Introduction to Philosophy (Phil I)

1. The Meaning of Philosophy

Each of us has a philosophy, even though we may not be aware of it. We all have some ideas concerning physical objects, our fellow persons, the meaning of life, death, God, right and wrong, beauty and ugliness, and the like. Of course, these ideas are acquired in a variety of ways, and they may be vague and confused. This broad, popular, man-in-the-street (*common-sense*) view of philosophy is not adequate for our purposes. It does not describe the work and task of the philosopher. We need to define philosophy more specifically; the broad view is vague, confused, and superficial.

The word *philosophy* comes from a combination of two Greek *words-philos,* meaning "loving" and *sophia,* meaning "wisdom." Etymologically, philosophy means the love of wisdom. To love something is to desire it. So, for many Greeks, the philosopher was the one who desired wisdom. The word *philos* also refers, for the Greeks, to the special kind of love found in close friendship. Hence the philosopher could also be characterized as the "friend of wisdom."

Philosophy in Western culture was born in the sixth century BC among a group of thinkers called the Pre-Socratics. According to tradition, one of these thinkers, **Pythagoras (**about 570 BC), coined the word *philosophy.* Along with other Pre-Socratics, he was **intensely interested in nature**, in knowing how the universe or cosmic order developed, and in figuring out what things were made of. These thinkers disagreed about the stuff out of which things are made (some said earth, some air, others fire, still others water or some combination of these elements), but many of them did think that **wisdom consisted of knowledge about nature**. To love wisdom, as far as they were concerned, was to search for knowledge about the universe.

Even though the western philosophical texts record the above history the Christian tradition takes the beginning of the history of philosophy much earlier than the time of Pythagoras. The way Abraham took to find the creator of the universe can be an evidence for the point that claim as philosophy has longer age than the time of Pythagoras.

Philosophy is **a rational enquiry into the forms, contents and implications of experience**. It is an attempt at a complete knowledge of being in all the phases of its manifestation in the various

processes of consciousness. The discovery of the ultimate **meaning and essence of existence** is the central purpose of philosophy. It is the art of the perfect life, the science of reality, the foundation of the practice of righteousness, the law of the attainment of freedom, and provides a key to the meaning and appreciation of beauty.

It is not controlled by the limitations of the past, present and future, by the laws of this place or that country, but refers to all times, places and conditions. Philosophy is the most inclusive of all branches of learning, and acts as a touchstone to all other aspects of human knowledge.

Philosophy is **a moral and intellectual science which** tries to explain the reality behind appearances by reducing the vague of the universe to ultimate causes, through the application of reason and law. Philosophy is no doubt the grand artistic work constructed by the higher purified intellect of man.

Philosophy is a general exposition of the ultimate concepts, meanings and values of the things in the universe, by a search to their final causes which range beyond the reach of the senses. It becomes possible for philosophy to concern itself with metaphysical essences by resting on the strong foundation of the testimony given by sages to deep meditation and realization.

A definition of philosophy can be offered from a number of perspectives.

1. ***Philosophy is a set of views or beliefs about life and the universe, which are often held uncritically.*** We refer to this meaning as the informal sense of philosophy or "having" a philosophy. Usually when a person says "my philosophy is," he or she is referring to an informal personal attitude to whatever topic is being discussed.

2. ***Philosophy is a process of reflecting on and criticizing our most deeply held conceptions and beliefs.*** This is the formal sense of "doing" philosophy. These two senses of philosophy—"having" and "doing"—cannot be treated entirely independent of each other, for if we did not *have* a philosophy in the formal, personal sense, then we could not *do* a philosophy in the critical, reflective sense. Having a philosophy, however, is not sufficient for doing philosophy. A genuine philosophical attitude is searching and critical; it is open-minded and tolerant—willing to look at all sides of an issue without prejudice. To philosophize is not merely to read and know philosophy; there are skills of argumentation to be mastered, techniques of analysis to be

employed, and a body of material to be appropriated such that we become able to think philosophically. Philosophers are reflective and critical. They take a second look at the material presented by common sense. They attempt to think through a variety of life's problems and to face all the facts involved impartially. The accumulation of knowledge does not by itself lead to understanding, because it does not necessarily teach the mind to make a *critical evaluation* of facts that entail consistent and coherent judgment. Critical evaluations often differ. Philosophers, theologians, scientists, and others disagree, first because they view things from different points of view and with different assumptions. Their personal experiences, cultural backgrounds, and training may vary widely. This is especially true of people living at different times and in different places.

A second reason philosophers disagree is that they live in a changing universe. People change, society changes, and nature changes. Some people are responsive and sensitive to change; others cling to tradition and the status quo, to systems that were formulated some time ago and that were declared to be authoritative and final.

A third reason philosophers disagree is that they deal with an area of human experience in which the evidence is not complete. The evidence we do have may be interpreted in various ways by different people. Despite these disagreements, however, philosophers continue to probe, examine, and evaluate the material with the hope of presenting consistent principles by which we can live ***world as a whole.*** Philosophy seeks to combine the conclusions of the various sciences and human experience into some kind of consistent world view. Philosophers wish to see life, not with the specialized slant of the scientist or the businessperson or the artist, but with the overall view of someone cognizant of life as a totality. In speaking of "speculative philosophy," which he distinguishes from "critical philosophy," C. D. Broad says, "Its object is to take over the results of the various sciences, to add to them the results of the religious and ethical experiences of mankind, and then to reflect upon the whole.

The hope is that, by this means, we may be able to reach some general conclusions as to the nature of the universe, and as to our position and prospects in it."

Although there are difficulties and dangers in setting forth any world view, there also are dangers in confining attention to fragments of human experience. Philosophy's task is to give a view of

the whole, a life and a world view, and to integrate the knowledge of the sciences with that of other disciplines to achieve a consistent whole. Philosophy, according to this view, attempts to bring the results of human inquiry— religious, historical, and scientific—into some meaningful interpretation that provides knowledge and insight for our lives.

4. Philosophy is the logical analysis of language and the clarification of the meaning of words and concepts.

Certainly this is one function of philosophy. In fact, nearly all philosophers have used methods of analysis and have sought to clarify the meaning of terms and the use of language. Some philosophers see this as the main task of philosophy, and a few claim this is the only legitimate function of philosophy.

Such persons consider philosophy a specialized field serving the sciences and aiding in the clarification of language rather than a broad field reflecting on all of life's experiences. This outlook has gained considerable support during the twentieth century. It would limit what we call *knowledge* to statements about *observable facts* and their interrelations—that is, to the business of the various sciences. Not all linguistic analysts, however, define *knowledge* so narrowly. Although they do reject and try to "clean up "many nonscientific assertions, many of them think that we can have knowledge of ethical principles and the like, although this knowledge is also experientially derived. Those who take the narrower view neglect, when they do not deny, all generalized world views and life views, as well as traditional moral philosophy and theology.

From this more narrow point of view, the aim of philosophy is to expose confusion and nonsense and to clarify the meaning and use of terms in science and everyday affairs.

5. Philosophy is a group of problems that interest people and for which philosophers always have sought answers.

Philosophy presses its inquiry into the deepest problems of human existence. Some of the philosophical questions raised in the past have been answered in a manner satisfactory to the majority of philosophers. Many questions, however, have been answered only tentatively, and many problems remain unsolved.

2. Pre-Socratic Philosophy

(A History of Philosophy, Fredrick Copleston) Pages 29-53, 61-65 and 81-86 The early philosophical ideas of Thales, Pythagoras, Heraclitus, Parmenides, Melissus, Zeno and Sophists.

2.1. **Thales of Miletus**

He was born in 624 BC in the port town of Miletus, on the west coast of Asia Minor (now Turkey), and died there in 547 BC. Thales (624 – 547 BC) has been called the **father of Greek philosophy**, as well as the first Greek scientist and mathematician. By profession, however, he was an engineer. One of the main astronomical claims to fame for Thales is the suggestion that he predicted the solar eclipse of 585 BC. It is the prediction of this solar eclipse which is widely agreed upon as the **birth of science and philosophy**.

There are two primary characteristics that distinguish Thales from all previous thinkers. First, he separated the **natural world** from the supernatural world by recognizing that natural events can be explained by appealing to **regular sequences of cause and effect**, rather than to random acts on the part of anthropomorphic gods. His explanations, unlike the explanations of all those who went before him, do not attribute any sort of human personality to nature. All the previous attempts to understand the world can be described as "mythologies." To answer the questions "why?" and "how?" earlier investigators personified natural phenomena into gods and goddesses, giving them human psychologies and human motivations. Divine jealousies, love affairs, births and deaths provided the framework for explaining the natural world.

Thales' second achievement was to recognize the superiority of rational argument over all other sorts of authority. Previous explanations of the world did not rest in their impressive use of reason, but in their aesthetic sensibility and their alleged divine inspiration. Thales, on the other hand, recognized that what makes one explanation better than another is how well it fits with, and accounts for, the evidence.

He raised the following questions

1. What is the ultimate reality of which everything is made of?

2. What is the unifying element of the world?

Thales believed that in the beginning there was only water that the world and all things were composed of water. “Water” is the **unifying principle**. Water is the first principle of reality or the primordial matter. He said that the one is eternal, indestructible permanent and has no beginning and end.

Reasons for deciding why water is the primordial matter

1. Psychological views

Water is evidently necessary for all living creatures. Water has the role of nourishment and generation. It is the source of motion. Water is alive. Indeed, water is an ancient symbol of life. His theory was supported by scientific evidence because water is the pre-requisite to life. It is believed that the first life flourish in ocean

2. Direct observation of seeds having moisture nature

Water is the principle of all moist things. There is moisture in many things.

3. The elastic nature of water.

Thales believed that water can exist in **solid, liquid and gaseous** forms. Thus, he concludes that water is everything.

4. Water seems everywhere

It bubbles from the ground. Mist rises from hills or mountains and became cloud He also believes earth floats on water. He said that the earth lighter than water. Because of this, the earth floats on the earth.

2.2. **Anaximander (611-547 B.C.)**

He was a student of Thales and proposed a different physis than water. He argues that water is not an arch principle.

Because water is the many things of the world. It has limited quantity.

Definite element cannot be the first principle of reality. Thus, water is too specific and one of the multiple things in the world.

Water is not the source of its opposite, i.e., fire, drought and hot. Since water puts out fire he reasoned it could not be the source of fire, and thus not the primary source.

Thus, he states that the primary substance must be **imperceptible.** He called the primary substance or ultimate reality the ***apeiron***, the "infinite" or "indefinite."Anaximander saw the world as a struggle of opposites, hot and cold, wet and dry. He thought the Universe formed out of **an infinite chaos** he called the “boundless” due to a “separating out” of opposites (such as hot and cold, wet and dry).The ***apeiron*** *is* Unbounded and unlimited. It has no quality. It is qualitatively indeterminate, eternal, endless and deathless. The Unbounded (or apeiron) is both the source out of which everything derives and also the unifier within nature. Everything in the universe is in fact just a variation on the Unbounded. The Unbounded must be limitless because it must be inexhaustible in order to give rise to everything else in the universe. It must have unlimited potentialities.

The Unbounded is also divine because it is deathless and indestructible which are two symptoms of divinity. Certainly motion is an important property of the Unbounded. The Unbounded moves with eternal motion (because it is alive, remember the important principle from Thales identifying life with motive force). As the Unbounded moves, something separates off from it. From this something, in turn, hot and cold separate off. Hot becomes fire, which then forms the sun and other heavenly bodies. Cold becomes **dark mist** which then forms earth and air, both of which originally moist but are dried off by fire.

The Unbounded steers all Things. The opposites are continually struggling against each other for dominance. They are transforming into one another, and thereby destroying one another. The Unbounded steps in and restores the proper balance between them, making them "pay penalty and retribution." The cycles of night and day, and of the four seasons, are perfect examples of the forced equilibrium

2.3. **Anaximenes (585-528 B.C.)**

He was student of Anaximander. He was monist believing in the oneness of the world.

Anaximenes thought of the basic substance as "air." The fundamental element is an infinite substance, but not an indefinite one. He did not agree with Thales and Anaximander. He asked, if everything comes from water, what can account for the diversity of the present world? He also argues that primordial matter which is devoid of qualities cannot justify the existence of heterogeneous qualities. Through completely natural processes of Condensation and rarefaction everything separated out into its form from Air." Just as our soul, which is air, integrates us, so breath and air surround the whole cosmos."

His physics (air) is transformed into everything else in the world through the processes of condensation and rarefaction. When air rarifies it becomes fire, when it condenses it becomes wind, then water, then clouds, then earth, and then, finally, stone.

Like Anaximander's Unbounded, Anaximenes' air is **unlimited and inexhaustible**. Air, however, is definite. It is something like mist, a breathy thing. Anaximenes arrives at his physics by observing living creatures. What makes a creature alive, he observes, is that it breathes. A breathy thing, which he calls soul, both holds together and guides the living creature. There must be some similar element, he reasons, that performs that same function for the whole cosmos.

Anaximenes provides us with evidence for the claim that rarefaction and condensation of air can give rise to qualitative changes. In particular, he provides us with evidence that condensation gives rise to coldness, and rarefaction to heat. His first piece of evidence comes from human breath. If we hold our lips far apart and breathe out, the resulting breath is hot. If, on the other hand, we purse our lips, forcing the air into a smaller space, the resulting breath is cool. As another confirming instance, Anaximenes points to water, snow, and ice. Water, the most condensed form of the three, is warmest, ice coldest, and snow somewhere in between.

To sum up, Anaximenes believes that everything is air at different degrees of density, and under the influence of heat, which expands, and of cold, which contracts its volume; it gives rise to the several phases of existence. When air is **thinned**, it could become fire. If air was **condensed**, it

would become wind and cloud. More condensing would make water and earth and stone. This process is known as **rarefaction and condensation**.

2.4. **Pythagoras** (569-475 BC)

He was a Greek philosopher, theologian and mathematician, who also contributed to astronomy. . Many presented Pythagoras as a god-like figure! Pythagoras was born on Samos, an island off the coast of Ionia, around 569 BC. He studied in Miletus under Thales, increasing his interest in mathematics and astronomy, and attended Anaximander's lectures, who at the time was interested in geometry and cosmology. Pythagoras then spent about 10 years studying geometry and astronomy in Egypt, as well as entering the priesthood there. From Egypt, he went to Mesopotamia, where he was involved in their sacred rites, as well as learning about arithmetic and music from the Babylonians. He founded a school based on mathematics, philosophy and religion in 510 BC, **Pythagorean**. He was the First to use the term **philosopher** and call himself a philosopher.

The Pythagoreans were interested in abstract and non-sensible things to describe reality. Pythagoras believed that mathematical entities are the intrinsic principles of reality. Everything could be represented by numbers. Number is considered as generator of anything. Everything counted, numerable. The idea of harmony, order and proportion can be reduced to numbers. Therefore, mathematical entities are the intrinsic or pattern principle of reality. It could be said that Pythagoras saw the study of mathematics as a purifier of the soul, just like he considered music as purifying.

He saw numbers in everything. He was convinced that the divine principles of the universe, though imperceptible to the senses, can be expressed in terms of relationships of numbers. He therefore reasoned that the secrets of the cosmos are revealed by pure thought, through deduction and analytic reflection on the perceptible world. This eventually led to the famous saying that "all things are numbers." Pythagoras himself spoke of square numbers and cubic numbers, and we still use these terms, but he also spoke of oblong, triangular, and spherical numbers. He associated numbers with form, relating arithmetic to geometry. He believed that explanation of the universe is found in numbers and numerical relationships. Numbers and numerical

relationships were real and influenced the empirical world Nothing is perfect in the empirical world; perfection is in abstract mathematical world and known only by reason

The key to their ideas is that the universe consists of a **harmony** that should be studied mathematically. We can understand the universe by knowing the numerical relations that express the harmonic ratios according to which everything changes.

Pythagoras believed that all relations could be reduced to numbers. This idea is known as **reductionism**. The Pythagorean beliefs included: that reality is mathematical in nature; that philosophy can achieve spiritual purification.

3. Classical Philosophy

3. 1- Plato's Metaphysics

His metaphysics is related with his **Theory of Forms.** He divided the world (reality) into two: the visible realm and the intelligible realm. The physical or the visible world is the world of senses; **the world of becoming**, and the intelligible realm is the world of Forms; the **world of being.** The intelligible world is Parmenidean, the visible world is Heraclitean. Forms in the intelligible realm are postulated to be the objects of knowledge. The physical world is constantly changing and the world of Forms is unchanging.

THE VISIBLE WORLD	THE INTELLIGIBLE WORLD
The visible world consists of physical objects and their images, shadows, and reflections.	The intelligible world consists of principles and Forms.
Physical objects are constantly changing. They are transient and ephemeral.	The Forms are unchanging and eternal.
Physical objects are less real than the Forms. Physical objects get what reality they have by their ***participation*** in the Forms.	The Forms are what really exists; the physical world is a kind of shadow or reflection of the world of the Forms.
We learn about physical objects empirically, by means of the senses: we look at them, taste	We learn about the Forms not by means of the sense but by means of Reason. We don't need

them, listen to them, and so on. But none of the information we gain in this way is reliable or trustworthy: we don't have real knowledge of the visible world, just mere "opinion."	to look at the Forms or listen to them; indeed we cannot do so. We figure out what they are by thinking about them. Empirical evidence is at best irrelevant, at worst misleading.
In a sense, though, knowledge of the forms also enables us to better understand the visible world. When we understand the Forms, we know what the visible world is a pale imitation The sun is what allows us to see physical objects.	The Good is what allows us to understand the Forms. (This is why the genuinely just person can't be a creep. We're just to the extent that our appetites and our reason are both properly developed and work together harmoniously. But when reason is developed, it makes us aware of the Good, and -- Plato thinks -- we can't know the Good without wanting to do it. So unless we do the good, we will inevitably be in inner turmoil.)
We have parts corresponding to the two worlds. Our physical bodies are a part of the visible world. Our bodies are responsible for our appetites. Our sense organs, by means of which we learn about the visible world, are also part of our physical body.	But there's also another part of us which links us with the eternal realm of the Forms, namely our soul (our reason). So one result of coming to learn about the Forms is that we will become less concerned with physical matters; we will be less governed by our appetites, and less reliant on our unreliable senses for knowledge.

The theory basically postulates the existence of a level of reality or "world" inhabited by the **ideal** or **archetypal forms** of all things and concepts. Thus a form exists, for objects like tables and rocks and for concepts, such as beauty and justice. In the dialogue **Meno**, Plato describes a form as the "**common nature**" possessed by a group of things or concepts. **The Form of the Good is at the top of the hierarchy of Forms, illuminating all of the others (as the sun illuminates objects in the visible realm).** Thus, The Form of the Good is the cause of all other forms, and is the source of all goodness, truth, beauty and objects.

The forms are eternal and changeless, but enter into a partnership with changeable matter, to produce the objects and examples of concepts, we perceive in the temporal world. These are always in a state of becoming, and may participate in a succession of forms. The ever changing temporal world can thus only be the source of opinion. Plato likens the opinions derived from our senses to the perception of shadows of real objects. True knowledge however is the perception of the archetypal forms themselves, which are real, eternal, and unchanging.

Whilst the forms are invisible to the eye, our souls have participated in the eternal world of forms prior to being incarnate in a physical body, and retain a memory of them. Although this memory is not readily accessible to the conscious mind, its presence is sufficient, to enable our limited perceptions. Plato maintains however, that the philosopher can achieve a state of perceiving the forms directly, with his mind's eye, by developing skill in discerning the abstract qualities, common to groups of things and ideas, in the temporal world; by realizing these are merely hypotheses; and by employing the method of dialectic, to categorize and group the qualities in their correct relationships and order; using these hypotheses as stepping stones, to further hypotheses. Thus reason is able to construct a hierarchy of forms, to scale to the height of first principle and attain a state of true knowledge. True knowledge is the knowledge of the Form of Good.

3. 2- Aristotle’s Metaphysics

He starts his metaphysics with optimistic saying that “all human being desire to know”. His assumption is that our sense perception is a harbinger of this.

“As human beings we desire to know: we delight in the senses apart from any value their use gives us, and we delight most especially in sight, which is the greatest source of knowledge.”

An account is given of the way in which we humans know. Other animals have only sensation, which allows for memory in some. The ability to remember gives rise to higher intelligence, allowing some to be taught.

Human beings have the ability to act systematically in pursuit of an end ("art") and reason, which allows us to have "connected experience." Experience is the basis of all human endeavors (a view known as "empiricism," which is opposed to Plato's "rationalism.")

The individual thing is "more real" than its qualifications. "That which is primary and *is* simply (not is something) must be substance. Substance is primary in every way. We know substances primarily and their properties secondarily. A substance must first exist, then be modified, so it is first in time.

The question, "What is being," is answered in a word: "substance." Aristotle speaks of being or substance in four ways: The Material cause, the formal cause, the efficient cause, and the final cause. The material because is the substratum out of which the thing is made; the formal cause is the pattern or form which when present makes matter into a particular type of thing; the efficient cause is the principle of motion; and the final cause is what something is for.

The **material cause** is the basic stuff out of which the thing is made. The material cause of a house, for example, would include the wood, metal, glass, and other building materials used in its construction. All of these things belong in an explanation of the house because it could not exist unless they were present in its composition. Similarly, wooden boxes are made up of wood.

The **formal cause** is the pattern or essence in conformity with which these materials are assembled. It is what makes a thing one thing rather than many things. Thus, the formal cause of our exemplary house would be the sort of thing that is represented on a blueprint of its design. This, too, is part of the explanation of the house, since its materials would be only a pile of rubble (or a different house) if they were not put together in this way.

The **efficient cause** is the agent or force immediately responsible for bringing this matter and that form together in the production of the thing. If your eye sees, then it sees because light from the object strikes your eyes and causes you to see what is there. Efficient causes answer the "what did that" question, but do not answer how it was done. Thus, the efficient cause of the house would include the carpenters, masons, plumbers, and other workers who used these materials to build the house in accordance with the blueprint for its construction. Clearly the house would not be what it is without their contribution.

Lastly, the **final cause** [telos] is the end or purpose for which a thing exists. Final cause is the aim or purpose being served by it. That for the sake of which a thing is what it is. So, the final cause of our house would be to provide shelter for human beings. This is part of the explanation of the house's existence because it would never have been built unless someone needed it as a place to live.

Causes of all four sorts are necessary elements in any adequate account of the existence and nature of the thing, Aristotle believed, since the absence or modification of any one of them would result it the existence of a thing of some different sort. Moreover, an explanation that includes all four causes completely captures the significance and reality of the thing itself.

Aristotle distinguishes the difference between primary and secondary substance. Primary being is ousia and a this something. The concrete individual is a primary being. Secondary ousia shows the universal essence that resulted from a classification. They are natural kinds, for instance dog, human , goat etc. Kinds are individuative categories. This implies primary ousia is unique from other members of its kind as well as the primary being of other kind. This division is a clear indication of Aristotle's attack on Plato who says that only the universal is primary substance. Plato argues for the real existence of ideas rather than particular things. This implies that what is relative is prior to what is in its own right.

The relationship between matter and form

The matter is the principle of individuation in material things. It remains the same parcel of the stuff throughout the change. On the other hand, the form is the pattern or the formula of essence. It makes a thing belongs to a certain kind; makes an object what it is. The essence belongs to only to the species of genus and alludes specific characteristics. It is an intelligible characteristic of an object. The essence of something is not the principle of individuation but of classification.

Aristotle says that there is no unmattered form and unformed matter. Form without matter and mater without form is nothing in the natural world. He believes in hylomorphic substance, a doctrine that everything is made out of both matter and form For Aristotle what is pure form is only the unmoved mover.

Aristotle explained why the universal cannot be substance by discussing changing. It is a concrete individual that undergoes change but not of universal. This shows individuals are really substances. The universal cannot be a this and a subject. Hence platonic ideas are useless to explain motion. The universal are absolutely eternal and cannot undergo change. No one can say a thing exists but not in motion.

Aristotle' criticism of Plato' theory of

His criticism emanates mainly from the third-man argument and the Korismos or the separation of the form from particulars. The third-man argument states that to draw an analogy between the first man and the second man, we must posit the third man, that is, the ideal man. And again to

draw the similarity between the first two men and the third man, we need another man. This leads to an infinite regress to explain the form. So, ideas are useless because Platonic ideas simply multiply the number of thing to be explained; they cannot explain perceptible things; Platonic ideas cause neither motion nor change because they exist apart from particular things.

They do not contribute to the being of other things either because they do not present in the things that participate in them, that is, ideas are supra-sensible things.

Moreover, Aristotle is in favor of Immanent form instead of transcendental form. For Aristotle, the essence of things is not out there but inherent within themselves. He raises the questions that "how can the ideal form be the causes of sensible things without being in those things?"

Aristotle has stated that, "Wisdom will never die with Plato", and on another occasion he said, Plato is dear, but truth is dearer. As mentioned above, while Academy was dedicated to speculative and political philosophy, Lyceum took biology and natural sciences seriously. But metaphysics or first philosophy occupies a central role in his scheme of things as well. According to him, mathematical and physical sciences treat of the quantity, quality, and relations of things. On the other hand, the first philosophy deals with the category of substance and also studies the causes of things. It enquires into the nature of being without considering the conditions imposed by space and time. The absolute and necessary being, as understood by Aristotle, is the eternal essence of things as opposed to the relative, contingent, and accidental. In this regard he agrees with Plato to a great deal.

Aristotle's major criticism of Plato's philosophy targeted the latter's idea of universal essences. For Plato they are universal and objective realities and they exist independent of objects. They are eternal and imperishable and the objects in the world are fundamentally unreal and are mere copies of these eternal essences. Aristotle agrees with Plato on many counts. But he opposes the latter's transcendentalism, which maintains that the essences are apart from the things. According to Aristotle, essences or forms are immanent to things.

As Russell says, Aristotle considered them as common nouns and not as objective realities and things. Any name capable of universal application to the members of a class represents a universal. Opposing Plato's theory, which posits them as abstract original forms to which objects "participate", Aristotle initiates the third man argument.

Third Man Argument

This argument aims at criticizing Plato's theory of ideas, which according to Aristotle states that, "a man is a man because he resembles or participates in the idea of man in the world of essences." Aristotle states that, if a man is a man because he resembles the ideal man, there must be a still more ideal man to whom both ordinary men and the ideal man are similar. Aristotle intends to demonstrate that the notion of imitation or copying used in the theory of forms runs into logical difficulties. In order to explain the similarity between a man and the form of man, one needs to construe a third form of man, and this always requires another form and hence the theory of ideas leads to ad infinitum.

Aristotle further asks whether the ideal man is an ideal animal. If he is, there must be as many ideal animals as there are species of animals. Again, how does the perfect and the eternal world be held responsible for the imperfect and perishable world of material objects?

Plato's transcendentalism conceived Ideas as real beings existing apart from the individuals, which express them. Aristotle finds this position objectionable. He asks, if the general Idea is the substance of the particulars or the essence of the things, how can it exist apart from that of which it is the substance and the essence? He affirms that the general cannot exist outside of and along side of the particular. According to him ideas considered as such and apart from the things, are not real beings or substances

Opposing Plato he maintains that the phenomenal world is not unreal and argues that both form and matter coexist in the world of objects. Their coexistence is responsible for the existence of the world we live. Since he considers this world as real he finds it worthwhile in pursuing knowledge about it. This makes natural scientific investigations meaningful and important. He maintains that genuine scientific knowledge is not a mere acquaintance with facts as knowledge consists in knowing the reasons and causes of things and it should explain why they cannot be other than what they are. The theory of form-matter coexistence answers these fundamental questions.

Aristotle asserts that ideas do not and cannot exist apart from things. On the other hand, they are inherent or immanent in things. The idea is the form of the thing, and cannot be separated from it except by abstraction. It is the essence of the particular and with it constitutes an indivisible whole. For example, Aristotle would hold that there is manness because there are actual men in this world. There is parenthood, because there are parents. Russell elucidates Aristotle's argument of immanence with an interesting simile. He says that, when we say "there is such a

thing as the game of football," it will be nonsensical to assume that football could exist without football-players. Russell in his usual style of language analysis explains Aristotle's position in the following way.

And this dependence is thought to be not reciprocal: the men who play football would still exist even if they never played football; things which are usually sweet may turn sour; and my face, which is usually red, may turn pale without ceasing to be my face. In this way we are led to conclude that what is meant by an adjective is dependent for its being on what is meant by a proper name, but not vice versa.

According to him matter is coexistent with form and different forms design matter differently in the process of evolution of objects. It is something that changes and Aristotle believed that each concrete instance of matter has an inner purpose. It is destined to become something. But Aristotle also maintains that matter has no reality apart from the form, as matter without the Idea is also an abstraction like Idea apart from particular object.

4. Scholastic Philosophy

St. Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274)

He lived at a critical juncture of western culture when the arrival of the Aristotelian *corpus* in Latin translation reopened the question of the relation between faith and reason. These translations of 'The Philosopher' (Aristotle as Aquinas called him) became an integral part of some of Aquinas' most important writings. **Aquinas** Translates Aristotle into the Christian Worldview. Aristotle was a pad for Aquinas. He incorporated religion and philosophy, that is, reason and faith. Like Aristotle, he held the teleological universe, believing that all actions aimed at some end. Moreover, Thomas held the hylomorphic view of Aristotle's metaphysics, but he went beyond Aristotle by considering the nature of God.

Following Aristotle's famous dictum that "all men by nature desire to know," Aquinas holds that people naturally seek knowledge of that which is their true goal and happiness, that is, the vision of God. While reason and philosophy have their respective roles in the acquisition of knowledge, they are inherently limited in their ability to apprehend all truths.

Aquinas, like Aristotle, criticized platonic view of forms, arguing for the real existence of particular things rather than ideas or forms.

Aquinas embraced Aristotle's ideas of **potentiality and actuality** to further understand being. That which a substance "is" its actuality and the thing which can be is its potentiality. Potentiality is the capacity to undergo change. Actuality and potentiality are opposites that describe the state of a substance. In other words, the cat is *actual* simply because it exists. However, the cat not only has *actuality*, it also has *potentiality*. A thing which requires completion by another is in potency: **realization of potency** is called actuality .The cat is capable of changing any of its accidents by simply moving, shedding fur, aging or even changing its substance (such as when the cat changes from a living cat into a corpse after death). In this sense, we say that the cat has a *potential* to change. All material things have both actuality and potentiality simply because of their virtue to change. Thus, Created beings have potentiality that is not actuality, imperfections as well as perfection. Only God is simultaneously all that He can be, infinitely real and infinitely perfect: 'I am who I am' (Exodus 3:14). His attributes or His operations are really identical with His essence, and His essence necessitates His existence. Pure act is the absolute perfection of God.

Aquinas adopts Aristotle's doctrine of the Four Causes: The Four Causes are (1) material cause, (2) formal cause, (3) efficient cause, and (4) final cause. The material cause, as its name implies, pertains to matter or the "stuff" of the world. Matter is potentiality, that is, that which something can become. The formal cause is the form or pattern that governs a particular thing, or the genus to which it belongs. The formal cause can also be called a thing's essence. For example, the formal cause of a particular human being is his or her humanity, the essence of what it means to be human. God is the only creature embodying pure actuality and pure being, and God is thus the only pure formal cause. The efficient cause is what we normally understand by the word *cause* and indicates something that has an effect. The final cause is the goal or purpose toward which a thing is oriented.

Aquinas' ideal being

He tried to explain the difference between existence and essence to understand reality or being. St. Thomas Aquinas states that being is "that which is". "That which is" is composed of two

parts: "which" refers to its *quiddity* (literally "whatness"), and "is" refers to its *esse* (“to be"). *Quiddity*" is synonymous with essence, form and nature; whereas "*esse*" refers to the principle of the being's existence. In other words, a being is "an essence that exists."

In other word, everything has two principles that explains its being, essence and existence. In all beings except for God, these principles are both required in order for the actually existing individual thing to be. The *quiddity* or form of a thing is what makes the object what it is: "Through the form, which is the actuality of matter, matter becomes something actual and something individual,” and also, "the form causes matter to be." Thus, it consists of two parts: "prime matter" (matter without form), and substantial form, which is what causes a substance to have its characteristics. For instance, a human being can be said to be a being whose matter is its body, and whose soul is its substantial form. Together, these consist of its *quiddity*/essence. Aquinas tells us that *esse* is the actuality of essence. *Esse(existence)* just is a kind of actuality

Essence is the "what" of a thing. It is that which is known about it by our forming of a concept. It is a formal principle since for material reality, it is abstracted by the human intellect. Hence, it is a universal principle making many material individuals to be of the same kind (for angels, it makes each angel to be a species unto itself). But, it is obvious upon reflection that "what a thing is" and "that it is" are completely different statements.

That a thing is or has existence, is a principle really distinct from its quiddity (essence). In no case (except for God) does the essence of a thing indicate anything about whether that thing really is. The essence of a horse that exists, and the essence of a horse that doesn't are absolutely the same, namely horse-ness; a horse's existing is totally different from what kind of a thing it is. Therefore, there must be something about really existing things that accounts for this very existing, and it is not their essence; it is their existence. Existence then is that which makes essences to be, to exercise the act of existing. St. Thomas indicated the activity of being, existence, with the Latin of "to be", ***esse***.

Existence is the act of being (esse) exercised by beings; existence actualizes potency as form actualizes matter. Just as the substantial form of a material being determines and makes actual some part of matter, so ***esse*** actualizes the potency of a thing's essence. The ***esse*** and essence of a thing are not separable in real beings. ***Esse*** is logically prior to all other actuality because a thing

cannot be in a certain way unless it simply is. So, because of this logical priority of existence, it is the actuality of all acts"

Existence as Superior to Essence

Aquinas rejected Plato in favor of Aristotle. Plato maintained that ultimate reality consists of essence, whereas Aristotle maintained that existence is primary. For Plato, the world around us that we perceive with our senses contains nothing except impermanent, ever-changing objects. Plato reasoned that for our observations of the world to count as true knowledge and not just as anecdotal evidence, our minds need to make a conceptual leap from individual instances of things to general ideas. He concluded that there must be something permanent that lies behind and unites individual existences, and he referred to this something as “essence.” According to Plato, existence, or the everyday world of objects such as tables, chairs, and dogs, is inherently inferior to essence.

Aquinas follows Aristotle in concluding that Plato’s theory is deficient, in part because it is unable to account for the origin of existence and in part because it is unacceptably dismissive of existence. Holy Scripture states that after each of the six days of Creation, God saw that the fruit of his day’s work was “good” or even “very good.” Furthermore, when Moses asks God how he should refer to him, God responds, “I am that I am,” thereby equating himself with being. In other words, God is pure existence or Being itself. Aquinas argues that man’s purpose consists exactly in developing himself toward Being, not in attempting to escape Being. For Aquinas, the difference between God and his creatures is one of degree, and we are separate from God insofar as we do not have as much existence as God.

Plato further pointed out that we talk about classes of things such as trees and dogs, but these terms do not refer to a particular object, but classes of objects. So then, what are we talking about when we talk about dogs? There must be something such as dogness that allows us to incorporate specific dogs into its domain. These classes are not something that we can perceive with the senses, but it must exist because it makes no sense to talk about nothing

The metaphysics of St. Thomas Aquinas differed significantly from that of Plato. This is evident in the distinction made by Thomas Aquinas between form and matter. Every material substance

is composed of both form and matter. The form is the universal element that places an object in its class or species such as horse or chair. The individuated particular members of the class are found in the matter. For instance, Challa and Belete have the same form-the form of humanness. But they are two separate and distinct persons. Challa is 5 foot long while Belete is 6 foot long. It is the matter that distinguishes between the two.

St. Thomas also made a clear distinction between act and potency. Act is that which exist, while potency is that which can be, or the capacity for being. To illustrate using our previous example, Challa as a man has actuality, that is he is actually a man. He is actually 5 foot, and weighs 45 k.gs. But as a man, Challa also has a certain amount of potentiality. He can become seven feet tall, 55 k.gs. As a man he can also be black, white, or any other color that man can potentially be. It is act which gives something whatever positive perfection it has, and potency which allows it to acquire a new act or perfection which it does not have at the moment. It is through this concept that Aquinas addresses one of the main concerns of philosophers; that of how something changes yet retains its identity.

God alone is Pure Act, since He has no potential to become something else. Every contingent being, however, is a combination of act and potential: "every being which can change in any way, which needs the help of any other being to explain itself and to exits, must be composite. It is not pure act; it is act in so far as it is something actual and determinate, but it is relative non-being or potency in so far as it does not contain a necessity for existing with itself"

At the center of Aquinas' metaphysics is his distinction between essence and existence. Essence is what a being is. Existence is the act by which a being is.Or to put it another way, the essence of something is its what-ness, while its existence is its is-ness. What something is is its essence, the fact that it is is its existence. Under the philosophy of Aquinas these are distinct. But although distinct, there is a definite dependence on one another. One cannot exist without the other. Frederick Copleston writes "There is no essence without existence and no existence without essence; the two are created together, and if its existence ceases, the concrete essence ceases to be."Copleston adds "Existence, then, is neither matter nor form; it is neither an essence nor part of an essence; it is the act by which the essence is or has being" and "existence is not a state of the essence, but rather that which places the essence in a state of actuality."

Hierarchy of beings

Not surprisingly, Aquinas' metaphysics begins with God. God is Being. In Him essence and existence are identical. He is necessary, essential, and without limitation. He is existence while everything else has existence. This existence is necessary if anything was to ever exist since for anything to be possible there must be something existing. And it must be of His nature to exist; non-existence is not possible for God. In everything else there is a distinction between essence and existence. God is the uncaused cause of everything else so His existence must be necessary. That is, He could not have not existed.

So, in the hierarchy of being we have God who is Pure Act in which essence and existence are identical. Below Him are angles: they posses no matter because they are spiritual beings; they are pure form; they have both **essence (potency) and existence (act**). Below the angles, we have man: his form is that of the rational soul and body; he also has both essence and existence. Below humans are things: they have no soul; they are purely material form; they also have both essence and existence. As we can see, the composition of act and potentiality is found in every finite being.

There also exist a relationship between form and matter, act and potential, and essence and existence. It is the form of something that determines or completes its essence, but the essence is actualized by its existence. The form is that which is, but existence is the act by which the form is. Matter is described by St. Thomas as pure potentiality, while form is act. Copleston writes "The cause of existence; it is act, distinct from the potentiality which it actualizes."

Body and Soul

Aquinas rejected Plato's notion that man is a soul simply using a body. This would lead us to the conclusion that the whole nature of man is in the soul. But we know that the soul alone is not a complete being. A man is only a man when he can not only think, but see, hear, imagine, and remember. These things are not possible by the soul alone. It requires a body. According to Aquinas, man is a composite being; he is composed of both body and soul. But instead of the Platonic view of man being a soul in a body, Aquinas maintains that it is the body that is in the soul, not the soul in the body. “Soul” will be defined as the form of living bodies.

Aquinas maintains that the soul is capable of existing apart from the living body after the death of the body, because the soul is incorruptible. This might suggest that he is a kind of Substance Dualist, the soul being one substance and the body another, with the soul "interacting" as it were with the other substance, the body. Considered as a substantial form of a material body, the soul exists in a living being as the substantial form of an animal. A human soul is a constitutive element of the nature of a human substance. It is the formal principle of a human substance.

View of God

God is the sole being whose existence is the same as His essence: "what subsists in God is His existence." Consequently, God cannot be a body (that is, He cannot be composed of matter), He cannot have any accidents. Aquinas also understands God as the transcendent cause of the universe, the "first cause of all things, exceeding all things caused by him," the source of all creaturely being and the cause of every other cause. Consequently, God's causality is not like the causality of any other causes (all other causes are "secondary causes"), because he is the transcendent source of all being, causing and sustaining every other existing thing at every instant (moment). Consequently, God's causality is never in competition with the causality of creatures; rather, God even causes some things through the causality of creatures.

Generally, it is evident that material substances exist contingently. They come into being and they pass out of being. While they exist, their existing is not what they are. Thomas that it is self-evident that what a thing is and its existing differ. Material things depend upon causes to exist, both to become and to be. Only in God is it the case that what he is and his existing are identical: God is His own existence.. Existence is the actuality of a substance, not itself something subsistent (something that exists necessarily as opposed to contingent existence in space and time) .This is true with material substances. But when we ask what we mean by saying that God exists, we have to negate aspects of material existence in order to avoid speaking of Him as if he were a contingent being**.***"Creatures… do not exist by their very nature...They receive their act of existing; God is his act of existing. That is why in every creature essence is really distinct from the act of existing, whereas in God the two are identical.*"

Plato's metaphysics concentrated on the Forms which were abstractions of real sensible objects. Aquinas contends that objects exist in and of themselves and that each object has actuality, that is, its own existence. Aquinas separated existence from essence; Plato made no such distinction.

Another distinction between Plato and Aquinas is in the idea of Forms. Both adhered to some type of concept of Forms; however, their use of the term was different. According to Plato, Forms were universals that existed separately from their objects. Aquinas denied universal Forms or the concept of some unchanging, immutable, immaterial object apart from sensible reality. Aquinas believed that form and matter together formed objects in reality. But the form of Aquinas was an immanent form that assigns an object to its class. For instance, Challa is of the form humanness. The main distinction being that the form is part of Challa, not something out there.

5. Modern Metaphysics

René Descartes

René Descartes was born on March 31, 1596, La Haye,Touraine, France and died February 11, 1650, Stockholm, Sweden. He was a French mathematician, scientist, and philosopher. Because he was one of the first to abandon scholastic Aristotelianism, because he formulated the first modern version of **mind-body dualism**, from which stems the mind-body problem, and because he promoted the development of a new science grounded in observation and experiment, he has been called **the father of modern philosophy.**

Descartes is often regarded as the first thinker to emphasize the use of reason to develop the natural sciences For him the philosophy was a thinking system that embodied all knowledge, and expressed it in this way:

Thus, all Philosophy is like a tree, of which Metaphysics is the root, Physics the trunk, and all the other sciences the branches that grow out of this trunk, which are reduced to three principals, namely, Medicine, Mechanics, and Ethics. By the science of Morals, I understand the highest and most perfect which, presupposing an entire knowledge of the other sciences, is the last degree of wisdom.

Applying an original system of methodical doubt, he dismissed apparent knowledge derived from authority, the senses, and reason and erected new epistemic foundations on the basis of the **intuition** that, when he is thinking, he exists; this he expressed in the dictum "**I think, therefore I am**" (best known in its Latin formulation, "Cogito, ergo sum")

He developed a metaphysical dualism that distinguishes radically between mind, the essence of which is thinking, and matter, the essence of which is extension in three dimensions. Descartes's metaphysics is rationalist, based on the postulation of innate ideas of mind, matter, and God, but his physics, based on sensory experience, is mechanistic and empiricist.

he provided a provisional moral code (later presented as final) for use while **seeking truth:** (1) obey local customs and laws, (2) make decisions on the best evidence and then stick to them firmly as though they were certain, (3) change desires rather than the world, and (4) always seek truth.

The **cogito** is a logically self-evident truth that also gives intuitively certain knowledge of a particular thing's existence—that is, one's self. Nevertheless, it justifies accepting as certain only the existence of the person who thinks it. If all one ever knew for certain was that one exists, and if one adhered to Descartes's method of doubting all that is uncertain, then one would be reduced to solipsism, the view that nothing exists but one's self and thoughts. To escape **solipsism**, Descartes argues that all ideas that are as "clear and distinct" as the cogito must be true, for, if they were not, the cogito also, as a member of the class of clear and distinct ideas, could be doubted. Since "I think, I am" cannot be doubted, all clear and distinct ideas must be true.

On the basis of clear and distinct innate ideas, Descartes then establishes that each mind is a mental substance and each body a part of one material substance. The mind or soul is immortal, because it is unextended and cannot be broken into parts, as can extended bodies.

Descartes also advances at least two proofs for the existence of God. The final proof, presented in the Fifth Meditation, begins with the proposition that Descartes has an innate idea of God as a perfect being. It concludes that God necessarily exists, because, if he did not, he would not be perfect. Descartes elsewhere argues that, because God is perfect, he does not deceive human beings, and therefore, because God leads us to believe that the material world exists, it does

exist. In this way Descartes claims to establish metaphysical foundations for the existence of his own mind, of God, and of the material world.

According to Descartes, a human being is a union of mind and body, two radically dissimilar substances that interact in the pineal gland. He reasoned that the pineal gland must be the uniting point because it is the only nondouble organ in the brain, and double reports, as from two eyes, must have one place to merge. He argued that each action on a person's sense organs causes subtle matter to move through tubular nerves to the pineal gland, causing it to vibrate distinctively. These vibrations give rise to emotions and passions and also cause the body to act. Bodily action is thus the final outcome of a reflex arc that begins with external stimuli—as, for example, when a soldier sees the enemy, feels fear, and flees. The mind cannot change bodily reactions directly—for example, it cannot will the body to fight—but by altering mental attitudes, it can change the pineal vibrations from those that cause fear and fleeing to those that cause courage and fighting.

Descartes' metaphysics asserts the existence of three substances, each characterized by an essence. The first and primary substance is God, whose essence is perfection. In fact, God is the only true substance, that is, the only being that is capable of existing on its own. The other two substances, mind and matter, are created by God and can only exist through his ongoing act of preservation or conservation, called God's "concurrence"

Descartes' arguments to establish the essences of these substances appeal directly to his clear and distinct perception of those essences. The essence of matter is extension in length, breadth, and depth. This extended substance possesses the further "modes" of size, shape, position, and motion. Modes are properties that exist only as modifications of the essential (principal) and the general attributes of a substance. In addition to its essence, extension, matter also has the general attributes of existence and duration. The individual parts of matter have durations as particular modes. All the modes of matter, including size, shape, position, and motion, can exist only as modifications of extended substance.

The essence of mind is thought. Besides existence and duration, minds have the two chief powers or faculties: intellect and will. The intellectual (or perceiving) power is further divided into the modes of pure intellect, imagination, and sense perception. Pure intellect operates

independently of the brain or body; imagination and sense perception depend upon the body for their operation (as does corporeal memory). The will is also divided into various modes, including desire, aversion, assertion, denial, and doubt. These always require some intellectual content (whether pure, imagined, or sensory) upon which to operate. Perhaps for that reason, Descartes describes the mind as an "intellectual substance" It seems he held that the mind essentially has a will, but that the intellectual (or perceptive, or representational) power is more basic, because the 'will' depends on it in its operation.

The proof of the existence of God ,mind and material things goes like this:

That it is impossible to doubt that you are thinking (you must think to doubt) thus we can be certain that a thinking mind exists. From this certain foundation he then concludes that God exists as the necessary creator of our material world and minds, and matter exists because our mind senses corporeal matter (particles), and God would not deceive us;

I think, hence I am, was so certain and of such evidence, that no ground of doubt, however extravagant, could be alleged by the sceptics capable of shaking it, I concluded that I might, without scruple, accept it as the first principle of the philosophy of which I was in search.

By the name God I understand a substance that is infinite, independent, all-knowing, all-powerful, and by which I myself and everything else, if anything else does exist, has been created. (Med. 3)

But, since God is no deceiver, ... and He has given me no faculty to recognize that this is the case, but on the other hand a very great inclination to believe that my sense are conveyed to me by corporeal objects, I do not see how he could be defended against the accusation of deceit if these ideas were produced by causes other than corporeal objects. Hence we must allow that corporeal things exist. (173)

Each substance has a principal attribute, and . . . the attribute of the mind is thought, while that of body is extension. (175)

He then distinguishes the properties of mind, matter and God.

Body is by nature always divisible, and the mind is entirely indivisible. (Med. 6)

Thus extension in length, breadth and depth, constitutes the nature of corporeal substance; and thought constitutes the nature of thinking substance. For all else that may be attributed to body presupposes extension, and is but a mode of this extended thing; as everything that we find in mind is but so many diverse forms of thinking. (175)

God is the primary cause of motion; and he always preserves the same quantity of motion in the universe.
After this consideration of the nature of motion, we must look at its cause. This is in fact twofold: first, there is the universal and primary cause - the general cause of all the motions of the world; and second there is the particular cause which produces in an individual piece of matter some motion which it previously lacked. Now as far as the general cause is concerned, it seems clear to me that this is no other than God himself. In the beginning, ,<in his omnipotence>, he created matter, along with its motion and rest; and now, merely by his regular concurrence, he preserves the same amount of motion and rest in the material universe as he put there in the beginning. Admittedly motion is simply a mode of the matter which is moved. But nevertheless it has a certain determinate quantity; and this, we easily understand, may be constant in the universe as a whole while varying in any given part. (Principles Part II, article. 36)

Generally, Descartes attempts to arrive at a fundamental set of principles that one can know as true without any doubt. To achieve this, he employs a method called **hyperbolical/metaphysical doubt**, also sometimes referred to as methodological skepticism: he rejects any ideas that can be doubted, and then reestablishes them in order to acquire a firm foundation for genuine knowledge.

Initially, Descartes arrives at only a single principle: **thought exists**. Thought cannot be separated from me, therefore, I exist . Therefore, Descartes concluded, if he doubted, then something or someone must be doing the doubting, therefore the very fact that he doubted proved his existence. "The simple meaning of the phrase is that if one is skeptical of existence, that is in and of itself proof that he does exist

Descartes concludes that he can be certain that he exists because he thinks. He perceives his body through the use of the senses; however, these have previously been unreliable. So Descartes

determines that the only indubitable knowledge is that he is a *thinking thing*. Thinking is what he does, and his power must come from his essence. The fact that he is a thinking thing is clear and distinct. Clear and distinct ideas are instilled upon him by God.

Mind and body are separate substances. "Substance," strictly speaking, for Descartes means "a **thing existing in such a manner that it has need of no other thing in order to exist**" (Principle LI, *The Principles of Philosophy*, trans. Anscombe and Geach). In this strict sense, according to Descartes, only God is really a substance. But in a derivative sense "created substances, whether corporeal or thinking, may be conceived under this common concept; for they are things which need only the concurrence of God in order to exist" (Principle LII, trans. Haldane and Ross). Descartes goes on to say that "there is always one principal property of substance which constitutes its nature and essence, and on which all the others depend. Thus extension in length, breadth and depth, constitutes the nature of corporeal substance; and thought constitutes the nature of thinking substance. For all else that may be attributed to body presupposes extension, and is but a mode of this extended thing; as everything that we find in mind is but so many diverse forms of thinking." So the essence of mind is thinking; other mental properties are "modes" of thinking (e.g. sensation, imagination, understanding . . .). The essence of matter is extension; other physical properties are modes of extension (e.g. mass, volume, shape, movement . . .). Each person is a mind, a mental substance; each person is also attached to a body with which he or she interacts.

6. The Main fields of Philosophy

Historically, philosophical concerns have been treated under these broad categories: logic, metaphysics, epistemology, Aesthetics and Ethics. Philosophy also deals with the systematic body of principles and assumptions underlying a particular field of experience. For example, there are philosophies of science, education, art, music, history, law, mathematics, and religion

6.1. Metaphysics is the study of the nature of reality (existence), of what exists in the world, what it is like, and how it is ordered. Metaphysics attempts to offer a comprehensive view of all that exists. It is concerned with such problems as the relation of mind to matter, the

nature of change, the meaning of "freedom," the existence of God, and the belief in personal immortality. In metaphysics philosophers wrestle with such questions as:

Is there a God? What is truth?

What is a person? What makes a person the same through time?

Is the world strictly composed of matter?

Do people have minds? If so, how is the mind related to the body?

Do people have free wills? What is it for one event to cause another?

What are numbers? Do they have a location in physical space? If so, where? If not, where are they? They certainly exist, so they have to be somewhere, but where?

6.2. **Epistemology** is the study of knowledge. It is primarily concerned with what we can know about the world and how we can know it. It investigates the very possibility and conditions of knowledge, its extent, nature and value. It bases itself on facts already known and rises above them to absolute verities, on which all phenomena depend and by which alone they can be rationally explained. Typical questions of concern in epistemology are:

(1) What are the *sources* of knowledge? Where does genuine knowledge come from or how do we know? How do we know what we know?

(2) What is the *nature* of knowledge? What is knowledge? Do we know anything at all? Is there a real world outside the mind, and if so can we know it? Does knowledge require certainty? This is the question of appearance versus reality.

(3) Is our knowledge *valid?* How do we distinguish truth from error? This is the question of the tests of truth, of verification. Traditionally, most of those who have offered answers to these questions can be placed in one of two schools of thought—**rationalism** or **empiricism.** The rationalists hold that human reason alone can discover the basic principles of the universe. The empiricists claim that all knowledge is ultimately derived from *sense experience* and, thus, that our knowledge is limited to what can be experienced. It should be clear that there is a necessary relation between metaphysics and epistemology. Our conception of reality depends on our

understanding of what can be known. Conversely, our theory of knowledge depends on our understanding of ourselves in relation to the whole of reality.

6.3. Ethics is concerned with what we ought to do and what it would be best to do. It is the study of what is good and what is bad, acceptable or unacceptable in human behavior. It is the study of the nature of morality itself. So, it raises such questions as:

What is good? What makes actions or people good? What is right? What makes actions right? Is morality objective or subjective? How should I treat others?

6.4. **Aesthetics** is the study of beauty. It struggle with questions such as

Is beauty in the eyes of the beholder (observer) or does it have objective existence? Where is beauty? Do beautiful things really possess beauty?

6.5. Logic: Philosophy endeavors to understand the nature of correct thinking and to discover what valid reasoning is. It is logic that does such tasks. Logic is the study of what makes reasoning good reasoning, i.e., reasoning which helps us discover truths. It provides techniques for establishing whether claims of any sort are true. It is the study of arguments or reasons given for people's answers to the aforementioned questions. Logicians ask such questions as: What constitutes "good" or "bad" reasoning? How do we determine whether a given piece of reasoning is good or bad? Can we prove that our methods of reasoning are correct? What is it for something to be possible or impossible or necessary?

Basic references

Anthony Kenny, The five ways: St. Thomas Aquinas' proofs of God's existence, in Studies in ethics and philosophy of religion Vol.V, Routledge, 2003 New York

Christopher Shields, Classical Philosophy, A contemporary introduction, Routledge, 2003 New York

Ed. L. Miller & Jon Jensen, Questions That Matter An Invitation To Philosophy, McGraw-Hill, New York, 2009.