

**COURSE
GUIDE**

**PHL 335
ANALYTIC PHILOSOPHY**

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First Printed 2017, 2022

ISBN: 335-978-978-058-370-5

CONTENTS	PAGE
Introduction	4
Course Objectives	4
Working through this course	5
Study Units	5

INTRODUCTION

This course introduces the students to the fundamentals of contemporary analytic Philosophy. It discusses the emergence, nature and methods of contemporary analytic philosophy with emphasis on logical atomism, logical positivism (logical empiricism) and ordinary language philosophy. Attention is focused on scholars like Rudolf Carnap, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Gottlob Frege, Bertrand Russell, W.V.O. Quine, Gilbert Ryle, Alfred Jules Ayer, Hilary Putnam, and Donald Davidson amongst others. It is notable that British Philosophy at the turn of the twentieth century was dominated by Neo-idealism (Omogbe, 2005:111). Neo-idealism itself is a reaction to the Philosophy of Friedrich Hegel and German idealists, which had reached its climax or apex in Germany at this period. However, people like Thomas Hill Green, James Mc Taggart, Francis Herbert Bradley and Bernard Bosanquet revived it among British Philosophers. One common theme among the idealists is the acceptance of metaphysics as having the highest value in man's intellectual enterprise. Attaching the highest value to metaphysics leads to absolute idealism. "Absolute idealism is the claim that reality is rational, conceptual totality, that reality is an absolute mind, or the mind of God, an integrated and total structure of conceptual truths" (Lavine,1984:207). It is the belief that absolute reason or ideas, mental or spiritual entities were the only source of reality available to man. This belief in absolute idealism attracted the wrath of analytic Philosophers led by George Edward Moore who rose up in defense of what he called "common sense". It is the Views of these analytic Philosophers, their rejection of absolute idealism and what they thought should be the proper function of Philosophy that we shall continue to discuss along. However, whether the views of the analytic Philosophers were able to resolve the problems of philosophy is yet to be determined. Nevertheless, like all good ideas, they contributed to the growth and development of the discipline of philosophy.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

In order to achieve the primary aim of this course, the following objectives have been set:

- To understand the meaning, nature, emergence and methods of contemporary analytic Philosophy.
- To examine the historical antecedents to contemporary analytic Philosophy.
- To take a philosophical tour through the different segments of analytic Philosophy.
- To critically examine the arguments of earlier and contemporary analytic Philosophers.

WORKING THROUGH THIS COURSE

For maximum efficiency, effectiveness and productivity in this course, students are required to have a copy of the course guide, main course material, download the videos and podcast, and the necessary materials for this course. These will serve as study guide and preparation before lectures. Additionally, students are required to be actively involved in forum discussion and facilitation.

STUDY UNITS

This course has 20 study units, which are structured into 4 modules. Module 1 comprises of 5 study units, Module 2 comprises of 4 study units, Module 3 comprises of 4 study units, while module 4 comprises of 7 study units as follows:

Module 1 Understanding Analytic Philosophy

- Unit 1 Defining Analytic Philosophy
- Unit 2 Emergence, Nature and Methods of Contemporary Analytic Philosophy
- Unit 3 Historical Antecedents to Contemporary Analytic Philosophy I
- Unit 4 Historical Antecedents to Contemporary Analytic Philosophy II
- Unit 5 Historical Antecedents to Contemporary Analytic Philosophy III

Module 2 The Different Segments Of Contemporary Analytic Philosophy

- Unit 1 Philosophical Analysis: The Proper Function of Philosophy is Analysis
- Unit 2 Logical Atomism
- Unit 3 Logical Positivism (Logical Empiricism)
- Unit 4 Analysis of Moral Language

Module 3 Understanding The Arguments Of Earlier Analytic Philosophers

- Unit 1 The Arguments of George Edward Moore (1873-1958)
- Unit 2 The Arguments of John L. Austin (1911-1960)
- Unit 3 The Arguments of Later Wittgenstein
- Unit 4 The Common Nature of their Arguments

Module 4 Understanding The Arguments Of Contemporary Analytic Philosophers

- Unit 1 The Arguments of Bertrand Russell and Alfred North Whitehead
- Unit 2 The Arguments of the Vienna Circle
- Unit 3 The Arguments of Early Wittgenstein
- Unit 4 The Arguments of Alfred Jules Ayer
- Unit 5 The Arguments of Rudolf Carnap
- Unit 6 The Arguments of W.V.O Quine
- Unit 7 The Arguments of Gilbert Ryle

MODULE 1 UNDERSTANDING ANALYTIC PHILOSOPHY**UNIT 1 DEFINING ANALYTIC PHILOSOPHY****CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Intended Learning Outcomes
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 What is Analytic Philosophy?
 - 3.2 The Rejection of Absolute Idealism
 - 3.3 The Resolve to Defend “Common Sense”.
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References and Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit attempts to clarify the key concept of this study, which is analytic Philosophy. In addition to that, it will equally show how absolute idealism was rejected in preference to Philosophical analysis. Lastly, it will present the “defense of common Sense”, as what marked the beginning of analytic Philosophy.

2.0 INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOME

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- discuss the concept of analytic Philosophy
- state the origin of the revolution that gave birth to analytic Philosophy
- mention reason for the rejection of absolute idealism in preference to Philosophical analysis.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT**3.1 What is Analytic Philosophy?**

Analytic Philosophy is that school of Philosophy which believes that the legitimate function of Philosophy is analysis. Popkin, et al, (1993:345) reveals that, “analysis consists in rewriting sentences of natural languages in such a way that these sentences will exhibit their proper logical form. When put into their logical form, their meaning will become clear, and Philosophical ambiguities or difficulties will be easily eliminated”. As we can see from the above remarks, analytic Philosophy involves breaking

down ambiguous expressions in natural languages into their simplest forms in order to reveal the through meaning of such expressions and determine their functionality in our daily experience. Analytic Philosophy contends that Philosophy is not a theory but an activity whose function is to reveal the true meaning of propositions. It holds the view that revealing the true meaning of propositions will help to determine whether they are meaningful or meaningless, useful or useless and scientific or nonsensical. Writing about analytic Philosophy, (Unah, 2013:91) summarizes it in a simple manner thus:

Analytic Philosophy holds that Philosophical problems arise because of certain rather subtle misuses or abuses of everyday language. If language is used wrongly, there is Philosophical perplexity and obscurity. All problems in Philosophy arise out of bad grammar or out of subtle misuse of language. Thus, the proper function of Philosophy is to clarify the use of certain concepts in everyday life so that we can avoid ambiguities and confusion.

Lawhead (2002:499) holds the view that, “although the analytic philosophers proposed many different theories of language and methods of attacking philosophical problems, they all embraced three fundamental doctrines”. According to him, these doctrines includes the following:

1. Philosophical puzzles, problems and contradictions are not found in the world, but in the things, we say about the world.
2. Philosophical problems can first be clarified and then solved or dissolved by either analyzing or reforming the way that language works.
3. If any problems remain that cannot be solved in this way, they are pseudo-problems and are not worth worrying about.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

What is analytic Philosophy?

3.2 The Rejection of Absolute Idealism

As we have stated earlier on, “absolute idealism is the claim that reality is rational, conceptual totality, that reality is an absolute mind, or the mind of God, an integrated and total structure of conceptual truths”(Lavine,1984:207). It is the philosophical tenet which holds that absolute reason or ideas, mental or spiritual entities is the ultimate source of reality and that even physical or material entities are reducible to the mental or ideal entities. This metaphysical thinking held sway among German idealists led by Friedrich Hegel but reached its apex in Germany at the dawn of the twentieth century. However, it was imported into

British Philosophy by Neo-Hegelians, that is, Philosophers who fell in love and practiced the teachings of Hegel in Britain. Among them were; James Elis Mc Taggart, Bernard Bosanquet, F.H. Bradley, Thomas Hill Green and others. For instance, Omoregbe, 2005:2 reports that:

James Elis Mc Taggart went as far as possible to express his well-known view that Time is unreal. The absolute, i.e. the Universe is the comprehensive system of timeless and immaterial substances. It is only in appearance that matter and time seem to exist, but in reality, they do not exist. They are unreal, for they do not meet the requirements for existence.

This singular statement among many others from Neo-Hegelians sparked off an intellectual debate led by G.E. Moore who was at that time a young student of Classics at Cambridge University. Bertrand Russell, who was also at that time a young student of Mathematics and Philosophy at Cambridge University, supported Moore. “Russell tells us that it was Moore who led the attack against idealism in England and himself followed with a sense of emancipation” (Omoregbe, 2005:111). Both Philosophers were perplexed about the thinking of these idealists who choose to renounce the obvious material and physical things of this universe and claimed that they were unreal. Consequently, in reaction against the teachings of the absolute idealists, both Russell and Moore affirmed a form of realism, which asserted that the components of reality exist on their own, independent of their relationship to minds, that time is real, and that things can be known apart from their relationship to anything else.

3.3 The Resolve to Defend “Common Sense”.

G. E. Moore was inspired to analyse language, particularly to clarify ordinary language and make it fit the test of common sense in its meaning. He did not want to give up Metaphysics. However, Moore was disturbed by the contrast between metaphysical language and the so-called “common sense”. For example, certain statements such as McTaggart’s famous notion that “time is unreal”, could not stand the test of common sense. “Moore could not understand how somebody could sincerely say that time is unreal. How could these Philosophers sincerely deny that material things exist?”(Omoregbe, 2005:112). As a result, he decided to defend “common sense”, by publishing a famous article in 1925 with the title: “A Defense of Common Sense”. In what he calls “truisms”, Moore argued that ordinary persons who claim that they knew and knew with certainty, that tables, chairs, trees, and so on existed, were correct. They were correct because, they were using the word “know” in its common, ordinary ways in making such a claim. However, those Philosophers, Idealists or skeptics, who deny that we can have knowledge of the external world were either making a mistake in such claims, or using the word

“know” in some technical sense. Using the word know in some technical sense does not condemn the claims of those speaking ordinary language, that they know that tables, chairs, persons and trees existed.

4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, we have conceptualised the meaning of analytic philosophy, discussed the rejection of absolute idealism by analytic philosophers and explained how G.E. Moore, angered by the unrestricted metaphysical speculations of the idealists, was able to defend common sense in the face of absolute idealism of the Hegelians. On the Meaning of analytic philosophy, we uphold that it is that school of philosophy, which believes that the legitimate function of Philosophy is analysis.

5.0 SUMMARY

- Analytic philosophy is that school of philosophy, which believes that the legitimate function of Philosophy is analysis.
- Absolute idealism was introduced into Britain by the Neo-Hegelians, that is, Philosophers who fell in love and practiced the teachings of Hegel in Britain. Among them were James Elis Mc Taggart, Bernard Bosanquet, F.H. Bradley and Thomas Hill Green.
- The early analytic philosophers like G.E.Moore and Bertrand Russell rejected absolute idealism. This marked the beginning of analytic philosophy.
- There was a resolve to defend common sense by G.E.Moore.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. What are the three fundamental points of agreement among analytic philosophers?
2. Why did the analytic philosophers reject the absolute idealism of the Neo-Hegelians

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

Omoregbe, J. I. (2005). *A Simplified History of Western Philosophy: Contemporary Philosophy*. Vol.3, Lagos: Joja Educational Research and Publishers Limited.

Popkin, R. H & Stroll, A. (1993). *Philosophy Made Simple*. (3rd ed.). Oxford: Elsevier Limited.

Unah, J. I. (2013). *Lectures on Philosophy and Logic*. Lagos: Fadec Publishers Limited.

Lawhead, W. F. (2002). *The Voyage of Discovery: A Historical Introduction to Philosophy*. (2nd ed.). Canada: Wadsworth Thomson Learning.

Lavine, T. Z. (1984). *From Socrates to Sartre: The Philosophic Quest*. New York: Bantam Books.

UNIT 2 EMERGENCE, NATURE AND METHODS OF CONTEMPORARY ANALYTIC PHILOSOPHY

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Learning Outcomes
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 The Emergence of Analytic Philosophy
 - 3.2 The Nature and Significance of Contemporary Analytic Philosophy
 - 3.3 The Method of Contemporary Analytic Philosophy and Its Challenges
 - 3.4 Analytic Philosophy and Other Philosophical Movements
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit introduces the students to the understanding of the emergence, nature and methods employed by contemporary analytic Philosophers to develop a new role for Philosophy, which they claimed to be the analysis of language. This is necessary in order to show clearly the differences between Philosophical language, Ordinary language and Mathematical or Scientific language. This, according to analytic Philosophers, will enable Philosophy to eliminate confusion and avoid misunderstanding.

2.0 INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- discuss the background of contemporary analytic Philosophy
- state the nature and methods of contemporary analytic Philosophy
- describe the difference between analytic Philosophy and other Philosophical movements
- explain the contributions or otherwise, of analytic Philosophy to the growth of Philosophy.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 The Emergence of Analytic Philosophy

From the beginning of the twentieth century until now, a certain group of Philosophers came together under the agreement that to make language clear, is the most important, if not the only responsibility of Philosophy. This school of thought is known as Analytic Philosophy or the Philosophy of language analysis. The Philosophers within this school of thought, though different in their styles of writing and arguments, agreed that “analysis”, i.e. to analyze language, is the best way to do Philosophy and that language is the first subject matter of Philosophy. “What unifies all analytic Philosophers is their agreement concerning the central task of Philosophy. The task of Philosophy, they say, is to clarify the meaning of language” (Stumpf, 1989:446). Analytic Philosophy emerged for some obvious reasons. In the first instance, Philosophers had the feeling that science has taken over most of the areas originally covered by Philosophy. For instance, they argued that the questions of Metaphysics has been taken over by Physics. Those of Epistemology and Philosophy of Mind taken over by Physiology and Psychology while Social and Political Philosophy were taken over by Sociology and Political science. “The discovery of facts is the task of the scientist. There are no facts left over for the Philosophers after all the sciences have done their work” (Stumpf, 1989:447). If the goal of acquiring knowledge about the world is now taken over by science, the only responsibility left for Philosophy is to analyze language to make it meaningful. Another reason for the emergence of analytic Philosophy was the invention of superior ways of doing logic which shows that Philosophical puzzles could be resolved using careful analysis of language.

According to Lawhead (2002:500), analytic

Philosophy can be divided into five stages or movements as follows:

1. Early Realism and Analysis: This was introduced by G.E. Moore and Bertrand Russell in Russell’s early period of logical atomism. They reacted against the metaphysical idealism of Neo-Hegelians and brought British Philosophy back to the search for clarity by means of analysis.

2. Logical Atomism: This was developed in the works of Bertrand Russell from 1914 to 1919 and in the early work of Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (1921). Both Philosophers saw the task of Philosophy as building languages with perfect logic whose syntax would reveal or mirror the metaphysical structure of the world.

3. Logical Positivism: This movement arose in the 1920’s and early 1930’s. Just like the logical atomists, the logical positivists tried to construct a language that was logically perfect. However, while the first two movements made metaphysics one of their concerns, the logical positivists claimed that metaphysical statements were meaningless.

Therefore, their own ideal language would be able to show clearly all scientific and logical truths but would make it out rightly impossible for anyone to express metaphysical claims.

4. Ordinary Language Philosophy; the Wittgensteinian Model: This movement resulted from the radical shift in the direction of Wittgenstein's later Philosophy. The unique feature of this stage of analysis was that Wittgenstein thought that the linguistic analyst, like a therapist, merely "cures" Philosophers of their distortions. Philosophical problems are not solved but are dissolved by taking a more careful look at how language works. Once this is done, there is no more need of Philosophy.

5. Ordinary Language Philosophy; Conceptual Analysis: This was initiated by such Philosophers as Gilbert Ryle and John Austin as well as many other heirs of the analytic movement. Unlike Wittgenstein, they did not see language analysis as simply a way to cure Philosophers of their "Philosophical diseases". Instead, they engaged in exploring traditional philosophical topics using ordinary language as a guide.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

How did analytic philosophy emerge on the Global scene?

3.2 The Nature and Significance of Contemporary Analytic Philosophy

The nature of philosophy is simply analytic in the view of contemporary analytic philosophers. This analysis involves breaking down natural languages, i.e. words, sentences or phrases into their simplest linguistic forms in order to make meaning in ordinary language. Analytic Philosophy may be described as an activity of playing games with words in order to dissolve the problems of philosophy. Analytic Philosophy according to Ludwig Wittgenstein is a therapy, which cures people of the many diseases of philosophy. Who misuses language? Who creates the puzzles, the problems, confusions and tangled knots of misusing language? It is the philosophers. Philosophical problems are not genuine problems but only the nonsense that results from not knowing how to handle language. When philosophers learn to use words as ordinary, everyday language does, they will then no longer fall into linguistic confusion. Concerning its significance, analytic philosophy is quite influential as no one can be a serious student of philosophy without involving in the activity of genuine analysis. Any attempt to avoid the art of analysis will result to "analysis paralysis", which cannot be cured by Wittgenstein's therapy. In addition, the technique of linguistic analysis contributed to an increased sense on the part of philosophers to professionalize their discipline. Analytic Philosophy provided philosophy with new methods, new tools and new field for philosophical engagement. Lavine (1984:409) put it succinctly thus: "Analytic philosophy

established autonomy for philosophy as a discipline. Now with its own technique, philosophy became independent and self-sufficient in relation to all other disciplines and especially with regard to the many sciences encroaching upon hitherto philosophic territory". Lastly, analytic philosophy has made philosophers aware of the importance language both as a philosophical resource and as an impediment to clear understanding and as such, has produced classical works of philosophy and classical philosophers.

3.3 The Method of Contemporary Analytic Philosophy and Its Challenges

Analytic philosophy, as the name implies, has only one method, and that method is analysis. By analysis, we mean the breaking down of natural languages, i.e. words, sentences or phrases into their simplest linguistic forms in order to make meaning in ordinary language, eliminate perplexity and confusion and increase human understanding. The analytic technique or method provides philosophy with a new, highly developed logical technique of analyzing word usage, discovering philosophical ambiguities, errors and confusions and dissolving philosophical problems. Interesting as this new method of resolving philosophical problems may appear, it has its challenges. First, from the beginning of analytic philosophy until now, the problems of philosophy have not been dissolved by linguistic analysis. Rather than dissolve the problems of philosophy, analytic philosophy has ended up dissolving itself. Lavine (1984:409) commenting on the challenges of analytic philosophy says: Analytic philosophy attacked traditional philosophy and rejected any constructive role for itself. Thus, it provided no metaphysics, no worldview, no theory of knowledge, no philosophy of nature, no ethics, sociopolitical philosophy or philosophy of history. Hence, it is seen to have created a vacuum in the intellectual world, inadequately filled by psychologists, economic theorists and political pundits, and failed to fulfill the important functions of philosophy as a discipline.

Furthermore, the teachings of analytic philosophy shows that philosophy is no longer about the world, but only about the language with which we speak about the world. Hence, analytic philosophy is identical with the technique of language analysis, imprisoned by language and trapped in the bottle of linguistic analysis. Analytic philosophy was totally cut off from the issues of human life and so has nothing to contribute to that beyond noticing a misuse of language.

3.4 Analytic Philosophy and other Philosophical Movements

Two prominent philosophical movements that developed because of their reactions against the tenets of analytic philosophy were existentialism and

phenomenology. Existentialism is the philosophy of human existence, which holds that man must first be in the world, as objects thrown into the world, and thereafter, defines his existence by constantly contributing his quota as an active participant in the affairs of men. The existentialists had jettisoned analytic philosophy because of its lack of impact and concerns about human life and the human predicament. What is the usefulness of a philosophical analysis that has no visible impact on human life? Of what value is a philosophy that has no respect for human freedom? Cut off from the vital affairs of human life, the analytic philosopher has no contributions to make to it. Phenomenology is the theory of phenomena of human experiences. In addition, the phenomena of human experience is a product of the activity of human consciousness. The phenomenologists also expressed their displeasure against the tenets of analytic philosophy. According to them, consciousness is the starting point of our lived experiences and analytic philosophy has contributed nothing to it. On the contrary, analytic philosophy is irrelevant to our lived-experiences because its teachings may obscure rather than reveal the rich dimensions of our lived-experiences, which should be the proper subject of philosophical investigations.

4.0 CONCLUSION

This second unit of the first module discussed the emergence of analytic philosophy and the five stages of the development of analytic philosophy. In addition, the nature and significance of contemporary analytic philosophy, the method and challenges of contemporary analytic philosophy as well as the criticism of analytic philosophy by other contemporary disciplines like existentialism and phenomenology were also discussed. These topics in all, shows the rich resources available in the field of analytic philosophy to the development and growth of philosophy as a discipline.

5.0 SUMMARY

- From the beginning of the twentieth century until now, a certain group of Philosophers came together under the agreement that to make language clear, is the most important, if not the only responsibility of Philosophy. This school of thought is known as Analytic Philosophy or the Philosophy of language analysis.
- Analytic Philosophy is divided into five stages namely: Early realism and analysis, logical atomism, logical positivism, ordinary language analysis; the Wittgensteinian model and ordinary language analysis; conceptual analysis.
- Analysis involves breaking down natural languages, i.e. words, sentences or phrases into their simplest linguistic forms in order to make meaning in ordinary language.

- Two prominent philosophical movements that developed because of their reactions against the tenets of analytic philosophy were existentialism and phenomenology.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. What are the five stages of analytic Philosophy?
2. What are the significance and challenges of contemporary analytic philosophy?

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

Stumpf, E. S. (1989). *Philosophy, History and Problems*. (4th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company.

Lawhead, W. F. (2002). *The Voyage of Discovery: A Historical Introduction to Philosophy*. (2nd ed.). Canada: Wadsworth Thompson Learning Group.

Lavine, T. Z. (1984). *From Socrates to Sartre: The Philosophic Quest*. New York: Bantam Books.

UNIT 3 HISTORICAL ANTECEDENTS TO CONTEMPORARY ANALYTIC PHILOSOPHY I

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Learning Outcomes
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 What is Hegelianism?
 - 3.2 Understanding the Background of Hegel's Philosophy
 - 3.3 The Climax of Hegel's Idealism in Germany and Its Subsequent Influence in the English Speaking World
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit introduces the students and the general reader to the first historical antecedent, which preceded the development of contemporary analytic philosophy. Its focus is on Hegelianism and how it influenced the growth of absolute idealism leading to the subsequent emergence of contemporary analytic philosophy.

2.0 INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- state the meaning of Hegelianism
- discuss the background of Hegel's philosophy
- identify Hegel's absolute idealism and its consequent rejection to the emergence of analytic philosophy.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 What is Hegelianism?

By Hegelianism, we mean the philosophy of G.W.F. Hegel. Hegel's philosophy had its roots from many sources, ranging from rationalism and empiricism to the critical Idealism of Immanuel Kant, as well as German Romanticism.

Hegel had thought deeply what his approach would be...there were, first of all, French rationalism and British empiricism, and beyond these and

synthesizing them, was the formidable philosophy of the German philosopher Kant, which had been the capstone of the Enlightenment philosophy. However, there was also a newer philosophy, which had appeared in Germany, and this was the viewpoint called Romanticism (Lavine, 1984:202).

Nevertheless, Kant's critical idealism seems to have had an upper hand in the formulation of Hegel's philosophy. Kant in his critical idealism had argued that the categories of the mind could only impose its objects on phenomena and therefore we can only know things as they appear to us in experience. However, the thing-in-itself is unknown and unknowable. Phenomenal things can be known but noumenal thing-in-itself, i.e. reality as it is, cannot be known. Therefore, Kant imposed a limit to what the human mind can know. The German idealists rejected this limit imposed by Kant in his critical idealism. The German idealists led by Fichte, Schelling and Hegel transformed Kant's critical idealism into a metaphysical idealism. "Fichte and the other German idealists took Kant's theory that the mind imposes its categories upon experience and transformed this into the theory that every object and therefore the entire universe, is a product of mind" (Stumpf, 1989:328). In the history of philosophy, Hegel, Fichte and Schelling belongs to what is known as post-Kantian idealism. Kant's philosophy had left his successors unsatisfied because of his claim that the human mind can never know things-in-themselves, but it can deal with phenomena by organizing them under its own categories, such as causality. It was in an attempt to solve philosophical issues raised by Kant's philosophy that, in Hegel's views, Fichte produced a subjective idealist philosophy, Schelling an objective idealist philosophy, while Hegel himself produced an absolute idealism. "We can now see what Hegel wants to do-he wants to build upon Kant and upon the Kantian turn in philosophy, upon the primacy which Kant gave to the pure rational concepts"(Lavine,1984:206).

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

What is absolute Idealism?

3.2 Understanding the Background of Hegel's Philosophy

As stated above, the background of Hegel's philosophy is rooted in French rationalism, British empiricism, Kant's critical idealism and German Romanticism. His intellectual strength lies in his ability to synthesize these philosophies and gave the world a new way of viewing reality. Hegel's Philosophy is founded on his belief in the absolute intelligibility of the world, which can be known by reason whose concepts are identical with reality. In his famous statement, "what is real is rational and what is rational is real", Hegel shows that reason is only that faculty

which expresses itself in the form of rules and principles by means of which we think and interpret phenomena. Beyond that, reason is also the essence of things. According to Hegel, true being is known and knowable and it is the same thing as the Idea or Spirit. In this view, what Hegel sees as significant or important is not isolated phenomena or objects, but being as a whole. That is to say, any particular event, phenomena or object should have meaning only when it is seen as a moment in a totality. Hegel saw the relation between the world and the changing factors as producing world history and that history he says is the manifestation of the absolute Spirit. World history is therefore the development or the becoming of absolute Spirit, which realizes itself, by being conscious of itself, through various stages.

3.3 The Climax of Hegel's Idealism in Germany and Its subsequent Influence in the English-Speaking World

Hegel's Philosophy came to a climax in Germany with the following resolutions or conclusions:

First, the human mind or consciousness is purely subjective spirit manifesting itself in immediate sensation and perception. Second, at a higher level, the spirit objectifies itself in form of well-organized institutions such as family, civil society, state and greater civilizations. Third, the Spirit becomes conscious of itself in art and religion and at the highest stage, it identifies itself in philosophy as absolute knowledge. At the climax of Hegel's Philosophy in Germany, Neo-Hegelians in Britain took over this absolute metaphysical idealism and ran with it as fast as they could in their own environment. The leading names of the British metaphysical idealists of that era include the following: 1. Francis Herbert Bradley 2. Bernard Bosanquet 3. James Mc Taggart 4. Edward Caird and 5. Thomas Hill Green, amongst several others. It is to the philosophies of these leading British Idealists and how they paved way for the emergence of analytic philosophy that we now turn attention to.

4.0 CONCLUSION

This unit discussed the first historical antecedent to contemporary analytic philosophy, which focuses on Hegel's philosophy as a foundation to absolute idealism. Hegel's absolute idealism had its roots from many sources, ranging from rationalism and empiricism, Kant's critical idealism to German Romanticism. The climax of Hegel's absolute idealism in Germany metamorphosed into British absolute idealism propagated by the Neo-Hegelians.

5.0 SUMMARY

- Absolute idealism is the claim that reality is rational, conceptual totality, that reality is an absolute mind or the mind of God, an integrated and total structure of conceptual truths.
- By Hegelianism, we mean the philosophy of G.W.F. Hegel.
- Hegel's philosophy is rooted in French rationalism, British empiricism, Kant's critical idealism and German Romanticism.
- Hegel's Philosophy is founded on his belief in the absolute intelligibility of the world, which can be known by reason whose concepts are identical with reality.
- The climax of Hegel's absolute idealism in Germany metamorphosed into British absolute idealism propagated by the Neo-Hegelians

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Explain the background of Hegel's philosophy.
2. What influence did Hegel's philosophy have on British philosophy and how did it lead to the emergence of analytic philosophy?

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

Stumpf, E. S. 1989. *Philosophy, History and Problems*, Fourth Edition, New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company.

Lavine, T.Z.1984. *From Socrates to Sartre: The Philosophic Quest*, New York: Bantam Books.

UNIT 4 HISTORICAL ANTECEDENTS TO CONTEMPORARY ANALYTIC PHILOSOPHY II

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Learning Outcomes
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Thomas Hill Green (1836-1882) and the Revival of Neo-Idealism in Britain
 - 3.2 Edward Caird (1835-1908)
 - 3.3 James Elis Mc Taggart (1866-1925)
 - 3.4 Bernard Bosanquet (1848-1923)
 - 3.5 Francis Herbert Bradley (1846-1924)
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit will introduce the students to the second historical antecedent, which preceded the development of contemporary analytic philosophy. Its focus will be on the Neo-Hegelians and British Idealists and how they influenced the growth of absolute idealism leading to the subsequent emergence of contemporary analytic philosophy.

2.0 INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOME

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- mention the names of all leading British Idealists
- identify the contributions of each idealist to the growth of absolute idealism in Britain
- identify the philosophies, which prepared adequate ground for the success of analytic philosophy.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Thomas Hill Green (1836-1882) and the Revival of Neo-Idealism in Britain

Right from the end of the nineteenth century to the beginning of the twentieth century, it was reported that German Idealism had reached a

climax in Hegel's absolute idealism but was revived for some obvious reasons among British philosophers. Omoregbe (2005:1) accounts that: Towards the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the present century German Idealism, which reached its climax in Hegelianism, began to be revived. This revival was particularly strong in Britain where a number of philosophers turned to Hegel's philosophy with renewed interest. This was largely due to a number of Hegel's works that were translated into English.

The first idealist to move in the direction of this revival was Thomas Hill Green, who held that, "human intelligence is a participation in the eternal intelligence, which reproduces itself in and through human consciousness". Green held the view that it is not the finite mind of man that synthesizes the world, hence there is an infinite mind of which the finite human mind participates in. This infinite mind produces itself and its knowledge in finite minds. The infinite mind is not to be reduced to the finite mind, neither is it separate from it. Thus, there is a tension between the finite and the infinite minds. The finite mind struggles to attain full self-realization in the infinite mind. Green concludes that this is the moral order of all finite subjects.

3.2 Edward Caird (1835-1908)

Caird started his idealism by rejecting the Kantian thing-in-itself and insisted that there is a basic unity, which underlies all subject-object dichotomy in reality. For him, there is no distinction, no difference between subject and object. The thought of such a distinction is a misconception that can be traced to a common source found in both object and subject, which is consciousness. Now God manifests himself as consciousness in both subject and object, in man and in nature as a unifying force of consciousness. Therefore, ultimate reality is God and all subjects and objects are united in Him.

3.3 James Elis Mc Taggart (1866-1925)

Another special character of interest among the Hegelians in Britain was James Elis Mc Taggart, who took idealism to the highest level. Mc Taggart was concerned with the nature of being and existence. Existence is known by experience, as whatever exists must be a substance. However, the problem is that there are many substances, all of which are united as one in the universe, which is the highest substance. He said that the universe might appear as if it contains two substances, nevertheless, there is only one real substance and that is the spiritual substance. "All existing substances in the universe are spiritual. The universe itself is the unity of substances, the absolute system of substances" (Omoregbe, 2005:2). He did not only deny the reality of matter, he also denied the

reality of time. “Substances are eternal and timeless. The absolute (universe) is the comprehensive system of timeless and immaterial substances”. He concludes that it is only in appearance that time and matter exist, not in reality because they lack the basic requirements for existence.

3.4 Bernard Bosanquet (1848-1923)

Bosanquet is presumed to be the closest idealist to Hegel in terms of thought. His assertion that “the absolute is the totality of all that exists, the synthesis of all beings”, confirms his Hegelianism. In confirming the absolute as the totality of all that exists, he did not deny that the individual also exists. The absolute is the totality of all beings conceived as one being, while the individual is one who is capable of conceiving his own world in his own way. Though the world exists in an objective form, the individual makes it his own world in his attempt to understand what the world is all about. Everything the individual does is about the world. The individual is a complete self that has been realized through the absolute. “Individuality in its fullness is realized only in the absolute, for the absolute alone is the individual in the fullest sense of the word” (Omogbe, 2005:3). This continuous emphasis on the absolute as the totality of all beings and the fullness of being makes Bosanquet a complete Hegelian who conceives the universe as an absolute system.

3.5 Francis Herbert Bradley (1846-1924)

Bradley says that both the subject and object of experience as well as their relation are one, the same reality. Hence, reality is one indivisible, intelligible whole. Bradley’s idealism is similar to the idealism of Edward Caird by insisting that both subject and object are one reality. According to Bradley, to know that reality is one totality is the beginning of knowledge. “Man’s fundamental prereflective experience reveals to him that reality is one totality, and this is, according to Bradley, the beginning of knowledge”(Omogbe,2005:3). The seemingly difference between subject and object are not real, it is only an illusion of the senses which appearance presents to us. The same thing applies to the idea of plurality or multiplicity. Reality is one indivisible and intelligible whole. Since appearance is unreal and deceptive, metaphysics is only an attempt to go beyond appearance and reach the point of reality where we will discover that reality is one indivisible and intelligible whole. All appearances of finite beings are illusive appearances, behind them is the ultimate reality found in the totality of the absolute, which is one reality. Like all other idealists before him, Bradley’s emphasis on the unity, intelligibility and wholeness of the absolute remains unshakable and confirms him a real Hegelian. However, despite the faith and consistency of arguments presented by the Hegelians in favour of idealism, it made no sense to

analytic philosophers who succeeded them. Analytic philosophy itself was like a dynamite, which appeared to destroy the efforts of the Hegelians to institute the tradition of idealism. It succeeded for two obvious reasons. The first reason for the success of analytic philosophy in Britain was the positivism of Auguste Comte and the second reason was the empiricism of David Hume. We now turn our attention to these philosophers to understand how they prepared the ground for the success of analytic philosophy.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

What common idea unites all Idealists?

4.0 CONCLUSION

This unit discussed the second historical antecedent to contemporary analytic philosophy, which focuses on the philosophy of the leading British idealists and Neo-Hegelians. The philosophical idealism of Thomas Hill Green, Edward Caird, Bernard Bosanquet, James Elis Mc Taggart and Francis Bradley were studied to show their contributions to the growth of idealism in Britain before the arrival of analytic philosophy, which became successful due to the inspirations it received from the positivism of Auguste Comte and the empiricism of David Hume.

5.0 SUMMARY

- German Idealism reached a climax in Hegel's absolute idealism but was revived among British philosophers.
- The first idealist in this revival was Thomas Hill Green, who held that, "human intelligence is a participation in the eternal intelligence".
- All idealists emphasise the absolute as the totality of all beings and the fullness of being.
- Despite the faith and consistency of arguments presented by the Hegelians in favour of idealism, it made no sense to analytic philosophers who succeeded them.
- Analytic philosophy succeeded because of the inspirations it received from the positivism of Auguste Comte and the empiricism of David Hume.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. What made James Mc Taggart's idealism unique and the first subject of attack by "common sense"?
2. Mention two dominant philosophies that inspired the revolutions of analytic philosophers against the Hegelians.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

Omogbe, J.I.2005. *A Simplified History of Western Philosophy: Contemporary Philosophy Vol.3*, Lagos: Joja Educational Research and Publishers Limited.

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UNIT 5 HISTORICAL ANTECEDENTS TO CONTEMPORARY ANALYTIC PHILOSOPHY III

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Learning Outcomes
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 What Is Positivism?
 - 3.2 Auguste Comte's Law of the Three Stages
 - 3.3 Hume's Empiricism and its Inspiration to the Success of Analytic Philosophy
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit will introduce the students to the third historical antecedent, which preceded the development of contemporary analytic philosophy. Its focus will be on the positivism of Auguste Comte and the empiricism of David Hume, to show how both philosophies inspired analytic philosophers and prepared the ground for their success against the Hegelian idealists in Britain.

2.0 INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOME

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- discuss the meaning of positivism
- identify the three stages in human thinking according to Auguste Comte
- explain why David Hume is a hard-core empiricist and how empiricism inspired the success of analytic philosophy.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 What Is Positivism?

Positivism as a word originated from St. Simon but was popularized by Auguste Comte. It is synonymous with the word scientism, which is the belief that science is the only reliable source of knowledge and values. All areas of human knowledge were credible only to the degree that their principles could be derived from science. For this reason, positivism is the view that the only true propositions are the ones that has been

scientifically verified. Speaking about positivism, Omoregbe (2005:10) says:

The only kind of knowledge that is genuine and certain is scientific knowledge and it is knowledge about observable phenomena. This means that there can be no knowledge about unseen realities that are not subject to empirical observation. Such realities do not come within the scope of human knowledge. Religion and metaphysics are therefore not sources of genuine knowledge, since they deal with realities that are not subject to empirical observation. Religious and metaphysical speculations do not increase man's knowledge of reality.

For Stumpf (1994:355) "It is the general attitude of mind, a spirit of enquiry and approach to the facts of human existence". Auguste Comte himself concludes that: "No proposition that is not finally reducible to the enunciation of a fact, particular or general, can offer any real and intelligible meaning" (Lawhead, 2002:435). Therefore, the consensus on positivism is that we are to renounce the attempt to know reality, and be content with the only kind of knowledge possible, which is the knowledge of phenomena as provided by the sciences.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

What is Positivism?

3.2 Auguste Comte's Law of the Three Stages

According to Comte, the history of ideas indicates that human thought has undergone three stages, and each stage marks a different way of discovering truth. It applies to individuals and to humanity as a whole.

Stage 1: The first stage of human intellectual development was the theological or religious stage. This stage represents humanity in its infancy. The early or primitive stage of the development of the human mind. It is the stage of religious worldview, where humanity resorted to religion to explain reality. People at this stage believed that the universe is governed by the actions of personal gods. It developed from fetishism or animism through polytheism and ended with monotheism. In monotheism, the world is seen as the product of one deity.

Stage 2: The second stage of human intellectual development was the metaphysical stage. This is the adolescent stage of humanity. At this stage, humanity tried to give abstract metaphysical explanations to reality. Events were said to have some underlying causes and were explained using abstract notions like essences or forces.

Stage 3: The third and last stage of the development of the human mind is the positive stage or the stage of positivism. This marks the stage of

adulthood for humanity. It is the stage of positive science where scientific explanations are offered to replace religious and metaphysical opinions on genuine knowledge. Omoregbe (2005:9) shared the difference between the first two stages and the last stage as follows:

Whereas in the first and second stages the human mind is preoccupied with the ultimate causes of things and tries to trace these causes beyond the observable phenomena, in the third stage, the stage of positive science, the human mind confines itself to what is empirically observable in its explanation of things. The knowledge acquired or sought is about observable phenomena and the mind abandons any attempt to explain these phenomena in terms of the unseen.

This understanding of positivism and the classifications given by Comte to the different stages of the development of the human mind became an instant inspiration to both logical positivism and analytic philosophy generally. Analytic philosophers saw reasons with Comte to reject religious and metaphysical speculations. They upheld the scientific method as the only tenable means of acquiring authentic knowledge of the world. Only scientific propositions are meaningful when fully analyzed. All other propositions are meaningless propositions. Anything short of the scientific method should be disregarded, as it cannot give us knowledge or information about the world.

3.3 Hume's Empiricism and its Inspiration to the Success of Analytic Philosophy

a. The Foundation of all Knowledge

In the Introduction to the *Treatise of Human Nature*, David Hume says that his purpose was "to study the science of man and to explain the Principles of human nature". Why has this become necessary? It is because all other sciences are based upon the science of man. To study the science of man, the science of human nature is to study the foundation of all human knowledge. Lavine (1984:151) captures it succinctly:

What Hume intends to do is to ask, with regard to all our knowledge: 1. how do you Know? What is the origin of this knowledge? 2. What are the limits of human knowledge? These are the questions which empiricism raises, and Hume will push them consistently and relentlessly. He already knows what he will show: that we have no knowledge, but only beliefs, which we feel, are true.

b. Hume's Attack on the Doctrine of Two Kinds of Knowledge

Hume's purpose in asking, what are the foundations of all knowledge, is to show that there is only one foundation, consisting

of one kind of knowledge, i.e. knowledge by sense perception or sense experience. It is also to destroy the age-long philosophical belief that there are two kinds of knowledge.

Both Plato and Descartes argued from the assumption that there are these two types of knowledge. That above ordinary knowledge by sense perception, there is a kind of knowledge whose source is in reason, and that this knowledge enables us to know the truth about reality and so to have a metaphysics, a theory about the nature of reality(Lavine,1984:152).

Hume denies that there are two kinds of knowledge. The notion that there is a superior kind of knowledge whose source is in reason, knowledge of the nature of reality or metaphysical knowledge. The notion he says is false and a complete illusion. We can never know the nature of ultimate reality because human understanding is limited to the knowledge of sense perception. As, such, metaphysics must be shown to be a pretentious nonsense, along with the doctrine on which it rests, that there are two kinds of knowledge, ordinary knowledge by sense perception and superior metaphysical knowledge by reason.

c. On Sense Perception: Between Impressions and Ideas

Hume divides perception into impressions and ideas. Impressions refers to our immediate sensations, passions, emotions, the immediate data of seeing, touching, hearing, desiring, loving and hating. Ideas refers to copies or faint images of impressions, such as thinking about or recalling any of our immediate impressions. Hume argues that the difference between Impressions and Ideas is in the greater force and liveliness of impressions. Impressions enter the human consciousness with more force. On the other hand, Ideas are only images of our impressions, which occur in thinking, reasoning and remembering. Hume went further to make a distinction between simple and complex impressions and simple and complex ideas, which are images of these impressions. “My perception of red is a simple impression, and my recollection of this red colour is a simple idea” (Lavine, 1984:153). It is a rule without exception according to Hume, that every simple idea has a simple impression, which resembles it and every simple impression a corresponding Idea as well. However, the rule may not apply in cases of complex impressions and complex ideas, unless these complex impressions and ideas are broken down into their simpler forms. Hume’s most important empiricist argument is that we cannot know anything which we have not had a prior impression of in sensory experience.

d. Finding the Empiricist Principle

The fundamental principle of empiricism founded by Hume is that: All our simple ideas in their first appearance are derived from simple impressions which correspond to them and which they represent. How will Hume use this principle to improve the course of knowledge? He will use it to demolish and destroy all falsehood arising from ignorance. All he needs to do is to ask a simple question, from what impression does this idea come? If not from immediate impression, the idea is meaningless. Where there is no impression, there is no adequate idea. Where there is no impression, the idea is meaningless. We can know that something exists only if we have an impression of it, i.e. only if we have a sensory experience of it.

When we entertain, therefore, any suspicion that a philosophical term is employed without any meaning or idea, we need but enquire, from what impression is that supposed idea derived? Moreover, if it were impossible to assign any, this will serve to confirm our suspicion (Hume, 1955:65).

Using this principle, Hume believes that he could destroy all philosophical arguments on metaphysics, as he accuses metaphysicians of using empty, meaningless words like substance, mind, and essence to refer to things, which have independent existence.

e. The Association of Ideas

According to Hume, our atomic ideas, which corresponds, to our impressions are connected or associated by three laws of association of ideas. These laws are the law of resemblance, the law of contiguity and the law of cause and effect. The law of resemblance states that ideas are connected by the resemblance between them. Our minds easily runs from one idea to another that resembles it. The law of contiguity states that, our minds tend to associate one idea with another that is physically or temporarily adjoining it, contiguous with it. The law of cause and effect states that our minds seem impelled to associate a cause with the effect it brings about. If we think of a wound, hardly can we not think of the pain, which follows it. Hume thinks that the law of cause and effect has the most powerful connective effects between our ideas.

f. The Limits of Human Knowledge

Right from the onset, Hume had set out to discover the limits of human knowledge. He proposes that as far as our knowledge of the world of facts is concerned, we are limited to our simple impressions and their corresponding ideas. These impressions and

ideas appear repeatedly in our experience. We have no way of knowing what causes them. We have no knowledge that external world exists or that God exists. These deceptive ideas, meaningless ideas are the work of human imagination; we have no sensory impressions of any of them. Human knowledge is limited to simple impressions and their images that corresponds as ideas. This discovery of the limits of human knowledge from impressions to their corresponding ideas sets the stage for further arguments by philosophers. Particularly, Russell and Wittgenstein saw light through the empirical arguments of Hume than the unfolding darkness of idealism propagated and nurtured by the Neo-Hegelians.

4.0 CONCLUSION

This unit discussed the third historical antecedent to contemporary analytic philosophy, which focuses on the positivism of Auguste Comte and the empiricism of David Hume. The positivism of Auguste Comte and the empiricism of David Hume prepared the last fertile soil for nurturing the growth of analytic philosophy in Britain.

5.0 SUMMARY

- The consensus on positivism is that we are to renounce the attempt to know reality, and be content with the only kind of knowledge possible, which is the knowledge of phenomena as provided by the sciences.
- Positivism as a word originated from St. Simon but was popularized by Auguste Comte.
- According to Comte, the history of ideas indicates that human thought has undergone three stages, and each stage marks a different way of discovering truth.
- Hume shows that there is only one foundation, consisting of one kind of knowledge, i.e. knowledge by sense perception or sense experience. He destroys the age-long philosophical belief that there are two kinds of knowledge.
- The fundamental principle of empiricism is that: All our simple ideas in their first appearance are derived from simple impressions which correspond to them and which they represent.
- The three laws of association of ideas are the law of resemblance, the law of contiguity and the law of cause and effect.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Mention and discuss the three stages of the development of the human mind by Auguste Comte.
2. Explain the three laws of association of ideas according to Hume.
3. Differentiate between Impressions and ideas according to David Hume.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

Lavine, T.Z.1984. *From Socrates to Sartre: The Philosophic Quest*, New York: Bantam Books.

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MODULE 2 THE DIFFERENT SEGMENTS OF CONTEMPORARY ANALYTIC PHILOSOPHY

UNIT 1 PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS: THE PROPER FUNCTION OF PHILOSOPHY IS ANALYSIS

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Learning Outcomes
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 The Proper Function of Philosophy is Analysis
 - 3.2 Moore, Austin and Later Wittgenstein as Language Analysts
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit will introduce the students to the segment of analytic philosophy which deals with philosophical analysis and which believes that the proper ideal function of philosophy should be the analysis of propositions to differentiate between the meaningful and the meaningless, and between the scientific and the metaphysical or nonsensical.

2.0 INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOME

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- state the meaning of philosophical Analysis
- mention the names of all Analytic philosophers who favoured analysis as the proper function of philosophy
- discuss the underlying arguments of these philosophers.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 The Proper Function of Philosophy is Analysis

The history of philosophy rightly suggests that even before the advent of analytic philosophy, philosophers have been struggling to assign an appropriate function to philosophy. These functions varies from the search for ultimate reality, to the search for knowledge, proper human values and so on. However, analytic philosophers were of the view that

the proper function of philosophy should be the analysis of everyday language, to determine which is meaningful and which is meaningless. Knowing the language that is meaningful or meaningless would help to eliminate confusion, clear doubts and encourage understanding. However, what then is analysis and how can we perform it? Popkin, R.H. and Stroll A. (1993:345) answered promptly:

Analysis consists in rewriting sentences of natural languages in such a way that these sentences will exhibit their proper logical form. When put into their logical form, their meaning will become clear, and philosophical perplexity will be eliminated.

Generally, philosophical analysts contend that first; one must analyze questions in order to discover what it means. Hence, the function of philosophical analysis is to take any problem, dissect it to show which questions in it are capable of being answered and how they are being answered. There is a common positive commitment among the language analysts that one must begin from analysis of ordinary language in order to see what light it casts on philosophical issues as the right step towards finding the solution.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

What is philosophical analysis?

3.2 Moore, Austin and Later Wittgenstein as Language Analysts

The trio of G.E.Moore, John Austin and the later Wittgenstein represents the ordinary language school. They share the common belief that the problems of philosophy are only linguistic problems. “Philosophers problems are not genuine problems but only the nonsense that results from not knowing how to handle language”. Moore defended a common sense view of the world, insisting that ordinary persons who claimed that they knew- and knew with certainty that tables, chairs or trees, existed were correct. They were correct because, they were using the word ‘know’ in its common, ordinary ways in making such a claim. Wittgenstein insisted that philosophy’s role is analytic. The role is to analyze language in order to discover the many language games, and their rules for using words, and to remove the puzzles, which arise when the rules of a language game are misused. When one sticks to the rules, no problems would arise, he concluded. Austin recommended the meticulous and subtle investigation of how words are used by ordinary speakers in order to understand their differences in meaning. He insisted, “there are three ways of spilling ink”, either deliberately, purposely or intentionally and these three are not the same, but can only be known by careful investigation. However, up to this day, the problems of philosophy have not been dissolved by philosophical

analysis of any language. Rather, it is even the case that linguistic philosophy itself has been dissolved.

4.0 CONCLUSION

This unit discussed philosophical analysis as one of the important segments of analytic philosophy. It holds that the proper function of philosophy is the analysis of everyday language, to differentiate the meaningful from the meaningless. The trio of G.E. Moore, John Austin and the later Wittgenstein are language analysts.

5.0 SUMMARY

- Analytic philosophers were of the view that the proper function of philosophy should be the analysis of everyday language, to determine which is meaningful and which is meaningless.
- Analysis consists in rewriting sentences of natural languages in such a way that these sentences will exhibit their proper logical form.
- The trio of G.E. Moore, John Austin and the later Wittgenstein represents the ordinary language school. They share the common belief that the problems of philosophy are only linguistic problems.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. How is analysis the proper function of philosophy?
2. Discuss the arguments of the language analysts and show their similarities.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

Lavine, T.Z.1984. *From Socrates to Sartre: The Philosophic Quest*, New York: Bantam Books.

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UNIT 2 LOGICAL ATOMISM

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Learning Outcomes
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Logical Atomism
 - 3.2 The New Logic: The Logic of Propositions
 - 3.3 Atomic and Molecular Propositions
 - 3.4 The Early Wittgenstein
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit introduces the students to the segment of analytic philosophy, which deals with logical atomism. Logical atomism in analytic philosophy represents the views of Bertrand Russell, Alfred North Whitehead and the early Ludwig Wittgenstein. They held that words are atomic particles and when broken down into their sub-atomic forms, their meaning appears and they are understood clearly.

2.0 INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOME

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- explain the meaning of logical atomism
- mention the names of all logical atomists
- discuss the underlying arguments of these philosophers.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Logical Atomism

The main tenets of logical atomism are as follows:

1. Philosophy is a genuine activity, just as science is a genuine activity.
2. Unlike science, philosophy does not discover new facts for us.
3. The knowledge we acquire through the study of philosophy is not knowledge of new facts.
4. Philosophy tells us about the structure of the world, how its basic ingredients are constructed.

5. Philosophy tells us that the world is composed of a set of atomic facts, i.e. objects and their properties.

We summarized the main tenets of logical atomism as shown above because; it is difficult for the non-specialist to understand, without first knowing the essentials of symbolic or mathematical logic. It is the philosophy of mathematical logic of *Principia Mathematica* published in three volumes by Bertrand Russell and Alfred North Whitehead between 1910 and 1913.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

What is Logical atomism?

3.2 The New Logic: The Logic of Propositions

Aristotle wrote the final words on logic before the publication of *Principia Mathematica* in 1910. Russell and Whitehead developed a new type of logic, which was much broader in scope than Aristotelian logic. Aristotelian logic was a logic of classes, while Russell's logic was a logic of propositions. Russell and Whitehead's *Principia Mathematica* became important to philosophy for two reasons: First, it argued that mathematics thought to be a distinct discipline, is in fact part of logic. Second, that everyday language or natural language has a structure similar to that of *Principia Mathematica*. For these reasons, mathematical logic would provide philosophy with the tool of razor sharpness for clarifying the meaning of sentences of any natural language.

3.3 Atomic and Molecular Propositions

Russell distinguished between atomic propositions and molecular propositions. An atomic proposition is a proposition, which have no parts, which are themselves, propositions. Example: Chekwas is human, is an atomic proposition, since its parts are individual words, not propositions. On the contrary, Chekwas and Blessing are going to the Alter, is a molecular proposition. It is a complex proposition containing two parts, each of which is itself a proposition, i.e. (a) Chekwas is going to the Alter, and (b) Blessing is going to the Alter. A molecular proposition is built up out of atomic propositions by the use of connecting words, such as 'and', 'or', and 'if...then'. By breaking down molecular propositions into its constituent atomic propositions, we know their meaning. How do we analyze the meaning of an atomic proposition? Every atomic proposition is always of the subject-predicate form according to Russell. For instance, 'Chekwas is brilliant', can be analyzed into a subject term, which is a proper noun or proper name, 'Chekwas', and into a predicate term, such as 'is brilliant'. The subject term in such a case always refers to an

individual thing- in this case the person, 'Chekwas' and the predicate term refers to some characteristic or 'property' which the subject term possesses, in this case the characteristic of being brilliant. When an atomic proposition is true, the subject term denotes an individual thing or object, and the predicate term refers to some characteristic of this thing or object. Atomic propositions gives us information about the real world. It informs us that the world is made up of facts, and that all such facts are atomic in nature, they can be described by an atomic proposition. There are no molecular facts in nature, since every molecular proposition can be reduced to a set of atomic propositions, plus the logical connectives. The ultimate constituents of the world are facts, and a fact is made up of an individual thing with its individual characteristics. Therefore, the function of philosophy is to give us information about the world.

3.4 The Early Wittgenstein

Wittgenstein believes that whatever one can think, one can speak. It follows that we can set out the limits of thought by determining the limits of language. Russell before him told us that the world was a collection of atomic facts. Using the term "state of affairs", for atomic facts, Wittgenstein gives us a similar account of the world. The world is all that is the case. The world is a totality of facts, not of things. Following Russell's atomism, Wittgenstein says that the function of language is to represent state of affairs in the world. This is his "picture theory of reality". A proposition is a picture of reality. It is a model of reality as we imagine it.

4.0 CONCLUSION

This unit discussed logical atomism as one of the important segments of analytic philosophy. Logical atomism in analytic philosophy represents the views of Bertrand Russell, Alfred North Whitehead and the early Ludwig Wittgenstein. It holds that words are atomic particles, when broken down into their sub-atomic forms, their meaning appears, and we understand it. Made up of an individual thing with its individual characteristics, is a fact, therefore, the ultimate constituent of the world are facts. The function of philosophy is to give us information about the world of facts. Wittgenstein says that the function of language is to represent state of affairs in the world.

5.0 SUMMARY

- Logical atomism in analytic philosophy represents the views of Bertrand Russell, Alfred North Whitehead and the early Ludwig Wittgenstein

- They held that words are atomic particles and when broken down into their sub-atomic forms, their meaning appears and we understand it clearly.
- Russell distinguished between atomic propositions and molecular propositions. An atomic proposition is a proposition, which have no parts, which are themselves, propositions. Example: Chekwas is human, is an atomic proposition, since its parts are individual words, not propositions.
- A molecular proposition is a complex proposition containing two parts, each of which is itself a proposition. Example: Chekwas and Blessing are going to the Alter. (a) Chekwas is going to the Alter, and (b) Blessing is going to the Alter.
- The function of philosophy is to give us information about the world of facts. Wittgenstein says that the function of language is to represent state of affairs in the world.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Explain the basic ideas of logical atomism
2. Mention the names of logical atomists and explain their common views.
3. Differentiate between atomic and molecular Propositions.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

Lavine, T.Z.1984. *From Socrates to Sartre: The Philosophic Quest*, New York: Bantam Books.

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UNIT 3 LOGICAL POSITIVISM (LOGICAL EMPIRICISM)

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Learning Outcomes
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Logical Positivism
 - 3.2 Analytic and Synthetic Propositions
 - 3.3 The Verification Principle
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit introduces the students to the segment of analytic philosophy, which deals with logical positivism. Logical positivism in analytic philosophy represents the views of the members of the logical positivists of the Vienna circle. They include; Moritz Schlick, Hans Hahn, Friedrich Waismann, Herbert Feigl, Otto Neurath and Rudolf Carnap. They held informal seminars and closely studied the writings of Wittgenstein.

2.0 INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- explain the meaning of logical Positivism
- mention the names of all logical positivists
- discuss the underlying arguments of their philosophies

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Logical Positivism

The logical positivists were a group of philosophically minded scientists and scientifically minded philosophers who came together in the early 1920s at a conference in Vienna, Austria to form a movement aimed at rebuilding philosophy on a sound logical and scientific foundation. They derived inspiration from the positivism of Auguste Comte, as well as the famous statement of David Hume, which says:

When we run over libraries, persuaded of these principles, what havoc must we make? If we take in our hand any volume; of divinity or school metaphysics, for instance; let us ask, does it contain any abstract reasoning concerning quantity or number? No. Does it contain any

experimental reasoning concerning matter of fact and existence? No. Commit it then to the flames: for it can contain nothing but sophistry and illusion. (Hume, 1952:12).

Following Hume's influence and persuasive oratory, the Logical positivists believed that all genuine knowledge falls within the two realms of science, i.e. the formal sciences of logic and mathematics and the empirical sciences. The logical positivists of the Vienna circle include; Moritz Schlick, Hans Hahn, Friedrich Waismann, Herbert Feigl, Otto Neurath and Rudolf Carnap. They held informal seminars and closely studied the writings of Wittgenstein. They agreed that philosophy is not a theory but an activity. According to them, Philosophy does not produce propositions which are true or false; it merely clarifies the meaning of statements, showing some to be scientific, some to be mathematical and some to be nonsensical.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

What is logical Positivism?

3.2 Analytic and Synthetic Propositions

Synthetic propositions are propositions, which require some kind of empirical investigation for their confirmation. On the other hand, analytic propositions are propositions, which does not require any empirical investigation for their confirmation. The truth of analytic propositions follow from their meaning. The Logical positivists are of the view that every significant proposition must be either analytic or synthetic, but none can be both. All analytic propositions belong to formal logic. They are true in virtue of their formal structure. All synthetic propositions are the propositions of science. They require empirical investigation before their truth can be established. Analytic propositions have the meaning of their predicate term contained in the subject term. Example; All husbands are married men. Hence, one can verify such statement by looking at the words they contain. Synthetic propositions are so-called because they result from joining or making a synthesis of two things that are not related. Example; the television is coloured. Analytic propositions do not refer to the world in the manner in which synthetic propositions do. Analytic propositions are trivial while synthetic propositions are informative.

3.3 The Verification Principle

The verification principle states that a factual statement is meaningful if it is verifiable in experience. However, the method of its verification determines the meaning of a factual statement. Example; if I claim that, "it is raining outside", this claim, whether through or false is meaningful

because I can specify concrete experiences that would verify it. The logical positivists continually modified the verification principle in the attempt to remedy problems as they arose. They did not try to decide whether a given statement about the world is true or not, for this is the task of science. The role of philosophy is to decide what it means to say that a statement has cognitive meaning. A cognitively meaningful statement is one that provides information about the world and this information must be verifiable in principle for it to be meaningful. It is verifiable in principle by experience conclusively or weakly. The conclusion of the logical positivists is that philosophy cannot be a source of truth. Knowledge comes to us only through the formal propositions of mathematics and logic or through the empirically verified observations of science. Their concern is with logical analysis. The function of logical analysis is to take any problem, show which questions in it are answerable to mathematical or logical reasoning, and which questions are answerable by some sort of empirical investigation. It is not the function of philosophers to answer these questions. It is their function to clarify the meaning of the questions so that one will know what sort of questions they are, and how to proceed to answer them. However, the logical positivists reluctantly granted that philosophers as caretakers of language could contribute. Physics is the most fully grounded of all sciences and Philosophers could use their logical techniques to show how all the sciences fits into it. What made the logical positivists unique in the history of philosophy was that, they did not say metaphysical statements are false or unfounded. They insisted, all metaphysical statements, in principle, are nonsensical. They are a form of disguised nonsense and are empty of cognitive content.

4.0 CONCLUSION

This unit discussed logical positivism as one of the important segments of analytic philosophy. Logical positivism in analytic philosophy represents the views of the logical positivists of the Vienna circle which include; Moritz Schlick, Hans Hahn, Friedrich Waismann, Herbert Feigl, Otto Neurath and Rudolf Carnap. They agreed that philosophy is not a theory but an activity. According to them, Philosophy does not produce propositions which are true or false; it merely clarifies the meaning of statements, showing some to be scientific, some to be mathematical and some to be nonsensical.

5.0 SUMMARY

- Logical positivism in analytic philosophy represents the views of the members of the logical positivists of the Vienna circle. They include; Moritz Schlick, Hans Hahn, Friedrich Waismann, Herbert Feigl, Otto Neurath and Rudolf Carnap.

- Philosophy does not produce propositions which are true or false; it merely clarifies the meaning of statements, showing some to be scientific, some to be mathematical and some to be nonsensical
- Synthetic propositions are propositions, which require some kind of empirical investigation for their confirmation. Analytic propositions are propositions, which does not require any empirical investigation for their confirmation.
- The verification principle states that a factual statement is meaningful if it is verifiable in experience.
- A cognitively meaningful statement is one that provides information about the world and this information must be verifiable in principle to be meaningful.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. List the names of members of the Vienna circle.
2. What are the main tenets of logical positivism?
3. What are analytic and synthetic propositions? Give examples.
4. State the verification principle.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

Hume, D. 1952. *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, Section 12, Part3, New York: Dover Publications.

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UNIT 4 ANALYSIS OF MORAL LANGUAGE

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Learning Outcomes
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Analysis of Moral Language
 - 3.2 Intuitionism
 - 3.3 Emotivism
 - 3.4 Prescriptivism
 - 3.5 Subjectivism
 - 3.6 Objectivism
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit introduces the students to the segment of analytic philosophy, which deals with the analysis of moral languages. The moral languages to be analyzed include; Intuitionism, Emotivism and Prescriptivism. They represent the views of Alfred Jules Ayer, Rudolf Carnap, Sir David William Ross, G.E. Moore, C.L. Stevenson and R.M. Hare as logical positivists.

2.0 INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- explain the meaning of Intuitionism, Emotivism and Prescriptivism
- identify the names of all logical positivists who argued about the nature of moral languages
- discuss the underlying arguments of these set of logical positivists.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Analysis of Moral Language

Why is it necessary for human beings to behave in certain ways and avoid other ways that are inimical to his existence? It is because he has a sense of morality. A sense of morality is also indicative of the fact that human knowledge of the future is obscure, so we cannot always know the future consequences of our actions. As a result, we need some guide in our

actions, and these guides are moral principles. However, the interpretation of moral principles are subject to controversial analysis, as what constitutes moral principles to one might differ with others and this is where ethics or the science of morality runs a divided house. We shall examine the interpretation of these moral principles such as intuitionism, emotivism, prescriptivism, subjectivism and objectivism to understand the moral positions of their arguments.

3.2 Intuitionism

Intuitionism is a moral principle, which says that the universe is structured on a moral order consisting of self-evident fundamental principles. We know these principles by intuition, and cannot explain them in terms of one single theory like utilitarianism or hedonism. Morality is so complex that no single principle can determine rightness or wrongness of actions. The self-evident principles only indicate rights or duties to us. This is the view of Sir David Ross and shared by G.E. Moore and other eminent members of the analytic movement. Ross rejects conceiving ethics as a natural phenomenon, arguing that the concepts of 'right' and 'good' are indefinable and unanalyzable simple properties, which we know by intuition. Ross makes a distinction between intrinsic goodness and instrumental goodness. Intrinsic goodness is goodness in itself. Anything that is intrinsically good is good in itself, not good as a means to something else. Instrumental goodness is goodness as a means to some other end. Anything that is instrumentally good is good because, it is a means to some other good. He mentions four things that are intrinsically good, and these includes; pleasure, knowledge, virtuous disposition and good motives. All other things are instrumentally good.

3.3 Emotivism

In his book, *Ethics and Language*, C.L. Stevenson says that ethical terms are used to fulfill two functions. First, to express one's feelings about something. Second, to evoke similar feelings in others. For example, if someone says stealing is wrong, he is using this statement to express his negative feelings about stealing, and at the same time trying to evoke similar negative feelings about stealing from other people. What this person is trying to communicate is, 'I disapprove of stealing; do so as well'. On the other hand, if a person says, altruism is good. What he is actually saying is, I approve altruism; do so as well. Emotivism means that ethical statements are not factual, and they do not give information about actions or things but simply express the speaker's feelings and tend to evoke similar feelings from the hearers. According to C.L. Stevenson, "moral terms have emotive meaning which they acquire in the course of time and utilized to express as well as to evoke emotions. For instance, if I say that cheating is wrong, my statement is nonfactual, it gives no

information about cheating and says nothing about it. It simply expresses my attitude towards cheating and tend towards evoking similar attitude from my hearers. The question as to whether ethical statements are true or false does not arise, since they do not make assertions. It follows from the theory of emotivism that if someone says that cheating is bad and another person says that cheating is very good, none of them is saying anything about cheating neither do they contradict one another, since each person is only describing his inner feelings or attitude towards cheating. A critical evaluation of emotivism as a theory shows that it is untenable. Moral statements cannot be explained as expressions of inner feelings that make no assertions about actions. The reasons for moral disagreements are also unsatisfactory. When a person says that killing is bad, he makes an assertion concerning the moral nature of the act of killing. Similarly, if another person comes up to say that killing is good, he has also made an assertion concerning the moral nature of the act of killing. These two assertions concerning the moral nature of the act of killing contradict each other and this gives rise to moral disputes. If one is right, the other must be wrong and vice versa. Both are objective moral statements by nature. Emotivism tries to reduce ethics or moral principles to subjectivism.

3.4 Prescriptivism

R.M. Hare is popularly associated with the theory of prescriptivism. In his two-classical works, *The Language of Morals* and *Freedom and Reason*, Hare argues that value judgements are “primarily prescriptive and intended to guide conduct”. In addition, “they are also descriptive and universalizable”. But two kinds of prescriptive statements exist. One is imperative, the other is evaluative. The difference between an imperative and an evaluative or moral statement is that an imperative is usually addressed to a particular person or a group of people, whereas an evaluative or moral statement is always universal. However, both are prescriptive. For instance, ‘do not commit adultery’ is an imperative statement and as such addressed to a particular person or group of persons. On the other hand, the evaluative or moral statement, ‘adultery is bad’, is not an imperative but entails imperative because it contains a command to refrain from adultery. There is no need for any imperative statement where there is an evaluative or moral statement because evaluative or moral statements entail imperative statements. The imperative that is entailed in an evaluative or moral statement is universal, prescriptive and descriptive in application. Therefore, the evaluative or moral statement, ‘adultery is bad’, entails the imperative that no one, including the speaker at that moment, should commit adultery. There is a link between evaluative or moral judgements and choices, for moral judgements are meant to guide human choices because they have a bearing on human conduct. One cannot make a moral judgement and at the same time go against it without involving oneself in self-contradiction. Moral principles

are guides to human conducts and actions as they are handed down from one generation to another through our different cultural backgrounds. However, each person is entitled to accept these moral principles by a free volition and internalize them as his own property. This is done in order to guard against unwarranted and unforeseen circumstances in the future, since no one knows what the future will bring. No one is sure what the future consequences of our actions will result to.

3.5 Subjectivism

Subjectivism is an ethical moral principle about the nature of moral judgements which holds that moral values are relative to individuals. There is no right or wrong per say. Subjectivism as a school of thought holds that there is no objective moral truth or facts anywhere. Moral rules depend on how we feel about it as individuals. For instance, to say, “murder is wrong”, cannot be objectively true. There is no right and there is no wrong. Right and wrong depend on how we feel about it. Moral judgements simply describe how we feel. To say that an act is “good”, is to say that we have a positive feeling about it and would encourage others to do same.

3.6 Objectivism

Objectivism is an ethical moral principle about the nature of moral judgements which holds that moral values are not relative to individuals. Objectivism holds that there are objective moral truth or facts and there are rational procedural tests for identifying them. Objectivism as a school of thought is a direct opposite of subjectivism. Objectivists believe that moral judgements are either true or false in just the same way that two plus two is equal to four in mathematics.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Define subjectivism and objectivism

4.0 CONCLUSION

This unit discussed the segment of analytic philosophy, which deals with the analysis of moral languages. The moral languages analyzed include; Intuitionism, Emotivism, Prescriptivism objectivism and subjectivism. They represent the views of Alfred Jules Ayer, Rudolf Carnap, Sir David William Ross, G.E. Moore, C.L. Stevenson and R.M. Hare as logical positivists. However, it is understandable that the interpretation of moral principles is subject to controversial analysis, as what constitutes moral principles to one might differ with others and this is why we have different

moral principles such as emotivism, intuitionism, prescriptivism and so on.

5.0 SUMMARY

- This segment of analytic philosophy deals with the analysis of moral languages.
- The moral languages analyzed include; Intuitionism, Emotivism, Prescriptivism, Subjectivism and Objectivism.
- It is necessary for human beings to behave in certain ways and avoid other ways that are inimical to his existence because he has a sense of morality.
- The interpretation of moral principles is subject to controversial analysis, as what constitutes moral principles to one might differ with others and this is where ethics or the science of morality runs a divided house.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Why is the interpretation of moral principles subject to controversial analysis?
2. Discuss the views of Sir David Ross and G. E. Moore concerning intuitionism.
3. What is prescriptivism?
4. Explain the concept of emotivism.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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MODULE 3 UNDERSTANDING THE ARGUMENTS OF EARLIER ANALYTIC PHILOSOPHERS

UNIT 1 THE ARGUMENTS OF G.E. MOORE (1873-1958)

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Learning Outcomes
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Moore's Defense of Common Sense
 - 3.2 Naturalistic Fallacy
 - 3.3 Evaluation of Moore's Argument
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit will introduce the students to the segment of analytic philosophy which deals with the philosophical arguments of George Edward Moore, popularly known as G.E. Moore and how it influenced the growth of analytic philosophy at its earliest stages.

2.0 INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- state the meaning of “common sense”, according to Moore
- explain what is meant by “naturalistic fallacy”
- discuss the underlying arguments of G.E. Moore's philosophy.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Moore's Defense of Common Sense

By “common sense”, Moore referred to the ordinary rational activity of human beings in which they are able to understand phenomena for what they are in simple language, without twisting its meaning with bogus and meaningless grammar. He defended a common-sense view of the world, insisting that ordinary persons who claimed that they knew and knew with certainty that tables, chairs or trees, existed were correct. They were correct because, they were using the word ‘know’ in its common, ordinary ways in making such a claim. Moore was upset by the way in which the British idealists violated common sense. The British idealists claimed that

particular physical objects are not real but are mere appearances, that nothing exist that is not related to a mind and that time is unreal. In reaction to the idealists, Moore asserted that the components of reality exist on their own independent of their relationship to minds, that time is real, and that things can be known irrespective of their relationship to anything else. In his response to the British idealists, Moore developed a new method for analyzing Philosophical questions and answers. He was convinced that our fundamental concepts and the linguistic meanings that express those concepts arise out of common sense and ordinary language. “Most Philosophical perplexities, he believed, result from philosophers using concepts and terms in peculiar ways”.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

What is common-sense according to G.E. Moore?

3.2 Naturalistic Fallacy

Naturalistic fallacy according to Moore, is a logical error that arises out of the attempt to reduce ethical claims to factual empirical claims. For instance, if we examine the concept of goodness, we will discover that “good” is an indefinable notion in the same sense that “yellow” cannot be given a purely verbal definition. Good is a property that cannot be reduced to any non-ethical natural quality such as pleasure or desirability, but can only be known through an intellectual intuition. Omoregbe (2005:113) captures this idea succinctly:

In his famous book, *Principia Ethica*, Moore says there are two central questions in ethics: (1) ‘What kinds of things ought to exist for their own sake? (2) ‘What kinds of actions ought to be performed? The answer to the first question is that things which ought to exist for their own sake are things that are intrinsically good, and the primary concern of ethics is to determine what is good. But ‘good’ cannot be defined because it is a simple notion, and simple notions are indefinable. Only complex notions can be defined. Simple notions can neither be analyzed nor defined.

Moore argues that the attempt to reduce ethical claims to factual, empirical claims commits a naturalistic fallacy. Moore’s persistent search for clarity and his analysis of the meanings of philosophical propositions provided a model for the analytic philosophers after him. Particularly, Moore’s appeal to ordinary language had an impact on the later stages of analytic philosophy’s development.

3.3 Evaluation of Moore’s Argument

Moore’s acceptance of common-sense realism, reasonable as it is, fails to acknowledge the fact that the process of corroborating the contents

inherent in our objective factual claims about anything real is potentially endless. The things we think of as actually existing in the world are always conceptualized as having features that transcend experience. To say of something that it is an “apple” or a “stone” is to become committed to claims about it that go beyond the data we have and even beyond those that we can ever obtain about it.

4.0 CONCLUSION

This unit discussed the philosophy of earlier analytic philosophers with particular reference to the philosophy of G.E. Moore. The views of Moore ranging from his common-sense realism to the idea of naturalistic fallacy were discussed and evaluated.

5.0 SUMMARY

- By “common sense”, Moore referred to the ordinary rational activity of human beings in which they are able to understand phenomena for what they are in simple language, without twisting its meaning with bogus and meaningless grammar.
- Naturalistic fallacy according to Moore, is a logical error that arises out of the attempt to reduce ethical claims to factual empirical claims.
- Moore’s acceptance of common-sense realism, reasonable as it is, fails to acknowledge the fact that the process of corroborating the contents inherent in our objective factual claims about anything real is potentially endless.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Explain the concept of naturalistic fallacy.
2. Discuss the main ideas of G.E. Moore’s philosophy.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

- Rescher, N. 1994. *Philosophical Standardism: An Empiricist Approach to Philosophical Methodology*, Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.
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UNIT 2 THE ARGUMENTS OF JOHN L. AUSTIN (1911-1960)

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Learning Outcomes
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 John L. Austin's Philosophical Method
 - 3.2 Analysis of Excuses
 - 3.3 How to Do Things with Words
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit will introduce you to the segment of analytic philosophy which deals with the philosophical arguments of John L. Austin and how it influenced the growth of analytic philosophy at its earliest stages.

2.0 INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOME

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- state why the analysis of ordinary language is important to philosophy
- describe the three distinguishable acts performed in 'speech acts
- discuss the underlying philosophical arguments of John L. Austin.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 John L. Austin's Philosophical Method

Austin believes that philosophy can make a positive contribution to the understanding of our language and concepts rather than simply serving as a therapy to our linguistic problems. In response to the question, "how many kinds of sentences are there?" Austin thinks that we can classify various forms of expression much as a botanist classifies various forms of flowers, producing an orderly array. He does not claim that the analysis of ordinary language is the only method that should be used in philosophy, but he insists that it is a useful one. Lawhead (2002:522) makes it clearer thus: "Ordinary language is not the last word: in principle it can everywhere be supplemented and improved upon and superseded. Only remember, it is the first word". He says the analysis of ordinary language is important to philosophy for the following reasons: (1) words are our

tools, and we should use clean tools. We should know what we mean and what we do not. (2) Since human speech has evolved over a long period of time, those that have endured are likely to be the most effective ones. (3) Linguistic analysis is not simply about words alone. Words and things must not be confused, for words can give us attention into the world of experience.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Explain Austin's view about philosophical method.

3.2 Analysis of Excuses

Austin's seminal essays; "A Plea for Excuses" and "Three Ways of Spilling Ink" gives us typical examples of the method of conceptual analysis. When we want to offer an excuse for an action performed that was unacceptable, we choose words such as, "inadvertently", "involuntarily", "accidentally", "unintentionally" and so on. Austin noticed that some words such as "voluntarily" and "involuntarily" come paired in both positive and negative forms but some others do not have these forms. However, contrary to their appearances, he says they are not true opposites. In "Three Ways of Spilling Ink", Austin describes a scene in which a young girl in school pours ink on the hair of the boy sitting in front of her. Did she spill the ink deliberately or on purpose or intentionally? One would think that these words are the same, but Austin shows that they are not. In this way, Austin shows the connections, the differences and subtle nuances among these words in our moral vocabulary.

3.3 How to Do Things with Words

In his classical work, *How to Do Things with Words*, Austin introduces what he calls "speech acts". In "speech acts", whenever someone says something, three distinguishable acts are performed. (1) The locutionary act, which is simply the act of uttering or writing a set of words with a certain meaning. (2) The illocutionary act, which is what a person intentionally does in performing the locutionary act, like warning, reporting, beating, ordering or suggesting. (3) The perlocutionary act, which is the actual response on the part of the listener the speaker hopes to bring about by performing the illocutionary act, such as, frighten, deceive, persuade and so on. As a result of Austin's research, speech act theory became fruitful and important to understanding language.

4.0 CONCLUSION

This unit discussed the philosophy of earlier analytic philosophers with particular reference to the philosophy of John L. Austin. The philosophical thoughts of Austin ranging from his philosophical method, analysis of excuses and how to do things with words were discussed.

5.0 SUMMARY

- Philosophy can make a positive contribution to the understanding of our language and concepts rather than simply serving as a therapy to our linguistic problems.
- Austin does not claim that the analysis of ordinary language is the only method that should be used in philosophy, but he insists that it is a useful one.
- The analysis of ordinary language is important to philosophy for three reasons: (1) words are tools, and we should use clean tools. (2) Human speech has evolved over a long period of time and those that have endured are likely to be the most effective ones. (3) Linguistic analysis is not simply about words alone, for words gives us attention into the world of experience.
- Some words such as “voluntarily” and “involuntarily” come paired in both positive and negative forms but some others do not have these forms. However, contrary to their appearances, they are not true opposites.
- There are connections, differences and subtle nuances among words in our moral vocabulary.
- In “speech acts”, whenever someone says something, three distinguishable acts are performed. (1) The locutionary act (2) The illocutionary act (3) The perlocutionary.
- Speech act theory is fruitful and important to understanding language.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Why is the analysis of ordinary language important to Philosophy?
2. What are the three distinguishable acts performed in speech acts?

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

Lawhead, W.F.2002. *The Voyage of Discovery: A Historical Introduction to Philosophy*, Second Edition, Canada: Wadsworth Thomson Learning.

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UNIT 3 THE ARGUMENTS OF LATER WITTGENSTEIN

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Learning Outcomes
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Language-Games
 - 3.2 Meaning and Use
 - 3.3 Forms of Life
 - 3.4 Ordinary Language versus Philosophical Language
 - 3.5 Philosophy as Therapy
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit will introduce you to the segment of analytic philosophy which deals with the philosophical arguments of later Wittgenstein and how it influenced the growth of analytic philosophy at its earliest stages.

2.0 INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- discuss what is meant by language-game
- identify differences between ordinary language and philosophical language
- discuss the underlying philosophical arguments of Later Wittgenstein
- explain how philosophy is a therapy that will cure philosophers of their linguistic perplexity.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Language-Games

In his second classical work, *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein devoted his argument to an attack upon his own previous work, *Philosophico-Logico Tractatus*, for its view of language. The *Tractatus* had assumed that there is one universal form of language, the form of language which consists of sentences picturing reality. In the *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein rejects this view as mistaken. We do use language to picture facts, but we also use language in many

other ways like, to give orders, to crack jokes, to pray, to greet people, to tell stories, to solve problems and so on. Lawyers use language differently from Doctors or Engineers. Each has a different kind of language with its own rules. Each is a different language-game played by its own rules. For any activity, the words and actions involved in it may be considered to be a language-game. Language-game is a technique that assumes that everyday language is learned analogously to the way in which certain games are learned, such as playing chess or basketball. This new view of language carries a new view of meaning. Words gain their meaning from how they are used in a language-game. He rejected his earlier notion in the *Tractatus* that a proposition is meaningful because it pictures reality. In his own words, Wittgenstein (1953:122) affirms that:

Language is a labyrinth of paths. You approach from one side and know your way about; you approach the same place from another side and no longer know your way about. Thus, the person who says, ‘everybody is basically selfish’, is aware of the fact that some people are motivated to act only in their own interest, and that some people are motivated to act so as to further the interest of others-yet he is inclined to describe both sets of people as ‘selfish’. In doing this, something has gone wrong with his way of describing these facts. The result is perplexity, because he is inclined to say both that such people are selfish and yet, in view of the obviously contrary facts, that they are not selfish. In the end, he does not know what to say.

The task of Philosophy is to analyze language in order to discover the many language-games, and their rules for using words, and to remove the puzzles which arise when the rules of a language-game are misused.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

What is a language-game?

3.2 Meaning and Use

Contrary to his earlier views in the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein understood that words and sentences do not have meanings all by themselves, for they have the meaning we give to them. They are intimately tied to human purposes and activities, and in this context, they have their life. “The nature of language is such that it can be understood as it is used in practice. It is a waste of time trying to look for the essence of language as a metaphysical concept. Language is not something metaphysical but a concrete activity” (Omeregbe, 2005:123). The meaning of a word is its use in a language. Language is like an ancient city or a tool in a tool-box.

3.3 Forms of Life

Wittgenstein's idea in the *Tractatus* shows language as an autonomous system of symbols in which the speaker is mysteriously absent. But in the *Philosophical Investigations*, he emphasized that speaking is a kind of activity that takes place within the broader, concrete circumstances of human life. "To imagine a language means to imagine a form of life", he says. Our ways of speaking are intimately tied into the common human practices, needs, interests, goals and understanding we seem to have.

3.4 Ordinary Language versus Philosophical Language

Wittgenstein's later Philosophy makes a distinction between ordinary use of language and its philosophical uses. Ordinary use of language is the everyday practice of using language to communicate the state of affairs, express opinions or describe events or activities in the most common ways they are. But philosophical language is the language created by philosophers against which our ordinary language is to be judged. It is the technical ways in which philosophers analyze and use ordinary terms. This technical way of using language creates pseudo-problems because it takes language out of the practical contexts where it is functioning well. It makes language to go "on holiday". "Philosophical problems arise when language goes on holiday".

3.5 Philosophy as Therapy

The aim of Wittgenstein's later philosophy is to show mainly that philosophy is a therapy. It is a therapy to rid philosophy of conceptual confusion by diagnosing its causes. "There is not a philosophical method, though there are methods like different therapies", he says. However, Wittgenstein thinks that the main method to use so as to achieve this aim is the use of language-games. This method assumes that everyday language is learned the way in which certain games are learned. The rules we learn for the proper employment of certain terms have much the same function as the rules we learn to play a game like football or chess.

4.0 CONCLUSION

This unit discussed the philosophy of earlier analytic philosophers with particular reference to the philosophy of later Wittgenstein. The philosophical thoughts of Ludwig Wittgenstein as recorded in his *Philosophical Investigations* were discussed. These ranges from his idea of language-games, the meaning and use of language, language as a form of life, the difference between philosophical language and ordinary language to philosophy as a therapy that would cure philosophers of their linguistic problems.

5.0 SUMMARY

- Language-game is a technique that assumes that everyday language is learned analogously to the way in which certain games are learned, such as playing chess or basketball.
- Words gain their meaning from how they are used in a language-game.
- The task of Philosophy is to analyze language in order to discover the many language-games, and their rules for using words, and to remove the puzzles which arise when the rules of a language-game are misused.
- Wittgenstein understood that words and sentences do not have meanings all by themselves, for they have the meaning we give to them.
- The meaning of a word is its use in a language
- Our ways of speaking are intimately tied into the common human practices, needs, interests, goals and understanding we seem to have.
- Ordinary use of language is the everyday practice of using language to communicate the state of affairs, express opinions or describe events or activities in the most common ways they are. But philosophical language is the language created by philosophers against which our ordinary language is to be judged.
- The aim of Wittgenstein's later philosophy is to show mainly that philosophy is a therapy. It is a therapy to rid philosophy of conceptual confusion by diagnosing its causes.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Differentiate between ordinary language and philosophical language.
2. How is philosophy a therapy to cure philosophers of their linguistic problems?

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

Lawhead, W.F.2002. *The Voyage of Discovery: A Historical Introduction to Philosophy*, Second Edition, Canada: Wadsworth Thomson Learning.

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UNIT 4 THE COMMON NATURE OF THEIR ARGUMENTS

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Learning Outcomes
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 The Similarity and Difference in the Views of the Early Analytic Philosophers
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit will introduce you to the common nature of the arguments of earlier analytic philosophers and how it influenced the growth of analytic philosophy at its earliest stages.

2.0 INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- list the similarity between the philosophical views of G.E. Moore, John L. Austin and the later Wittgenstein
- identify the differences, if any, between the philosophical views of G.E. Moore, John L. Austin and the later Wittgenstein
- analyse their different philosophies.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 The Similarity and Difference in the Views of the Early Analytic Philosophers

The trio of G.E. Moore, John Austin and the later Wittgenstein represents the ordinary language school in the history of the early stages of analytic philosophy. They share the common belief that the problems of philosophy are only linguistic problems. “Philosophical problems are not genuine problems but only the nonsense that results from not knowing how to handle language”. Moore defended a common-sense view of the world, insisting that ordinary persons who claimed that they knew and knew with certainty that tables, chairs or trees, existed were correct. They were correct because, they were using the word ‘know’ in its common, ordinary ways in making such a claim. Wittgenstein insisted that philosophy’s role is analytic. The role is to analyze language in order to

discover the many language games, and their rules for using words, and to remove the puzzles, which arise when the rules of a language-game are misused. “When one sticks to the rules, no problems would arise”, he concluded. Austin recommended the meticulous and subtle investigation of how words are used by ordinary speakers in order to understand their differences in meaning. He insisted, “there are three ways of spilling ink”, either deliberately, purposely or intentionally and these three are not the same, but can only be known by careful investigation.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

What is the similarity between the views of the early analytic Philosophers?

4.0 CONCLUSION

This unit discussed the similarity and difference between the views of the early analytic philosophers with particular reference to the philosophy of G.E. Moore, John L. Austin and the later Wittgenstein.

5.0 SUMMARY

- The trio of G.E. Moore, John Austin and the later Wittgenstein represents the ordinary language school in the history of the early stages of analytic philosophy.
- They share the common belief that the problems of philosophy are only linguistic problems.
- They differ in their choice of language of expression but shared similar views.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Explain the difference, if any, between their philosophical viewpoints.
2. What school of philosophy do they represent in the history of the early analytic philosophy?

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

Lavine, T.Z.1984. *From Socrates to Sartre: The Philosophic Quest*, New York: Bantam Books.

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MODULE 4 UNDERSTANDING THE ARGUMENTS OF CONTEMPORARY ANALYTIC PHILOSOPHERS

UNIT 1 THE ARGUMENTS OF BERTRAND RUSSELL AND ALFRED NORTH-WHITEHEAD

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Learning Outcomes
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Bertrand Russell and Alfred North-Whitehead on Logical Atomism
 - 3.2 The New Logic: The Logic of Propositions
 - 3.3 Atomic and Molecular Propositions
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit will introduce you to the arguments of contemporary analytic philosophers with particular reference to the philosophical views of Bertrand Russell and Alfred North-Whitehead, and how they influenced the growth of contemporary analytic philosophy.

2.0 INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this unit, students should be able to:

- discuss the philosophical viewpoints of Bertrand Russell and Alfred North-Whitehead on logical atomism
- state the meaning of atomic and molecular propositions
- explain the differences between atomic and molecular propositions.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Bertrand Russell and Alfred North-Whitehead on Logical Atomism

The main tenets of logical atomism are as follows:

1. Philosophy is a genuine activity, just as science is a genuine activity.
2. Unlike science, philosophy does not discover new facts for us.
3. The knowledge we acquire through the study of philosophy is not knowledge of new facts.
4. Philosophy tells us about the structure of the world, how its basic ingredients are constructed.
5. Philosophy tells us that the world is composed of a set of atomic facts, i.e., objects and their properties.

We summarised the main tenets of logical atomism as shown above because; it is difficult for the non-specialist to understand, without first knowing the essentials of symbolic or mathematical logic. It is the philosophy of mathematical logic of *Principia Mathematica* published in three volumes by Bertrand Russell and Alfred North Whitehead between 1910 and 1913.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

What is the difference between philosophy and science according to Russell and Whitehead?

3.2 The New Logic: The Logic of Propositions

Aristotle wrote the final words on logic before the publication of *Principia Mathematica* in 1910. Russell and Whitehead developed a new type of logic, which was much broader in scope than Aristotelian logic. Aristotelian logic was a logic of classes, while Russell and White-Head's logic was a logic of propositions. Russell and Whitehead's *Principia Mathematica* became important to philosophy for two reasons: First, it argued that mathematics thought to be a distinct discipline, is in fact part of logic. Second, that everyday language or natural language has a structure similar to that of *Principia Mathematica*. For these reasons, mathematical logic would provide philosophy with the tool of razor-sharpness for clarifying the meaning of sentences of any natural language.

3.3 Atomic and Molecular Propositions

Russell and Whitehead distinguished between atomic propositions and molecular propositions. An atomic proposition is a proposition, which have no parts, which are themselves, propositions. Example: James is human, is an atomic proposition, since its parts are individual words, not propositions. On the contrary, Philip and Victoria are going to the Alter, is a molecular proposition. It is a complex proposition containing two parts, each of which is itself a proposition, i.e. (a) Philip is going to the Alter, and (b) Victoria is going to the Alter. A molecular proposition is built up out of atomic propositions by the use of connecting words, such as 'and', 'or', and 'if...then'. By breaking down molecular propositions into its constituent atomic propositions, we know their meaning. How do we analyze the meaning of an atomic proposition? Every atomic proposition is always of the subject-predicate form according to Russell and Whitehead. For instance, 'John is brilliant', can be analyzed into a subject term, which is a proper noun or proper name, 'John', and into a predicate term, such as 'is brilliant'. The subject term in such a case always refers to an individual thing, in this case the person, 'John' and the predicate term refers to some characteristic or 'property' which the subject term possesses, in this case the characteristic of being brilliant. When an atomic proposition is true, the subject term denotes an individual thing or object, and the predicate term refers to some characteristic of this thing or object. Atomic propositions give us information about the real world. It informs us that the world is made up of facts, and that all such facts are atomic in nature, they can be described by an atomic proposition. There are no molecular facts in nature, since every molecular proposition can be reduced to a set of atomic propositions, plus the logical connectives. The ultimate constituents of the world are facts, and a fact is made up of an individual thing with its individual characteristics. Therefore, the function of philosophy is to give us information about the world. The analytic views of Russell and Whitehead eventually became a boost to the growth of contemporary analytic philosophy as it attracted the attention of other analytic philosophers to respond to these views, especially the attention of Ludwig Wittgenstein in particular and members of the Vienna Circle in general.

4.0 CONCLUSION

This unit introduced the students to the philosophical viewpoints of Bertrand Russell and Alfred North-Whitehead as contemporary analytic philosophers. Particularly, it discussed their views on logical atomism and the different kinds of propositions.

5.0 SUMMARY

- Philosophy is a genuine activity, just as science is a genuine activity. However, unlike science, philosophy does not discover new facts.
- Philosophy tells us that the world is composed of a set of atomic facts, i.e., objects and their properties.
- Aristotelian logic was a logic of classes, while Russell and White-Head's logic was a logic of propositions.
- Mathematical logic would provide philosophy with the tool of razor-sharpness for clarifying the meaning of sentences of any natural language.
- Atomic proposition is a proposition, which have no parts, which are themselves, propositions.
- A molecular proposition is a complex proposition containing two parts, each of which is itself a proposition.
- A molecular proposition is built up out of atomic propositions by the use of connecting words.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Who wrote the final word on logic before the publication of *Principia Mathematica*?
2. Mention two reasons why *Principia Mathematica* became important to philosophy?
3. What is the difference between atomic and molecular propositions?

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

Lavine, T.Z.1984. *From Socrates to Sartre: The Philosophic Quest*, New York: Bantam Books.

Omoregbe, J.I.2005. *A Simplified History of Western Philosophy: Contemporary Philosophy Vol.3*, Lagos: Joja Educational Research and Publishers Limited.

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UNIT 2 THE ARGUMENTS OF THE VIENNA CIRCLE

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Learning Outcomes
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 The Vienna Circle
 - 3.2 Analytic and Synthetic Propositions
 - 3.3 The Verification Principle
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit will introduce you to the arguments of contemporary analytic philosophers with particular reference to the philosophical views of members of the Vienna Circle and how they influenced the growth of contemporary analytic philosophy.

2.0 INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- describe the philosophical viewpoints of the Vienna Circle
- state the meaning of atomic and molecular propositions
- explain the differences between atomic and molecular propositions.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 The Vienna Circle

The members of the Vienna Circle were a group of philosophically minded scientists and scientifically minded philosophers who came together in the early 1920s at a conference in Vienna, Austria to form a movement aimed at rebuilding philosophy on a sound logical and scientific foundation. They derived inspiration from the positivism of Auguste Comte, as well as the famous statement of David Hume, which says:

When we run over libraries, persuaded of these principles, what havoc must we make? If we take in our hand any volume; of divinity or school metaphysics, for instance; let us ask, does it contain any abstract reasoning concerning quantity or number? No. Does it contain any

experimental reasoning concerning matter of fact and existence? No. Commit it then to the flames: for it can contain nothing but sophistry and illusion. (Hume, 1952:12).

Following Hume's influence and persuasive oratory, the members of the Vienna Circle believed that all genuine knowledge falls within the two realms of science, i.e., the formal sciences of logic and mathematics and the empirical sciences. The members of the Vienna circle include; Moritz Schlick, Hans Hahn, Friedrich Waismann, Herbert Feigl, Otto Neurath and Rudolf Carnap. They held informal seminars and closely studied the writings of Wittgenstein. They agreed that philosophy is not a theory but an activity. According to them, Philosophy does not produce propositions which are true or false; it merely clarifies the meaning of statements, showing some to be scientific, some to be mathematical and some to be nonsensical.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

List the names of members of the Vienna circle

3.2 Analytic and Synthetic Propositions

The Vienna Circle were of the opinion that synthetic propositions are propositions, which require some kind of empirical investigation for their confirmation. On the other hand, analytic propositions are propositions, which does not require any empirical investigation for their confirmation. The truth of analytic propositions follows from their meaning. They are of the view that every significant proposition must be either analytic or synthetic, but none can be both. All analytic propositions belong to formal logic. They are true in virtue of their formal structure. All synthetic propositions are the propositions of science. They require empirical investigation before their truth can be established. Analytic propositions have the meaning of their predicate term contained in the subject term. Example; All husbands are married men. Hence, one can verify such statement by looking at the words they contain. Synthetic propositions are so-called because they result from joining or making a synthesis of two things that are not related. Example; the television is coloured. Analytic propositions do not refer to the world in the manner in which synthetic propositions do. Analytic propositions are trivial while synthetic propositions are informative.

3.3 The Verification Principle

The verification principle states that a factual statement is meaningful if it is verifiable in experience. However, the method of its verification determines the meaning of a factual statement. Example; if I claim that,

“it is raining outside”, this claim, whether true or false is meaningful because I can specify concrete experiences that would verify it. The Vienna Circle continually modified the verification principle in the attempt to remedy problems as they arose. They did not try to decide whether a given statement about the world is true or not, for this is the task of science. The role of philosophy is to decide what it means to say that a statement has cognitive meaning. A cognitively meaningful statement is one that provides information about the world and this information must be verifiable in principle for it to be meaningful. It is verifiable in principle by experience conclusively or weakly. The conclusion of the logical positivists is that philosophy cannot be a source of truth. Knowledge comes to us only through the formal propositions of mathematics and logic or through the empirically verified observations of science. Their concern is with logical analysis. The function of logical analysis is to take any problem, show which questions in it are answerable to mathematical or logical reasoning, and which questions are answerable by some sort of empirical investigation. It is not the function of philosophers to answer these questions. It is their function to clarify the meaning of the questions so that one will know what sort of questions they are, and how to proceed to answer them. However, the logical positivists reluctantly granted that philosophers as caretakers of language could contribute. Physics is the most fully grounded of all sciences and Philosophers could use their logical techniques to show how all the sciences fits into it. What made the logical positivists unique in the history of philosophy was that, they did not say metaphysical statements are false or unfounded. They insisted, all metaphysical statements, in principle, are nonsensical. They are a form of disguised nonsense and are empty of cognitive content.

4.0 CONCLUSION

This unit discussed the views of members of the Vienna Circle as an important segment of contemporary analytic philosophy. The Vienna Circle represents the views of Moritz Schlick, Hans Hahn, Friedrich Waismann, Herbert Feigl, Otto Neurath and Rudolf Carnap. They agreed that philosophy is not a theory but an activity. According to them, Philosophy does not produce propositions which are true or false; it merely clarifies the meaning of statements, showing some to be scientific, some to be mathematical and some to be nonsensical.

5.0 SUMMARY

- The members of the Vienna Circle include; Moritz Schlick, Hans Hahn, Friedrich Waismann, Herbert Feigl, Otto Neurath and Rudolf Carnap.

- Philosophy does not produce propositions which are true or false; it merely clarifies the meaning of statements, showing some to be scientific, some to be mathematical and some to be nonsensical
- Synthetic propositions are propositions, which require some kind of empirical investigation for their confirmation. Analytic propositions are propositions, which does not require any empirical investigation for their confirmation.
- The verification principle states that a factual statement is meaningful if it is verifiable in experience.
- A cognitively meaningful statement is one that provides information about the world and this information must be verifiable in principle to be meaningful.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. What are their main philosophical viewpoints?
2. What are analytic and synthetic propositions? Give examples.
3. State the verification principle.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

Hume, D. 1952. *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, Section 12, Part3, New York: Dover Publications.

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UNIT 3 THE ARGUMENTS OF EARLY WITTGENSTEIN

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Learning Outcomes
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 The Task of the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*
 - 3.2 The Picture Theory of Language
 - 3.3 Wittgenstein succumbs to Mysticism and Metaphysics
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit will introduce you to the arguments of contemporary analytic philosophers with particular reference to the philosophical views of the early Wittgenstein and how it influenced the growth of contemporary analytic philosophy.

2.0 INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- discuss the philosophical task of the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*
- describe Wittgenstein's transformation from logic to mysticism and metaphysics
- explain the philosophical viewpoints of the early Wittgenstein.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 The Task of the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*

Logical atomism, which is the philosophy of Russell and Whitehead recorded in the *Principia Mathematica*, received a very careful attention in the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, published in 1922 by Wittgenstein. The task of the *Tractatus* was triple in nature. The first task was to repudiate traditional metaphysics but it ended up being metaphysical. The second task was to reduce language to a series of elementary propositions that would correspond with observable facts. The third was to develop a theory of language that would establish the boundaries of meaning. Wittgenstein believes that whatever can be thought can be spoken. Hence, it follows that the limits of thought can be

set out by determining the limits of language, and this will give us the limits of what can be intelligible. This was exactly what he tried to do with the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Outline the triple task of the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*

3.2 The Picture Theory of Language

According to Wittgenstein, the ideal language pictured or mirrored the world, just as a map mirror it. If we wish to discover whether Lagos is West of Abuja in Nigeria, we can do so by referring to a map, since a map in a sense, would picture the terrain. It pictures it because there is identity of structure between the points on the map and the points on the ground. A perfect language is like a map. It pictures the structure of reality. For every proper name in the language, there is a corresponding entity, and for every predicate, a corresponding property. The ideal language therefore gives us the structure of facts, since facts are composed of objects and their properties.

3.3 Wittgenstein succumbs to Mysticism and Metaphysics

Wittgenstein held that philosophy is a genuine activity, just as science is. However, unlike science, philosophy does not discover new facts for us. The knowledge we acquire through the study of philosophy is not the knowledge of new facts. Rather, philosophy tells us about the structure of the world, how its basic ingredients are constructed. It tells us that the world is composed of a set of atomic facts. As can be seen from the above analysis, Wittgenstein's early philosophy was a metaphysical system in the traditional sense. It contends that philosophy is an activity which gives us knowledge of the world, different from the kind of knowledge which science gives. Philosophy tells us that the world is composed of a set of atomic facts. Atomic facts, if it exists, must be transcendental and an invisible reality. Hence, Wittgenstein inadvertently turns to metaphysics. In a similar way, Wittgenstein claims that within the boundary of meaningful language is nothing but the propositions of science. However, what lies beyond or outside the boundaries of meaningful language? It must be something inexpressible or mystical. "There are, indeed, things that cannot be put into words. They make themselves manifest. They are what is mystical" (cited by Lawhead, 2002:513).

4.0 CONCLUSION

This unit discussed the views of the early Wittgenstein as an important aspect of analytic philosophy. These views range from the idea of the *Tractatus*, the picture theory of language to Wittgenstein's descent into mysticism and metaphysics.

5.0 SUMMARY

- The task of the *Tractatus* was triple in nature.
- Wittgenstein believes that whatever can be thought can be spoken. Hence, it follows that the limits of thought can be set out by determining the limits of language, and this will give us the limits of what can be intelligible.
- According to Wittgenstein, the ideal language pictured or mirrored the world, just as a map mirrors it.
- For every proper name in the language, there is a corresponding entity, and for every predicate, a corresponding property.
- Wittgenstein's early philosophy was a metaphysical system in the traditional sense.
- Wittgenstein claims that within the boundary of meaningful language is nothing but the propositions of science. However, what lies beyond or outside the boundaries of meaningful language? It must be something inexpressible or mystical.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Explain the picture theory of language.
2. How did Wittgenstein succumb to mysticism and metaphysics?

7.0 References/Further Reading

- Popkin, R.H and Stroll, A.1993. *Philosophy Made Simple*, Third Edition, Oxford: Elsevier Limited.
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UNIT 4 THE ARGUMENTS OF A.J. AYER

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Learning Outcomes
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Attack on Metaphysics
 - 3.2 The Verification Method
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit will introduce you to the arguments of contemporary analytic philosophers with particular reference to the philosophical views of Alfred Jules Ayer, popularly known as A.J. Ayer and how it influenced the growth of contemporary analytic philosophy.

2.0 INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- discuss the philosophical arguments of A.J. Ayer
- explain the difference between practical verifiability and verifiability in principle
- analyse Ayer's position against metaphysics.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Attack on Metaphysics

In his famous work, *Language, Truth and Logic*, published in 1946, Ayer began the preliminary pages with an attack on metaphysics. "We may begin by criticizing the metaphysical thesis that philosophy affords us knowledge of a reality transcending the world of science and common sense". He says that one way of attacking a metaphysician who claimed to have knowledge of a reality which transcended the phenomenal world would be to enquire from what premises his propositions were deduced. As long as his propositions are deduced from empirical premises, which is the only possibility, he would never arrive at any transcendental knowledge or any super-empirical reality, implying that metaphysics is impossible. However, Ayer accepted that one cannot overthrow a system of transcendent metaphysics by a mere criticism of it. Hence, he resolved

to attack directly the nature of the actual statements which comprise this metaphysics. “We shall maintain that no statement which refers to a “reality” transcending the limits of all possible sense experience can possibly have any literal significance; from which it must follow that the labours of those who have striven to describe such a reality have all been devoted to the production of nonsense”. A. J. Ayer’s attack on metaphysics is not surprising at all, for he belonged to the logical positivist school, which relies on the concept of verifiability to accept any proposition as either true or false, hence, his attack on traditional metaphysics. “Our charge against the metaphysician is not that he attempts to employ the understanding in a field where it cannot profitably venture, but that he produces sentences which fail to conform to the conditions under which alone a sentence can be literally significant”.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Why did A.J. Ayer choose to attack metaphysics?

3.2 The Verification Method

Ayer held that the only acceptable method of doing philosophy is the method of verification. “The criterion which we use to test the genuineness of apparent statements of fact is the criterion of verifiability”, he says. But at what point or under what conditions can a proposition be said to be verified? Ayer answers that “a proposition is said to be verified if, and only if, a person knows what observations would lead him, under certain conditions, to accept the proposition as being true or reject it as being false”. He made a distinction between practical verifiability and verifiability in principle. Practical verifiability is a kind of verifiability confirmed by observation. On the other hand, verifiability in principle is a situation where we have propositions concerning matters of fact, which we could not verify even if we choose to, because we lack the practical means of placing ourselves in the situation where the right observations could be made. Furthermore, Ayer made another distinction between what he calls the “strong” and “weak” sense of the term verifiable. A proposition is said to be verifiable, in the strong sense of the term, if, and only if, its truth could be conclusively established in experience. It is verifiable in the weak sense, if it is possible for experience to render it probable.

4.0 CONCLUSION

This unit discussed the views of Alfred Jules Ayer as an important aspect of contemporary analytic philosophy. These views ranges from his attack on metaphysics to the verifiability principle.

5.0 SUMMARY

- Ayer argues that one way of attacking a metaphysician who claimed to have knowledge of a reality which transcended the phenomenal world would be to enquire from what premises his propositions were deduced.
- As long as his propositions are deduced from empirical premises, which is the only possibility, he would never arrive at any transcendental knowledge or any super-empirical reality, implying that metaphysics is impossible.
- A. J. Ayer's attack on metaphysics is not surprising at all, for he belonged to the logical positivist school which relies on the concept of verifiability to accept any proposition as either true or false.
- Ayer held that the only acceptable method of doing philosophy is the method of verification.
- A proposition is said to be verified if, and only if, a person knows what observations would lead him, under certain conditions, to accept the proposition as being true or reject it as being false.
- Practical verifiability is a kind of verifiability confirmed by observation. Verifiability in principle is a situation where we have propositions concerning matters of fact, which we could not verify even if we choose to, because we lack the practical means of placing ourselves in the situation where the right observations could be made.
- A proposition is said to be verifiable, in the strong sense of the term, if, and only if, its truth could be conclusively established in experience. It is verifiable in the weak sense, if it is possible for experience to render it probable.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. What was Ayer's charge against the metaphysicians?
2. Under what conditions can a proposition be said to be verified?
3. Distinguish between practical verifiability and verifiability in principle.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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UNIT 5 THE ARGUMENTS OF RUDOLPH CARNAP (1891-1970)

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Learning Outcomes
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Carnap on the Verification Method
 - 3.2 Attack against Metaphysics
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit will introduce you to the arguments of contemporary analytic philosophers with particular reference to the philosophical views of Rudolph Carnap and how it influenced the growth of contemporary analytic philosophy.

2.0 INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- discuss the philosophical arguments of Rudolph Carnap
- explain Carnap's views on the verifiability method
- state Carnap's criticism against metaphysics.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Carnap on the Verification Method

Carnap held that one of the principal tasks of logical analysis of any proposition is to discover the method of verification of that proposition, that is, how we can be certain about the truth or falsity of that proposition. For this reason, he believes that there are two methods of verification, direct verification and indirect verification. Direct verification is involved when a proposition asserts something about a perception I am having, and this proposition is effectively tested by my present perception. Propositions which cannot be verified directly involves indirect verification. Indirect verification gives rise to hypotheses, since there is always a possibility of finding in the future a negative instance. Hence, it does not guarantee absolute certainty. The two forms of verification, direct and indirect verification, are central to the scientific method.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Explain the two methods of verification according to Carnap

3.2 Attack against Metaphysics

Rudolph Carnap's virile and virulent attack on metaphysics is simply second to David Hume's attack on metaphysics in character and eloquence. Carnap says that "metaphysical propositions are neither true nor false, because they assert nothing, contain neither knowledge nor error, lie completely outside the field of knowledge, of theory, outside the discussion of truth or falsehood" (Stumpf, 1989:454). When logical analysis is applied to metaphysics, he further alleged, metaphysical propositions are not verifiable. If an attempt is made at verification, the result always turns out negative. Metaphysics has a deceptive character, it gives the illusion of knowledge without actually giving any knowledge, and Carnap says, "this is why we reject it". Normative ethics and value judgements in general, belong to the region of metaphysics, but psychology belongs to the realm of the empirical sciences such as biology and chemistry. He also distinguished between the material and formal modes of language. He was of the view that the material mode is what is used in philosophy that results to ambiguities and confusion.

4.0 CONCLUSION

This unit discussed the views of Rudolph Carnap as an important aspect of contemporary analytic philosophy. His views ranges from the verifiability method to his virulent attack on metaphysics.

5.0 SUMMARY

- One of the principal tasks of logical analysis of any proposition is to discover the method of verification of that proposition, that is, how we can be certain about the truth or falsity of that proposition.
- There are two methods of verification, direct verification and indirect verification.
- The two forms of verification, direct and indirect verification, are central to the scientific method.
- When logical analysis is applied to metaphysics, metaphysical propositions are not verifiable. If an attempt is made at verification, the result always turns out negative.
- Metaphysics has a deceptive character; it gives the illusion of knowledge without actually giving any knowledge.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Analyze Carnap's attack against metaphysics.
2. Why did Carnap reject metaphysics?

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

Stumpf, S.E. 1989. *Philosophy, History and Problems*, Fourth Edition, New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc.

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UNIT 6 THE ARGUMENTS OF W.V.O QUINE

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Learning Outcomes
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Influences upon Quine's Philosophy and His Philosophical Impacts on Contemporary Analytic Philosophy
 - 3.2 Quine's Naturalism
 - 3.3 Analytic and Synthetic Propositions
 - 3.4 Attack on the Verification Principle
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit will introduce you to the arguments of contemporary analytic philosophers with particular reference to the philosophical views of W.V.O Quine and how it influenced the growth of contemporary analytic philosophy.

2.0 INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOME

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- discuss the philosophical arguments of W.V.O. Quine
- explain the concept of Quine's naturalism
- explain why Quine challenged the distinction between analytic and synthetic truths.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Influences upon Quine's Philosophy and His Philosophical Impacts on Contemporary Analytic Philosophy

There are three major influences upon Quine's philosophical thoughts and ideas. These include; the logical atomism of Bertrand Russell, the positivism of Rudolph Carnap and the pragmatism of Dewey and James. These philosophies are blended in the unity of the thoughts of W.V.O. Quine. The collective opinion from the diverse views of these philosophies contained in Quine's idea is that, when done correctly, philosophy is just an extension or sub-discipline of science. Quine himself

has also influenced contemporary analytic philosophy in many ways. One of the most prominent influences is in the philosophy of mind. First, Hilary Putnam's view in *Representation and Reality* (1989), that "the way to solve philosophical problems is to construct a better scientific picture of the world" (Putnam, 1989:107) is traceable to Quine. Putnam, the founder of 'functionalism', a theory of the human mind which assumes that the human mind works like a computer system, created this form of materialism on the notion that computer science or the cognitive sciences, will give us a true picture of the human mind. This idea has its origin in Quine's philosophical thought. Quine also has another major influence in the philosophical works of Donald Davidson, who joins Quine in rejecting Kant's transcendental idealism. Davidson, in a paper titled, "On the Very Idea of a Conceptual Scheme" (1974), argues that Kant's concepts, which assumes that the physical world can be contrasted with the mental, and that mental activity conditions the human apprehension of the world is to be rejected because, it rests on a fallacious distinction. The world is simply as science describes it. Both the mental and the physical spaces are all subject to scientific investigations.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

What are the three major influences upon Quine's philosophical ideas?

3.2 Quine's Naturalism

Quine's idea that science and only science alone, is the key to reality, and that philosophy, when done correctly, is an extension of science is called Quine's naturalism. It is the view that the exploration of nature, including human nature, is properly done only by science.

3.3 Analytic and Synthetic Propositions

Quine rejected and challenged the distinction between analytic and synthetic propositions and held that no clear distinction exists between them. No clear boundary has been drawn. To even think that there is a distinction between analytic and synthetic propositions is an unempirical dogma of empiricists or just a metaphysical article of faith. Quine challenged this view that there is a distinction of kind between analytic and synthetic propositions. He held the contrary opinion that propositions do not differ in kind but in degree, and that depending on how future experience judges matters, a proposition can be given up or revised. No proposition no matter how sound is immune to revision.

3.4 Attack on the Verification Principle

Quine held the view that the verification principle, is after all, unverifiable in itself. This is because, its greatest problem was how to answer the question, what is verification? If we say that verification means observation confirmed through sensory experience, a further question arises, who's experienced is the observation necessary to be confirmed? Why must the criterion of meaning be centered on sense experience? It is obvious that there is no way to answer the question on the verification principle without a relapse into solipsism.

4.0 CONCLUSION

This unit discussed the views of W.V.O. Quine as an important aspect of contemporary analytic philosophy. These views ranges from the influences upon his philosophy and his philosophical impacts on contemporary analytic philosophers, Quine's naturalism, the distinction between analytic and synthetic propositions to his attack on the verification principle.

5.0 SUMMARY

- There are three major influences upon Quine's philosophical thoughts and ideas. These include; the logical atomism of Bertrand Russell, the positivism of Rudolph Carnap and the pragmatism of Dewey and James.
- Quine himself has also influenced contemporary analytic philosophy in many ways. One of the most prominent influences is in the philosophy of mind.
- Quine's idea that science and only science alone, is the key to reality, and that philosophy, when done correctly, is an extension of science is called Quine's naturalism.
- Quine rejected and challenged the distinction between analytic and synthetic propositions and held that no clear distinction exists between them.
- No proposition no matter how sound is immune to revision.
- Quine held the view that the verification principle, is after all, unverifiable in itself. This is because, its greatest problem was how to answer the question, what is verification?

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Define Quine's naturalism.
2. What was Quine's view regarding the verification principle?

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

Stumpf, S.E. 1989. *Philosophy, History and Problems*, Fourth Edition, New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc.

Popkin, R.H and Stroll, A.1993. *Philosophy Made Simple*, Third Edition, Oxford: Elsevier Limited.

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UNIT 7 THE ARGUMENTS OF GILBERT RYLE

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Learning Outcomes
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Descartes's Myth: The Ghost in the Machine
 - 3.2 The Category-Mistake
 - 3.3 Analysis of Mental Terms
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit will introduce you to the arguments of contemporary analytic philosophers with particular reference to the philosophical views of Gilbert Ryle and how it influenced the growth of contemporary analytic philosophy.

2.0 INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- discuss the philosophical arguments of Gilbert Ryle
- explain the concept of category mistakes
- discuss the concept of Ghost in the machine.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Descartes's Myth: The Ghost in the Machine

Believing so much in the truth of Wittgenstein's assertion that "a proper analysis of the terminology of a problem area in philosophy will show that what initially appeared to be a problem was only a pseudo-problem", Ryle used the method of philosophical analysis to deal with the mind-body problem. This was the subject of discourse in *The Concept of Mind* (1949) published by Ryle. Ryle argues that the "official doctrine" or "Descartes myth", as he chooses to call it, contradicts virtually everything we know about minds. In the simplest form, the "official doctrine" says that every human being has a mind and a body that are coordinated. However, upon the death of the body, the mind may continue to exist and exert its powers. Ryle contends that the mind-body theory is not only incorrect, but it also leads to many other serious errors as one elaborates

the implications. It follows from this theory that each person has two collateral histories, one consisting of the bodily events, and the other from the mind events. But the human body is in space and governed by physical laws, minds do not exist in space and are not governed by physical laws. Bodily life is observable but the activities of the mind are not observable and are therefore private. A serious problem is encountered here since we are required to say that the contrast between the public character of the body and the private status of the mind is that the body is external and the mind is internal. It is therefore erroneous to say that the mind is in the body. It would imply that there is a ghost in the machine.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

How can we make a category-mistake?

3.2 The Category-Mistake

What Ryle thinks is wrong with the “official doctrine” of the ghost in the machine is that, the very principle upon which the theory rest is false. It is not even a series of particular mistakes, but a huge mistake of a particular kind which he calls a “category-mistake”. The mistake consists in representing the facts of mental life as if they belonged to the same logical category, whereas they belonged to separate logical categories. To show what is meant by a category mistake, Ryle describes the imaginary visit of a foreigner to Oxford University for the very first time. After seeing the playing fields, museums, scientific laboratories, and the various colleges. Having seen these various places, the visitor turns back to ask; but where is the University? The question assumes that the University is still another institution different from what he has seen. Ryle insists that Descartes is the major culprit in this category-mistake.

3.3 Analysis of Mental Terms

In his analysis of the notion of intelligence, acting intelligently would consist of two activities, if we follow the dictates of the “official doctrine”. The first activity would be (a) doing something (b) thinking about what one is doing while doing it. It is true we often deliberate before doing something, but deliberation is not a necessary feature of intelligent performances. When we drive a car, for instance, we do not mentally rehearse our intended action. If intelligence is defined in terms of a hidden, private process that occurs behind the scenes, then we would never know if someone was intelligent, for we would not have access to the private part of the mind. In a similar way, we would not know many other things we know about people, such as, that they are creative or observant. In a careful analysis of several assertions concerning the mind, Ryle makes these assertions clearer by saying in each case that mental-

conduct words do refer to mental acts but not to minds. The acts of knowing, understanding, willing or feeling were considered as being unconnected with the body and as occurring, when referred to in the present tense, in the mind. Ryle rejected this by saying that virtually in every assertion about the mind some facts about bodily behavior are relevant.

4.0 CONCLUSION

This unit discussed the philosophical thoughts of Gilbert Ryle as an important aspect of contemporary analytic philosophy. These thoughts range from the concept of the Ghost in the machine, the category-mistake to Ryle's analysis of mental terms.

5.0 SUMMARY

- Ryle used the method of philosophical analysis to deal with the mind-body problem.
- Ryle contends that the mind-body theory is not only incorrect, but it also leads to many other serious errors as one elaborates the implications.
- It follows from this theory that each person has two collateral histories, one consisting of the bodily events, and the other from the mind events.
- It is therefore erroneous to say that the mind is in the body. It would imply that there is a ghost in the machine.
- What Ryle thinks is wrong with the "official doctrine" of the ghost in the machine is that, the very principle upon which the theory rest is false.
- If intelligence is defined in terms of a hidden, private process that occurs behind the scenes, then we would never know if someone was intelligent, for we would not have access to the private part of the mind.
- In a careful analysis of several assertions concerning the mind, Ryle makes these assertions clearer by saying in each case that mental-conduct words do refer to mental acts but not to minds.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Why did Ryle claim that the mind-body theory is incorrect?
2. How did Ryle make the assertions concerning the mind clearer?

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

- Stumpf, S.E. 1989. *Philosophy, History and Problems*, Fourth Edition, New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc.
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