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Course Title: PHILOSOPHICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

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NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA

ABUJA

PHIL205: PHILOSOPHICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

National Open University of Nigeria Headquarters

Course Guide

Introduction

Welcome to **PHL 205: Philosophical Anthropology.** PHL 205 is a two-credit unit course with a minimum duration of one semester. It is an optional course for Philosophy Major (degree) students in the university. The course is expected to provide instruction on the basic concepts of philosophical anthropology which has evolved over time to be called the philosophy of the person; pay particular attention to the study of the history of anthropology, its limitations and the necessity for the application of philosophy to the study of anthropology; its transformation into the philosophy of the person; the development of the concept of the person from the three philosophical traditions—African , Eastern and Western; the various theories of the human person; the crises of the person, and the causes, aspects and manifestations of the crises of the person; as well as an exposition of a fundamental ontology of the person, and establish the goal of a fundamental philosophy of the person. The aim is to equip the students with the skill to identify, explain and express the basic concepts and a broad understanding of the philosophy of the person.

Course Objectives

By the end of the course you will be able to:

- ❖ Identify the basic concepts of anthropology.
- ❖ Acquire knowledge of the history of anthropology.
- ❖ Explain the limitations of anthropology and why philosophy is injected into its study.
- ❖ Discuss the transformation of anthropology into the philosophy of the human person.
- ❖ Clarify the concept of the philosophy of the person.
- ❖ Know the African philosophical view of the human person.
- ❖ Know the Eastern philosophical view of the human person.
- ❖ Know the western philosophical view of the human person.
- ❖ Discuss the various theories of the human person.
- ❖ Identify the causes of the crises of the human person.
- ❖ Identify the aspects of the crises of the human person.
- ❖ Explain the manifestations of the crises of the human person.
- ❖ Articulate a more fundamental ontology of the human person.

❖ Demonstrate that a fundamental philosophy of the person fosters a better understanding of humanity.

Working Through the Course

To complete this course of study successfully, please read the study units, listen to the audios and videos, do all the assignments, open the links and read, participate in discussion forums, read the recommended books and other materials provided, prepare your portfolios, and participate in the online facilitation.

Each study unit has introduction, intended learning outcomes, the main content, conclusion, summary and references/further readings. The introduction will tell you the expectations in the study unit. Read and note the intended learning outcomes (ILOs). The intended learning outcomes tell you what you should be able to do at the completion of each study unit. So, you can evaluate your learning at the end of each unit to ensure you have achieved the intended learning outcomes. To meet the intended learning outcomes, knowledge is presented in texts, videos and links arranged into modules and units. Click on the links as may be directed, but where you are reading the text offline, you will have to copy and paste the link address into a browser. You can download the audios and videos to view offline. You can also print or download the text and save in your computer or external drive. The conclusion gives you the theme of the knowledge you are taking away from the unit. Unit summaries are presented in downloadable audios and videos.

There are two main forms of assessment—the formative and the summative. The formative assessment will help you monitor your learning. This is presented as in-text questions, discussion forums and self-Assessment Exercises. The summative assessments would be used by the university to evaluate your academic performance. This will be given as Computer Based Test (CBT) which serves as continuous assessment and final examinations. A minimum of two or a maximum of three computer-based tests will be given with only one final examination at the end of the semester. You are required to take all the computer-based tests and the final examination.

Study Units

There are 14 study units in this course divided into three modules. The modules and units are presented as follows:-

Module 1

Unit 1:   Basic Concepts and Issues of Philosophical Anthropology,

Unit 2:   History of the emergence of Philosophical Anthropology

Unit 3:   The Concept of the Philosophy of the Person

Unit 4:   Theories of the Person: African and Eastern

Unit 5:   Theories of the Person: Western

Module 2

Unit 1:   Crises of the Human Person and Causes

Unit 2:   Dimensions or Aspects of the Crises of the Person

Unit 3:   Manifestations of the Crises of the Person

Unit 4:   A Fundamental Ontology of the Human Person

Unit 5:   The Goal of a Fundamental Philosophy of the Person

Module 3

Unit 1:   Practice Exercise in Philosophical Anthropology

Unit 2:   Practice Exercise in the Philosophy of the Person

Unit 3:   Practice Exercise in the Crises of the Person

Unit 4:   Practice Exercise in a Fundamental Philosophy of the Person

References and Further Readings

Adeofe, L. (2004). Personal Identity in African Metaphysics. In Brown Lee M (ed). *African Philosophy: New Traditional Perspectives*, pp. 69-83. London: Oxford University Press

Appiah, A. (2004). Akan and Euro-American Concepts of the Person. In Brown Lee M (ed). *African Philosophy: New Traditional Perspectives*, pp. 21-34. London: Oxford University Press.

Craemer, W. De. (1983). A Cross-cultural Perspective on Personhood. Milbank Memorial Fund *Quarterly/Health and Society*, Vol. 61, No. 1, 1983. http://about.jstor.org/terms

Heine, Steven J. and Buchtel, Emma E. (2009). Personality: The Universal and the Culturally Specific. *Annual Reviews of Psychology*. Downloaded from arjournals.annualreviews.org by University of British Columbia Library on 12/16/08. For personal use only.

Elvin, M. (1985). Between the Earth and Heaven: Conceptions of the Self in China. In Michael Carrithers, Steven Collins and Steven Lukes (eds). *The Category of the Person,* pp. 156-188). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Fang, T.H. (1969). The World and the Individual in Chinese Metaphysics. In Charles A Moore (ed). *The Chinese Mind: Essentials of Chinese Philosophy and Culture*. USA: East-West Centre Press University of Hawahi.

Gbadegesin, S, (1998). Eniyan: The Yoruba Concept of the Person. In P.H. Coetzee and A.P.J. Roux (eds). *The African Philosophy Reader.* London: Routledge.

Heidegger, M. (1962). Being and Time. Trans by J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Hunter, D.E. and Whitten, P. (1976). The Study of Anthropology. New York: Harper and Row.

Igbafen, M.L. (2014). The Concept of Person in African and Chinese Philosophies: A Comparative Inquiry. *International Journal of Philosophy and Theology.* September 2014, Vol. 2, No. 3, pp.121-149. http://dx.doi.org/10.15640/ijpt.v2n3a10

Ikuenobe, P. (2006). The Idea of Personhood in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart.* In *Philosophia Africana.* August at BNET. mht.

Kaphagawani, D. (2006). African Conceptions of a Person: A Critical Survey. In Kwasi Wiredu (ed). *A Companion to African Philosophy,* pp.332-341. USA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

Kimmerle, H. (2008). The Concept of a Person in African Thought: A dialogue between African and Western Philosophies. In Helmut Wautischer (ed). *Ontology of Consciousness Percipient Action*, pp.507-524. London: A Bradford Book The MIT Press.

Menkiti, I.A. (2006). On the Normative Concept of a Person. In Kwasi Wiredu (ed). *A Companion to African Philosophy*, pp.324-331. USA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

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Omoregbe, J.I. (1998). African Philosophy: Yesterday and Today. In E.C.Eze (ed). *African Philosophy An Anthology*, pp.3-8. USA: Blackwell Publishers.

Omorebge, J.I. (2004). *Comparative Philosophy: East- West A Comparative Analysis of Asian and Western Philosophy*, Lagos: Joja Press Limited.

Oyeshile, O. (2006). The Individual-Community Relationship as an Issue in Social and Political Philosophy. In Olusegun Oladipo (ed). *Core Issues in African Philosophy*, pp.102-119. Ibadan: Hope Publications.

Pappe, H.O. (1967). Philosophical Anthropology. In The Encyclopedia of Philosophy: Logic to Psychology, Paul Edwards (ed). London; New York: Macmillan.

Unah, Jim I. (2002 reprinted 2006). *Philosophy, Society and Anthropology.* Lagos: Fadec Publishers.

Unah, Jim I. (2016). *On Being: Discourse on the Ontology of Human Being.* Lagos: Foresight Press.

Since books are not within easy reach, it is advisable to use some of the links provided with the online resources listed above.

Presentation Schedule

The presentation schedule gives you the important dates for the completion of your computer-based tests, participation in forum discussions and participation at facilitation. Remember, you are to submit all your assignments at the appropriate time. You should guide against delays and plagiarisms in your work. Plagiarism is a criminal offence and is highly penalized.

Assessment

There are two main forms of assessments in this course that will be scored The Continuous Assessments and the Final examination. The continuous assessment shall be in three-fold. **There will be two Computer-Based Assessments. The computer-based assessments will be given in accordance to university academic calendar. The timing must be strictly adhered to.** The Computer-Based Assessments shall be scored a maximum of 10% each, while your participation in discussion forums and your portfolio presentation shall be scored maximum of 10% if you meet 75% participation. Therefore, the maximum score for continuous assessment shall be 30% which shall form part of the final grade.

The final examination for PHL 205 will be maximum of two hours and it takes 70 percent of the total course grade. The examination will consist of 5 questions out of which you are expected to answer 4.

Note: You will earn 10% score if you meet a minimum of 75% participation in the course forum discussions and in your portfolios otherwise you will lose the 10% in your total score. You will be required to upload your portfolio using google Doc. What are you expected to do in your portfolio? Your portfolio should be note or jottings you made on each study unit and activities. This will include the time you spent on each unit or activity.

How to get the Most from the Course

To get the most in this course, you need a personal laptop and internet facility. This will give you adequate opportunity to learn anywhere you are in the world.. Use the Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) to guide your self-study in the course. At the end of every unit, examine yourself with the ILOs and see if you have achieved what you need to achieve.

Carefully work through each unit and make your notes. Join the online real time facilitation session as scheduled. Where you miss the scheduled online real time facilitation, go through the recorded facilitation session at your own free time. Each real time facilitation session will be video recorded and posted on the platform.

In addition to the real time facilitation, watch the video and audio recorded summary in each unit. The video/audio summaries are directed to salient part in each unit. You can access the audio and videos by clicking on the links in the text or through the course page.

Work through all self-assessment exercises. Finally, obey the rules in the class.

Facilitation

You will receive online facilitation. The facilitation is learner-centered. The mode of facilitation shall be asynchronous and synchronous. For the asynchronous facilitation, your facilitator will:

- ❖ Present the theme for the week;
- ❖ Direct and summarize forum discussions;
- ❖ Coordinate activities in the platform;
- ❖ Score and grade activities when need be;
- ❖ Upload scores into the university recommended platform;
- ❖ Support you to learn. In this regard personal mails may be sent;
- ❖ Send you videos and audio lectures: and podcast.

For the synchronous

There will be a minimum of eight hours and a maximum of twelve online real time contacts in the course. This will be through video conferencing in the Learning Management System. The

sessions are going to be run at an hour per session. At the end of each one-hour video conferencing, the video will be uploaded for view at your pace.

The facilitator will concentrate on main themes that must be known in the course. The facilitator is to present the online real time video facilitation time table at the beginning of the course.

The facilitator will take you through the course guide in the first lecture at the start date of facilitation.

Do not hesitate to contact your facilitator. Contact your facilitator if you:

- ❖ Do not understand any part of the study units or the assignment
- ❖ Have difficulty with the self-assessment exercises
- ❖ Have a question or problem with an assignment or your tutor's comments on an assignment.

Also, use the contact provide for technical support.

Read assignments, participate in the forums and discussions. This gives you opportunity to socialize with others in the programme. You can raise any problem encountered during your study. To gain the maximum benefit from course facilitation, prepare a list of questions before the discussion session. You will learn a lot from participating actively in the discussions.

Finally, respond to the questionnaire. This will help the university to know your areas of challenges and how to improve on them for a review of the course materials and lectures.

MODULE ONE [1]

UNIT 1:   Basic Concepts and Issues of Philosophical Anthropology

Contents

1.0   Introduction
2.0   Intended Learning Outcomes [ILOs]
3.0   Main Content

3.1   Definition of Anthropology

3.2   Etymological construction and meaning of Anthropology
3.3   The meaning of Philosophical Anthropology
4.0   Conclusion
5.0   Summary
6.0   References/Further Reading

1.0   Introduction

Here, we are saddled with the responsibility of making the students understand the general meaning of anthropology, its historical account, how it has over time metamorphosed into what is today known as philosophical anthropology and the distinction between the former and the latter. Also of interest to us here is to highlight the limitations of anthropology which make the philosophy of the human person the right choice of study. To enrich this discourse, we further seek to explore how the person is understood in among three civilizations; African, Eastern and Western.

2. 0   Intended Learning Outcomes

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

❖ Identify the basic concepts of anthropology.
❖ Acquire knowledge of the meaning and history of anthropology.
❖ Know the meaning of philosophical anthropology

3.0   Main Content

3.1   Definition of Anthropology

3.2   Etymological meaning and construction of Anthropology
3.2.1 Anthropos
3.2.2 Logos
3.2.3 Scope of Anthropology

3.1   Definition of Anthropology

Anthropology is generally defined as the study of man. This definition comes from two Greek terms combined to produce the concept. The two Greek terms are "anthropos" and "logos." From this, it appears that anthropology is assigned the task to specifically address the question, "what is man?" What this question requires us to do is to identify what exactly it is that man is. Is man, for instance, a bundle of genetic tissues that evolved from an animal into a human being, or a direct creation of God consisting of spiritual and physical elements or an entity that understands itself as well as what being or existence means? These are not easy questions to answer, even though they look simple. The way to begin to seek meaningful answers is to return to the root terms making up anthropology. The terms are "Anthropos" and "logos". Let us return to them.

3.2   Etymological meaning and construction of Anthropology.

From the etymological meaning of anthropology, there appears to be a difference between what it means and the actual activities of anthropologists. The term anthropology, derives its root from two Greek words namely: *anthropos* and *logos*, which are translated literally in English language as 'man' and 'study' respectively. Also, anthropos, other than meaning man, equally means 'humanity', 'human' or 'mankind'. In the same vein, *logos* or *logoi* (plural) could also mean; reason, discourse, science, theory (Cf. Unah, 2002:129).

Accordingly, anthropology as we noted above, could be rendered as; the study of man, the science of man, the theory of man, the reason on man and the discourse on man (Ibid). Thus, anthropology studies man in his cultural, linguistic and religious dimensions. But, it does

appear that there is a difference between studying man and his activities and studying man in general. To resolve this problem, probably, we need to take a closer look at the meaning of *anthropos***.**

3.2.1 Anthropos

Anthropos as we have seen is a Greek term that houses both humans and man. In other words, it refers to a human being whether male or female. It describes a human-like creature and distinguishes this particular being from other kinds of beings such as animals, beasts, angels and God. Examples of these category of creatures are available at (https://www.gettyimages.com/photos/prehistoric-man). It is for that very reason that anthropos can mean human or human beings in particular and man in general. It is because of this two-legged definition of anthropology (as individual human beings in particular and as man in general) that led the early anthropologists and explorers into a kind of racial profiling of human beings and their activities rather than observing the fact of thinking and minding as point of departure in the study of human creature (Harris, 1968:91) as we shall later see in our discussion. In fact, it is also said that the term anthropos equally entails such Greek words like "ana" and "prosopos" with "ana" meaning up and "prosopos" meaning face. So, from the etymological meaning of anthropos, man means a being which has its face turned up (http://www.arvindus.com/publications/201203081.html).

3.2.2 Logos

The second part of the etymological construction namely, *logos,* as we mentioned earlier can be interpreted or rendered in many ways; such as reason, study, science, discourse, et cetera. Combined with *anthropos*, *logos* could mean reason on man or loosely speaking, reason on human or human person; it could mean study of man or study of human person; it could mean science of man or science of human person; or discourse on man or discourse on human person, et cetera.

3.2.3 Scope of Anthropology

Consequently, anthropologists found it intriguing to seek understanding of this kind of being; study its culture and mode of social relation. It provides a detailed study of local life of this species in comparison to cosmopolitan life in other human societies. In strict terms, anthropology provides insight in two ways: first, by producing knowledge about why there are cultural variations in the world and the purpose or significance of certain practices among a people. For instance, anthropological studies

> may deal with, say, the role of caste and wealth in Indian village life, technology among highland people in New Guinea, religion in southern Africa, food habits in northern Norway, the political importance of kinship in the Middle East, or notions about gender in the Amazon basin (Erickson, 2004:7).

Erickson further listed the key concepts of anthropology to include: [i] Person [ii] Society [iii] Culture [iv] Translation and comparison [v] Holism and [vi] Context.

Erickson believes that these are the concepts that define anthropology. He equally observes that while we discriminate between one concept and the other, we should be wary of not allowing our chosen and preferred concept to so influence our view of reality to the extent that we refuse to be receptive to contrary views. Again, the choice of concept is also a function of interest, training, and this is why it is not always advisable for a researcher to insist on viewing the totality of reality from a certain privileged position (Ibid, pp.19-41). We shall throw more light on this when we discuss the concept of the person in different civilizations.

What have become clear from Erickson's submissions regarding the scope of anthropology is that many different kinds of activities are lumped together as part and parcel of anthropology. And because of this development, many subject areas have been poached by anthropologists. It does appear also that anthropologists have concentrated more attention on the activities involving human beings or man rather than what man or the human person truly is. For instance, how man gathers his food, the occupations that he is involved, how he fashions his tools; his belief systems, his mode of social organization, his relationships and sundry other activities that have become identified with specific disciplines, are found in the study of anthropology; implying that anthropology is an amorphous science or field of study. On account of this, anthropology has failed to furnish a clear understanding of the human person.

Consequently, it was supposed that if anthropology could not provide a comprehensive view of man, a discipline with pedigree and substance, such as philosophy, should inject universal philosophical elements into anthropology to fortify its transcendental structures and make it a universal science of human beings. How should anthropology be studied in a philosophical manner?

3.3 The meaning of Philosophical Anthropology

From the forgoing, it means that anthropology needs the assistance of philosophy to become a universal science of man. Different philosophical traditions proposed their inputs, which would make anthropology philosophical. Emmanuel Kant proposed reason as the basic characteristic of all humans. According to Kant, reason is the only property peculiar to all humans; implying that reason should be the guide to all human actions. But this universal characteristic of reason suggested by Kant does not exhaust all the universal traits of man that all humans share. For instance, one other characteristic of man that Kant did not mention is "work". Human life in every civilization is defined by work. It could be said, as Karl Marx did, that "work" is man's life. It is because of this universal trait that Karl Marx insisted that the worker should not be deprived of the fruit of his labour; the proceeds from his work. Another philosopher, Ludwig Feuerbach, defined man as an essence seeking being. It is this search for essence that takes man to religion and the quest for the world beyond. Without going into details, all three characteristics mentioned by the three philosophers are true characteristics of the human person. What is not true, however, as each of then tended to suggest, is that only one of the characteristics can exhaustively define man or human reality. So, even the effort of philosophical anthropologists to answer the question, "what is man" leaves gaps for a more universal science of man to fill. That universal science is fundamental ontology which shall be discussed in Module two.

4.0 Conclusion

This unit began with the discussion on the meaning of anthropology which we said is the study of man. The etymological combination of the term, "Anthropos" and "logos" support   the meaning ascribed to anthropology. But owing to the fact of not being precise or clear about what exactly man is, it became necessary for the clarity seeking parental discipline, philosophy, to offer clarity about the meaning of man. Effort to provide this clarity led to the definition of man by Kant, Karl Marx, and Feuerbach as a being endowed with reason, a being whose essence is work, and a being who seeks essence in other-worldly reality, respectively. Evidently, even philosophical anthropology provided incomplete definitions of human reality; though, what they say is universally true about man.

5.0   Summary

Anthropology as the study of man does not appear to provide a clear picture of what man truly, universally, is. Anthropology's attempts to furnish an understanding of man are fraught with imprecision and tainted with racism. This makes it [anthropology] a poor science of man. It became necessary to seek clarity from philosophy. Such attempt at clarity by philosophers ended up with a fragmented understanding of man's universal characteristics; which demands a more fundamental science of man.

7.0   References/ Further Reading

Erickson, T.H. (2004). What is Anthropology? London: Pluto Press.

Harris, M. (1968). The Rise of Anthropological Theories: A History of Theories of Culture. Columbia University: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, Inc.

Unah, Jim I. (2002 reprinted 2006). *Philosophy, Society and Anthropology.* Lagos: Fadec Publishers.

UNIT2: HISTORY OF THE EMERGENCE OF PHILOSOPHICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Contents

1.0   **Introduction**

It will be erroneous to assume that humankind in their present condition just appeared like a new author mobile in a showroom, having all the features perfectly fitted. Different parts of man (homo-sapiens) underwent several evolutionary processes for there to be the present refined humankind with fine language, dressing style, sophisticated culture and ways of doing things. But how then were we able to know the state of existence of the (stone-age) ancient humankind? The answer lies in the works of anthropologists. According to Unah, the account of anthropology dates back to the history of western education. In other words, it is traceable to the time when European history began. This unit provides us with information on how human beings evolved and developed.

2.0   Intended Learning Outcomes

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

❖ Acquire adequate information about the development of human beings
❖ How the activities of early anthropologists cumulated into what became known as anthropological study of man.

3.0   **Main Content**

3.1   The Emergence of Anthropology

Notwithstanding its checquered history, anthropology got fully developed as a well-founded independent academic course of study in the 19th century (Cf. Unah, 2002: 130)). According to him, at the early stage of anthropological studies, information about it came from

the experiences of explorers, travelers and adventurers through whose activities the discovery of the existence of different group of human society were made (Ibid). During the 19th century, there was a need for specialization amongst anthropologists. These include,

- ❖ Physical anthropology, which specialized in the biological processes of homo-sapiens that separates them from other animals;
- ❖ Archeology which focused on physical remains or former conditions of previous cultures. This category of anthropologists got their findings through excavating some buried utensils and forms from the ground and examining them to obtain information about the people who used them and used be there;
- ❖ There were also linguistic anthropologists who examined the morphology or structure of the human language;
- ❖ Then, we have cultural anthropologists whose interests dwelt on the nature of human culture and its patterns that separates the human society from the animal kingdom;
- ❖ There was also another group known as psychological anthropologists that examined the diverse cultures of humankind, the relationships that existed between them and how they combine with other social structures in influencing the human person (See. Encyclopedia Britannica https://www.britannica.com/science/anthropology). They were also concerned with the nature of the human society and how human beings came to associate with one another and the actual reasons behind change in a society.

3.2   Activities of Anthropologists

In line with the above classifications, in the ancient days, voyagers and philosophers observed the cultural and physical differences of the people they came across. In very many cases, these voyagers gathered their information about the things they saw from observation. For instance, (Oke, 1984: 3), stated that these travelers observed that "…forms of society differed from place to place and that people's body-shape and skin colour varied as well. These observations led to interest in speculation about human origins and human development". In the strict sense,

> Anthropology was born between 1860 and 1880; and, it must be stressed, right from the start it took a radically comparative form. It chose to place in perspective so as to study not only ancient societies, the medieval European past and some, at least, of our contemporary mores and customs, but also primitive civilizations across the world (Lavisse, https://chs.harvard.edu/CHS/article/display/3929.preface-doing-anthropology-with-the-greeks)

At this juncture, it is appropriate to introduce other chronicles of conceptions of the development of anthropology.

3.3 **Chronicle of Conceptions**

Anthropology emerged as a distinct academic discipline, as the debate regarding how humankind evolved, thickened. In the words of Alan Barnad (2004:15), "from a 'history of ideas' point of view, the writings of ancient Greek philosophers and travellers, medieval Arab historians, medieval and Renaissance European travellers, and later European philosophers, jurists, and scientists of various kinds, are all plausible precursors".

According to historical records, Xenophanes (570-475 BC), of the ancient Greek civilization usually referred to as the "golden era" of European thought, was credited to be the 'first thinker to call anthropological attention to the nature of man when he argued, among other things, that society is the creation of man; that the gods are human images formed in the mind, and that religion is a product of society for its own ends and purposes' (Cf. Unah, 2002:130). Thus, Xenophanes was notorious for criticizing the anthropomorphic conception of God. He was against the accepted belief in one Supreme Being called God who, according to him, daily interferes in the affairs of men. Such notion of God, he said, only exists but in people's mind, beyond which there is no God. "He dismissed the popular understanding of the gods as superstition. Whereas the rainbow was considered a manifestation of the goddess Iris, Xenophanes claimed that, "She whom men call `Iris' is in reality a cloud, purple, red, and green to the sight" (Mark, 2009, https://www.ancient.eu/Xenophanes_of_Colophon/).

Another Greek traveller and philosopher, who sojourned to several parts of the world, was Herodotus (484-425 BC). He "described the life-styles of the people he met; their physical characteristics, language, customs, institutions, laws, political organizations and military and belief systems" (Cf. Oke, p.3). He was a cultural anthropologist. In describing the cultural practices of a certain people who lived between Egypt and Libya, he wrote:

> They observed most Egyptian customs, but the clothes they wear are rather those of the rest of the Libyans. There women wear a bangle on each shin, made of bronze. They let the hair on their head grow long, and when a woman catches lice on herself she bites them in retaliation and then throws them away. These are the only Libyans who do this, and they are the only ones who before setting up a household, display their virgins to the king. When the king finds one of them please he himself takes her maidenhood (Redfield, 1985)
> https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/abs/10.1086/366908?journalCode=cp

3.4 Man-Centered Conception

Arguably, Herodotus is reputed to be the first to introduce racial dimension into the anthropological discourse on man. This is because "he believed that the Greek way of life was superior to all others" (Cf. Unah, 131)). In spite of this, the philosopher in Herodotus enabled him to acknowledge the truth that people naturally prefer their own culture to that of others and

they "tend to judge others negatively in terms of their own value system" (Ibid). With such ethnocentric attitude, he found everything odd in the clothes the people he met wore, the food they ate, their customs and odd ideas, what is good and evil, using his own Greek civilization as the measuring standard.

Unah further observed that Plato and his master Socrates and Protagoras of Abedera, are other philosophers who drew anthropological perspectives of man in their works in the classical period. In other words, these philosophies put man at the centre of their philosophical discussions. Socrates (469-399 BC) believes that knowledge is virtue and the center or seat of knowledge is man. Man needs to know himself to be able to stand at a vantage position; while describing the network of relationships, the cultures which he develops and his place in the scheme of things. Thus, Socrates came up with the dictum "Man, know theyself"; for "an unexamined life is not worth living". Knowledge, he believed, brings virtue and virtue produces happiness to the one who has it. If there is any knowledge worth gathering about the world, it is that of the self. It is through virtue that healthy and harmonious interaction in the society is made possible. A wise man for him is one who seeks to know. In other words, a wise person is one who knows that he does not know, and thus seeks to know; whereas, a foolish person is one who does not know that he does not know. Therefore, he asserted that knowledge is virtue and it is the right social conduct and the right knowledge is that which begins with the self.

Unfortunately, Socrates was persecuted and executed by the Athenian authorities because they perceived his teachings were beginning to hit the right cord among the people, especially the youth. Thus, they accused him of radicalizing and corrupting the minds of the youth. He however died in 399BC but his student Plato (429-347 BC), carried on the mantle. According to Unah, Plato later introduced another anthropological dimension on the nature of man in relation to society. The concept of justice, Plato argues, is one of the products of man's self-knowledge of himself and the good. The knowledge of the self and the good, leads to Justice; and justice when properly articulated and elaborated proves to be the cord which ties and binds the fabrics of the society (Ibid).

The point of interest here is that it is within the society that man can live and have his being. A society devoid of justice, in the view of Plato, is a wayward society. Accordingly, he classified man into three parts: the rational, the spirited and the appetitive parts, constituting the human being. This classification corresponds with his further classification of the society into the guardian, the soldiers and the artisans. He maintained that, for justice to reign in the society, each of these classifications, whether at the human level or the level of society, must carry out its duty according to its assigned role. This is the way that the human society can experience harmony and efficiency. Thus, one can argue that the first principle of division of labour was initiated by Plato.

Again, Unah opines that the Greek efforts at prioritizing justice yielded a human ethics that put man at the centre in the scheme of affairs with the objective of aiding man to live a well-ordered life directed by reason. Put differently, it is human reason that should guide and determine the right course of social behaviour. According to him, the right conduct in the view of the Greeks, was not one prescribed by God, but one thought out by man himself as best suited for the attainment of social harmony and tranquility (Ibid, p.133).

3.5   Divine-Centered Conception

In course of time, there emerged new anthropological perspectives on man; which conceptualized man and the universe as the handiwork of an all-powerful and benevolent God whose ways are unfathomable and who is both the author of morality and the determinant of the right social conduct. That is to say that, after the days of the Greeks when the discourse about the universe was man-centered or anthropocentric, other group of thinkers who sought to interpret all human experiences in terms of divine will and divine orchestration emerged. This was a Christian group of thinkers and prominent among them was Augustine of Hippo (354-430 AD). Accordingly,

> Anthropology for Augustine was based on the truth that humanity was created in the image of God. Augustine affirms that the world was created by God out of nothing, through a free act of God. He then affirms the absolute unity and the spiritual nature of the human soul. He affirms that the soul is simple and immortal. The soul has three functions: being, understanding, and loving, corresponding to three faculties: intellective memory, intelligence, and will.
> http://www.augnet.org/en/works-of-augustine/his-ideas/2302-anthropology/

In Augustine's view, to seek knowledge about man is to seek knowledge about God. It is only what God says about man that is the valid knowledge about who man is, and this can only be found through the bible. This divine centered view of man was later improved upon by medieval scholars such as St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-74). He said that man is created by God and has a composite nature, that is, both material and substantial forms. Consequently, just like Augustine, he admitted the created nature of man but however conceded that man's substantial nature is the rational soul. He acknowledged the fact that man's rational nature endows him with the immense potentials to acquire and apply knowledge and his other instincts such as the lust for power and uninhibited sexual drives put him almost at par with the lower animals. Thus, anthropology today, studies such dual nature of man, that is, the rational and creative, and the

uninhibited animalistic tendencies, which affirms the probable affinity between humans and the lower animals (Cf. Unah, p.133).

The point to drive home here, from the brief account of the history of anthropology, includes the fact that the history of man can only make sense within the context of the human society. In other words, since man is a being discoverable only in the social context, it will appear that the reasonable account of him must be one which has its root within the human society. Thus, it seems more appealing having to get information about the origin and history of the human society and the reason for the diversities among humankind from the activities of explorers who travelled around the world. However, this position does necessarily disprove the creationist and the God narrative of the origin of man.

3.6   Misconceptions about Anthropology

Evidently, some of the reports about the nature of some societies and peoples were tainted with prejudices and racial coloration.. For instance, it is unimaginable and hurting to read some accounts "portraying some of the human beings they met in their journeys as one-eyed, dog-headed and with tails" (Ibid, p.134). Unah further captures it thus:

> These grotesque and distorted accounts given by some of the explorers and travellers provided the impetus for the original thrust of anthropology as a discipline concerned with the study of the "primitive" man, who represented savagery and barbarism providing a sharp contrast to the civilized European man whose destiny was to civilize the brutes (ibid).

Accordingly, such account as characterized by some anthropologist, simply juxtaposed the European world in opposition to the non-Europeans, with the former having the full right to enlighten, educate and colonize the latter; which is perceived as backward and less-rational. The latter is at times, presented as depraved, corrupt and wicked, while the former wears the look of the ideal human being. It was this form of thinking by some anthropologists that introduced the notion of the 'superior' and the 'weak race' which echoes terribly in many places today.

To put it bluntly, the history of anthropology, rather than going ahead to highlight the fundamental characteristics general to all humankind, proceeded along the line of racial profiling, racism, and imperialism with the intent of subjugating and colonializing the contact people. Pathetic as it were, "Primitive man was treated humorously as the" bush man of the "earlier stages of mankind requiring a European assistance in the form of a missionary, civilizing, activity" (Ibid, p.135).

With anthropology having assumed this unfortunate dimension, European powers dispatched more anthropologists to the new world in form of missionaries and colonial

administrators. All of these were perpetrated under the cover that the weak natives badly needed protection and assistance to move from barbaric and primitive stages to civilized human beings. This framework led to the balkanization of the territory of the weak continents with each of the intruders laying claim to ownership. It also marked the beginning of the exploration and exploitation of the natural resources of those conquered territories. Thus, the anthropological fieldwork outside the European soil was a tragic exercise for the conquered peoples.

4.0   Conclusion

Notwithstanding the above mentioned unhappy circumstances surrounding the work of anthropologists in the non-European societies, credit should be given to the outcome of their fieldwork; because it was through their findings that outstanding results about the study of languages, economic activities, social customs such as marriages and kingship ties, as well as biology and the study of diseases and illnesses, such as malaria, cholera, et cetera, improved the human condition. These beneficial consequences raised questions as to how to review anthropology to improve the curriculum to enrich it and expunge its racial and offensive contents.

5.0   Summary

Anthropology emerged and developed from the activities of early explorers, missionaries, and travellers, especially in the 19th Century. The observations and accounts given by these anthropologists revealed that human societies are diverse, and each is unique on its own way, and does need the other to validate its relevance and existence. Unfortunately, the anthropologists injected prejudices and racial profiling in the reports which they gave of the different people they met in their journeys and adventures; requiring that we interrogate and evolve a more fundamental and people-friendly method of studying the diverse societies of humankind and securing a more accurate picture and understanding of human nature and human reality.

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UNIT 3:   THE CONCEPT OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE PERSON

Contents

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1.0   **Introduction**

   1.1 The Human Person

      The human person can be said to be a complex being that can do many things. Different from other forms of being, the human person can move his or her body, he or she can run, jump and even dance. These are bodily activities of the human person. Thus, we can say that the human person has a body, in which many other activities and processes take place. For instance, the beating of the heart, the complex functioning of the brain and the functioning of the kidney, et cetera, are bodily functions. All these processes are important for sustaining the human person's life and for healthy living as well. In the same vein, there are many other things which the person can do but cannot be classified as bodily activities. In other words, if bodily activity alone is what defines a Person; this will be an incomplete definition because there are many other beings which can move themselves in the same manner. They are developed in the psychomotor domain of education. However, in addition to the bodily activities, a person can think about things, reflect over a course of action, desire something, feel and dream about many different things. These of course seem to be mental and affective activities and are quite different from the earlier described bodily activities and processes. They seem to involve a mind which has mental states; and are quite different from bodily states. This is the reason that when we want to capture a person's mental state with words; we say he is happy, sad, in love, nervous, bold, et cetera. Therefore, a universal definition of person will include, not just a complex body, but also an entity endowed with physical, mental and emotional states. More light shall be shed on this in Unit 5 when we shall be looking at the Western conception of the person.

      Despite the fact that the notion of the person is universal, every society has at least, one collection of ideas that can be called their philosophy or theory of the person, which is why we often talk of African, Eastern or European personality. The philosophy of a person is an aggregate of views about what constitute human beings, what make human beings work, what they need for survival. All these are considered when talking about the human person. The notion of the human person is intricately linked with culture. It is for this reason that "cultural psychologists seek to understand people as they are embedded within their cultures" (Heine and Buchtel, 2009:370). Also, a philosophy of a person is not something that the people in the society will necessarily think of as separate from their views about many other things. In other words, it is intertwined with a couple of other things constituting their worldview. This is because people interact not only with each other but also with the world at large. In the African worldview, for instance, this web of interaction goes beyond the living human beings to include the living-dead, the ancestors and the deities. A people's concept of a person gives a more or

less comprehensive, epistemological and metaphysical account (Cf. Ndubuisi, 2004:422) of how a person works internally and externally in relation to his biological, social, religious, and moral attitudes towards existential challenges. Accordingly, Onah (2002: 70), identifies, two approaches in the study of personality; descriptive and normative approaches.

3.2 Descriptive Concept of the Human Person

The descriptive concept of a person has to do with the analysis of constituent parts of the human person; both physical and non-physical and their functions or significance in the scheme of things. This could sometimes take the form of examining human personality's subjective experience, free will and liability to moral laws. It seeks to know "what defines the human species in the abstract, what distinguishes humans from animals, and what is the natural condition of humankind" (Barnard, 2004:18). It tells whether all that constitute the human person is the physical body and its features or if there is a non-physical, mental or spiritual element in the human person and the physiological needs for survival. Igwe lends more credence to this in his discussion of what he calls classical definition of the human person. Citing Omoregbe, he writes:

> Classical definition as provided by Bioethics sees a person as an individual substance of rational nature, meaning that rationality is the distinguishing mark of a human person. More so, Aristotle asserts that the human being has a rational principle; within the nutritive life, he shares this rationality with plants, and within the instinctual life, he shares with other beings. This, he says, is the ability to rationally execute or formulate actions (Cf. Igwe, 2018: 39).

However, while not rejecting such a definition of the human person completely, Igwe objects that it is blank and open-ended. "Open-ended because it can as well be applied to both the wise and the foolish, and as such, it does not in any way follow necessarily the *making* of rational choices, as opposed to the *ability* to make them" (Ibid). Notwithstanding this objection, he agrees that rationality remains the prerogative property of human agents and it is that factor that differentiates the insane person or morally depraved person from the human person.

3.3 The Normative Concept of the Human Person

The normative approach has to do with the social status of a responsible member of a society. It evolves from the way in which man is understood in a given community in terms of his relations to other living beings and his role among other human beings (Sogolo 1993:190-91). According to Onah (2002), it is not something one is born with. In other words, it not natural to a person's character the way we can speak of rationality or other human existential traits. Normative personhood has to do with how a person acquires and internalizes social values. In this perspective, a person cannot only be said to be a human being but also one who has shown

commitment to, and has attained the status of a responsible member of the society. In an African traditional thought, according to Ndubuisi, a normal human being has three levels of existence: as an individual, as a member of a group, and as a member of a community. All of these constantly interact and inter-penetrate one another in a harmonious relation (Ndubuisi, 2004: 425).

> Only in terms of other people does the individual become conscious of his own being, his own duties, his privileges and responsibilities towards himself and towards other people. When he suffers, he does not suffer alone but with the corporate group; when he rejoices, he rejoices not alone but with his kinsmen, his neighbours and relatives whether dead or alive… The individual can only say: "I am, because we are; and since we are, therefore I am". This is the cardinal point in the understanding of the African view of human being (Mbiti, 1969: 108-09).

From this definition, it is clear that from the normative point of view, a social deviant or one who makes evil deeds a habit cannot be regarded as a human person. A human person is one whose action and inaction are dictated by consideration for the plight of other human persons. That is why Igwe (2018), while differentiating between the human person and the human being, writes:

> All human persons fall under the category of being a human being, but not all human beings fall in the domain of the human person. In other words, every human person possesses the qualities of being human (human being), but not every human being has the qualities of a human person (Igwe, 2018:40).

Highlighting the views of Omoregbe on the attributes of human personality, Igwe, again, writes that for a person to be said to be human, such an individual must "be a rational being, a free being, a moral being, a social being, a being that is capable of interpersonal relationship, and an individual being" (Ibid). Furthermore, Igwe adds that apart from the above listed characteristics of the human person, there is also a need to include self-evaluation as a key attribute of the human person. He argues that one can be rational, free, moral, social and individualistic, yet not being self-evaluating. For one to be a human person, he contends, that person should be self-evaluating. "A reflective being is that which, apart from possessing rationality, continuously reflects and, is conscious of this very property" (Ibid).

4.0 Conclusion

From the foregoing, a whole complex of things is considered in the discourse on the human person. There are physical, non-phsysical, psychological, biological, and

cultural, and a host other factors at play when deciding what constitutes a human person. Oftentimes, some anthropologists and social philosophers confuse the descriptive with the normative conception of the human person, and vice versa; a confusion that usually results in racism, racialism and ethnic hatred. From the universal view of the human person, the concept of the person seems verifiable and undiscriminating. From this perspective, the question of personal identity is validated by two factors namely, rationality and social inclination. In other words, the human person is one with a higher reasoning faculty which it uses to organize the self, the society and the whole living environment. Among all the living beings in the world, it is only the human person that is endowed with these properties; which is why the human person is regarded, in some quarters, as the most evolved of all sentient beings.

Similarly, even within framework of the normative conception of personhood, there are varying opinions as to what make up the human person as distinct from the human being. This to say that apart from the fact of reason and social conditioning, there are other sentiments shared in some cultures in respect to who the human person ought to be. Be it as it may, "it is not wrong to say that man, Eastern or Western, is man. However, the 'right concept' is very important to focus on man's real existence and man's everyday practice" (Lei, 2010:156). It is in the light of this that we shall now proceed to discuss the concept of the Person in both African and Eastern cultures.

5.0 Summary

The main point of our discussion about the philosophy of the human person can be summarized as follows: the first is that the question of what constitutes the human person is culturally sensitive. In other words, each human society appears to have a different opinion of what a human person is. The second point we made is that there are two approaches to the study of the philosophy of the human person; the first is descriptive and the second is normative. While the descriptive interpretation of the human person takes its root from the fact of nature, the normative approach is a function of nurture and social circumstance. However, the normative interpretation derives its fiber from the descriptive. In other words, there has to be a being called human before he or she can qualify to become a person.

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Unit 4: Theories of the Person: African and Eastern

Content

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1.0 Introduction

A people's metaphysical account, strictly ontological account of reality, is a comprehensive theory derived from their experience of the world, of the universe informed by a theory of being or a principle of reality otherwise known as metaphysics. A person's metaphysics is a position adopted and the reduction of all reality, all experience to that position. The metaphysical position is more of an editor of reality because it determines the principles or categories of reality that governs the world of particular people, that grounds their experiences and that explains the universe (Unah, 2004: 10). This is the reason why there are different theories of the human person depending on cultural specifics. In other words, as there are varied cultures in different societies, so there are varied views of what constitutes the human person. It is within this paradigm that we shall situate the African and Eastern conceptions of the human personality.

2.0 Intended Learning Outcome

This unit provides views about the person within the African and Eastern context. Accordingly, at the end of the study, the students are expected to have known the following:
  ➢ describe what constitutes the theory of the person
  ➢ Know that in African cultural interpretation, one does not become a person until he or she has met certain social requirements.
  ➢ Know that Africans have both the descriptive and normative concepts of the person
  ➢ Should be able to describe the similarity between the African and the Eastern views of the person.

3.0   Main Content

3.1   Theories of the Person

A theory of a person in the true sense of the word refers to certain requirements expected of a human being for one to be regarded as human person. There are several theories about the person and in most cases; these theories are influenced by culture, belief, religion or other forms of orientation. Although there are different perspectives about who a person is, there seems to be a consensus on the fact that personhood is an earned status. With this in mind, let us proceed to examine the African and Eastern conceptions of the person.

3.1.1   The African Theory of Human Person

The African conception of human personality reflects the cultural uniqueness that pervades its cultural space, social norms, belief and religion. "The conception of a man is

different (among Africans) and, like that of Cartesian Europe, is never dualist or dichotomist. There is never the separation between body and soul found elsewhere" (Cf. Tembo, 1980: 2). In essence, African account of reality is generally known to be a holistic one due to the manner in which it interlocks both sensible beings (material) and non-sensible beings together as aspects of the holistic world; having an interacting influence on each other. Just a reminder of what we discussed in Unit 3 above, where we noted that there are two approaches to the concept of man. This, according to Wiredu can also be found in Akan-African traditional thought; one is descriptive and the other normative (see unit 3 above).

As a matter of fact, it does appear that there are no unanimity of views on what constitutes the human person in Africa due to slight variations in their views. In other words, views on human person vary from one community to the other; but maintain a common denominator (holism). "Notwithstanding the perceived variations in African cultures, works on African history, anthropology, archeology, religion and philosophy are replete with notorious facts of sufficient significant similarities and relative unanimity in the thought systems of Africans" (Igbafen, 2014:125). Wiredu for instance, explains the ontological or descriptive basis of personhood in Akan society to include; Okra- the life principle and source of human dignity and destiny. There is also what is understood as Sunsum (the personality principle), and Mogya (the blood principle) (Onah, p. 75). There is also such principles as Nipadua (the physical body), and Ntoro (that which is responsible for the case of personality) i.e. the semen. Wiredu stated that the Semen principle is inherited from one's father and is taken as the basis of membership of patrilineal group. Differing slightly from the position of Wiredu, Kwame Gyekye talks about a unified dualist view of the Akan concept of a person as consisting of the Okra (the soul) and Nipadua (body); which does not entertain the tripartite notion of the person (Gyekye 1984:200). In other words, Gyekye is not in agreement with the tripartite view of man.

For the Yoruba interpretation of the human Person, Oyeshile (2006) writes that the Yoruba believe that man is tripartite in nature. These three elements are ara (body), emi (vital principle) and Ori (destiny). As such, the Yoruba believe that it is ori that rules, controls and guides the life and activities of a person. The Ori as the essence of a person derives from Olodumare (Supreme Being) and because this Ori is derived from Oludumare, man is bound to Olodumare without which the human being can never have his existence (Oyeshile, 2006: 157).

In terms of the material content of man, the Yoruba believe that ara stands for a collective term for all the material components of a person. These components which ara represents include Opolo (the brain), Okan (the heart), and Ifun (the intestine). Explaining this further, Oladipo, writes: both Opolo and Okan are regarded by the Yoruba as having some connections with human conscious activities, thinking, feeling, etc. Opolo is regarded by them as having connections with sanity and intelligence, to the extent that; "when a person is insane, they say "Opolo re ko pe"(his brain is not complete or not in order" (Oladipo, 1992:16).

On the other hand, Okan (psychical heart) which, apart from being closely connected with blood is also regarded as the seat of emotions and physical energy (Ibid). They believe strongly in emi as the element which provides the animating force without which a person cannot

be said to be living at all. While commenting on the dualistic view of the African notion of man, Ndubuisi states that the meaningfulness of the world and its order is centered on the self. Man and nature, for an African, are inseparable and should not be seen as two independent realities. The body and the soul are closely knitted. To him, the one should not be viewed as distinct from the other. It is impossible to know one to the exclusion of the other (Ndubuisi, 2004: 423-424).

Irrespective of these descriptive qualities of man in the African views, one can still not be said to be a human person. In other words, one may be biologically certified to be a human being yet, not a human person (see Igwe, 2018). For instance, in Igbo-African society, a human being may be referred to as not a person if his or her social conducts contradict the family, clan and community accepted norms and values. As such, one often hears expressions like: *onye a'bugho mmadu,* or *onye a bu onye nzuzu* (these man or woman is not a human person/anti-social). Accordingly, Igbafen avers:

> The degree of respect for and observance of one's communal norms and values is crucial to asserting one's essence as a person to the extent that the achievement of personhood in the final analysis depends on one's ability to use communal norms to guide one's actions. …the notion of an individual who is not shaped by his community, its norms, and interests does not make sense in African cultures (Igbafen, p. 126).

What is interesting about the African concept of personhood is that an individual may possess his or her distinct individuality which differentiates him or she from other animals and other fellow human beings; yet cannot be regarded as a person in isolation of others. In essence, the answer to the question of what constitute the human person in Africa is approached from both the descriptive and normative perspectives. In other words, man in African conception, is both an ontological and normative being. And these two approaches are always at play whenever the question of holistic personhood is raised. However, Africans appear to hold tenaciously that a human being's relation to the society, communal norms and values greatly confer the status of personhood to such individual. In this vein, all persons are human beings but not all human beings are persons. Is this also true of the Eastern conception of the person?

3.1.2   The Eastern Theory of Human Person

Just as we have seen the way Africans conceive the human person, so also it is necessary that we examine the views of the Eastern people on what constitutes their definition of the human person. In doing this, rather than speak of the whole Eastern people as though they are unified people with single worldview, we shall select only the Chinese and the Japanese for consideration. This is because both traditions have a shared-worldview. Ancient Chinese philosophy is not as unified as the Africans' which is founded on communalism; thus, their worldviews are scattered among different philosophical systems like Confucianism, Taoism,

Buddhism, and the rest (Unah, 2010:73). However, Confucianism seems to be more widely accepted and imbibed by the Chinese people and across the Asian continent and also bears similarity with the African views. For this reason, we can single out Confucianism for discussion.

3.1.3 **Chinese**

Confucianism is a philosophical system whose founder is Confucius and its doctrine is founded on the cultivation of virtues and human development. As such, it contains both metaphysical and moral principles with which the followers are expected to ground their reality. There are both individual and communal perspectives to the understanding of the human person in Chinese; although community appears to be more emphasized than individuality. In the words of Igbafen (2014:136);

> The Chinese since (antiquity) time immemorial have had a clear inward vision of the self, person or individual as a relatively coherent, enduring, and self-contained entity that makes decision, carries responsibility, is possessed by feelings, and in general has a fate, a fortune, and a history.

However, in the Confucian system, the notion of self is not exactly the same as it is understood in the west. Instead, self only comes to light in relation with the society "it is defined through the social institutions and relationships in the midst of which it stands and which are instrumental in forming its character" (Ibid). The essence of the human person is only actualized with community. Accordingly, the notion of an estrange individuality is unknown to Confucianism. A person is defined in Chinese by his or her interaction or relation to other persons. In other words, it is active social relation that defines the human person. It is more interested in the social conduct as the determining factor of personhood. "He specialized not only in the orderly arrangement of society and relationship between people but also in self-perfection and self-development, humanism and moral rectitude as the ultimate goals of every person. Confucius proposed procedures to cultivate self-development" (Lei, 2010:157-158). The real human being in Confucius parlance is a man of *Jen*, that is the man whose moral conduct is driven not by self-interest but by the interest of others, a man who does his duties for duty; not for profit or praise (the society), because he loves his or her fellowmen. Put differently,

> Man is always considered as Man-in-society. It is true that the Analects delineate Confucius and his followers as individuals, with individual characteristics, occasionally with eccentricities; but the constant theme is Man-in- relation, existing in a network of duties and

obligations. Man for the Confucianianists is a social being (Morten, 1971:69).

This is another way of saying that an isolated individuality or a recluse is not a human person. In other words, for one to be qualified as a human person, one must not only meet the biological requirements for a human being; like rationality and other components but also be seen to be socially distinguished; both in conduct towards others and in moral rectitude. Thus, the crux of Confucius theory of man is that man is essentially a social being who has the society built around him; and right from birth, growth, learning and death, the society remains the womb within which all of these are incubated. Man is "molded into who he is by these processes. Society is nothing more than the interactions of men, because society is a product of the individuals who compose it" (Hahn and Waterhouse, 1972:355). "Everyone in society has certain duties, certain things which he ought to perform, which he ought to do, and which have to be done for their own sake" (Unah, 2010:82). Therefore, for Chinese (Confucius), the human being possesses all the qualities that distinguish man from animals like in the western sense; however, a human person cannot be so called in the strict sense unless he or she has attained the state of moral and ethical rectitude.

3.1.4 **Japanese**

For the Japanese, just as the Chinese, "social relationship and social interaction with other persons"(Craemer, 1983:26) are definite characteristics of their notion of personhood; although they do not deny the biological components in man. For instance, they use the term *ningen* to indicate a human person who occupies a physical space and inhabited by a spirit (see Brivio, 1980). Thus, human being, person or man is understood in Japan as *Ningen*. But beyond that, Craemer observes that the Japanese view of person is comparable to Bantu-African view where community's reality takes a primal status over and above that of the individual. But unlike the African, the Japanese is relatively indifferent to transcendental appeal (Craemer, 26). An individual identity in the Japanese conception is derived from social identity, "precisely because togetherness is desirable" (Cf. Ibid). Accordingly, the Japanese will first identify him or herself with the group before distinguishing his or her individual identity. Nakane (1974), as cited my Craemer, writes:

> …rather than say, "I am a typesetter" or "I am a filing clerk," he is likely to say, "I am from B Publishing Group" or "I belong to S Company"…. In group identification, a frame such as "company" or "associate" is of primary importance; the attribute of the individual is a secondary matter. The same tendency is found among intellectuals: among university graduates, what matters most, and functions the strongest socially, is not whether a man holds or does not hold a PhD but rather from which university he graduated (Cf. Craemer, p.27).

Just like it is in the African conception where communal identity is the defining factor of personhood, so also it is with the Japanese where mutuality of existence overshadows human

individuality. One whose moral consideration is determined by the feeling of the other is seen as a virtuous person. Thus, in the Japanese world of human relations, empathy and emotionality play prominent roles. That is, a person cannot be so called until he or she demonstrates such quality in social relations. The autonomy of the individual becomes guaranteed only in social involvement. This however is not to say that the Japanese lack the sense of individual identity. Rather, what it implies is that although while the individual retains his or her self-identity, there is a strong connect between individual identity and social identity, to the extent that at any point where the interest of both conflicts, the latter will take primal position. "Self-identity, for a Japanese, may ultimately derive from {establishing and reestablishing} confidence in the purity of his inner self" (Lebra, 1976:161).

4.0 Conclusion

The import of the foregoing, is that social solidarity is the defining feature of both African and Eastern theories of personhood. In other words, for the human person to be so called, all the biological qualities of human being must be in tandem with the communal order, as it is only by so doing that the aspirations, yearnings, goals and happiness of the human person can be guaranteed.

5.0 Summary

In this unit, we have seen that the theory of the human person varies from society to society, from culture to culture. None of them lays claim or denies the biological component of the human person. Rather, they seem to be saying the biological requirement of human being there are other social demands which one must need to be qualified as a human person.

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Unit 5:   Theories of The Person: Western

Contents

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1.0 Introduction

    As we hinted in Unit 3 where we briefly discussed the two approaches to understanding the person, this Unit promises to widen and explain those approaches. Throughout the history of western education, the discourse about the person is bifurcated along two schools of thought; idealism and materialism; although each of these conceptions is deeply rooted in the notion of "the person as essentially individual and rational in nature" (Craemer, 1983: 32). While trying to aggregate the views of the person in western scholarship, we said in Unit 3 that certain realities about the person suggest that there is body/physical and mental components or states constituting the human person. Thus, the summary of the western view of the person is that the human person is a being who possesses both the bodily and mental states. In that line, apart from other biological traits, the western conception of the human person is based on individuality, consciousness and rationality. This notion often raises metaphysical debates about what exactly consciousness and "about the identity of states of consciousness with particular bodies, and about how we differentiate ourselves from what is not ourselves"(https://www.encyclopedia.com/medicine/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/personhood) . Thus, implications of using consciousness and rationality as the distinguishing mark of personhood include that; first, the human person is morally liable for his actions; that one that is in a vegetative state is not in the same level of personhood with one that is fully active; that an insane person is less a person to a sane person. It is in the debate to truly understand the human person that arguments about mental/soul versus bodily/physical states ensue. All of these will play out in the course of delivering instructions on this unit.

2.0 Intended Learning Outcomes [ILOs]
    The discussion in this unit promises to be interesting; at the end of which the students are expected to achieve the following:-

      ❖ Able to describe how idealism and materialism contest personhood

      ❖ Able to establish how mental and bodily activities define human life.

3.0   Main Content

3.1   Mental State as Constituent of Human Person

The first question that comes to mind here is, what constitutes the mental state of being? Simply put, we can say that the mental is the non-physical; it is that aspect of the human person which perceives, feels, remembers imagines, wills, and above all, thinks. It is other-wise called the mind (Igwe, 2018). The mind is an immaterial entity in which all mental states and processes occur: thinking, imagining, feeling, memories, ideas and so on, are the properties of the mind (Bunge 1980:1). Some philosophers aptly describe or substitute the mind with the soul and spirit. In this sense, the mind is viewed as a faculty, the cognitive faculty, the power to think or a reality that has the capacity to connect divine light from the soul or spirit through consciousness. Put differently, any being that has the capacity to think has a mind. Hence if you want to identify the existence of a mind is by evidence of thinking. Those who argue along this line are called idealists.

Accordingly, the idealists hold that man is a thinking being. They further insist that even if there are material components of the human person, they are reducible to the mental phenomena. Armstrong (1968:5), further explains:

> Some theories of mind and body try to reduce body to mind or some property of mind. Such theories may be called mentalist theories. Thus, according to Hegel and his followers, the Absolute Idealists, the whole material world is really mental or spiritual in nature, little as it may appear so. According to Leibniz, material objects are colonies or rudimentary souls.

This view can be classified as belonging to a philosophical theory known as idealism; and in the view of Omoregbe (2001:5), it means a;

> Philosophical theory or school of thought Which gives primacy to spirit or idea over matter in its conception of reality Idealists generally deny the existence of Matter as an autonomous entity or substance existing on its own, independently of any mind or spirit.

Accordingly, Omoregbe further classifies idealism to be of two types; subjective idealism and objective idealism (Ibid). The former reduces matter to idea, while the latter deny matter completely. Amstrong, agrees with Omoregbe's view about subjective idealist. In his observation that Bishop Berkeley and his philosophical descendants, the phenomena-lists, hold that physical objects are constructions out of ideas or sense impressions (Armstrong, 1968:5).

Objective idealists exemplified by the German idealists such as Hegel, Schelling, Fitchte; completely deny the independent existence of matter as an entity or as a separate and different substance from mind. According to Omoregbe, what we see as material objects are self-projections or manifestations of a spiritual reality underlying them (Omoregbe, 2001: 6). What this view establishes is that there is a spirit, soul or mind in the ultimate reality underlying every matter whatsoever. As such the human person is predominantly spiritual. To some other philosophers, the soul ought to be admitted as a complete substance of its own. This is because in their views its substantiality is identified with that of man and man has nothing other than soul, since the soul is gifted with its own act of being. Man is completely a spiritual substance (Mondin, 1985:219). Stressing this view further, Belser (1993: 4) states that Schelling conceives the absolute as that which does not depend upon anything else in order to exist or be conceived. In this sense, the Absolute is both existence and essence. It is independent of, and unconditioned by any other thing. The absolute is a *causi sui*; that whose essence necessarily involves existence (Ibid).

The thrust of the idealist view on the human person is that the mental, mind, spirit or soul takes primacy in the constitution of the human person. According to the idealist, matter is reducible to the mental. The whole of this was captured in George Berkeley's 'esse est percipi to be is to be perceived'. Schopenhauer, a German philosopher, on his part, reduced the entire reality to mental phenomena in his popular view about the world as '*will* and *idea*'. This of course is the idealist conception of the human person. At this juncture, it is important for us to look at its rival school of materialism.

3.2 The Material State as Constituent of the Person

Just like the idealist school took the extreme position in the conception of the human person by completely denying any material component in the makeup of the human person, so also the materialist views the notion of the mental, mind, spirit or soul as illusory. In their view, the mind is not a thing apart, but a set of brain functions or activities (Bunge, 1980:1).

In this sense, it implies that activities such as perceiving, imagining, thinking, dreaming, desiring, et cetera, would all be brain processes. In essence, the materialists take material reality as a point of departure and as such, every other activity there is, only becomes a function of the material. It is otherwise known as materialist or physicalist theories of mind. Armstrong (1968), writes: for a materialist, man is nothing but a physical object and so he is committed to giving a purely physical theory of the mind (p.10).

It must also be noted here that what we have come to know today as materialism is associated with Democritus and his atomic theory in which he states that everything that constitutes reality is made up of atoms. Although he does not deny the reality of the mental, he maintains that they are material in the final analysis in that, just like everything else, they are made up of atoms. For this type of reasoning, it makes no sense to speak of the human person

with words like soul, mind, or spirit existing side by side with the body. In a case whereby such elements exist, they simply arise from the functions of the nervous system. Within this view, there are those who out rightly deny the reality of the mental and there are those who admit that although the mental exist but are reducible to matter in the process of its development. This is what Armstrong meant when he stated that in opposition to the mental theory, "we have materialist theories which try to reduce mind to body or to some property of body" (Ibid, p.5). In clarifying this view, Omoregbe, (1996:84) further writes:

> Like Democritus, before him, Epicurus also held that everything in reality was made of atoms, and that only matter existed. All events and activities in the universe were also explained by him as due to the movement of atoms as they float about in the void. The combination of a number of atoms as they clash with one another in their downward movement accounts for the coming into existence of things. The human souls and even the gods are all composed of atoms.

This is the scientific position on the human person; although there are still those who seem to dangle between the material constitution of the human person and dualism.

Closely related to the doctrine of materialism is naturalism which Armstrong describes as "the doctrine that reality consists of nothing but a single all-embracing spatiotemporal system" (Stumpf, 2002: 188). Armstrong rejects the idealism of thinkers such as Berkeley who denied the existence of matter. This is because he believes that denial of the existence of matter is based on a priori argument; that is, arguments independent of experience rather than on empirical evidence. Materialism and naturalism are very much alike although physicalism which is another word for materialism seems to be a narrower concept than naturalism. Materialism agrees with naturalism on reality being spatiotemporal. However, it argues that all spatiotemporal entities comprise the entities known by physics. That is, entities like molecules, atoms, electrons, etc. On this note some scholars have argued that "it is possible for materialism to be false and naturalism to still be true" (Ibid). If we then bring the materialistic theory to bear on the human person, it would mean that the human contains nothing other than the entities recognized by physics. In this case the place for mind spirit or soul is unknown to it, and if there be any, it is subsumed under behaviourism or brain processes.

3.3 Dualism of Human Person

Although properly elaborated in Descartes' philosophy, the father of Dualism according to Omoregbe (2001) is Plato. Dualism means two. A dualist view about the human person is one that holds that mind and body are distinct. A man for the dualists is a compound object, a material thing, which also relates somehow to a non-material aspect of him-the mind. According to Armstrong (1968), there are two main types of dualist theory. He identifies them to be: one

which is of a Cartesian origin. For Cartesian Dualism, the mind is a single non-material or spiritual substance which is somehow related to the body. The other type of dualism Armstrong identifies as Bundle Dualism. He explains that the term bundle relates to Hume's notorious description of the mind as a bundle of perception (Armstrong, 1968:6-7).

Again, Armstrong distinguishes between Interactionist dualism and Parallelist dualism. The former, he understands to mean a theory of mind whereby the body acts on the mind; the mind reacts on the body. That is, in this case, there is a dual relationship, the body acting on the mind, and the mind reacting on the body. He likened it to a room-thermometer relationship in which case, a rise in the temperature of the room brings about changes in the thermostat: the changes in the thermostat in turn affect the room bringing back its temperature to a certain level (p. 8). On the other hand, the latter thinks of body and as related like room and thermometer. The body they say acts on the mind, but the mind is incapable of reacting back on the body in any way at all (Ibid). Within the parallelist theory we have yet another version which could be called extreme parallelist theory. For this view, not only is the mind incapable of acting on the body, but the body is also incapacitated of acting on the mind. In all, what the dualist view upholds without controversy is that mind and body, mental and material, constitute the human person.

The point to take home from our various discussion (starting from the African, Chinese, Japanese and Western views) on what constitutes the human person are that; every civilization has at least one collection of ideas that can be identified as their concept or theory of a person; that it is through this concept of a person that we understand the difference between the human person and other kinds of beings.

4.0 **Conclusion**

This unit has centered on the western conception of the human person which is built on a radically opposed schools of idealism and materialism. While the idealist theory of the person favours the nonphysical, spiritual or soul elements as defining personhood, the materialist theory contends that the human person is a component of matter, and that if there is any mental constituent of the person, it is explainable through brain processes. A somewhat reconciliatory position is that of dualism, which makes provisions for both elements to conveniently cohabit in a complementary kind of relationship; thereby dousing the tension generated by hardline idealist or materialist metaphysics of personhood.

5.0 **Summary**

The search for a true doctrine of personhood begun with the African and Asian conceptions brought us into the mainstream of western European rigid schools of idealism and materialism; which is construed as scientific accounts of the philosophy of the person. What we found out in the western position is that personhood is defined by consciousness and rationality; without recourse to communal sentiments or moral reference which are favoured by African and Asian conceptions. Still, still all of these views appear not have satisfactorily address the problem under reference; which leaves a lacuna for further research.

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Module 2

Contents

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UNIT 1:   Crises of the Human Person and Causes

Contents

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1.0 Introduction

Anthropology as we have seen from its history and development encompasses a whole lot of things. As we pointed out in module one, it engages in the study of human beings; their biological constitution, normative dimensions and activities. Different cultures have different ways in which they view the human person and what is expected of human beings before they can qualify as accepted members of the human community. Philosophical anthropology has the noble task of directly calibrating what belongs to human beings in general without regard to colour, race, size and status. Unfortunately, the history of anthropology in Africa from our study in module One, took the shape of narrating what humans do instead of concentrating on the general constitution of the human person, whether black or white. It is in the process of describing what a particular people do or what they fail to do, in comparison with other groups of people elsewhere that the notion of superior race or superior culture and inferior or primitive culture was smuggled into anthropological studies. These different dimensions introduced in the study of the human person by different cultures and in different works of anthropologists have brought crises in the study of anthropology. Consequently, philosophy as the parent discipline attempted to come to the rescue of anthropology to furnish it with a more solid foundation. This mission was not successfully accomplished; thus necessitating that a more fundamental approach be applied to the study of personhood, in this module.

2.0 Intended Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit you are expected to:-

   ❖ Identify the root cause[s] of the crises of personhood
   ❖ Know the nature of the crises

3.0 Main Content

3.1 Background to the Crises

In Unit one of the first Module, we made attempts to explain the meaning of anthropology. The conclusion we arrived at was that anthropology studies man from different perspectives. We identified the cultural, linguistic, religious, and racial perspectives to the study of man (see Module One: Units One & Two). The reason for the manifestation of these cultural and other dimensions of man is embedded in the nature of reality. Since every conception of virtually

everything varies cross-culturally, so too is the conception of the person. And as argued by Melford (1993:107-108), "not only conceptions of the self, but also the self itself, for if the self varies across individuals within one and the same society, then it surely can be presumed that it varies across societies". But if the notion of the self or the human person varies across cultures, does that imply that it is impossible to have an all-round narrative of personhood?

Virtually in all the units of the first module, attempts were made to explain the various views about the human person. We looked at the African view, the Eastern view and the Western view. Each of these views about the constituents of the human person appears to have thrown more confusion with regards to who a person really is. For instance, John Locke, a British thinker, provided certain capacities that a human person must possess. In his view, for one to be a human, one must be "a thinking intelligent being, that has reason and reflection, and can consider itself as itself, the same thinking thing, in different times and places"(Cf. Milne, 2006:146). Joseph Fletcher on his part, made an attempt to distinguish between being human and being a person. His argument is that some human beings at a point cease to be a person depending on certain circumstances. This form of argument about human person is based on the fact of functionality. In other words, this view is against the general notion that all human beings are human persons. On the contrary, what should define who a human person really is, is the fact of consciousness and feelings. Unfortunately, this form of view poses a problem to clear understanding of the person. This is because; to maintain this type of view simply means to support abortion or euthanasia, for instance. The implication of Fletcher's position is that, for instance, one who by accident or illness becomes unconscious can as well be disposed of as not belonging to the category of persons. This, again, introduces more crises into the effort to secure an understanding of the human person.

3.2 Sources of the Crises

This undertaking to secure a better understanding of the nature of the person may be further illuminated with a discussion of aspects of human nature; which is characterized by the exercise of freedom, volition and choices that often run counter to the perceptions of others around us, and sometimes we ourselves act to contradict our previous convictions. This is described as the ambivalence of human nature, or the porousness and predicament of the human condition. In the physical universe, human beings perceive and engage in social interactions. We perceive the letters, words and sentences of this discourse through the sense of sight – the eyes. Also, we perceive that the letters are printed on white paper with black ink. We perceive that while we read to participate in the discourse, some other people, nearby do not do the same. Through the sense of taste; by the tongue, each person could perceive the taste of the previous meal; to be either delicious or sour. Through the sense of smell – by the nostrils, we can differentiate polluted air from uncontaminated air. Through the sense of touch - by the skin we perceive, say, external pains caused by heat or pricking by the niddle. Through the sense of hearing – the ear, we can perceive the ringing tones of our mobile handsets each moment the number is dialed. Also, we can perceive the sound from the neighborhoods; our family members, our classmates,

our lecturers; of vehicles, of guns, of bombs, of aircrafts, even of ourselves. All of these characterize human nature and they constitute the fundamental sources of personal and interpersonal crises.

But it is not perception that informs us of the nature and entailments of the information fetched by the senses; rather it is reason – the faculty of rationality. We perceive through the senses but know by reason. We are able to discriminate between: white and black colours, sweat and bitter taste, pleasant and unpleasant odor or smell, pain and pleasure; hot and cold temperature, loud and quiet sounds, by reason. Further, we discern, understand, interpret and apply information or sensations by reason. Reason enables us to go beyond or transcend the perceptible objects; to cognize, interpret, understand, know and recognize perceived objects after the particular moments they are perceived. Rationality is the activity of the mind for understanding of both physical facts and non-physical realities. To this end, rationality is essentially associated with metaphysics – after the physical.

Rationality enables human being to think clearly about anything, take positions, draw conclusions and make judgments even on issues that may not secure general consensus.

How then do the physical and non-physical nature of human being relate to the crises of human person? Issuing from our discussion above, it is due to the natural endowment of man as a rational being with free will. It is plurality not properly understood and managed that amounts to interpersonal and inter-group crisis. They amount to crisis because; they are not just plural but different and sometimes contradictory. Based on our pattern of discourse, there is a structural connection between irreconcilable contradictions and crisis. All of these constitute the fundamental sources of crises in the human person.

3.3 **Identity Crises**

Thus, there is the crisis of identity. Identity crisis as a term, is said to have originated in the work of a developmental psychologist Erik Erickson (Cherry, 2019 https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-an-identity-crisis-2795948). He is of the view that it is through identity formation that an individual distinguishes and affirms his or her existence. Put differently by Locke, what matters about the human person is self-consciousness. This is because according to him, "in all our thinking we are conscious of ourselves as the subject of all our actions – "in this alone consists personal identity, i.e. the sameness of a rational being" (Milne, 2006:146).

Now, on the strength of Lockean definition above, should we accept rationality as the sole requirement for the human person? Do we accept the view that what constitutes the human person is solely the body or can it be sound to admit the existence of spiritual, mental or non-physical components in the human person?

Again, is the human person a free agent or is he or she constrained by certain inevitable circumstances that he or she responds to; in other words, what is the place of freedom or determinism in the question of the human person if indeed the human person is a divine project that was fully created to fulfill certain divine purposes? Thus, it suffices to say that all the attempts made at understanding the human person in different civilizations, as observed in Module One, have left us more confused about who the human person really is. Although all the different accounts seem to have varied opinion about what constitutes the human person; nevertheless, "they share a core belief that personhood is not something that belongs intrinsically to every human being" (Ibid, p.147); which in itself is a problem that could brew crises of its own.

What is responsible for the identity crisis identified above is the double identity characterization of human reality. For instance, in respect to mind-body dichotomy of the human person; which should we accept as the authentic view about the human person? Is it true that, apart from the physical body that we can see of the human person, there is a mental, spiritual or soul element? What is your opinion on this?

Furthermore, if we are to admit the views of scholars that the distinguishing mark of the human person is reason, then what about the infants, the insane, the vegetative or the stupid? Or, if we accept that the deciding factor for human person is about functionality and consciousness; are we now saying that embryo and the brain-dead aren't human?

4.0 **Conclusion**

In the course of discussions in this unit, rationality and functionality have been identified as the determinants of personhood, which have been noted to introduce identity crises. But other contending factors, such as being born into the world are also germane to personal identity. In other words, beyond functionality or consciousness, the human person must be socially alive. This view resonates in the African, Chinese and Japanese conceptions which we considered in Module One. This perspective automatically excludes a social rebel from the class of human persons. That is to say that, one who is biologically certified as a human being would on the basis of conduct, be denied personhood. In other words, if as a human being, I have consistently misbehaved in a socially antithetical manner, I am therefore rendered by social definition as not belonging to the group of beings called human persons. Such, prompts the question who am I? It also reduces personality self-worth. Put differently, if there is an observable behavioural quality of a person which I run short of; does that reduce my status as a person? The point to stress on this is that a study of the person based on communal or collective identity also leads to identity crisis.

5.0 Summary

From the forgoing, it seems undeniable that when anthropology is studied from cultural or linguistic dimensions, it leaves identity of the person confused and introduces racism into anthropology. This deliberately contrived weapon was used for imperial and colonial subjugation of peaceful people. Evidently, it is on account of the fact that man is involved in so many activities as he goes about his daily rounds, that the anthropologists make the mistake, deliberately or inadvertently, of engaging in the description of these activities and at the end, leave the question who is the human person in general unanswered.

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Unit 2:   Dimensions or Aspects of the Crises of the Person

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1.0   **Introduction**

A very crucial aspect of the crisis of the human person lies in the multiple definitions often given to it. Some of the examples of these include, but not limited to, the mind-body problem; the problem of freedom and determinism, the problem of egoism and altruism. Descartes, in his meditations, holds that mind and body are distinct substances which, nevertheless, interact. How could two things with two radically different natures be domiciled in the human person and suppose that there won't be disorder in such an entity? Again, there is a debate in philosophy regarding the nature of human actions. The debate thrives on the question whether human actions are free or determined. In the same vein, moral philosophers are locked in a controversy in regard to the underlying motivation of the actions of the human person.

2.0   **Intended Learning Outcomes [ILOs]**

At the end of this learning unit, you should be able to do the following:-

- ❖ Identify some aspects of the crises of personhood
- ❖ Describe some of the conflicting aspects of personhood
- ❖ Attempt some solutions to aspects of the identified conflicts

3.0   **Main Content**

3.1   **Conflicting definitions of personhood**

Personhood or personal identity has been defined as,

[i] Capacity for intelligent reasoning; rational thought, consciousness;

[ii] Functionality; utility; sentience (being with feeling)

[iii] Moral responsibility; Community recognition

[vi] Alignment with and recognition of Divine purpose

[v] An amalgam of neurological processes

3.2 **Conflicting Accounts of Human Nature or Human Reality**

The above list suggests the following: you are a human person or have attained personhood when you display capacity for intelligent reasoning, ability for rational thought and reasonable choices in the midst of conflicting, oft-tempting, alternatives. If intelligence confers personality or personhood, are robots designed to display intelligence such as functioning as medical diagnosticians, receptionists, search engines, drivers, et cetera, qualify for personhood?

In the same way, functionality, utility and sentience have been advanced as essential qualities of personhood. This means that a person is a person because he or she can perform certain physical activities and is conscious of his or her environment; for instance, he or she can talk, feel, express love and empathy, et cetera. But if these were to be granted as the proper requirements of personal identity, would individuals in vegetative, embryonic, fetal, unconscious, states be denied personhood?

It has also been averred that moral responsibility and performance of social obligations confer personhood. This position means that a human being could only qualify to be a person if and only if his actions and conducts are in agreement with prescribed norms of behaviour of the society or community. If conformity with social norms defines a person as a person where lies personal identity and freedom of action? Where lies the uniqueness of the individual human being? Where do you place dissidents, sexual minorities, and mentally challenged individuals?

It has also been advanced in some quarters that alignment of the individual with the divine purpose for his existence qualifies an individual to be a person. St. Augustine, the Bishop of Hippo and St. Thomas Aquinas have expressed views that assign personhood on the basis of Divine or celestial recognition. How does the theory of Divine recognition and purpose of personhood coexist with human freedom?

Personhood has also been defined in terms of the possession of neurological composition. This means that to be a person is explainable wholly in terms of brain processes and the nervous system; without reference to and independent of mental states. If this is correct about the human personality, how is it that the phenomena of astral travels, clairvoyance, and parapsychological occurrences feature in human reality? All of these will appear to have ignored the invaluable contributions of Soul or Mind philosophers, such as Plato and Descartes, in the development of western thought. In particular, we need to acquaint ourselves with Descartes' position on the nature of mind in its relationship with the body.

3.3 **Mind-Body Problem**

In his *Meditations* Descartes holds the view that mind and body are distinct substances which cohabits the human space. In his explanation of the self or the person, the expression, Cogito

ergo Sum" [I think therefore I am] establishes the fact that human personality lies in the heart of consciousness. Here, the dictum, 'I think', is the major defining characteristic of human existence. He goes further to state that the root of consciousness is the mind, rather than the brain. In other words, the mind, in his understanding is the *self*, which performs the act of consciousness such as: thinking, imagining, doubting, reflecting, planning and willing. Against this backdrop, Descartes describes consciousness as mental, as thought and non-spatial in character. What then is mental or non-spatial event? Warburton (1999:131) clearly answers it thus: "mental aspects are such things as thinking, feeling, deciding, dreaming, imagining, and wishing and so on". Accordingly, Descartes believes that mental elements cannot be extended in space. The nature of the mind is therefore thought. Aside the existence of a thinking thing (mind or the self), Descartes posits that the body also exists. To him, his body includes: his face, arms, and other members composed of bones and flesh including human brain. All these are, in his view, divisible, spatial, and capable of being extended. Hence, he wrote:

> By body, I understand all that which can be defined by a certain figure. Something which can be defined in a certain place, and which can fill a given space in such a way that every other body will be excluded from it; which can be perceived either by touch or sight or hearing or taste (Descartes, 1968:279).

This quotation shows that the body is different from the mind and equally implies that they are two ontologically disparate substances. But again, how do I explain a non-spatial mind being trapped in a spatial body? This double-identity of the human person poses a problem.

Indeed, the mind body-problem is one of the persistent problems which philosophers have struggled for centuries to resolve. From the time of Descartes in the seventeenth century it has been an issue of prime importance. The reason for this is due partly to the growing influence of science, with its desire to describe the world in qualitative and mathematical terms.

Descartes also says that, apart from these two elements simply existing, they are also radically distinct in nature. Put differently, the mind-body problem originated from the Cartesian attempts to answer the question; what is the fundamental nature of mind and body as constituents of the human person? As was further queried by Stumpf (2002:198); if mind and body are two very different kinds of substances, how could something non mental affect something material or vice versa? How are mind and body related being that for Descartes, mind and body are two radically different entities, two different substances? Descartes further explains that the basic features of material objects are their geometric qualities like size, shape, weight, et cetera. On the contrary, the basic feature of the mental is thinking. In other words, while material objects are extended in length, breadth, and depth, non-extension and thought are the nature of thinking substance. To reconcile the problem elicited by the notion of mind-body difference; Descartes, again, introduced what he called dualistic interactionalism.

3.4   **Freedom and Determinism**

Another dimension to the crisis of human person lies in the debate whether or not man is free or determined. This has been known in philosophical discourse as freedom and determinism. Freedom is considered as a fundamental component of human being. In the views of the existentialists, it is freedom that confers meaning on human existence. Freedom is the most precious gift given to man by nature. By freedom, he charts or determines the course of existence. Also, within the existential framework, being-in-the-world and being-with-others; at different social units and in course of time, different experiences inform different thoughts and different decisions. These again amounts to contradictions; both of the self and of others. Podolny considered such magnitude of contradictions thus:

> People so frequently contradict, not only others, but themselves as well. They change their point of view, correct themselves, agree with others... Evidently, there is no other way to get to know the universe, which is also full of contradictions (Podolny, 1986:206).

Freedom is exercised by man's capacity to act and not to act in a particular way; to choose among available options, to discriminate the good from the bad and act correspondingly. Most importantly, freedom comes with burden. The burden of freedom is responsibility. When one is free to choose, one is also liable for one's choice. When one choses to act in a particular manner, s/he takes responsibility for the same action. One who chooses to be virtuous will enjoy good rewards. Conversely, one who chooses to be vicious will suffer the punishment.

Yet, alternative experiences show that individuals do not entirely determine the course of affairs of their lives. Meaning that, there is essentially no cause-effect relationship between virtuous acts and rewards, on the one hand, and vicious acts and punishment, on the other hand. The implication is that, people do not take responsibility for either virtuous or vicious; good or bad actions on the basis that such people are determined (design of superior being), made to act in the very ways they do. Again, if indeed, I am free, why should I not do or achieve all that I desire? Why do people regret certain action of theirs in the face of repercussion? All of these pose a problem to the human person.

3.5   **Egoism and Altruism**
One of the biggest challenges confronting the human person is the question of how to identify motives of actions. Can the human person perform any action devoid of self-interest or is it true that at the remotest part of every human action lies the self-interest? There are those who believe that there can be altruistic actions. In other words, they believe that one's action can, sometimes, be motivated by the need to help others. For instance, if a very wealthy man decides

to go to a neighbourhood to distribute part of his wealth to the less privileged; it is difficult to see how such gesture could be seen as egoistic or done for self-interest. Again, if I am going along the way and suddenly, I run across a distressed individual and I decided to give a helping hand; how can my action be interpreted as motivated by self-interest?

Of course, at a cursory glance, one could argue, from the instances we gave above, that there are altruistic actions. However, there are opposing views which contend that, if I decide to give arm to a beggar or give helping hand to a distressed person; there is, at least, one motivation, private to my heart, from which such action springs. To some, it may be because of religious considerations; they want to fulfil the injunctions of whatever they believe in, so as to have access to certain promises in that faith, which means they fear or the need to be pious as the motive of the action.   To others, the reason for their action may not be because they want to be praised or rewarded by anybody but because they want to be happy. In this case, happiness is the motivating factor. Therefore, somehow, at a closer investigation, it could be said that no human action goes without motive and in as much as the motive is in anyway traceable to the self; it is a self-interest action; which validates the position that the human person is driven by self-interest. But, if we are to accept this as basic axiom about the human person, how can we decipher the genuineness of human actions?

4.0 **Conclusion**

The crises of the human person throw different dimensions and each of these dimensions stems from the problem of definition of human nature. Definition poses a problem to the actual understanding of the human person if personhood is reduced to the capacity for reasoning or consciousness. It is also problematic when we reduce the entire human person to functionality, activities and actions. Each of these definitions throws up a charge for a more fundamental approach in the study of the human person.

5.0 **Summary**

In this unit, we have tried to highlight the various issues that are often presented in the effort to properly understand the person. The point was made that, at the bottom of this conflict, lies the problem of definition and multiple nature of the person. Unfortunately, rather than dismiss any of these positions as irrelevant and out of order, the proper attitude might be that each of these perspectives should combine in defining the person and even provide further justification for a more fundamental approach to the study of personhood.

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UNIT 3: Manifestations of the Crises of the person

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  3.2 Racial Determinism
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6.0   References/Further Reading

1.0   **Introduction**

  The manifestation of identity crises has largely happened under the banner of all manner of determinisms. In Module 1 units 1 and 2, for instance, Unah linked the phenomenon of racism and racialism to a form of anthropological studies that engaged in the description of what humans do rather than who the human person is; leading to the introduction of racial superiority

into the study of personhood. Some, especially Africans, were classified as 'primitives', and Europeans as 'civilized'. This culture of racial superiority infused secretly by the colonialists promoted a form of identity crises that diminished the self- confidence and self-esteem of colonized people. This, in turn, brought about the practice of cultural imposition by the Europeans, on the one hand, and the undermining of the cultures of colonized Africans, on the other hand; thus, further escalating identity crises.

2.0 Intended Learning Outcomes [ILOs]

By the end of this unit, you should be able to do the following:-

- ❖ Identify the link between European expansionist anthropology and socio-cultural prejudices
- ❖ Able to enumerate the forms of determinism associated with socio-cultural prejudices.
- ❖ Understand and describe how cultural determinism shapes the self-confidence and self-esteem of the human person.

3.0   Main Content

3.1 Forms of Determinism as Constraints on Human Freedom

We have identified freedom, in some of the previous units, as one of the fundamental characteristics of personhood. In other words, our previous expositions show that the existence of the human person is characterized by freedom; yet, such freedom is limited. For instance, Sartre (1969) opined that we are condemned to be free. Also, taking responsibility for one's actions restricts man's freedom. This is in the sense that he is restrained from some actions on the basis of the consequences that the same actions impose. It suffices to state that, often, actions of human person have greater tendencies of conforming to social standards and in relation to consequences of his actions. It is obvious, therefore, that the human person is not absolutely free; rather, he is free but in chains [Rousseau, 1952]. It would seem that the attempt to break away from the chains and fetters that constrain or abort the freedom of the human person is what manifests, in different forms, as the crises of personhood.

3.2 Racial Determinism

In the first two units of module one, it was observed that anthropological studies when tainted with socio-cultural prejudices do generate identity crisis. Again, anthropology, when studied from cultural or linguistic dimensions, leaves the identity of the person confused and introduces racism into anthropology (Cf. Unah, 2002:135). In that discussion, Unah observed that because man is involved in so many activities as he goes about his daily rounds, anthropologists do make the mistake of engaging with the description of these activities and at the end, leave the question of who the human person is, in general, unanswered.

Consequently, as we noted above, it was through this progression that the act of racism and racialism became intricately connected to anthropological studies. This could otherwise be described as the derailment of anthropology. In other words, anthropology became derailed when it deviated from its core mission of studying man as man and got engaged in the description of what humans do rather than who the human person is in general; whether black or white. Against this backdrop, Unah accuses anthropologists, most especially early European anthropologists, of being the pioneers of "expansionism, imperialism and colonialism" (p.138) by the manner they progressed in their anthropological studies. The tendency to use culture in defining who the human person is leads to a situation in which the culture of one society is elevated above the one being described. Wherever this sort of thing happens, the former would be the civilized culture and the latter the primitive, which they claim can only be saved by people from the superior culture because the natives lack the capacity to think for themselves (Kanyandago, 2003:35). This way of approaching the study of man introduces crisis, in that, it leaves us in search of whom the human person really is.

3.3, Cultural Determinism

Cultural determinism happens when there is imposition of cultural practices such as language, religion, mode of dressing and other elements of social practices on a people. When this imposition happens, it manifests in identity crisis. Questions as: "are you still yourself" or "are you now somebody of a different culture" continue to nudge the individual. Thus, the narrative of people that suffer cultural imposition is one of loss of identity, one of loss of self-confidence, and one of loss of self-esteem. All of these undermine the capacity of the person to take full control of his or her senses and faculties; and this deprives people from being able to create value and opportunities for further self-development.

3.3.1 Inter-Cultural Determinism

Inter-Cultural determinism is a subset of cultural determinism. It describes a situation in which one culture parades itself as a civilized, developed and 'superior' culture. Such culture assigns to itself the role of purportedly civilizing and developing the cultures of the host communities. This is a claim to cultural determinism. And the situation whereby people from imperial culture claim superiority generates crisis of its own and it manifests in ways that are most times inhuman to the people of the host cultures such as the practice of slavery which dehumanizes persons that are traded as slaves. Also, it leads to racial arrogance that one is in a position, by virtue of cultural superiority to lord it over others. It makes the imperial culture to ride roughshod over host cultures. This happened in the colonial experiences of many African nations, Nigeria inclusive. The European culture now determines the way African cultures should go. In some cases, it took the form of assimilation or absorption of the host cultures. It makes them to imbibe the ethos of the new culture. The people of the host cultures who have been absorbed react to these in many different ways. When they realize that they can neither grow their own culture nor be completely accepted in the absorbing, assimilating, colonizing

imperial culture, they take recourse to violent protest, brigandage and have been largely responsible for the upsurge in insurgency in many post-colonial societies. It also manifests in nationalism, in the attempt to return to the native culture.

As the people of the host cultures lose their cultural values and identity to the alien, colonizing culture, there is always loss of rights; loss of freedom; the realization of which sparks off protests for a return to original culture and the jettisoning of the alien culture. These manifestations keep generating crises in different communities. The presence of the people of the colonizing cultures constitutes themselves into leaches and parasites on the host cultures to keep the people perpetually disadvantaged. It leads to infringement of fundamental human rights; freedoms. And the people colonized have not been allowed to take charge of their destiny because they are still being pestered and their lifeways determined by the people of the colonizing culture.

3.3.2. Intra-Cultural Determinism

Within individual African cultures, you find situations where community norms and traditions impose on the right of individuals; depriving them of their uniqueness and identities. This narrative is one that also often brews crisis because, often times, especially, where these cultures are not transforming their ways to allow for civilized progress. If these cultures are embracing positive changes, it will be easy for individuals to key in with the norms and ethos of the cultures. But when the cultures are neither growing nor transforming their ways, it leaves room for rejections and these rejections manifest in crisis while the insistence that individuals must bow to the dictates of culture is cultural determinism. That is that, your culture must define you as a person.

Other manifestations of crisis generated by cultural determinism include: dissent, protest, militancy, rebellion, insurgency et cetera. These are modes of reacting against attempts by culture and tradition to abort or truncate the uniqueness of the individual to assault personhood. But can individuals fully, completely sustain individual uniqueness, self-identity without connecting with the other identities? Is it not in creating a link or a connection between individuals in a socio-cultural environment that cultural norms find expressions? If this is the case, is the project of personhood devoid of socio-cultural interactions really feasible? This is also a critique of the project of personhood.

The point being made is that the individual must be able to synchronize his aspirations; his rights with the overall scheme of the socio-cultural environment in which he seeks to pursue his enlighten self-interest. In other words, while the concerns about crises of personhood are genuine; individuals will continue to be defined, one way or the other, by the socio-cultural environment in which they live. If individuals connect properly with the demands of culture, the crises of personal identity will reduce to the barest minimum. It is when individuals see a dichotomy between their uniqueness as opposed to normative prescriptions for the health of

society that identity crisis heightens. However, this does not argue the case that basic rights that preserve individual uniqueness should be trampled upon.

The situation arises where the people of African cultures contest and contend what the culture demands of them. Cases of burial rites or funeral obsequies, and other cultural practices that individuals within the culture think override their uniqueness, or their self-identity abound. These situations create intra-group tensions which is more or less another form of one's own cultural determinism that undermines personhood.

4.0   Conclusion

Looking through the lines of most anthropological accounts of the human person, the phenomenon of racism and ethnic profiling easily resonates. Anthropology assumes this dangerous dimension when it is made to engage with what the human persons do and what they fail to do. This is how the study of personhood assumed racial dimension most especially in the African continent. These activities brewed cultural superiority for Europeans, on the one hand, and inferiority complex for the Africans; which in the ended resulted in expansionist policies and colonialism. Thus, the feeling that certain group of people is more endowed with the gift of personhood and as such, must show others the way to civility, was an unfortunate dimension of anthropological development that has over time driven the human society into all forms of hatred and xenophobic feelings among one another. All of these happen at both inter-cultural and intra-cultural levels; which, in the end, found expression in identity crises. This is a testimony that each of the various theories of personhood has not adequately captured the fundamental nature of the human person.

5.0 Summary

This unit has been able to establish a link between European expansionist anthropologists and the phenomenon of cultural prejudice. In doing so, it identified forms of determinisms associated with such phenomenon. It argued that the human person is conditioned by all forms of determinisms and responds to them accordingly. The underlying cause of the crises of the person, we noted, is due to a derailment in the anthropological mission. We said that it was this derailment of mission that led to the events of cultural comparison; the end of which was often to see which people were civilized and which were barbaric. This development has been decried as an unfortunate happenstance in the history of anthropological studies which requires a more fundamental philosophy of personhood to address.

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UNIT 4:   A Fundamental Ontology of the Human Person

Contents

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6.0. References/Further readings

1.0.   Introduction
        The point that has been stressed in our discussion of the various ways different cultures and anthropologists tried to present man is that the result of their efforts appears to have thrown confusion into the meaning of the human person. This is because, rather than present the human

person as such, individual persons with colour, culture, activities and race were being discussed and all of these leave us in further confusion about who the human person is. The first question it raises is; how can the edifice of meaning of the human person be erected so as to douse the tension and crises generated by the previous efforts made at defining personhood? How can we define the human personality that will be colour, race, activity, culture and location neutral?

2.0   Intended Learning Outcomes [ILOs]

At the end of this study unit, you should be able to achieve the following:-

- ➢ Able to know the difference between Anthropology, Philosophical Anthropology and Fundamental Ontology of the Human Person
- ➢ Able to appreciate the uniqueness of Fundamental Ontology
- ➢ Able to know and identify the universal traits of personhood

3.0   Main Content

3.1 Identifying the difference between Anthropology, Philosophical Anthropology and Fundamental Ontology

In the previous discussions, it has been said many times that anthropology is the study of man. But in studying man early European anthropologists spent all their time and effort in describing particular characteristics or traits of human beings and their activities, culture, life ways and the differences between humans and their cultures. In doing so, anthropologists went about describing which culture is superior and which culture is inferior; which human groups are refined and which are primitive and unrefined, and which one should refine the other. By taking this route in the study of man, European anthropologists introduced the dangerous practice of imposing one culture on another; imposing European culture on African culture, and using this as an excuse to colonize and dominate African societies and forcing different peoples to join political unions that they could not understand; to realize their expansionist and exploitative ambition; especially in the prosecution of slavery and slave trade, which devastated and impoverished Africa of its human resource.

This initial European plot to impose their life ways on Africans and the practice of slave trade, are the root causes of the identity crises afflicting Africans and their inability to muster the will to take full charge of their own affairs. In view of this development, some concerned human beings (Europeans inclusive) began to worry that things are wrong, and thus began crusade or campaign against slavery and slave trade. But this was preceded by the decision to broaden the scope and reduce or remove the discriminatory elements in the study of the human person by

introducing universal philosophical characteristics of man thus, this was how philosophical anthropology developed what it tries to achieve is to remove the racial element from the study of man by injecting the universal characteristics of man into anthropological studies. From here, philosophers began to identify the universal traits of humanity and on the basis on which to construct the doctrine of the universal brotherhood of all men.

However, each philosophical anthropologist identifies just one or two of the universal traits of humans. This again introduced another form of contestation as to which of the universal traits identify aby the philosophers is prior. This developme.t within the rank of philosophical anthropology shows that there is still a limited understanding of human nature. It is on account of the limitations of philosophical anthropology that there evolved the desire to create or discover a more fundament. This fundamental science is human ontology or more popularly, the ontology of the human person.

Now, what is human ontology or fundamental ontology offering that the earlier thinkers (anthropologists and philosophical anthropologists) did not offer? What is fundamental ontology bringing to the table of human personality? What fundamental ontology brings to the table of human personality discourse is all the basic existential traits that belong to human nature woefully omitted by previous studies of human personality (Unah, 2016). One concrete philosophy that clearly, unambiguously, presented the universal traits of man compressively, is the philosophy of Martin Heidegger; which is also to be found in the works of other existential ontologists. But his own is by far, the most comprehensive: which he accomplished in the analysis of Dasein or in the Fundamental Ontology of the Human Person.

3.2. Fundamental Ontology of the Human Person

Fundamental ontology means the metaphysics of the human person. The metaphysics of human being is one that takes root in the philosophy of Being. As a matter of fact, ontology, strictly speaking, is the theory, study, interrogation or investigation of Being or what it means for something to be at all. For instance, the question of Being does not bother about the being of white person, the being of black person, the being of cat, horse, house, student, teacher, et cetera; but what it takes for all these to be at all. In the case of the human person, it is interested in knowing what it takes for the human person to be at all. The question of what it means to be is fundamental to any study of personhood.

It was Martin Heidegger, a German philosopher, in his work "Being and Time" that drew attention to the need for us to return to the question of Being or what it takes for something to be at all. Accordingly, he devoted his interest in Being itself and not individual beings. Being itself is the source or ground of the being of all individual beings and it manifests itself in them (Heidegger, 1962a: 231). Heidegger seemed discontented with the way the question of Being had been treated. Since the previous efforts made by other philosophers of Being at discussing being were seen by Heidegger to be inadequate and confusing, he proposed a new model.

Heidegger observed that there is a difference between Being itself and other beings. This difference according to him has been overlooked and forgotten throughout the history of western ontology. "On the basis of Greek's initial contribution towards an interpretation on Being, a dogma has been developed which not only declares the question about the meaning of Being to be superfluous, but sanctions its complete neglect" (Ibid, p.21).

He observed that the unwarranted application of the categories by the Greek philosophers is largely responsible for the confusion and crises of Being. It is this confusion between Being itself and the particular instances of Being as exemplified in regional ontologies that has resulted in interpretations of reality variously as; will to power, subjectivity, mind or matter. We often assume that being is not a hard concept because it appears in our everyday language and in all our transactions; hence it is a common knowledge. According to Heidegger, it was this preliminary assumption about Being that perpetually drove its true understanding into obliviousness, into hiding.

Thus, for him, Being becomes elusive to understanding when we assume that it is a common knowledge and universal, when we think that it is not definable and we think that everybody knows it and as such, does not need further definition (Ibid). When we peddle these kinds of presuppositions about Being, it makes the understanding of Being herculean, a difficult task. According to Heidegger, such was the preoccupation of the Greek interpretations which ended up introducing confusion into the domain of Being. As further observed by Unah, "for until the question of the meaning of Being has been sufficiently clarified and answered, no adequate interpretation and grounding of metaphysics can hold sway" (Unah, 1997: 102). Consequently, Heidegger reasoned that if indeed the question of Being is fundamental and prior, we must revisit it and lay a fresh foundation for its proper understanding by laying bare structures that belong to Being in general (Heidegger, 1962a:24). He maintained that the fundamental question about Being which all other previous thinkers have failed to grasp, is "the unearthing of the deep meaning of *Sein*" (Iroegbu, 1995:213). But, again, how do we now proceed with the formulation of the question of the meaning of Being? For Heidegger, therefore, we have to begin by clarifying what it means for something to be at all. In his view, the question of what it means to be at all is the most fundamental of all questions.

In trying to question what belongs to Being in general, we at the same time admit that there is something to be questioned (Unah, 1997:106). In other words, both the questioning and that which is questioned occur simultaneously, at the same time. This is another way of saying that every questioning presupposes a question of something which we expect an answer to. Thus, enquiry implies a behaviour of enquirer which is an entity with a definite character. What Heidegger consistently maintained is that it may not be possible for us to know what Being is in the proper sense of it; but that we are at advantage in seeking to know because we already have a faint idea of what is it that we seek to know which appears elusive to us. "Thus, Heidegger thinks

that the first standard procedure of interrogating the Being-process is the recognition of the fact that we live within a vague average imprecise understanding of Being" (Ibid, p.108).

So, for Heidegger, what we often seek to know when we raise the question of Being is not this being or that being but the Being of entities which itself is not an entity. Since there are many entities which manifest being, we have to discern which of these entities stands in a vantage position to explain Being. We have to map out which access point to being among the variety of entities best explains Being. According to Heidegger, looking at all the characteristics of the various entities, we ourselves (human beings) appear to have acquired the right character to explain Being. This is because it is through us that the question "what is Being?" is raised. Thus, he writes:

> This entity which each of us is himself and which include inquiring as one of the possibilities of its Being, we shall denote by the term "Dasein". If we are to formulate our question explicitly and transparently, we must first give a proper explanation of an entity (Dasein) with regard to its Being (Heidegger, 1962a:27).

What Heidegger means above is that, no other entity has the privileged position to explain Being except that entity whose mode of existence encapsulates Being. That entity, he says, is *Dasein* or the human being. Differently stated by Iroegbu,

> The *point-de-depart* of this proper ontology is for, Heidegger, *fundamental Ontology*; the investigation of the human being, otherwise called the *Dasein*, who posits the question of being, and who is the only locus in which the being question can be investigated (Iroegbu, 1995:213-214).

To understand the meaning of Being, we have to access it through that entity whose being is ontico-ontologically prior. "This is because, according to Heidegger, in the question of seeking an understanding of Being through the being of man, one is talking not simply of deducing one concept from another higher or lower, but of concrete ways of investigating" (Unah, 1997:113). Heidegger was determined to give metaphysics (ontology) a strong foundation.

 Heidegger saw that every field of study presupposes metaphysics, presupposes being but there is a problem of foundation in terms of grounding. Accordingly, due to this lack of foundation, it has become difficult to conceptualize Being and it is the duty of the ontological researcher to provide a metaphysical foundation for grounding Being. He saw this task of foundation as an embodiment of the existential analysis of Dasein which means the being of man. Dasein of all entities can raise the question of essential thought. It is only Dasein that can raise the question of ultimate reality, and only Dasein that can realize the self-reflective consciousness of the human condition.

On this task of laying a solid foundation for metaphysics (ontology), Heidegger observes as follows:

i. The problem of ontology is the problem of fundamental ontology.
ii. Fundamental ontology means the ontological analytic of man's finite essence which should prepare the foundation for metaphysics which belongs to human nature in general.
iii. Fundamental ontology means that the metaphysics of human Dasein is necessary if metaphysics in general is to be possible.
iv. Kant's critique of Pure Reason is preliminary stage in the laying of foundation of metaphysics (Heidegger, 1962b:3-4).

Laying a solid foundation requires a concrete plan which is part of the creative process. This vision is the realm of nothingness. The foundation of metaphysics in this context must be located in fundamental ontology. It is here that all other things can take their root. This scheme, because of its crucial nature, must be sought in the essential analytic of Dasein (the human person). To this end, he thinks that bringing man's thinking back to its original source is the mission of fundamental ontology.

Therefore, he believes strongly that there is an intricate connection between the Being process and human being and this is necessary in understanding Being. This is because, when we want to conceptualize Being, we often begin with regional entities in order to get to their underlying first principles (Being). Thus, Heidegger feels that since out of all the entities which constitute Being, we ourselves are one of such, it would be better we begin the interrogation of Being through that entity that already has a vague idea of Being because it is he alone that enjoys this privilege. Here comes the link between Being and human being.

3.3. The Basic Traits of Human Being

The basic traits are facticity, existentiality (transcendence) and fallenness (forfeiture). Forfeiture is a basic characteristic of a human being. It is the natural tendency of all human persons to want to forget the self in pursuit of the not too relevant (Nwigwe, 2002:254). Human reality is grounded in these characteristics. Every human being has a past, a history, where he is coming from or what has been about him. There is no one without a past. Every human being exists also in the present which is the pivot of all his activities; looking back and looking forward and immediate activity. So, the past and the future are intertwined in the present activity of human being. No moment is severed in isolation and this is human reality- that happens to all humans. In this analysis, past, future and present are mingled together. There is no human doing that is not a mixture of these elements of man.

Although, in unguarded moments, human being forgets to make present, forgets to do what he should be doing. That also is part of human existential nature and it is called fallenness

(forfeiture) or more technically, the self, abandoning it-self. When the self abandons itself, to what does it abandon it? It abandons it to distractions, to the paying of attention to what people say or do, to not making present, to not doing what one should be doing. This is described as fallenness or inauthenticity. The basic trait of existentiality portrays human being as always making plans, always projecting (Unah, 2016:146-147). By this, human life is carried on in transcendence; human life is a life of transcendence, reaching out beyond oneself. Every human being is involved in the project of making plans, dreaming, looking ahead. This trait is associated with authenticity because of its nature. Its nature is to propel the human being from one state to another. Whether you are short or tall, civilized or primitive, these events will happen to you. Apart from these basic traits, there are other traits, everyone of which is mixed up with human chemistry, everyone of which is intertwine with the structure of existence. Other elementary trait like boredom, anxiety, conscience, guilt, dread, death et cetera, happens to all humans. Language too is a basic human trait which you find in every human, even in the dumb. The essence of language is communication; to pass thoughts to others, so, the dumb is not only capable of speech; they are involved in a special kind of speech – sign language. There is no human that the capacity for language is not part of his or her personhood. Also, death is in the structure of human existence; one begins to dies the very moment of birth.

Without going into sordid details, this fundamental ontological understanding of man protects all humans from harm. A person in the vegetative state and the physically challenged are recognized by this understanding of human nature. A vegetative person still retains an element of personality because he is capable of death; at that very moment, his personhood knock at the door, emphasizing his personality. This analysis of human nature prevents anyone from denying any class of human beings personhood or personality.

4.0. Conclusion

This unit began with the discussion of the difference between philosophical anthropology and fundamental ontology. Anthropology studies man in a fragmented manner with all its attendant problems of generating identity crisis, racism, and tendency to dominate others. Philosophical anthropology's introduction of universal traits into the study of human personality did not fully overcome the parochialism of early anthropological science. The contest among philosophers regarding particular characteristics is higher or superior to the other took the matter of personal identity back to slaughter slag of empirical anthropology. Fundamental ontology takes man back to his root, to his basic essence. This basic essence is found in the recognition of all basic universal traits as constituting personality. Ontology developed as the universal science of man; nondiscriminatory, non-derogatory aspects of man.

5.0. Summary

The inquiry regarding the constitution of personhood took us from anthropology through philosophical anthropology to fundamental ontology. The first two attempts at understanding

man ended up creating the problem of crisis of personal identity and even group identity as some group were recognized as superior than other and so fail to establish a universal science of man. Fundamental ontology came to the rescue and demonstrated that personhood is possible for all humans and that the practice of cultural superiority and the practice of domination are antithetical to the humble true nature of man. We demonstrate this by going beyond the individual man to the characteristics that endow us with the universal nature of man. Thus, establishing that the brotherhood of all men does not reside in culture, kinship, geography etc. but on those basic existential characteristics that inhere in all humans, without exception.

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Unit 5:   The Goal of a Fundamental Philosophy of the Person

Content

1.0 Introduction

1.0 Introduction

The fundamental philosophy of the person is also called the ontology of the human person. It is the analysis of the structure of human thought; which is the source of the objective factor, of objective experience. It is the phenomenological description of what belongs to thought in general; not for particular specialties or a theory of knowledge. It is this that accounts for the dynamism and vastness of existence in general. The simple goal of fundamental philosophy of the human person is to lay down the ground of what basically belongs to all human persons irrespective of where they are found. By so doing, it does not seek to describe the individual and cultural human person with their baggage of racial characteristics and prejudices. Instead, it is more interested in the idea of the human person as such. This is derived from the thinking that the idea of the human person takes priority over any particular instantiation of it. When we properly understand what it means for a person to be, what it is that makes human entities privileged beings; it is then that the value, respect and dignity of personhood would be adequately restored and appreciated.

2.0 Intended Learning Outcomes [ILOs]

By the end of this unit, you should be able to know the following:-

- ➢ How Thought is Structured
- ➢ How to describe the structure of Human Thought
- ➢ How to articulate the goals and benefits of Fundamental Philosophy of Man

3.0 Main Content

3.1 Analysis of the Structure of Thought

Fundamental ontology involves the study of the source of the objective factor; that is, how human is constituted. The first element in the structure of thought is transcendence. Transcendence is the structural unity between thought and intuition; that is the unity between the intellect [thought] and intuition. So, you have thought and you have intuition. For thought to be

fully accomplished, there has to be a fusion between it [thought] and intuition. Transcendence is the movement that takes place between thought and intuition. Transcendence is the fusion of thought and intuition. Intuition here means sensuous intuition. The intellect is thought or pure reason. So, we have three names for one item in the structure, namely intellect, thought and pure reason.

Thought or intellect or pure reason always moves towards intuition for information to process into knowledge or cognition. By the same token, intuition always orients itself towards thought for its own activity to be concluded. The task of intuition is to deposit information in a central area occupied by the pure productive imagination. The task of the pure imagination is to generate ideas that the intellect uses to process information deposited by intuition. The diagram below illustrates this graphically.

‘diagram A’

Thought

Common Roots

Intuition
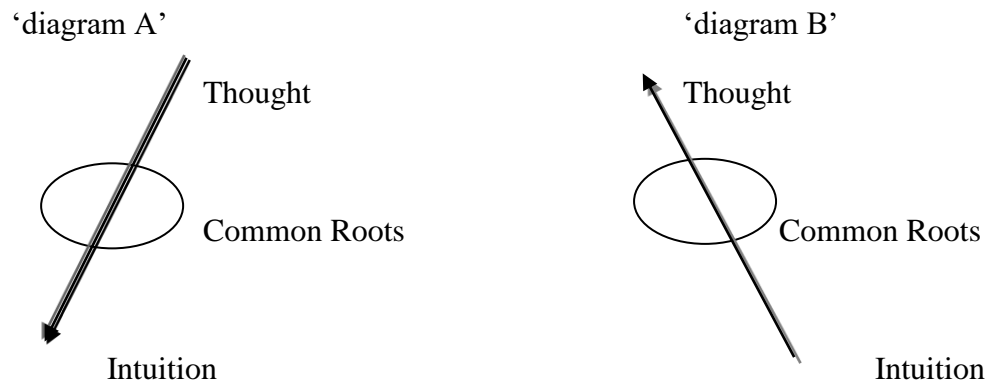
‘diagram B’

Thought

Common Roots

Intuition

Diagram A shows a movement of thought towards intuition, and diagram B shows a movement of intuition towards thought. They meet at the roots of man's mental powers, the imagination, which endlessly produces and reproduces ideas and concepts used by thought to process sense information from experience, from the world of objects and sense. Intuition warehouses the activities of the sense organs.

Thus, there is a relational dependence of thought on intuition, and vice versa. There can be no knowledge of anything if this relational dependence or cooperation does not happen. That is why Kant could assert that ‘Thought without content is empty, intuition without concept is blind’ (Kant, 1922: 40). Concepts are created by the mind through the activities of the intellect and the imagination. It is these concepts that the mind uses to process sense data intuited by the sensory organs of smell, touch, taste, hearing, and sight. Knowledge production can only happen when the scenarios described above are carried out by thought and intuition. Communication of intellectual decision on the sense data of intuition is the last stage in knowledge production.

There is, however, a form of knowledge that is not dependent on sense experience; but which merely arises from experience. This is the type of knowledge that Kant calls synthetic a priori knowledge. It is because of this that we have the different types of concepts, such as the pure concepts of the understanding and empirical concepts for the analysis of sense information. For, Instance, the knowledge of God, freedom, democracy, pure mathematics, et cetera, do not come from the sense experience; even though they arise from experience. What is of interest here is that this analysis makes it easier to understand man's priority in the scheme of things, and the unique endowment of reason which we use in playing the politics of assigning meaning to the world. The benefits of this knowledge and understanding about the boundless capacities and capabilities of human thought are unquantifiable, as we shall demonstrate in the next unit.

3.2 **The Benefits of Understanding the Structure of Thought**

The analysis of thought is the introductory part to a full-fledged fundamental ontology of the human person who is involved in knowledge production, be it that of anthropology, philosophical anthropology, or even ontology. So, an understanding of the structure of thought or how thought happens is expressed in these words:-

> Philosophy of man is the study of the source of the objectivity factor. It is the study of what makes objective experience in general possible. Ontology of man is the study of what renders experience of any kind possible. It is an enquiry into the metaphysical constitution of human life which provides the basis for the understanding of Being itself or Reality in general… Philosophy of man inquiries into how we form notions, images, ideas, concepts and how these notions, images, ideas and concepts are applied to things; how they translate into words in form of communication or discourse and how understanding of what is communicated actually takes place. It is about how we generate ideas and concepts to affect experience or things in the world. The metaphysics of man celebrates the fact that human reality is an inexhaustible reservoir of meanings and can spontaneously bring about any desired state of affair (Unah, 2006: 44-45).

From the foregoing, it is evident that the fundamental philosophy of man is the metaphysics of man which accounts for the vastness of human knowledge and human reality. The above quotation leads us to the goal of the fundamental philosophy of the person.

3.3 **Highlights of the Goals of a Fundamental Philosophy of Man**

The goals include but are not limited to:

- Fostering the conditions of mutual understanding amongst identities for mutual prosperity and peaceful coexistence.

- Teaching the human mind to be accommodating through the process of finite transcendence.

- Promoting nondiscriminatory descriptions of the human person.

- Describing human being as having the capacity to transcend finite existences.

- Developing and reorienting the mind of the human person against what Soyinka identified as "structured ignorance" (1991) and what Unah described as the "tribal mindset" (2006:19).

- Ameliorating situations of crises of the human person and human societies and averting global disaster.

- Developing the human mind with the capacity for objectivity and neutrality in the description of entities.

- Teaching humans about how the task of assigning meaning to things, to the world, is possible.

- Investigating how we form notions, images, ideas, and concepts and how they are applied to things.

- Generating ideas and concepts to affect experience and add value to the world,

- Empowering the mind of the human person to respond effectively to crises; through tolerance, peaceful coexistence, and mutual understanding.

4.0   Conclusion

This module identified the crises of the human person from different perspectives: physical; in terms of existential and social facts; non-physical, psychological, cognitive, imaginative, and transcendental. It acknowledged that events, situations, experiences constantly change which also leads to change in human thoughts and perceptions. This situation accounts for the variations, inconsistencies and contradictions in human cognitions. The aftermath of these variations, inconsistencies and contradictions is the crises of the human person. However, the fundamental philosophy of the human person empowers and educates the mind beyond particular and restricted approaches to existential and social facts. The outcome of this undertaking is the emergence of a generation of thinkers that entertains an all-round picture of the world which promotes peaceful coexistence; mutual understanding, and efficient crises moderated world order.

5.0 Summary

This unit began with the analysis of human thought; which is structured into the Intellect or pure reason, the imagination, and sensuous intuition which cooperate with each other to produce a complete act of Knowledge. Understanding the structure of thought and how the intellect has the role of superintending and processing knowledge from sense information from the world of sensible objects enables us to know how enormously we are endowed with reason to work out our problems and destiny in the world. The highlights of the goals of fundamental ontology demonstrate this eloquently.

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Module One

Practice exercises

Essay questions

1. How did anthropology as a discipline develop?

2. Describe the normative and descriptive concepts of a person in Africa thought?

3. Differentiate between anthropology and philosophical anthropology

4. Discuss the Confucian view of the human person?

5. What do you understand by the Mind-Body problem?

6. Is there any relationship between the African and Confucian concepts of personhood: discuss?

7. What was wrong in anthropology to warrant the intervention of philosophy?

Multiple choice questions

1. The field of study which studies man is known as:
   (a) Philosophy
   (b) Psychology
   (c) Sociology
   (d) Anthropology
2. Which among the following is the most suitable definition of anthropology?
   (a) The study of white man
   (b) The study of black man
   (c) The study of man
   (d) The study of primitive man
3. The term anthropology is a derivation of two Greek words
   (a) Anthropos and law
   (b) Anthropos and logos
   (c) Anthropos and logic

(d) Anthropology
4. Anthropos is a Greek tern which in English language means?
   (a) Human being/man
   (b) Human being/animal
   (c) Man/woam
   (d) Anthropology
8. The following were listed by Erickson as constituting the key concepts in anthropology?
   (a) Man, woman, girl, boy and community
   (b) person, society, culture, translation and comparison, holism and context
   (c) ancient, primitive, modern, culture and people
   (d) history, man, activity, culture and politics
6 From the etymological derivative, anthropos means a being which has its face turned up; which of these terms exactly depict the Greek meaning?
   (a) Dasein and man
   (b) Anthropos and logos
   (c) Ana and prosopos
   (d) Plato and forms

7 Which of the following is the most authentic meaning of anthropology?
   a. Study of man and his activities
   b. Study of man
   c. Study of primitive man
   d. Study of civilized man
8 Through the activities of the following individuals we got information about anthropology
   a. Prophets, fortune tellers and diviners
   b. Voyagers, explorers, historians and expansionists
   c. Professors, doctors, and teachers
   d. None of the above
9 In the sphere of human variation, anthropologists study
   a. Why human beings vary biologically
   b. Human traits inheritance
   c. Environmental effects on population characteristics
   d. All of the above
10 The adjective 'anthropocentric' means; ?
   a. Man centered view
   b. God centered view
   c. None of the above
   d. All of the above
11 The dictum 'man know thyself' is credited to which philosopher?

a. Moses
b. Jim Unah
c. Plato
d. Socrates

12 In what way does philosophy make inroads into anthropology?
    a. By establishing the claim that anthropology has derailed
    b. By showing that anthropology has not fundamentally answered the question, what is man?
    c. By exploring metaphysically the essential characteristics of man; establishing that man has a capacity to transcend his natural limitations in the quest of authenticity
    d. All of the above

13 Divine centered conception of man is represented by?
    a. St Augustine and Moses
    b. St Aquinas and Protagoras
    c. St Augustine and Aquinas
    d. Sigmund Freud

14 A misconception about anthropology resulted in…
    a. Racism, racialism, xenophobia and colonialism
    b. Conception, corruption, and confusion
    c. None of the above
    d. The abandonment of anthropology

15 The conception of the human person is often said to be…?
    a. Culturally influenced
    b. Without bias
    c. Without prejudice
    d. Independent of culture

16 Africa has two perspectives from which it considers man
    a. Big man and poor man
    b. Descriptive and normative
    c. Good man and evil man
    d. All of the above

17 The African normative concept of the human person has to do with
    a. The level of wealth of a person
    b. The height of a person
    c. In respect to the individuals' obedience to community's values
    d Normal human beings

18 The nexus between the African and Asian conception is that; beyond biological requirement for a human being, the status of personhood is earned based on:
    a One's intelligence
    b. Smartness

c   Fidelity to communal established norms and values.

d   Hard work

19 which of the following system of philosophies has a strong similarity with the African?

    a. Taoism

    b. Atomism

    c. Westernism

    d. Confucianism

20 The term for personhood in Japanese thought is

   a Brahman

   b Ningen

   c Jen

   d Man of the people

21 The conflict generated by the mental and material components of the human person is known as;

   a   spirit and flesh problem

   b   Mind-body problem

   c   Second world war

   d   Dualism

Module Two

Practice exercises on the crises of the person

Essay questions

1. Enumerate three causes of the crises of the human person
2. Outline three basic dimensions of the crises of the human person
3. In what ways do the crises of the human person manifest in our immediate society?
4. Why fundamental ontology when philosophy is already in business of anthropology?
5. How does fundamental philosophy of the person resolve the crises of personhood?
6. Enumerate the goals of fundamental philosophy of the person?
7. What is cultural determinism?

Multiple choice questions

1. The sources of the crises of the human person include the following except?
   a. Human nature

b. Ambivalence

c. Fundamental ontology

d. Identity

2. The crises of the human person are traceable to the following except man's

a. Thought pattern

b. Perception

c. Orientation

d. Insanity

3. The crises of the human person evolve out the following except ….?

a. Contradictions

b. Variations

c. Interpretations

d. Negativities

4. The crises of the human person developed by the inability of an individual to…

a. Pray

b. Express one's will

c. Reconcile different opinions

d. Love

5. The crises of the human person manifest …

a. Human nature

b. Divine nature

c. Sinful nature

d. Evil nature

6. The crises of the person depends on some dual identity except

a. Physical and non-physical

b. Freedom and determinist

c. Mind and body

d. Prayer and worship

7. A fundamental dimension of the human person is …?

a. Identity crises

b. Gender crisis

c. Vocation crisis

d. Financial crisis

8. The crises of the human person will most likely persist except we apply …?

a. Sledgehammer on troublemakers

b. Fundamental ontology of the human person

c. Restraints

d. Racial profiling of those causing the crises

9. The crises of the human person are the manifestations of the following except….?

a. Peace in the world

b. Human ambivalence

c. Human nature and irreconcilable contradictions

d. Mind-Body problem

10. Consequences of the crises of the human person include the following except?

    a. Hatred

    b. Order

    c. Disorder

    d. Violence

11. To solve the crises of the human person, we have to return to?

    a. Dogmatism

    b. Autocracy

    c. Religion

    d. Essential traits of the human being

12. The crises of the human person is?

    a. Entirely physical

    b. Entirely non-physical

    c. Both physical and non-physical

    d. Neither physical nor spiritual

13. The crisis of the human person can be resolved by?

    a. True love

    b. Total obedience

    c. Fasting and prayer

    d. Phenomenological understanding of man

14. The crises of the human person are associated with?

    a. Human nature

    b. Human identity

    c. Human contingency

    d. All of the above

15. The crises in Anthropological studies will persist so long as?

a. Its contents remain centered on what people do or what they fail to do

b. Emphasis on fundamental ontology continues to linger

c. Human life and social order remain peaceful

d. Philosophers are alive to duty

16 The goals of fundamental philosophy of the person include the following except?

    a. Promote nondiscriminatory descriptions of the human person

    b. To foster the conditions of mutual understanding among entities

    c. To create more divisions among anthropologists and thinkers

    d. Develop the human mind with the capacity for objectivity and neutrality

17. The task of pure imagination is to?

    a. Generate ideas with which the intellect uses to process information

b. Dream dreams

c. Imagine the future

d. Make predictions

18 Kant said that "thought without content is empty and intuition without concept is…?

    a. Prophetic

    b. Full

    c. Blind

    d. Pure

19 The fundamental philosophy of the person…?

    a. Studies human being

    b. Examines the essential traits of human beings

    c. Recreation of human being

    d. The art of human being

20 The fundamental philosophy of the person provides…?

    a. Holistic understanding of human person

    b. A partial understanding of human person

    c. A religious understanding of human person

    d. An anthropological understanding of human person

21 The fundamental philosophy of the person entails

    a. Conversion of the human being in their belief system

    b. Changing of the will

    c. Orienting the mind to open up without presuppositions and discriminations

    d. Formation of conscience

22 The fundamental philosophy of man requires

    a. Phenomenological comportment

    b. Social conformity

    c. Religious diversity

    d. Political autonomy

23 The fundamental philosophy of man demands phenomenological comportment in order to

    a. Understand the white race to be superior to the black race

    b. Understand the black race to be inferior to the white race

    c. Understand how Europeans colonized non-Europeans

    d. Understand what belongs to the human person in general, regardless.

24 The fundamental philosophy of man involves

    a. Human transcendence

    b. Narrating what human persons do or fail to do

    c. Racial profiling

    d. Cultural prejudices

25 Transcendental exercises involve

    a. Going beyond

b. Perception

c. Dreaming

d. Flashback

26 The fundamental philosophy of person implies that

a. Man is a cultural animal

b. Philosophy is related to person

c. Both man and philosophy are not fundamental

d. To understand the human person, one must transcend the particulars.

27 The fundamental philosophy of man aims at

a. Make human being moral

b. Make human being holy

c. Make human being loving

d. Grounding the study of man on certain essential traits

28 The fundamental philosophy of person belongs to an area of philosophy known as

a. Epistemology

b. Ontology

c. Ethics

d. Logic

29 The fundamental philosophy of person is a response to

a. The crises of human person

b. The prayer of human person

c. The frailty of human person

d. The sinfulness of human person

30 The fundamental philosophy of the person requires certain temperament

a. Aggression

b. Prejudice

c. Precision

d. Patience

31 The fundamental philosophy of person is relevant to the understanding of

a. Personhood in its universal sense.

b. The being of animals

c. The being of living things

d. The being of inanimate objects

32 The fundamental philosophy of person is quintessential to man's

a. True essence

b. Imperial superiority

c. Absolute dogmatism

d. Inferiority complex

33 The fundamental philosophy of the human person is

a. The metaphysics of man

b. Man as a religious being
c. Man as a political animal
d. Man as a money-making animal