition of terrorism.

Terrorism is commonly defined as violent acts intended to create fear

perpetrated for a religious, political or ideological goal and which deliberately target or disregard the safety of non-combatants (e.g. neutral military personnel or civilians).

Terrorism involves activities such as assassinations, bombings, random killings, taking hostage, hijackings and skyjacking. There are three perspectives of terrorism: The terrorists, the victims, and the general public.

Terrorists do not see themselves as evil. They believe they are legitimate combatants, fighting for what they believe in, by whatever means possible to attain their goals.

3.8.3.1 Causal factors of terrorism.

- Religious intolerance is a factor which is adding fuel to the fire of terrorism. The youth educated through religious “madrassa” are indoctrinated with extreme ideas. They become intolerant towards other religions and even other sects of their own religion. They impose their own extreme ideas to people and vent their fanaticism through violent actions.

Intolerance makes society a jungle. It is a destructive phenomenon for social harmony, political stability and economic growth.

- Illiteracy is the root cause of extremism and terrorism. A high illiteracy rate makes people vulnerable to terrorism. Illiteracy and lack of skills provide a fertile ground for those who wish to recruit young men and women to their cause, especially when significant monetary payments are attached.
- Poverty is also an incubating cause of terrorism. Majority of people are living below poverty line. For the youngsters, unemployment has made the matter worse. In these adverse circumstances, some people go to the level of extremism and even commit suicide.

These are the people whose services are hired by the terrorist groups and they become easy prey for terrorism.

Other causal factors include: social injustice, economic disparity, international conspiracies among others.

Terrorism is an international problem in today's global community. Many nations are affected whether directly or indirectly. Most nations oppose terrorism, while others condone or even support active brutal terrorism and terrorist groups.

In the recent Garrisra University college terror attack, one of the terrorists was a brilliant law graduate from University of Nairobi. Abdirahim Abdullahi joined the militant group Al-Shabaab after graduating from the University of Nairobi- School of law in 2013.

One local report suggested he may also have tried to leave Kenya to join the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant in Syria but had been turned back at the border because he did not have a proper passport.

The massacre carried out on Thursday, 2nd April 2015 claimed the lives of 148 people has been called the worst attack in Kenya in the last 15 years.

The underlying questions arising from this incident are:

- What could have made such a brilliant youth with a prestigious promising career join a terror group?
- If the student had studied Jurisprudence (philosophy of law), Moral philosophy (ethics) and Critical thinking at the university level, what made him join a terror group after graduating from the university?

Philosophy does not pretend to have answers to all of our questions or solutions to all of the world problems but it is fundamental in finding solutions to our problems and answers to our questions.

The possible answers to our questions in the case of this law graduate are:

- The thinking traits that predispose people to radicalization include being an absolutist, being judgmental of others and the suppression of critical thinking. In the radicalization process,

morals are corrupted and critical thinking is suppressed.

The primary function of critical thinking is to supersede and replace distorted thinking with thinking based upon reliable procedures of inquiry.

When our beliefs remain unexamined, we are not free; we act without thinking about why we act, and thus do not exercise control over our own destinies.

Critical thinking aims at self-sufficiency and a self sufficient person is a liberated person free from the undesirable control of unjustified beliefs.

- There are some negative psychological influences that shape the minds of the radicals allowing them to practice terror activities.
- Factors such as emotions, personal vulnerabilities, personality and even the context of situations influence how we make decisions, including ethical ones.

Ethical dilemmas can occur in many ways, often when we least expect them.

Most professionals do not knowingly get themselves tangled up in difficult situations. Some stumble into trouble without recognizing what is in store down the road. Some give in to temptations and abandon their professional objectivity.

One may confront a situation that offers no choice but to make decisions with ethical implications under ambiguous circumstances.

Confusion, pressure, frustration, ambition, anxiety, conflicting loyalties among other factors complicate the matter and greatly elevate the chances of errors in decision making.

3.8.3.2 Effects of terrorism.

In a society where terror exists, social disintegration occurs. Social relations, economic transactions, getting education among others are affected.

Frequent incidents of terrorism and displacement of local population have severely affected the social fabric.

Similarly terror brings psychological problems. Fear in the hearts of people is created. Trauma, depression and confusion increases.

People feel insecure whenever in their daily life activities, as time and again they watch the terror events taking place in different places.

3.8.3.3 Possible solutions to terrorism.

To combat terrorism, one must first understand the underlying motivations for each particular group's actions. Then a strategy needs to be developed based on those findings. It is difficult to fight terrorism without endangering civil liberties. Many innocent people get caught in the cross-fire.

Ending terrorist threats requires imaginative and fluid thinking, whether to attack the roots of terrorism or neutralize a particular group.

The general principles which can be applied in reducing terrorism include:

- An intensified effort to bring terrorists to justice by prosecution and conviction before the court of law.
- Tough measures to penalize the state sponsors who give terrorist movements safe haven, explosives, cash, moral and diplomatic support.
- There should be no deals and no concessions, even in the face of the most severe intimidation and blackmails from terrorists.
- No surrender to the terrorists and there should be an absolute determination to defeat terrorism within the framework of the rule of law and democratic process.
- Our government should make efforts to create employment for the youth. This will in turn eliminate poverty. This in turn will make the targeted youth self-reliant and dignified citizens.
- Our universities and research institutions should take up the initiative of re-interpreting the Islamic injunctions in the light of modern knowledge and 21st century challenges (with emphasis on social justice).
- Our politicians, general masses and security forces must show a strong sense of unity to fight terrorism.
- At the university level there should be courses in principles of patriotism in critical thinking.

4.0 THE ROLE OF PHILOSOPHY IN RESEARCH AT THE UNIVERSITY LEVEL.

4.1 Definition of research

Research can be defined as an endless search for knowledge or unending search for truth.

In the broadest sense of the word research, the definition of research includes any gathering of data, information and facts for the advancement of knowledge.

Research comprises of “creative work” undertaken on a systematic basis in order to increase the stock of knowledge, including knowledge of humans, culture and society. This stock of knowledge is used to establish or confirm facts, reaffirm the results of previous work, solve new existing problems, support theorems or develop new theories.

At the university level, masters' degrees introduce students to research at the frontiers of knowledge and analysis, and train them in relevant techniques appropriate to the discipline and the objectives of the program.

Any research must demonstrate the student's ability to:

- Master theoretically sophisticated subject matter.
- Identify and evaluate critically the findings and discussions in scholarly literature and other forms of information.
- Design a well structured, relevant and integrated plan of research.
- Conduct research using appropriate methods of investigation and analysis.
- Analyze, argue and reach conclusions which are informed by independent inquiry and other available information.
- Engage in rigorous intellectual analysis, criticism and problem solving.

The choice of an appropriate research method should be determined by a combination of the philosophical position of the researcher vis-à-vis

the research objectives, the nature of the problem to be explored, its novelty in research terms, and the time and resources available to carry out the research.

The leap that students, in particular, make from the statement of the problem to data collection without the benefits of a perspective to guide them either in the choice of the problem or the choice of a methodology is one of the principal reasons for the relatively low level of a great deal of research in the field.

4.2 RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY.

Research philosophy can be defined as the development of the research background, research knowledge and its nature. The basic meaning of the definition is precisely the exact thing every researcher does when he or she is conducting a research and that is the will to develop knowledge in a particular field.

There are several reasons why every researcher needs to understand research philosophy before embarking on a particular research. There are three reasons why there is significance in understanding research philosophy in reference to research methodology.

1. By understanding research philosophy, the researchers may refine and clarify the research method to be used in their study and consequently help them to collect data/gather evidence and to answer their research questions.
2. The knowledge of research philosophy will enable researchers to come up with different types of methodologies and as such avoiding inappropriate and unrelated works.
3. The knowledge of research philosophy helps the researcher to be more creative and exploratory in their research methods.

4.3 DEDUCTIVE AND INDUCTIVE APPROACHES IN RESEARCH.

Before the modern idea of research emerged, philosophers referred to research as **logical reasoning**. Some of the basic distinctions in logic have been carried over into contemporary research. In systems of logic I

will discuss how two major logical systems: the **inductive** and **deductive** methods of reasoning are related to modern research.

Deductive approach in research

Deductive logic deals with reasoning which attempts to establish **conclusive inferences**. **To say that an inference is “conclusive” means that if the reasons given are true, then it will be impossible for the inference based upon these reasons to be false.** Such reasoning is called **valid** reasoning. Deductive logic thus is concerned with the **rules for determining when an argument is valid**.

Deductive reasoning can also be explained as reasoning from the general to the particular. In other words, deductive approach in research involves formulation of hypotheses and their subjection to testing during the research process. The researcher starts at a very broad spectrum of information and work down to a specific conclusion.

For instance, a researcher begins a theory about his or her topic of interest then he or she narrows it down into a more specific hypothesis that can be tested. The hypothesis is then narrowed down even further when data is collected to test the hypothesis. This ultimately leads the researcher to be able to test the hypothesis with specific data, leading to a confirmation (or not) of the original theory and arriving at a conclusion.

A deductive approach to research is typically associated with scientific investigation. The researcher studies what others have done, reads existing theories of whatever phenomenon he or she is studying, and then tests hypotheses that emerge from those theories.

Inductive approach in research

Inductive reasoning refers to reasoning that takes specific information and makes a broader generalization that is considered probable, allowing for the fact that the conclusion may not be available or accurate. It is concerned with inferences from the particular to the general.

In an Inductive approach to research, a researcher begins by collecting data that is relevant to his or her topic of interest. Once a substantial amount of data has been collected, a researcher looks for patterns in the

data, working to develop a theory that can explain those patterns.

In other words, the researcher begins to detect patterns and regularities, formulates some tentative hypotheses that can be explored and finally ends up developing some general conclusions or theories. Thus when researchers take an inductive approach, they start with a set of observations and then they move from those particular experiences to a more general set of propositions about those experiences. In other words, they move from data to theory or from the specific to the general. Therefore inductive approach to research involves beginning with a set of empirical observations, seeking patterns in those observations and then theorizing about those patterns.

4.4 OVERVIEW.

Inductive and deductive approaches to research can be employed together for a more complete understanding of the topic that a researcher is studying. Though researchers don't always set out to use both inductive and deductive strategies in their work, they sometimes find that new questions arise in the course of an investigation that can be best answered by employing both approaches.

However, the most important point to bear in mind when considering whether to use an inductive or deductive or both approaches is the purpose of your research, the methods that are best suitable to either test a hypothesis, explore a new or emerging area within the discipline, or to answer specific research questions.

4.5 RESEARCH ETHICS

Ethics can be defined in a most common way as **norms for conduct that distinguishes between acceptable and unacceptable behavior**. There are several reasons why it is important to adhere to ethical norms in research.

- Ethical norms promote the aims of research such as knowledge, truth and avoidance of error. For example, prohibition against fabricating data, falsifying data or misrepresenting research data promotes truth and avoids error.
- Since research often involves a great deal of co-operation and co-ordination among many different people in different

disciplines and institutions, ethical standards promote the values that are essential to collaborative work such as trust, accountability, mutual respect and fairness. For example, many ethical norms in research, such as guidelines for authorship, copyright, data sharing policies and confidentiality rules in peer review are designed to protect intellectual property interests while encouraging collaboration.

Most researchers want to receive credit for their contributions and do not want to have their ideas disclosed prematurely.

- Many ethical norms of research promote a variety of other important moral and social values, such as social responsibility, compliance with the law, health and safety. Ethical lapses in research can significantly harm human and animal subjects, students and the public. For example, a researcher who fabricates data in a clinical trial may harm or even kill patients and a researcher who fails to abide by regulations and guidelines relating to radiation or biological safety may jeopardize the health and safety of the staff, students and even his or her own health and safety.

Given the importance of ethics for the conduct of research, many professional associations, government agencies and universities have adopted specific codes, rules and policies relating to research ethics.

5.0 CONCLUSION

Philosophical thought is an inescapable part of human existence. Almost everyone has been puzzled from time to time by essential philosophical questions such as: “what is a good life? Did I have any existence before I was born? Is there life after death?” Most people also have some kind of philosophy in the sense of a personal outlook on life. Even a person who claims that considering philosophical questions is a waste of time is expressing what is important, worthwhile or valuable. **Why?**

Because a rejection of all philosophy is in itself philosophy. Philosophy has had enormous influence in our everyday lives. The very language we speak uses classifications derived from philosophy. For example, the classifications of noun and verb involve the philosophical idea that there is a difference between things and actions. If we ask what the difference is, we are starting a philosophical inquiry.

Every institution of society is based on philosophical ideas, whether that institution is the law, government, religion, the family, marriage, industry, business or education. Philosophical differences have led to the overthrow of governments, drastic changes in laws and the transformation of entire economic systems. Such changes have occurred because the people involved held certain beliefs about what is important, true, real and significant and about how life should be lived.

Systems of education follow a society's philosophical ideas about what students should be taught and for what purposes. For example, democratic societies stress that people should learn how to think and make choices for themselves. Non-democratic societies discourage such activities and want their citizens to surrender their own interests to those of the state.

The values and skills taught by the educational systems of a society thus reflect the society's philosophical ideas of what is important.

Perhaps the chief practical reason to study philosophy is to acquire a very valuable set of skills. Philosophy is not just learning what other philosophers have thought. By studying philosophy, a student becomes an active inquirer, a critical thinker and solver of problems, and not just a passive learner who memorises ideas. Philosophy teaches students how to become thoughtful and reflective. By so doing, it opens them up to being careful about their own ideas and habits of thought. It is a matter of opening the questioning mind, taking charge of ideas, rather than being enslaved by them.

By studying philosophy, a student develops skills of critical and moral thinking, argumentation, information management, communication, abstract reasoning, analytic and synthetic thinking.

Philosophy as a process functions as an activity which responds to society's demand for wisdom, which is bringing together all that we know in order to obtain what we value. Viewed in this way, philosophy is part of the activity of human growth and thus an integral and essential part of the process of education. Philosophy and education have a common goal which is the development of the total intellect of a person and the realization of the human potential.

Philosophical capacity of good leadership is of paramount importance, for example, in the leadership of departments, schools, faculties, colleges and universities. Our D.V.Cs, our Vice chancellor, our chair of council, and our chancellor hopefully have the philosophical capacity for good leadership.

All the above ranks in the university demand an executive with solid balanced philosophical considerations such as humanism, justice, honesty, accountability, commitment, truth and free from corruption. All these leaders will make decisions on any issue upon a thorough analysis of the merits and demerits of the consequences of their choices. In the final sense, they will have exercised their freedom in decision making.

Philosophically (existentialism to be exact) they must accept the burden of taking full responsibility of the consequences of their choices.

Only philosophy offers this dictum of good faith to humanity not only at the university level but also in sectors of reality of human existence.

Philosophy (existentialism) has no respect for “bad faith” excuses in wrong decisions.

Leadership in all institutions (universities) is and must be founded on philosophy. **Why?**

Because philosophy by its intrinsic critical thinking, is dynamic and not static. The ideal university must be dynamic.

Philosophy is a critical and comprehensive inquiry into the ways in which what we know can be used to obtain what we value. Philosophy is one of the most, if not the most, distinctive of all human activities, as such philosophy has been and will continue to be of great importance in the lives of human beings around the world.

