Course Code: PHL 422

Course Title: Intercultural Philosophy

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COURSE GUIDE

PHL 422: INTERCULTURAL PHILOSOPHY

NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA
(NOUN)

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General Introduction

Welcome to Intercultural Philosophy, dear students. This course is designed to facilitate an understanding of the meaning and nature of Intercultural Philosophy as well as how various philosophical cultures thrive. Some of the primary questions to be considered in this course are: What is the meaning of intercultural philosophy? What is the significance of intercultural philosophy? How tenable are the various philosophical themes among the various philosophical cultures of the world on such issues as Being, Mind and Ethnoscience.

This course builds on PHL241 (COMPARATIVE PHILOSOPHY, which is sometimes called CROSS-CULTURAL PHILOSOPHY (see Wong 2014by deepening the understanding of the issues introduced in PHL241. In PHL 422, the philosophical views of individual scholars on an array of issues within the context of specific philosophical cultures will be presented to students in an objective and unbiased manner being judgmental. However, students will be encouraged to critically consider how the philosophical themes examined are rationally dispersed all over the world.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

At the end of this course, student should be able to
- explain and make clarification between the meaning of culture and philosophy;
- interface between culture and philosophy;
- discuss the idea of intercultural philosophy and its relevance to intellectual maturity and tolerance;
- analyse the notion of Being in the thoughts of Lao-Tzu and Ọ̀rúnmìlà;
- discuss the intercultural features of the ideas of Ọ̀rúnmìlà and Socrates;
- interrogate the practice of science and methodology in Africa, Asia and Europe; and
- reflect on the status of patriarchy among some African and Western feminist scholars.

WORKING THROUGH THIS COURSE

For an adequate understanding of the contents of this course, students are encouraged to possess a copy of the course guide which outlines what is expected of them. It will guide students to read through the study text in a coherent and logical manner and thereby enhance their understanding of the fundamental ideas expressed in each of the thematic considerations included in the modules of this course.

In addition to the above, students are required to be actively involved in forum discussion and facilitation. Hence, attendance plus class participation are very important. There are also interesting readings that are necessary to enhance understanding of the course. Lecture notes are mere guidelines.

Furthermore, students are encouraged to develop novel thoughts and reflections on how the tools and methods of philosophy have implications for a deeper understanding of history by consulting other relevant texts beyond the course guide and notes given to them.

STUDY UNITS
cover the important aspects of PHL422, the course has a total of 12 units spread across 3 modules. They are outlined below:

Module 1: Introducing Intercultural Philosophy
Unit 1: The Idea of Culture
Unit 2: Further Reflection over the Meaning of Philosophy
Unit 3: What is Intercultural Philosophy?
Unit 4: Intercultural Philosophy is not Globalisation

Module 2: The Development of Scientific Thinking among Africans, Asians and Westerners
Unit 1: Science and its Criterion Question
Unit 2: Modern Science and Oriental Ethnoscience
Unit 3: Ethnoscientific Reflections among Ancient Africans
Unit 4: An Intercultural Engagement with African and Western Science

Module 3: Intercultural Philosophy and Some Thematic Concerns
Unit 1: The "Historical Question" concerning Lao-Tzu, Òrúnmìlà and Socrates
Unit 2: Lao-Tzu and Òrúnmìlà on the Discourse on Being
Unit 3: Discourse on the Soul in African, European and Oriental Cultures
Unit 4: African and Western Feminists on Patriarchy and Ectogenesis

PRESENTATION SCHEDULE
This course has two presentations: one at the middle of the semester and the other towards the end of the semester. Before presentations, the facilitator would have established the rudiments of the course with the students. At the beginning of the semester, each student taking this course will be assigned a topic by the course facilitator. This will be made available in due time, for individual presentations during forum discussions. Each presenter has 15 minutes (10 minutes for presentation and 5 minutes for questions and answer). Besides, students will be divided by the course facilitator into groups and each group will be expected to submit an agreed topic for presentation to the facilitator via the recommended medium. Both attract 5% of total marks.

ASSESSMENT
In addition to the discussion forum presentations, two other papers are required in this course. Each paper should not exceed 2,500 words (excluding references and should be typewritten in 12 fonts, 1.5 spacing, and Times New Roman. The preferred reference

style is APA 6th edition (you can download the format online). The topics will be made available in due time. Each carries 10% of the total marks.

Students should use the followings links to check their papers for plagiarism before submission:
- http://plagiarism.org
- http://www.library.arizona.edu/help/tutorials/plagiarism/index.html

If any student is unable to subject any paper to the plagiarism test, the course facilitator will do this after retrieving the electronic format from their student. Similarity index for submitted works by student must NOT EXCEED 35%. Finally, all students taking this course MUST take the final exam which attracts 70% of the total marks.

FOR OPTIMAL PERFORMANCE IN THIS COURSE
For students to perform optimally in this course, s/he must:
- Have 75% of attendance through active participation in both forum discussions and facilitation;
- Read each topic in the course materials before it is treated in class;
- Submit every assignment as and when due; failure to do so will attract penalties;
- Know that regular discussion and sharing of ideas among peers will enhance understanding the contents of the course;
- Download videos, podcasts and summary of group discussions for personal use;
- Attempt each self-assessment exercise in the main course material;
- Take the final exam; and
- Approach the course facilitator when there is a challenge with any aspect of the course.

FACILITATION
This course operates a learner-centred online facilitation. To support the student's learning process, the course facilitator will introduce each topic for discussion before, opening the floor for discussion. Each student is expected to read the course materials, as well as other related texts, and raise critical issues which s/he shall bring forth in the forum discussion for clarification. The facilitator will summarize forum discussion, provide relevant materials, videos and podcasts to the class; and disseminate all relevant information via email and SMS as might be required.

REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS/WEB SOURCES
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In addition to the afore-stated works, the following online sites can also assist students to acquire additional publications:
- www.pdfdrive.net
- www.bookboon.com
- www.sparknotes.com

- http://ebookee.org
- https://scholar.google.com
- https://books.google.com

Module 1: Introducing the Notion of Intercultural Philosophy
Unit 1: The Idea of Culture
Unit 2: Further Reflection on the Meaning of Philosophy
Unit 3: What is Intercultural Philosophy?
Unit 4: Difference between Intercultural Philosophy and Globalisation of Culture

Unit 1: The Idea of Culture

1.1   Introduction

This is the first unit of the course PHL422, Intercultural Philosophy. As students that have been studying philosophy for over three years, you will should know that in the final year, all your previous studies in Philosophy will be harnessed for cohesion. So to understand the idea of intercultural philosophy, a main question to be investigated indepth is the notion of culture and how it influences moral values.

1.2   Learning Outcomes

At the end of this unit, it is expected that students should:

- Have an in-depth understanding of the notion of culture; and
- Be able to establish the relationship between culture and moral values.

1.3.1 An Appraisal of the Notion of Culture

What is culture? How can we arrive at an adequate understanding of the idea of culture that is peculiar to humans? What makes a set of social construct pass as an indicator of culture? These are some of the foremost questions that the present section is focused on.

To begin with, it is perhaps helpful to state that the culture of a people is what marks them out distinctively from other people in the human family. Culture, as it is usually understood, includes a complex of traits and characters that are peculiar to a people to the extent that it marks them out from other peoples or societies. These peculiar traits include a people's language, dressing, music, work, arts, religion, dancing and so on. It also includes a people's social norms, taboos and values. Values within the context of cultures are the beliefs that are held about what is right and wrong and what is important in life (Idang, 2015: 97). Edward Taylor (1950) defined culture as that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs or any other capabilities and habits acquired by people as members of society. TLikewise, Idang, (2015) defined culture as

embracing a wide range of human phenomena, material achievements and norms, beliefs, feelings, manners, and morals . It is the patterned way of life shared by a particular group of people that claim to share a single origin or descent.

Discussions of values in Nigeria or any African country, are predicated on the acceptance of an African culture; except that there may be no consensus among scholars on what may count as African culture (Makinde, 2007: 232). Primarily, this is due to the varied beliefs and traditions that exist among the African people. However, this may not count as a major reason to deny African culture. Hay (1958:5) reinforces this belief with the analysis of the Japanese culture vis-à-vis the Western culture. According to him, 'Western culture' is not the culture of any specific country or people; rather it is only an imaginary construct. In other words, for him "there is actually no such thing as 'the West' and so there cannot be any reality in the idea of 'Western culture'." Hay (1958:17) continues that although held in relation to an attack on ethnocentricity which rests on the assumption that America and Europe represent universalized models of civilization and culture. The implication is that the reference to African culture too rests on the assumption that we are dealing with a socially constructed term. Thus, the term 'African culture' may, therefore, be considered a 'construct' designed for the purpose of marking out 'African culture' from the rest of the world. In this respect, the particularity of certain cultural elements among African people does not invalidate any attempt to discuss the present issue under a general framework. The same view tends to be fundamental to any discussion on the youth culture and values, especially as it relates to young people in the sub-Saharan Africa. However, for the purpose of this work African culture and values depict the culture and values that are indigenous to African people. In this respect, African culture is defined in terms of a people's way of life-taste, fashion, marriage, customs and so forth.

With the notion and nature of culture briefly explained, we shall in the next section of this unit provide a more detailed exposition of the connection between culture, values and morality. This is the task of the next section.

1.3.2 The Relationship between Culture and Moral Values

What are moral values? How can we situate them as products of culture? It is helpful to commence with the understanding that when we talk about culture, the idea of values also become prominent. Philosophically, the term 'value' can be linked to 'axiology'; value can be regarded as the worth of a thing, an action, a belief and even a people. Values are mostly ascribes to things in relation to the culture and tradition from where they spring, because they are essentially culture bound, just like morality. In axiological parlance, human conduct, nature and knowledge are subjects of value. Indeed, there are different criteria towards which the process of valuation is carried out. For instance, values placed on human conduct are ethically evaluated, whereas those placed on nature, works of arts and

artefacts are aesthetically derived. However, the notion of value can also be employed in economic and cultural valuations (Akomolafe & Samuel, 2016: 198). It is the in light of this cultural valuation that we concern our discourse in this unit, showing unequivocal evidence as to the presence of ethical and social values still inherent in the cultural values.

It has earlier been stated logically that a person is a member of a community but not a member of a society until he/she has learnt the way of the group, and has imbibed their values. Therefore, the ways and values to be learnt are called culture. Culture is the total way of life of a people in their attempt to harness and conquer their environment. It is what gives meaning to their politics, economics, language, religion, philosophy, aesthetics and every aspect of their existence. In his article entitled, "Society, Culture and Education" Itedjere (1995: 18) underscored the fact that when a child is born, he has a total sum of physical characteristics transmitted to him from the parents. The physical characteristics include: colour of the eyes, hair, skin and so forth which it is referred to as hereditary traits or innate characteristics. Due to his superior mental equipment, humans transmit ideas, habits and technique from one generation to another. These features of humans are social hereditary. In view of the foregoing fact, this argument suggests that a child has both biological heredity and social heredity that shape their *Being* in the world.

The point we are making from the foregoing analysis and exposition is that culture is a social heredity of man. It is in line with this proposition that Ottaway (1962: 21) argues that culture is the configuration of learned behaviour, and the results of behaviour, whose component elements are shared and transmitted by the members of a particular society. Holistic definition of culture touches on all areas of human life. This is the evidence in a scholarly work done by Onokerhoraye when he writes:

> Culture refers to the total way of life of a society. It is made up of its members' customs, tradition and beliefs, their behaviour, dress, language, their work, their way of living, relationship network and their attitudes of life, the focus of the group's loyalties and the way they all perceive the world (1988: 102).

At this juncture, it is imperative to acknowledge that culture is classified into two aspects, namely, material and non-material.

Material culture embraces tangible things which people have made from and from which a great deal of things can be learnt. This aspect of culture has been used by archeologists to reconstruct the ways of life of extinct societies. They include the material outfit of a people (dress), buildings, crafts, implements, weapons and

religion. It should be noted that some of the elements of material culture are more durable than some others, but they all constitute continuity from one generation to another.

The non-material culture can be described as a system of customs and human spiritual achievements. In essence, this aspect of culture is an expression of human's in their material culture. They include language which is the most important and unifying element of cultural ideas, beliefs, habits, norms, morals, philosophy, religion and social organization.

Again, it is instructive to state that the classification of culture is done for easy distinction as both the material and non-material cannot be easily separated. For instance, a religious belief can be classified as non-material culture, but when it belief is internalized into material manifestation of say pulpit, candles or rosary, it becomes material.

Values occupy a central place in a people's culture and forming the major bulwark that sustains a people's culture. Since African culture relates to "all the material and spiritual values of the African people in the course of history and characterising the historical stage attained by Africa in her developments" (Idang, 209: 142). This simply means that there is a peculiar way of life, approach to issues, values and world views that are typically African. "What a people hold to be true, right or proper with regard to those things explains much of the cultural traits by which they become identified" (Etuk, 2002: 22). By traits, we speak of values here; and Etuk (2002: 22) writes that "no group of people can survive without a set of values which holds them together and guarantees their continued existence."

According to Godwin Sogolo (1993: 119), "African values may be taken to mean a set of institutionalized ideals which guide and direct the patterns of life of Africans." African values therefore are goal-oriented because they point to a desired goal, which actions are geared towards and upon which the expectation of every individual and community is hinged. Individual actions are mirrored through the approved society's values upon which the test for justification is based. This makes an action a moral one. The question of moral justification provides us with the notion of ultimate value. Society may or may not actually or consciously recognise it, yet it is a part of its moral value (Igboin, 2011: 96).

Among the various African values, the sacredness of human life is of utmost importance. The respect and dignity accorded to human life cannot be over-emphasised. Respect for humanity spreads beyond the confines of the nuclear family. Members of extended family, community or tribe are regarded as brothers whose lives must be preserved and protected. In this case, the notion of human

value is intrinsically linked with a wide range of brotherhood, which may not be biologically based. The conception of brotherhood in Africa is different from the Western conception. Therefore, in whatever circumstance, the spirit of brotherhood stimulates patriotic response and disposition of one towards another; man is valued above and beyond every other possession. African attitude to human life has an ultimate worth because of its intrinsic relation with the creator of life (Igboin, 2011: 96).

Moral values are intrinsically social, and arise from interdependent relationships since the total well-being and welfare of the community is essentially important to the moral values. Thus, values such as responsibility, kindness, honesty, hospitality, accommodation, generosity, compassion, faithfulness, fruitfulness, love, dignity, diligence, etc., are all considered to be moral values (Igboin, 2011: 100).

It is on the basis of these foundations to African values that we speak of African Theories of value. With emphasis on Humanity and the endless interpersonal relationships inherent in African culture, we agree that we attain self-realisation through interpersonal relationships.

Self-Assessment Exercise

1. The idea of _____ type of culture can be described as a system of customs and human spiritual achievements.

2. Respect for humanity spreads beyond the confines of the nuclear family (a) True (b) False

1.4   Summary
In this unit, we have been able to provide an analysis of two crucial topic that are central to this course. We have looked at culture. We have also looked at the relationship between culture and moral values.

1.5   References/Further Readings/Web Sources

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1.6   Possible Answers to SAE

1. Non-material

2. (a)

Unit 2: Further Reflection on the Meaning of Philosophy

2.1   Introduction

The focus of this unit is to consider what philosophy is an as an academic discipline. As you know, the idea of what philosophy is continues to present itself as a recurrent issue in this programme. In this unit however, we are going to take another approach. We commence with a brief definition of what philosophy is. After this, we substantiate the subject matter through the position of Russell especially in respect of the conviction that philosophy serves as the intermediate position between science and religion.

2.2   Learning Outcomes

At the end of this unit, the students should:

- Have an in-depth understanding of what philosophy is;
- Understand the idea of philosophy from the perspective of Bertrand Russell; and
- Establish if the position of philosophy as the intermediate between religion and science as presented by Russell is sustainable .

2.3.1 What is Philosophy?

The word Philosophy is derived from two Greek words 'philo' and 'sophia' literally translated into English as 'love' and 'wisdom' respectively. Hence, a combination of both terms has led intellectuals to conceive philosophy as the love for wisdom. In a related development, *The New Webster's Dictionary of the English Language* definesphilosophy as the love or pursuit of wisdom, i.ethat is, the search for basic principles. Traditionally, Western philosophy comprises five branches: metaphysics, ethics, aesthetics, epistemology and logic." (Cayne, 1992: 755) It must be stated that philosophy of other disciplines makes the branches of philosophy six. This latter branch of philosophy investigates the knowledge claims

of other disciplines. Hence we have philosophy of biology, philosophy of physics, and philosophy of education, etc.

2.3.2 Understanding Philosophy through the Lens of Bertrand Russell

The famous British philosopher, Bertrand Russell, in his account of what philosophy is, maintains that it is the branch of human endeavour that is situated at the junction of religion on the left and science on the right. What Russell is saying is that philosophy occupies an intermediate position between religion and science.

For us to fully understand Russell's position, it is important to take note of a few things about his background. He was born in 1872, as a grandson of Prime Minister Lord John Russell, and godson of John Stuart Mill. At the Trinity College, Cambridge, he accepted for a while a British version of the Hegelian idealism (Kenny, 2006: 357).

Two things can be deduced from the above. Firstly, Russell attended a school that is reputed for analytic philosophy. Secondly, his entire career and way of seeing philosophy was not only shaped by people before him, but also by his peers. Russell is of the opinion that philosophy is like an intermediate position between religion and science because it has the potential to accommodate the method and truths of both fields. He tried to establish this view by showing instances in the history of Western philosophy where philosophers combined these various fields without much problem.

Pythagoras' case is a curious combination of religion, mathematics, science, music, re-incarnation, mysticism, etc. This influenced some medieval and modern thinkers like St. Augustine, Rene Descartes and Immanuel Kant. According to Bertrand Russell:

> The combination of mathematics and theology, which began with Pythagoras, characterized religious philosophy in Greece, in the middle ages, and in modern times down to Kant . . . In Plato, St Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, Descartes, Spinoza and Leibniz, there is an intimate blending of religion and reasoning, of moral aspiration with logical admiration of what is timeless, which comes from Pythagoras, and distinguishes the intellectualised theology of Europe from the more straightforward mysticism of Asia (Russell, 1962:37).

Russell clearly reveals that there was the intellectual harmony from the background of philosophy for both religion and science. However, throughout his intellectual career, Russell favours the scientific aspect of philosophizing over the religious wing. For instance, in *Principia Matemathica*, Whitehead and Russell worked on logicism which claims that mathematical truths can be translated into logical truths, a claim which remains controversial to this day. They attempted to derive all mathematical truths from a set of axioms and inference rules in symbolic logic. *Principia Mathematica* is considered by specialists as one of the most important books in mathematics and philosophy (Lawhead, 2002: 482).

The assertion that philosophy is an intermediate between religion and science cannot be demonstrated in any of Russell's contributions to philosophy. He seems more scientific than religious. His thought on logic is one of the backbones for the founding of one of the distinctive area of philosophy of science. According to S. Psillos:

> Philosophy of science emerged as a distinctive part of philosophy in the twentieth century. It set its own agenda, the systematic study of the metaphysical and epistemological foundations of science, and acquired its own professional structure, departments and journals. Its defining moment was the meeting (and the clash) of two courses of events: the breakdown of the Kantian philosophical tradition and the crisis in the sciences and mathematics at the beginning of the century. The emergence of the new Frege–Russell logic, the arithmeticization of geometry and the collapse of classical mechanics called into question the neat Kantian scheme of synthetic a priori principles (Psillos, 2008: 618).

We also find that Russell emphasizes on empirical verification which is a scientific method that has no place in religion. This is because of his relation with members of the Vienna Circle. The logical positive school developed around the 1920s in Austria. It was a group formed by leading philosophers of science, mathematics, linguists, scientists, etc. They met in Vienna and hence they are also known as the Vienna Circle. This group has the following persons as members, A.J. Ayer, Bertrand Russell, Moritz Schlick, Ludwig Wittgenstein and many others. The group was concerned with the analysis of language and meaning. Ayer for instance puts it that "a philosopher that cannot master language is like a mathematician that cannot handle numerals" (Ayer, 1952). They announced that the central task of philosophy is to assist the scientists with the language they need

to communicate their discoveries. Logical positivism is convinced that science has taken up all the facts and that there is none left for the use of philosophy any more (Stumpf, 1979).

They used mainly the idea of cognitive meaningfulness and the verification principle to make their ideas of science distinct from other disciplines. A statement is either analytic or else speaking nonsense. This group of scholars had the sole intention of demarcating the sciences from the non-sciences and they saw metaphysics as a non-science whose language they cannot accommodate. If metaphysics is seen as non-science, then the case of religion which does not use the verification principle to know is not helped. However, Russell was skeptical of the use of senses in a later writing but this does not remove him from the shade of a scholar that uses more of scientific than religious. In his words:

> In daily life, we assume as certain many things which, on a closer scrutiny, are found to be so full of apparent contradictions that only a great amount of thought enables us to know what it is that we really may believe. In the search for certainty, it is natural to begin with our present experiences, and in some sense, no doubt, knowledge is to be derived from them. But any statement as to what it is that our immediate experiences make us know is very likely to be wrong (Russell, 1997:1).

So far we have been able to show that there is disconnection between the statements of Russell that philosophy is the midway between religion and science and his actual contribution and conception of philosophy.

We agree with Omeregbe that "philosophy is essentially a reflective activity" (Omeregbe, 1985: 1). We agree with him because to philosophize is to reflect on any human experience, to search for answers to some fundamental questions that arise out of man's continuous curiosity. In our own opinion, philosophy began with man's existence. There are many obstacles, challenges, wonder, curiosity that causes man to reflect deeply. J.I Omeregbe, on the nature of philosophy argues that:

> To reflect on such questions in search of explanations or answers is to philosophize. There is no part of the world where men never reflect on such basic questions about the human person or about the physical universe. In other words, there is no part of the world where men do not philosophize. The tendency to reflect on such fundamental philosophic questions is part of human nature; it is rooted in man's natural instinct of

curiosity – the instinct to know (Omeregbe, 1985: 1).

The above excerpt makes our point more obvious. There is no particular race that is endowed with the ability to philosophize while others lack this gift. Philosophy is not an intermediate position but a discipline that is at the top hierarchy and beyond both religion and science. Philosophy, takes nothing for granted. It raises questions about every assumption and supposition underlying any object or concept. Philosophy is anti-dogmatic. Most scholars often claim that philosophy is the base and apex of any endeavor of study. This is why regardless of whatever one has studied, the highest academic qualification one can have is the PhD – Doctor of Philosophy.

Self-Assessment Exercise

1. Who said that "philosophy is essentially a reflective activity"? (a) Russell (b) Omeregbe (c) Whitehead (d) Pythagoras

2. What announced that the central task of philosophy is to assist the scientists with the language they need to communicate their discoveries? (a) Logical positivists (b) Primary logicians (c) Logicism (d) Russell

1.4 Summary
What has been undertaken in this unit is a short revision of the general nature of philosophy. This revision is crucial and central to our understanding of intercultural philosophy, to which we now turn in the next unit.

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1.6   Possible Answers to SAE
1. (b);
2. (a)

Unit 3: What is Intercultural Philosophy?

3.1   Introduction

In this unit, we are going to consider the idea of intercultural philosophy and see whether it is Eurocentric. By Eurocentric, what we mean is whether or not intercultural philosophy and philosophers see the European culture and ways of doing things superior and absolute. We can see at this juncture that the approach that was taken in the previous two units can prove helpful since we have looked at the idea of culture as well as undertaken a brief revision of what philosophy means. In this unit, we shall see the extent to which intercultural philosophy seems to have been used as a stance for Eurocentric ideals.

3.2   Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit, the learners should:

- Have a commanding grasp of what intercultural philosophy is;
- Be familiar with some popular intercultural scholars; and
- Realise the extent to which Western intercultural philosophers have tried to be racial and Eurocentric in their intellectual appeal.

3.3.1 The Meaning of Intercultural Philosophy

In the long history of philosophical thought there has always been a case made for universality although many great thinkers see philosophical value only in the western tradition and fail to appreciate what other parts of the world have achieved over the centuries. Eurocentric philosophers such as Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel agree that while Greek philosophy is   the birthplace of philosophy, other philosophical traditions such as the Chinese or Indian constitute only teachings of wisdom (Wimmer 2004). Others claim that philosophy has more than one birthplace and also recognise the Asian traditions of philosophy (Mall 1989).

Karl Jaspers, a German psychiatrist and philosopher, developed the theory of an axial age, referring to the period from 800 BCE to 200 BCE, during which philosophical thinking evolved in China, India and the Occident. Jasper's theory is widely accepted by those philosophising interculturally (Sweet 2014).

In contrast to any Eurocentrism there are those philosophers who hold that there needs to be communication as well as collaboration among different traditions and cultures especially in today's global situation given that intercultural interactions and encounters are a fact of human existence (Furtado 1998). The goal is to extend one's thinking to include other cultures such as Asian, Latin-American, Islamic, and African (Wikipedia 2022).

Intercultural philosophy should not be an academic subject besides others but an attitude followed by everybody that philosophise (Wimmer 2004). No matter the cultural/philosophical orientation one belongs to, other cultural/philosophical orientations should be taken into consideration in order to have a balanced view of how humans irrespective of their cultures have contributed to humanity (Wimmer 2004).

For Raimon Panikkar (2000) it is also important to connect religion and philosophy as they are both key elements of human reality and important to many cultures. When developing an approach to intercultural philosophy one has to abandon the idea of using only one's own ways of demonstration and description but has to include other forms such as dance, music, architecture, rituals, art, literature, myths, proverbs, folk tales and so on Mall (2000) A manner of meeting has to be found to allow a variety of exchange where one's own tradition can be preserved and not be forged into one big syncretism. The only way to stop cultures from being absorbed by globalisation and becoming something of a world culture, which is monoculturally predetermined, according to Fornet-Betancort, is the project of an intercultural dialogue. Others view China and Japan as an example of intercultural practise that others could learn from as they have managed to integrate Buddhism without losing their own cultural identity. Philosophers such as Wimmer (2004) and Mall (2000) postulate forms of dialogue in which all parties are on the same level without having any other power but the better argument.

Another way of comprehending the main thesis of intercultural philosophy is by seeing at as a body of thought or doctrine about the proper way to respond to cultural and religious diversity. It is an umbrella term used in revaluing disrespected identities, marginalized groups and used in the changing of dominant patterns of representation and identification. According to Murphy (2012), intercultural philosophy refers to anything from the cultural and political discourses and practices of foreign national and immigrants to those of racial, ethnic, sexual, religious and sub-national minorities: from the social characteristics and problems of governance posed by any society composed of different cultural communities. Raz (2004) defined intercultural philosophy as an evaluative approach which is anchored on a belief in the interdependence of individual well-being and the prosperity of the cultural group to which those individuals belong.

Second intercultural philosophy arises out of the belief in value pluralism. This is especially demonstrated via the validity of the diverse values embodied in the practices in different climes. Multiculturalists, such as Will Kymlicka affirm that "cultural groups are to be recognized and accommodated on the basis that there is not just one culture but there are multiple cultures. Intercultural philosophy recognizes most importantly the identity of the minority groups, though not to the neglect of the majority group" (Kymlicka, 1995). In spite of the countless and limitless conceptions ascribed to intercultural philosophy, it is well accounted for in the words of Caleb Rosado (1996: 3) that:

> Intercultural philosophy is a system of beliefs and behaviours that recognizes and respects the presence of all diverse groups in an organization or society, acknowledges and values their socio-cultural differences, and encourages and enables their continued contribution within an inclusive cultural context which empowers all within the organization or society.

It is important to take a critical look at some of the key implications that present themselves in the above quotation. The first is recognition of the rich diversity in a given society or organization. For the longest time racial/ethnic minorities, the physically disabled, and women have not been given the same recognition as others (Rosado, 1996: 4). It is also established that "the one-sided approach to history and education has been a testimony to that fact" (Swan, 1995: 182). With recognition there is also respect. Respect is the process whereby the "Other" is treated with deference, courtesy and compassion in an endeavor to safeguard the integrity, dignity, value and social worth of the individual. It means treating people the way they want to be treated. Respect and recognition are not the same, since recognizing the existence of a group does not necessarily elicit respect for the group. Our nation has a long history of not respecting the rights of the powerless (Swan, 1995).

Intercultural philosophy also entails acknowledging the validity of the cultural expressions and contributions of the various groups (Rosado, 1996: 4). This is not to imply that all cultural contributions are of equal value and social worth, or that all should be tolerated. Some cultural practices are better than others for the overall betterment of society. These cultural expressions and contributions that differ from those of the dominant group in society are usually only acknowledged when there is an economic market for them, such as music for African American, native Indian dances for tourism or Mexican cuisine.

3.3.2 Seven Ways of Defining Intercultural Philosophy

Intercultural philosophy represents in a way, the moral and political claims of a wide range of disadvantaged groups such as women, the disabled, ethnic and religious minorities, immigrants, etc. Intercultural philosophy can also be seen as a matter of economic interests and political power. In this sense, intercultural philosophy demands remedies to economic and political disadvantage that people suffer as a result of their minority status (Cornell et al 2007). Regardless of the outlook on intercultural philosophy, there are various ways that the concept have been understood and used too. For instance Friedrich Heckmann (1993) highlights about seven various ways that the concept has come to be understood.

First, "intercultural philosophy" or "multicultural society" are used as indicators of social change, referring to the changing ethnic composition of the population; an allegedly rather homogeneous population has become more heterogeneous. In this sense, "multicultural society" is a descriptive category (Heckmann, 1993: 245).

Secondly, the terms are used in what might be called a normative-cognitive way. This use could be circumscribed as follows: we should recognize the fact that we have become a country of immigration, that we need immigration, at present and in the future, and should accept the social and cultural consequences (Heckmann, 1993: 245).

A third use describes both an attitude and a norm: intercultural philosophy as tolerance toward others; as friendly and supportive behavior toward immigrants; as a liberal and democratic attitude which is based (among other things) on learning from the errors and fatal consequences of nationalism, chauvinism, and ethnic intolerance (Heckmann, 1993: 245).

Fourthly, intercultural philosophy is an interpretation of the concept of culture: there are no "pure," original cultures. Each culture has incorporated elements of other cultures; cultures are the result of interaction with one another; culture is continuous process and change. In this sense, the cultures of immigrants are seen as opportunities for the enrichment of one's own culture (Heckmann, 1993: 245).

Fifth, on a more superficial level, intercultural philosophy is an attitude that looks upon some aspects of the immigrants' culture (folklore, food, for example) and sees these as possible enrichment of "our" culture. Very often, in a socio-romantic view, the immigrants are viewed as people with qualities that "we have lost" (emotions, stable social relations, spontaneity, etc.); we could learn from them (Heckmann, 1993: 245).

Intercultural philosophy as a political-constitutional principle is the sixth conception in the discussion, referring to ethnic identities as a major basis for

political and state organization, for the distribution of rights and resources; it means the re-enforcing of ethnic pluralism, ethnic autonomy, and speaks out against acculturation or assimilation, against one "state language" (Heckmann, 1993: 245).

The seventh meaning: as a critical category, intercultural philosophy is regarded as a well-intended, but illusory concept which overlooks the necessity for a common culture, language, and identification to enable societal and state integration and stability. The unifying and homogenizing effects of the nation-state are looked upon as an achievement that should not be easily given up (Heckmann, 1993: 245).

In intercultural philosophy, the mere toleration of group differences falls short of treating members of minority groups as equal citizens. Rather, the recognition and positive accommodation of group differences are required. The claims of multiculturalists include religion, language, ethnicity, nationality, race, etc. Intercultural philosophy entails in a word, the open expression of cultural life and achievement as well as inclinations by minority groups as allowed, recognized, and accommodated by the majority group.

It is also important to state that two central keys undergird the notion of intercultural philosophy: tolerance and pluralism: these two will be discussed in some details later. It is however pertinent to stress that each of these endorse cultural accommodations. Examples of cultural accommodation or what Kymlicka called "group-differentiated rights" include exemptions from generally applicable laws (e.g, religious exemptions), assistance to do things that the majority can do unassisted (e.g multilingual ballots, funding for minority language schools), representation of minorities in government bodies, etc. (Kymlicka, 1995).

Thus, intercultural philosophy involves 'group differentiated' rights, which include the right of minority groups (or a member of such group) to act or not act in a certain way in accordance with their religions obligations or group cultural commitments.

From what we have done here, we can deduce that intercultural philosophy aims to give voice to the other cultures in the world. History has shown how Europe undermined the intellectual life of Africans and their epistemes. What intercultural philosophy seeks to do however is to disclose ways through which we can overcome the hurdles of Eurocentrism and race in cross-cultural fertilisation. Has intercultural philosophy however succeeded in this guise? We shall come to know in the next section.

3.3.3 Is Intercultural Philosophy Eurocentric?

In this unit, we will consider how intercultural philosophy, which is supposed to be a breeding ground for the successful interaction of ideas of divergent cultures, has been compromised. Rather, it has been used as a tool to show that Africans are not yet ready for their cultures to be respected and learned from.

In the 21st century, which is the age of sophistication, exposure and technological advancement and breakthroughs, on almost every front, one would have thought that the cerebral stamina of the 'man of colour' (Fanon 2008) would have reached a level to command respect, enough to shore the epistemic gap. Unfortunately, this is not to be. Rather than recognition and dignity, the efforts of Africa's knowledge production have been recently dubbed as transliteration and plagiarism of Western thought systems. This is the deduction from two Western intercultural scholars – Jurgen Hengelbrock (2002) and Heinz Kimmerle (2002).

Jurgen Hengelbrock who is a German intercultural philosopher claims that when he visited Africa for the first time, he was aghast to find African intellectuals displaying their European standing rather than standing to the true African heritage (Hengelbrock 2002). Alongside Kimmerle, Hengelbrock comes to the conclusion that there is nothing substantially new via their researches since these are nothing but mere rehashing of what Western intellect has exhausted overtime (Ozumba 2015, 181).

These points were the primary focus of their 2002 debate titled: "The Stranger between Oppression and Superiority." In his words, Hengelbrock (2002) hints that:

> Indeed, arriving in Africa for the first time you feel a disappointment or even a certain shock. You are looking for African culture and you don't find anything but western life style in its worst form, and on the other hand terrible poverty and social disintegration. Speaking with African intellectuals you notice their European education and formation.

The implication is the dearth in creativity and originality on the part of African scholarship (Chimakonam 2019, 163). From this orient, it seems clear that there will necessarily be the need to show why this is not the case. Hengelbrock's displeasure leads him to affirm as follows: "indeed, you must go very far in order to find the genuine Africa, far not only in a geographical sense but first of all in a mental one" (Hengelbrock 2002). Kimmerle (2002) adds to the findings or observations of Hengelbrock by insisting that what is called African thought system passes as no more than folk wisdom at best and uncharitable ersatz of Western ideas at worst. Of course, the suggestions of these scholars have found

African scholars such as Godfrey Ozumba (2015) and Innocent Asouzu (2007) riposting.

Ozumba, reacting to Kimmerle and Hengelbrock insists: "I beg to disagree that what the immense population of African philosophers do amount to copying Western episteme" (Ozumba 2015, 182). According to him, "to say that Africans merely copy or transliterate, or translate or repackage Western philosophy into African containers is to accuse African philosophers of plagiarism and this opens up another scandal on another stolen legacy. This counter accusation will be the most uncharitable way of redressing the first "Stolen Legacy" Saga" (Ozumba 2015, 181).

On his part, Innocent Asouzu rejoins that it is incorrect for Kimmerle and Hengelbrock to announce that African ideas are mere imitations of Western thoughts. He sees a form of protectionism over the superiorisation of reason of one culture over others. Asouzu (2007, 32) elucidates: "This protectionist type of reasoning is a remnant of our natural instinct of self-preservation in the course of which we seek to be considered as special types of human beings, along with our cultural heritages."

Much as some African scholars have tried to defend this outlook, this study is convinced that efforts at defending are not enough. There ought to be a yard stick or paradigm through which one can show *that* creativity, *that* originality, which will make a thought distinct and characteristic of Asia, Africa, and Euro-America. Whereas we strongly believe this can be attained via logic, it is also fundamental to point that "The humanities must search for Africa in Africa and not elsewhere" (Falola 2007, 31). On this note, an Afro-inspired logic from within is crucial to the attainment of this paramount aim. Any non-African logic system that is entreated for mediating African episteme, will merely reinforce the plagiarist charge and compromise the originality question.

Furthermore, the charge that nothing original has or can ever surface from Africa and the entire global south is steeped in the ideology of Eurocentrism. Kimmerle (2002) and Hengelbrock (2002) are merely reiterating, albeit in less subtle terms, the derogatory comments of prominent Western scholars concerning the African intellect. For instance, several decades before the pronouncements of Kimmerle and Hengelbrock, the French anthropologist Lucien Levy-Brul (1995, 43) had found that traditional Africans are "primitive people who had no idea of natural explanation. They are perceived as people whose dreams are real experiences lacking the mental wherewithal to distinguish between subject and object, good and bad, moral and immoral. Levy-Bruhl (1995, 43) continues that ancient Africans are "Primitive, barbaric, irrational, uncivilised and most importantly

people without capacity for critical and rational thinking- qualities that is natural to doing philosophy."

David Hume, in spite of his brilliance still maintains that other races are naturally inferior to Europeans (Popkin 1978, 215). In a unit entitled "Of National Characters," he holds: "I am apt to suspect the Negroes to be naturally inferior to the whites. There scarcely ever was a civilised notion of that complexion; nor even any individual eminent in action or speculation… (Hume 1985, 319). Similarly, the German philosophy Georg Friedrich Hegel (1975, 177) will be remembered for his assertion that the African is "an example of animal in all his savagery and lawlessness." In a related development, another great German scholar, Immanuel Kant believes that Europeans are the epitome of rationality and sound mind whereas "the so-called sub-human, primitive, and characterological inferiority of the American Indian, the African, and the Asian is biologically and metaphysically inherited archetype" (Kant 1978, 124-5). Likewise, the erstwhile president of the United States, Thomas Jefferson (1787, 192) announces: "I advance it therefore as a suspicion only, that the blacks, whether originally a distinct race, or made distinct by time and circumstances, are inferior to the whites in the endowments both of body and mind."

From the foregoing it is clear that the case of Kimmerle and Hengelbrock is nothing but old wine in a new jar, a way of committing the old sins in new ways. However, it needs to be stated that these utterances have made African knowledge production subaltern, with Africans themselves condemning their ritual archives and intellectual heritage. We say this on four grounds. First, the third and perhaps fourth generation of African scholars have abandoned the conversational and system building nature of African philosophy for the invitation and even imposition of Western ideas over African themes. Second, the spirit of scholarship among the first-generation scholars of African philosophy who conversed, engaged and criticized one another is vegetative among the present crop of African scholars.

Third, the tendency in some African tertiary institutions where it is rife, the understanding that it is impossible for non-Africans to do original African philosophy poses as another militating factor that has stalked the conversational and system building character of philosophy. Finally, the "I did it first mentality" which is synonymous with some of the first and second generation of African scholars has left so much ideas as foundations for systems that have failed to be erected. For instance, Sophie Oluwole (2014), who speaks of "Binary Complementarity" for the first time in a 2014 book publication, fails to mention, acknowledge, engage or converse with Innocent Asouzu who has been brainstorming and publishing copiously on the subject decades hitherto.

Incidentally, such a mentality is now replete among the third and fourth generation of African scholars, and this dangerous trend needs to be reversed earnestly.

The urgency to reverse this unenviable trend is pertinent due to the connection between power and knowledge. We say this from the finding that "Power shapes knowledge, which is obviously not neutral and free of context" (Falola 2018, 928). Toyin Falola (2018, 896) further avers: "In a Western-derived knowledge system, the epistemic identities of our scholars and the ecology of African universities can extend and reproduce the externally derived knowledge systems. That external knowledge cannot be separated from external power, for it shapes who sells a centre, and who turns particularism into universalism." He goes on to infer correctly: "In that Western power and control of knowledge, African scholarship becomes consigned to the margins. They exist in footnotes as gatherers of data and as intellectual subjects needed to supply information about African objects." What does all of these mean or imply for knowledge production?

What can be understood is that intercultural philosophy means well for the entire world and the cultures that are in it. However, the problem has usually been with the way through which some European scholars continue to demean African ideas and place their European ideals as overriding. We believe that so long as this problem persists, intercultural philosophy will not be able to attain its aim – allowing the intellectual cultures of the world to speak their minds.

Self-Assessment Exercise

1. Who said: "indeed, you must go very far in order to find the genuine Africa, far not only in a geographical sense but first of all in a mental one" (a) Hengelbrock (b) Ozumba (c) Kimmerle (d) Asouzu

2. The goal of _____is to extend one's thinking into including other cultures, to not only consider one tradition but as many as possible such as Asian, Latin-American, Islamic, or African

3.4   Summary
In this unit, we have considered the role that Eurocentrism plays in the effort of the yearning for the various cultures of the world to be able to meet and interact via intercultural philosophy. It has also been demonstrated that even when intercultural philosophy is Eurocentric in orientation, it still holds positive promise if its Eurocentric and racist biases can be eliminated.

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3.6   Possible Answers to SAE
1. (a);
2. Intercultural philosophy

Unit 4: How Intercultural Philosophy is not Globalisation

4.1   Introduction

In the preceding unit, we have looked at the idea of intercultural philosophy closely. In this unit, we are going to show that intercultural philosophy differs from another element in globalisation. This is because whereas the former provides a level playing field for the various cultures of the world, the latter insists that the "lesser" valued cultures of the world ought to be admitted into the Western way of life in the name of cultural evolution and modernisation. This unit will show that globalisation and intercultural philosophy, which the last unit considered are not at par even when they seem to be.

4.2   Learning Outcomes

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

- Understand globalisation as a form of ideological imposition;
- Define and state what globalisation means; and
- Distinguish globalisation from intercultural philosophy.

4.3.1   Meaning of Globalisation

What is globalization? Does it have any practical relevance to the day to day affairs of Africans? Is it a resolution put in place to rehabilitate the African economy and accelerate development? These questions are bound to be raised by anyone who wishes to know what globalization stands for, especially from the African perspective. Attempting to answer these questions is the main agenda of this section. Globalisation means different things to different people and thus it has been used in several ways in literatures (Lawal, 2006: 66). It is a process of integrating not only the economy of nations but also their culture, technology and governance. Generally, it may be referred to as: the widening, deepening and speeding up of world-wide interconnectedness in all aspects of contemporary social life, from the cultural to the criminal, the financial to the Spiritual (Held *et al*, 1999: 5).

This, in essence illustrates the way in which contemporary globalization connects communities in one region of the world to development in another continent. The whole idea of globalization therefore revolves around other new realities and

terminologies as information technology, deregulation, trade liberalisation, economic competition or free enterprises and an emergent political structure/system that is people oriented (Lawal, 2006: 67).

More explicitly, globalisation "refers to a process of increasing economic openness, growing economic interdependence, and deepening economic integration between countries of the world. It is associated not only with a phenomenal spread and volume of cross-border economic transactions, but also with an organization of economic activities which straddles national boundaries (Held *et al*, 1999: 6). In other words, it refers to the increasing integration of economies particularly through trade and financial flows around the world.

The term also refers to the 'movement of people i.e. labour, knowledge and technology across international borders'. There are also cultural, political and environmental dimensions of globalisation that are not discussed here. The breakdown of boundaries as barriers to economic exploitation that globalisation represents means that every country of this world, rich/developed or poor/developing would have access to every other country. That is, the developing nations would have unrestricted access to the markets of the developed countries and vice-versa. "It will be a borderless world" (Mahathir, 1996). This again, has raised so many questions and increasing debate about the power of the state and the continuous relevance of the principles of sovereignty, independence and the understanding of international relations – the debate, which is also not the focus of their paper.

Meanwhile, the word 'globalisation', which has been used in many ways - has formed the source of confusion and controversy embedded in the understanding of or the problem of having the full grasp of what the term (and any other post-cold war words) suggests. While some perceive globalisation as a process of increasing integration into the world economy as positive (salvation), others see it as negative (damnation) in terms of unequal pattern of development. However, beyond the general understanding and conception of a perceived intensification of global interconnectedness, there is a substantial disagreement about its causal dynamics and how its characteristics should and structural consequences can be explained (Lawal, 2006: 67).

Walden Bello defines globalization as "the accelerated integration of capital, production and markets globally, a process driven by the logic of corporate profitability" (Bello; 2004: xii) In a similar development, Frederick Stutz and Barney Warf conceives it as "referring to worldwide process that make the world, its economic system, and its society more uniform, more integrated and more interdependent the globalization process is a useful way to explain the movement of people, goods, and ideas within and among various regions of the world and

their cultural, political and environmental systems."(Stutz and Warf;2007:9) These scholars perceive globalization as having a relation with culture, consumption, telecommunications, economy, socialization of work, services, tourism, local diversity etc. Their view implies that globalization can be viewed from many perspectives. D. Nayejar (2002) argues that the term 'globalization' may be used in both normative and positive senses. In the normative sense, it could mean reactions to increased integration and the policies that accompany it while the latter entails increased international integration of trade, investment and finance.

4.3.2 Globalisation as an Ideological Imposition
From the various definitions provided for globalisation in the preceding section, it is safe to deduce that it does not consider the culture of the natives, the African or Asian as worthy of ever developing. Its central contention is that these cultures be admitted into the advanced capitalist systems of the world with the ideology which girds same.

Incidentally, when intercultural philosophy wishes to provide lending ears to the cultures and world-views of all the peoples of the world irrespective of race and geography, this is not the case for globalisation whose impact in Africa has been disastrous. This is expressed in the ways that globalisation has negatively affected the African culture of sacredness of marriage and child-rearing for instance. In recent times, young Africans are now finding it fashionable to be addressed as "baby mama" and "baby daddy."

The globalization process, from the foregoing is detrimental to Africa's quest for development. Nigerian scholar Obiora Anichebe (2008) states that "globalization will merely make the poor and developing countries such as Nigeria to join a race of unequal contestants and this is a great advantage to them." In a similar development, Parenti (1989:28) explains that "aid from rich nations and loans from rich banks are not likely to be granted if the funds will be used to compete against capital accumulation interests of the donor." In short, what we have is 'phantom aid' which African states pay back as part of their debts. What can Africa do to equal this uneventful turn?

African countries do not have the means to put these unequal interactions in a balance. Africa lacks the bargaining and negotiating strength in international relations; while the North has agencies and institutions helping to coordinate their policies (such as the European Commission, G7, OECD etc) while Africa cannot boast of any. They have more leverage in Bretton Woods and the WTO to shape the content of globalization to serve their needs and to formulate policies which developing countries have been overdosed with. It is our contention that Africa will never benefit substantially unless they break from the free market system. The globalization process is no more than a new form of recolonising Africa. Africa

has no advantage from globalization. Although it may be argued that Africa is benefitted one way or the other, it needs to be added that such aids given to Africa are what some Marxists call "Sharp Philanthropy." This is a situation where an advanced nation assists a developing or under-developing nation with some implied and undisclosed conditions to the general popular which are in the end beneficial to the former.

The globalization process has been rocked with at least three crises that have shown that it is incapable of helping Africa realize her goals. The first was the Asian Financial Crisis of 1997. Here, we see how capital market liberalization through globalization weakened the economy of the Asian Tigers. Secondly, the collapse of the Third Ministerial of the WTO in Seattle in December 1999 showed the inequities put forward for trade liberalization at the detriment of the Third World countries. The resentment of Uruguay Round in 1995, popular opposition to the WTO and the unresolved conflicts between the EU and US shows another loophole of the globalization process. Thirdly, the collapse of the stock market and the end of the Clinton boom in March, 2001 shows not only the incompetency of globalization but also the failure of capitalism.

From the brief excursion into the ideological component of globalisation, we can see that it is different from intercultural philosophy.

Self-Assessment Exercise

1. Who defined globalization as "the accelerated integration of capital, production and markets globally, a process driven by the logic of corporate profitability"? (a) Russell (b) Nayejar (c) Bello (d) Popkin

2. Globalisation is no different from intercultural philosophy. (a) True (b) False

4.4   Summary
Our focus in this unit has been to show that globalisation has an ideological underpinning which makes it different from intercultural philosophy. We have shown that whereas intercultural philosophy seeks to make the various cultures of the world engage one another and grow together, globalisation is a tool for imposing Western ideals and culture over the others.

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4.6 Possible Answers to SAE
1. (c); 2. (b)

End of Module Exercises

1. What kind of culture embraces tangible things which people have made from where great deal of things can be learnt? (a) Material (b) Tangible (c) Irrelevant (d) Globalised

2. It is to the credit of _____ science has taken up all the facts and that there is none left for the use of philosophy any more

3. David Hume, in spite of his brilliance still maintains that other races are naturally inferior to _____

4. Kimmerle and Hengelbrock to announce that African ideas are mere imitations of Western thoughts (a) True (b) False

5. The globalization process is no more than a new form of recolonising Africa (a) True (b) False

Module 2: The Development of Scientific Thinking among Africans, Asians and Westerners
Unit 1: Science and its Criterion Question
Unit 2: Modern Science and Oriental Ethnoscience
Unit 3: Ethnoscientific Reflections among Ancient Africans
Unit 4: An Intercultural Engagement between African and Western Science

Unit 1: Science and its Criterion Question

1.1   Introduction

The focus of this unit is to consider what science is as a discipline and facilitate an understanding of how the idea of science developed among non-Western cultures, some of whom we shall be looking at in other units. This unit will also discuss the role that causality play in science as well as how the question of methodology has attracted scholarly attention.

1.2   Learning Outcomes

In this unit, the learners should understand the:

- meaning of science;
- role of causality in science; and
- scholarly deliberations over the valid methodology for science

1.3.1 What is Science?

Science lacks a universal definition even when its Latin etymology 'scientia' means knowledge. At some point in history, many works on science were termed "natural philosophy" (Alozie, 2004: 4). As a concept, 'science' is penned as "knowledge acquired by careful observation, by deduction of the laws which govern changes and conditions, and by testing these deductions by experience" (Cayne, 1992: 895). Cayne's definition is not only about what science is, but also suggestive of the method science employs for knowledge acquisition about the actual world. Our assessment of the various approaches to what science *is* finds that tendency of giving crucial weight to its method. This is also what Oseni Taiwo Afisi (2016: 59) asserts when he explains that "the general character of science and the methodology are in specific terms referred to as observation and experimentation." From another perspective, it is affirmed that: "Science is not a field of study like mathematics, chemistry and economics, but a method which should be applied to other branches if they must gain relevance in the modern world" (Negedu, 2014: 245). Similarly, Edward Wilson (1998: 58) holds that "science is an organized, systematic enterprise that gathers knowledge about the world and condenses the knowledge into testable laws and principles." This trend,

to define science using its method of inquiry is also suggestive in Popper (1959); and even Bartley (1968). We can see that it is almost impossible to define science in the Western understanding without the emphasis on methodology. This emphasis on methodology which is observation and experimentation goes back to the French scholar Francis Bacon (2012) who highlights how idols (obstacles) to authentic knowledge of the world need to be overcome through observation and experimentation. For Bacon, there are errors of thinking in the human minds that are likable to idols. There are four of these: Idols of the Tribe; Idols of the Cave; Idols of the Marketplace; and Idols of the Theatre.

Concerning the Idols of the Cave, Bacon (2012: 14) says they "have their foundation in human nature itself, and in the tribe or race of men. For it is a false assertion that man is the measure of things." Idols of the Cave concern individual issues such as passion and drive which lead to the misunderstanding in the nature of things. The Idols of the Marketplace "are formed by the intercourse and association of men with each other…on the account and consort of men there" (Bacon, 2012: 20). The Idols of the Theatre represent ancient ideas that have been held as indubitable dogmas. They reveal themselves in many traditional ideas in Africa which are held rigidly without any attempt to be improved upon. They are seen to be too sacred and certain to require further revisions. In the words of Bacon (2012: 22): "there are idols which have immigrated into human minds from the various dogmas of philosophies, and also from wrong laws of demonstration."

When we consider the foregoing, it should be clear that even though science might not have a universal definition, its method and how it does its business has usually been the basis for its understanding.

1.3.2 Causality and Scientific Theorising

In this unit, we will examine the idea of causality as a tool for the development of theorising the world. Causation, simply put is the understanding that "an event, a consequent is caused by another, which is its antecedent" (Hanks, 1976: 329). What this means is that there is a connection between events where one serves as the basis or the efficient causation for the one that follows. As simple as this seems however, David Hume thinks that our notion or perception of causality is a product of habit.

Hume had been influenced by the empiricism of Thomas Hobbes and John Locke before him (Warburton, 1999: 89). Hume was however, displeased with the notion of causation and how humans are too quick to infer that every event must have a cause. This is exactly the point that Hume's skeptical conclusion is always directed at. It must be stated from the onset that David Hume was a thorough going empiricist who ended up with skepticism (Stumpf, 1979: 233). In this expository unit, we shall be concerned with his idea of causality or induction,

evincing how he arrived at such skeptical conclusions. Hume's problem with the idea that every event must have a cause may be summed up thus: "If we look for the origin of the idea of causation, Hume says, we find that it cannot be any particular inherent quality of objects; for objects of the most different kinds can be causes and effects We must look instead for relationships between objects…we feel that there must be a necessary connection between cause and effect, though the nature of this connection is difficult to establish" (Kenny, 2006: 260).

David Hume was primarily against the idea that things that happen must have a cause, and if this is the case, an effect would usually follows its cause. David Hume concludes skeptically that we can ever really know that a particular event is traceable to a particular cause. In other words, we cannot infer that a particular event has a sole cause. This has been termed the problem of induction. In the words of Helen Beebee (2011: 731): "the problem of induction is the problem of justifying the belief that the unobserved resembles the observed." How he arrived at this skeptical conclusion will occupy the attention of this unit after we have exhausted Hume on causation.

David Hume made use of many examples but the most famous, which this unit shall employ is the billiard ball instance. Suppose that we have one billiard ball lying at rest on the table, and another moving rapidly towards it. When they collide, it's logicalfor the one at rest to start moving as a result of the collision? For hume, it is easy to imagine that the one at rest remains in that state, while the other ball returns in the direction from which it came (Salmon, 2002: 20).

In this example, Hume invites his readers to imagine a case of one ball at rest and another that is in motion which collides with the former. According to him, we are by experience led to think that as a result of the collision the former ball should start moving. Hence, the belief that one ball is the cause of another's motion? He avers that it is habit and doubt if we can ever establish the cause of an event. Thus, Hume, in section VII titled "Of the Idea of Necessary Connexion" in his *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, avers:

> When we look about us towards external objects, and consider the operation of causes, we are never able, in a single instance, to discover any power or necessary connexion; any quality, which binds the effect to the cause, and renders the one an infallible consequence of the other. We only find, that the one does actually, in fact, follow the other. The impulse of one billiard-ball is attended with motion in the second. This is the whole that appears to the outward senses. The mind feels no sentiment or inward impression* from this succession of objects: Consequently, there is not, in

any single, particular instance of cause and effect, anything which can suggest the idea of power or necessary connexion (Hume, 2007: 46).

Hume examines two arguments to support his position. First, he searched for logical relations between cause and effect. He concluded that it would be impossible to construe an effect logically from a cause since other possible causes are conceivable without contradiction. For instance, let us assume that a sleeper sets an alarm for 4 P.M. and exactly this period a large thunder clap sounded, bringing the sleeper to life. Hume invites us to ask which is actually the cause (alarm or thunder clap) of the effect (waking state of sleeper). Hume with this logic claims that we cannot ascertain which is the real cause as one cannot be ruled out by another. This implies that "cause and effect are not logical relations" (Salmon, 2002: 20).

The second possibility that Hume explores is a physical relation. He believes that when a cause and effect happens, there are three physical or factual relations that are observable:
- Cause appears before effect;
- Contiguity or close proximity in space and time; and
- Constant conjunction producing similar results in other similar cases.

Hume thereby concludes that beyond these three, he cannot observe what actually caused an activity. In his words,: "Beyond these three circumstances of contiguity, priority and constant conjunction, I can discover nothing in this cause" (Hume, 2007: 213).

Hume, therefore attained skeptical conclusion regarding the real connection between the cause and the effect. Hume concludes that the constant conjunction, which reveals nothing about the causal relations in the physical situation, has an influence on our minds. If we observe the same pattern of billiard-ball collisions several times, we come to expect the pattern to be repeated. When we see the collision, "habit" – Hume's term – leads us to expect motion to occur in the ball initially at rest. Notice, however, that this conclusion puts the connection between cause and effect in the human mind, not in the physical world (Salmon, 2002: 21).

The discourse on causation has however, evolved into induction. It needs to be stated categorically that this issue originates with David Hume's famous argument in section IV of his *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding,* which we had considered above. According to the standard interpretation, Hume there puts forward the thesis of inductive skepticism*:* the thesis that inductive inferences are never justified, that is, that the premises of an inductive argument provide *no reason at all* for believing the conclusion (Hume, 2007). The reasoning given by

Hume has been explored in an earlier unit so we shall not concern ourselves with this here.

The idea that we have no justification for whatever knowledge of induction is not being taken light-handedly by philosophers. It is at this point that we shall concern with some of them. Paul Edwards believes that Hume treats the idea of 'reason' differently. To Edwards, Hume meant that "the term reason means 'deductively conclusive reason'" (Edwards, 1949: 142). Unfortunately, this is mistaken—Hume was not claiming merely that the conclusions of inductive arguments are not absolutely certain, but rather that they are not justified at all (Huemer, 2001: 295).

 Another scholar that made a strong case against the skeptical conclusions of Hume regarding the possibility and validity of inductive reasoning is Nelson Goodman.

Nelson Goodman argues for dissolution of the traditional problem of induction. In his view, to show that an inductive argument is justified, all we have to do is show how that inference accords with our accepted argumentative practices. (He compares this to how we find a correct definition, by finding the definition that corresponds to our actual use of the term that is to be defined.) However, Goodman identifies another, "new" problem of induction, which is the problem of stating the actual rules of inductive inference that we accept (Goodman, 1973). Traditionally, it was thought, roughly, that an inductive inference was simply any inference of the form,

> All observed As have been B.
> Therefore (probably), all As are B.

From all of the above, it becomes obvious that if philosophers are failing to grapple with the problem of induction, how is it possible that science's employment of it is flawless. We shall examine this shortly with some scientific instances.

Let us imagine scientist-astronomists in Aristotle and Ptolemy who believe that the earth is the center of the universe as a result of induction from their 'crude' knowledge of the heavens. Stephen Hawkings (1988: 3) captures their thoughts in his words: "Aristotle thought the earth was stationary and that the sun, the moon, the planets, and the stars moved in circular orbits about the earth. He believed this because he felt, for mystical reasons, that the earth was the center of the universe, and that circular motion was the most perfect."

Now, it is not surprising that even the church built on this falsehood that she resisted for centuries that the earth is the centre of focus for all the other creations. But this was soon challenged and they had to give way to the idea of heliocentrism

which is the thesis that the sun actually is the centre of the universe and not the earth. This is in a way was a 'slap' on the Christian dogma (Alozie, 2004) (Hawkings, 1988).

When we consider another important aspect of Physics, we notice that the problem regarding the behaviours of light was contested. At one point, it is considered that light is a particle and at another point, it is the claim that light is a wave. The problem that all inductions made by these theories may in fact be wrong as David Hume had reminded us. It was in the 20th century that both wave and particles were considered simultaneously to birth the 'wavicle' theory of light (Alozie, 2004).

Thus far, we can see how science in the Western world works as we have been able to consider the connection between causality and scientific inferences. The last portion of this unit is to look at how attempts have been made to improve the criterion of scientific methodology in the West.

1.3.3 The Criterion Question of Scientific Methodology

Since it is difficult to define science without mentioning its method for inquiry, some groups of scholars met in Vienna, Austria to provide a solid ground to this method and to demarcate science from non-science. This group soon came to be known as logical positivists or members of Vienna Circle. In the words of Princewill Alozie (2004: 40) "Logical Positivism is a group of scholars who were also members of the Vienna Club or Circle." They proposed that the main method or criterion that distinguishes science from any other intellectual effort is reductionism which is captured within the fold of verificationism.

In the words of Huemer (2002:128), reductionism is the view that every statement can be translated into a statement or collection of statements about sensory experiences (idealists hold this view). W.V.O Quine (1951) considers the positivist view that each statement can be associated with a class of possible experiences that would confirm it and another class that would disconfirm it, to be a weakened form of reductionism. This in essence is the thread of connection between reductionism and verificationism, both one of the cardinal principles of the Philosophers of Science in the Logical Positivist Club. The same is true for Oswald Hafling who mentions that "mental phenomena can be reduced, in some sense, to the vocabulary of the material or physical" (Hafling, 1996:195).

Another idea, which was central to logical positivism and remains of central importance today, is that philosophical questions are largely questions of language, and that theories of meaning are therefore of central importance (Hafling, 1996:194). As we had already hinted at this in the introductory part of this study, we shall explore some other aspects of the reductionist method in the

philosophy of science. It is the case that aside their method of reductionism, the group attacked metaphysics a great deal. In fact, they sought the total elimination of the metaphysical enterprise.

Various conceptions, interpretations and understanding of the term have been held, even before Aristotle who holds that the first principle is the 'Unmoved Mover' which gained popularity among prominent scholastics such as Augustine and Aquinas. Earlier philosophers before Plato and Aristotle had attempted to ground the basic constituent of the universe on a single substance. Thales had opted for water, Heraclitus fire, the Stoics, Logos, etc. This is why Rudolf Carnap avers that:

> The sort of propositions I wish to denote as metaphysical may most easily be made clear by some examples: the Essence and Principle of the world is "Water", said Thales, "Fire", said Heraclitus, "the Infinite", said Anaximander; "Number", said Pythagoras (Carnap 1998:461).

However, the debate between what Aristotle called *metaphysical specialis* and *metaphysical generalis* is yet to be resolved in the present century despite Kant's (1964) recommendation that *metaphysical specialis* be grounded in *metaphysical generalis*.

However, in the early 20th century, some linguists, philosophers and scientists, called for the repudiation of metaphysics as an intellectual enterprise. Popular minds here are: Moritz Schlick, Rudolf Carnap, Alfred Jules Ayer, Hans Reichenbach, Friedrich Waismann, Herbert Fiegl etc. These are the prominent figures in the Vienna Circle. The Circle or club was established in Vienna. The Circle was interested in demarcating science from non-science (Alozie 2004:40).What arguments did these minds converge against metaphysics? It should be recalled that the destructive criticisms of metaphysics may be traced to David Hume who had called for burning of books on the subject (Hume 2007: lvi).

In a related development, Moritz Schlick (1926:117) opines that the metaphysician "…seeks vain illusion." This was exactly echoed by Rudolf Carnap (1959: 36) in the following words:

> Our claim that the statements of metaphysics are entirely meaningless, that they do not assert anything,… how could it be explained that so many men in all ages and nations among them eminent minds, spend so much energy, on metaphysics if the latter consisted of nothing but mere words, nonsensically juxtaposed?

Alfred Jules Ayer (1952), one of the staunch arch enemies of metaphysics had proposed the *Verification Principle* which ruled out statements whose propositions cannot be observed.

As simple as the method of Western science is, it needs to be said that it has gone under serious critical examination from Popper which led to the evolution of the criterion of Western science. The aim is to distinguish what counts as science from non-science. Obviously, the method of inquiry counts and lends credence to what science *is*. For instance, the Vienna Circle or logical positivism as they are popular called used the principle of verification to dichotomise science from non-science. They held that science alone is meaningful. They furthered that even meaningfulness comprises of verifiability owing to science as an orientation affiliated to empirical verification (Popper, 1959: 11). Alfred Jules Ayer, Rudolf Carnap, Hans Reichenbach, Moritz Schlick are some of the prominent members of logical positivism which we already considered a while ago, hold dear to this scientific postulate. Karl Popper however disagrees with these minds.

Popper offers that logical positivism had coalesced two philosophical problems (meaning and demarcation) and then employed the verification principle as a panacea to both of them (Afisi, 2013: 507). Popper turns the tide to argue for the negative idea of falsificationism. Falsificationism is an approach to statements, hypotheses or theories with the inherent possibility to prove it to be false. A statement is falsifiable if it is possible to conceive an argument which proves the statement in question to be false. In this sense, to falsify is synonymous with to nullify, meaning not to commit fraud but show to be false. Falsification considers scientific statements individually. As Popper puts it, a decision is required on the part of the individual scientist to accept or reject the statements that makes up a theory or that might falsify it. Popper stressed that unfalsifiable statements are equally important in science (Afisi & Ofuasia, 2018: 171). Whereas Popper was concerned in the main with the logic or method of the growth of knowledge, borrowing from evolutionary biology and cognitive psychology, his reflections has come under critical receptions. It appears there are some scholars who do not share in his outlook or attitude concerning how the knowledge of scientific knowledge blossoms. These are the scholars that we concern with.

Thomas Kuhn is one of the most influential minds that raised some objections and points of departure from Popper's evolutionary epistemology captured in his idea of negative falsificationism. Kuhn's influential book *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* examined in detail the history of science. Kuhn argued that scientists work within a conceptual paradigm that strongly influences the way in which they see data. Scientists will go to great length to defend their paradigm against falsification, by the addition of *ad hoc* hypotheses to existing theories. Changing a 'paradigm' is difficult, as it requires an individual scientist to break with his or her

peers and defend a heterodox theory (Kuhn, 1970). Kuhn's work as a vindication for Popper's foray into evolutionary biology, since it provided historical evidence that science progressed by rejecting inadequate theories, and that it is the *decision*, on the part of the scientist, to accept or reject a theory that is the crucial element of falsificationism. Foremost amongst these was Imre Lakatos.

Lakatos attempted to explain Kuhn's work by arguing that science progresses by the falsification of *research programs* rather than the more specific universal statements of naïve falsification. In Lakatos' approach, a scientist works within a research program that corresponds roughly with Kuhn's 'paradigm.' Whereas Popper rejected the use of *ad hoc* hypotheses as unscientific, Lakatos accepted their place in the development of new theories (Lakatos, 1978). In other words, Imre Lakatos maintained that all scientific theories have a metaphysical "hard core" essential for the generation of hypotheses and theoretical assumptions. Thus, according to Lakatos, scientific changes are connected with vast cataclysmic metaphysical revolutions (Lakatos, 1970).

In a related development, Paul Feyerabend examined the history of science with a more critical eye, and ultimately rejected any prescriptive methodology at all. He rejected Lakatos' argument for ad hoc hypothesis, arguing that science would not have progressed without making use of any and all available methods to support new theories. He rejected any reliance on a scientific method, along with any special authority for science that might derive from such a method. Rather, he claimed that if one is keen to have a universally valid methodological rule, epistemological anarchism or *anything goes* would be the only candidate. For Feyerabend (1992), any special status that science might have derives from the social and physical value of the results of science rather than its method. Much recent work has been devoted to analyzing the role of metaphysics in scientific theorizing. Alexandre Koyré led this movement, declaring in his book *Metaphysics and Measurement*, "It is not by following experiment, but by outstripping experiment, that the scientific mind makes progress" (Koyre, 1968: 80).

For Paul Feyerabend, even science does not need rationalists to stand on its feet. What science has offered us is a century of failure and to say metaphysics is irrelevant as some want to say is very untrue. In his own words, Feyerabend showed that some of the disciplines that have a distinct logic of their own today may be said to have been plucked from metaphysics. He explains that:

> Scientific education as we know it today has precisely this aim. It simplifies 'science' by simplifying its participants: first, a domain of research is defined. The domain is separated from the rest of history (physics, for example, is separated from metaphysics and from

theology) and given a 'logic' of its own. A thorough training in such a 'logic' then conditions those working in the domain; it makes their actions more uniform and it freezes large parts of the historical process as well (Feyebrand, 1992: 11).

Now, several scientists are usually prone to say some disciplines should adopt their methodology as though the scientific method is the best out of all. Feyerabend (1992: iii) insists that: "Again I want to make two points: first, that science can stand on its own feet and does not need any help from rationalists, secular humanists, Marxists and similar religious movements; and, secondly, that non-scientific cultures, procedures and assumptions can also stand on their own feet and should be allowed to do so, if this is the wish of their representatives."

In their book *Fashionable Nonsense*, physicists Alan Sokal and Jean Bricmont criticized falsifiability on the grounds that it does not accurately describe the way science really works. They argue that theories are used because of their successes, not because of the failures of other theories. Sokal and Bricmont (1998: 62) write: "When a theory successfully withstands an attempt at falsification, a scientist will, quite naturally, consider the theory to be partially confirmed and will accord it a greater likelihood or a higher subjective probability. ... But Popper will have none of this: throughout his life he was a stubborn opponent of any idea of 'confirmation' of a theory, or even of its "probability'."

They further argue that falsifiability cannot distinguish between astrology and astronomy, as both make technical predictions that are sometimes incorrect. In spite of the foregoing objections levelled against Popper's evolutionary epistemology, it needs to be stated that Popper has come to be defended by David Miller, a contemporary philosopher of critical rationalism.

Miller (1994), in his defense and restatement of critical rationalism admits that the critics of Popper have been searching for good reasons whereas there is nothing as such. He maintains that the quest for any such thing as good reason either leads to an infinite regress or begs the question. Elsewhere, Miller (2000:156) argues that astrology does not lay itself open to falsification, while astronomy does, and this is the litmus test for science. The main thing is that falsificationism and the demarcation criterion is not fool proof, however, the objections too are not error free.

Self-Assessment Exercise

1. Science has a universal definition (a) True (b) False

2. Logical Positivism was established at where? (a) Brussels (b) London (c) Munich (d) Wien

1.4   Summary

The discourse on science, as we have been able to show reveals that it is impossible for the Western mind to conceive it without a unique methodology. Furthermore, efforts have also been made to not only make this methodology obvious but to also distinguish it from other areas of scholarship that may seem to have similar ways of obtaining knowledge about the world but not scientific in the real sense. This has led to the debate on the demarcation criterion which we have considered very well in the present unit. From the look of things, it is clear that there is a scientific tradition in the Western world that stretches back to ancient Greece and which has also allowed scholars from almost every part of the world to contribute to it. How the Western tradition have been able to tolerate these other scientific cultures is however questionable and the issue will be looked at in other units of this module.

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1.6   Possible Answers to SAE

1. (b);
2. (d)

Unit 2: Modern Science and Oriental Ethnoscience

2.1   Introduction

The agenda of this unit is to show that there were scientific ideas in Asia before contact with the West. What will be deduced is the fact that there are some scientific ideas with philosophical implications that have been the concern of the Orientals that qualify as science (see Capra 1975). This establishes the position of advocates of intercultural philosophy that various intellectual cultures of the world have value and should be given appropriate attention.

2.2   Learning Outcomes

The agenda of this unit is for students to understand the:
*   Idea of ethnoscience;
*   How ethnoscience functions among the Orientals; and
*   Relevance of ethnoscience for making sense of modern physics.

2.3.1   The Universality of Ethnoscience

Ethnoscience connotes the inquiry into what the members of any culture know about the actual world, its *modus operandi* and the interactions among the parts, components, or features of their knowledge of the world. Marc Auge shares this outlook too as he presents ethnoscience as the effort "to reconstitute what serves as science for others, their practices of looking after themselves and their bodies, their botanical knowledge, but also their forms of classification of making connections, etc" (Auge 1999, 118). It is that area of research that is gradually becoming replete in intellectual research culture of global south as a result of the revelation that "the global north is intellectually exhausted and fatigued" (Chimakonam 2019, 11). A similar finding had come from Bonaventura de Sousa Santos who avers that this 'stagnation' emanated from the fact that "after five centuries of 'teaching' the world, the global north seems to have lost the capacity to learn from the experiences of the world. In other words, it looks as if colonialism has disabled the global north "from learning in non-colonial terms, that is, in terms that allow for the existence of histories other than the 'universal' history of the West" (Santos 2016, 19). What can we learn from this excerpt of Santos?

The foregoing subtle realization has informed the trust in ethnoscience which seeks alliance between the social sciences and the humanities (e.g. anthropology, sociology, psychology and philosophy) with natural sciences such as biology, medicine, ecology from a transdisciplinary stance (Ingold 2000, 406-7). No one captures the idea better than Scott Atran (1991, 650) who passes ethnoscience as the effort that looks at culture with a scientific perspective. Personally, I tinker that ethnoscience concerns with the scientific mentality that displays itself in various indigenous cultures all over the world. In this sense, the revered modern science has its humble beginnings in ancient Greek ethnophilosophy. With the parallels from Eastern ethnoscience, it is clear that modern science and its Western origin is not an absolute monolithic standard for understanding the actual world – one of the strong points of Oluwole.

Furthermore, it needs to be hinted however that ethnoscience as a research framework is neither new to the world nor Africa. It has however suffered from unfair criticisms and comparison vis-à-vis Western science and its method. This is evident in the verdict of the anthropologist Robin Horton (1967, 53) who taught for several years in Nigeria. Whereas he admits that traditional thought provides a theoretical form which "places things in a causal order wider than that provided by common sense," he was in a hurry to draw the comparison with Western science stressing that when indigenous knowledge is characterized by "an absolute acceptance of the established theoretical tenets" (Horton 1867, 155-6) modern science does not. What Horton's works and similar anthropological efforts concerning Africa have done is an unfair and derogatory exposition of African ethnoscience, thereby giving the erroneous impression that traditional African way of perceiving reality is inferior or subaltern. They fail to understand that the ethnoscience of these peoples "refers to the system of knowledge and cognition typical of a given culture…the sum of a given society's folk classifications…its particular way of classifying its material and social universe" (Sturtervant 1964, 99-100).

Just like the Orientals, whose ethnoscience explored other arrays of consciousness to codify reality and arrive at conclusions that Western (modern) science is coming to confirm within the last century, Africa too has its unique way of explaining reality, which is valid in its own right even if this may look unintelligible to the Western mind alien to the logic that girds thought and theory in Africa. For instance, the ethnomathematician, Ron Eglash (1999, 19-40) who studied indigenous African fractals mathematics relays that when Europeans first came to Africa, they considered the architecture disorganised and primitive. It never occurred to them that the Africans might have been using a form of mathematics that they had not discovered yet. The lesson is that when various cultures are allowed to flourish, their individual ingenuities will be revealed. In the

next section of this unit, the ethnoscience of the Orientals will be used to affirm this conviction.

2.3.2 The Balance between Oriental Ethnoscience and Modern Physics

Since the publication of Fritjof Capra's *The Tao of Physics,* it has been established that what parades as modern science is a rehearsal of ancient Indian and Chinese ethnosciences. A few years afterward, Gary Zukav's *The Dancing Wu Li Masters* (similar to what Capra termed as the Cosmic Dance), reinforced the convictions of Capra. In the third part of his classic, Capra draws the places of convergence between modern science and Oriental science paying attention to realities such as: the Unity of Diversity; Space-Time; World of Opposites; Dynamic Universe; Emptiness and Form; Cosmic Dance; Quark Symmetries; Patterns of Change; and Interpenetration (Capra 1975). Due to space-time limitation, we shall focus on the concept of Space-Time between these 'scientific traditions' – Eastern and Western to illustrate how they intersect.

Modern science, through advancements in quantum and relativity theories not only confirm some semblances with Eastern ethnoscientific traditions but surrender as well that "all the concepts we use to describe nature are limited, that they are not features of reality, as we tend to believe, but creations of the mind" (Capra 1975, 57). The concepts – 'space' and 'time' had been conceived by classical physics to exist as absolutes independent of the human mind. This is made viable by their excessive trust in the three-dimensional conditioning of reality.

In classical physics, the three-dimensional approach to space encoded in Euclid's geometry continued to influence European schools in the beginning of the previous century. Plato had believed that God is a geometer. Since there is no law of physics that excludes space and time from its formulation, classical physics had held a conception of absolute time and space (Alozie 2004). That Physics, I must relay, also thrived on the idea of absolute three-dimensional space irrespective of inherent material objects which obeys the laws of Euclidean geometry. Consequently, time is perceived as a distinct entity, absolute too, and flows liberated from the material world and human cognition. It is fixed, immutable and organized in the 'before,' 'after,' or 'simultaneous' which corresponds to past, future and present respectively. This outlook has been challenged validly by quantum theory. What then is quantum theory about? How could such an idea may have been developed among the ancient scholars of Asia?

Quantum theory challenges the approaches of reality from independent space and time. The theory as Princewill Alozie (2004, 110) admits that "instead of knowing something by observing it, quantum mechanics suggests something is not there, until you observe it." The same reality observed by Agent P and Q from opposing

ends, for instance, will subtly differ and be relative for each of them. This is known in physics as the "observer effect" (Sheath 2019, 18).

The same also applies to temporal considerations. Temporal events, in classical mechanics, are arranged in time sequence following the velocity of light at 186, 000 miles per hour – a speed that is very high compared to any other velocity we experience giving the impression that we observe events at the instant they occur (Capra 1975, 59). This has been proved to be false as light requires time to travel from the space of event to the location of the observer. This idea of time has led to the abandonment of absolute space in Newtonian or classical mechanics – a faraway event which occurred at a particular time for one observer may appear earlier or later for another observer. The implication is that, like any quanta, space and time do not exist if they are not observed. They are not out there, fixed as classical mechanics tell us. This is why Mendel Sachs (1969, 53) asserts that "relativity theory implies that the space and time coordinates are the only elements of a language that is used by an observer to describe his environment." This understanding of time and space, which is peculiar to relativity theory, is not new to the Orientals.

Eastern philosophers and scientists of ancient times had recognized all along that time and space are particular states of consciousness (Ashvaghosha 2005, 107). Likewise, ethnoscientists of ancient India and China, have learned the capacity to "transcend the three-dimensional world of everyday life to experience a higher, multidimensional reality" (Capra 1975, 61). It is however important to state as Capra too does that "the dimension of these states of consciousness may not be the same as the ones we are dealing with in relativistic physics, but it is striking that they have led the mystic towards notions of space and time which are very similar to those implied by relativity theory" (Capra 1975, 61). The idea that there are various forms of consciousness parallel with the present one is endorsed by William James (2002, 300-1) who relays:

>Our waking consciousness, whilst all about it, parted from it by the filmiest of screens, there lie potential forms of consciousness entirely different. We may go through life without suspecting their existence, but apply the requisite stimulus, and at a touch they are there in all their completeness, different types of mentality which probably somewhere have their field of application and adaptation. No account of the universe in its totality can be final which leaves these other forms of consciousness quite disregarded.

This understanding of space-time finds expression in the *Avatamsaka* strand of Mahayana Buddhism. The aggregate kernel of *Avatamsaka* concerning space-time in Eastern ethnoscience is relayed thus:

> The significance of the Avatamsaka and its philosophy is unintelligible unless we once experience…a state of complete dissolution where there is no more distinction between mind and body, subject and object…We look around and perceive that…every object is related to every other object…not only spatially, but temporally…As a fact of pure experience, there is no space without time, no time without space; they are interpenetrating (Suzuki 1969, 33).

The foregoing has been corroborated by Taoist sage Hui-neng, the Sixth Zen patriarch who asserts: "The absolute tranquility is the present moment. Though it is at this moment there is no limit to this moment, and herein is eternal delight" (Watts 1957, 201). Elsewhere, the general consensus among the ethnoscientists and philosophers of ancient Oriental is that "the past and the future are both rolled up in this present moment of illumination, and this present moment is not something standing still with all its contents, for it ceaselessly moves on" (Suzuku 1968, 148-9). Elsewhere, we can read that the actual world comprises "of several different worlds organised like rings of onions. At the summit of manifestation, it is possible to see the past, present and future in a single glimpse" (Sheath 2019, 20).

That the ethnoscience of the East has some levels of logical equilibrium with modern science, implies that the latter is not saying anything substantially new to the Oriental world at least. Quantum and relativity theories are not wholly unheard of as Julius Robert Oppenheimer (1954, 8-9), the three-time Nobel Prize nominee of physics informs: "They have a history, and in Buddhist and Hindu thought a more considerable and central place. What we shall find is an exemplification, an encouragement, and a refinement of old wisdom." In a related theme, the Nobel Prize winning Physicist Neils Bohr (1961, 20) validates: "For a parallel to the lesson of atomic theory…we must turn to those kinds of epistemological problems with which already thinkers like the Buddha and Lao Tzu have been confronted, when trying to harmonise our position as spectators in the great drama of existence."

One point to be gleaned is that the Orientals did not embroil themselves in the meta-philosophical question whether or not they have a philosophy or science – something initiated but impeding to the early developments of contemporary African philosophy. The Orientals merely forayed into their ritual archives (that in

the African context would be called Ethnophilosophy), which in most cases is gravid with ethnoscientific postulations. The Oriental intellectual cultures of ancient China, Japan, Korea and India were in no hurry to show the world their intellectual capacity. Rather they engaged in cross-cultural conversations within the continent leading to the revival of a philosophy and ethnoscience that competes with Western philosophy and modern science.

Self-Assessment Exercise

1. Plato had believed that God is a _____ (a) Mathematician (b) Spirit (c) Geometer (d) Philosopher

2. The statement: "For a parallel to the lesson of atomic theory…we must turn to those kinds of epistemological problems with which already thinkers like the Buddha and Lao Tzu have been confronted, when trying to harmonise our position as spectators in the great drama of existence" was made by _____

3. Quantum theory challenges the approaches of reality from independent space and time (a) False (b) True

1.4 Summary

This unit defined ethnoscience as the way a particular culture conceives and interacts with the world. The scientific cultures of the Orientals have been used to show how it anticipates some of the findings of modern physics in the 20th century.

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1.6   Possible Answers to SAE

1. (c)
2. Neils Bohr
3. (b)

Unit 3: Ethnoscientific Reflections among Ancient Africans

3.1   Introduction

In this unit, we will consider the African ethnoscience by looking at how ancient Africans conceived objects of reality. Another crucial issue which African science faces is the problem of methodology and we shall look at that along with how causality functions for the trado-African.

3.2   Learning Outcomes

This unit will equip students with:

- A firm grasp of the African way of doing science devoid of external influence; and
- An understanding of the ways ancient Africans conceive causality and apply same in their reflections.

3.3.1 The Question of African Science and Methodology

What makes an exercise or inquiry into nature pass as African? Various scholars have provided various suggestions and we are going to consider their positions. Much like the historical and intellectual debate on the existence of African philosophy, the existence of a distinct African science with its specialized method(s) has also been a subject of debate. One of many "denialists" of the existence of African science is Samuel Tunde Bajah (1980). Bajah published a monograph entitled "African Science: Fact or Fiction" wherein he argues against the notion of the existence of an African science. His assertion is that "there is science in Africa but there is no African science" (Bajah, 1980: 25).

Contrary to Bajah, a profound assertion on the existence of African science can be found in Brian Murfin's (1992) article entitled, "African Science in School Curriculum." Murfin unequivocally responded that, there is African science; and its existence is what calls for the activities, the nature of understanding and explanations of the phenomena that occur in Africa. So, just as science exists in other parts of the world, there is also African science where efforts are made by traditional thinkers in Africa through their years of training in attempts to unfold the truth in nature (Murfin, 1992). This is further buttressed by Nwankwo Ezeabasili's position that the African has an authentic scientific culture.

Accordingly, African science is "African account of nature and how it works" (Ezeabasili, 1977: xi). Apparently, this debate on whether there is African science or not continued for some time until Chimakonam (2012b) first attempted a broad-based system in African science.

In an attempt to show that science is a universal affair some African scholars have come forward to provide detailed analysis concerning the unique nature of African science. It is the task of the next section to consider the positions of these apologists.

Ivan Van Sertima
This is one of the foremost and outspoken minds both on the reality of African science and the greatness of ancient African civilization. In his detailed work, *Blacks in Science: Ancient and Modern,* Van Sertima (1983) argues that Africa had an impressive scientific tradition in certain centers and historical periods with a particular focus on African American inventions, especially in the fields of telecommunications, space, and nuclear science. Van Sertima places in perspective the role of the African in world civilization, especially the little-known contributions to the advancement of Europe with a major unit on the evolution of the Caucasoid discusses scientific discoveries of the African origins of humankind and the shift towards albinism (dropping of pigmentation) by the Grimaldi African during an ice age in Europe (Zulu, 2009: 238).

Second, the debt owed to African and Arab Moors for certain inventions, usually credited to the Renaissance, is discussed, as well as the much earlier Egyptian influence on Greek science and philosophy (Zulu, 2009: 238). Well documented achievements of African scientists can be found in Sertima's reflections where African science excels in various disciplines of Western categorisation of science (Afisi, 2016: 65). The various accounts of scholars in Sertima's edited work reveals African science contributions in chemistry; in astronomy on how the *Dogon* of Mali had an excellent understanding of the solar system; in mathematics, on how the *Yorubas* had a superbly complex number system based on twenty; in biology; in agricultural crop production; and in medicine and surgery (Sertima, 1984). It is based on Van Sertima's ideas that some contemporary African scholars have built the arguments concerning the possibility of African science. Let us consider the contribution of Chris Akpan to the discourse.

Chris Akpan
In his paper, "The Method of African Science: A Philosophical Evaluation," Akpan (2010) enumerates a number of methods that characterize traditional African science. He notes that the methods of observation and experimentation, which are hallmarks of every science or systematic indigenous forms of inquiry also, have a significant place in traditional African science. Akpan (2010: 15),

however, avers that the level of sophistication that observation and experimentation have reached in Western science today is higher than what traditional African science presents.

The above assertion, by Akpan (2010), may be correct if we are able to essentially comprehend the advancements in observation and laboratory experimentations that have come to characterize Western science today. Indeed, the level of scientific innovations and inventions that Western science epitomizes is significantly impressive. There is really no room for comparing the level of achievements and developments between Western science and traditional African science, except for the purposes of a cross-cultural "polylogue". The purpose of this "polylogue" is that when two cultures, for instance, dialogue, ideally people in both cultures learn from their understanding of the other what can be accepted or jettisoned. This would represent the possibilities of mutual benefit if there is intelligent dialogue concerning the differences and the commonalities (Afisi, 2012: 104). In this way, while traditional African science may not be as burgeoning as to the same extent as that in the West, it yet maintains significant indigenous methods of inquiry of its own.

Moreover, the gradual pace at which traditional African science can be said to be developing can be looked at from the perspective that the gradual level of development that Western science had to go through right from the Ancient Greek period through to the Renaissance, and to its current form, is indicative of the kind of dialectics that Hegel talked about (Afisi, 2016: 65). At the thesis stage, Western science would be "ancient" in its raw initial form. It moved beyond the stage of anti-thesis to the stage of synthesis. As Hegel noted, development is a becoming and it is non-static. Ultimately, the synthesis becomes a new thesis, and the cycle is a continuum. This is the state of development in science. This is also obtainable in traditional African science.

Traditional African science is no longer in its "ancient" thesis stage. The development in trends and methods of traditional African science has evolved significantly over the years to a level of sophistication that can truly be termed scientific (Afisi, 2016: 65). Akpan (2010) while discussing the method of African science on an issue like causation provided an improved analysis that departs from the Western understanding of the issue. In other words, even for the Western scientists who accept causation in science, causality is usually limited to empirical causation, where questions such as what makes 'A' to cause 'B' or how event 'B' is possible in the face of 'A' are asked (Akpan, 2010: 15). However, to the traditional African scientist, causality helps to understand the logical richness of generalizations in science. It helps to deepen the understanding of the nature and causes of events beyond the causal empirical explanation of which Western science is limited. The Western scientist is interested in explaining the empirical

causation involved in event 'A' causing event 'B'. The specialist traditional African knowledge inquirer is involved with what Kwame Gyekye (1997: 28) calls "agentive causation." The traditional African scientist is interested in the explanation of the cause of an event, a sickness or death. The scientist will tend to raise the questions "who caused it" and "why it was caused" rather than the "what and how – questions" (Akpan, 2010: 15). This is the kind of analysis that Sodipo (2010) whose ideas we already discussed in the earlier parts of this unit concerned with. Let us now consider another prominent African scholar who is confident that there is an African science with its unique method.

Jonathan Chimakonam
In furtherance of the thesis that African science exists in order to find solutions to some of the fundamental challenges faced within its cosmology, Chimakonam's three-way justification of the African science project defends this assertion. First is the need to develop a science that fits with African native thought system. Second is the need to have an environment friendly science as an alternative to Western science, which currently presents serious environmental problems. Third is the need for a science that can offer safe and adequate energy to the world (Chimakonam, 2012b: 8). These justifications present African science as that which arises out of the utmost need to establish an indigenous brand of African logic embedded within the African thought system. It is a science which is eco-friendly and presents itself as capable of providing safe and adequate energy to the people of Africa (Afisi, 2016: 65). Such is a science that its practitioners have shown the capacity for relevance, as African traditional scientists have continued to excel in the various interdisciplinary fields of science, be it, orthopaedic, soil, crop and animal sciences, metrology, astronomy, and medical sciences (Afisi, 2016: 66).

Others such as Gyekye and Jim Unah have affirmed that the richness of metaphysics and ontological categories of causality in traditional African science is validated. So the condemnation of it is misplaced, because it is what gives distinctiveness to the methodology of its science. Both Gyekye and Unah are assertive and categorical about the positive dimensions of these ontological categories of causality; as they are compatible with the story of a harmonious African society. To Unah, the African society is a world where everything interpenetrates, where the physical and spiritual conflate. There exists an extraordinary harmony in African society, one of synthetic unity and compatibility among all things (Unah, 1995: 107). In relation to traditional African science, Gyekye also affirmed that the method of traditional African science has significant mystico- religious undertone because traditional African culture is greatly rich in the idea of causality, which is generally understood in terms of spirits and mystical powers (Gyekye, 1997: 28).

Clearly, such affirmation of a mystic-religious orientation in traditional African science is not a negative idea. Rather, it is a strength for which traditional African science remains distinct in its nature and methodology. It signifies its richness in metaphysics and epistemology as forms of scientific inquiry. This richness embellishes the understanding of a scientific outlook of the world through means beyond empirical causation. So, as a method of inquiry, mystico-religious consciousness is both spiritual and mystical. Although it is much more spiritual and no less literal-minded, the mystico-religious inquiry cannot be said to be the complete antithesis of Western science. Truly, one can say that in most non-Western scientific traditions thinking resonates with the abstract idea of nous (which sees knowledge as the perception of the mental rather than the physical) that is associated with the mystic philosophy of Plotinus. It can also be reiterated that mysticism or religiosity does not necessarily hinder the progress of knowledge, as Western societies were still largely religious while science progressed there (Afisi, 2016: 68). So, the embrace of the mystico-religious mode of inquiry that is associated with traditional African science as a systematic indigenous knowledge of non-Western orientation, is quite compatible with the claim that the spiritual is incidental to the physical (Afisi, 2016: 68-9).

We can see from the analysis thus far how it is almost impossible to be talking about an African science that has similarity with the Western approach. We can see that from the analysis, that African science is fundamentally non-empirical thought admitting causality. It is this point that Christian Emedolu highlights specifically. How, then, does causality function among Africans? This is the task of the next section.

3.3.2 Causality in African Ethnoscience

In one of the previous units, we have already discussed the idea of causality and how it is helpful in scientific induction. In this section of this unit, we are focusing on the notion of causality among traditional Africans. This is important because it will assist us in comprehending how it informed the ethnoscience of Africans.

We begin with the claim that causality is a central dogma when we consider the idea of African science. In this regard, Chris Akpan (2010) identifies a fundamental method of traditional African science. This is the method of causality with an underlying mythico-religious dimension. In discussing causality as a method of science, Akpan points to the essential role that causality plays in the nature and character of traditional African science. In his general analysis of causality, Akpan first simply makes a sweeping generalization of the role of causality in Western science by stating how the Western scientist strives to give a causal explanation to things within the physical universe (Akpan, 2010: 15). Akpan's intention is to show that causal inevitability of natural phenomena underlies every scientific research (Afisi, 2016: 66). In making a clear distinction

on what makes causality in African science different from what is obtainable in the West, Akpan notes that caution must prevail in not confusing the idea of causal explanations with the idea of causality. He points out that though there are differences in agents of causation, as well as assumptions behind causative patterns, there is no fundamental difference in the idea of causality, whether in the West or in Africa. Causality still simply means "A causes B" in both contexts (Afisi, 2016: 66). We however disagree with Akpan on this subject. His examination of African science using the principle of causality lacks serious and reliable analysis especially when looked at from the angle of African ontology.

John Sodipo (2010: 91) is credited for emphasizing the ontological connection between an event and its non-empirical cause. Specifically, when the Western mind thinks that an event is caused by the other, Sodipo (2010: 91) maintains that the African even goes further to consider the works of some non-empirical forces within the African ontology as reasons for an event to have taken place. The African, according to Sodipo even when he understands that the fall of the tree may have been caused by lightening goes further to even examine the possibility of such a reality being understood from the workings of ontological realities like the malevolent forces which we considered in the preceding section. For Sodipo, these realities, even when they are non-empirical are usually given more priority over the empirical factors.

So as Akpan argues, even when the Western and African mind both believe in causal factors in the phenomena, it is also clear that the latter goes beyond the physical and invite the non-physical for the reason why some states of affairs are the way they are. Whether or not this thinking is guided by habit or custom as Hume would say is beyond the contention of this unit. Our point is to show that in the explanation of causality in African ontology, the non-physical ontological realities also play a part.

To have a better understanding of how causal factors, both physical and non-physical are crucial for African ontology, we shall examine the practice of rainmaking which is replete in many traditional African communities.

Human-Induced Rainfall in African Ethnoscience
The ability to control and divert rainfall is both tied to the non-physical aspects of African ontology as well as the Afro-ontological perception of the idea of causality which we have already explained in the foregoing sub-section.

In African traditional societies, through incantations and symbols, rain is prevented or diverted. Observably, as "the rain-maker burns certain leaves and sprinkles water, using sacred objects, especially rain-stones, words are uttered that

go to effect the desired result, namely, rainfall" (Aja, 1996: 117). These traditional rain-makers monopolize and shroud this sort of knowledge in secrecy and often use it for business purposes or for harming their perceived enemies.

Usually, they have agents, who go around informing them of venues and times for ceremonies and they extort money from the hosts of these ceremonies. Otherwise, they (rain-makers) would mess up any ceremonies if they are not paid. Regrettably, this knowledge is left in utter secrecy and this informed the reason for Africa's continuous epistemic backwardness. There are other areas of Africa's knowledge system, where this culture of epistemic secrecy abounds.

Self-Assessment Exercise

1. In the explanation of causality in African ontology, the non-physical ontological realities also play a part. (a) True (b) False

2. Pick the odd choice (a) Sertima (b) Chimakonam (c) Sodipo (d) Akpan

3.4   Summary
In this unit, we have been able to examine the idea of ethnoscience among Africans. We have also been able to illustrate with examples how central the concept of causality is for African ethnoscience. In the next unit, this will be made more obvious as we investigate the parallels between African and Western scientific cultures.

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3.6   Possible Answers to SAE
1. (a)
2. (c)

Unit 4: An Intercultural Engagement between African and Western Science

4.1   Introduction
4.2   Learning Outcomes
4.3   An Intercultural Exercise on African and Western Science
4.4   Summary
4.5   References/Further Readings/Web Sources
4.6   Possible Answers to SAE

4.1   Introduction

The preceding units of this module have been concerned with the ethnoscientific cultures of Asia and Africa and how they have been able to show some levels of similarity through the ambiance of intercultural study. In this unit, our principal focus is on the cross-cultural variables that may be deduced from the assessment of African and Western science.

4.2   Learning Outcomes

At the end of this unit, students should:

- Understand what is meant by science in the African and Western contexts;
- Accept that ideas need not conform to Western standards to be deemed scientific; and
- Appreciate the usefulness of intercultural philosophy in expanding the horizon of knowledge.

4.3   An Intercultural Exercise on African and Western Science

In this section, our aim is to draw the places of agreement and disagreement between Western and African science. We have already shown in module 1, the way causality plays out in the scientific culture of the West. Previously, we have also examined the main characterisations of African science and how causality plays a critical role. In the present section, we will highlight some of the observed similarities and differences between these cultures.

Firstly, it is important to explain that the traditions of science in each of the African and Western contexts give primacy to the idea of causation. We can see that the notion of causality plays an important role in the ways that scientific method functions for the Western mind and the African mind. Even when these traditions take the idea of causality seriously, it is important to also note that they have some places of differences. Previously, it has been made clear that from the Western angle, there is the look for causation in physical and logical relations. However, this is not for Africans.

From the African angle, non-empirical understanding of causation is given serious consideration. The physical and logical relations among objects, even when these are acknowledged, do not play any primary role in their understanding of the world.

Furthermore, the history of civilizations has shown that Western science has a defined method for understanding the world and predicts regularities in nature. From this, the history of Western science has accounted for several scientific and technological breakthroughs. On the other hand, African science may not be able to account for such feats. History and patents of scientific breakthroughs has not been kind to Africa's contribution to science.

Another reason that is connected to the failure to recognize the contribution of African science concerns the lack of a minimum method recogised by all scientists working in traditional science in Africa, on the one hand, as well as the failure by Western science to affirm that what is presented as scientific by Africans is indeed scientific because it is not in line with their own standards, construed to be both universal and absolute (Afisi 2016).

This kind of thinking led to the conception of African science by Western trained scientists as unscientific. It is therefore important to realize the need to further research into the emergence or birthing of a science that is indeed African that can solve African problems and also be able to assist other persons in other parts of the world in making their existence more meaningful.

It is our belief that a comparative analysis between African and Western science will continue to be unfair to Africa unless Africa is willing to make adequate contributions to the understanding of the world both in Africa and globally. It is our submission that when this is in place, a fair comparison between African and Western science might be possible, plausible and fair.

Self-Assessment Exercise

1. Both African and Western science take the idea of causality seriously (a) True (b) False

2. Intercultural philosophy facilitate an understanding of the basic ideas of various cultures of the world (a) True (b) False

4.4   Summary
In this unit, we have compared African and Western science to identify parallels and divergences. We have been able to show that the monolithic character of

Western science is one of the gridlocks serving as the failure to appreciate African ethnoscientific reflections.

4.5   References/Further Readings/Web Sources

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4.6   Possible Answers to SAE

1. (a)
2. (a)

End of Module Exercises

1. For Paul Feyerabend, even science needs rationalists to stand on its feet (a) True (b) False

2. Popper turns the tide to argue for the negative idea of which theory?

3. Oriental is another way of calling who? (a) European (b) African (c) Caucasians (d) Asians

4. Who is credited for emphasizing the ontological connection between an event and its non-empirical cause? (a) Sodipo (b) Ladipo (c) Akpan (d) Sertima

Module 3: Intercultural Philosophy and Some Thematic Concerns
Unit 1: The "Historical Question" concerning Lao-Tzu, Ọ̀rúnmìlà and Socrates
Unit 2: Lao-Tzu and Ọ̀rúnmìlà on the Discourse on Being
Unit 3: Discourse on the Soul in African, European and Oriental Cultures
Unit 4: African and Western Feminists on Patriarchy and Ectogenesis

Unit 1: The "Historical Question" concerning Lao-Tzu, Ọ̀rúnmìlà and Socrates

1.1   Introduction

In this unit, we will examine some of the crucial features of intercultural philosophy as we focus on how confusion arises over the lives and works of each of Lao-Tzu, Ọ̀rúnmìlà and Socrates. The agenda is to tease a common denominator among the three of them, as it pertains to whether or not the existence of each of them is real and historical or mythical and unreliable.

1.2   Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit, students should understand:

- The Ọ̀rúnmìlà problem;
- Understand that the Socratic problem is not limited to the West alone; and
- That Lao-Tzu also faces the dilemma of real existence as against mythical existence

1.3.1   The Lao-Tzu Problem

Beginning with Lao-Tzu, it is worthy of consideration that the only work which he is said to have ever written is *Laozi,* which is a compendium of his ideas. As correctly noted by Joshua Mark (2020), the work was later renamed *Tao-Te-Ching* which roughly translates as *The Classic Way and Virtue.* While there are discrepancies over the dates as well as the authorship of *Laozi,* it is generally credited to the Old Master, Lao-Tzu.

Alan Chan (2018) is circumspect over whether there was indeed a historical persona called Lao-Tzu. This circumspection is also shared by Will Durant (2014) who after citing the pre-Confucian magnitude of Lao-Tzu's ideas ended up adding: "…though we are not sure that he ever lived at all." The implication is that the personality of Lao-Tzu is subject to at least three articulations. First, general historicity perceives him as a legendary Chinese figure who might have never lived. Second, ancient Chinese scholarship sees him as a human who once lived. Third, the religious arm of Taoism, perceives him as a deity (Mark 2020).

1.3.2 The Ọ̀rúnmìlà Problem

Just as what the world knows about Socrates (see next section) might be gleaned from the writings of his disciples, the same may be said of *Ọ̀rúnmìlà*, whose thoughts have been compiled within the verses of the *Ifá* literary corpus. He is depicted in an *Odù Ifá* as an extraordinary persona. A brief account of his personality is therefore pertinent.

An *Ifá* tradition has it that *Ọ̀rúnmìlà* was sent along with other *Òrìṣà*s, (i.e. deities), to *Ilé-Ifẹ̀* by *Olódùmarè*, God, to establish the world. By being branded as a deity with *ìmọ̀ ìjìnlẹ̀* (i.e. deep knowledge and wisdom of things), his special mandate was to use this wisdom to organise the society and deliver unto humankind the divine message of *Olódùmarè*. But then he was mocked for lack of children. This tradition is documented in *Odù Ìwòrì Méjì* rendered in English language thus:
It is the apá tree that grows in the forest, lighting the wizards' fire
It is the orúrù tree that is clothed in blood from top to bottom
It was on the earth that I pressed the marks of Ifá
Before I used the divining tray
The slender palm tree atop the hill
Which branches this way and that in sixteen heads
Performed divination for Ọ̀rúnmìlà
When they said that Baba would never have children in the city of Ifẹ

The question of lack of children caused *Ọ̀rúnmìlà* to laugh but he performed divination. He soon gave birth to eight children, each of whom became important kings of Yoruba city-states [most of which still exist today, the *Odù Ifá* explains how the titles of the kings and other important positions of these cities are contractions of the original names of *Ọ̀rúnmìlà*'s children].

One day, *Ọ̀rúnmìlà* summoned his children for a festival. They all came to join him and paid their respects, but the youngest child challenged *Ọ̀rúnmìlà*'s authority by coming to the festival with the same symbols of authority which his father wore and refused to bow to him. *Ọ̀rúnmìlà* was incensed by this rejection of his authority, so he withdrew to the foot of a particular kind of palm tree and climbed up into heaven. As a result, the earth fell into chaos, women couldn't get pregnant, those who were pregnant couldn't deliver, the sick didn't recover, the rain stopped falling, the rivers dried up, the crops failed, and even the animals started behaving strangely. Everything was falling apart.

The people begged *Ọ̀rúnmìlà*'s children to convince him to come back, and they went to perform divination. *Ọ̀rúnmìlà*'s children made the prescribed sacrifice and went to the foot of the palm tree their father had climbed and began to implore him to return to earth, reciting a litany of his praise names. However, *Ọ̀rúnmìlà* had

made up his mind not to return to earth. But pitying his children, he told them to stretch out their hands so he could give them something to ease their distress. He gave them the sixteen *ìkin*, the palm nuts used in *Ifá* divination, telling them, "All the good that you want in this world, this is the one you must consult". When they returned to *Ilé-Ifè*, things started to go well again and they attained all the good things they were seeking.

However, there is a more secular explanation that passes *Òrúnmìlà* as a human being who was born at *Ilé-Ifè*. Ola Longe shares this perspective when he demarcates *Òrúnmìlà* from *Ifá*. For him, the *Ifá* corpus "…was originated and codified by *Òrúnmìlà* who lived in *Ilé-Ifè*, several centuries ago" (Longe, 1998: 15). Elsewhere, it has been proposed that *Òrúnmìlà* was born and raised in *Oke-Igeti* [(Oluwole, 2014: 43); Emmanuel, 2000: 56)]. Obviously, it does not require too much reflection to discern that just as there is the Socratic Problem, there is also the *Òrúnmìlà* Problem, I will return to this shortly. For now, it should be understood that regardless of the problem surrounding the personality of *Òrúnmìlà*, there is the dominant but accentuated error which demands the need to dichotomize the personality on the one hand from the corpus on the other hand. This is important because of the trend involving the "use of *Ifá* and *Òrúnmìlà*" (Balogun & Fayemi, 2008: 37); (Abimbola, 1976: 3) as though they are synonymous.

We can see that the person of Òrúnmìlà is shrouded in mysticism as one cannot be sure if he were a spiritual deity or a human. Nevertheless, one thing is sure – no documentation provided evidence of his death even when they boast of the various ways that he had existed.

1.3.3 The Socratic Problem

Biographical profiling of Socrates informs that he was born in 486 B.C (Cayne, 1992). During this time, people of different races populated the city of Athens where he lived (Kenny, 2006: 13). Socrates, though popularly known as a philosophic sage, excelled in other facets of life besides his vocation in philosophy. He was a soldier in the war between Athens and Sparta. In the instructive words of Anthony Kenny:

> Among those who served in the Athenian heavy infantry was Socrates the son of Sophroniscus, who was thirty-eight when the war began. He was present at three of the important battles in the earlier years of the war and won a reputation for bravery. Back in Athens in 406, he held office in the Assembly at a time when a group of generals was put on trial for abandoning the bodies of the dead at the sea-battle of Arginusae. It was illegal to try the generals

collectively rather than individually, but Socrates was the only person to vote against doing so, and they were executed (Kenny, 2006: 25).

Apart from being a war veteran, he held political offices as well as taught philosophy. His teachings have considerable influence on Plato's and Aristotle's philosophies. In spite of being renowned as a teacher of great repute, Socrates had no personal writings of his. Ideas known today in philosophical literature as Socrates's are the approximate representations of his views recorded by his students and contemporaries such as Plato, Aristotle, Xenophon and Aristophanes (Oluwole, 2014). This difficult situation of having a clear and accurate framing of historical Socrates and the views accredited to him by the writings of his students and contemporaries is termed the Socratic Problem[1] (Santas, 1964).

There is a very important tradition about Socrates that is pertinent for the purpose of drawing semblance with Ọ̀rúnmìlà whom we had discussed about in the preceding section. It concerns the reputation for wisdom. Socrates is known for asking more questions than providing answers to such questions. In paradoxical and gadfly manner, he claims to have no answer to the fundamental questions he raises in dialectical conversation with others. In fact, Socrates once said, "I know you won't believe me, but the highest form of Human Excellence is to question oneself and others" (Luce, 1992: 12). Life must be given self-critical appraisal both in terms of one's own perception of realities and attitudinal dispositions because for Socrates "an unexamined life is not worth living" (Plato *Apology*: 28 [37e - 38c]).

Historically, "in classical Greece great attention was paid to the oracles uttered in the name of the god Apollo by the entranced priestesses in the shrine of Delphi. When asked if there was anyone wiser than Socrates, a priestess replied that there was no one" (Kenny, 2006: 26). Upon hearing this verdict, Socrates proceeded to engage those who had reputation for knowledge and wisdom in Greece (Stumpf, 1979) only to concede that indeed the entranced priestess was correct. All these people didn't recognize the limits of their knowledge and what is beyond them but "he alone realized that his own wisdom was worth nothing" (Kenny, 2006: 26).

Unlike his Athenian philosophical predecessors who were more interested in finding the foundational principles, origin and stuffs of the universe, Socrates was concerned with protesting against the way and forms in which the divine origin of

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[1]The Socratic problem entails that in the absence of verbatim recording of the views of Socrates, possibility of exaggerations, biased interpretations and false claims cannot be ruled out in what is called 'Socrates's view'. In spite of this, the works of Plato, Aristophanes and Xenophone have some basic views of the historical Socrates than many contemporary commentaries. In this article, Plato's *Apology* together with other commentaries shall be reference points.

moral laws have been formulated and misinterpreted. His interest was to assist Athenians to understand and correctly cognize the dictates of G/god. He, therefore, questioned political and religious authority in Athens and taught Athenian youths the art of critical reasoning. Since "a society is a battle place of ideology" (Harris, 1988), the ideology in Socrates' teachings influenced the political life in Athens. As a consequence, Socrates was accused by the Athenian authority of corrupting the youths in Athens with the use of propaganda and "supportive rhetoric" (Harris, 1988: 129). The aftermath of the accusation was the sentence to consume the hemlock. He died from hemlock administration at the age of 70 (Russell, 1962).

Self-Assessment Exercise

1. *Ọ̀rúnmìlà* left no writing (a) True (b) False

2. There are _____ numbers of narratives regarding the life and times of Lao-tzu (a) Two (b) Four (c) Three (d) Five

1.4   Summary
In this unit, we have been able to engage in an intercultural exercise and pointed out that versions of what is known as the Socratic Problem among Western philosophers can also be found in the African and Asian traditions, for example with regards to *Ọ̀rúnmìlà* and Lao-tzu.

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1.6   Possible Answers to SAE
1. (a)
2. (c)

Unit 2: Lao-Tzu and Ọ̀rúnmìlà on the Discourse on Being

2.1   Introduction

In this unit, we engage with the ideas of an ancient African sage Ọ̀rúnmìlà as well as the ancient Chinese sage, Lao-tzu on the notion of Being. Perhaps as a way of understanding what Being means as well as how these scholars conceive of the idea, it is important to first have an understanding of what this metaphysical concept means.

2.2   Learning Outcomes

In this unit, students should:

- Have a fair grasp of the doctrine of Being as a problem that has bothered humanity;
- Understand how Lao-tzu conceive of the idea of Being;
- Be familiar with Ọ̀rúnmìlà's conception of Being; and
- Understand the idea of Being as an intercultural notion that is not limited to any geographical location or race.

2.3.1 An Overview of the Notion of Being

What is Being? This seemingly easy questioncould be highly problematic. Being is one of the basic concepts in metaphysics that does not have a generally accepted definition. In normal usage, it refers to the state of being in existence (Farr, 2005). In philosophy, being is the material or immaterial existence of a thing. Anything that exists is being and the branch of philosophy that studies being is called Ontology. Being is a concept encompassing objective and subjective features of existence. "Being" may be thought to name a property possessed by everything that is. Or it may be thought to name an object or a realm beyond, above, or behind the objects of the physical world; in this case, physical objects somehow exist by virtue of their relationship to "Being." Or again, "Being" may be the name of the genus to which everything that is belongs by virtue of the possession of the property of Being or of standing in relation to Being.

The doctrine that "Being" is a name implies some kind of dualism, according to which the realm of Being is contrasted with that of the merely phenomenal. Variations on this doctrine are general enough to be put to a number of different

uses in the attempt to solve quite different problems. Nevertheless, the basic doctrine is founded on a false assumption, for it obscures the facts that the verb "to be" has a number of different uses and that in its central and commonest use it does not ascribe a property, a relation, or class membership in any way. "Being" is normally a participle, not a noun. To break with normal usage without special justification is to be gratuitously liable to confusion. We can investigate the type of confusion generated by the acceptance of "Being" as a name, and also the type of clarification that came to be needed, by considering what Parmenides made of Being.

In the history of philosophy in the West, Parmenides is the first to look at the question of Being by asking: What is reality? By reality, what is meant is that which is stable and which receives different forms and shapes. By reality, we are meant to say that there is more to the paper and pen we are currently using to do our writing work. Various philosophers have tried to make a point that all what is apprehended are illusions and that the real permeates all of them.

We owe the origin of these problems to Parmenides who tells us that change is illusion. Parmenides had written a poem titled *On Nature,* in which he distinguished between two ways of coming to know things as they 'really' are. These are: Ways of Opinion and Ways of Truth (Omoregebe;1996). By ways of Opinion, Parmenides meant the ways of the senses; that aspect of our faculty that is responsible for the illusion of the things that we perceive as though they are real. Ways of Truth for Parmindes is the ways Nonbeing. The way through which we know that things are not even going through any kind of change.

The Parmenidean approach to appearance and reality is coming after Heraclitus had announced that 'everything is in flux' (Omoregbe;1996). This implies that things are subject to change. Parmenides wants us to believe that the change Heraclitus is talking about is mere illusions and way of opinion and that reality is non-becoming. These two ancient Greek scholars inaugurated the discourse of appearance and reality which latter scholars like Zeno, Empedocles, Pythagoras, the Sophists, Plato, Socrates, Aristotle, and many other scholars down to the era of modern philosophy have sought to answer.

Philosophers often suppose a certain sense of being as primary, and from it derive other senses of being as secondary. So, even if they use the same word "is," the meaning of being is different, depending upon what it is that "is": sensible material beings, values and norms, principles, mathematical objects, quality, time, space, God, etc. For Plato, the primary kind of being is the immutable world of ideas, while for Aristotle, it is the mutable world of substances. In another context, however, Aristotle put one immutable substance, God, as the principle of all being, and Thomas Aquinas, too, conceived God as the primary being, from

which all other beings in the world receive their existence. Materialists conceive material or a sensible entity as the primary model of being, while idealists regard thought or spirit as primary. Most philosophers, including Aristotle, Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger, were aware of these diverse senses of being.

Inquiries into being often contrast it with its reciprocal concept, and the meaning of being varies accordingly. Paired sets include: being and becoming, being and non-being, being and appearance or phenomena, being and existence, being and essence, being and beings, being and thought, and being and ought. How to approach the question of being is determined by the style of thought, philosophical approach, or methodology. For example, the phenomenological approaches of Husserl and Heidegger locate the question of being on the horizon of human consciousness and existence. Eastern philosophies emphasize the role of "non-being" for our understanding of being.

2.3.2 The Similarity between Ọ̀rúnmìlà's and Lao-Tzu's Reflections on Being

Now that we are a bit conversant with the idea of Being, it is crucial to inquire into the possibility of how non-Western sages in the history of thought of Africa and Asia entertained the concept. How did the popular sages in each of these traditions of thought conceived Being? Let us commence with Ọ̀rúnmìlà on the subject.

The fundamental concept that is equivalent to Being in Ọ̀rúnmìlà's discourse on what passes muster as Being is *Ìwà*. *Ìwà*, is a *Yorùbá* word with two meanings. In the first sense, it means "to be" and in the second sense it refers to "character." For Ọ̀rúnmìlà, as different as these meanings seem, they are inter-related,. Things *are* but are adjudged based on the character they display. In most of his dealings, Ọ̀rúnmìlà emphasized the urgency in the participation in the principle of *Ìwà*. It is therefore normal to see *Ìwà* acting as a prefix in *Ìwà réré* (Good Character), *Ìwà pẹlẹ* (Gentle Character), which testifies to the state of harmony with Being. These are usually contrasted with *Ìwà burúkú* (Bad Character), which attest to a state of disharmony with Being. All of these are attempts at explaining what kind of moral disposition and living can endear one to the goodwill of the gods and the Higher God, Olódùmarè. Ọ̀rúnmìlà is convinced that even the Higher God, Olódùmarè is subordinate to *Ìwà*. This is because in almost all of what Olódùmarè does what Olódùmarè is always on the lookout for is *Ìwà*. It is also instructive to note that for Ọ̀rúnmìlà, Olódùmarè is not *Ìwà* and vice-versa. There are some verses of the *Ifá* corpus that attest to this. Specifically, in the chapter, *Èjì Ogbè,* Ọ̀rúnmìlà explains:
Coming into the world is easy
Later, when returning, the last gasps are difficult
There is no comforter
No one to whom we can complain, what remains is the work of one's hands
Gentle character is what Ẹlẹdùmarè likes

To be in tune with Being, one must have a proper character. On this note, Oludamini Ogunnaike (2015) makes it clear when he explains that *Ìwà* may be perceived as Being enshrined in the affinity between conduct/agency with ontology in traditional *Yorùbá* thought. For him, "To have good character (*iwa*) is not just to be "better" than one who lacks character, it is to be "more," to have a greater share of "existence" or "being" (*iwa*). This greater capacity of being is both a condition and a result of the process of acquiring knowledge" (Ogunnaike 2015, 397). What this means in traditional *Yorùbá* thought is thatthere is a linkage between morality and ontology. Ulli Beier (1975, 49) hints at this finding thus: "Yoruba ethics means: to become through ritual, a being who knows more and understands more, a person who lives more and is more."

In his reflection on the subject or place of *Ìwà* in ancient Yorùbá metaphysics, Wole Soyinka (1990, 52) states that "It must not be understood in any narrow sense of the ethical code which society develops to regulate the conduct of its members. A breakdown in the moral order implies in the African worldview, a rupture in the nature just like the physical malfunctioning of one man." It is the failure to replicate the proper character to self and nature, for Ọ̀rúnmìlà that accounts for the chaos in the world. This is better expressed in the words of Maulana Karenga (1999, ix) Ọ̀rúnmìlà "calls one's ritual performance useless, invalid or in vain if one's character is deficient." The implication is that when one is not harmony with Being via one's character, nothing works well for that person. Ọ̀rúnmìlà makes this clearer in another chapter, *Ogbè-Yọ̀nú:*
It is only cultivating character that is difficult
There is not one bad destiny in Ilé-Ifẹ
It is only cultivating character that is difficult.

It is because Olódùmarè is the entity who is able to exemplify *Ìwà* better than any other entity that the appellation *Olu-Ìwà* is given to Olódùmarè. *Olu-Ìwà* roughly translates as Lord of Character but not Absolute Being or Lord of Existence which Ogunnaike's (2015) unreliable Western-substance assessment implies. Olódùmarè cannot be Absolute or Lord of Existence because even in the *Ifá* corpus, adduced to have been written by Ọ̀rúnmìlà with his array of disciples, a severely limited God is portrayed. Ọ̀rúnmìlà consistently highlights the need to be in tune with *Ìwà* for harmony both within the self and with the world. From another verse in the previously cited chapter, *Ogbè-Yọ̀nú*, Ọ̀rúnmìlà reveals:
If human destiny marries Ìwà
And Ìwà marries human destiny
The world will be well.

In the final analysis, Olódùmarè, in Ọ̀rúnmìlà's analysis is not the creator of the universe nor an entity raised to the status of Being that explains why the world is or how it became into existence. *Ìwà* is more of a force which all entities are

striving to be in harmony with. Some renowned and influential scholars on traditional *Yorùbá* thought have also buttressed this outlook. For instance, Wande Abimbola (1975, 395) explains:

> The man who has *iwa pẹlẹ* will not collide with any of the powers both human and supernatural and will therefore live in complete harmony with the forces that govern the universe. This is why the Yoruba regard *iwa pẹlẹ* as the most important of all moral values, and the greatest attribute of man. The essence of religious worship for the Yoruba consists therefore in striving to cultivate *iwa pẹlẹ* (good/gentle character).

Sophie Oluwole (1995, 18) correctly notes, in divesting Olódùmarè of being the creative force of the universe, that "the Yoruba sage neither regards God as the creator of the world nor as a perfect Being." Elsewhere, Samuel Ade-Ali (2006, 5) explains: "Olodumare is not absolutely the genesis and ultimate explanation of all things in Yoruba metaphysics…" This description of the traditional *Yorùbá* view of the Higher God in relation to Being seems to affirm the general African belief on the subject:

> He knows more than we do, but unlike the Christian God, He does not know everything. He is more powerful than we are but He is not all-powerful. God, in Africa is more benevolent than we are but He too can do evil and therefore not omni-benevolent. In short, God in African religion is not transcendental (Sogolo 1983, 157).

What can be deduced from the foregoing is that central to Ọ̀rúnmìlà is the notion that the idea of what accounts or suffices as the ultimate explanation for reality is not Olódùmarè, the Higher God, but *Ìwà*. Now that we have discussed how the ancient African sage Ọ̀rúnmìlà looked at Being, we will explore Lao-tzu on the subject.

Generally, the concept *Tao* has usually been adduced as Lao-Tzu's equivalent of what counts as Being. Lao-Tzu perceives the *Tao* as a cosmic force which is responsible for all that exists. As Joshua Mark (2020) puts it, for Lao-Tzu, the *Tao* "created all things, bound all things, moved all things, and finally loosed all things back into their original state." *Tao,* which is also written as *Dao,* in other contexts simply means "Way." As Lao-Tzu himself notes, the *Tao* is beyond description and lacks shape, name and even form (Chan 1963). The fundamental conviction of

Lao-Tzu in relation to the *Tao* is that proximity to it brings harmony and contentment whereas aversion to it is a recipe for disaster.

While assessing the *Tao,* renowned Chinese scholar, Kai Zhen (2022) reveals that it is a metaphysical concept which is distinct from the thoughts of ancient Greek scholars as the concept focuses on how the world can be understood without recourse to perceivable objects. Lao-Tzu is of the conviction that virtue is not something that can be attained outside the *Tao.* For one to attain inner peace, harmony with nature and virtue, it is pertinent to recognise and follow the *Tao.* Even when this recognition is important, Lao-Tzu continues to maintain that the *Tao* is beyond naming and definition. This is evident in the First Verse of the *Tao-Te-Cheng*:

The Tao that can be told of is not the eternal Tao
The name that can be named is not the eternal name
The Nameless is the origin of Heaven and earth
The Named is the mother of all things.
Therefore, let there always be non-being, so we may see their subtlety
And let there always be being, so we may see their outcome
The two are the same
But after they are produced they have different names (Baird and Heimbeck 2005, 371).

The foregoing excerpt of Lao-Tzu can bebetter comprehended and appreciated following the position of the ying-yang concept in the entire scheme. It is the interactions between these two principles (which are presented as being and non-being in the foregoing verse) that account for all there is in the world. The perpetual motion between the two of them is responsible for all beings. The "actual" *Tao* differs from the named *Tao* as the former is beyond naming because it cannot be comprehended by the human mind.

Lao-Tzu also goes on to explain that the *Tao* is the principle that is responsible for the beginning of all things. What can be noticed here is that Lao-Tzu does not at any point of his reflection try to invite the God-concept into his analysis. Even when he is willing to admit that there is the "actual" *Tao* which is beyond naming, he does not state that God can take that position. He left it open. Hence, by insisting that the *Tao* is a principle which accounts for all there is, Lao-Tzu is not affirming a creator God. The nameless or even what may be termed the amorphous feature of the *Tao* makes it impossible to deploy God as the ultimate metaphysical principle in Lao-Tzu's system. As Chan (2018) notes, "the dominant interpretation in traditional China is that Dao represents the original, undifferentiated, essential *qi*-energy, the "One" which in turn produces the yin and yang cosmic forces." In his analysis, the Chinese scholar, Charles Wei-hsun Fu (1973) assists with the

comprehension of the *Tao* by stating in Lao-Tzu's use, it does not in any way invite the idea of a God. Fu (1973) highlights six dimensions of understanding the *Tao*: Reality, Origin, Principle, Function, Virtue and Technique. Fu (1973), in his bid to make this "strange" metaphysical orientation intelligible to his Western audience goes as far as comparing the Lao-Tzu's ideas with that of Spinoza. In recent times however, the ideas of Lao-Tzu and other prominent ancient Oriental sages such as Siddharta Gautama on Being has been used as a point of reference for indigenous wisdom that anticipated theorisations in modern physics. In other words, as the ethno-science of the Oriental has some levels of logical equilibrium with modern physics, this implies that the latter is not saying anything substantially new to the Oriental world at least. Quantum and relativity theories are not wholly unheard of as the famous Julius Robert Oppenheimer (1954, 8-9), the three-time Nobel Prize nominee of physics informs: "They have a history, and in Buddhist and Hindu thought a more considerable and central place. What we shall find is an exemplification, an encouragement, and a refinement of old wisdom."

In spite of lacking the confidence to say that the efforts of the preceding paragraphs are the perfect and complete rendition of Lao-Tzu's the *Tao,* it needs to be restated that the important part for this discourse is that the onto-theological constitution of Being is absent. This is the overriding contention of Martin Heidegger when he says that metaphysics has ended because the grounding question of Being has been rendered into oblivion. The very idea that Lao-Tzu himself says the "actual" *Tao* is beyond explanation and naming is another reason why effort is made to be restricted to the inner kernel of the *Tao,* as it relates to the contention of this inquiry. Furthermore, the exploration of Lao-Tzu's position and other Chinese scholars over the concept of the *Tao* is an indication that there is the *Tao* is not God and God is not *Tao*. This serves as a justification of the proposition earlier stated that the authentic assessment into the question of Being as Being must look beyond the mainstream and dominant Western tradition of thought.

What the foregoing attests to is that the principal character of the ideas of Ọ̀rúnmìlà and Lao-Tzu, being process-underpinned have no place for God as Being. On this note, it therefore becomes valid to draw the inference that for these two ancient sages from Africa and China, their metaphysical reflection does not pass as an onto-theological articulation. In fact, they had inadvertently anticipated a variant of process metaphysics which would receive maximum attention, exposition and become popular via Whitehead in the 20th century.

Self-Assessment Exercise

1. The Tao simply means _____

2. Being for Ọ̀rúnmìlà is called _____

2.4   Summary

In this unit, we have taken an intercultural account into the concept of Being as it is understood in the ideas of Lao-tzu and Ọ̀rúnmìlà. The exposition has served as one of the overriding motivations for the established fact that rationality is abundant and not limited to any race or geography.

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1.6   Possible Answers to SAE

1. The Way
2. *Ìwà*

Unit 3: Discourse on the Soul in African, European and Oriental Cultures

3.1   Introduction

The agenda of this unit is to further explore another philosophical idea that is cross-cultural. Specifically, we are going to consider the notion of the soul among the various philosophic cultures of the world. One thing to learn is that the discourse on the soul shows an intercultural leaning which allows us to see from diverse perspectives, how the notion of soul has commanded attention among scholars.

3.2   Learning Outcomes

In this unit, students will be exposed to:

- The idea of soul as conceived across diverse cultures; and
- How reincarnation and the existence of the soul is a global metaphysical concern

3.3.1 The Soul and Reincarnation in Ancient Greece

One of the first places in ancient Greek writings that inspires the thought of reincarnation and immortality of the human soul may be found in Plato (1973; 1997). In *The Republic,* Plato (1997) demonstrated that the soul outlives the body and that all the knowledge we claim to know may be passed on as recollection. He demonstrated this in *Meno* and *Theatetus.* Let us consider the latter book closely.

The main discourse of the book is on knowledge. Theaetetus begins to answer Socrates' question, "What is knowledge?" by giving examples of knowledge: geometry, for example, and the technical know-how of a shoemaker. But Socrates objects that what he wants is not a bunch of examples of knowledge, but rather an explanation of the *nature* of knowledge. In answer to the philosophical question "What is knowledge?" what is required is a definition that we can use to decide whether any particular case is one where somebody knows something. Theaetetus then makes other attempts at answering the question that *do* give definitions of this sort. But Socrates argues against all of them. Finally, Theaetetus suggests that to know something is just to believe something that is true (Plato, 1973).

Socrates points out that it follows from this theory of Theaetetus' that when a skilled lawyer persuades a jury that someone is innocent, then if the person is in fact innocent, the jury knows he or she is innocent, *even if the lawyer has persuaded the jury by dishonest means*. This consequence, Socrates argues, shows that Theaetetus' theory must be wrong, because in such circumstances we would not allow that the jurors *knew* that the accused person was innocent, even if they *correctly believed* it.

Socrates has a point. Suppose, for example, my lawyers believe that I am innocent and that I am being framed. They might decide that it was more important to protect someone from being framed than to respect the law, which the prosecutors are, after all, abusing. So they might fake "evidence" that undermines the fake "evidence" produced by the prosecutors. Suppose they persuaded the jury: the members of the jury would *correctly believe* I am innocent, but they certainly wouldn't *know* that I am innocent. Here is the passage where Socrates summarizes his objection and Theaetetus responds:

SOCRATES: But if true belief and knowledge were the same thing, then the jury would never make correct judgments without knowledge; and, as things are, it seems that the two [knowledge and true belief] are different.

THEAETETUS: Yes, Socrates, there's something I once heard someone saying, which I'd forgotten, **but it's coming back to me now**. He said that true belief with a justification is knowledge, and the kind without a justification falls outside the sphere of knowledge (Plato, 1973:94 **bold emphasis not in the original**).

By saying that "…but it's coming back to me now" (Plato, 1973), Theatetus seems to be laying claim to the belief that all knowledge is a recollection of the past life.

The ancient philosopher Pythagoras is said to have hinted at his re-incarnation in the following tradition handed down to us:

> They say that, while staying at Argos, he saw a shield from the spoils of Troy nailed up, and burst into tears. When the Argives asked him the reason for his emotion, he said that he himself had borne that shield in Troy when he was Euphorbus; they did not believe him, and judged him to be mad, but he said he would find a true sign that this was the case; for on the inside of the shield was written in archaic lettering EUPHORBUS' S. Because of the extraordinary nature of the claim, they all urged him to take down the offering; and the inscription was found on it (Barnes 1979, 110).

There is no doubt that the above is another glaring instance of belief in reincarnation among the ancient Greek scholar, Pythagoras. We shall now consider the Hindu tradition.

3.3.2 The Soul and Reincarnation in Ancient Yoruba society

Even among the Yorubas, there is no doubt that the belief in fully entrenched. The concept of reincarnation makes meaningful the Yoruba belief in life after death. Reincarnation is the passage of the soul from one body to another. The lot of the soul in each being is determined by its behavior in a former life. The Yoruba speak of *Atun- wa-* another coming, but in reality, there appears to be nothing like it in a specific sense (Labeodan, 2008:6). The Yoruba believe that the deceased persons do "reincarnate" in their grandchildren and great grandchildren and in spite of this reincarnation, the deceased continues to live in after-life.

Mbiti is however of the opinion that this reincarnation is partial, in the sense that only some human features or characteristics of the living-dead are said to be 'reborn' in some children (Mbiti, 1977:144). Those who hold someone in the state of personal immortality see biological or character resemblances in a young child and immediately claim that the dead has "returned" to them. The names like, *Babajide-* father has woke up" and *Iyabo* mother has come and other names which specify the return of particular ancestors are very suggestive (Labeodan, 2008:7).

The belief of the Yoruba in the existence of *emere* or *abiku* buttresses their beliefs in immortality or after life. The *abiku* phenomenon is a succession of rebirth; that is undesirable and it is not welcome in any family.

The Yoruba belief in reincarnation is also well expressed in the names given to those believed to have reincarnated. Here are some of such names:
1. Banjoko – sit (stay) with me
2. Durojaiye – wait and enjoy
3. Durosinmi – wait and bury me
4. Yetunde- mother had returned
5. Babatunde – father has returned
6. Iyabobola – mother has come into wealth.

These first three names are some of the names given to an *abiku* that is, the born-to-die child, so that the child would stay; while the last three names are those of ancestors that have reincarnated (Labeodan, 2008:7).

The belief in reincarnation, as seen among the Yoruba portrays clearly their belief that the soul of man does not die because it can exist independently outside of the

body. They believe evidently that there is an element of immortality in man and that there is a life after death.

3.3.3 The Soul and Reincarnation in Hinduism

The religious doctrine of the transmigration of the soul that developed during the Brahmanic period is observed to this day. A person's future reincarnation depends not only on how he lives his life and follows the laws of his caste, but also on burial rites. Orthodox Hindus cremate the dead. If possible they carry out the cremation on the banks of a sacred river and throw the ashes into the water. Until the nineteenth century some castes in North India practised the barbaric religious custom of burning a widow on the pyre of her husband (Tokarev, 1989:177).

The theoretical foundation of reincarnation was developed in that period-the idea of karma. The concept of karma is complex, and it has been interpreted in different ways by different trends in Indian philosophy. It corresponds approximately to two concepts-causality and fate. All the actions of an individual, good or bad, prompt corresponding consequences in his life if these actions are carried out with a purpose. A person is rewarded for every good deed, and punished for every bad one; but, as a rule, the rewards and punishments are allotted not in this life, but in future reincarnation. The fate of a person or any other being in this life is the result of his conduct in a former existence. A person creates his own fate in his future reincarnation by his behaviour. Thus, the philosophical idea of karma became the foundation of the Brahmanic teaching about reincarnation (Tokarev, 1989:177).

3.3.4 Mystics on the Discourse of the Soul

Re-incarnation is a reality that some have experienced. Again, because we have not had such experiences is not sufficient to say those who have are liars. The notion of astral projection experience by mystics also seems to support the view that reincarnation is a reality.

Lobsang Rampa whom we had mentioned before now, was a lama whose soul inhabited the body of a British plumber named Cyril Henry Hoskin (1910-1981) who writes with that name (T. Lobsang Rampa) and recounts events that had occurred many years back as a lama in Tibet and China. His instances and cases are very similar to the ones we cited in the preceding section. Let us consider the subject of astral projection and those who have also experienced it like Rampa.

In her 1983 book, *Out on a Limb*, Shirley Maclaine describes her astral experience thus:

> I stared at the flickering candle. My head felt light. I
> physically felt a kind of tunnel open in my mind…I
> felt myself flow into the space, fill it, and float off,

> rising out of my body until I began to soar. I was
> aware that my body remained in the water. I looked
> down and saw it… (MacLaine;1983:327).

The above excerpt shows, above other things a personal experience of a human with flesh and blood. She demonstrates that there is something more than the physical human body, contra what scholars such as Gilbert Ryle and John Searle would have us understand. In his own first astral experience which occurred in November 1971, Nigerian author Iyke Nathan Uzorma harps:

> In that experience, I had something like electric shock
> all over my body while I was still awake on the bed.
> Immediately after this shock I found myself standing
> outside my body. Thereafter, I began to run inside a big
> tunnel filled with darkness. This was astral projection in
> its first stage (Uzorma;2007:71).

This thought has been also corroborated by the experience of Lobsang Rampa when he writes that "you will experience a sensation that you are going through a tunnel toward a light at the far end of the tunnel. You will be drifted upwards like a piece of thistle down on an evening breeze" (Rampa;1980:65). Now, the fact that these persons may not have met before and tell their stories shows that there is an aorta of truth no matter how little and just because their experiences cannot be incorporate into the scientific schema does not make them the opposite of the truth in all entirety.

For those whose still agree with John Searle up to this point that the Cartesian belief in an immortal soul is a myth indeed, Sir Karl Popper's take on the subject of myth and science becomes relevant. Sir Popper writes:

> I realize that such myths may be developed, and become
> testable; that historically speaking all – or very nearly all
> – scientific theories originate from myths and that a
> myth may contain important anticipations of scientific
> theories. Examples are Empedocles' theory of evolution
> by trial and error or Parmenides' myth of the
> unchanging block universe, in which nothing ever
> happens and which if we add another dimension
> becomes Einstein's block universe… (Popper;1963:36).

For those who are wont to ignore the experiences of these persons and label them as 'fake', Lobsang Rampa (or we may say Cyril Henry Hoskin) tells us in his 'Foreword' in *As It Was!* that:

All my books ARE true, and I have maintained that in the face of relentless persecution and calumny. But throughout the ages sane, sensible people have been persecuted and even tortured for telling it As it Was! (Rampa;1978:9).

What we can learn from this intercultural exercise is that the idea of soul and its manner of existence has gained divergent attention from sages all over the world. And it is through intercultural philosophy that these diversities may be brought forward, discussed and acknowledged.

Self-Assessment Exercise

1. The _____ phenomenon is a term indicating succession of rebirth among the Yoruba

2. In which book does Plato demonstrate that the soul outlives the body? (a) Citizen (b) Monarchy (c) Republic (d) Attorney

3.4 Summary

In this unit, we considered the notion of the soul and reincarnation across some cultures. This exercise in intercultural philosophy has gone to show that there are various ways people conceive the notion of soul.

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3.6 Possible Answers to SAE
1. Abiku
2. (c)

Unit 4: African and Western Feminists on Patriarchy and Ectogenesis

4.1   Introduction

This unit considers the notion of ectogenesis and its intercultural implications for scholars both in the Western and African feminist traditions.

4.2   Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit, the students should:

- Understand the meaning of ectogenesis;
- Be familiar with the intercultural and cross-cultural notion of ectogenesis; and
- Understand how feminists in the African and Western traditions perceive ectogenesis.

4.3.1 The Meaning of Ectogenesis

In her publication, *Equal Opportunity and the Case for State Sponsored Ectogenesis*, Evie Kendal (2015: 2) defines ectogenesis as "extrauterine gestation of human foetuses from conception to "birth," although it could also entail artificial incubation of an embryo or foetus transferred from a woman's uterus after conception." In spite of this fair expression, it is informing to begin with the Greek etymology of ectogenesis, which comprises of two root words: "*ecto*" (i.e. outside) and "*genesis*" (i.e. beginning). Literally, this means beginning outside. The 'thing' or 'being' that is beginning outside, in the context of ectogenesis is the human foetus. In a related development Mary Warren (1986) expatiates that the term describes the entire affair as a new way of making babies away from the conventional model.

It is to the credit of the British scientist J.B.S. Haldane that the term appeared in 1923. Ever since it has evolved as a common term to denote any form of artificial growth of a human foetus outside its naturally supposed habitat – the womb or uterus. It is on this note that the definition given by Anna Smadjor (2007: 338) is well captured thus: "ectogenesis is the growth of an organism in an artificial environment outside the body in which it would normally be found, such as the growth of an embryo or foetus outside the mother's body, or the growth of bacteria outside the body of a host." In spite of these lucid and seemingly unproblematic definitions, it is important, for the sake of the arguments that this research seeks to

undertake to make a distinction between full and partial ectogenesis. Very few scholars such as Rasanen & Smajdor (2020) have been able to make this important distinction as most researchers usually seem to combine both and then assume that what obtains for full ectogenesis is also the case for the partial.

What is considered as full or complete ectogenesis is "a complete alternative to human gestation. Embryos would be created via In vitro Fertilisation (IVF) and transferred into an artificial womb for the duration of the gestation period" (Rasanen & Smajdor (2020: 1). In simpler terms, what this expresses is that sperm and ovum cells are brought together outside the human body to form a zygote, which is then placed in artificial wombs to develop. This means that all the medical and scientific efforts at procreation are external to the body of the woman. It is for this reason that Anna Smajdor, in her "In Defense of Ectogenesis" takes the position that ectogenesis will unleash women from the unfair responsibilities of pregnancy and reproduction (Smajdor 2012). One point to realise, at this juncture is that full or complete ectogenesis is at the moment not viable, however, it is important to understand that this technological breakthrough has also been extended to animals but the ethical impliactions need to be given serious reflection as well (Rasanen & Smajdor, 2020: 3).

When talking about partial or incomplete ectogenesis, there are two usages that must be understood. The first usage is the exit of an embryo or a foetus that is still developing out of the female body into an artificial womb to complete its development (Rasanen & Smajdor (2020). This is the aspect of ectogenesis with implications for the abortion dilemma as scholars such as Simkulet (2019); Rasanen (2017); Singer & Wells (1984); Mathison & Davis (2017) have held divergent views concerning the right to self-determination and autonomy of a mother as well as the pro-life view that emphasises the value of the embryos. Regardless of how this is conceived, it is an interesting fact that this form of partial ectogenesis is one that acknowledges the commencement of life inside the body of the female but carried to term by an artificial device.

With this brief analysis given to the concept of ectogenesis, it is now time to see how the concept has been given divergent understanding among African and Western feminist scholars.

4.3.2 The Views of Some African and Western Feminists on Ectogenesis

When the entire idea of ectogenesis is assessed critically, one see that it a means to challenge and change the cultural meaning of motherhood and to reimagine the concept of being born. But in a society in which children are artificially gestated what would it mean to be born? Would it refer to when the foetus is grown to a full term infant, or perhaps to the precise moment when the baby is disconnected and removed from the machinery, or even to when she was handed over to the

custody of a caregiver? It is clear that in such a society we would have to redefine some essential ideas that have been shared throughout generations and have been considered usual and standard across cultures (Dasaolu et al 2022). From the exploration in that section, it is not misplaced to state that what the feminists seem to be saying concerning how ectogenesis can liberate women may be rendered thus:

"With ectogenesis, women do not need to be subdued by the burden nature has deployed to her regarding childbirth. With the assistance of artificial wombs, women can compete favourably across all frontiers with men."

The foregoing deduction is correct following the exposition of the previous section. When the above deduction is however compared and contrasted with the African version, an ideological dilemma ensues. In other words, there are African feminists who will not endorse the position of the Western feminist on ectogenesis, which is to liberate the woman from patriarchy. It is also helpful to note that ectogenesis, even as it is still an unfolding potential, has attracted a lot of philosophical arguments, particularly regarding its effect on motherhood and the society's perception of human maternity. In order to comprehend and appreciate the ideological foundation of the African feminist theorists, it is important to first understand the metaphysics of traditional Africa concerning motherhood and maternity.

Most African societies view the act of giving birth as a very important stride in a woman's life and as a means to achieving important social status. It is also seen as a rite of passage into motherhood. Clearly, this is against the position or ideology of foremost Western feminists on the subject of ectogenesis. Fertility, fecundity, conception, childbirth and childcare is considered as a rite of passage to a woman's personal fulfilment, a path to social acceptance and a woman who does not pass through this phase is regarded as a little above slave, except in special circumstances (Dasaolu et al 2022). For instance, the Yoruba-African society significantly admits pregnancy and motherhood as a means of life-long commitment and accomplishment. The Yoruba society, strongly ruled by cultural institutions and with various norms and values view every stage of motherhood as sacred with deep spiritual and cultural significance; from the circumcision of a female child to her first coitus, from the constant backaches during pregnancy to the breaking of the amniotic fluid and painful labour, from the suckling at the breast to the child care, from the blessings from the bosom to the cursing with the breast, even to the protection of the child by the mother from the land of the dead. Furthermore, the period of gestation and maternity is filled with many cultural practices and taboos which point to the significance of the period in the life of the mother and unborn child. This period is believed to be capable of making or marring the future of the unborn child and confer a level of relationship between

the child, the mother and society at large. Many philosophical studies have been conducted on the effect of the influx of obstetrics technologies (Assisted Reproductive Technologies) into the African societies, particularly the Yoruba society [(Jegede and Fayemiwo, 2012; (Oyekan and Ani, 2017)], with little emphasis on the cultural implications of such technologies on African values, while little to nothing exists on the philosophical discourse of the ethical implications of ectogenesis in African societies.

Similarly, many philosophical arguments and counter-arguments have been put forward regarding the effect of ectogenesis on the culture of motherhood in the Western world. This study however does not attempt to engage or entertain any of these. The primary contention of this work is to show that via ectogenesis, the ideological orientations of African and Western feminists can be seen not to be at par. And some foremost African feminists have maintained this outlook.

Chikwenye Ogunyemi is an African feminist whose Afro-feminist theory is called "womanism." Womanism, talks about the "promotion of mutual love, tolerance and defence of family values, without violence and allied hostilities between man and woman" (Amaefula 2021: 297). As Ogunyemi (1985: 5) puts it:

> Womanism is black-centred. It is accommodationist. It wants meaningful union [sic] between black women and black men and black children, and will see to it that men will change from their sexist stand. This ideological position explains why women writers do not end their plots with feminist victories.

For her, there are four Cs that encapsulate the condition of the African woman: Collaboration, Conciliation, Cooperation and Complementarity. These four aspects of her ideas may be said to be what Obioma Nnaemeka (2014) admits for her own version of African feminism which she calls "Nego-Feminism." As the four Cs indicate, the primary aim of the Afro-feminist approach is not to displace or frustrate patriarchy by avoiding or desisting from carrying out the roles that nature as appointed the woman to do. At this juncture, it is not misplaced to consider why these African feminist theorists seem to have different view concerning the place of women in society.

In other words, the reality of the African woman is far remote from those of the Briton or the Japanese. Illiteracy, religious injunctions, economic dependency, among others constitutes the prominent *Achilles feet* that makes a feminist scholar from the African angle radically different from their Western counterparts. More so, it is highly doubtful if what we have in many parts of sub-Saharan Africa is even half close to liberalism. Regimes in the sub-Saharan parts of Africa are

usually prone to different anomalies such as bad governance, mismanagement of public funds, and bad representation of the people, among others. Even the democratization process is merely in theory as states in other continents of the world are forging ahead towards the greener pastures.

Simi Afonja (2005) one of the foremost feminist scholars in Africa reveals how feminist scholars attack the political and socio-economic system prevalent in the continent. She harps that "instead of the structural economic models that were insensitive to local realities they demanded radical changes to the postcolonial economic structure that would be amenable to people's participation in governance" (Afonja 2005: 2). In her own understanding, there "was extensive empirical data that suggested that autonomy and inequality had co-existed since pre-colonisation, and that autonomy was either reproduced during the process of change or was an outcome of women's choices on account of their class, access to power, race, ethnicity or geographical location" (Afonja 2005: 7). Simi Afonja (2005) reveals that there are many aspects of Western terms and terminologies that distort what is experienced by the woman in Africa. She expatiates:

> There is a new set of discourses that may not be so new after all but problematizes old discourses on gender in the search for alternatives. The contention is that gender and patriarchy originated from Western European epistemologies and misrepresented African women's realities. In place of these, seniority, motherhood and matriarchy are theorized as the basis for social organization in African societies (Afonjo 2005: 9).

The above informs us that a concept like patriarchy is alien to the African woman and it was a foreign import which does not correctly mirror what the African woman experiences. She goes ahead to inform us that "motherism" is the basis of an African feminism. In a related development, an African feminist scholar Olu Obafemi (2009) argues for "Snail sense feminism," which has the capacity to accommodate men in the framework.

What this implies is that women all over the world face different problems. While some recognize no qualms in their subjugation, others fight and it would be wrong to use the bearings of those who rival men to judge those who are satisfied with the status quo. The starting point of feminist discourses also matter. Some feminist scholars like Afonja (2005) maintain it from "motherism" and patriarchy is foreign to the African woman.

Self-Assessment Exercise

1. Most African feminists are in support of ectogenesis (a) True (b) False

2. Most Western feminists are against ectogenesis (a) True (b) False

4.4   Summary
In this unit, we have considered the intercultural aspect of feminist thoughts on the subject of ectogenesis and have shown that even when there are feminists in the African and Western traditions of thought, they have diverse views on the plight of women. This unit employed the concept of ectogenesis to address this intellectual and cultural diversity.

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4.6 Possible Answers to SAE
1. (b);
2. (b)

End of Module Exercises

1   Socrates protested against the way and forms in which the divine origin of moral laws have been formulated and misinterpreted (a) False (b) True

2   Lao-Tzu means _____ in Chinese

3   Who is the first to consider the question of Being in Western Philosophy? (a) Parmenides (b) Heraclitus (c) Georgias (d) Socrates

4   Quantum theory has foundation in Asian mysteries (a) True (b) False

5   Who is of the opinion that reincarnation is partial, in the sense that only some human features or characteristics of the living-dead are said to be 'reborn' in some children (a) Rampa (b) Mbiti (c) Laebodan (d) Idowu

6   Which Pre-Socratic scholar talked about the immortality of the soul? (a) Georgia (b) Pythagoras (c) Protagoras (d) Heraclitus

7   "Snail sense feminism," which has the capacity to accommodate men in the framework was developed by _____

8   Most African feminists entertain and endorse the movement against patriarchy (a) True (b) False