NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

COURSE CODE: PHL 454

COURSE TITLE: ADVANCE PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA

COURSE TEAM

Course /Developer/Writer: Dr Francis Chigozie Ofoegbu

Department of Philosophy

Alex Ekwueme Federal University

Content Editor: **(In-View)**

COURSE GUIDE FOR ADVANCED PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

(PHL 454)

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

This course introduces the students to Advanced Philosophy of Religion. It is a follow up of PHL 252. It will treat critically and comprehensively selected topics in Philosophy of religion, such as miracle, magic, problems of religious language, religious crisis in Nigeria, various theories about the nature of faith and politics, etc.

Philosophical discussions of miracles focus on the credibility of specific claims in the Jewish and Christian scripture. A miracle is often described as something unusual because it is contrary to the usual course of nature (Adams, 1767: 15). Accordingly, Miracle differs from Magic, a method of interfacing with the supernatural for a particular outcome; Magic has either a human or demonic source, but Miracle is a supernatural work of God and can be used for the public good. Also, while miracle is different from sorcery, as sorcerers may use it against society (Stein et.al, 2016: 136).

Similarly, religious language entails the integration of definite beliefs of a certain faith in order to interpret and internalize them in society. It has also been

one of the factors of religious crisis in Nigeria. Hence there is a need to compliment religion with politics, because religion will serve as the conscience of the people and direct them to the right path of decision making and service to the people. Once there is morality in the society which religion propagates, wherein the citizens imbibe and embrace it, there will be unity, peace, progress and sustainable development in the society.

Course Objectives

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

- To understand the concept of Miracle;
- To examine the concept of Magic
- To examine problems of religious language;
- To explore the religious crisis in Nigeria
- To discuss theories about the nature of religion
- To examine the concept of religion and politics.

Working through this Course

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

Study Units

This course has 23 study units which are structured into 4 modules. Each module comprises of 4-6 study units as follows:

Module 1: Miracle
Unit 1: The Concept of Miracle
Unit 2: Religious Views on Miracle
Unit 3: Arguments for Miracle and their Criticisms
Unit 4: Arguments against Miracle and their Criticisms
Unit 5: Bases of Miracle

Module 2: Magic
Unit 1: Defining Magic
Unit 2: Nature, Scope and Principle of Magic
Unit 3: Theories of Magic
Unit 4: Magic and Society

Module 3: Problems of Religious Language
Unit 1: Understanding Religious Language

Unit 2: Difference between Religious Statements and Scientific Statements

Unit 3: Problems of Religious Language: Positions on the Validity and Invalidity of Religious Language

Unit 4: Critical Evaluation of Thomas Aquinas' Christian Perspective

Module 4: Religious Crisis in Nigeria
Unit 1: Understanding Religious Crisis in Nigeria

Unit 2: Brief History of Religious Crisis in Nigeria
Unit 3: Causes and Effects of Religious Crisis
Unit 4: Consequences of Religious Crisis and The Way Forward

Module 5: Theories of Religion
Unit 1: Sociological Theory

Unit 2: Psychological Theory of Religion

Module 6: Religion and Politics
Unit 1: Defining the Concept of Religion
Unit 2: Defining the Concept of Politics
Unit3: Religion and State
Unit 4: Some Issues on Religion and Politics

References and Further Readings

Akudolu, L. (2019). Understanding the Nature and Problems of Metaphysics. Nigeria, Awka: Valid Publishers.

Anthony, F. (1967). "Miracles" in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Paul Edwards. New York: The Macmillan Company and The Free Press.

Aquinas, St. (1905). Thomas, *Summa Contra Gentiles*. (*SCG*), translation by J. Rickaby, London: Burns and Oates.

Basinger, D. (2018) *Miracles.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Durkheim, E. (1893). *Division of Labor in Society*. Translated by George Simpson. (1993) New York: Free Press.

Durkheim, E. (1961), *The Elementary Forms of the Religions Life*. New York: Collier Books.
Fox, J. (2018), An *Introduction to Religion and Politics: Theory and Practice*. Second Edition. London: Routledge.
Frazer, J.G. (1922), *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion*. New York: MacMillan.

Graham, O. (2015). *The Routledge Handbook of Contemporary Philosophy of Religion*. New York: Routledge.

Hume, D. (1955). *An Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. C. W. Hendel. New York: Bobbs-Merrill

Likka, P. (2002). *Mind and Miracles*. USA: Blackwell Publishing.

Mumford, S. (2001). *Miracles: Metaphysics and Modality*. Cambridge: University Press.

Stein, R.L. & Stein, P.L. (2016), *The Anthropology of Religion, Magic and Witchcraft.* 3rd edition. New York: Routledge.

Tylor, E.B. (1871), *Primitive Cultures: Researches into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Language, Art and Custom.* London: J. Murray.

Yandell, K. (2016). *Philosophy of Religion: A Contemporary Introduction.* New York: Routledge.

Yandell, K.E. (2002). *Philosophy of Religion, a Contemporary Introduction.* London: Routledge.

MODULE 1.   MIRACLE

Table of Contents

Unit 1: The Concept of Miracle
Unit 2: Religious Views on Miracle
Unit 3: Arguments for Miracle and their Criticisms
Unit 4: Arguments against Miracle and their Criticisms
Unit 5: Bases of Miracle

UNIT 1: DEFINING MIRACLE

Unit 1: The Concept of Religion
1.1 Introduction
1.2 Intended Learning Outcomes
1.3 Main contents
     1.3.1 Etymological Meaning of Miracle
     1.3.2 Miracles as Events Contrary to the Usual Course of Nature
     1.3.3 Miracles as Events that Surpass the Powers of Nature
     1.3.4 Miracles as Violations of the laws of Nature
1.4 Differences between Miracle and Magic

1.1 Introduction

Philosophical discussions of miracles are focused principally on the credibility of certain claims in religion. But inquiry into the credibility of specific miracle claims inevitably raises questions regarding the concept of miracle, and arguments regarding particular claims cannot be evaluated until the nature of that concept has been at least reasonably clarified. We shall look at four major conceptions of miracle: etymological meaning, miracles as events contrary to the usual course of nature, miracles as events that exceed the productive power of nature, and miracles as violations of the laws of nature. We shall also look at the differences between **miracle and magic.**

1.2 Intended Learning outcomes

This unit will help students:

1. to underpin miracle
2. to understand the concept of miracle
3.   to differentiate miracle from magic

1.3 Main contents

1.3.1 Etymological Meaning of Miracle

Etymologically, the word 'miracle' comes from a Latin word "*miraculum"*, meaning a wonderful or surprising thing. This does not mean that every surprising happenstance is a miracle. Miracle is a rather surprising, rare and extraordinary act of a divine agency which does not follow the known order by which things happen. Aquinas (*Summa Contra Gentiles III)* says "those things are properly called miracles which are done by divine agency beyond the order commonly observed in nature (*praeter ordinem communiter observatum in rebus*)".

A miracle, philosophically and theologically speaking, is never a mere coincidence no matter how extraordinary or significant. If you missed a plane and the plane crashed, that is not a miracle unless God intervened in the natural course of the event causing you to miss the flight. A miracle is a supernaturally (divinely) caused event; an event (ordinarily) different from what would have occurred in the normal (natural) course of event. It is a divine overriding of or interference with the natural order. Miracles, however, are not ordinarily understood to be mere products of divine agency, but must be extraordinary, marvellous and significant as well.

1.3.2. Miracles as Events Contrary to the Usual Course of Nature

A miracle can be described as something unusual because it is contrary to the usual course of nature. William Adams (1767: 15) notes:

> An experienced uniformity in the course of nature hath been always thought necessary to the belief and use of miracles. These are indeed relative ideas. There must be an ordinary regular course of nature, before there can be anything extraordinary. A river must flow, before its stream can be interrupted.

When something happens in an extraordinary way contrary to our regular experience of how it usually happens in nature, it is termed a miracle. There is a regularity in nature, which we experience through our senses, and this conditions our minds to expect things to follow similar ways they have been operating. Then, when a certain event takes place strangely order than this observed regularity, it is called a miracle. That is why miracles have to do with wonder, surprise and awe.

Defining miracle in this sense, Likka (2002) states that miracle is a real or imagined event that contradicts our intuitive expectations of how entities normally behave. According to him, our minds treat half-understood information by carrying out searches in the memory, trying to connect current information with something already known. Therefore, a miracle can be understood as a happenstance contrary to our usual experience; that does not mean that they are contrary to the experience of those who witnessed them but that they are only contrary to their usual experience. Hence, their encounter with such miracles makes it possible for them to believe what they initially did believe was possible. Our regular experience informs us that once one dies, the next thing that follows within three days is decay but seeing a dead man who had been in a grave for four days raised to life is miraculous to us. The reason is simply because such an event is contrary to our usual experience.

1.3.3 Miracles as Events that Surpass the Powers of Nature

One of the definitions of miracle given by St. Thomas is that miracle is something which happens beyond the order or course of nature. Consequently, when something is called a miracle, it means an occurrence beyond the order of created nature. Reciting the words of psalmist as the foundation of this definition, St. Thomas says that no one but God alone can do this: "Praise the Lord, who alone doth great wonders". This implies that nature cannot produce miraculous effects.

As it stands, however, this definition leaves us wanting a more precise conception of what is meant by the order or course of nature. We might therefore try to tighten the definition by saying that a miracle is an event that exceeds the productive power of nature (St. Thomas Aquinas, *SCG* 3.103; *ST* 1.110, art. 4), where "nature" is construed broadly enough to include ourselves and any other creatures substantially like ourselves. Variations on this include the idea that a

miracle is an event that would have happened only given the intervention of an agent not wholly bound by nature (Larmer 1988: 9) and that a miracle is an event that would have happened only if there an interruption on nature by a being whose power supersedes the power of nature.

In this sense, Stephen Mumford (2001) defines miracle as natural events with supernatural causes and that such causal interaction is logically possible. Such miracles may or may not involve violations of natural laws. If violations of laws are possible, Humean supervenience views of laws are best avoided. Where miracles violate natural laws, it shows that what is naturally impossible may be actual, and what is naturally impossible may not be actual. However, his definition points to a supernatural being as the cause of miracle; a being whose power is beyond and supersedes the productive power of nature.

A miracle may surpass the powers of nature in three ways: (a) substantially, as when two bodies are together in one place or sun is made to turn black, or water turned to wine. Such miracles are absolutely above the capacity of nature and represent the highest degree of power. (b)Subjectively, when the miracle consists not in the substance of what is produced but in the subject in which it occurs; for example, the resurrection of the dead and restoring sight to the blind. Nature can indeed produce life but not in a corpse; and it can give sight, but not to the blind. (c) Qualitatively, when a miracle exceeds the mode or manner in which nature produces a given effect. For example, when a person is suddenly cured of a longstanding disease without medication and without a period of convalescence which is usual in such cases.

1.3.4. Miracles as Violations of the laws of Nature
David Hume (1955) and Spinoza (1883) conceive miracles as violations of natural laws. This definition has been the focus of lively discussion ever since. Humetries to explain miracle as an event beyond mere changes in the regular course of nature, raising the bar higher for an occurrence to qualify as a miracle but also raising the potential epistemic significance of such an event if it could be authenticated. Spinoza sees miraclesviolation of natural lawssomething impossible. As a pantheist, he believes that God and nature is one, and therefore God doing something contrary to laws of nature means that he is doing something contrary to himself, which is absurd. It is on this comprehension that his impossibility argument against miracle rests as well as Hume's incredibility argument.

But what is natural law? Harrison (1995) explains that what is called natural law is nothing but a general description of regularity in the course of nature, which is descriptive and prescriptive. He alleges that it was Newton that led scholars to commitment to the mechanical view of the universe governed by immutable laws. Law, according to him, should be prohibitive and not prescriptive only. Therefore, natural law does not exist for nature does not give any law. The universe is governed by Omnipotent God and miracle is God bringing changes in regular ways by which He acts

Bringing the concept of natural laws into the definition of "miracle" is, however, problematic, and for a variety of reasons many writers have found it untenable. First, the concept of a miracle predates any modern concept of a natural law by many centuries. While this does not necessarily preclude Hume's concept, it does raise the question of what concept or concepts earlier thinkers had in mind and of why the Humean concept should be thought preferable (Tucker 2005). One benefit of defining miracles in terms of violations of natural law is that this definition entails that a miracle is beyond the productive power of nature. But if that is the key idea, then it is hard to see why we should not simply use that as the definition and leave out the problematic talk of laws.

Second, it becomes difficult to say in some cases just which natural laws are being violated by the event in question (Earman 2000). That dead men stay dead is a widely observed fact, but it is not, in the ordinary scientific use of the term, a law of nature that dead men stay dead. The laws involved in the decomposition of a dead body are all at a much more fundamental level, at least at the level of biochemical and thermodynamic processes and the level of interactions of fundamental particles.

Third, there are deep philosophical disagreements regarding the nature and even the existence of natural laws. On Hume's own "regularity" view of natural laws, it is difficult to see what it would mean for a natural law to be violated. If the natural laws are simply compendious statements of natural regularities, an apparent "violation" would most naturally be an indication, not that a supernatural intervention duringnature had occurred, but rather that what we had thought was a natural law was, in fact, not one. On metaphysically rich conceptions of natural laws, violations are problematic since the laws involve relations of necessity among universals. And on the view that there are no natural laws whatsoever, the set of events satisfying the Humean definition of a miracle is, trivially, empty.

Speaking of miracles as *violations* of the laws of nature also raises questions about the nature of violation. Richard Swinburne (1970) has suggested that a miracle might be defined as a non-repeatable counter-instance to a law of nature. If a putative law has broad scope, great explanatory power, and appealing simplicity, it may be more reasonable, Swinburne argues, to retain the law (defined as a regularity that virtually invariably holds) and to accept that the event in question is a non-repeatable counter-instance of that law than to throw out the law and create a vastly more complex law that accommodates the event.

One way to get around all of these problems and still retain the Humean formulation is simply to redefine the laws of nature. J. L. Mackie sums up this perspective neatly:

> The laws of nature … describe the ways in which the world—including, of course, human beings—works when left to itself, when not interfered with. A miracle occurs when the world is

not left to itself, when something distinct from the natural order intrudes into it. (Mackie 1982: 19–20)

With the notion of "natural law" thus redefined, the "violation" definition becomes virtually equivalent to the earlier definition of a miracle as an event that exceeds the productive power of nature. And in Mackie's formulation it has the desirable feature that it makes evident the connection between a miracle and supernatural agency.

Self-Assessment Exercise1

1. Which of the following words cannot be used to describe miracle?

   a. strange **b.** surprising **c.** rare **d.**extraordinary

2. Generally speaking, miracle is the same as the usual course of nature. **True or False**

3. _____ is in nature which we experience through our senses, and which conditions our minds to expect things to follow similar ways they have been operating.

4. Who defines miracle as natural events with supernatural causes and that such causal interaction is logically possible?

5. – and - are two words that represent "a general description of regularity in the course of nature, which is descriptive and prescriptive."

1.4 Differences between Miracle and Magic

Magic and *miracles* might mean the same thing to some people, but there is vast difference between the two terms. To distinguish miracle from magic, we must take some instances from the Bible. This is because the Bible is the greatest record of miracles and some instances of magic and therefore can serve as the best source of our data. It is proper to say that Jesus worked miracles, but it would be wrong to attribute His works to magic. Magic and miracles differ in their source: magic has either a human or demonic source, but miracles are supernatural works of God.

There are two diverse kinds of "magic," and it is good to distinguish between the two. Entertainers who use sleight-of-hand and illusions in their performance are often called "magicians," but they are illusionists, which is what most of them prefer to be called. An illusionist's audience does not consider what they see to be "real" magic; they understand it is a trick, and they delight in the fact they cannot figure out how the trick is done. The other kind of magic is what some might call "real" magic; it draws on occult, demonic power. The Bible speaks of

"lying wonders" in 2 Thessalonians 2:9. The Antichrist's coming "will be in accordance with how Satan works. He will use all sorts of displays of power through signs and wonders that serve the lie." This type of magic, sometimes spelled *magick* to distinguish it from sleight-of-hand, is associated with divination, conjuring, and sorcery and is condemned in Scripture (see Deuteronomy 18:10–12). Of course, the Antichrist will *claim* that his power comes from God, but that is a lie, too (see Revelation 13:2).

A major difference between magic and miracles is that magic draws upon power that is not directly from God, and miracles are the result of God's power intervening in the world. Magic is an attempt to circumvent God in the acquisition of knowledge or power. The city of Ephesus was a battleground between magic and miracles. The pagan population of Ephesus was steeped in idolatry and involved in magic, but then Paul brought the gospel to that city, and with the gospel came true power through the apostle: "God did extraordinary miracles through Paul" (Acts 19:11). Seeing what Paul did, some exorcists (the seven sons of Sceva) attempted to duplicate his miracles, but they failed miserably and publicly (verses 13–16). When many Ephesians were saved through the preaching of Paul and Silas, the new believers destroyed their books of witchcraft: "A number of those who had practiced magic arts brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. And they counted the value of them and found it came to fifty thousand pieces of silver" (Acts 19:19, ESV). So, in Ephesus, there was a clear contrast between the miracles of God and the magic of the devil, which is sorcery.

Another difference between magic and miracles is that magic does not glorify God, but miracles do (see Mark 2:12). A good example of a magician's self-promotion is found in Samaria. "A man named Simon had practiced sorcery in the city and amazed all the people of Samaria. He boasted that he was someone great, and all the people, both high and low, gave him their attention and exclaimed, 'This man is rightly called the Great Power of God.' They followed him because he had amazed them for a long time with his sorcery" (Acts 8:9–11). Note that Simon was boastful about his "power" and went by a blasphemous title. Simon had the ability to amaze the crowds with his magic, but it was not the power of God. Simon's performances were all about himself and enriching his own life. Later, Simon the magician sees a true miracle performed by Peter and John, and he offers to buy from them the "secret" to their trick (verses 18–19). Peter immediately rebukes Simon; in Simon's sinful heart, he had equated the power of the Holy Spirit with his own sorcery (verses 20–23).

Another difference between magic and miracles is that magic involves manipulation and opposition to the truth but miracles reveal the truth. The magician attempts to manipulate people for personal gain. The worker of miracles simply highlights the power and glory of God. **The city of Paphos on the island of Cyprus was another battleground between the miraculous and the magical.** As Paul and Barnabas (and Mark) were preaching in that city, they were opposed by "a Jewish sorcerer and false prophet named Bar-Jesus, who

was an attendant of the proconsul, Sergius Paulus" (Acts 13:6–7). This sorcerer, also called Elymas, had wormed his way into the political establishment of Cyprus. When the proconsul began to listen to the missionaries' message, Elymas "tried to turn the proconsul from the faith" (verse 8). Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, confronted Elymas head-on: "You are a child of the devil and an enemy of everything that is right! You are full of all kinds of deceit and trickery. Will you never stop perverting the right ways of the Lord?" (verse 10). Paul then performed a miracle—striking Elymas blind—showing that the miracle-working power of God is greater than the magic of the devil (verse 11). The result was that the proconsul believed the gospel and was saved (verse 12).

Another good comparison of miracles and magic is found in the book of Exodus. The workers of magic in Egypt are called "sorcerers" and "magicians" (Exodus 7:11, 22); however, Moses and Aaron are never identified by those terms. The works that God did through Moses were true miracles, whereas the tricks of Pharaoh's magicians were meant to deceive and harden the king's heart. Early in the story, there is a showdown in Pharaoh's court: "Aaron threw his staff down in front of Pharaoh and his officials, and it became a snake. Pharaoh then summoned wise men and sorcerers, and the Egyptian magicians also did the same things by their secret arts: Each one threw down his staff and it became a snake. But Aaron's staff swallowed up their staffs" (Exodus 7:10–12). The fact that the Egyptian snakes were eaten by Aaron's snake shows that the power of God is greater than whatever power the pagan magicians were tapping in to. Later, these same Egyptian sorcerers duplicated the changing of water into blood (Exodus 7:22) and the mass production of frogs (Exodus 8:7). However, the sorcerers were powerless to mimic the other plagues. When it came to the gnats, the magicians' abilities fell short. As they reported to Pharaoh, "This is the finger of God" (Exodus 8:19).

Miracles and magic sometimes look the same, but their goals are different. Magic and illusion distract the eye from reality, while miracles draw the eye to reality. Miracles reveal; magic hides. Miracles are an expression of creative power; magic uses what already exists. Miracles are a gift; magic is a studied skill. Miracles do not glorify men; magic seeks to be noticed and bring glory to the magician.

Jesus was not a magician. He was the Son of God, known for His many miracles (John 7:31). Jesus told His enemies "Do not believe me unless I do the works of my Father. But if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the works, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father" (John 10:37–38). Jesus' miracles (or "signs," as John called them) are proof of who He is.

1. The kind of magic that draws on occult, demonic power is called ___.

2. Mention two things that magic usually do to the truth.

3. The distinction between magic and miracle is in their ___.

1.5 Summary

1. Etymologically, the word 'miracle' comes from a Latin word "*miraculum*", meaning a wonderful or surprising thing.
2. David Hume (1955) and Spinoza (1883) conceive miracles as violations of natural laws.
3. *Magic* and *miracles* might mean the same thing to some people, but there is vast difference between the two terms.

1.6 References/Further Reading

Adams, W. 1767, *An Essay in Answer to Mr. Hume's Essay on Miracles*, 3rd ed., Babbage, Charles, 1837, *The Ninth Bridgewater Treatise*, London: John Murray.

Akudolu, L. (2019). Understanding the Nature and Problems of Metaphysics. Nigeria, Awka: Valid Publishers.

Anthony, F. (1967). "Miracles" in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Paul Edwards. New York: The Macmillan Company and The Free Press.

Aquinas, T. *Summa Contra Gentiles* (1905). (*SCG*), translation by J. Rickaby, London: Burns and Oates.

Basinger, D. (2018) *Miracles.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Berkhorf, L. (1974). *Systematic Theology*. Ediburgh: The Banner of Trust.

Campbell, G. (1762). *A Dissertation on Miracles*, London: Thomas Tegg, 1839.

Christian Answers. Net (2005). "Miracles are not possible", some claim. Is it true? https://christiananswers.net/q-eden/edn-t011.html Retrieved 2021-08-26.

Come Reason Ministries (nd). "Are miralces logically impossible?" https://www.comereason.org/david-hume-on-miracles.asp. Retrived 2021-08-26.

Copan, P. (ed.), 1998, *Will the Real Jesus Please Stand Up?* Grand Rapids: Baker Books.

Copan, P. and Tacelli, R. (eds.) (2000). *Jesus' Resurrection: Fact or Figment?* Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity.

Craig, W. L. (2008). *Reasonable Faith*, 3rd ed., Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books.

Craig, W. L. (1985). *The Historical Argument for the Resurrection of Jesus During the Deist Controversy*, Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press.

Craig, W. L. (2002). *Assessing the New Testament Evidence for the Resurrection of Jesus*, Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press.

Earman, J. 2000, *Hume's Abject Failure*, Oxford: Oxford University Press

Graig, W. (1998). "Creation, Providence and Miracles in Davies", In: Brain (ed.) *Philosophy of Religion.* Washington: Georgetown University Press.

Habermas, Gary (1996). *The Historical Jesus*. Joplin: College Press.

Harrison, P. (1995). "Newtonian Sciences, Miracles, and Laws of Nature". *Journal of History of Ideas 5 (4).*

Hoffman, Paul K (1999)."A Jurisprudential Analysis of Hume's "in Principal" Argument against Miracles" (PDF). *Christian Apologetics Journal, 2 (1).* Archived from the original(PDF) on October 26, 2007. Retrieved 2007-11-21.

Hume, David (1955). *An Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. C. W. Hendel. New York: Bobbs-Merrill

Hume, David (1748 *et seq).An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, Tom L. Beauchamp (ed.), New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.

Kant, Immanuel (1960). *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone*, 2nd ed., trans. T. M. Green and H. H. Hudon. New York: Harper Torchbook.

Larmer, Robert (1988). *Water into Wine? An Investigation of the Concept of Miracle*, Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Lewis, C. S. (1947). *Miracles*, New York: Macmillan.

---------------- (1960). *Miracles: A Preliminary Study*. New York: Macmillan

Likka, P. (2002). *Mind and Miracles*. USA: Blackwell Publishing.

Mackie, J. L. (1982). *The Miracle of Theism*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Morgan, Thomas (1739). *The Moral Philosopher*, vol. 2, London: Printed for the author.

Mumford, Stephen (2001). *Miracles: Metaphysics and Modality*. Cambridge: University Press.

O'Collins, Gerald, and David Kendall (1996). "Reissuing Venturini," in O'Collins and Kendall (eds.), *Focus on Jesus: Essays in Soteriology and Christology*, Herefordshire: Fowler Wright Books, pp. 153–75.

Paley, William (1794). *A View of the Evidences of Christianity*, London: John W. Parker   and   Son, 1859.

Spinoza, Baruch (1670). *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus.* London: Trübner and Co., 1862.

Spinoza, Benedict (1883). *Tractatus Theologica-Pliticus*, in The Chief Works of Benedict de Spinoza, trans. R. H. M. Elwes. London: George Bell and Sons

Swinburne, Richard (1970). *The Concept of a Miracle*, London: Macmillan and Co.

Toland, John (1702). *Christianity Not Mysterious*, London: n.p.

Voltaire (1764, 1901). *Philosophical Dictionary*, in *The Works of Voltaire*, vol. 11, New   York: E. R. DuMont.

Whately, Richard (1819). *Historic Doubts Relative to Napoleon Bonaparte*, Andover: Warren   F. Draper, 1874.

1.7 Possible Answers to the Self-Assessment Exercise

Self-Assessment Exercise 1.

1. A. Strange
2. False
3. Regularity
4. Stephen Mumford
5. Natural Law

Self-Assessment Exercise 2

1. Real Magic
2. Manipulate and Oppose/ Manipulation and Opposition
3. Source

UNIT TWO: RELIGIOUS VIEWS ON MIRACLE

2.0 Introduction

Many religious denominations believe in miracle as a sign of God's existence as well as his confirmation to their teachings and doctrine. The prominent among the religions of the world are Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam. Among these, Christianity is the highest ranked one on miracles. The birth of Jesus Christ, his ministries, his death and resurrection, the acts of his apostles and disciples, and church in both early, medieval and contemporary era are characterized by miraculous instances. We shall therefore begin our discourse here with Christianity.

2.1 Intended Learning outcomes

This unit will help students:

1. to discuss how prominent religions, conceive miracles.
2. to understand the background of the concept of miracle
3. to differentiate various religious view on miracle

2.3 Main contents

2.3.1   Christianity

The gospels record three sorts of miracles performed by Jesus: exorcisms, cures, and nature wonders. In the Gospel of John the miracles are referred to as "signs" and the emphasis is on God demonstrating his underlying normal activity in remarkable ways. In the New Testament, the greatest miracle is the resurrection of Jesus, the event central to Christian faith.

Jesus explains in the New Testament that miracles are performed by faith in God. "If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'move from here to there' and it will move." (Gospel of Matthew 17:20). After Jesus returned to heaven, the Book of Acts records the disciples of Jesus praying to God to grant that miracles be done in his name for the purpose of convincing onlookers that he is alive. (Acts 4:29–31).

Other passages mention false prophets who will be able to perform miracles to deceive "if possible, even the elect of Christ" (Matthew 24:24). 2 Thessalonians 2:9 says, "And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming: Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the Truth, that they might be saved." Revelation 13:13,14 says, "And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live." Revelation 16:14 says, "For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to

gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty." Revelation 19:20 says, "And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone." These passages indicate that signs, wonders, and miracles are not necessarily committed by God. These miracles not committed by God are labeled as false (pseudo) miracles, which could mean that they are deceptive in nature and are different from the true miracles committed by God.

In early Christianity, miracles were the most often attested motivations for conversions of pagans; pagan Romans took the existence of miracles for granted; Christian texts reporting them offered miracles as divine proof of the Christian God's unique claim to authority, relegating all other gods to the lower status of *daimones*: "of all worships, the Christian best and most particularly advertised its miracles by driving out of spirits and laying on of hands" (MacMullen, 1984:40). The Gospel of John is structured around miraculous "signs": The success of the Apostles according to the church historian Eusebius of Caesarea lay in their miracles: "though laymen in their language", he asserted, "they drew courage from divine, miraculous powers" (MacMullen, 1984:22). The conversion of Constantine by a miraculous sign in heaven is a prominent fourth-century example.

Since the Age of Enlightenment, miracles have often needed to be rationalized: C.S. Lewis, Norman Geisler, William Lane Craig, and other 20th-century Christians have argued that miracles are reasonable and plausible. For example, Lewis said that a miracle is something that comes expected. If for thousands of years a woman can become pregnant only by sexual intercourse with a man, then if she were to become pregnant without a man, it would be a miracle (CRM 2021, Christi (Hoffman 1999, 2005, CRM). There have been numerous claims of miracles by people of most Christian denominations, including but not limited to faith healings and casting out demons.

2.3.2   Hinduism
In Hinduism, miracles are focused on episodes of liberation of the spirit. A key example is the revelation of Krishna to Arjuna, wherein Krishna persuades Arjuna to rejoin the battle against his cousins by briefly and miraculously giving Arjuna the power to see the true scope of the universe, and its sustainment within Krishna, which requires divine vision. This is a typical situation in Hindu mythology wherein wondrous acts are performed for the purpose of bringing spiritual liberation to those who witness or read about them.

Hindu sages have criticized both expectation and reliance on miracles as cheats, situations where people have sought to earn a benefit without doing the work necessary to merit it. Miracles continue to be occasionally reported in the practice of Hinduism, with an example of a miracle modernly reported in Hinduism being the Hindu milk miracle of September 1995, with additional occurrences in 2006 and 2010, wherein statues of certain Hindu deities were seen to drink milk offered to them. The scientific explanation for the incident,

attested by Indian academics, was that the material was wicked from the offering bowls by capillary action.

3.2.3 Buddhism
The *Haedong Kosung-jon* of Korea (Biographies of High Monks) records that King Beopheung of Silla had desired to promulgate Buddhism as the state religion. However, officials in his court opposed him. In the fourteenth year of his reign, Beopheung's "Grand Secretary", Ichadon, devised a strategy to overcome court opposition. Ichadon schemed with the king, convincing him to make a proclamation granting Buddhism official state sanction using the royal seal. Ichadon told the king to deny having made such a proclamation when the opposing officials received it and demanded an explanation. Instead, Ichadon would confess and accept the punishment of execution, for what would quickly be seen as a forgery. Ichadon prophesied to the king that at his execution a wonderful miracle would convince the opposing court faction of Buddhism's power. Ichadon's scheme went as planned, and the opposing officials took the bait. When Ichadon was executed on the 15th day of the 9th month in 527, his prophecy was fulfilled; the earth shook, the sun was darkened, beautiful flowers rained from the sky, his severed head flew to the sacred Geumgang mountains, and milk instead of blood sprayed 100 feet in the air from his beheaded corpse. The omen was accepted by the opposing court officials as a manifestation of heaven's approval, and Buddhism was made the state religion in 527 CE. The *Honchō Hokke Reigenki* (c. 1040) of Japan contains a collection of Buddhist miracle stories. Miracles play in the veneration of Buddhist relics in Southern Asia. Thus, Somawathie Stupa in Sri Lanka is an increasingly popular site of pilgrimage and tourist destination thanks to multiple reports about miraculous rays of light and modern legends, which often have been fixed in photographs and movies.

2.3.4 Islam
In the Quran, a miracle can be defined as a supernatural intervention in the life of human beings. According to this definition, miracles are present "in a threefold sense: in sacred history, in connection with Muhammad himself and in relation to revelation. The Quran does not use the technical Arabic word for miracle (*Muʿdjiza*) "that by means of which [the Prophet] confounds, overwhelms, his opponents". The term 'Ayah' (sign) is used in the Quran in the above-mentioned threefold sense: it refers to the "verses" of the Quran (believed to be the divine speech in human language; presented by Muhammad as his chief miracle); as well as to miracles of it and the signs (particularly those of creation).

To defend the possibility of miracles and God's omnipotence against the encroachment of the independent secondary causes, some medieval Muslim theologians such as Al-Ghazali rejected the idea of accepted it as something that facilitates humankind's investigation and comprehension of natural processes. They argued that nature was composed of uniform atoms that were "recreated" at every instant by God. Thus, if the soil to fall, God would have to create and

re-create the accident of heaviness for as long as the soil was to fall. For Muslim theologians, the laws of nature were only the customary sequence of apparent causes: customs of God.

Sufi biographical literature records claim of miraculous accounts of men and women. The miraculous prowess of the Sufi holy men includes *firasa* (clairvoyance), the ability to , to become completely invisible and practice *buruz* (exteriorization). The holy men wild beasts and traverse long distances in time span. They could also produce food and rain in seasons of drought, heal the sick and help barren women conceive.

Self-Assessment Exercise1

1. The history of Christianity is characterized by miraculous instances, true or false?
2. In Hinduism, miracles are focused on episodes of...?
3. .....biographical literature records claim of miraculous accounts of men and women in Islam.

2.3.5.   Judaism

Descriptions of miracles (Hebrew *Ness, נס*) appear in the Tanakh. Examples include prophets, such as Elijah who performed miracles like the raising of a widow's dead son (1 Kings 17:17–24) and Elisha whose miracles include multiplying the poor widow's jar of oil (2 Kings 4:1–7) and restoring to life the son of the woman of Shunem (2 Kings 4:18–37). The Torah describes many miracles related to Moses during his time as a prophet and the Exodus of the Israelites. Parting the Red Sea, and facilitating the Plagues of Egypt are among the most famous.

During the first century BCE, a variety of religious movements and splinter groups developed amongst the Jews in Judea, individuals claimed to be miracle workers in the tradition of Moses, Elijah, and Elisha, the Jewish prophets. The Talmud provides some examples of such Jewish miracle workers, one of whom is Honi HaM'agel, who was famous for his ability to successfully pray for rain.

There are people who obscure all miracles by explaining them in terms of the laws of nature. When these heretics who do not believe in miracles disappear and faith increases in the world, then the Mashiach will come. For the essence of the Redemption primarily depends on this – that is, on faith.

Most Chasidic communities are rife with tales of miracles that follow a *yechidut*, a spiritual audience with a *tzadik*: barren women become pregnant, cancer tumors shrink, wayward children become pious. Many Hasidim claim that miracles can take place in merit of partaking of the *shirayim* (the leftovers from the rebbe's meal), such as miraculous healing or blessings of wealth or piety.

Self-Assessment Exercise 2

1. ....describes many miracles related to Moses during his time as a prophet?

2. During the first century BCE, a variety of religious movements and splinter groups developed amongst the Jews in Judea. True or False?

3. .....provides some examples of Jewish miracle workers?

2.5.0   Summary

1. The gospels record three sorts of miracles performed by Jesus: exorcisms, cures, and nature wonders
2. In Hinduism, miracles are focused on episodes of liberation of the spirit.
3. In the Quran, a miracle can be defined as a supernatural intervention in the life of human beings.

2.6.0   References/Further Reading

Adams, W. 1767, *An Essay in Answer to Mr. Hume's Essay on Miracles*, 3rd ed., Babbage, Charles, 1837, *The Ninth Bridgewater Treatise*, London: John Murray.

Akudolu, L. (2019). Understanding the Nature and Problems of Metaphysics. Nigeria, Awka: Valid Publishers.

Anthony, F. (1967). "Miracles" in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Paul Edwards.   New York: The Macmillan Company and The Free Press.

Aquinas, T. *Summa Contra Gentiles* (1905). (*SCG*), translation by J. Rickaby, London: Burns and Oates.

Basinger, D. (2018) *Miracles.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Berkhorf, L. (1974). *Systematic Theology*. Ediburgh: The Banner of Trust.

Campbell, G. (1762). *A Dissertation on Miracles*, London: Thomas Tegg, 1839.

Christian Answers. Net (2005). "Miracles are not possible", some claim. Is it true?   https://christiananswers.net/q-eden/edn-t011.html   Retrieved 2021-08-26.

Come Reason Ministries (nd). "Are miralces logically impossible?" https://www.comereason.org/david-hume-on-miracles.asp. Retrieved 2021-08-26.

Copan, P. (ed.), 1998, *Will the Real Jesus Please Stand Up?* Grand Rapids: Baker Books.

Copan, P. and Tacelli, R. (eds.) (2000). *Jesus' Resurrection: Fact or Figment?* Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity.

Craig, W. L. (2008). *Reasonable Faith*, 3rd ed., Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books.

Craig, W. L. (1985). *The Historical Argument for the Resurrection of Jesus During the Deist Controversy*, Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press.

Craig, W. L. (2002). *Assessing the New Testament Evidence for the Resurrection of Jesus*, Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press.

Earman, J. 2000, *Hume's Abject Failure*, Oxford: Oxford University Press

Graig, W. (1998). "Creation, Providence and Miracles in Davies", In: Brain (ed.)*Philosophy of Religion.* Washington: Georgetown University Press.

Habermas, Gary (1996). *The Historical Jesus*. Joplin: College Press.

Harrison, P. (1995). "Newtonian Sciences, Miracles, and Laws of Nature". *Journal of History of Ideas 5 (4).*

Hoffman, Paul K (1999)."A Jurisprudential Analysis of Hume's "in Principal" Argument against Miracles" (PDF). *Christian Apologetics Journal, 2 (1).* Archived from the original(PDF) on October 26, 2007. Retrieved 2007-11-21.

Hume, David (1955). *An Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. C. W. Hendel. New York: Bobbs-Merrill

Hume, David (1748 *et seq). An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, Tom L. Beauchamp (ed.), New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.

Kant, Immanuel (1960). *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone*, 2nd ed., trans. T. M. Green and H. H. Hudon. New York: Harper Torchbook.

Larmer, Robert (1988). *Water into Wine? An Investigation of the Concept of Miracle*, Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Lewis, C. S. (1947). *Miracles*, New York: Macmillan.

--------------- (1960). *Miracles: A Preliminary Study*. New York: Macmillan

Likka, P. (2002). *Mind and Miracles*. USA: Blackwell Publishing.

Mackie, J. L. (1982). *The Miracle of Theism*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

MacMullen, R. (1984). *Christianizing the Roman Empire.* New Haven: Yale University Press.

Morgan, Thomas (1739). *The Moral Philosopher*, vol. 2, London: Printed for the author.

Mumford, Stephen (2001). *Miracles: Metaphysics and Modality*. Cambridge: University Press.

O'Collins, Gerald, and David Kendall (1996). "Reissuing Venturini," in O'Collins and Kendall (eds.), *Focus on Jesus: Essays in Soteriology and Christology*, Herefordshire: Fowler Wright Books, pp. 153–75.

Paley, William (1794). *A View of the Evidences of Christianity*, London: John W. Parker   and   Son, 1859.

Spinoza, Baruch (1670). *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus.* London: Trübner and Co., 1862.

Spinoza, Benedict (1883). *Tractatus Theologica-Pliticus*, in The Chief Works of Benedict de Spinoza, trans. R. H. M. Elwes. London: George Bell and Sons

Swinburne, Richard (1970). *The Concept of a Miracle*, London: Macmillan and Co.

Toland, John (1702). *Christianity Not Mysterious*, London: n.p.

Voltaire (1764, 1901). *Philosophical Dictionary*, in *The Works of Voltaire*, vol. 11, New   York: E. R. DuMont.

Whately, Richard (1819). *Historic Doubts Relative to Napoleon Bonaparte*, Andover: Warren   F. Draper, 1874.

2.7. Possible Answers to the Self-Assessment Exercise

Self-Assessment Exercise 1.

1. True
2. Liberation of the spirit
3. Sufi

Self-Assessment Exercise 2

1. The Torah
2. True
3. The Talmud

UNIT 3: ARGUMENTS FOR MIRACLE AND THEIR CRITICISMS

3.0 Introduction

3.1 Intended Learning Outcomes

3.2 Main contents

       3.2.1 Deductive Arguments

       3.2.2 Criteriological Arguments

       3.2.3 Explanatory Arguments

       3.2.4 Probabilistic Arguments

3.3 Summary

3.4 References/Further Reading

3.5 Possible Answers to the Self-Assessment Exercise

3.0   Introduction

"Miracles, indeed, would prove something," admits the eponymous skeptic in Berkeley's *Alciphron*. "But what proof do we have of these miracles?" (Berkeley 1732/1898: 364) There is no lack of answers in the literature. But the variety of

premises, the multiplicity of argumentative structures, and the diversity of aims employed to this end can be bewildering. Broadly speaking, most arguments for miracle claims fall into one of four structural categories: deductive, criteriological, explanatory, or probabilistic. These classifications are not mutually exclusive. An argument may be put forward as criteriological but be best analyzed, on reflection, as explanatory; an explanatory argument may be best analyzed in probabilistic terms. But the fourfold classification will do for a first rough sorting.

3.1 Intended Learning outcomes

This unit will help students:

1. to understand various arguments in support of miracles.
2. to analyse argument for miracles.
3. to differentiate various arguments for miracle.

3.2 Main contents
3.2.1 Deductive arguments

A valid deductive argument is one in which, given the truth of the premises, the conclusion must also be true. Deductive arguments for miracle claims are relatively rare in serious modern discussions, since they are subject to peculiar liabilities. Here, for example, is a deductive reconstruction of an argument given by William Paley (1859), broadly modelled on the version given by Richard Whately (1870: 254–258) and other Victorian logicians:

1. All miracles attested by persons, claiming to have witnessed them, who pass their lives in labours, dangers, and sufferings in support of their statements, and who, in consequence of their belief, submit to new rules of conduct, are worthy of credit.
2. The central Christian miracles are attested by such evidence.

Therefore,

3. The central Christian miracles are worthy of credit.

There are several strategies available for pressing a critique of this argument. In ancient times, premise 2 was generally conceded, while premise 1 was contested; since the Enlightenment, it has become somewhat more common for critics to contest premise 2 as well. There are also indirect approaches that exploit the deductive structure of the argument to argue that something must be wrong with the argument without getting bogged down in the details of a specific critique. Adding further true premises does not reduce the support that a deductive argument gives to its conclusion; but the addition of such premises may bring to light some awkward consequences. One interpretation of one part of Hume's strategy in "Of Miracles," part 2 is that he has in mind the addition of a further premise:

2. Various non-Christian miracles are attested by such (or better) evidence,

the conclusion envisaged being, of course, that

3. Various non-Christian miracles are worthy of credit.

The strategy is intended as a *reductio ad absurdum* of the first premise, since *prima facie* it is not the case that both the Christian miracles and the non-Christian miracles are worthy of credit. Paley does not cast his own argument into a deductive form, but he does attempt to forestall this sort of criticism by adding, in rounding out Part 1, an additional claim for which he offers several lines of argument:

There is *not* satisfactory evidence, that persons professing to be original witnesses of other miracles, in their nature as certain as these are, have ever acted in the same manner, in attestation of the accounts which they delivered, and properly in consequence of their belief of those accounts. (Paley 1859: 181)

3.2.2   Criteriological Arguments

A criteriological argument sets forth some criteria ostensibly met by the claim in question and concludes that the satisfaction of those criteria reflects well on the claim—that it is certain, or true, or likely to be true, or plausible, or more plausible than it would have been had it not met the criteria A classic formulation of a criteriological argument for miracles is employed by Charles Leslie (1697/1815: 13), who argues that we may safely believe an historical claim that meets four criteria:

1. That the matters of fact be such, as that men's outward senses, their eyes and ears, may be judges of it.
2. That it be done publicly in the face of the world.
3. That not only public monuments be kept up in memory of it, but some outward actions to be performed.
4. That such monuments, and such actions or observances, be instituted, and do commence from the time that the matter of fact was done.

The first two criteria, Leslie explains, "make it impossible for any such matter of fact to be imposed upon men, at the time when such a fact was said to be done, because every man's eyes and senses would contradict it." The latter two criteria assure those who come afterwards that the account of the event was not invented subsequent to the time of the purported event. Leslie points out that these criteria are not necessary conditions of factual truth, but he insists that they are—taken jointly—sufficient. Hence, we may speak of Leslie's principle: If any reported event meets all four of these criteria, then its historicity is certain.

In assessing a criteriological argument, we need to ask not only whether the event in question meets the criteria but also whether the criteria themselves good indicators of truth are. An argument for the criteria that Leslie gives cannot

proceed wholly *a priori*, since there is not a necessary connection between an event satisfying the criteria and its being true. In this case, perhaps the most promising approach would be to argue that the criteria effectively rule out explanations other than the truth of the claim. Leslie's remarks suggest that this is the direction he would go if challenged, but he does not offer a fully developed defense of his criteria.

Leslie's argument is, in the sense outlined above, categorical—he holds that, as the claim of the resurrection meets all four criteria (the memorials being supplied by the Christian commemoration of the last supper and the transfer of the day of worship from the Sabbath (Saturday) to the first day of the week (Sunday)), the certainty of the matter of fact in question is "demonstrated." This rather bold claim opens the possibility of refutation of Leslie's principle by counterexample, though reportedly Conyers Middleton, a contemporary of Hume whose critique of the ecclesiastical miracles was notable for its thoroughness, searched vainly for years for a counterexample to Leslie's principle. Be that as it may, a criteriological argument may also be constructed on the basis of a more modest principle, such as that if any reported event meets all four of these criteria, then it is reasonable to accept its historicity.

The chief difficulty with criteriological arguments, whether bold or modest, is that they provide no means for taking into account any other considerations that might weigh against the historical claim in question. Intuitively, extreme antecedent improbability ought to carry some weight in our evaluation of the credibility of a factual claim. A defender of a criteriological argument might respond that so long as the bar is set high enough, antecedent improbability will be overwhelmed by the fact that the event does indeed meet the stipulated criteria. But this is a claim that requires argument; and the bolder the conclusion, the more argument it requires.

3.2.3 Explanatory Arguments

An explanatory argument is typically contrastive: it aims to show, for example, that one hypothesis is a better explanation of a certain body of facts than any rival hypothesis or than the disjunction of all rival hypotheses. This approach argues that it is the best explanation for a small set of widely conceded facts. A typical "minimal facts" argument for the resurrection of Jesus starts with a list of facts such as these (Habermas 1996: 162):

1. Jesus died by crucifixion.
2. His disciples subsequently had experiences which they believed were literal physical appearances of the risen Jesus.
3. The disciples were transformed from fearful cowards into bold proclaimers who were willing to face persecution and death for their message.
4. Paul, who had previously been a persecutor of the Christians, had an experience that he also believed was an appearance of the risen Jesus.

None of these four facts is, in itself, a supernatural claim, and virtually all critical scholars with relevant expertise concur in these facts on ordinary historical grounds. The explanatory argument starts with this scholarly consensus and contends that all alternative explanations for these facts are inferior to the explanation that Jesus actually did rise from the dead. The conclusion is therefore typically categorical.

One advantage of this approach over the criteriological approach is that the inference is explicitly contrastive: the argument engages directly with alternative explanations of the data. Such engagement brings with it the burden of examining a variety of alternative explanations, a burden that is sometimes discharged by reference to established criteria of historical explanation (Craig 2008: 233).

This sort of explanatory argument may be contested in at least five ways, a number of which have been explored. First, one might try, the scholarly consensus notwithstanding, to dispute the facts asserted. (Crossan, in Copan 1998) If successful, this strategy would undermine the positive argument. Second, one might grant, if only for the sake of the argument, the *prima facie* force of the positive argument but attempt to neutralize it by widening the factual basis to include a matching set of facts, equally well attested, for which the *falsehood* of the resurrection account is the best explanation. Third, one might argue that the relative merits of the miraculous and non-miraculous explanations have been improperly assessed and that, rightly considered, one or more of the non-miraculous explanations is actually preferable as an explanation of the facts in question. (Lüdemann, in Copan and Tacelli 2000) Fourth, one might produce a non-miraculous explanation not addressed in the explanatory argument and argue that it is superior to the miraculous explanation (Venturini 1800; cf. O'Collins and Kendall 1996). Fifth, one might contest the implication that an explanation that is superior to its rivals in pairwise comparisons is actually more reasonable to believe than not. It is not difficult to imagine (or even to find) cases where one explanation is marginally better than any given rival but where the disjunction of the rival explanations is more believable. This final criticism applies only when the explanatory argument is categorical; but in that case, a further argument would be necessary to close off this line of criticism.

Self-Assessment Exercise 1

---

1. A valid deductive argument is one in which, given the truth of the premises, the conclusion must also be true. True or False?

2. A classic formulation of a criteriological argument for miracles is employed by ...?

3. .... is contrastive and aims to show that one hypothesis is a better explanation of a certain body of facts than any rival hypothesis.

3.2.4 Probabilistic arguments

A probabilistic argument aims to show that the conclusion is more probable than not, or that it is more probable than some fixed standard, or that it is far more probable given the evidence adduced than it is considered independent of that evidence. This method employs the machinery of Bayesian probability and argues that some fact or set of facts renders the conclusion probable (for a categorical argument) or significantly more probable than it was taken apart from those facts (for a confirmatory one). Historically, probabilistic arguments for miracles have centered on the credibility of eyewitness to the testimony of the miraculous. For instance, if independent witnesses can be found, who speak truth more frequently than falsehood, the probability of the event concurring *shall be greater than the improbability of the alleged miracle*. (Babbage 1837: 202, emphasis original; cf. Holder 1998 and Earman 2000). The problem with this argument is that it lacks certainty.

Self-Assessment Exercise 2

1..... argument show that the conclusion is more probable than not.

2..... what method employs the machinery of Bayesian probability.

3. Historically, probabilistic arguments for miracles have centred on the ...... to the testimony of the miraculous.

3.3 Summary
1. Deductive argument is one in which, given the truth of the premises, the conclusion must also be true.
2. Criteriological argument sets forth some criteria ostensibly met by the claim in question and concludes that the satisfaction of those criteria reflects well on the claim.
3. Explanatory argument is typically contrastive: it aims to show, for example, that one hypothesis is a better explanation of a certain body of facts than any rival hypothesis or than the disjunction of all rival hypotheses.
4. Probabilistic argument aims to show that the conclusion is more probable than not, or that it is more probable than some fixed standard, or that it is far more probable given the evidence adduced than it is considered independent of that evidence.

3.4 References/Further Reading

Adams, W. 1767, *An Essay in Answer to Mr. Hume's Essay on Miracles*, 3rd ed., Babbage, Charles, 1837, *The Ninth Bridgewater Treatise*, London: John Murray.

Akudolu, L. (2019). Understanding the Nature and Problems of Metaphysics. Nigeria, Awka: Valid Publishers.

Anthony, F. (1967). "Miracles" in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Paul Edwards. New York: The Macmillan Company and The Free Press.

Aquinas, T. *Summa Contra Gentiles* (1905). (*SCG*), translation by J. Rickaby, London: Burns and Oates.

Basinger, D. (2018) *Miracles.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Berkhorf, L. (1974). *Systematic Theology*. Ediburgh: The Banner of Trust.

Campbell, G. (1762). *A Dissertation on Miracles*, London: Thomas Tegg, 1839.

Christian Answers. Net (2005). "Miracles are not possible", some claim. Is it true? https://christiananswers.net/q-eden/edn-t011.html Retrieved 2021-08-26.

Come Reason Ministries (nd). "Are miralces logically impossible?" https://www.comereason.org/david-hume-on-miracles.asp. Retrieved 2021-08-26.

Copan, P. (ed.), 1998, *Will the Real Jesus Please Stand Up?* Grand Rapids: Baker Books.

Copan, P. and Tacelli, R. (eds.) (2000). *Jesus' Resurrection: Fact or Figment?* Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity.

Craig, W. L. (2008). *Reasonable Faith*, 3rd ed., Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books.

Craig, W. L. (1985). *The Historical Argument for the Resurrection of Jesus During the Deist Controversy*, Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press.

Craig, W. L. (2002). *Assessing the New Testament Evidence for the Resurrection of Jesus*, Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press.

Earman, J. 2000, *Hume's Abject Failure*, Oxford: Oxford University Press

Graig, W. (1998). "Creation, Providence and Miracles in Davies", In: Brain (ed.) *Philosophy of Religion.* Washington: Georgetown University Press.

Habermas, Gary (1996). *The Historical Jesus*. Joplin: College Press.

Harrison, P. (1995). "Newtonian Sciences, Miracles, and Laws of Nature". *Journal of History of Ideas 5 (4).*

Hoffman, Paul K (1999)."A Jurisprudential Analysis Of Hume's "in Principal" Argument against Miracles" (PDF). *Christian Apologetics Journal, 2 (1).* Archived   from the original(PDF) on October 26, 2007. Retrieved 2007-11-21.

Hume, David (1955). *An Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. C. W. Hendel.   New York: Bobbs-Merrill

Hume, David (1748 *et seq).An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, Tom L.   Beauchamp (ed.), New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.

Kant, Immanuel (1960). *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone*, 2nd ed., trans. T. M. Green and H. H. Hudon.New York: Harper Torchbook.

Larmer, Robert (1988). *Water into Wine? An Investigation of the Concept of Miracle*, Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Lewis, C. S. (1947). *Miracles*, New York: Macmillan.

---------------- (1960). *Miracles: A Preliminary Study*. New York: Macmillan

Likka, P. (2002). *Mind and Miracles*. USA: Blackwell Publishing.

Mackie, J. L. (1982). *The Miracle of Theism*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Morgan, Thomas (1739). *The Moral Philosopher*, vol. 2, London: Printed for the author.

Mumford, Stephen (2001). *Miracles: Metaphysics and Modality*. Cambridge: University Press.

O'Collins, Gerald, and David Kendall (1996). "Reissuing Venturini," in O'Collins and Kendall (eds.), *Focus on Jesus: Essays in Soteriology and Christology*, Herefordshire: Fowler Wright Books, pp. 153–75.

Paley, William (1794). *A View of the Evidences of Christianity*, London: John W. Parker   and Son, 1859.

Spinoza, Baruch (1670). *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus.* London: Trübner and Co., 1862.

Spinoza, Benedict (1883). *Tractatus Theologica-Pliticus*, in The Chief Works of Benedict de Spinoza, trans. R. H. M. Elwes. London: George Bell and Sons

Swinburne, Richard (1970). *The Concept of a Miracle*, London: Macmillan and Co.

Toland, John (1702). *Christianity Not Mysterious*, London: n.p.

Voltaire (1764, 1901). *Philosophical Dictionary*, in *The Works of Voltaire*, vol. 11, New   York: E. R. DuMont.

Whately, Richard (1819). *Historic Doubts Relative to Napoleon Bonaparte*, Andover: Warren F. Draper, 1874.

3.5 Possible Answers to the Self-Assessment Exercise

Self-Assessment Exercise 1

1. True

2. Charles Leslie

3. An explanatory argument

Self-Assessment Exercise 2

1. Probabilistic Argument'

2. Probabilistic Argument

3. credibility of eyewitness

UNIT 4: ARGUMENTS AGAINST MIRACLES AND THEIR CRITICISMS

4.0 Introduction
4.1 Intended Learning Outcomes
4.2 Main contents
      4.2.1 Impossibility Arguments
      4.2.2 Incredibility Arguments
      4.2.3 Arguments from Auspicious Conditions
      4.2.4 Arguments from Ignorance and Barbarism
      4.2.5 Arguments from Emotionalism

4.3 Summary
4.4 References/Further Reading

4.4 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercise

4.0 Introduction
Arguments against miracle claims, like arguments in their favour, come in a variety of forms, invoke diverse premises, and have distinct aims. We shall discuss the popular ones among them.

4.1 Intended Learning outcomes

This unit will help students:

1. to understand various forms of arguments against miracles.
2. to analyse argument against miracles.
3. to differentiate various arguments against miracle.

4.2 Main contents

4.2.1 Impossibility Arguments

The boldest claim that could be made against reported miracles is that such events are impossible. Famous among these arguments is the argument of Spinoza. Arguing from a Newtonian concept of nature, Spinoza insisted that "nothing then, comes to pass in nature in contravention to her universal laws, nay, nothing does not agree with them and follows from them, for . . . she keeps a fixed and immutable order." In fact, "a miracle, whether in contravention to, or beyond, nature, is a mere absurdity." Spinoza was dogmatic about the impossibility of miracles when he proclaimed, "We may, then, be absolutely certain that every event which is truly described in Scripture necessarily happened, like everything else, according to natural laws" (Spinoza 1883: 83, 87, 92)

In support of his crucial premise Spinoza insisted that Nature "keeps a fixed and *immutable* Order." That is to say, everything "*necessarily* happened . . . according to natural laws." And "nothing comes to pass in nature in contravention to her *universal* laws . . . " (Spinoza 1883:83).

Spinoza's argument can be summarized as follows:

1. Miracles are violations of natural laws.
2. Natural laws are immutable.
3. It is impossible for immutable laws to be violated.
4. Therefore, miracles are impossible.

A non-theological version of this argument, sometimes mistakenly attributed to Hume, is actually due to Voltaire (1764/1901: 272): "A miracle is the violation of mathematical, divine, immutable, eternal laws. By the very exposition itself, a miracle is a contradiction in terms: a law cannot at the same time be immutable and violated".

A subtler version of a theological objection can also be found in the entry "Miracles" in Voltaire's *Philosophical Dictionary* (1764/1901: 273):

> It is impossible a being infinitely wise can have made laws to violate them. He could not … derange the machine but with a view of making it work better; but it is evident that God, all-wise and omnipotent, originally made this immense machine, the universe, as good and perfect as He was able; if He saw that some imperfections would arise from the nature of matter, He provided

for that in the beginning; and, accordingly, He will never change anything in it.

It is therefore impious to ascribe miracles to God; they would indicate a lack of forethought, or of power, or both.

According to Le Clerc (1690:235), Spinoza's argument relied so much on abstract reasoning. He argued that empirical evidence for miracles is greater than Spinoza's argument. Secondly, the allegation that miracles violate the laws of nature is sick. The question is: what is this natural law? The so-called natural laws such as the law of gravitation, are properly speaking the effect of God acting on matter at every moment; for matter has only the power to continue in its present state, be it rest or motion. Anything that is done in the world is either done by God or by created intelligent beings. The implication of this is that the so-called "natural laws" is a fiction; what we discern as the course of nature is nothing else than God's will, producing certain effects in a continual and uniform manner. Thus, a miracle does not violate the law of nature which really does not exist except only an unusual event which God does. Miracle therefore can serve as a confirmation of the existence of God, who is omnipotent and possesses freewill to interpose in the regular order in which he acts. Thirdly, the so-called "natural laws' composes of incidental state of events, not necessary or essential states. It is therefore not prohibitive as the Ten Commandment but descriptive, describing the regular way by which things happen. In other words, miracles are not and cannot be conceived as violations of "natural laws".

4.2.2   Incredibility Arguments

Incredibility of miracles means that a miracle is impossible to be accepted as true or to be believed. David Hume in his incredibility argument against miracle said: "I flatter myself that I have discovered an argument . . . which, if just, will, with the wise and learned, be an everlasting check to all kinds of superstitious delusion, and consequently will be useful as long as the world endures" (Hume 1955).

Just what is this "final" argument against the miraculous? In Hume's own words:

1. "A miracle is a violation of the laws of nature."
2. "Firm and unalterable experience has established these laws."
3. "A wise man proportions his belief to the evidence."
4. Therefore, "the proof against miracles . . . is as entire as any argument from experience can possibly be imagined."(Hume 1955:118-123)

In this form the crucial premise is the second one which Hume explains as follows: "There must, therefore, be a uniform experience against every miraculous event. Otherwise the event would not merit that appellation." So

"nothing is esteemed a miracle if it ever happened in the common course of nature" (Hume 1955, 122-123)

Here again the essence of the argument depends on man's repeated observation. For the common course of nature provides us with uniform experience of natural regularities. However, there is a difference between Hume and Spinoza. For Spinoza a scientific law was *universal* and immutable; hence, miracles were impossible. For Hume human experience is *uniform* and, thus, miracles may be possible but they are *incredible*. So, between Spinoza and Hume there was a softening of the basis for naturalism which corresponds to the later softening of the understanding of a scientific law. A scientific law is not necessarily universal (with no exception); it is simply *uniform* (with no credible exception). But even in this weaker form, Hume's argument rests upon the *regularity* of nature as opposed to the claim for highly irregular events (such as miracles).

Another similar argument is from Anthony Flew (1967) who stated that miracles cannot be accepted as true because evidence against miracles is always greater than evidence in support of it. His argument can be summarized in this way:

1. Miracles are by nature particular and unrepeatable.
2. Natural events are by nature general and repeatable.
3. Now, in practice, the evidence for the general and repeatable is always greater than that for the particular and unrepeatable.
4. Therefore, in practice, the evidence will always be greater against miracles than for them.

These arguments are fallacious because of the following reasons: If testimony is accepted only when the matter is deemed possible, then many natural facts would not be accepted as true. For example, a man living in a hot climate would never believe in the testimony from others that water could exist in a solid state. This implies that testimony to an event cannot be refuted by experience and observations, otherwise, we would never be justified in believing anything outside our present experience. Secondly, contrary to Flew's thought, miracle should be particular and unrepeatable, lest it is no more qualified as miracle. That miracle is not general, it is not a proof against its existence but a proof for its identification and unique nature. Thirdly, the issue of evidence is fallacious. If we see a man who was blind seeing, what other evidence is greater than it? Miracle itself is evidence against unbelief.

4.2.3   Arguments from Inauspicious Conditions

First, Hume lists a set of conditions that would, in his view, be necessary in order for an argument from testimony to have its full force, and he argues that no miracle report has ever met these conditions:

There is not to be found, in all history, any miracle attested by a sufficient number of men, of such unquestioned good sense, education, and learning, as to secure us against all delusion in themselves; of such undoubted integrity, as to

place them beyond all suspicion of any design to deceive others; of such credit and reputation in the eyes of mankind, as to have a great deal to lose in case of their being detected in any falsehood; and at the same time attesting facts, performed in such a public manner, and in so celebrated a part of the world, as to render the detection unavoidable: All which circumstances are requisite to give us a full assurance in the testimony of men. (Hume 1748/2000: 88).

These arguments of Hume can easily be dismissed: (1) No miracle has a sufficient number of witnesses. This is false with regard to Biblical miracles. The miracles of Jesus Christ were publicly performed. The same applies to many miracles today. (2)That miracle does not originate among educated ones but in the midst of ignorant men. This cannot be said concerning the miracle of Jesus Christ which took place under Roman civilization in the capital city of the Jews. Moreover, we do not need education to ascertain when a miracle has taken place but our five senses.   (3) That no miracle is associated with men of integrity. The greatest men of integrity both in ancient and modern times are the ministers of God: Bishops, prophets, and clergy, and they are so revered in our society. Most of them are known for signs and wonders. This proves the argument of Hume wrong.

4.2.4   Argument from Ignorance and Barbarism

Similar to the argument from inauspicious conditions is the argument from ignorance and barbarism. The argument claims that miracle stories are most popular in backward cultures. As John Toland (1702: 148) puts it, it is very observable, that the more ignorant and barbarous any people remain, you shall find "most abound with Tales of this nature …" The unstated moral to be drawn is that both the production and the reception of miracle stories are due to a failure to understand the secondary causes lying behind phenomena, while increasing knowledge and culture leaves no room for such stories. Hume (2000: 90–91) also borrowed this line of reasoning.

But the supposed trajectory of societies from ignorant superstition to enlightened rationalism owes a good deal more to selective illustration than one would suspect from reading Toland and Hume. Campbell (1762/1839: 70) points out that in the *Qur'an* Mohammed made no claim to work public miracles, though by Toland's (and Hume's) reasoning the circumstances would have been most propitious for such tales. Coming forward in time, miracle stories abounded in the 18th century, as Hume well knew. And renowned scientists such as Isaac Newton and Robert Boyle were well known defenders of the Christian miracle claims. Other forces are at work in the creation and acceptance of miracle stories besides the relative level of civilization and education. In addition, this argument suffered similar criticisms levelled against the argument from inauspicious conditions.

Self-Assessment Exercise 1

1. The boldest claim that could be made against reported miracles is that such events are.....

2. ....means that a miracle is impossible to be accepted as true or to be believed.

3...... argue on inauspicious conditions of miracle.

4.2.5 Argument from Emotionalism (Passions of Surprise and Wonder)

Thomas Morgan (1739: 31) raises a second charge in these words: "Men are the more easily imposed on in such Matters, as they love to gratify the Passion of *Admiration*, and take a great deal of Pleasure in hearing or telling of Wonders". The implication is twofold: miracle stories are more likely than other falsehoods to be *told*, since they cater to a natural human desire to be amazed; and they are more likely than other falsehoods to be *believed*, since the same passions lead to their uncritical reception. Hume, perhaps following Morgan, makes much the same point in nearly the same words. But he goes beyond Morgan in specifying a further exacerbating factor: the religious context of a miracle claim, he urges, makes the telling of a miracle story even more likely.

> If the spirits of religion join itself to the love of wonder, there is an end of common sense; and human testimony, in these circumstances, loses all pretensions to authority. A religionist may be an enthusiast, and imagine he sees what has no reality: He may know his narrative to be false, and yet persevere in it, with the best intentions in the world, for the sake of promoting so holy a cause: Or even where this delusion has not place, vanity, excited by so strong a temptation, operates on him more powerfully than on the rest of mankind in any other circumstances; and self-interest with equal force. (Hume 1748/2000: 89)

But as George Campbell points out (1762/1839: 48–49), this consideration cuts both ways; the religious nature of the claim may also operate to make it *less* readily received:

> The prejudice resulting from the religious affection may just as readily *obstruct* as *promote* our faith in a religious miracle. What things in nature are more contrary, than one religion is to another religion? They are just as contrary as light and darkness, truth and error. The affections, with which they are contemplated by the same person, are just as opposite as desire and aversion, love and hatred. The same religious zeal which gives the mind of a Christian a *propensity* to the belief of a miracle in support of Christianity will

inspire him with an *aversion* from the belief of a miracle in support of Mahometanism. The same principle which will make him acquiesce in evidence *less* than sufficient in one case, will make him require evidence *more* than sufficient in the other….

… [T]hat the evidence arising from miracles performed in proof of a doctrine disbelieved, and consequently hated before, did in fact surmount that obstacle, and conquer all the opposition arising thence, is a very strong presumption in favour of that evidence; just as strong a presumption in its favour, as it would have been against it, had all their former zeal, and principles, and prejudices, co-operated with the evidence, whatever it was, in gaining an entire assent.

Moreover, as Campbell (1762/1839: 49) immediately points out, there is the greatest disparity in this respect, a disparity which deserves to be particularly attended to, betwixt the evidence of miracles performed in proof of a religion *to be* established, and in *contradiction* to opinions generally received; and the evidence of miracles performed in support of a religion *already* established, and in *confirmation* of opinions generally received.

It is, therefore, a debatable question whether the consideration of the passions evoked by tales of the miraculous works for or against the miracle claim in any given instance. This is not an issue that can be settled in advance of a detailed consideration of the facts.

Self-Assessment Exercise 2

1.Argument from emotionalism is also known as......?

2. The argument of..... claims that miracle stories are most popular in backward cultures.

3. For .... men take a great deal of Pleasure in hearing or telling of Wonders.

4.3 Summary
1. Miracles are not and cannot be conceived as violations of "natural laws".
2. Miracle is impossible to be accepted as true or very difficult to be believed.
3. There are epistemological challenges on the concept of miracle.

4.4 References/Further Reading

Adams, W. 1767, *An Essay in Answer to Mr. Hume's Essay on Miracles*, 3rd ed., Babbage, Charles, 1837, *The Ninth Bridgewater Treatise*, London: John Murray.

Akudolu, L. (2019). Understanding the Nature and Problems of Metaphysics. Nigeria, Awka: Valid Publishers.

Anthony, F. (1967). "Miracles" in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Paul Edwards. New York: The Macmillan Company and The Free Press.

Aquinas, T. *Summa Contra Gentiles* (1905). (*SCG*), translation by J. Rickaby, London: Burns and Oates.

Basinger, D. (2018) *Miracles.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Berkhorf, L. (1974). *Systematic Theology*. Ediburgh: The Banner of Trust.

Campbell, G. (1762). *A Dissertation on Miracles*, London: Thomas Tegg, 1839.

Christian Answers. Net (2005). "Miracles are not possible", some claim. Is it true? https://christiananswers.net/q-eden/edn-t011.html Retrieved 2021-08-26.

Come Reason Ministries (nd). "Are miralces logically impossible?" https://www.comereason.org/david-hume-on-miracles.asp. Retrieved 2021-08-26.

Copan, P. (ed.), 1998, *Will the Real Jesus Please Stand Up?* Grand Rapids: Baker Books.

Copan, P. and Tacelli, R. (eds.) (2000). *Jesus' Resurrection: Fact or Figment?* Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity.

Craig, W. L. (2008). *Reasonable Faith*, 3rd ed., Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books.

Craig, W. L. (1985). *The Historical Argument for the Resurrection of Jesus During the Deist Controversy*, Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press.

Craig, W. L. (2002). *Assessing the New Testament Evidence for the Resurrection of Jesus*, Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press.

Earman, J. 2000, *Hume's Abject Failure*, Oxford: Oxford University Press

Graig, W. (1998). "Creation, Providence and Miracles in Davies", In: Brain (ed.) *Philosophy of Religion.* Washington: Georgetown University Press.

Habermas, Gary (1996). *The Historical Jesus*. Joplin: College Press.

Harrison, P. (1995). "Newtonian Sciences, Miracles, and Laws of Nature". *Journal of History of Ideas 5 (4).*

Hoffman, Paul K (1999)."A Jurisprudential Analysis Of Hume's "in Principal" Argument against Miracles" (PDF). *Christian Apologetics Journal, 2 (1).* Archived from the original(PDF) on October 26, 2007. Retrieved 2007-11-21.

Hume, David (1955). *An Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. C. W. Hendel. New York: Bobbs-Merrill

Hume, David (1748 *et seq).An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, Tom L. Beauchamp (ed.), New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.

Kant, Immanuel (1960). *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone*, 2nd ed., trans. T. M. Green and H. H. Hudon. New York: Harper Torchbook.

Larmer, Robert (1988). *Water into Wine? An Investigation of the Concept of Miracle*, Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Lewis, C. S. (1947). *Miracles*, New York: Macmillan.

---------------- (1960). *Miracles: A Preliminary Study*. New York: Macmillan

Likka, P. (2002). *Mind and Miracles*. USA: Blackwell Publishing.

Mackie, J. L. (1982). *The Miracle of Theism*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Morgan, Thomas (1739). *The Moral Philosopher*, vol. 2, London: Printed for the author.

Mumford, Stephen (2001). *Miracles: Metaphysics and Modality*. Cambridge: University Press.

O'Collins, Gerald, and David Kendall (1996). "Reissuing Venturini," in O'Collins and Kendall (eds.), *Focus on Jesus: Essays in Soteriology and Christology*, Herefordshire: Fowler Wright Books, pp. 153–75.

Paley, William (1794). *A View of the Evidences of Christianity*, London: John W. Parker and Son, 1859.

Spinoza, Baruch (1670). *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus.* London: Trübner and Co., 1862.

Spinoza, Benedict (1883). *Tractatus Theologica-Pliticus*, in The Chief Works of Benedict de Spinoza, trans. R. H. M. Elwes. London: George Bell and Sons

Swinburne, Richard (1970). *The Concept of a Miracle*, London: Macmillan and Co.

Toland, John (1702). *Christianity Not Mysterious*, London: n.p.

Voltaire (1764, 1901). *Philosophical Dictionary*, in *The Works of Voltaire*, vol. 11, New   York: E. R. DuMont.

Whately, Richard (1819). *Historic Doubts Relative to Napoleon Bonaparte*, Andover: Warren   F. Draper, 1874.

4.5 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercise

Self-Assessment Exercise 1

1. Impossible

2. Incredibility of miracles

3. David Hume

Self-Assessment Exercise 2

1. Passions of Surprise and Wonder.

2. Argument from Ignorance and Barbarism.

3. Thomas Morgan

UNIT 5: BASES OF MIRACLES

5.0 Introduction
5.1 Intended Learning Outcomes
5.2. Main contents
    5.2.1 God's Existence
    5.2.2 God's Attributes
5.3 Summary
5.4 References/Further Reading

5.5 Possible Answers to Self -Assessment Exercise

5.0 Introduction
Having gone through various arguments and discussions on the concept, nature and possibility of miracle, we shall conclude by giving the basis of miracle. Two major bases are identified here: God's existence and God's attributes.

5.1 Intended Learning outcomes

This unit will help students:

1. to understand the basis for miracle.
2. to analyse the basis of miracles.
3. To understand the relationship between miracle and God's existence.

5.2 Main contents
5.2.1   God's Existence

If God exists, miracles would be possible because he who created the world has power to overrule any law and to change any situation. The so-called "natural laws" as we have seen are properly speaking are descriptions of the regular way God directs the affairs of nature.   They depend on the will of God, and it is only the constant and uniform procession of the normal course of nature that led us to think it is invariable. More so, such laws are not prohibitive so that one can accuse God of violating the laws he instituted. Miracle in fact proves that God is not a blind being that continues acting only in uniform manner, but a free being.

Secondly, even if such laws are prohibitive, God cannot be expected to be "chained" by such laws. Laws, whenever they exist, are made for imperfect and frail beings. God is a perfect being, and therefore outside the dictate of any law. We should understand that he did not take permission from anybody before his creation acts and is not expected to take such permission neither from man nor any of his creatures before bringing miraculous manifestations. He is therefore free and justified in acting contrary to such law.

Thirdly, the laws are called "natural laws" or "laws of nature". By implication, the laws are for nature and not for God. God is not part of nature. He is above nature; he is supernatural. He is power behind nature and can suspend such laws to bring his will unto manifestation. In the words of Berkhorf (1974:177), "when a miracle is performed, the laws of nature are not violated, but suspended at a particular point by a higher manifestation of the will of God. The forces of nature are not annihilated or suspended, but are only counteracted at a point by a force superior to the powers of nature"

Similarly, the psalmist explains that "all dominion belongs to God, and he rules over the nations" (Ps.22:28); "For God is great God, the great king above all gods. In his hands are the depths of the earth…(Ps.95:3-4); "Our God is in heaven, he does whatever that pleases him (Ps.115:3). In this sense, no reasonable man should expect God to be directed by the so-called "laws of nature".

However, the problem with God's existence is that it lacks general acceptance, because of the metaphysical nature of the subject matter. The theists had proposed diverse rational arguments, popular among them include ontological, cosmological and teleological arguments to prove that God exists, but these arguments were not spared by critics. On the other hand, miracles can serve as a confirmation for the existence of such a higher being, who can sometimes overrule the course of nature to prove there is a being and power superior and

beyond nature. In other words, miracles can serve as a proof for God's existence, and God's existence is the basis for miraculous events. The two are inseparable.

5.2.2 God's Attributes

God's attributes such as Omnipotence, Omniscience, and Omni-benevolence, can as well serve as bases of miracle. Omnipotence means that God is All-Powerful. His power has no limitation. There is no impossibility before him. "For with God nothing is impossible" (Lk 1:37). By omniscience, we mean that he knows everything. God is all-knowing in the sense that is aware of the past, present and future. Nothing takes him by surprise. His knowledge is total. He knows all that there is to know and all can be known. He knows how to solve every problem. By Omni-benevolence, we mean all-loving. He loves his children so much that by his omnipotent power and omniscience, he can and knows how to overrule or work on nature to favour his children or save them from their afflictions. Considering these attributes, the possibility of miracles becomes more obvious.

Self -Assessment Exercise

---

1. Natural laws are descriptions of the regular way God directs the affairs of nature. True or False.

2. According to .... when a miracle is performed, the laws of nature are not violated, but suspended.

3. Does existence of God justify the idea of miracle? True or False.

5.3 Summary
1. Miracles are possible if God exist.
2. Attributes of God show that miracle existed as true or very difficult to be believed.
3. There is a relationship between miracle and God's existence.

5.4 References/Further Reading

Adams, W. 1767, *An Essay in Answer to Mr. Hume's Essay on Miracles*, 3rd ed., Babbage, Charles, 1837, *The Ninth Bridgewater Treatise*, London: John Murray.

Akudolu, L. (2019). Understanding the Nature and Problems of Metaphysics. Nigeria, Awka: Valid Publishers.

Anthony, F. (1967). "Miracles" in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Paul Edwards. New York: The Macmillan Company and The Free Press.

Aquinas, T. *Summa Contra Gentiles* (1905). (*SCG*), translation by J. Rickaby, London: Burns and Oates.

Basinger, D. (2018) *Miracles.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Berkhorf, L. (1974). *Systematic Theology*. Ediburgh: The Banner of Trust.

Campbell, G. (1762). *A Dissertation on Miracles*, London: Thomas Tegg, 1839.

Christian Answers. Net (2005). "Miracles are not possible", some claim. Is it true? https://christiananswers.net/q-eden/edn-t011.html Retrieved 2021-08-26.

Come Reason Ministries (nd). "Are miralces logically impossible?" https://www.comereason.org/david-hume-on-miracles.asp. Retrived 2021-08-26.

Copan, P. (ed.), 1998, *Will the Real Jesus Please Stand Up?* Grand Rapids: Baker Books.

Copan, P. and Tacelli, R. (eds.) (2000). *Jesus' Resurrection: Fact or Figment?* Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity.

Craig, W. L. (2008). *Reasonable Faith*, 3rd ed., Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books.

Craig, W. L. (1985). *The Historical Argument for the Resurrection of Jesus During the Deist Controversy*, Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press.

Craig, W. L. (2002). *Assessing the New Testament Evidence for the Resurrection of Jesus*, Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press.

Earman, J. 2000, *Hume's Abject Failure*, Oxford: Oxford University Press

Graig, W. (1998). "Creation, Providence and Miracles in Davies", In: Brain (ed.) *Philosophy of Religion.* Washington: Georgetown University Press.

Habermas, Gary (1996). *The Historical Jesus*. Joplin: College Press.

Harrison, P. (1995). "Newtonian Sciences, Miracles, and Laws of Nature". *Journal of History of Ideas 5 (4).*

Hoffman, Paul K (1999)."A Jurisprudential Analysis of Hume's "in Principal" Argument against Miracles" (PDF). *Christian Apologetics Journal, 2 (1).* Archived from the original(PDF) on October 26, 2007. Retrieved 2007-11-21.

Hume, David (1955). *An Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. C. W. Hendel. New York: Bobbs-Merrill

Hume, David (1748 *et seq*).*An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, Tom L.   Beauchamp (ed.), New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.

Kant, Immanuel (1960). *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone*, 2nd ed., trans. T. M. Green and H. H. Hudon .New York: Harper Torchbook.

Larmer, Robert (1988). *Water into Wine? An Investigation of the Concept of Miracle*, Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Lewis, C. S. (1947). *Miracles*, New York: Macmillan.

---------------- (1960). *Miracles: A Preliminary Study*. New York: Macmillan

Likka, P. (2002). *Mind and Miracles*. USA: Blackwell Publishing.

Mackie, J. L. (1982). *The Miracle of Theism*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Morgan, Thomas (1739). *The Moral Philosopher*, vol. 2, London: Printed for the author.

Mumford, Stephen (2001). *Miracles: Metaphysics and Modality*. Cambridge: University Press.

O'Collins, Gerald, and David Kendall (1996). "Reissuing Venturini," in O'Collins and Kendall (eds.), *Focus on Jesus: Essays in Soteriology and Christology*, Herefordshire: Fowler Wright Books, pp. 153–75.

Paley, William (1794). *A View of the Evidences of Christianity*, London: John W. Parker   and   Son, 1859.

Spinoza, Baruch (1670). *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus.* London: Trübner and Co., 1862.

Spinoza, Benedict (1883). *Tractatus Theologica-Pliticus*, in The Chief Works of Benedict de Spinoza, trans. R. H. M. Elwes. London: George Bell and Sons

Swinburne, Richard (1970). *The Concept of a Miracle*, London: Macmillan and Co.

Toland, John (1702). *Christianity Not Mysterious*, London: n.p.

Voltaire (1764, 1901). *Philosophical Dictionary*, in *The Works of Voltaire*, vol. 11, New   York: E. R. DuMont.

Whately, Richard (1819). *Historic Doubts Relative to Napoleon Bonaparte*, Andover: Warren   F. Draper, 1874.

5.5 Possible Answers to Self -Assessment Exercise

1. True

2. Berkhorf

3. True

MODULE 2: MAGIC

Unit 1: Defining Magic
Unit 2: Nature, Scope and Principle of Magic
Unit 3: Theories of Magic
Unit 4: Magic and Society

Unit 1: Defining Magic

Unit 1: Defining the Concept of Religion
1.0 Introduction
2.0 Intended Learning Outcomes
3.0 Main contents
    3.1 What is Magic?
    3.2 Brief History of Magic
    3.3 The relationship between Magic and Religion

4.0 Summary
5.0 References/Further Reading

6.0 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercise

1.0. Introduction.

This unit attempts a conceptual clarification of the key term of this Module, namely; Magic. In addition to this it explores a brief history of Magic and examines the relationship between Magic and Religion.

2.0. Intended Learning outcomes

This unit will help students:

1) To underpin Magic
2) To understand the concept of Magic
3) To examine the relationship between magic and religion

3.0. Main Contents

3.1. What is Magic?

The term Magic is very difficult and vague to define. No wonder Michael D. Bailey (2006: 23) clearly observes, "Moreover terminology for and concepts of magic are almost universally vague, mutable, and "Occult" in the literal sense of hidden or obscured. This basic methodological problem, however, is itself an element that all scholars working in the many fields bearing on magic, magical rituals, and witchcraft have in common". However, it is important to define the concept of magic for better clarification and understanding. Etymologically, the term magic is derived from "Magus, a zoroastrain astrologer priests from Medes, from "Magikos" and Magicus', both Greek and Latin adjective respectively, which appears in feminine gender and magike techne and (Greek), ars magica (Latin), meaning magical art. This English word was directly influenced by the French word Magique. (Magic (sorcery), New World encyclopedia).

Accordingly, Magic is seen as a method that interface with supernatural by which people bring about a particular outcome. This can be used for public good, while sorcerers may use it against society, although healers use it in their activities (Stein et.al, 2016: 136). For Rodney Stark (2001: 111) magic "refers to all efforts to manipulate supernatural forces to gain rewards (or avoid costs) without reference to a God or gods or to general explanations of existence". Here human beings believe that through their efforts, they act directly or indirectly on nature and themselves for their good or to their detriment without divine assistance. Also, magic is seen as "the illusory manipulation of visible or invisible realities" (Czachesz: 2011:147). For Czachesz magic assumes to change the visible or invisible reality, meanwhile in actuality it does not. Thus, magic portrays a deceptive activity that claims to manipulate reality.

On the other hand, Magic is seen as western projection about non-westerners for the purpose of self-definition against the colonized, domestic peasants, and as an instrument or social discrimination (Fowler 2005, Braarvig 1999: 21-27). This makes the term magic to have ethnocentric and pejorative conation, whereby the developing nations especially Africans are seen as primitive ,backward, and

unproductive people for the purpose of colonization. The concept magic deals with belief and practice. It is a belief which explain different events and phenomena that controls the natural world through supernatural means. It is a practice, by persons to control natural world, including people, events, objects and physical phenomena through mystical or supernatural means.

3.2. Brief History of Magic.

Here, we are going to make use of the four-dating system of Ancient, Medieval, Modern and Contemporary period to explore the History of Magic.

1)   Ancient Period.

One may observe that magical believes goes back to prehistoric times, which can be seen in the Egyptian Pyramid texts and the India Vedas. (eg Atharvareda knowledge of magic formulas). It has number of charms, hymns, sacrifices, and some uses of herbs as its content. The foremost magicians were class of priests (Persian Magi of Zoroastrianism), that were well learned and were advanced in craft and knowledge. It is also believed that ancient Greek mystery religions contains magical components, while in Egypt many magical papyri were discovered. This scroll dating 2nd century B.C.E have instances of incantations, and magic words etc. it was also observed that around 700 B.C.F and 100 CE, the Celts played in European magical tradition.

2) Medieval Period

This era was characterized by Christianity especially the Catholic Church, that appropriated and Christianize many religious practices and beliefs. For instance, Christian relics which worked miracles replaced amulets. Further, magic coexisted with Christian theology, but around 15th century AD Magician were persecuted and their rites and beliefs were seen as heresy.

3) Modern Period.

This was an era of Renaissance that brought about rebirth of occultism, teaching of the Hermeticism, Gnosticism and Neo-Platonism. Prominent in this period was a Germany was Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa born in 1486 and known because of his works on Magic and Occultism. The advent of Industrial Revolution that promoted Scientism, play down on the scope of applied magic and threatened the magical belief system. Also, it was believed that the tension caused by Protestant Reformation brought about the rise in witch-hunting in Germany, and England.

4) Contemporary Period.

Magical interest was revived in the 20th century with the advent of new paganism. One of the prominent figures in this epoch was Aliester Crowley who

has many works on magic and the Occult. More so, a magical fraternity founded in 1888 known as the Hermetic order of the Golden Dawn, western occultism and ceremonial magic. (Magic (sorcery), New World Encyclopedia).

Self-Assessment Exercise 1

1. Etymologically the term magic is derived from ....?

2. Magic is seen as the illusory manipulation of visible or invisible realities. True or False?

3. Magical believes goes back to prehistoric times, which can be seen in -&-.

3.3. The Relationship Between Magic and Religion

According to Jonathan Fox (2018:6) Religion seeks to understand the origins and natures of reality using a set of answers that include the supernatural. Religion is also a social phenomenon and institution which influences the behavior of human beings both as individuals and in groups. These influences on behavior manifest though the influences of religious, religious institutions, religious legitimacy, religious beliefs, and the codification of these beliefs into authoritative dogma, among other avenues of influence (6). For Yandell (2002:16) a Religion is a conceptual system that provides an interpretation of the word and the place of human beings in it, bases an account of how life should be lived given that interpretation, and expresses this interpretation and lifestyle in set of rituals, institutions, and practices. This definition indirectly compliments religion and magic. But for several years, many scholars attempt to describe the differences between Magic and religion. Some of these scholars believe that magic and religion are different. Thus, Tylor (1871:1) argues that Magic is a logical way of thinking consisting of bad premises. And it is not in the realm of religion because there is no involvement of spirits which defines religion. Accordingly, James Frazer. (1922) sees magic as a pseudoscience since it acts directly. It attempts to commands and coerce spiritual forces, unlike religion that supplicates their aid. For Durkheim Magic deals on private acts carried out for individual benefit while religion deals on command communal gains. Thus, he buttresses "In all history we do not find a single religion without a church…There is no Church of Magic" (1961:60). Further, Mauss (1972: 22-30) believes that magic is secret, private, and highly prohibited, unlike religion that has rites which is acknowledged and approved publicly.

From the foregoing, the above scholars distinguished magic from religion the perspective of social context, appeal to and manipulation of supernatural beings, hence treating them exclusively. However, one may see magic as an aspect of religious practices, sine it involves cult activities, rituals, and supernatural beings and divinities. They also share the same goals of healing or maintaining

one's health and seeking the advisories of super natural beings for favours. Even some magical activities are done open, some religious activities are done privately. Also, while magic is done for the good of individuals and society while some religious practices are detrimental to individuals and communities. Therefore, bifurcating religion and Magic may not be justified, because their relationship depends on the level of magical and religious altitude towards the betterment of human beings.

Self-Assessment Exercise 2

1. Yandell definition of religion indirectly compliments religion and magic, True or False.
2. .... argues that Magic is a logical way of thinking consisting of bad premises.
3. For..... magic deals on private acts carried out for individual benefit while religion deals on command communal gains.

4.0 Summary
1. Magic is seen as a method that interface with supernatural by which people bring about a particular outcome.
2. There are four dating system of Ancient, Medieval, Modern and Contemporary period to explore the History of Magic.
3. Bifurcating religion and Magic may not be justified, because their relationship depends on the level of magical and religious altitude towards the betterment of human beings.

5.0   References/Further Reading

Bailey, M.D. (2006), "The Meaning of Magic", *Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft*, Vol   II, No.1, PP.1-23.

Braarvig, J. (1999). "Magic: Reconsidering the Grand Dichotomy." In *The World of Ancient Magic: Papers from the First International Samson Eitrem*
     Seminar at the Norwegian Institute at Athens, 4–8 May 1997, edited by
     D.R. Jordan, H. and E. Thomassen, 21–54. Bergen: Norwegian
Institute at Athens.

Czachesz, 1. (2011), "Explaining Magic: Earliest Christanity as a Test Case",
     ResearchGate, Retrieved July8, 2021 from https//www.researchgate.net

Durkheim, E. (1961), *The Elementary Forms of the Religions Life*. New York:
     Collier Books.

Fowler, R.I. (2005). "The Concept of Magic." In *Thesaurus cultus et rituum*
     antiquorum, vol 3, edited by J. Ch. Balty *et al*., 283–286. Basel: Fondation

pour le Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae and Los Angeles: Getty Publications

Fox, J. (2018), *An Introduction to Religion and Politics: Theory and Practice*. Second Edition. London: Routledge.

Frazer, J.G. (1922), *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion*. New York: MacMillan.

Magic (sorcery). (2018, August 7.) *New World Encyclopedia,* Retrieved 07:19, July 20, 2021. From https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/p/index.php?

Plauss, M. (1972), *A General Theory of Magic*. London: Routtedge.

Stark, R. (2001)" Reconceptualizing Religion, Magic, and Science" *Review of Religion, Magic, and Science*" Review of Religious Research. Vol.43, No.2, PP.101-120.

Stein, R.L. & Stein, P.L. (2016), *The Anthropology of Religion, Magic and Witchcraft.* 3rd edition. New York: Routledge.

Tylor, E.B. (1871), *Primitive Cultures: Researches into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Language, Art and Custom*. London: J.Murray.

Yandell, K.E. (2002). *Philosophy of Religion, a Contemporary Introduction*. London: Routtedge.

6.0 Possible Answers to Self -Assessment Exercise

Self-Assessment Exercise 1

1. Magus, Magikos, Magicus
2. True
3. Egyptian Pyramid texts and the India Vedas.

Self-Assessment Exercise 2

1. True
2. Tylor
3. Durkheim

UNIT 2: NATURE, SCOPE AND PRINCIPLE OF MAGIC

2.0 Introduction.

This unit attempts to discuss the nature and scope of magic, in doing this it explains the purpose and different forms of magic like divination, witchcraft, Sorcery, incantation astrology, alchemy, among others. It also examines the principles of magic and further analyses different types of magic.

2.1 Intended Learning Outcomes

This unit will help students:

1. To understand the nature and scope of magic

2. To examine the principles of magic

3. To analyse various types of magic

2.2 Main Contents

2.2.1 Nature and Scope of Magic

Magic deals with the manipulation of sacred objects by a magician to favour an individual client negatively or positively. A magician is one who has magical powers and does magic. Sorcerer, or charmer is one that does magic. For Stein & Stein (2016: 146) "Magic is used for a variety of reasons to increase the probability of success and control the uncertainties of life, magic can also be used in antisocial ways to interfere with the economic activities of others and to bring about illness and even death". For Gilbert, "the purpose of magic is to acquire knowledge, power, love or wealth; to heal or ward off illness or danger; to guarantee productivity or success in an endeavour; to reveal information; to trick; or to entertain". The effectiveness and possibilities of all these goals is dependent on the condition and performance of the magician.

Magic has different forms through which it is operated and practiced like divination, witchcraft, sorcery, astrology, incantations, alchemy, necromancy and spirit mediation etc.

Divination

Etymologically, it is from Latin word *divinare* meaning to foresee, predict, prophecy or to foretell. It is also related to *divinus* meaning divine or to be inspired by a god'' which shows it has something to do with supernatural. It is the techniques used in getting Information about unknown things, and even future events that will occur. It is also the attempt to have insight into a situation or question through occultic standardized process or ritual (Peek 1991:2). Divination techniques are characterized into inspirational and non-inspirational. For Stein & Stein (2016:148):

> Inspirational forms of divination involve some type
>
> of spiritual experience such as a direct contact with
>
> a supernatural being through an altered state of
>
> consciousness, usually possession. This form of
>
> divination is sometimes referred to as natural or
>
> emotive divination.Non-inspirational or artificial
>
> forms are more magical ways of ways of doing
>
> divination and include the reading of natural event
>
> as well as the manipulation of oracular devices.

Further, Stein & Stein (Ibid) divide divination into fortuitous and deliberate types. Fortuitous divination occurs when there is no conscious effort of the individual. E.g. one may see flight of the birds overhead or unknowingly one falls into a trance and has a vision. While deliberate forms, one consciously sets out to do it like examining the liver of sacrificed animal or reading tarot cards. Accordingly, divination has many techniques such as oneiromancy (interpretation of dreams), Presentionment (feelings one experiences like sneezing, twitching, and hiccuping), necromancy (divination through contact with the ancestors or), Ornithomancy (reading path and form of a flight of birds), apantomancy (meeting an animal by chance), Haruspication (examining of entrails of sacrificed animals), Scapulamancy (interpretation of scapula or shoulder blade of animal skeleton). Others include aleuromancy, dowsing, graphology, palmistry, phrenology and tasseography. All these techniques are various ways divination is practices.

Witchcraft:

The term is defined differently in various historical and cultural contexts. Generally, it is seen as a harmful magic performed by a low social status people that involves alliance or worship of evil supernatural entities. For Montesano (2020: 1) "we can define witchcraft as a supernatural means to cause harm, death or misfortune". In the West, it is seen as the work of crones that meet at night secretly and indulge in cannibalism and orgiastic rituals with devil and perform black magic (Lewis: 2021). One major characteristic of a witch is the ability to cast a spell. A spell "consist of set of words, a formula or verse, or a ritual action, or any combination of these" (Oxford English Dictionary, 1971). Further, witchcraft is categorized into four forms, offensive, defensive, communicative, and divination. Thus Friday Mufuzi (2014:55-56) observes:

> Offensive witchcraft falls under the category in
>
> which practitioners use their art to cause harm to
>
> their perceived enemies or their property while in
>
> defensive witchcraft" practitioner use their charms
>
> to protect themselves against harm directed at them.
>
> In communicative witchcraft practitioners, who may
>
> be witchcraft doctors or wizards, employ a wide
>
> range of objects to help them communicate in their
>
> mysterious supernatural world of witches.
>
> Divination is the category of witchcraft in which
>
> practitioner detects causes of a misfortune and
>
> predicts its effects.

Here, witchcraft does an offensive, defensive, communicative function for the witch and also help him/her to detect and predict the cause of his misfortunes.

Sorcery

Etymologically, it came from the Latin word *sortiarius*, meaning 'person who casts lots' i.e, a person who tells fortune. It is "the power of performing supernatural things, with the help of internal powers and the resume of the occult science, raised by the dead to the highest degree of power" (Prat, 1915:5). It is the "practice of malevolent magic derived from casting lots as ancient Mediterranean world" (Melton 2021). It is distinguished from witchcraft, whereby it is learned sorcery is intrinsic; also, its intent is mostly evil while witchcraft may be good or bad.

Astrology

Etymologically, the term originated from Latin word *astrologia* meaning "star-divination". It claims to study the influences of the stars and planets on events that occurs on earth. It refers to a pseudoscience which claims to divine information concerning human affairs and earthy events, through the study of positions and movements of heavenly objects (Thagard, 978:223). Accordingly, recent western astrology associates it with the system of horoscopes that claims to explain aspects of one's personality and predict particular event in one's life based on positions of heavenly bodies. And many astrologists depend on this system. (Bennett et al. 2007:83)

Incantations

Etymologically, the term originated from a Latin word *incantare* meaning charm, to bewitch, to consecrate with spells and to enchant. It may take place during prayer or hymn, ritual, invoke or praise a deity. It may be used to cast a spell on object or person. Duru (2016:68) states that: "In Igbo tradition, incantation is the secret of all ways of giving or practicing traditional medicine". It is used for the purpose of love, to stop mosquitoes from biting, and one becoming invincible. It may also be used for good performances or bad practices especially in social vices. Thus Duru (Ibid) observes that "the traditional Igbo society employs the use of incantations in communication with the spirits and the dead. This is often offered in the form of prayers for favour and action from the gods of the land and indeed, the supreme being"

Alchemy:

It is originated from English – Byzantine name referred to as "the art" or "knowledge" and often characterized to be divine, sacred or mystic. (Keyser: 1990:353). For Benjamin Radford (2016):

> Alchemy is an ancient practice shrouded in mystery
>
> and secrecy. Its practitioners mainly sought to turn
>
> lead into gold. Alchemy was rooted in a complex
>
> spiritual worldview in which everything around us
>
> contain a sort of universal spirit, and metals were
>
> believed not only to be alive but also to grow inside
>
> the Earth. When a base, or common metal such as
>
> lead was found, it was thought to simply be a
>
> spiritually and physically immature from of highly
>
> metals such as gold.

Here, Alchemists are of the view that metals are the same thing in various stages of refinement toward their way to spiritual perfection.

Necromancy

Etymologically, it originated from two Greek words *nekros* (dead body) and *manteia* (divination by means of), meaning "The divination by means of dead body". According to Wikipedia:

> Necromancy is the practice of magic involving
>
> communication with the dead either by summoning
>
> their spirits as apparitions, visions, raising them bodily
>
> for the purpose of divination, in parting the means to
>
> foretell future events, discover hidden knowledge to
>
> bring someone back from dead, or to use the dead as
>
> a weapon.

Thus, necromancy deals with the conjuring of the spirits of the dead with the view of revealing the future or to influence course of event. This can be known as death magic.

Self-Assessment Exercise 1

---

1. ...... is one that does magic.

2. Divination techniques are characterized into....&......

3. ...... may be used to cast a spell on object or person.

4. The divination by means of dead body is known as.....

2.2.2   What is the Principle of Magic?

These are principles magic tends to follow and was articulated by James Frazer in his work "The Golden Bough". For him, there is a law of sympathy that says magic always dependent on real association or agreement between things.

Law of magic has two parts:

  i. Law of similarity, which says that things that are alike are the same.
 ii. Law of contagion which says that things that were once in contact will always be connected even after their connection breaks.

2.2.3 Types of Magic

There are two types of magic; Homeopathic or Imitative and Contagions Magic.

Homeopathic (Imitative) Magic:
It is derived from the law of similarity and it claims that there is a causal relationship among things that appear to be similar. For Stein & Stein (2016: 138), this similarity may be physical or behavioural and the most kind of this magic is image magic. They further observe:

> This is the practice of making an image to represent
>
> a living person or animal, which can then be killed
>
> or injured through doing things to the image, such
>
> as sticking pins into the image or burning it. The
>
> first may cause pain in the body of the victim that
>
> corresponds to the place on the image where the
>
> pin was stuck; burning the image might bring about
>
> a high fever. Animals drawn on the walls of caves
>
> with arrows through them might be an example of
>
> image magic. Here the artist is creating the hunt in
>
> art. Depicting a successful hunt will bring about a
>
> similar outcome in the real hunt (ibid).

Also, there are instances of behaviours that will always imitate a desired end, making the end to occur. No wonder, a pregnant woman is told that her behaviour during pregnancy will always reflect in her child e.g. A woman who steals when pregnant, will give birth to a child that has a long arm of a thief. Further, some practices like 'alternative or homeopathic medicine' in many societies are based on law of similarity.

Contagious Magic

It is derived from the law of contagion, on the premise that things that used to be in contact will maintain a connection always. Stein & Stein give an instance from New Guinea, thus:

> If a man has been hit in battle by an arrow his
>
> friends will bind up the wound and put a cool
>
> poultice on it to keep the fever down and make

him comfortable. They will also put a poultice

on the arrow, which they have taken out of the

wound, because it was connected with the

wound, and this too will help with the cure. The

enemy who fired the arrow, however, is likely

 to be practicing counter-magic. Back in his

camp he will keep the bow near the fire and

twang the string from time to time because

the bow fired the arrow that made the wound,

and through this connection he can send

twinges of pain (2016: 139)

Hence, anything which is connected with any person may be used in contagions magic. So, one's belongings (clothes), hair, nail cut or material things can used against the particular person in contagion magic. One may also be attacked through his footprint, name, shadow, belief, ideas and reflections (Ibid).

---

1. Law of magic has two parts.....&.....

2. There are two types of magic.....&.....

3. Homeopathic (Imitative) Magic is derived from .....

2.3   Summary

● Magic deals with the manipulation of sacred objects by a magician in order to favour an individual client negatively or positively.

● Magic has different forms through which it is operated and practiced like divination, witchcraft, sorcery, astrology, incantations, alchemy, necromancy and spirit mediation etc.

● There are two types of magic namely; homeopathic (Imitative) and contagious magic.

2.4 References/Further Reading

Bennett, Y., Donohue, M., Schneider, N. and Volt, M. (2007). *The Cosmic Perspective* (4th ed). San Francisco CA: Addison-Wlesley. Pp.82-84.

Duru, W. (2016). "The Communicativeness of Incantations in the Traditional Igbo Society" *Journal of Media and Communication Studies*, vol.8(7), pp.63-70.

Girlbert, R. A. (2021). Magic Supernatural Phenomenon. *Britannica*. https://www.britannica.com retrieved on 2/6/21.

Keyser, P . (1990) "Älchemy in the Ancient World: From Science to Magic". *IIinois Classical Studies*, 15(2).pp.353-378.

Lewis, J. B. Witchcraft. *Britannica*. https://www.britannica.com retrieved on 12/6/21.

Melton, J.G. (2021), "Sorcery Occult Practice". *Britannica*. www.britannica,com, retrieved on 30/5/21.

Montesano, M. (2020). "Introduction to the Special Issues: Witchcraft, Demonology and Magic", *Witchcraft, Demonology and Magic Religions*, Vol II. No 187; doi: 10.33901 rel 11040187

Mufuzi, F. (2014). "The Practical of Witchcraft and the Changing Patterns of its Paraphernalia in the Light of Technologically Produced Goods and Presented by Linystone Museum, 19305-1973", *Zambia Social Science Journal*, Vol. 5, no. 1. Pp. 50-71.

Necromancy, *Wikipedia*, https://en.m.wikipedia,org, retrieved on 21/5/21.

Oxford English Dictionary (1971). The Compact Edition. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.

Peek, P. M. (1991). *African Divination Systems: Ways of Knowing*. Indian University Press

Pratt, S.A.M. (1915). "The Attitude of the Catholic Church Toward Witchcraft and the Allied Practices of Sorcery and Magic". *A Dissertation, Catholic University of America*, Washington DC: National Capital Press, Inc. www.forgottenbooks.com, retrieved on 23/6/21.

Radford, B. (2016). "What is Alchemy" *Livescience*, www.livescience.com, retrieved on 30/5/21.

Stein, R.L. & Stein, P.L. (2016), *The Anthropology of Religion, Magic and Witchcraft,* 3rd edition. New York: Routledge.

Thagard, P. R. (1978). "Why Astrology is a Pseudoscience" *Proceedings of the Biennial Meeting of the Philosophy of Science Association* vol.1, pp.223-234.

2.5 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercise

Self-Assessment Exercise 1

1. Sorcerer or Charmer

2. Inspirational and Non-inspirational

3. Incantation

4. Necromancy

Self-Assessment Exercise 2

1. Law of Similiarity and Law of Contagion.

2. Homeopathic or Imitative and Contagions Magic

3, Law of similarity

UNIT 3:   THEORIES OF MAGIC

3.0 Introduction
3.1 Intended Learning Outcomes
3.2 Main contents
    3.2.1 Theories of Magic

3.3 Summary
3.4 References/Further Reading

3.5 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercise

3.0 Introduction

This unit attempts to analyse various theories of magic and their proponents. Some of the proponents include; Edward Burnett Tylor, James Frazer, Emile Durkheim, Marcel Mauss, Bronislaw Kasper Malinowski, Sigmund Freud, Edward Evans Pritchard, Claude Levi-Strauss, among others.

3.1 Intended Learning Outcomes

This unit will help the students;
1. to underpin the theories of magic
2. to understand psychological, anthropological and sociological theory of magic
3. to examine various theories of magic.

3.2 Main contents

3.2.1 Theories of Magic

Magic deals with efforts to manipulate supernatural forces for the benefit of an individual or a group. Lets' examine some of the theories and their theorist.

Sir Edward Burnett Tylor (1832-1917)

He was an English anthropologist and founder of cultural anthropology. His theory on Magic is seen in his work "Primitive Cultures" published in 1871. He linked the study of Magic to the study of development of religion, whereby there is evolutionary progression from magic to religion, then to science. Thus, he believed that magical knowledge and performance are "Pseudoscience". Tylor observed that in various tribal cultures, Magicians use the same approach like

scientist, but makes mistake by associating ideas because they look alike, whereby the relationship do not exist. He believes that magic is "one of the most pernicious delusions that ever-vexed mankind". For him, magical practice and belief retrogressed in later stages of history of man, but magic and religion are complementary parts of one cultural phenomenon.

James Frazer (1854-1941)

He was a Scottish folklorist and social anthropologist. As a member of evolutionary school, Frazer believed that Magic was early stage of religion so in his theory of magic published in the "The Golden Bough" (1922). Thus, he observed that over year's culture passed through three different stages; from Magic to religion and to science. Magical thought for him is primitive, followed by religious thought and the scientific thought. He believed that magic and science have similarities, unlike magic and religion that are different. Magic as earliest form of human thought and behaviour deals with the supernatural, and when people observe the ineffective nature of magical techniques, they turned to religion in order to supplicate and propitiate to gods who control nature, and later to science when they recognize existence or natural law. Hence, he stated law of sympathy, where magic relies on real association or agreement between things. For him, law of sympathy is divided into law of similarity (that things that are alike are the same), and law of contagions magic. Finally, Frazer opines that if the principles of magical thought replace legitimate explanations, it becomes science, while illegitimate explanations become magic.

Emile Durkheim (1858-1917)

A French sociologist through his work "The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life" (1961) argued that magical rites depend on the manipulation of sacred objects through magicians on behalf of the individual clients. He believed that magic consists of beliefs and rites, dogmas, myths, sacrifices, prayers, incantations, chants and dances; and beings and forces invoked by magician are similar and always the same to those addressed by religion. He also observed that historically, religion and magic have a strong dislike for each other even when they are defined. Thus, he observed that religion was a public, social and a kind institution, while magic was a private, selfish and malevolent. Hence, he argues that religious beliefs "are always common to a determined group or church, which makes profession of adhering to them and of practicing the rites connected with them…. The individuals which compose it feel themselves united to each other by the simple fact, that they have a common faith" (1912: 59). On the other hand, magical belief; "does not result in binding together those who adhere to it or in uniting them into a group leading a common life…. Between the magician and the individuals, themselves, there are no lasting bonds which make them members of the same moral community, comparable to that formed by the believers in the same god or the observers of the same cult" (1912 :60).

Marcel Mauss (1872 - 1950)

A French sociologist and a nephew to Emile Durkheim, through his work. "A General Theory of Magic" (1902) co-authored with Hubert, examined magic in primitive societies, and it manifestation in one's thoughts and social action. Here, they observed that social facts are subjective and be seen as magic. Thus, they opine that we have officers, actions and representations in magic. A magician accomplishes magical actions whether a professional or not. Hence, magical representations are ideas and beliefs that correspond to magical actions and known as magical rites. Further, they argued that social occurrences may be seen as magic, while individual actions are not magic.

Bronislaw Kasper Malinowski (1884 - 1942)

He was a polish anthropologist whose research on magic was carried out among the Trobriand Islanders of Melanesia during world war I. in his magic theory, he opines that primitive people has empirical knowledge which is compared to modern scientific knowledge, with regard to the behaviour of nature and its control to meet the need of man. For him, the primitive applies this knowledge to get their desire like, a crop of tubers, a catch of fish among others. And they are certain to accomplish their desire because of the powerful techniques they use. But when the farmers face challenges in their field caused by improper planting, blight or a drought, they have anxiety. This anxiety makes them to perform magical rites, in which they believe that it brings good luck. Accordingly, he observes that magical act always has an idea and claim that is clear, straight forward and concrete, while religious ceremony has no aim directed towards any subsequent event. So, magic for him protect people from failure and help them to achieve success. Thus, magic 'ritualizes man's optimism' (Malinowski, 1978: 70).

Sigmund Freud (1856 - 1939)

He is an Austrian neurologist and founder of psychoanalysis, whose theory of magic is contained the work "Totem and Taboo" (1913). For him magical and sorcery belief is derived from overvaluation of physical acts by which the structural conditions of minds are changed to the world. He opines that magic should serve this purpose; subject the processes of nature to man's will, protect the individual against dangers and enemies, and empower him to injure his enemies. Freud observed that magical principle include similarity (contact in transferred sense) and contiguity (contact in direct sense), which are the processes of association of ideas that explains the madness of magic rules. He believed that the motive that makes one to exercise magic is the wishes of men. Accordingly, Freud believed that principle that controls magic and technique of

animistic method of thought is "Omnipotence of Thought" (uncanny and peculiar occurrences that seemed to pursue one just as they pursue others with his kind of sickness).

Self-Assessment Exercise 1

1. Magic does not deal with efforts to manipulate supernatural forces for the benefit of an individual or a group. True or False?

2. Who linked the study of Magic to the study of development of religion, whereby there is evolutionary progression from magic to religion, then to science?

3. Who believed that the motive that makes one to exercise magic is the wishes of men?

Sir Edward Evans Pritchard (1902-1973)

He is an English anthropologist in his work *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande* (1937) observed that the beliefs of the Azandes were not irrational, and magic is a coherent system that helped to mould the tribe. According to Pritchard, in Azande tribe magic entails the use of object especially of plant material known as medicines, which has supernatural power in it. These medicines have various categories according to their functions, some can be used to control nature, horticulture and hunting among others. For him, magic is use for success in love and for ensuring safe journey. It is also used to avenge murder, adultery, theft and cure diseases using specific medicines. Magic rituals of Azande are not very formal or always public, while some public rituals are performed by chief and majority of magic is done by individuals for their immediate need. And magical rituals are always simple, involving manipulation of medicine and recitation of a spell.

Claude Levi-Strauss (1908 - 2009)

He is a French anthropologist and the main proponent of structural anthropology. In his magic theory presented in the work "The Sorcerer and His Magic" (1963), he made three case studies especially on the story of *Quesalid* an indigene of Kwakinti from Vancouver. Levi-Strauss opines that magical belief is made of three aspects namely: Sorcerer's belief, Patient's belief and Social beliefs. And the healing procedure is based on three experiences: The Shaman (that has psychological experience), the sick person (that needs healing), and the public (the audience and collective supporter of the healing rituals). These

elements are connected, but the group consensus and psychological experience of the Shaman are the most important. He believes that during the healing, harmony is recreated among the group. And in every one of us, there exists 'logical thought' that is deficient in meaning and a "pathological thought" that is full of meaning. For him, the main mode of thought in the ritual is that of the patient (unable to express him problem because of sickness), and pathological thought represents the neurotic Shaman (who has experience of the patient behaviour in order to heal him). And the audience observes the two modes of thought. Thus, Levi-Strauss projected the psychological universe to social universe. He also observes that magical thinking can change and provide the mind a new system of reference and interpretation that removes contradiction.

Self-Assessment Exercise 2

---

1. Who observed that the beliefs of the Azandes were not irrational, and magic is a coherent system that helped to mould the tribe?

2. For Levi-Strauss magical belief is made of three aspects namely:--, -- &--.

3. For Levi-Strauss healing procedure is based on three experiences;--, -- &--.

3.3 Summary

● Magic subjects the processes of nature to man's will, in order to protect one against dangers and enemies.

● Magic entails the use of object inform of plank known as medicine to control nature, horticulture and hunting.

● Magic rituals involves manipulation of medicine and recitation of spell.

3.4 References/Further Reading

Durkheim, E. (1961), *The Elementary Forms of the Religions Life*. New York: Collier Books.

Evans-Pritchard, E. E. (1937). *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande.* Oxford: Clarendon.

Frazer, J.G. (1922). *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion*. New York: MacMillan.

Freud, S. (1913). *Totem and Taboo.* Routledge. ISBN 0415253969

Levi-Strauss, C. (1963). *The Sorcerer and His Magic. In Structural Anthropology.* New York: Basic Books.

Malinowski, B. (1978). *Coral Gardens And Their Magic.* New York: Dover.

Mauss, M. (1902). *General Theory of Magic*. Routledge. ISBN 0415253969.

Melton, J.G. (2021), "Sorcery Occult Practice". *Britannica*. www.britannica,com, retrieved on 30/5/21.

Montesano, M. (2020). "Introduction to the Special Issues: Witchcraft, Demonology and Magic", *Witchcraft, Demonology and Magic Religions*, Vol II. No 187; doi: 10.33901 rel 11040187

Mufuzi, F. (2014). "The Practical of Witchcraft and the Changing Patterns of its Paraphernalia in the Light of Technologically Produced Goods and Presented by Linystone Museum, 19305-1973", *Zambia Social Science Journal*, Vol. 5, no. 1. Pp. 50-71.

Tylor, E.B. (1871), *Primitive Cultures: Researches into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Language, Art and Custom.* London: J.Murray.

3.5 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercise

Self-Assessment Exercise 1

1. False

2. Sir Edward Burnett Tylor

3. Sigmund Freud

Self-Assessment Exercise 2

1. Sir Edward Evans Pritchard

2. Sorcerer's belief, Patient's belief and Social beliefs.

3. The Shaman (that has psychological experience), the sick person, and the public

UNIT 4:   MAGIC AND SOCIETY

4.0 Introduction

This unit attempts to analyse magic among various society. Because of want of space, we shall analyse few magical traditions among societies. The societies include; Trobriand Island, Igbo and Azande, in order to give us a logical and practical look of magical practices and rituals.

4.1 Intended Learning Outcomes

This unit will help the students;
1. to understand magical practices among societies.
2. to examine magical practices among societies.
4. to promote some societal values.

4.2 Main contents

4.2.1   Analysis of Magic among some Society.

Magic as an art, deals with employing of invisible or spiritual agencies in order to obtain certain visible results (Hartmann, 1924: 12). These results may be good or evil, if it is good, it becomes white magic or if evil it becomes black magic. These results can be seen in different magical practices in various societies through witchcraft, divination, sorcery, among others. Let's examine some magical practices in some societies.

4.2.2   Magic among Trobriand Islands

This society is a tropical rainforest area and the Trobriand Islands are part of Papua New Guinea nation, located in Milne Bay Province. The Trobriands have four main islands that include; Kiriwina (the largest), Kaileuna, Vakuta and Kitava. They are mainly subsistence horticulturalists that live in a traditional settlement, with a social structure based on matrilineal clan controlling the land resources. According to Stein & Stein (2016: 142), Trobriand Islanders have three types of knowledge; the first is knowledge of things in everyday world that is shared by all in the society; second is a specialized knowledge shared by a limited number of individuals; the third and highest knowledge is complex and valued technological skills. A person with the third kind of knowledge is call "tokabitam" (man with knowledge) and this knowledge include important magic like rain and garden magic.

Accordingly, there are many forms of magic among the Trobrianders that is a private property of individuals. The common way to acquire the knowledge of this magic is to learns from people's parents, grandparents or among other kins, by buying it or presenting series of gifts to them. The magic may disappear from the community if owners of the magic die with it and never transfer the knowledge. This people believe that woman's conception is caused by the ancestral spirit entering that woman's body. They practice many traditional magical spells whereby young people learns from older ones in exchange for tobacco, food and money. Some people buy and sell spells, while the literate one's among them write magic spells in books and hide them. Sometimes a person may cast spells to increase the visual effects of one's body, to induce erotic feeling in their lover, or make an ugly person beautiful (Weiner, 1988). In their magical practices, sometimes magical words are chanted into coconut oil, whereby one rubs it on one's skin, or into herbs and flowers they use to decorate their hair and armbands.

Further, the Trobrianders engaged in garden magic, because of poor harvest as a result of no rain, animal and insect pests destroying their crops and other bad things affecting their farms. Hence, they engage in garden rituals before a field is cleared, where men gather around the magician to complete the garden ritual for bumper harvest. Malinoroski (1961: 100) describes this event, where the magician wearing a hereditary magic wand in his left-hand march to the garden with men cutting a small sapling and recites a spell thus:

> This is our bad wood, O ancestral spirits!
>
> O bush-pig, who fightest, Obush-pig,
>
> From the great stone in the ray boay,
>
> O bush-pig of the garden stakes,
>
> O bush-pig drawn by evil smells,
>
> O bush-pig of the narrow face,

O bush-pig of the ugly countenance,

O fierce bush-pig, thy sail,

O bush-pig, is in thy ear,

thy steering –oar is in thy tail.

I kick thee from behind,

I despatch thee. Go away. Go to Ulawola.

Return whence you have come.

It burns your eyes, it turns your stomach.

So, the cutting of the sapling which is thrown into forest signifies the evil influences and bush-pigs that destroy the gardens. This ritual among others guarantees a bountiful harvest for the people of Trobriand Islands.

Form the above, one has no doubt that magic is an important exercise for Trobrianders. It has a moral and social function that brings about better cooperation among their society. Also, it addresses different kinds of problems that affect the people. Thus, magic become a culture of life and meaningful endeavour for the people as against evil.

Self-Assessment Exercise 1

1. Magic as an art, deals with employing of invisible or spiritual agencies in order to obtain certain visible results. True or False?

2. The third kind of knowledge for the Trobriand Islands includes important magic like rain and garden magic. True or False?

3. Trobrianders engaged in garden magic, because of .....

4.2.3   Magic among Igbo Society.

The Igbo are from South-central and South-eastern region of Nigeria. They are among the largest ethnic groups in Africa (Williams, 2008: 32). Magic in Igbo land involves so many traditional religious practices and cultural beliefs, some of which reflect the concept of Dibia, Afa divination, farm festivals, incantations etc. buttressing this, Duru (2016: 64) writes:

The Igbo people are one of the largest ethnic

groups in Africa, with a population of about

thirty-four (34) million. In rural Nigeria, Igbo

people work mostly as craftsmen, farmers

and traders. They have related ethnic groups

such as Ekpeye, Igbo jews, Ibibio, Efik,

Annang, Ogoni etc.

In Igbo land a Dibia (known as master of wisdom/knowledge) is a mystical individual that mediate between human world and the world of the spirit. The Dibia may act as a scribe, teacher, healer, diviner and advisor of his people. They always stay in their shrines where they are consulted by the people of their community. The Dibia has the power to know what happens both in the physical/spirit world and interprets any spiritual messages especially when it concerns the problem of individuals or community. Some Dibia can also manipulate the supernatural being in favour of or against individual or groups. Endowed with the knowledge of herb which makes some of them a herbalist. Here the treat all manners of sickness with herbs and other elements through the invocation of supernatural powers, which shows their magical prowess.

During Igba afa (divination) in Igbo land, the Ogba afa or Dibia (diviner), and the master of wisdom and esoteric knowledge finds or decodes people's spiritual misfortunes through dream, performing sacrifices, throwing divination seeds, beads or cowries in the shrine. For instance, in Igbo land, some diviners proffer solutions to some peoples' problem like infertility, marriages, sickness, among others by divination.

Further, as in the garden magic among the Trobriand Islanders, some Igbo communities have similar culture. Like the people of Ezeakiri village in Naze, Owerri North L.G.A of Imo State, has farm preparation festival known as 'Akirioche'. This festival takes place for about eight market days before planting season begins (around January or February), within this period the chief priest (Dbibia) of Akirioche goes for a spiritual journey with some elders and all the road to the farms are closed. During this journey, the chief priest has the power to foresee some evils that may befall the community in the nearest future, which makes him to sacrifice to the gods for bountiful harvest and peaceful co-existence in the society. At the end of the ritual (eight market days), members of the community are allowed to have a free harvest of palm fruit in the community to mark the end of the event. Also, there are other harvest festival/ritual performed by the priests, like the new yam festival where the gods are praised and thanked for his goodness.

Accordingly, incantation is used by the Igbo to communicate with the spirits and the dead. It is known as enchantment, it may be in form of a charm or spell that is created using words. This may take place as a ritual, hymn or prayer in order to praise or invoke a deity. It is tool for the practice of traditional medicine and use for the purpose of finding love. It is use in some places like in Umunoha, Mbaitolu L.G.A of Imo State to imprison all mosquitoes and prevent them from biting people. Further, it is used for the purpose of becoming invisible. When

someone recites the incantation or holds it charm, nobody will see him/her (Duru, 2016: 68). It can also be used as a protective charm, so that when one shoots, machetes or hits one it will not penetrate the person (also known as odieshi).

From the foregoing, magic among the Igbos, explains reality for them, but it may be use for a good purpose or bad purpose. And there is rational and religion reasons for these practices. It is important to know that there are taboos that must be respected or the charms and spells will not work. For instance, they may not have sexual relationship or eat some foods or fruits for their magic to be potent and effectual.

4.2.4   Magic among the Azande (Zande)

Azande is an ethic group that is located from upper Nile basin in South Sudan to rainforest area of Democratic Republic of Congo. Azande traditional beliefs hinges on magic oracle and witchcraft. Stein and Stein (2016: 145) explains their magic thus;

> Among the Azande magic involves the use of
>
> objects usually of plant material, called medicines.
>
> A medicine is an object in which supernatural
>
> power resides. To access this power, to change
>
> a piece of wood or plant material into medicine,
>
> require ritual. The object which may be consumed
>
> in the ritual or kept intact for long periods of time,
>
> then becomes the center of magical rituals.

Here, magical objects are mainly plants and these plants are associated with its natural resemblance for magical purpose. For instance, if a woman is finding it difficult to breastfeed a baby, a particular fruit that has enough milk sap is given to her to drink to produce enough breast milk.

Accordingly, many plants or medicines are categorized according to the purpose they serve. Some are used to control nature like rain or delay of sunset; to protect hunter from dangerous animals and to help him aim accurately at the prey; to aid craftsmen in their task; to fight against sorcerers and witches. For them magic does important function in bringing success in live and granting a safe journey. It is also used to cure disease, avenge murder, adultery and theft (Ibid: 146). In order to make use of the medicine, the plant may be burned using oil, or made into infusion for drinking. After, it may be rubbed on the face, forehead, drunk or

one may make whistle out of it to blow out misfortune in the early morning. Buttressing the magical ritual of the Zande, Stein and Stein (Ibid) writes:

> The ritual itself is usually quite simple. It involves
>
> manipulating the medicine and reciting a spell. This
>
> is not formal. The individual simply addresses the
>
> medicine and tells it what he or she wants done. Unlike
>
> magical spells in other societies, power does not
>
> reside in the spell. Rather, the power resides in the
>
> medicine, and the spell is simply a way of waking
>
> up the power and giving the power instructions.
>
> The manner is quite informal; the only requirement
>
> is that the instructions be clear. If the medicine is
>
> handled correctly and the instructions are clear,
>
> the magic will work. Another requirement is
>
> the observation of a number of tabus, although
>
> which tabus are observed varies widely.
>
> Commonly, they include abstention from sexual
>
> activity and the avoidance of certain foods. If the
>
> tabus is not observed, the magic will fail.

From the foregoing, the Azande, Igbo and Trobriand Islanders magical traditions are aspects of religion and culture which is rational and are used to understand and control reality. It provides a natural philosophy that explains unfortunate and future events among these people. This practice is value laden among these tribes and explains and regulates their conducts. Therefore, magical activities should be use by individuals and groups to better the human situation and guarantee peaceful coexistence and sustainable development in the society. Further, black magic or magic that promotes wickedness and evil should be shunned at times and in all places.

Self-Assessment Exercise 2

1. In Igbo land ..... is a mystical individual that mediate between human world and the world of the spirit.
2. Ezeakiri village in Naze has the same garden magic concept with .....
3. .... traditional beliefs hinges on magic oracle and witchcraft

4.3 Summary

- Magic deals with employing spiritual agencies to obtain certain results.
- Magic as an important exercise has moral and social function.
- Magic is an aspect of religion and culture that people use to understand and control reality.

4.4 References/Further Reading

Duru, W. (2016). "The Communicativeness of Incantations in the Traditional Igbo Society". Journal of media and communication studies. Vol.8 (7).pp.63-70.

Elliot, C. (1877). Delineation of Roman Catholicism: Drawn from the Authentic and Acknowledged Standards of the Church of Rome. Lane & Scott.

Feldman, N. (2005). Divided by God Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Hartmann, F. (1924). Magic: White and Black London: Kegan Paul.

Jefferson, T. (1802-01-01). "Jeffersons' Letter to the Danbury Basptist. U.S Library of Congress.

Malinowski, B. (1978). Coral Gardens and their magic New York: Dover.

Mubarak, A. (2009). "Religion and Politics: Integration, Sepahalion and Conflict". Violence and Peace Challenges of religion. Lahore. www.ireness.net.

Weiner, A.B. (1988). The Trobrianders of Papua New Guinea. United States of America: Wadsworth, Cernage Leaving. ISBN 9780030119194.

Williams, L. (2008). Nigeria: The Bradt Travel Guide. Bradt Travel Guides. ISBN 978-1-84162-239-2.

4.5 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercise

Self-Assessment Exercise 1

1. True

2. True

3. Poor harvest

Self-Assessment Exercise 2

1. Dibia

2. Trobiand Islanders

3. Azande

Module 3: Problems of Religious Language

Unit. 1: Understanding Religious Language

1.0 Introduction

This unit aims to provide explanations on what religious language entails. It distils this meaning from the senses in which some philosophers understood the concept prior to their arguments for or against. Beyond easing basic understanding of the notion, it is a precursor to appreciating the related problems that follow.

2.0 Intended Learning Outcomes

This unit will help students:

1. To see clearer there is a pattern of communication peculiar to religion.
2. To become familiar with religious language.
3. To know more certainly religious language is indispensable to practicing any religion.

3.0 Main Contents

3.1.   Religious Language

The notion "religious language" is a combination of two key concepts—religious and language. Religious, as a term, pertains to religion. It is the adjectival expression of the noun "religion." According to the *Concise Oxford Dictionary of the English Language*, religion is "the belief in and worship of a superhuman controlling power, especially a personal God or gods; a particular system of faith and worship." Put differently, it is an area of human existence which calls the spirit-part of us into full play in the course of cognizing and affirming the underlying beliefs therein. Religion is a word that has become synonymous to the otherworldly.

On the other hand, language is a medium of expression wherein words are formed and combined meaningfully in conformity with instituted rules, for the purposes of communication, interpretation of the real world, and ontology

(Okonkwo, 2012 :9). However, Jerome Okonkwo's definition of language as "the human agenda-setting in semantic space for the integration, interpretations and internalization of conventions for the states of affairs of sociality" (Okonkwo, 2012:4), provides an invaluable insight. When religion and language are juxtaposed, religious language would entail the integration of definite beliefs of a certain faith to the human space—a means for interpreting and internalizing them accordingly.

The unrestrained operation of language in any religion is critical to the extent that it constitutes part of a particular faith's essence, as it enables encapsulation of the prevailing message and tenets therein—whether monotheistic or non-monotheistic. Keith Yandell, acknowledging the salience of religious language, provides us an inkling of how to enquire about this vital component of religion: "If all claims about God, for example, are non-literal, how does this affect what sorts of arguments can be offered on behalf of these claims? Does this place them simply beyond argument altogether? Are all claims about God non-literal?" (Yandell, 2016: xix). Clearly, these posers impact the core of religious language, serving as a guide to decipher its role.

Given humans standing as a *homo loquens* (being that uses language), it can be said in Sartrean parlance that man is condemned to be a user of language. This inherent disposition drives him to devise varied ways of passing information from one person to another. Nowhere is this more crucial than in religion. Both affirmation and proselytization of any religion require words to convey its truths, making religious language a focal point. Keith Yandell noted that defining religion for the sake of understanding takes either a doctrinal route or functional route.

> Broadly speaking, definitions of 'religion' tend to fall into one of two classes. One sort of definition is substantial or doctrinal; a given religion is defined in terms of the beliefs its adherents accept that make them adherents of that religion, and religion generally is characterized in terms of beliefs that all religions are alleged to share. Another sort of definition is functional or pragmatic; 'religion' is defined in terms of what it is alleged that all religions do or what the social function of religion is alleged to be (Yandell, 2016:10).

Thus, making sense of religion in any of these ways and subsequently projecting it draws our attention to subject of language. Religious language is the linguistic pattern deployed to expose the essence and relevance of a particular religion. To this end, most times, new terms are coined to explain

the central figures therein and paint pictures in the minds of adherents, prospects and passers-by. "Language is one medium by which the presence and activity of beings that are otherwise unavailable to the senses can be made presupposable, even compelling, in ways that are publicly yet also subjectively available to people as members of social groups" (Keane, 1997 :49). Although the supernatural beings tend to defy physical reduction, relating pertinent information about them in a way that makes sense to people individually and collectively underscores religious language.

In other words, religion and language are like Siamese twins strongly tied to each other. No matter how esoteric the communication tends to be, religion never gets weary of turning to language for animation. That is:

> It would be impossible to acquire a religion without the medium of language. Because what is said may particularly condition what can be thought, the use of speech pattern will have subtle psychological effects on the speakers, tending to limit what can be named and hence what can be thought. Hence, religion and language are closely connected to each other (Ugwueye and Ezenwa-Ohaeto, 2011: 176).

This connectedness underlines how dependent religion is on language; language can do without religion but religion can't do without language. Arguably, language forms part of its crux. In as much as the spotlight is on God, gods or spirits, resort to language is an attempt to demystify them, driving understanding and eliciting devotion. Religious language is comparable to a wholesaler—middleman—who mediates between the supernatural and mortal men. It facilitates the delivery of goods, core messages supposedly manufactured by the mysterious figures to the retailers, priests and eventually to consumers, followers. Taking cognizance of the various modes of religious language, in the *A Dictionary of Philosophy of Religion*, the editors shed light on religious language as:

> Language about the sacred and our relation to the sacred; for example, God, Brahman, Allah, karma, reincarnation, and so on. Religious texts and practices include almost all the main ways of using language: expressive, descriptive, referential, reformative, and so on. Terms may be used literally, metaphorically or analogously, or even equivocally (Taliaferro and Marty, 2010:197).

Among these various ways in which religious language features, it is tenable that the descriptive dimension is most captivating due to how graphical pictures painted in the mind of followers are. Language in this respect largely reduces the cognitive distance between the supernatural and humans, making the former more evident.

Furthermore, the sociolinguistic implications of religious language cannot be overstretched. Language's position as a *sine qua non* for social interactions magnifies those peculiar ways in which religion speaks. Bearing in mind how language rules cum concomitant meanings differ from society to society, these are significantly carried over to religious realities discourse. However, language is often tweaked to accommodate the outliers in the domain as it coordinates and lubricates interactions in religious milieus. Thus:

> In another sense, then, a religious language is the product of the intersection of language variables of different sorts within this one domain of human experience. It is this localization of ways of using language in a given sphere of social action that attracts sociolinguistic attention, for we expect to find here, as elsewhere, linguistic means responding to social motivation and having cultural meaning (Samarin, 1987:85).

Often, it is commonplace to see allusions to stories, considered explanations for either the genesis or purpose of certain realities, in many religions. For instance, how did humans come to be? To what end? Given how knotty such questions are, it isn't difficult to see reason for those infusions regarded as privileged knowledge. In this way, "if religious language is not expressed in a mythical language, it does not communicate the sacred knowledge. Since myths are an essential part of all religious language, the mythical expression is the medium of understanding supernatural beings and events as well as human religious experiences" (Janetius 2008: 2).

Again, shedding light on the nature of religious language, Roy Jackson illustrates that religious language differs profoundly from the typical use of language due to the subject it attempts to invariably talk about. He as well implied the operation of a peculiar set of rules which underpins conversations had there. For him, "it is one thing to comment on how cold it is today, but if someone was then to start talking about God, the language drifts from the 'everyday' to the 'mysterious' or the 'metaphysical'. At one time, it certainly would not have been uncommon to 'bring God into the conversation' because it was believed that such things as the weather were acts of God" (Jackson 2011: 113). Bottom line is religious language has come to stay as long as exploration of our religious nature is concerned.

Self-Assessment Exercise

1. ---- refers to a belief in and worship of a superhuman controlling power, especially a personal God or gods.
2. ---- refers to a medium of expression for the purposes of communication, interpretation of the real world, and ontology.
3. ---- refers to a language about the sacred and our relation to the sacred.
4. Religious language bridges the gap between the divine and humans. True or False?

4.0 Summary

- Religious language is the social interactive tool of distinct pattern in which religion communicates.
- Existence and relevance of religious language are linked to man's nature as a *homo religiousus*—a religious being.
- Religious language bridges the gap between the divine and humans.

5.0 References/Further Reading

Graham, O. (2015). *The Routledge Handbook of Contemporary Philosophy of Religion*. New York: Routledge

Jackson, R. (2014). *The God of Philosophy: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion*. New York: Routledge.

Janetius, S. T. (2008). *Altering the Altar: Myth, Celibacy and Psychology*. Thrissur: Mishil and Js Publishers.

Keane, W. (1997). "Religious Language" in *Annual Review of Anthropology (Vol. 26).*   pp.47-71. Annual Reviws Inc.

Okonkwo, J. I. (2012). *Okwu Danahu Onu: The Basic Principle of Igbo Philosophy of   Language*. Owerri: Imo State University Press.

Samarin, W. (1987). "The Language of Religion" in *Sociolinguistics: An International   Handbook of the Science of Language and Society*. Ammon, U., Dittmar, N., & Mattheier, K. (Eds.). pp. 85-91. Berlin: Walter de Gruyer.

Taliaferro, C., Draper. P., and Quinn, P. L. *A Companion to Philosophy of Religion*.   United Kingdom: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

Taliaferro, C., Marty E. et. al. (2010). *A Dictionary of Philosophy of Religion*. London: The Continuum International Publishing Group.

Ugwueye, E. and Ohaeto-Ezenwa, N. (2011). "Religious Language: Problems and Meaning" in *Unizik Journal of Arts and Humanities (Vol. 12 No. 1).* pp.173-187.

Yandell, K. (2016). *Philosophy of Religion: A Contemporary Introduction.* New York: Routledge.

6.0 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercise

Self-Assessment Exercise
1. Religion
2. Language
3. Religous Language
4. True.

Unit. 2: Difference between Religious Statements and Scientific Statements

2.0   Introduction

2.1   Intended Learning Outcomes

2.2   Main Contents

2.2.1   Religion and Science: Battle for Truth

2.2.2   Religious Statements versus Scientific Statements

2.2.3   Summary

2.3   References/Further Reading

2.4   Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercise

2.0 Introduction

This unit is tailored towards magnifying the disparity existing between scientific and religious propositions. Considering the perennial collision between apologists of both viewpoints, it becomes salient here to behold the points which underlie their positions. Religious language is a constellation of religious statements, knowing how exactly they differ from those ratified by a chunk of the intelligentsia is crucial. Against this backdrop arose the problems of religious language.

2.1 Intended Learning Outcomes

This unit will help students:

1. To distinguish religious propositions from scientific propositions.

2. To have an in-depth understanding of religious language.

3. To decipher the background of problems associated with religious language.

2.2. Main Contents

2.2.1. Religion and Science: The Battle for Truth

Curiosity of man has taken him places, one of which is religion. Wonder about his beingness and environment with no handy answers often propels him to rouse the religious dimension of his being. In trying to solve the conundrums of how humans and nature came to be, suffering, misfortune, death and so on, speculations on the existence of transcendent forces crop up. That is:

> Religion originated gradually in human history. When people failed to comprehend various phenomenons in their life as well as in nature, not able to find an answer to different existential and eschatological questions, they started to mystify such occurrences. Rituals and

customs started to emerge when human beings failed to comprehend and rationalize the critical moments. Furthermore, to be freed from such critical situations in life, people started to imagine such forces as supernatural beings and began to worship them. As generations passed, this orientation became increasingly intense and such explanations became an integral part of their life and living (Janetius, 2008:1).

This connects the dots with respect to how numerously popular religion is all over the globe and enormous influence it has wielded from the ancient to contemporary eras. Some of them are Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Jainism, Taoism, Buddhism, to mention but a few. Millions of followers they have is a testament to how dependent many, unlearned and learned inclusive, are on religious perspectives or truths of life. This played out in ancient Greece when polytheism was at the height of its powers, seeing reference to many gods who superintended diverse areas of nature and universe. Greeks premised their understanding of how the world works on this foundation until the Ionian philosophers brought about a paradigm shift. This detour to reason midwifed what we know today as science.

Additionally, the puissance of religious truths is tangible in the instrumental role it played in the emergence of world powers such as Greece, Egypt, Rome, Persia, England, France and their dominance. The common belief that the gods or God gifted each of them a divine right or power *de jure* to conquer and rule the world, an information provided by special priests, proved to be a great incentive undergirding their conquest missions for thousands of years. Harvests, famines, droughts, victories, defeats were seen through the lens of "will of the gods." Would these nations have attained such unprecedented heights against all odds without religion navigating their boat? Clearly, religion has an argument here. Talking about religion almost invariably implies the existence of a transcendental being, which many people term God. But does such being actually exist? Regarding the tenability of God's existence, the basis of a number of religions, Yujin Nagasawa (2011:153) highlights "the ontological argument, the design argument, and the cosmological argument. Among the three, the design argument attracts the most attention today. The cosmological argument follows, with the ontological argument clearly being the least popular." These arguments are put forward not only to solidify religion but to demonstrate its distinctness. As ubiquitous as this *status-quo* is, not all are impressed by it.

Emergence of philosophy, and later on science, saw the procession to a divergent, opposing direction. Instead of interpreting reality in terms of conceptions painted in colours of God, gods, spirits or the metaphysical, science does so with systematic investigations in the company of the duo of observation

and experimentation serving as a guide. About how science arrives at its truths, Karl Popper, in his insightful work *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*, explains that "A scientist, whether theorist or experimenter, puts forward statements, or systems of statements, and tests them step by step. In the field of the empirical sciences, more particularly, he constructs hypotheses, or systems of theories, and tests them against experience by observation and experiment." In other words, experience within the human world is the *terminus a quo* and *terminus ad quem* of science, not beyond at all. He adds that:

> The empirical sciences can be characterized by the fact that they use *'inductive methods'*, as they are called. According to this view, the logic of scientific discovery would be identical with inductive logic, *i.e.* with the logical analysis of these inductive methods. It is usual to call an inference 'inductive' if it passes from *singular* statements (sometimes also called 'particular' statements), such as accounts of the results of observations or experiments, to universal statements, such as hypotheses or theories (Popper, 1980:3-4).

Thus, science, unlike religion with its sentiments towards preternatural revelation and experience, looks up to inductive reasoning as a means of proffering solutions to the puzzles of reality. Thinking in this ascending order draws our attention to the efficacy of proceeding from little to much, simple to complex, known to the unknown. The presumption in the world of science that meaningful, comprehensible information are consequent of empirical verification cannot be overemphasized. Truths are believed to be products of this process. In view of the multiple amazing breakthroughs of science, it is tempting to think of it by and large as infallible. Overcoming this temptation, Popper acknowledges that:

> Now it is far from obvious, from a logical point of view, that we are justified in inferring universal statements from singular ones, no matter how numerous; for any conclusion drawn in this way may always turn out to be false: no matter how many instances of white swans we may have observed, this does not justify the conclusion that all swans are white. The question whether inductive inferences are justified, or under what

conditions, is known as the problem of
induction.

This is an eloquent pointer to the limitations of scientific truths. Induction as a
method of unearthing facts can be delusive, if overstretched. Tendency of falling
into the ditch of fallacy of hasty generalization seems to be high when there is no
looking before leaping.

More so, in order to yield scientific truths, theories couched in paradigms are
formed. Some examples are Newton's laws of motion, Einstein's theory of
relativity, ohms law, Heisenberg's uncertainty principle, etcetera. Thomas S.
Kuhn (1970:24), in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions,* described science's
modus operandi, albeit sarcastically, saying that "Normal science consists in the
actualization of that promise, an actualization achieved by extending the
knowledge of those facts that the paradigm displays as particularly revealing, by
increasing the extent of the match between those facts and the paradigm's
predictions, and by further articulation of the paradigm itself." Put differently,
science sometimes derails toward dogmatism, which can adversely affect the
quality of truths there from. Apparently, notwithstanding the immense promise
of both religion and science in shaping our *weltanschauung* (worldview), their
constraints need be had in mind. Since there are religious and scientific truths, it
is in line to elucidate how propositions of both diverge.

2.2.2   Religious Statements versus Scientific Statements

Religious statements are chiefly metaphysical whereas scientific statements are
physical or mundane. Due to nature of the subject—transcendental beings such
as God, gods, spirits—religion attempts to unravel, expressing specific
information about such beings often requires usage of descriptions and
assertions that capture the transcendence. For instance, when Christianity
through its holy book insists Christ Jesus is God-incarnate who died to save
mankind with His blood and guarantee of salvation for whosoever believes in
Him, such statements mirror metaphysics. Some inevitable questions would be
how can an Immortal being become mortal? Does incarnation even have any
basis in reality? How can the death of one person atone for wrongdoings of the
entire human race? Addressing these would call for transcendental references.
Thus:

> "When someone says "I believe in
> God", he or she is not saying the same
> thing as "I believe I have the flu". A
> genuine belief in God (rather than a
> mere tendency to respond positively
> whenasked if God exists) implies a
> commitment, a particular attitude to
> life.To believe in God is to say

> something about the kind of person youare. If a person believes in a creator God then the person believes that humankind – and the world – was created by a greater being. If God isa moral God, then the believer, if he is to be consistent, must acquiesce to a belief in objective morality" (Jackson, 2011:113-114).

As opposed to this, scientific statements are mundane in the sense that contents of meanings referred to are within the purview of this world. Both subject and associated details are largely discoverable in and verifiable through experience. Basically, scientific statements articulate scientific truths about varied facets of reality. Lying beneath these propositions is the belief that what is knowable and expressible is the world governed by our senses and none beyond this one can be contended without running into hallucination *cum* fallacy. This is exactly what Ludwig Wittgenstein, in *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, meant when he tied truth-value to solely "facts" about "state of affairs." Buttressing this point, he argued:

> The correct method in philosophy would really be the following: to say nothing except what can be said, i.e. propositions of natural science—i.e. something that has nothing to do with philosophy –and then, whenever someone else wanted to say something metaphysical, to demonstrate to him that he had failed to give a meaning to certain signs in his propositions. Although it would not be satisfying to the other person—he would not have the feeling we were teaching him philosophy—this method would be the only correct one (Wittgenstein, 1922:89).

Also, this position of resisting chasing after shadows and sticking to what is, was particularly echoed by logical positivism through a frontline exponent, Alfred Jules Ayer, who contended that meaningful, scientific statements are those which conform to the principle of verification. With respect to statements, he contended that "unless it satisfied the principle of verification, it would not be capable of being understood in the sense which either scientific hypotheses or common-sense statements are habitually understood. I confess, however, that it now seems to me unlikely that any metaphysician would yield a claim of this kind" (Ayer, 1952:15).

Self-Assessment Exercise

1. .....within the human world is the *terminus a quo* and *terminus ad quem* of science.

2. The empirical sciences use what method ....

3. Religious statements are chiefly metaphysical whereas scientific statements are physical or mundane. True or False?

4. For ... any meaningful, scientific statements are those which conform to the principle of verification.

2.3 Summary

- Typically, religious statements are metaphysical and esoteric, whereas scientific statements are mundane and exoteric.
- Religion and science remain at loggerheads in the discovery and dissemination of truths, verities about reality to date.
- Methodologically, religion relies on religious experience *cum* revelation while science relies on experimentation and observation built on induction.

2.4 References/Further Reading

Ayer, A. J. (1952). *Language, Truth and Logic*. New York: Dover Publications, Inc.

Jackson, R. (2014). *The God of Philosophy: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion*. New York: Routledge.

Janetius, S. T. (2008). *Altering the Altar: Myth, Celibacy and Psychology*. Thrissur: Mishil and Js Publishers.

Kuhn, S. T. The Structure of Scientific Revolutions. Chicago and London: Chicago   University Press.

Nagasawa, Y. (2011). *The Existence of God: A Philosophical Introduction*. New York: Routledge.

Popper, K. (1980). *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*. London and New York: Routledge.

Tenant, N. (2015). Introducing Philosophy: God, Mind, World, and Logic. New York: Routledge.

Wittgenstein, L. (1974) *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. Pears D. F. and McGuiness B.F. (trans). London and New York: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

2.5 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercise

Self-Assessment Exercise

1. Experience

2. Inductive methods

3. True

4. Alfred Jules Ayer

Unit 3: Problems of Religious Language: Positions on the Validity and Invalidity of Religious Language

3.0   Introduction

3.1   Intended Learning Outcomes

3.2   Main Contents

3.2.1   Problems of Religious Language

3.0 Introduction

This unit seeks to bring to the fore extant arguments for and against religious language. Religious language has over the years mooted debates on its right to a claim of meaningfulness. As infallible as religionists think religious language is, gravitating towards objectivity by paying attention to alternative viewpoints minimizes credulity. More importantly, exposure to persuasiveness of both sides of the coin reveals the problems of religious language and prevents us from hanging in the balance in such discussions.

3.1 Intended Learning Outcomes

This unit will help students:

1. To know the contentions surrounding religious language.

2. To see how the conflicting positions constitute problems of religious language.

3. To critically take a position.

3.2 Main Contents

3.2.1   Problems of Religious Language

As straight forward as using language may seem, there is challenges in the course of evaluating religious language. Conception and subsequent exposition on the bases of devotion in most religions, call for distinctive communication, as opposed to the everyday one. Inevitably, the central supernatural figures are introduced but not without controversy besieging their reality and related religious language. That is to say, "This problem arises when talking about God. Human language is derived from human experience and is designed to communicate human experience. When, however, it is used to talk about things or objects that are outside the scope of human experience, is it still meaningful?" (Omoregbe, 1993:179). It can be thus maintained that the issues and problems associated with religious language border on meaningfulness. Given that "It is not unusual for a religion to contain metaphysical, epistemological, and ethical commitments," is communication of these commitments nonsensical and consequently pointless? (Yandell, 2016:12).

Encapsulating the positions on validity and invalidity of religious language, Joseph Omoregbe observes that:

> Some philosophers have held that religious propositions are meaningless. Others have held that the religious propositions are not real propositions, that they are pseudo-propositions. There are others who maintain that religious propositions have some meaning but their real meaning is different from what they appear to be saying. The later Wittgenstein and his followers maintain that religious propositions are meaningful when seen within the context of the language-game in which they are used (Omoregbe, 1993:179-180).

These go to show the different approaches to interpreting the concept of religious language. Their exploration is needful at this juncture to grasp the theme here. Each is insightful and has arguments from renowned scholars to match.

First, religious language is meaningless. What *prima facie* comes to mind as giver of such response is science and this is far from mistaken. Logical positivism, as a school of thought, hardly gets weary of showing displeasure towards statements which purport to refer to beings, "realities" beyond the gamut of this world of experience. Their disposition stems from their standard of meaningfulness known as the verification principle: the meaning of a statement is the method of its verification. That is, a statement's possession of truth-value which imbues it with meaning is dependent on its verifiability; this could be carried out either directly or indirectly. Kenneth Klein, in his work *Positivism and Christianity: A Study of Theism and Verifiability*, calls this standard "criterion of factual significance." He explained that:

> A genuine statement of fact, according to the Positivist classification of sentences, is a sentence which succeeds in asserting something about the world, about what is the case. More commonly, a genuine statement of fact declares that a particular state of affairs obtains, and not that a different state of affairs obtains. The statement that it is raining outside typically declares that it is raining outside, not that it is snowing, hailing, sleeting, etc… The hallmark of genuineness in putatively factual statements, or for their meaningfulness,

as the Positivist want to put it, was that
they must be testable (Klein, 1974:1-2).

For the logical positivists, propositions of religion do not pass the litmus test of this criterion and are hence meaningless. "The only meaningful statements are either synthetic or analytic" (Jackson, 2014:115). Exuding a strong scientific orientation, it has zero tolerance for mysterious beings, terms and experiences. However, Frederick Copleston begged to differ from this positivist dismissal of religious language, clarifying both are separate areas of human existence which do not necessarily collide. He argued that "In the last century people used to talk about a conflict between religion and science in the sense in which that conflict was understood in the last century; for no verified scientific statement can contradict a revealed dogma. We are no troubled by apparent discrepancies between scientific theories and *Genesis*, for we have a better idea now of the nature of scientific theories and hypotheses on the one hand, while on the other hand every sensible person realizes that the Bible was not designed to be a handbook of astronomy or any branch of science" (Copleston, 1956: 32). In other words, for him, religious statements can make sense.

Second, Religious language basically says nothing. This viewpoint contends that religious propositions do not represent contents of the world out there and by that very fact, is devoid of any truth-value whatsoever. As regards this Anthony Flew's criticism of religious statements, Stephen Davis points out that "Let us first be clear on the nature of Flew's criticism of theological statements. We must first begin with a definition—let us say that a statement is an "assertion" and is "cognitively meaningful" if and only if it makes a genuine factual claim about the state of the world, if it is the kind of utterance that can describe how the world is. Thus the statement, "The item on the table is a piece of chalk" is a genuine assertion, but "Shut the door!" "Hurray for our team!" are not. These utterances describe nothing in the world—the first gives an order and the second vents an emotion—neither makes a factual claim. They are, then, cognitively meaningless utterances" (Davis, 1975: 23). Put differently, statements of religious nature are impostors deserving to be unmasked.

Third, religious statements say one thing and mean another. This connotes that although humans preoccupy themselves with speaking about God or gods in religion, they actually refer to themselves. Besides expression, there is cognition as well. To know something is to be conscious of something. "Consciousness has also come to mean awareness of something" (Ekwuru, 2010:97). This consciousness process involves mainly a subject and object, wherein the former tries to be aware of the latter. Similarly, in religion, there are patent efforts by members (subject) to become personally conscious of the designated supreme being(s) (object) with the belief such deities are essentially different from who they are. Begging to disagree, Ludwig Feuerbach, in his work *Essence of Christianity*, argued self-consciousness also features in the man-higher being consciousness, for the higher being is nothing other than humans' idealized self of perfection. Thus:

But when religion—consciousness of God—is designed as the self-consciousness of man, this is not to be understood as affirming that the religious man is directly aware of this identity; for, on the contrary, ignorance of it is fundamental to the peculiar nature of religion. To preclude this misconception, it is better to say, religion is man's earliest and also indirect form of self-knowledge… Man first of all sees his nature as if out of himself, before he finds it in himself. His own nature is in the first instance contemplated by him as that of another being… Hence the historical progress of religion consists in this: that what by an earlier religion was regarded as objective, is now recognized as subjective; that is, what was formerly contemplated and worshipped as God is now perceived to be something human (Feuerbach, 2008: 25).

That is to say, man unknowingly appropriates to the supernatural being certain excellent, pristine characteristics he wishes he possesses. He worships himself. When, for instance, Christians make religious statements like "God is omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent," Feuerbach reckons it is merely an utopian version of the human person. Knowing God is tantamount to knowing oneself. In other words, "Feuerbach's claim to have discovered the true nature of religion and the real meaning of the concept of God implies that he has also discovered the real meaning of religious statements. According to him, the concept of God is the concept of man's perfect nature projected outside man, it follows therefore that any statement about God is actually a statement about man's perfect nature" (Omoregbe, 1993:191). Therefore, religious propositions say God but mean man, reeking of anthromorphism. Thomas Aquinas would object, we shall see why later on.

Fourth and lastly, meaning of religious statements is contextual. They may make sense in one context but not in another. This perspective protects religious language from fiery attacks, particularly from science which ceases every opportunity to discredit it, attaching the nonsensical tag. Substantiating this position, in *Philosophical Investigations*, which is a revision of his earlier work/view that pandered to science, Ludwig Wittgenstein contends that language has many functions occasioned by many, various settings and realities obtainable. He labels this "multiplicity of language games." However, attaining

meaningfulness in each case hinges on adhering to the peculiar linguistic rules in existence. That is:

> But how many kinds of sentence are there? Say assertion, question, and command? —there are countless kinds: countless different kinds of use of what we call "symbols", "words", "sentences". And this multiplicity is not something fixed, given once for all; but new types of languages, new language-games, as we may say, come into existence, and others become obsolete and get forgotten… Here the term "language-game" is meant to bring into prominence the fact that the speaking of language is part of an activity, or of a form of life (Wittgenstein, 1956:18).

Since language can function variedly, it opens the door for religious propositions to come in and make tenable claims of meaningfulness. This view seems to loudly acknowledge the peculiarities of religion, warranting approval of the interplay of expressions which go on within that space. Despite existence of such favourable views, debates on religious language continue to persist.

Self-Assessment Exercise

1. The problem of religious language arises when talking about

2. The issues and problems associated with religious language border on ....

3. For .... religious language is meaningless.

4. For --- the concept of God is the concept of man's perfect nature projected outside man.

5. Who talks about "multiplicity of language games."?

3.3 Summary

- The problems of religious language lie in the different arguments for and against it.
- For religious language to be meaningful, possession of truth-value is paramount.
- Religious language is meaningless, ambiguous, contextual, and says nothing are some of the schools of thought on the subject-matter.

3.4 References/Further Reading

Copleston, F. S. J. (1956). *Contemporary Philosophy: Studies of Logical Positivism and Existentialism*. Great Britain: Chapel River Press.

Davis, S. T. "Theology, Verification and Falsification" in *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* (Vol. 6 No. 1). pp.23-39. Berlin: Springer.

Ekwuru, E. G. (2010). *Basic Introductory Themes and Issues in Philosophical Anthropology*. Owerri: Living Flames Resources.

Feuerbach, L. (2008). *The Essence of Christianity*. Eliot. G. (trans). New York: Dover Publications, Inc.

Jackson, R. (2014). *The God of Philosophy: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion*. New York: Routledge.

Klein, K. H. (1974). *Positivism and Christianity: A Study of Theism and Verifiability*. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff.

Omoregbe, J. I. (1993). *A Philosophical Look at Religion.* Lagos: Joja Educational Research and Publishers Ltd.

Wittgenstein, L. (1958). *Philosophical Investigations*. Anscombe, G. E. M. (trans). United Kingdom: Basil Blackwell Ltd.

Yandell, K. (2016). *Philosophy of Religion: A Contemporary Introduction*. New York: Routledge.

3.5 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercise

Self-Assessment Exercise

1. God
2. Meaningfulness
3. Logical Positivist.
4. Ludwig Feuerbach
5. Ludwig Wittgenstein

Unit 4: **Critical Evaluation of Thomas Aquinas' Christian Perspective**

4.0 Introduction

This unit aims to provide a tour of Thomas Aquinas' perspective on religious language. For reason of its widespread acceptance in a religion so dominant in many parts of the globe, Christianity, it attempts to enable its exposition and evaluation. Aquinas' move to validate religious language by syncing natures of humans and God is nothing short of ingenious. Undeterred by the enormity of problems of religious language, he proffers a solution—which is also contestable.

4.1 Intended Learning Outcomes

This unit will help students:

1. To know Thomas Aquinas' arguments for religious language.

2. To see its relevance to the Christian religion and other similar monotheistic ones.

3.   To take cognizance of the strengths and weaknesses of his position.

4.2 Main Contents

4.2.1.   Religious Language as Analogy

Thomas Aquinas' influential standing as a philosopher and frontline Christian apologist is undisputed to date. His seminal contributions which beamed his allegiance to Christianity were profoundly instrumental to somewhat affording the religion a rational form that made it reasonable to critical minds as well as laity. His Christianization of Aristotelian philosophy, despite earlier reservations about it being antithetical to Christian doctrine, is amazing. Although he is more popular within and outside the walls of philosophy for his *Quinque Viae* or five proofs of God's existence, it is pivotal to draw our attention to his position on the nature of expressions employed in description of and reference to this Supreme Being whose existence is supposedly self-evident. The mere fact his discourse on religious expressions preceded that of God's existence sheds light on the importance of the former.

In his *magnum opus*, *Summa Theologica*, Aquinas set out to address actual or potential contentious issues in the Christian faith. In relation to religious language, he begins by anticipating "objections" to the conception of religious language as having a somewhat literal undertone. The first argued that since the Holy Scripture is sacred and *ipso facto* the highest science, it is misplaced for it to entangle itself with forms of expression that are applicable to finite beings. Thus, "It seems that Holy Scripture should not use metaphors. For that which is proper to the lowest science seems not to befit this science, which holds the highest place of all" (Aquinas, 1920:Q1 A9) Given the enormous lacuna in the nature of necessary being and contingent beings, employing a religious language—the second objection affirms—that compares them in any way blurs the fact being expressed about the divine; "But by such similitude truth is obscured. Therefore, to put forward divine truths by likening them to corporeal things does not befit this science" (Aquinas, 1920:Q1 A9). The last objection holds that only transcendental expressions should be utilized in discussions about the divine due to the affinity that exists between them, rather than deploy mundane expressions which are patently distant from what they refer to. That is to say, "the higher creatures are, the nearer they approach to the divine likeness. If therefore any creature be taken to represent God, this representation ought chiefly to be taken from the higher creatures, and not from the lower; yet this is often found in Scriptures" (Aquinas, 1920:Q1 A9). These objections are reflective of opposition to hinging religious language on analogy.

However, Thomas Aquinas had a contrary view that favoured the structuring of religious language in analogical forms which is summarized in his response. He contended that usage of metaphors or figures of speech are instrumental to the cognizance of divine realities which are just difficult for the natural man to comprehend. Expressing verities about God and His ways literally, without the introduction of terms and events humans can relate to, would be abstruse for those the message is meant for. Thus, rather than complicate the linguistic expressions about the sacred, such metaphorical expressions simplify it. A metaphor is a figure of speech that makes a direct comparison between two things. In this case, it is the comparison of the otherworldly with the worldly so as to create a strong image in the human mind which would facilitate understanding of the transcendental. This trait of relating and comparing things in metaphors make them analogical. Hence, when Aquinas mentions metaphors, he refers to analogy as religious language. Aquinas maintained thus:

> I answer that, it is befitting Holy Writ to put forward divine and spiritual truths by means of comparisons with material things. For God provides for everything according to the capacity of its nature. Now it is natural to man to attain to intellectual truths through sensible objects, because all our knowledge

originates from sense. Hence in Holy Writ, spiritual truths are fittingly taught under the likeness of material things… It is also befitting Holy Writ, which is proposed to all without distinction of persons—"To the wise and to the unwise I am a debtor" (Rm. 1:14)—that spiritual truths be expounded by means of figures taken from corporeal things, in order that thereby even the simple who are unable by themselves to grasp intellectual things may be able to understand it (Aquinas, 1920:Q1 A9).

He reckoned that word-constituents of religious language be made to pass through the medium of the sensible *en route* super sensible. And this is due to the inherent epistemic disposition of humans to acquire knowledge significantly through the senses coupled with the need to considerably prevent ambiguity.

But what about constructing and construing religious language in **univocal** and **equivocal** senses? The first—which entails the full literal translation of what is referred to or described about God—has the propensity to either lead to a misunderstanding about God or limit him. For example, God's word is a lamp unto my feet and light unto my path. Given the conventional meaning of the terms "lamp" and "light," it follows, univocally speaking, that God is a lamp and light. The boundlessness of God renders this interpretation questionable, because of the implausibility of reducing such a Supreme Being to the nature of the said terms. Also, viewing the stated expression with equivocal spectacles, it could mean that God is an object of illumination that has little weight. That sounds gibberish, to say the least. On the other hand, analogy introduces an exigent balance in religious language by substantially making up for the deficiencies of univocal and equivocal interpretative forms (Marshall, 2017:1). For Aquinas, it does this by demonstrating that divine-centred expressions are neither entirely literal nor ambiguous, but comparatively pragmatic by virtue of the clearer understanding achieved by juxtaposing the infinite and finite. Such portrayal of similarity is so invaluable. Analogy in religious linguistics then becomes imperative due to the somewhat lack of terms in the human conceptual scheme that can sufficiently describe and explain God.

Furthermore, Aquinas argued that the ontological similarity between God and man delineated by being makes analogy possible in the first place. Thus, his discourse on analogy as the crux of religious propositions revolved round the ideas of **analogy of being** and **analogy of proportion.**

4.2.2 Analogy of Being

This entails the meaningful expression of axioms about God using human-related terms due to a common bond of being. Maintaining in his work *Summa Contra Gentiles* that God is universal perfection, Aquinas contended that humans as well as other existents are sheer effects cum manifestations of God, and thereby ontologically "participate" in God. In Aristotelian parlance, he regards the Supreme Being as pure actuality which connotes perfection and man as a being which vacillates between potentiality and actuality, indicative of imperfection. Since man proceeds from and participates in God, he shares in God's being. That is to say, "everything imperfect must proceed from something perfect: therefore, the First Being must be most perfect. Everything is perfect inasmuch as it is in actuality; imperfect, inasmuch as it is in potentiality, with privation of actuality. That then which is nowise in potentiality, but is pure actuality, must be most perfect; and such is God" (Aquinas, 1929:11).

More so, the creature has a considerable degree of likeness to the creator. This state of affairs makes it feasible to analogously place God and man side by side in propositions. That is, certain human terms employed in referring to God in religious statements do not portray a literal meaning but rather a comparative or analogous meaning—courtesy of the being they share. Elucidating this point, Aquinas posits that" The perfections proper to other things in respect of their several forms must be attributed to God in respect of His productivity alone, which productivity is no other than His essence. Thus, then God is called 'wise,' not only in respect of His producing wisdom, but because, in so far as we are wise, we imitate in some measure His productivity, which makes us wise." (Aquinas, 1929:12). This capability to imitate God is enabled and undergirded by being which binds both Him and man, hence the analogy of being.

4.2.3   Analogy of Proportion

This is the variety of analogy which underscores the inverse proportion existing between God and man in the course of utilizing mundane terms to make reference to God. Thus, the denotative weight of terms in form of predicates saying something about subjects of God and man intrinsically differs; such concepts do not mean exactly the same thing for God and man, and this is so chiefly due to their varying ontological dispositions. Thomas Aquinas argues that God's *locus standi* as a necessary being whose essence is to be and perfection which contingent beings like man emanate from as imperfections, makes the discrepancy in construing terms analogously used for both pertinent. Thus:

> Whatever is predicated of things so as to imply that one thing precedes and the other is consequent and dependent on the former, is certainly not predicated synonymously. Now nothing is predicated of God and of other beings as

though they stood in the same rank, but it is implied that one precedes, and the other is consequent and dependent. Of God all predicates are predicated essentially. He is called 'being' to denote that He is essence itself; and 'good, ' to denote that He is goodness itself. But of other beings predications are made to denote participation. Thus, Socrates is called 'a man, ' not that he is humanity itself, but one having humanity. It is impossible therefore for any predicate to be applied synonymously and in the same sense to God and other beings (Aquinas, 1929:12).

However, these forms of analogy are pivotal to knowing God because of the limitedness of the intellect of finite men to directly fathom the infinite. Albeit it seems we know, Aquinas maintains, God through the existential proclivities of man, it does not follow they are prior to Him. Citing as an example the power of healing, its cognition via the effects on a person who has experienced it does not necessarily mean manifestation of healing fundamentally precedes power of healing. Similarly, that we know considerable God through existents, which are progenies of God, does not entail that they are prior to Him. "Thus then, because we arrive at the knowledge of God from the knowledge of other realities, the thing signified by the names that we apply in common to God and to those other realities -- the thing signified, I say, is by priority in God, in the mode proper to God: but the concept attaching to the name is posterior in its application to Him: hence He is said to be named from the effects which He causes" (Aquinas, 1929:13).

Also, as a matter of fact, the thread of analogy ran through his famous proofs of God's existence, the cosmological argument embodied in the *Quinque Viae*, wherein he successfully painted vivid pictures of the self-evidence of the beingness of a primordial and prehistoric Supreme Being by alluding to mundane, human entities. Thus, this pattern of communication pervaded virtually all of Aquinas' writings that had an iota of metaphysics. His "single aim in using analogy is adequately to account for all aspects of the God creature relation" (Zimmerman, 2017:1). Nevertheless, his prescription of analogy in religious language has certain strengths and weaknesses that are deserving of crystallization.

4.2.4   Critique of Aquinas' Position

The field of philosophy of religion broaches certain salient topics that are within in its purview for critical discussion, of which the character of language

employed in shedding light on the supernatural is very crucial. While scholars like Protagoras takes an agnostic stance, which connotes that correctly or validly saying anything about the divine or God is far from possible, Aquinas has in contrast insisted that we can know and talk about God through analogy. Apparently, the strength of Aquinas' principle of analogy lay in its continued admittance that God or the supernatural is intelligible. This is possible by making relevant comparisons between Him and contingent beings which are proportional to our cognitive abilities. Since God is knowable, this justifies the existence of religions like Christianity that are inclined to theism.

Another merit of Aquinas' position on religious language is the fact that it furnishes us with a more robust understanding about the nature of God. The transcendental and limitless disposition of God calls for a linguistic measure that would bridge the gap between it and our comprehension. Analogy, to a great extent, does just that. Even the Holy Bible somewhat adopts this style in its explications about God and His ways. For instance, Psalms 125:2 (New King James Version) says "As the mountains surround Jerusalem, So the Lord surrounds His people from this time forth and forever." In order to depict how God shields and protects his people, reference is made to finite existents like mountains and city of Jerusalem in Israel. Such expression puts Christians in the know of God's omnipotence.

On the flip side other, Thomas Aquinas' recommendation of analogy as a *modus lingua* in religion has not been bought by all those involved in such matters. It is argued by some that analysing certain divine/preternatural realities or experience in language tends to result in their adulteration. M. O. Webb points this out succinctly:

> Aquinas thought that talk about God could not be straightforwardly literally true, since God's nature is beyond our comprehension, so he developed his ingenious theory of analogy to account for talk about God. Some, in recent times, have thought that the doctrine of analogy developed by Aquinas does not go far enough; the purported objects of religious experience are not the kinds of things that can be represented in language. In the Buddhist traditions, especially Zen, there is a strain of thought according to which the enlightenment experience is inherently indescribable. The Buddha himself said things like that about nirvana, and about the state of an enlightened being after death… In the Advaita Vedanta school

of Indian philosophy, some think that the real nature of Brahman, the conscious ground of all reality, is to be absolutely non-dual, without any distinction or difference. Brahman, in this view, is indescribable, as to describe it is to import distinctions (Webb, 2014:11-12).

Thus, the ultimate realities for these oriental religions are immune to being brought to bear in human language of supposedly limited tendencies. This stands in opposition to an analogical orientation in religious language that does not envisage, although not gratuitously, the muddling of transcendental waters if appropriated.

More so, Aquinas' affirmation of the meaningfulness of religious language through the pathway of analogy was refuted by the logical positivists who contended that the cognitive value of any statement is based on its verifiability. Elucidating their position, Joseph Omoregbe asserted thus:

> Metaphysical and theological speculations do not qualify as knowledge, nor do they in any way increase man's knowledge of reality. Their propositions are meaningless since they cannot be verified and shown to be true or false (Omoregbe, 1991:10).

In other words, religious language—encoded in analogy or not—is bereft of truth-value and its claims about saying something about the divine or unempirical is nonsensical.

However, it can be reckoned that religious language is an inextricable facet of religion which can be regarded as its very fuel, without which getting into motion, for religion, would be almost impossible. In addition to analogy, taking cognizance that propositions made about God can sometimes be contextual is important. This prevents misappropriating religious statements and applying them to contexts where they do not belong. That God, in the scriptures and Old Testament, forbade the Israelites from getting married to other tribes for avoidance of the infiltration of idolatry does not necessarily mean Christian adherents in the recent past and present should not marry from other tribes. Rather, it underscores the point of not tying the knots with those who do not share their spiritual faith. Such subtlety can be dealt with once partisans in religion bear in mind that religious language can occasionally be contextual, and misconception forestalled as a corollary.

Self-Assessment Exercise

1. When Aquinas mentions metaphors, he refers to analogy as .....

2. ---- entails the meaningful expression of axioms about God using human-related terms due to a common bond of being.

3. ----- is said to be named from the effects which He causes.

4. Thomas Aquinas famous proofs of God's existence is known as .....

5.Who takes an agnostic stance that saying anything about the divine or God is far from possible?

4.3 Summary
- Thomas Aquinas argued for the analogical interpretation of religious language, instead of the univocal and equivocal ones.
- Analogy of being and analogy of proportion constitute the basis of talking and thinking about the divine.
- Contrary to Aquinas' view, representation of God in religious language can turn out inadequate.

4.4 References/Further Reading

Aquinas, T. (1929). *Summa Contra Gentiles*. London: Burns, Oates & Washbourne.

Aquinas, T. (1920). "Question 1, Article 9" in *Summa Theologica,* Fathers of the   English Dominican Province (trans).

Concise Oxford English Dictionary 11e (London: Oxford University Press, 2004).

Ekwuru, E. G. (2010). *Basic Introductory Themes and Issues in Philosophical Anthropology*. Owerri: Living Flames Resources.

Marshall, Taylor. "Golden Key to Thomas Aquinas: Analogy"
      Available   at
Taylormarshall.com/2013/05/the-golden-key-to-thomas-aquinas-analogy.html
Accessed on October 31, 2017.

Okonkwo, J. I. (2012). *Okwu Danahu Onu: The Basic Principle of Igbo Philosophy of   Language*. Owerri: Imo State University Press.

Omoregbe, J. I.(1991). *A Simplified History of Western Philosophy: Contemporary Philosophy.* Lagos: Joja Educational Research and Publishers Ltd.

Webb, Keane. (1997). "Religious Language" in *Annual Review of Anthropology.(Vol.26).*

Webb, M. O. (2014). "The Cognitivity of Religious Language" in *A Comparative Doxastic-Practice Epistemology of Religious Experience*. Berlin: Springer.

Yandell, Keith. (2016). *Philosophy of Religion: A Contemporary Introduction*. New York: Routledge.

Zimmerman, J. A. "Thomas Aquinas' Doctrine of Analogy, A New Interpretation"Available at https://scholarship.rice.edu/handle/1911/89937Accessed on October 31, 2017.

4.5 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercise

Self-Assessment Exercise

1. Religious language

2. Analogy of Being

3. God

4. Cosmological argument or *Quinque Viae*,

5. Protagoras

MODULE 4:   RELIGIOUS CRISIS IN NIGERIA

UNIT 1:   UNDERSTANDING RELIGIOUS CRISIS IN NIGERIA

1.0 Introduction
2.0 Intended Learning Outcome
3.0 Main Contents
        3.1 Meaning of Religion
        3.2 Meaning of Religious Crisis
4.0 Summary
5.0 References/Further for Readings
6.0 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercise

1.0 Introduction

In this unit, an attempt is made to clarify the concepts used in this module, viz; religion and crisis. It takes a look at the meaning and origin of religious crisis. It presents and analyses the origin and meaning of religious, as well as the meaning of crisis. It gives an overview of the meaning of religious crisis in Nigeria.

2.0 Intending Learning Outcome

This unit will help the students to;

- i) Understand the meaning of religion
- ii) Understand the meaning of crisis
- iii) Discuss religious crisis in Nigeria

3.0 Main Contents

3.1 Meaning of Religion

Religious crisis is becoming the greatest menace to the modern society, a worrisome omen which has given the inhabitants of the society serious concerns. But why is there religious crisis? Why are various religious adherents prone to crisis? To attempt an answer to the above questions, it is important we travel down the road through the meaning of religion. Encyclopedia Britannica sees religion as "human beings' relation to that which they regard as holy, sacred, absolute, spiritual, divine, or worthy of special reverence" (n. pag.). In a literal sense, religion implies a worship or belief in a supernatural being. Every religion held God to be the centre of their worship. Many of the beliefs have to do with God, argue by Moore and Bruder. They x-ray religious beliefs to mean "that God exist, that he is good, that he created the universe and is the source of all that is real, that he is a personal deity, that he is a transcendent deity, etc" (2002: 341). It is in the belief in God's existence that the human existence is embedded. However, Jegede sees religion "as a social phenomenon, as such, it has played dominant role in the socio-political organisation of man throughout the course of history" (2019:54). Kasomo defines religion as a "system of beliefs and practises by which a group of people interpret and respond to what they feel is sacred and supernatural elsewhere" (2009: 125).

Molner (1988) defines Religion as a "system of beliefs and practices" by which a group of people interpret and respond to what they feel is sacred and supernatural elsewhere. Religion is sacred, but this sacredness is relative, in the sense that it is the people who give or identify the sacredness of something, that can be an object or a person. This is to say that, it is the people who make things or persons sacred. Religion can also be defined as unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things that unite people into one moral community called a Church".

Therefore, religion, according to Kasomo involves; - Faith (unquestionable belief) that cannot be proved from scientific point of view. - Symbols and particularly, symbolic actions. In the African Traditional Religions, religious practices demonstrated through rituals are very important, and so are practiced

or performed all the times (2009: 125). It is believed that humans are created by God to reflect his image. Upon creation, humans were given freewill which consequently justify the immortality of the soul. The existence of God also implies the possibility or reality of miracles and supernatural reality. Emile Durkheim, a social theorist, defines religion as a "unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things" (1915). In a related trend, Karl Marx sees religion as a social institution which includes beliefs and practices that serve the needs of society (1914).

There is an interaction between religion and the society within which it functions, Awolalu argued. According to him, "religion performs a variety of functions. The first is on the individual as it affects social behavior. The second is that religion interacts and influences the other facets or social institutions in the society, namely, Polity and economy. These institutions also influence the religious institutions, the effect of which affect in a fundamental way, a people's way of life" (1970:11). This view laid the ontological basis upon which religious crisis is predicated. Religious crisis therefore, is a disagreement among two groups of different religions that struggle against coexistence within themselves.

3.2 Meaning of Crisis

Crisis, on the other hand, is not essentially a defining property of religion. Crisis is argued to be vulgarly interpolated into religious practices. Crisis literally means a time of intense difficulty or chaos. It is an unstable condition of extreme difficulty or danger. The Cambridge dictionary sees crisis as a time of great disagreement, confusion, or suffering (n.pag.). In line with this definition, it makes sense to refer to crisis of confidence, political crisis, religious crisis, cultural crisis, development crisis, etc. Thus, religious crisis is seen as a tense disagreement that exist between or among different religions. This tense disagreement arises as a result of different systems of belief in the existence of God or in supernatural being, and varied methods of worshiping God. Religious crisis is endemic in Nigeria. Its reality has led to wanton destruction of lives and damages to relationships. National and international politics/relations have been dented by the sad reality of religious crisis.

Brecher contends that "crisis, conflict and war are intricately interrelate, both conceptually and empirically. All are characterized by mutual mistrust between adversaries, turmoil, tension and hostility" (1996: 8). Violence, though is usually a necessary method in the time of crisis and conflict, cannot be said to be an essential or common property of crisis and conflict. This means that there can be crisis or conflict without violence. Another important point Brecher pointed out is the difference between crisis and conflict. According to him, "every crisis reflects a state of conflict between two or more adversaries, but not every crisis becomes conflict" (1996: 10). He further argues that "the focus of a crisis is (usually) a single issue, a territorial dispute, economic boycott, alleged mistreatment of a minority group, threat to a political regime, and so forth" (ibid). The point of adumbration is that crisis leads to conflict and

conflict precipitate war. Since crisis is the first phase of deep rooted misunderstanding, intense danger or difficult moment, it necessarily transmutes to irreconcilable differences among people.

Crisis is analysed in four phases viz; onset, escalation, de-escalation, and impact. On onset/pre-crisis phase, Brecher observes that this phase "does not refer to any hostile interaction or threat perception, for conflict and stress are pervasive in the twentieth – and early twenty –first- century global system of fragmented authority and unequal distribution of power and resources. Rather, they are characterized by a change in the intensity of disruptive interaction between two or more states and of threat perception by one of them" (1996: 11). Pre-crisis phase is a phase of normalcy, a non-crisis phase. In this phase, there is no perceived animosity, danger or enmity. Onset phase of crisis is a period of perceived value threat. This phase is designated by outbreak of crisis, at though low level.

Escalation phase is the progression on the previous phase, an escalation of the low-level crisis at the onset stage. Brecher describes it as a phase;

> "characterised by a change from no-violence to violence as the primary technique of crisis management; that is, the entire crisis man be non-violent. However, if violence occurs in the onset phase, escalation will be indicated by a shift from a low-level to high-level violence, namely, from minor clashes to serious clashes or war between the adversaries. Whether or not accompanied by violence, the process of escalation usually leads to irreversibility in the sense of consequences for the adversaries, as well as for one or more elements of systemic change – in actors/regimes, power relations, alliance configuration, and rules of the game" (1996: 12).

Escalation only refers to an increase level of the reality in the onset phase. It also means that violence is not necessarily a definite characteristic of crisis, crisis situation could be characterized by non-violent activities.

De-escalation phase is the phase of winding down the crisis situation in the escalating phase. It signifies the end to crisis and restoration of normalcy. It indicates a phase of termination of a tense danger which include subsequently enthroned reintegration and accommodation of different party. Brecher opines that in this phase, "while the danger of crisis is getting out of hand, that is, escalating to war, has attracted much more attention from scholars and practitioners, the reduction of hostile, often violent, interactions to a non-crisis norm is a goal of many states, as well as regional and global organization" (1996: 12).

Impact phase is the last phase of crisis situation. Impact phase, described by Brecher, "designates the phase following crisis termination, that is, its

aftermath, the counterpart of post-crisis at the actor level of analysis" (1996: 12). The post-crisis phase is a chronological phase of crisis sequence.

Self-Assessment Exercise

1. ---- is a disagreement among two groups of different religions that struggle against coexistence within themselves?
2. For ---- crisis, conflict and war are intricately interrelate.
3. Religion, according to ...... involves; - Faith (unquestionable belief) that cannot be proved from scientific point of view.

4. What phase is designated by outbreak of crisis, at though low level?

5. What phase signifies the end to crisis and restoration of normalcy?

4.0 Summary

● Religious crisis is a great menace to the modern society and a worrisome omen that gives concern to the society.

● Religion implies a worship or belief in a supernatural being

● Crisis can be analysed into four phases viz; onset, escalation, de-escalation, and impact.

5.0 References/Further Reading

Awolalu, J. O. (1970). "The Yoruba Philosophy of Life|". In *Presence Africaine*.
Cambridge Business English Dictionary. Cambridge University Press.

Brecher, M. (1996). "Introduction: Crisis, Conflict, War – State of the Discipline International" *Political Science Review,* 17.2. pp..127-139

Jegede, P. O. (2019). "Implications of Religious Conflicts on Peace, National Security and Development in Nigeria" Ilorin *Journal of Religious Studies, (IJOURELS) 9.1*.p p.53-70.
Kasomo, D. (2009). "An Examination of Co-existence of Religion and Politics". *International Journal of Sociology and Anthropology* 1.7. pp. 124-131.

Molner, T. (1988). *Twin Powers: Politics and the Sacred*. Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing Company.
Moore, N. B. and Bruder, K. (2002). Philosophy: *The Power of Ideas* (5th edition). New York: McGraw-Hill Co., Inc.

Smith, D. (2004). *Religions and Social Change in the Third World*. London: University Press.

Taylor, B. J. (2002). *The World Conference Religion and Peace*. Geneva. St. Paul Publisher.

"Religion" *Encyclopeadia Britannica,* www.britannica.com retrieved on 20/6/21.

6.0 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercise

Self-Assessment Exercise

1. Religious crisis

2. Brecher

3. Kasomo

4. Onset Phase

5. De-escalation Phase.

UNIT 2: Brief History of Religious Crisis in Nigeria

 2.0   Introduction

The history of religious crisis in Nigeria is arguably dated back to the evolution of the Nigerian, state, with first religious crisis which of 1953. Since then, religious crisis has become pervasive in Nigeria. Since 1953, the political atmosphere in Nigeria has been sharpened by inter and intra religious bickering. We have seen coups and counter coups d'état organized on the basis of pre-existing religious tension. The coup of 1966 was perceived by Northern Muslims to have been staged by Southern Christians. This coup is argued to have claimed prominent northern Muslim politicians while the southern Christian politicians were left untouched. This perception prompted the counter coup of the same year staged largely by young northern military officers. This counter coup claimed the lives of southern politicians prominent among are the Head of State, Gen. Johnson Aguiyi-Ironsi and his host, Lt. Colonel Fajuyi Adekunle. This counter coup brought in Lt. Colonel Yakubu Gowon, a northerner, as Nigerian Head of State. The Nigerian civil war of 1967 is argued to have been provoked by these coup and counter coup.

Since the civil war, Nigerian has been plagued and deeply plunged into deep-rooted ethno-religious crisis. The prevailing mutual suspicious is built on this deep-rooted ethno-religious crisis.

Consequently, the regime of Gen. Ibrahim Babangida registered Nigeria with the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC). This move is reckoning to have "aggravated religious tensions in the country, particularly among the Christian community" (Holman, 1986: 8). This move saw the introduction of Sharia into Nigeria. Since 1999, when democracy was reintroduction to Nigeria, "Sharia was instituted as a main body of civil and criminal law in 9 Muslim-majority and in some parts of Muslim-plurality states, when then Zamfara State governor Ahmad Rufai Sani began to push for the institution of Sharia at the state level of government" (Jonah et al, 2014: 12). This push led to violent crisis in the northern part of the country. The methods of implementation and enforcement of the said Sharia law are argued to be inhuman and outright violation of human rights. The methods include flogging, stoning, amputation and even outright execution. The prevailing tension spreading through the social strata of Nigeria is perceived to be as a result of aggressive method of the implementation of the sharia law. The activities of Fulani Herdsmen and other Islamic non-state actors are suspected by the southerners to be part of the ploy to Islamize Nigeria.

2.1 Intended Learning Outcome

This unit will furnish the students with the understanding of

- The origin of religious crisis in Nigeria.
- The types of religions practiced in Nigeria.
- The various religious schools of thoughts.
- The various religious crisis in Nigeria.

2.2 Main Contents

2.2.1   Types of Religions and their Practices in Nigeria

Nigeria is a multi-ethnic and multi-religions country. Among numerous religious practiced in Nigeria, African Traditional Religion, Christianity and Islam hold dominance.

i) **African Traditional Religion (ATR)**: This religion is indigenous to Africa. Without a precise document, it is believed that the accounts of its origin are lost in antiquity (Antiquity 327). Although, it has no founder, it is a religion tied to the cultural heritage of the indigenous African people.

ii) **Islam:** This is a religion founded about 7th century by Mohammed. Islam was introduced into Nigeria about 10th century through Kanem-Borno, and eventually got to Hausa land about 11th century, which united the Hausa people and states under the sharia law. Islam was founded by Prophet Mohammed in Mecca and Medina in modern day Saudi Arabia. Islam is a monotheistic religion which anchored its practices on the Holy Koran. Two visions of Islam –Shia and Sunni. Pruitt observed that "though the two main sects within Islam, Sunni Shia, agree on most of the fundamental beliefs and practices of Islam, a bitter split between the two goes back some 14 centuries. The divide originated with a dispute over who should succeed the Prophet Muhammad as leader of the Islamic faith he introduced" (n.pag.). The modern-day Islam is structured to exist along this divide.

iii) **Christianity:** This is the world largest religion founded by Jesus Christ from Nazareth, in present day Israel. Christianity was first introduced into Nigeria through the ancient kingdom of Benin. However, it did not spread until the 19th century through the efforts of aggressive evangelism by group of missionaries. The tenets of Christianity are hinged on the teachings of Christ found in the "Holy Bible". Christianity has different denominations such as Catholicism, Anglicanism, Lutheranism, Baptist, Protestants etc. Christianity remains the most widely practice religion in the world with over two billion followers estimated. The thrust of the Christian faith is centred on the birth, life, death and the resurrection of Jesus. The Christian faith is also hinged on their belief in Godhead consists in the trinity – God the Father, God the son (Jesus Christ) and God the Holy Spirit.

2.2.2   The Origin of Religion

The origin of religion is as old as the origin of human existence. There is no specific account for the origin of religion. However, religion's origin can be discussed under some school of thoughts or theory.

I) **The Psychological Theory**: psychological theory of religion can be gleaning from Sigmund Freud discourse on the totemic relationship between father and son. The conception of religion viz-a- viz the existence of supernatural being is like a father figure. In this view, the origin of religion is predicated on the helplessness and frustration of man in the face of intense obstacles and his attempt to find an escape route outside himself to overcome this predicament. The solution is found in the father figure i.e., God.

II) **The Rationalist Theory:** The rationalist theory of religion's origin is enunciated by Euchemerus in 280BC. The thrust of this theory is that religion originated as a result of the deification of worship of ancestors, heroes, and benefactors.

III) **Revelation:** Religious scholars believed that religion originates from revelation. Revelation simply means the communication of knowledge to man by a divine or supernatural agency. The quest to know that which is hidden prompt man to seek divine engagement.

IV) **Sociological Theory:** This school of thought focuses its belief on religion be a sociological tool which is aim at checkmating man's proclivity to violence in response to governmental oppression. Karl Marx is the father of this school of thought. For him, religion is a social invention to keep man in check. Moral codes of behaviour were invented to keep man under perpetual subjugation.

Self-Assessment Exercise 1

1. Among numerous religious practiced in Nigeria, African Traditional Religion, Christianity and Islam do not hold dominance. True or False?

2. Which religion is tied to the cultural heritage of the indigenous African people?

3. ---- simply means the communication of knowledge to man by a divine or supernatural agency

2.2.3   Religious Crisis in Nigeria

Inter and intra religious crisis in Nigeria have posed a grave danger to the survival of Nigeria. As a multi-religious country that is predominantly divided into two great hostile religious lines of Islam and Christianity, religious unrest appears to be one of the commonest features of religious practices and activities in Nigeria. Christianity and Islam have, through their activities, portrayed themselves as monolithic entities in constant and perpetual battles. Nigerian citizens have suffered marginalization and discrimination in the name of religion one professes or not. Though, Nigeria as a secular state does not

have a state religion, after 13 years of military regime, President Olusegun Obasanjo set up a Constitutional Drafting Committee that will draft the necessary constitution to pave the way for Second Republic in 1979, and then a divisive and contentious issue arose. A debate on whether Islamic Law (Sharia) should be included both at the state and federal level divided the committee and threw the nation into national confusion. The acceptance of Sharia law would mean the recognition of Islamic religion as a state religion along with its established federal and state Sharia courts, an idea the southerners found ridiculous and unacceptable. The committee was thus factionalized and the first step for compromise was reached for the establishment of a federal sharia court of appeal which was blatantly rejected by the southern committee members. Another compromise for the establishment of state sharia court of appeal was proposed and accepted by both parties. The implication of this acceptance is that states who deem it necessary to establish sharia court could do so irrespective of the metaphysical differences of the inhabitants of the state. Consequently, the acceptance and practice of sharia resulted to violent religious crisis particularly in the northern part of the country. Hence, this sharia law is argued to be the bane of religious crisis in Nigeria.

Self-Assessment Exercise 2

---

1. Inter and intra religious crisis in Nigeria have posed a grave danger to the survival of Nigeria. True or False?

2. ----- law is argued to be the bane of religious crisis in Nigeria.

3. Christianity and Islam have, through their activities, portrayed themselves as monolithic entities in constant and perpetual battles. True or False?

2.3 Summary

- In Nigeria African Traditional Religion, Christianity and Islam are dominant religions that are practiced.

- Origin of religion is better explained through these schools of thought viz revelation, sociological, psychological and rationalist theory.

- Inter and intra religious crisis in Nigeria have posed a grave danger to the survival of Nigeria

2.4 References/Further Reading

Holman, M. (1986). Nigeria, Politics; Religious Differences. Financial Times. Accessed   29th July, 2021.

Jonah, A. and Igboeroteonwu, A. (2014). Nigerian Sharia Architect Defends Law. Accessed 29th July, 2021.

Kukah, M.H. (2002). Religion, Good Governance and the Politics of Communal Conflicts: An   Assessment.
Manus, U.K. (1992). Religious Values, Social Justice and Peace in the Nigerian Context. in Olupona, J.K.

Nnoli, O. (2003), (ed) *Communal Conflict and Population Displacement in Nigeria: A Research Report.* Enugu: Snaap Press Ltd.
Nwabudike, K. and Osewe, A.E. (2006). Ahmadu Bello University (ABU) Boils Again. *Olive Branch*. Vol. 1.20.
Obafemi, O. (2006), "Religion at the Grave-yard of the People". *Daily Sun*. March 30.
Otite, O. and Olawale, I.A, (eds) (1999). *Communal Conflicts in Nigeria: Management, Resolution and Transformation*. Ibadan: Spectrum Books Ltd.

2.5 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercise

Self-Assessment Exercise 1

1. False

2. African Traditional Religion.

3. Revelation

Self-Assessment Exercise 2

1. True

2. Sharia

3. True

UNIT 3:   CAUSES AND EFFECTS OF RELIGIOUS CRISIS

6.0 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercise

1.0 **Introduction**

Religious crisis is currently engulfing the Nigerian state, sweeping across the social stratum of the Nigerian society and afflicting all it touches. The activities of the Fulani Headsmen, the several terrorist attacks orchestrated by Boko Haram and the Islamic State of West Africa are pointing to the direction of suspicious plans to turn Nigeria into a one religious state. Their activities are manifested through the incessant killings, kidnappings, raping, arsons and other dangerous activities. While it is evident that religion is a means of uniting the human race, the practice of it has always insinuated violent crisis. It has also been deployed as a powerful tool for the acquisition and wilding of power. Behind every crisis there is a cause. So religious crisis in Nigeria is not different, some factors are argued to be responsible for religious crisis in Nigeria.

However, while acknowledging the fact that religious practices have in one way or the other contributed to the spiritual deification of the country and the building of morals and ethical values, it has nevertheless posed a great challenge and exposed the inability of the Nigerian elites to manage the metaphysical differences of the people. The intra-religious and inter-religious disturbances that have ravaged Nigeria left a deep sense of horror and feelings of 'religious cannibalism' in the minds of the people. The Maitatsine riot which broke out in Kano State and Borno State in 1980 and 1982 respectively, spread through Kaduna State and Sabon-Gari area of Kano State. In 1984, the same Maitatsine riot broke out in Gongola State, now Yobe State and extended to Gombe State. In 1987, it was the turn of Kafanchan, Zaria and some part of Katsina State to receive its fair share from inter-religious violence. This was closely followed by the inter-religious war in Bauchi state in 1991, the Reinhard Bonnke riot in Kano State in 1991, and religious attacks on Maitatsine sect at Abule-Taylor near Lagos State in 1998. Many lives were reportedly lost and properties worth millions of naira destroyed. This has left an indelible and fundamental question to be answered as regards to what constitute the object of true religion.

2.0 **Intended Learning Outcome**

At the end of this unit, the students are expected to understand the following;

- The dynamism of religious crisis in Nigeria
- Different causes of violent religious conflict in Nigeria
- How religion is manipulated to further the interest of man

3.0 **Main Content**

3.1 **The Structure of the Nigerian State**

The way and manner the Nigerian state is structured is unarguably the bane of diverse violent crisis in Nigeria. Kwaja argued "that the fragile nature of the institutions of the state in terms of their ability and capacity to manage multi-diversity, corruption, the increasing divide between the poor and the rich, gross violation of human rights, environmental degeneration, contestations over land, among others, as the underlying causes of violent religious conflicts in Nigeria since the enthronement of democratic rule in 1999" (2001: 107). The above quote summarizes the causes of religious crisis in Nigeria. Politicians occupying political offices have been largely accused of manipulating the people with the aim of maintaining political dominance over their political opponents.

Takaya, in what he considered as a most fundamental political import of religion, observed that "Religions are parochial and emotional socialisers. They specialise in building one-faith exclusive brotherhood communities; Religion, at some point, is politics and is the most potent and long lasting political association. Moreover, religious creeds excite and extract the deepest possible emotional and physical loyalties from their adherents when in political competition with people of other faiths" (2001: 10*)*. In more concrete terms, religious crisis in Nigeria is said to insinuate politics. The weaponization of hunger through high rates of unemployment necessarily made the unemployed youths vulnerable for, and surplus to recruitment by the politicians. This is because disempowered people are easy to rule and manipulate. Widespread poverty is a reflection of the structure of the society. A poorly structured society would be notorious in breeding poverty. This leads to an increase army of unemployed youths who are most ready to do anything to earn a living for themselves.

3.2 Religious Language
Another cause of religious crisis is argued to be the inappropriate or vulgar use of religious languages by various religious leaders. Religious leaders prey on their followers' ignorance and religiously manipulate them through either inflammatory words or misinterpretation of the holy books. Religious language refers to claims or statements made about God. These statements or claims are either drawn from revelations, visions or introspections. Most of the interpretations are argued to contain some level of ambiguities. Hence, the problem of "ambiguity in meaning with respect to the terms predicated of God is the problem of religious language or the problem of naming God. These predications could include divine attributes, properties, or actions" (Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy n.pag.).
The problem of religious language is more inherent and extremely worrisome among the practitioners of Islam and Christianity (popularly known as Abrahamic Religions). This is because the tradition of written texts, oral teachings and commentary tradition are specially interpretation to the congregation to convey God's instructions/injunctions.

3.3 Literacy Factor

The problem of religious language is closely tied to the educational levels of the people. One of the reasons why religious crisis in Nigeria persist is because of lack of or low levels of education. It is on record that Nigeria has one of the highest numbers of out of school children. These out of school children grow into the society constituting nuisance to the society at large. The reality of touting, and the prevailing effect of Al-Majiri system provide deep insight and rational explanatory model of the persisting religious crisis in Nigeria. Since education is a holistic way of life, "the child or young adult develops the aggregate of all the processes, abilities, and attitudes and other forms of behaviour which are of positive value to the society in which he lives" (Fafunwa, 1974: 73). Any attempt to alter the form of education that inculcate the above outlined aggregate values constitute an affront, ultimate disruption on the child's development.

More so, the literacy levels of the religious clerics is of fundamental importance in religious crisis discourse. Alhaji Aminu Kano saw the Koranic teachers as "only good in impeding the intellectual and physical growth of the pupils, instead of educating them to recognise their nature and help them adjust, the Koranic teacher appears to be a menace in children's world and in the educational field; for not only is he hopelessly ignorant of these modern conceptions but is not ready to accept them" (Adamu, 1986). The Nigerian approach to religious education appears to be extremely hypocritical and half-hearted. Clerics place less value on university education as a requirement to confer adequate ability for effective and accurate transmission of knowledge. Therefore, illiteracy has provided enough motivation for misinterpretation, manipulation, and application.

Self-Assessment Exercise 1

1. The way and manner the Nigerian state is structured is not the bane of diverse violent crisis in Nigeria. True or False?

2. Religious crisis is caused by the inappropriate or vulgar use of religious languages by various religious leaders. True or False?

3. Literacy level among the people of Nigeria is one the factor responsible for religious crisis. True or False?

3.3 Economic Factor

Religious crisis has occasioned untold devastating effects that can be imagined. The wanton loss of lives and destruction of property pose serious economic threat to the society. Economic activities are seriously affected as both human and vehicular movement are distorted. More so, a percentage of the population is displaced. In this sense, many are rendered homeless and turned destitute, the energy to create is lost or under-utilized as a result of this religious existential

reality. Religious crisis fosters unemployment, underdevelopment and the distortion of national cohesion.

Religious adherents who are economically strangulated and materialistically disempowered are prone to religious incitement.

3.4 Dominance Factor

The quest for dominance is another important factor that causes religious crisis. This quest for dominance is very fundamental in the formation of attitudes across the length and breadth of Northern and Southern Nigeria. It is along this trajectory that political and social activities are organized to be inherently discriminatory and oppressive. There are four reasons that ignite the religious bigotry prevalent in Nigeria. These reasons are outline by Gofwen as follows:

(i)   The differing political philosophy of the major religions in Nigeria, Islam and Christianity.
(ii) The mutual suspicions and fear of domination between the two religions.
(iii) Mutual ignorance of the beliefs and teachings of each other's religion and sometimes even of one's own faith.
(iv) Provocative acts of pronouncements which hurt the religious sensibilities of people of other faiths, whether they are intended or inadvertent" (2004: 74).

The quest to dominate and the fear of being dominated has also contributed to the existing religious crisis in Nigeria.

Self-Assessment Exercise 2

---

1. Religious adherents who are economically strangulated and materialistically disempowered are prone to religious incitement. True or False?
2. ------ factor makes political and social activities to be inherently discriminatory and oppressive.
3. Who outlined the four reasons that ignite the religious bigotry prevalent in Nigeria?

4.0 Summary

● The structure of Nigeria is the bane of diverse violent crisis in the country.

● Different causes of religious conflict in Nigeria also include religious language, economic, literacy, and dominance factors.

● Religion is manipulated for selfish interest.

5.0 References/Further Study

Adamu, H.A. (1986). The North and Nigerian Unity. Daily Times, Nigeria

Fafumwa, A.B. (1974), History of Education in Nigeria, London: George Allen and Unwin.

Gofwen, R.I. (2004). *Religious Conflicts in Northern Nigeria and Nation Building: the throes of two decades 1980-2000.* Kaduna: Human Rights Monitor.

Kwaja, C.M. A. (2009). "Strategies for Building State Capacity to Manage Ethnic and Religious Conflicts in Nigeria." *Journal ofPan African Studies*, 3,3. pp. 105- 115.

Takaya, B. J. *Religion, Politics and Peace: Resolving the Nigerian Dilemma.* In Olupona, J. K. (ed.) *Religion, Peace and Multi-faith Nigeria.* Ile-Ife: O. A. U. Press, 1992. 109-123.

"Religious Language" *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy,* https//iep.utm.edu. Retrieved on   23/6/21.

6.0 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercise

Self-Assessment Exercise 1

1. False

2. True

3. True

Self-Assessment Exercise 2

1. True

2. Dominance factor

3. Gofwen

UNIT 4: CONSEQUENCES OF RELIGIOUS CRISIS AND THE WAY FORWARD

4.0   Introduction
4.1   Intended Learning Outcome
4.2 Main Contents
4.2.1   Consequences
4.2.2 Way Forward

4.3 Summary
4.4   References/Further Study
4.5   Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercise

3.0 Introduction

Religious crisis is most prevalent in Nigeria. From the evolution of the Nigerian state, ethno-religious crisis has been a recurring experience of the Nigerian society. A day hardly passes without a report of religious crisis from religious adherents. In this part of the world, religious adherents willingly kill for God. They view killings in the name of religion as one of the religious rituals. The relationship between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria has reached a crisis level marked with utmost distrust and mutual suspicious. The bombings, and the burning of churches in the northern part of the country (largely dominated by Muslim adherents) that is now a matter of daily occurrence, and the fear of reprisal attacks in the southern part of the country (mostly dominated by Christian adherents) have reached a crescendo of religious nihilism.

4.1 Intended Learning Outcome

At the end of this unit, the students are expected to understand the following;

- The consequences of religious crisis
- The way forward out of religious crisis
- The benefit of true religion

4.2 Main Contents
4.2.1 Consequences of Religious Crisis

The consequences of religious crisis directly underpin the process of nation building. This is perhaps reflected in Aguwa's lamentation that "at the very start of nationhood, Nigeria, like many other African countries faced ethnic, regional, and religious division. Almost routinely, the divisions have been played up, manipulated or mobilised for political reasons. The consequences are incessant conflicts which undermine the process of nation building" (1997: 335). More so, the same religion adherents have often engaged in cutthroat competitions. These competitions have often led to violent crisis. Hence, there exist in Nigeria inter-religious and intra-religious crisis.

Nwaomah, in commenting on the effect of religious crisis, argued that "The resultant effects of religious conflicts in Nigeria are enormous. It pervades all the sectors of the economy. Generally, conflicts breed insecurity, discrimination, mutual distrust and slow economic and educational development. This is the case in Nigeria where in addition to the gratuitous killings and maiming of thousands of persons, properties worth billions of naira have been destroyed. Certainly, these huge losses have deprived the nation of needed manpower and services for the growth of its wobbling economy" (2001: 101). The economic effect of religious crisis is further adumbrated by

Nwaomah. Religious crisis according to him, have left its effect on investment options in the crisis ridden areas.

Another effect religious crisis has on the immediate society is political instability. "The political instability, arising from the insecurity and uncertainty that pervades the region, does not inspire the confidence of foreign investors and thereby deprives the nation of the economic gains. In some instances, the enterprising Southerners who had established thriving businesses in the troubled areas in the North have relocated to other and safer places" (Nwaomah, 2001: 101-102). Pervasive insecurity affects economic activities as the inhabitants of the affected areas are internally displaced. As a result of this contradiction, internal refugees are created. Nothing can better illustrate this than the near-death of economic activities in the north eastern Nigeria as a result of Boko Haram activities, and the dwindling agricultural changes in the middle belt of Nigeria as a result of the activities of herdsmen. With respect to policy making process and its print on inter-religious crisis, Ezeibe argued vehemently that;

> Policies are carried by emotional sentiments rooted in ethnicity or religion, politics in Nigeria is characterised by religious cleavages. The education religious and political elites (class) prey upon the masses and use them as satellite to achieve their socio-political and economic objectives. This is done through orientation, indoctrination or violence using the masses on the already conceived stereotypes against their political and religious opponents. Right from formation of political parties to campaign processes and voting patterns, all tend towards religious affiliations and tribalism. As a result, politics in Nigeria is associated with violence and lack of accommodation. Thus, religious conflicts have chartered the routine of political process in Nigeria (2009: 128-129).

Furthermore, the enormity of religious crisis underscores society's instability. Religious crisis negatively affects the peaceful relationship that exists among the people. Thus, Nwaomah argued that "religious conflicts in Nigeria have left in its trail a broken society: communities that hitherto co-existed peacefully now treat each other with mistrust and latent or open aggression. Consequently, settlement patterns begin to follow the boundaries of religion in these areas so that adherents can be swiftly mobilized in the event of future riots. The disrupted social harmony is sometimes felt in places far from the crisis scene and thus account for the reprisal riots in other parts of Nigeria" (2001: 102). Ezeibe, while bemoaning the economic consequences of inter-religious crisis, recounted that "since 1960 so many people have lost their lives to religious conflicts, properties worth billions destroyed, trade stifled and banks closed down in Nigeria" (2009: 127). He revealed that "the powerful religious elites use religion to achieve their economic safety and resort to conflict by appealing to religious sentiments when it suits them. So, they seek religions sentiment in order to deceive the public" (ibid). This shows how the manipulative

tendencies of the political elites have further deepened inter-religious and intra-religious crisis in Nigeria.

4.2.2 Way Forward

Intractable crisis such as religious crisis often defy solution. It is not the case that religious crisis is completely irresolvable, but those that profit from religious crisis would do everything to maintain the status quo. To this end, Ezeibe observed that "these conflicts are sustained largely because they serve the economic interest of certain religious leaders who conceal the economic matrix behind their support for fanatic religious values. Behind these seeming passion and love for religious values and dogma shown by religious leaders lies the domination of religious values by religious leader's selfish economic benefits (2009: 129).

Since most of the protracted religious crisis is politically motivated, it can be reasoned that the most pragmatic way out of the quagmire could insinuate political solution. Illiteracy is one of the causes of religious crisis, to this end, the government must demonstrate the willingness to improving education system and creating religious awareness. A literate mass of people cannot easily be swayed with uncouth religious doctrine. A pragmatic system of education has the capacity of freeing the mind from narrow and limited perception of truth, arbitrary decision-making process and unguided execution of programme of action. Unfettered education system imbues the mind with deductive power which enables man to escape from the prejudice of a blind routine, community systemic nihilism and religious acrobatic dogmatism. This is probably what Worsely had in mind when he defines education as knowledge "as a systematic cultivation of the mind and other natural powers of the mind and other natural powers on the acquisition of the knowledge and skill through training and instruction" (1975: 71).

The government has a responsibility of creating a conducive atmosphere for religions to coexist peacefully. This can be done through the establishment of special organs or agencies to specifically regulate the conduct of different religious bodies, and to enforce religious tolerance among different religious adherents. The government must also be strong willed in winding the big stick against religious crisis promoters. Clerics who are unrefined, uneducated and thus facilitate inter-religious and intra-religious crisis should be encouraged to embrace education and free himself from deep rooted ignorance.   The overall responsibility of the government with respect to religious crisis management and transformation is formulating and promoting policies that will eliminate religious discrimination and intolerance, and encourage religious co-existence, tolerance, and religious freedom.   Ushe, thus argued that "religious discrimination refers specifically to limitations on the religious practices or religious institutions of religious minorities which are not placed on the majority religion. Religious freedom is an even more ambiguous term. Violations of religious freedom can include all of the various interpretations of religious discrimination discussed above. It can also include any restriction on religious practices or institutions that are placed on everyone in a state. It can

also include when a state enforces aspects of the majority religion's doctrine as state law" (2015: 121). Culture of toleration must be emphasized through administrative regulations.

Self-Assessment Exercise

1. For ---- at the very start of nationhood, Nigeria, like many other African countries faced ethnic, regional, and religious division.
2. One of the effect religious crisis has on the immediate society is political instability. True or False?
3. Who revealed that "the powerful religious elites use religion to achieve their economic safety?
4. The government must improve the education system and creating religious awareness to solve the problem of ----
5. Culture of toleration should be emphasized to enhance religious harmony. True or False?

4.3 Summary

- Ethno-religious crisis has been a recurring experience of the Nigerian citizens.

- Religious Crisis brings about insecurity, discrimination, mutual distrust and slow economic and educational development.

- Culture of toleration should be emphasized to enhance religious harmony.

4.4 References/Further Readings

Aguwa, J. C. (1997). Religious Conflict in Nigeria: Impact on Nation Building. Dialectical Anthropology 22, p. 335-351.

Ezeibe, C. C. (2009). Inter-Religious Conflicts and Crisis of Development in Nigeria: Who Benefits? *International Journal of Research in Arts and Social Sciences* Vol. 1.pp. 112- 132.

Merton T (1968). Faith and Violence: Christian Teaching and Practice, Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame.

Molner T (1988). Twin Powers: Politics and the Sacred. Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing Company.

Northrup, T.A (1989). "Dynamics of Identity" in Krisberg, L. et al (1989) (eds.) *Intractable Conflict and Their Transformations.* Syracuse: University Press.

Nwaomah, Sampson M. (2011). "Religious Crises in Nigeria: Manifestation, Effect and the Way Farward" *Journal of Sociology, Psychology and Anthropology in Practice*. Vol 3, No. 2, pp. 94 -104.

Okanya, D.C. (1995). "Religion and Violence in Nigeria: The Maitatsine Rebellion Explained; in D. Okanya (ed) *Great Issues in Governmentand Politics.* Enugu: Marydam Printing Company.

Ushe, Mike Ushe. (2015). "Religious Conflicts and Education in Nigeria: Implications for National Security". Journal of Education and Practice. Vol. 6, no 2, pp. 117-128.

Worsely, P. (1975), Third World, London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson.

4.6 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercise

Self-Assessment Exercise
1. Aguwa
2. True
3. Ezeibe.
4. Illiteracy.
5. True

Module 5: Theories of Religion

Unit 1: Sociological Theory

1.0   Introduction

2.0   Intended Learning Outcomes

3.0   Main Contents

4.0   Summary

5.0   References/Further Reading

1.0   Introduction

This unit attempts to define religion and shed more light on how society influences religion and vice versa. In addition to this, it takes a look at different scholarly opinions on the Sociology of Religion. It also attempts to account for historical precedents that gave birth to the investigation of religion as a sociological phenomenon.

2.0   Intended Learning Outcomes

This unit will help students:

- To understand the relationship between Sociology and Religion.
- Differentiate between the schools of thought of Weber, Durkheim and Marx.
- Better understand the Marxist theory of Religion.

3.0   Main Contents

3.1   What is Religion?

To a lay man, religion can be said to be the beliefs, practices, and values related to sacred or spiritual concerns. According to dictionary.com, Religion is a set of beliefs concerning the cause, nature, and purpose of the universe, especially when considered as the creation of a superhuman agency or agencies, usually involving devotional and ritual observances, and often containing a moral code governing the conduct of human affairs. Social theorist Émile Durkheim defined religion as a "unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things". Max Weber on the other hand, believed religion could be a force for social change. Karl Marx viewed religion as a tool used by capitalist societies to perpetuate inequality.

For the sociologists, religion is a social institution, because it includes beliefs and practices that serve the needs of society. Religion is also an example of a cultural universal, because it is found in all societies in one form or another. Functionalism, conflict theory, and interactionism all provide valuable ways for sociologists to understand religion.

Sociological perspectives on religion aim to understand the functions religion serves, the inequality and other problems it can reinforce and perpetuate, and the role it plays in our daily lives (Emerson, Monahan, & Mirola, 2011)

3.2 The Sociology of Religion

This is the study of the beliefs, practices and organizational forms of religion using the tools and methods of the discipline of sociology. This objective investigation may include the use both of quantitative

methods (surveys, polls, demographic and census analysis) and of qualitative approaches (such as participant observation, interviewing, and analysis of archival, historical and documentary materials).

Modern sociology as an academic discipline began with the analysis of religion in Émile Durkheim's 1897 study of suicide rates among Catholic and Protestant populations, a foundational work of social research which served to distinguish sociology from other disciplines, such as psychology. The works of Karl Marx (1818-1883) and Max Weber (1864-1920) emphasized the relationship between religion and the economic or social structure of society.

Contemporary debates have centred on issues such as secularization, civil religion, and the cohesiveness of religion in the context of globalization and multiculturalism. Contemporary sociology of religion may also encompass the sociology of irreligion (for instance, in the analysis of secular-humanist belief systems). The sociology of religion is distinguished from the philosophy of religion in that it does not set out to assess the validity of religious beliefs. The process of comparing multiple conflicting dogmas may require what Peter L. Berger has described as inherent "methodological atheism". Whereas the sociology of religion broadly differs from theology in assuming indifference to the supernatural, theorists tend to acknowledge socio-cultural reification of religious practice.

3.3   The History of Religion as a Sociological concept

In the wake of nineteenth century European industrialization and secularization, three social theorists attempted to examine the relationship between religion and society: Émile Durkheim, Max Weber, and Karl Marx. They are among the founding thinkers of modern sociology.

As stated earlier, French sociologist Émile Durkheim (1858–1917) defined religion as a "unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things" (1915). To him, sacred meant extraordinary—something that inspired wonder and that seemed connected to the concept of "the divine." Durkheim argued that "religion happens" in society when there is a separation between the profane (ordinary life) and the sacred (1915). A rock, for example, isn't sacred or profane as it exists. But if someone makes it into a headstone, or another person uses it for landscaping, it takes on different meanings—one sacred, one profane.

Durkheim is generally considered the first sociologist who analysed religion in terms of its societal impact. Above all, he believed religion is about community: It binds people together (social cohesion), promotes behaviour consistency (social control), and offers strength during life's transitions and tragedies (meaning and purpose). By applying the methods of natural science to the study of society, Durkheim held that the source of religion and morality is the collective mind-set of society and that the cohesive bonds of social order result

from common values in a society. He contended that these values need to be maintained to maintain social stability.

But what would happen if religion were to decline? This question led Durkheim to posit that religion is not just a social creation but something that represents the power of society: When people celebrate sacred things, they celebrate the power of their society. By this reasoning, even if traditional religion disappeared, society wouldn't necessarily dissolve.

Whereas Durkheim saw religion as a source of social stability, German sociologist and political economist Max Weber (1864–1920) believed it was a precipitator of social change. He examined the effects of religion on economic activities and noticed that heavily Protestant societies—such as those in the Netherlands, England, Scotland, and Germany—were the most highly developed capitalist societies and that their most successful business leaders were Protestant. In his writing *The Protestant Work Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1905), he contends that the Protestant work ethic influenced the development of capitalism. Weber noted that certain kinds of Protestantism supported the pursuit of material gain by motivating believers to work hard, be successful, and not spend their profits on frivolous things. (The modern use of "work ethic" comes directly from Weber's Protestant ethic, although it has now lost its religious connotations)

German philosopher, journalist, and revolutionary socialist Karl Marx (1818–1883) also studied the social impact of religion. He believed religion reflects the social stratification of society and that it maintains inequality and perpetuates the status quo. For him, religion was just an extension of working-class (proletariat) economic suffering. He famously argued that religion "is the opium of the people" (1844).

For Durkheim, Weber, and Marx, who were reacting to the great social and economic upheaval of the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century in Europe, religion was an integral part of society. For Durkheim, religion was a force for cohesion that helped bind the members of society to the group, while Weber believed religion could be understood as something separate from society. Marx considered religion inseparable from the economy and the worker. Religion could not be understood apart from the capitalist society that perpetuated inequality. Despite their different views, these social theorists all believed in the centrality of religion to society.

3.4   Durkheim and Functionalism
Emile Durkheim, the founder of functionalism, spent much of his academic career studying religions, especially those of small societies. The totetism, or primitive kinship system of Australian aborigines as an "elementary" form of religion, primarily interested him. This research formed the basis of

Durkheim's 1921 book, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, which is certainly the best-known study on the sociology of religion. Durkheim viewed religion within the context of the entire society and acknowledged its place in influencing the thinking and behaviour of the members of society.

Durkheim found that people tend to separate religious symbols, objects, and rituals, which are sacred, from the daily symbols, objects, and routines of existence referred to as the profane. Sacred objects are often believed to have divine properties that separate them from profane objects. Even in more-advanced cultures, people still view sacred objects with a sense of reverence and awe, even if they do not believe that the objects have some special power.

Durkheim also argued that religion never concerns only belief, but also encompasses regular rituals and ceremonies on the part of a group of believers, who then develop and strengthen a sense of group solidarity. Rituals are necessary to bind together the members of a religious group, and they allow individuals to escape from the mundane aspects of daily life into higher realms of experience. Sacred rituals and ceremonies are especially important for marking occasions such as births, marriages, times of crisis, and deaths.

Durkheim's theory of religion exemplifies how functionalists examine sociological phenomena. According to Durkheim, people see religion as contributing to the health and continuation of society in general. Thus, religion functions to bind society's members by prompting them to affirm their common values and beliefs on a regular basis.

Durkheim predicted that religion's influence would decrease as society modernizes. He believed that scientific thinking would likely replace religious thinking, with people giving only minimal attention to rituals and ceremonies. He also considered the concept of "God" to be on the verge of extinction. Instead, he envisioned society as promoting **civil religion**, in which, for example, civic celebrations, parades, and patriotism take the place of church services. If traditional religion were to continue, however, he believed it would do so only as a means to preserve social cohesion and order.

3.5   Weber and Social Change

Durkheim claimed that his theory applied to religion in general, yet he based his conclusions on a limited set of examples. Max Weber, on the other hand, initiated a large-scale study of religions around the globe. His principal interest was in large, global religions with millions of believers. He conducted in-depth studies of Ancient Judaism, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Taoism. In *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1904/1958), Weber examined the impact of Christianity on Western thinking and culture.

The fundamental purpose of Weber's research was to discover religion's impact on social change. For example, in Protestantism, especially the "Protestant Work Ethic," Weber saw the roots of capitalism. In the Eastern religions, Weber saw barriers to capitalism. For example, Hinduism stresses attaining higher levels of spirituality by escaping from the toils of the mundane physical world. Such a perspective does not easily lend itself to making and spending money.

To Weber, Christianity was a *salvation religion* that claims people can be "saved" when they convert to certain beliefs and moral codes. In Christianity, the idea of "sin" and its atonement by God's grace plays a fundamental role. Unlike the Eastern religions' passive approach, salvation religions like Christianity are active, demanding continuous struggles against sin and the negative aspects of society.

Self-Assessment Exercise 1

---

1. Who viewed religion as a tool used by capitalist societies to perpetuate inequality?

2. According to .... people see religion as contributing to the health and continuation of society in general.

3. For ..... Christianity was a *salvation religion* that claims people can be "saved" when they convert to certain beliefs and moral codes.

3.6   Marxist Theory of Religion

According to Karl Marx, religion is like other social institutions in that it is dependent upon the material and economic realities in a given society. It has no independent history; instead, it is the creature of productive forces. As Marx wrote, "The religious world is but the reflex of the real world."

According to Marx, religion can only be understood in relation to other social systems and the economic structures of society. In fact, religion is only dependent upon economics, nothing else—so much so that the actual religious doctrines are almost irrelevant. This is a functionalist interpretation of religion: understanding religion is dependent upon what social purpose religion itself serves, not the content of its beliefs.

Marx's opinion was that religion is an illusion that provides reasons and an excuse to keep society functioning just as it is. Much as capitalism takes our productive labour and alienates us from its value, religion takes our highest ideals and aspirations and alienates us from them, projecting them onto an alien and unknowable being called a god.

Marx has three reasons for disliking religion.

- First, it is irrational: Religion is a delusion and worship of appearances that avoids recognizing underlying reality.
- Second, religion negates all that is dignified in a human being by rendering them servile and more amenable to accepting the status quo. In the preface to his doctoral dissertation, Marx adopted as his motto the words of the Greek hero Prometheus who defied the gods to bring fire to humanity: "I hate all gods," with the addition that they "do not recognize man's self-consciousness as the highest divinity."
- Third, religion is hypocritical. Although it might profess valuable principles, it sides with the oppressors. Jesus advocated helping the poor, but the Christian church merged with the oppressive Roman state, taking part in the enslavement of people for centuries. In the middle Ages, the Catholic Church preached about heaven but acquired as much property and power as possible.

Martin Luther preached the ability of each individual to interpret the Bible but sided with aristocratic rulers and against peasants who fought against economic and social oppression. According to Marx, this new form of Christianity, Protestantism, was a production of new economic forces as early capitalism developed. New economic realities required a new religious superstructure by which it could be justified and defended.

3.7   Marxist Social-Conflict Approach

The social-conflict approach is rooted in Karl Marx's critique of capitalism. According to Marx, in a capitalist society, religion plays a critical role in maintaining an unequal status quo, in which certain groups of people have radically more resources and power than other groups of people. Marx argued that the bourgeoise used religion as a tool to keep the less powerful proletariat pacified. Marx argued that religion was able to do this by promising rewards in the after-life, instead of in this life. It was in this sense that Marx asserted the following. "Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the feeling of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless circumstances. It is the opium of the people…The abolition of religion as the illusory happiness of the people is the demand for their real happiness" (p.72). In this passage, Marx is calling for the proletariat to discard religion and its deceit about other-worldly events. Only then would this class of people be able to rise up against the bourgeoisie and gain control of the means of production, and only then would they achieve real rewards, in this life. Thus, the social-conflict approach to religion highlights how religion, as a phenomenon of human behaviour, functions to maintain social inequality by providing a worldview that justifies oppression.

It should be reiterated here that Marx's approach to sociology was critical in the sense that it advocated for change in the world. This is in stark contrast to other scholars, many of whom pursue knowledge for knowledge's sake, and lack overt

political aims. Because Marx was committed to criticizing the prevailing organization of society during his time, he took a particularly aggressive stance towards religion. He believed that it was a tool of social control used to maintain an unequal status quo, and that it should be abolished.

Although people commonly assume that Marx saw no place for religion, this assumption is not entirely true. Marx held that religion served as a sanctuary from the harshness of everyday life and oppression by the powerful. Still, he predicted that traditional religion would one day pass away.

Self-Assessment Exercise 2

1. For ...... the religious world is but the reflex of the real world.

2. According to --- the new form of Christianity, Protestantism, was a production of new economic forces as early capitalism developed.

3. The social-conflict approach is rooted in Karl Marx's critique of ......

4.0   Summary

- The founding fathers of sociological theories of religion includes: Karl Marx, Max Weber, and Emile Durkheim.
- Max Weber set out to discover religion's impact on social change.
- Durkheim predicted that religion's influence on society would decrease as society modernizes.
- Karl Marx believed that religion was a tool of social control used to maintain an unequal status quo, and that it should be abolished.

5.0   References/Further Reading

Durkheim, E. (1893). *Division of Labor in Society*. Translated by George Simpson. (1993)New York: Free Press.

Durkheim, E. (1915). *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*. Translated by J. Swain. (1947) Glencoe, IL: Free Pres

Emerson, M. O., Monahan, S. C., & Mirola, W. A. (2011). *Religion matters: What sociology teaches us about religion in our world*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Marx, K. (1964). *Karl Marx: Selected writings in sociology and social philosophy* (T. B. Bottomore, Trans.). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

Marx, K. (1844). *Contribution to Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

McKinnon, A. M. (2005). 'Reading 'Opium of the People': Expression, Protest and the Dialectics of Religion'. Critical Sociology, vol 31, no. 1-2, pp. 15–38

Moberg, D. O. (2008). Spirituality and aging: Research and implications. *Journal of Religion, Spirituality & Aging, 20*, 95–134

Ritzer, G. (1993). *The McDonaldization of Society*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge.

The Sociological Study of Religion. *hirr.hartsem.edu.* Archived *from the original on 2 March 2012*.

Weber, M. (1949). 'Religious rejections of the world and their directions' in From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology edited by Gerth, H. & Mills, C.W. New York: Oxford University Press.

Weber, M. (1928). *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Los Angeles: Roxbury Company, (2002).

Wilson, B. (1982). *Religion in Sociological Perspective* New York: Oxford University Press

https://www.learnreligions.com/religion-as-opium-of-the-people-250555

6.0 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercise

Self-Assessment Exercise 1

1. Karl Marx

2. Durkheim

3. Weber

Self-Assessment Exercise 2

1. Karl Marx

2. Karl Marx

3. Capitalism

Unit 2:   Psychological Theory of Religion

2.0   Introduction

2.1   Intended Learning Outcomes

2.2.   Main Contents

2.2.1   Concepts of psychology, theory and religion

2.0   Introduction

This unit is intended to provide definitional clarifications on the key terms of psychology, theory and religion which are the concern of Unit 4. It also probes the psychological theory, history of religion as well as the theoretical variance alongside the types of religion.

2.1   Intended Learning Outcomes

The unit will help the students:

1. to define psychology of religion
2. to explain some approaches of the theories of religion
3. to understand the historical evolution of religion
4. to discuss different types of religion

2.2   Main Contents

2.2.1   Concepts of psychology, theory and religion

In tackling the topic – Psychological Theory of Religion, as we have in this study, there is the need for the definition and detailed explication of terms such as "Psychology", "Theory" and "Religion". This will pave way for a better understanding and clarification of the conceptual distinction of the three terms.

Psychology

The field of psychology is concerned with the science of the mind and behaviour (Wikipedia.org). Psychology prioritizes the conscious and the unconscious as well as feelings and thoughts phenomena in its study. Aside this, it also gives attention to neuroscience in which case the emergent properties of the brain are considered. Psychology, being an off-shoot of social

science, attempts to facilitate the understanding of the behaviour of individuals or groups.

By etymology, psychology as a term derives from the Greek word "psyche" which means spirit or soul, and "-logia", the second part of the word, referring to research or study. For the purpose of achieving a scholarly conceptualization of psychology, the following definitions are explored. According to William James (1890), psychology is the science of mental life, both of its phenomena and their conditions. Despite the widespread currency this definition enjoyed for decades, some notable radical behaviourists contested against this meaning. Resulting from this behaviourist contestation is the proposal of another definition in which psychology is considered as a natural science with the theoretical goal of predicting and controlling of behaviour (John Watson, 1913).

Religion

Coming from the perspective of religion, most people have some idea of what the term "religion" means. When asked, people tend to think of religion as belief in a God or gods, in supernatural spirits, or in an afterlife. Or they are likely to name one of the great world religions, such as Hinduism, Christianity, Buddhism, Judaism, or Islam. But when discussing the term "religion," some observers or better still, researchers, find that "belief in a God or gods" is far too specific, far too theological a definition to use for certain people such as Buddhists, who worship no God, or for specific groups such as Jews, who think of their faith chiefly as a matter of activities rather than ideas.

To accommodate such instances, Durkheim and Eliade prefer a broad concept like "the sacred" as the defining essential of religion. They note that the Buddhist who does not believe in God does, after all, have a sense of the sacred. So, they find this abstract term more suitable when one is considering the entire span and story of religion in the world rather than traditions of just one
place or time or type. Again, some theorists strongly prefer *substantive* definitions, which closely resemble the common-sense approach. They define religion in terms of the beliefs or the ideas that religious people commit to and find important. Other theorists think this approach just too restrictive and offer instead a more *functional* definition. They leave the content or the ideas of
religion off to the side and define it solely in terms of how it operates in human life. They want to know what a religion does for an individual person psychologically or for a group socially. Less concerned with the actual content of people's beliefs or practices, they are inclined to describe religion, *whatever its specific content*, as that which brings a sense of comfort or well-being to an individual or provides support for a group.

Theory
In the case of theory, the same thing that applies to religion is true of theory. People also have some general idea of what the term "theory" means. Having

heard the term most often in the context of science, they think of it as a kind of explanation—an attempt to account for something that is not at first understood, usually by offering an answer to the common question "Why?" A religious theorist can approach it from the perspective of its origin, function, etc. From the angle of origin, a religious theorist can mean by this word any of several things: its *prehistorical* origin—how, at the dawn of history, the first human beings acquired a religion; its *psychological* or *social* origin—how, at all times in human history, it arises in response to certain group or individual needs; its *intellectual* origin—how, at one time or all times, certain perceived truths about the world have led people to believe certain religious claims; or its *historical* origin—how, at a specific time and place in the past, a certain prophetic personality or a special sequence of events has created a religion and given it a distinctive character or shape.

Also, a religious theorist coming from the functional perspective may tend to explain religion intellectually in terms of the ideas that guide and inspire people, in which case he or she may stress human intention, emotions, and agency. Such theorists believe that people are religious because certain ideas strike them as true and valuable and therefore ought to be followed in the framing of their life. Theorists who stress this role of human thought and feeling are sometimes described as interpretive rather than explanatory in their approach. Religions, they contend, are adopted by persons and are about things that have meaning to human beings; accordingly, interpretations, which take account of human intent, best explain religion, which after all is the product of human thoughts and purposes. Interpretive theorists tend to reject "explanations" because they are about things, not persons. They appeal only to impersonal processes rather than to humanly meaningful purposes. Functional theorists, by contrast, strongly disagree with any other argument because they think that though explanations are of course good for things—for physical objects and natural processes—they are just as useful in understanding people. In other words, they strive to look beneath or behind the conscious thoughts of religious people to find something deeper and hidden. They routinely contend that certain underlying social structures or unnoticed psychological pressures are the real cause of religious behaviour. Of these divergent approaches to the theories of religion, the focus here is on psychological theory of religion.

In most fields of study, particularly science, theories present concepts or ideas that are testable. In science fields, a theory is not based on guess but on a hypothesis that is backed by evidence. It is considered to be a fact-based framework for describing a phenomenon. Science-based theories present explanations about aspects of human or even the natural world backed by repeated testing and experimentation. A theory draws its strength from its diverse phenomena explanatory potential.

In the field of psychology, theories form the bases for providing a model for understanding human thoughts, emotions and behaviours. Scholars believe that the historical development of psychology has been characterized by the

emergence of a number of theories to explain and predict various aspects of human behaviour. Generally, some notable components of a psychological theory are given below:

a. It must describe a behaviour
b. It must make predictions about future behaviour

Some exemplar psychological theories like classical conditioning (by John Watson and B.F. Skinner), Freud's theories, etc, though some have not held up very well and have been replaced with new theories that better explain human development, are still well accepted today.

2.2.2 What is Psychological Theory of Religion?

Generally, psychology of religion is a subfield of psychology. In the views of some scholars, psychology of religion is a field that has experienced rapid growth as evident in the increased spate of publications in it which confirms the vibrancy of the field (See Emmons, 1999; Richards & Bergin, 2000; Hill & Hood, 1999). Like any other subfield of psychology such as clinical, counselling and health, etc, with their various study foci, psychology of religion examines the link between religion and psychology.

By way of attempting a description or definition of the psychological theory of religion holistically, it can be considered to be a subfield of psychology that presents psychologically testable or evidence-based theoretical idea or concept that recognizes both spiritual and religious influences on individuals and groups (Emmons & McCullough, 1999; Paloutzian & Kirkpatric, 1995). In other words, it is a subfield of psychology with interest in the study of the psychological aspects human religiousness (Hall, 1902; Vande Kemp, 1992).

Although some notable scholars in the likes of Hall (1904), among others, pioneered the study in this subfield, it drastically declined in development in the mid-1920s until the 1960s. In the opinion of Paloutzian (1996), this was probably due to a number of factors. These include the establishment of scientific psychology after the model of physics, separation of psychology department from their former home of philosophy department, efforts by psychologists to avoid "taboo" topics that might be considered too philosophical or too theological, etc.

Self-Assessment Exercise 1

1. According to ...... psychology is the science of mental life, both of its phenomena and their conditions.

2. In science fields, a theory is not based on guess but on a hypothesis that is backed by evidence. True or False?

3. What is the subfield of psychology with interest in the study of the

psychological aspects human religiousness?

2.2.3 Some Religious Theorists in the Field of Psychology

a. Sigmund Freud

One of the famous religious theorists whose works have remained remarkable in the views of psychologists is Sigmund Freud (1856–1939). Freud gave explanations of the genesis of religion in his various writings. For instance, in *Totem and Taboo*, he applied the idea of the Oedipus complex (involving unresolved sexual feelings of, for example, a son toward his mother and hostility toward his father) and postulated its emergence in the primordial stage of human development. Also, in another of his works, *Moses and Monotheism*, Freud reconstructed biblical history by his general theory. His ideas were also developed in *The Future of an Illusion*. When Freud spoke of religion as an illusion, he maintained that it "is a fantasy structure from which a man must be set free if he is to grow to maturity."

This, by implication, means that Freud views the idea of God as being a version of the father image, and religious belief as at bottom infantile and neurotic. Authoritarian religion, Freud believed, is dysfunctional and alienates man from himself.

b. Erik H. Erikson

Also notable among the religious theorists in psychological field is Erik Erikson (1902–1994). Erikson is best known for his theory of psychological development, which has its roots in the psychoanalytic importance of identity in personality. Erikson's works on the biographies of Gandhi and Martin Luther reveal his positive view of religion. In line with his theoretical approach, religions are considered to have important influences in successful personality development because they are the primary way that cultures promote the virtues associated with each stage of life. Religious rituals facilitate this development. Erikson's theory has not benefited from systematic empirical study, but it remains an influential and well-regarded theory in the psychological study of religion even at present.

c. Carl Jung

Another religious theorist in the field of psychology like Freud is Carl Jung (1875–1961). Jung is a Swiss psychoanalyst who adopted a very different posture in his theory, one that was more sympathetic to religion and more concerned with a positive appreciation of religious symbolism. Jung considered the question of the metaphysical existence of God to be unanswerable by the psychologist and adopted a kind of agnosticism. Jung's theory favoured religion greatly in that he took a more liberal and sympathetic approach.

In his postulations, Jung argued that in addition to the personal unconscious (roughly adopting Freud's concept), there is the collective unconscious, which is the repository of human experience and which contains "archetypes", that is, basic images that are universal in that they recur regardless of culture. The eruption of these images from the unconscious into the realm of consciousness he viewed as the basis of religious experience and often of artistic creativity. Some of Jung's writings have been devoted to elucidating some of the archetypal symbols and include his work in comparative mythology.

d. Rudolf Otto

Very significant also among the religious theorists is Rudolf Otto (1869–1937), a German Protestant theologian and scholar of comparative religion. His work, *The Idea of the Holy* (published first in 1917 as *Das Heilige*), defines the concept of the holy as that which is *numinous*. Otto explained the numinous as a "non-rational, non-sensory experience or feeling whose primary and immediate object is outside the self." He further argues that it is a mystery (Latin: *mysterium tremendum*) that is both fascinating (*fascinans*) and terrifying at the same time; a mystery that causes trembling and fascination, attempting to explain that inexpressible and perhaps supernatural emotional reaction of wonder drawing us to seemingly ordinary and/or religious experiences of grace. This sense of emotional wonder appears evident at the root of all religious experiences. Through this emotional wonder, we suspend our rational mind for non-rational possibilities, he concludes.

2.2.4   History of Psychology of Religion

Historically, psychology of religion has the credit of its origin given to William James (1842 – 1910), an American psychologist and philosopher, who is considered by most psychologists to be the founder of the field. In psychology of religion, James' influence endures. His *Varieties of Religious Experience* is considered to be the classic work in the field, and references to James' ideas are common at professional conferences. James distinguished between institutional religion and personal religion. According to him, while institutional religion refers to the religious group or organization and plays an important part in a society's culture, that of personal religion, in which the individual has mystical experience, can be experienced regardless of the culture. Williams James,

while studying personal religious experiences, made a distinction between *healthy-minded* and *sick-souled* religiousness. He claims that individuals predisposed to healthy-mindedness tend to ignore the evil in the world and focus on the positive and the good. But, in contrast, individuals predisposed to having a sick-souled religion are unable to ignore evil and suffering and need a unifying experience, religious or otherwise, to reconcile good and evil.

Self-Assessment Exercise 2

---

1. ..... spoke of religion as an illusion, and maintained that it "is a fantasy structure from which a man must be set free if he is to grow to maturity."

2. Who defines the concept of the holy as that which is *numinous*.

3. Historically, psychology of religion has the credit of its origin given to......

2.3   Summary

In this study, effort has been made towards explaining in as much details as possible some operational concepts inherent in the study of the psychological theory of religion. The unit has witnessed an exploration of such concepts as psychology, theory, religion, what is meant by psychological theory of religion, history of psychology of religion and a sampling of some of the notable theories in the field.

2.4   References/Further Reading

Emmons RA. 1999. *The Psychology of Ultimate Concerns: Motivation and Spirituality*
    in Personality. New York: Guilford

Freud S. 1927. *The Future of an Illusion*. Transl. J. Strachey, 1961. New York: Norton

https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/psychology

Hill PC, Hood RW Jr. 1999. *Measures of Religiosity*. Birmingham, AL: Religious Educ.
    Press

Hall GS. 1904. *Adolescence: Its Psychology and Relations to Physiology, Anthropology,*
    Sociology, Sex, Crime, Religion and Education, 2 Vols. New York: Appleton

James, W. (1890). *The Principles of Psychology*. New York: Henry Holt

Jung CG. 1938. *Psychology and Religion*. New Haven: Yale Univ. Press

Hester M. 1998. The status of the psychology of religion: an interviewwith R.F. Paloutzian.
   Teach. Psychol. 25:303–6

Paloutzian RF. 1996. *Invitation to the Psychology of Religion*. Needham Heights, MA:
   Allyn & Bacon. 2nd ed.

Paloutzian RF, Kirkpatrick LA, eds. 1995. Religious influences on personal and societal
   well-being. *J. Soc. Issues* 51(2): whole issue

Richards PS, Bergin AE, eds. 2000. *Handbook of Psychotherapy and Religious Diversity.*
   Washington, DC: Am. Psychol. Assoc.

Watson, John B. (1913). Psychology as the Behaviourist Views It. (PDF). Psychological Review. 20. (2): 158 – 177. doi:10.1037/hoo74428

2.5   Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercise

Self-Assessment Exercise 1

1. William James

2. True

3. Psychological Theory of Religion.

Self-Assessment Exercise 2

1.Sigmund Freud

2. Rudolf Otto

3. William James

MODULE 6:   RELIGION AND POLITICS

Unit 1: Defining the Concept of Religion

1.0 Introduction
2.0 Intended Learning Outcomes
3.0 Main contents
4.0 Summary
5.0 References/Further Reading

6.0 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercise

1.0 Introduction

This unit attempts a conceptual clarification of Religion, although its meaning has remained complex and not universally accepted. It points out that Religion influences the lives of people for ages and makes the comfortable and guide them. It also explains religion from substantivist or functionalist perspective.

2.0 Intended Learning Outcomes

This unit will help students:

1. to underpin Religion;

2. to understand the concept of religion

3. to understand influence of religion on the society.

3.0 Main Contents

3.1   What is Religion?

The definition of man as a social being no doubt is a reality which surrounds the daily living of man. In the social nature of man is the desire for affiliation with the divine. To a greater extent, many desires this affiliation and to build a link and relation with the supernatural entity. Religion therefore becomes a medium for this connection. Humans believe that they are not the highest in ontological ranking but rather product of a higher Being – God. And this higher creator rewards good deeds, provides for the created and protects. Religion is not founded on scientific results but on beliefs. As there are many religions (Christianity, Buddhism, Confucianism, Hinduism, Islam, African Traditional Religion, Shinto, Sikhism, Taoism, Judaism, Jainism, Indigenous American Religions, Rastafarianism, etc), so there are ways of building affinity with the divine.

The concept Religion is one that has not enjoyed any universal accepted definition. As there are many scholars, so are interests and perspectives on what religion is. Anthony Gill agrees with (Hamilton, 1995:1–21) when he

notes that defining religion is a slippery enterprise. Given the broad panoply of what are often seen as religious movements from Judaism to yoga, Buddhism to UFO cults a single definition that encompasses all these entities has yet to be devised (Gill, 2001:120). However, the etymology of the word offers some leap to understand the meaning of the concept. The word Religion is from the Latin word *religo* or *religare* which means to bind back. For Thomas Aquinas, Religion means a binding back to God. Smith (1996:5) writes that "religion is a system of beliefs and practices oriented toward the sacred or supernatural, through which the life experiences of groups of people are given meaning and direction." According to Gill (ibid):

> In an often-confusing world, religions are belief
> systems that provide ordered meaning and
> prescribe actions. The supernatural component is
> key to the definition, as it allows us to differentiate
> religions from secular ideologies, although it
> presents a problem in classifying something
> like   Confucianism. This definition, however,
> does cover the "big three" Western faiths
> (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) and the bulk
> of Eastern religions (e.g. Hinduism, Taoism, and
> most variants of Buddhism). As such, this
> definition   encompasses the spiritual beliefs and
> practices of the vast majority of the world's population.

The definition of religion today is approached from two perspectives: substantivist or functionalist perspective. The substantive approach looks at what religion is while the functionalist view asks the question of what religion does. The functionalist approach focuses on the place of religion in people's lives, how it influences them, the order it brings and the role in places in the society.   According to Jonatan Bäckelie, substantivist approach to the definition of religion "usually has its starting place in belief in God/gods. However, this criterion is usually deemed too restrictive and so it is usually phrased as belief in some sort of *transcendence;* something above or beyond the material world. Even so, transcendence as a concept does not present a solution. Most scholars for instance would not agree that Confucianism contains any concept of transcendence. Also, ancient Greek or Roman gods were not seen as transcendent in such a sense, but highly involved in the affairs of men (2011: 11)."
The functionalist view of religion looks at how religion influences the lives of people, their society and behaviour. Writing on the functionalist perspective, Jonatan Bäckelie notes that the "functionalists return to the broadest meaning of the word *religio* in classical Rome: Any binding obligation or devotion that structures one's social relations. Sociologist Emilé Durkheim – pioneering the functionalist approach – defined religion as such: "a religion is a unified system of belief and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart

and surrounded by prohibitions". Although this definition relies on dividing sacred from profane; Durkheim says nothing about what *is* sacred in a specific context. Rather, anything has the potential of being viewed as sacred depending on context and culture. In the US, for instance, it is a crime to *desecrate* the flag. It doesn't matter in such a context that the flag is not thought to be God or materialistically speaking made from anything other than fabric; the symbolism embedded in the flag makes it an object of reverence, *surrounded by prohibitions* (2011: 11-12)."

Religion involves a pattern, a system of beliefs and practices which involves a group of people. It is an institution. It has its mode of operation, its authority, binding force on its members and its rules. Religion is sacred but its sacredness is defined by people. It is a unified system backed by its own philosophy. Gill note:

> Religion frequently takes on an institutional form. (For rhetorical simplicity, the institutionalized form of religion can be called a "church," although this is a mostly Christian term.) Almost all religious traditions have some form of rules dictating who is a member of the spiritual community and which members can make official pronouncements regarding doctrinal content. Thus, religion involves authoritative relationships. Recognizing this fact is an essential part of the broader definition of religion, specifically as it pertains to the study of politics; it raises the issue of church-state relations. Persons in authority generally seek the means of preserving their power. For religious authority, this may often mean reaching out for the assistance of the state, as religious groups typically lack the backing of coercive power. Overlapping authority between state and religious leaders may also cause conflict (e.g. on matters of obligatory military service). Religious leaders may use their institutional position to challenge unpopular governments as a means of preserving their authority or credibility among parishioners. In essence, by acknowledging that religion commonly takes on institutional forms, the role of interests becomes as critical to the analysis of religion and politics as are beliefs and values. I return to this important point below. For now, suffice it to say that identifying both the ideational and institutional aspects of religion is important to understanding secularization and its consequences for politics.

Religion implies an organized belief practice which has to do with believe in a supernatural Being – God or any other being considered to be powerful. Religion involves revelations, symbols, rituals, Worldviews; texts laid down rules and morals which meanings for its adherents. From experiences and facts, Religion conditions people's mode of acting and relation with others. It enables a strong moral force and habits that aid good living. Contrary to the view of Sigmund Freud who see religion as a form of wish fulfilment, and Karl Marx idea of it being the opium of the people and Feuerbach understanding of it as the abstraction of the ideals of man and attributing it to what is considered a supernatural being, many have the natural desire to turn to a Being considered to be the creator. Religion enables a kind connection among people and as such provides a sense of comfort and guidance.

Self-Assessment Exercise

1. For ..... religion means a binding back to God.
2. The ...... view of religion looks at how religion influences the lives of people, their society and behaviour.
3.For Karl Marx ---- is the opium of the people

4.0 Summary
● Etymologically, the word religion is from Latin word *religo* or *religare* which means to bind back.
● There are many religions (Christianity, Buddhism, Confucianism, Hinduism, Islam, African Traditional Religion, Shinto, Sikhism, Taoism, Judaism, Jainism, Indigenous American Religions, Rastafarianism, etc) which are ways of building affinity with the divine.

● Two approaches to define religion are; functionalist perspective which asks the question of what religion does, and substantivist perspective that look at what religion is.

5.0 References/Further Reading

Amaku, E. E. (2010). *Philosophy and Social Life in Nigeria.* Uwani: Victojo Production sevices.
Afolabi, O. O. (2015). "The role of religion in Nigerian politics   and   its sustainability for political development." *Net Journal of Social   Science*s, Vol. 3(2), pp. 42-49, ISSN: 2315-9774
Bäckelie, J. (2011). *Religion and Politics - A Valid Divide?: Confessionality in   Politics and Higher Education.*
Gill, A.   (2001). "Religion and Comparative Politics,"*Annual. Rev. Polit. Sci.*. 4:117–38
Hamilton. (1995) cited in Gill, Anthony. "Religion and Comparative Politics, *"Annual. Rev.   Polit. Sci.* 2001. 4:117–38

Raiser, K. (2013). *Religion, Power, Politics,* Translated from the German, by Stephen Brown. Geneva: WCC Publications

Onyeocha, I. (2007). *Africa: the Country, the Concept and the Horizon.* Owerri: Imo State University Press.

Smith, D. (2004). *Religions and Social Change in the Third World,* London: University Press

6.0 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercise
Self-Assessment Exercise
1. Thomas Aquinas
2. Functionalist
3. Religion

UNIT 2: THE CONCEPT OF POLITICS

2.0 Introduction

2.1. Intended learning outcome

2.2. Main Contents

2.2.1 The Meaning of Politics

2.2.2 The Concept of State

2.2.3 On the Origin of the State

2.2.2 Politics and the State

2.3   Summary
2.5   References/Further Reading

2.0 Introduction

This unit attempts a conceptual clarification of Politics. In addition, it looks at the meaning of the concept state and its origin in view to properly situate politics as social state affairs. Politics is an activity, it takes place in the state and its aim is geared towards the common good of the state. This unit equally looks at the inevitability of politics as a veritable ingredient in the development of the state.

2.1 Intended Learning Outcomes

This unit will help students:

1. Underpin the concept of Politics

2. Understand the concept of State/politics.

3. Have an overview of the origin of the state

4. To know the inter-relatedness of politics and the state.

2.2 Main Contents
2.2.1   The Meaning of Politics

Defining what politics is one is bound to encounter challenges of not meeting up with numerous perspectives of what politics is. A look at different books, articles and encyclopaedia reveals that many writes and define according what fits their perspectives. Hence, definitions are often based on tradition, historical or cultural background. "In his famous lecture of 1919, "Politics as a Vocation," Max Weber responds to the question, what do we understand by politics? 'The concept is extremely broad and comprises any kind of

independent leadership in action.' He continues: 'We wish to understand by politics only the leadership, or the influencing of the leadership, of a *political* association, hence today, of a *state . . .* a state is a human community that (successfully) claims the *monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force* within a given territory.' And a little later, he states: "Hence, 'politics for us means striving to share power or striving to influence the distribution of power, either among states or among groups within a state. . .. He who is active in politics strives for power either as a means in serving other aims, ideal or egoistic, or as 'power for power's sake,' that is, in order to enjoy the prestige-feeling that power gives (Konrad, 2013: 20)." Some scholars see politics as an activity in a state in which people struggle for power to change policies or bring about new ones and to acquire power. Afolabi writes that Politics is the activity through which people make, preserve and amend the general rules under which they live. As such, it is an essentially social activity, inextricably linked on the one hand to the existence of diversity and conflict, and on the other, to a willingness to co-operate and act collectively. Politics requires a constitution and political parties. It involves ideology. It includes criticism (opinion); it requires the public and the state which made up of individuals (2015 :44)."

Politics exist in a public space and it involves the participation of citizens in order to shape and organize the state for the common good. Though there are divergent views on what politics is; it is always easy to associate politics with deceit and manipulation of public consciousness especially when successive governments have not tried to change the lives of the people. Politics is an activity which has no codified system. It is not an institution with its own laws except when carried out under political party, however, as an activity for the welfare of the people, engaging in it implies operating on certain laws which guides the process of becoming leader, implementing policies as enshrined in the constitution and by the dictates of reason (natural laws).

2.2.2 The Concept of State

Aristotle is of the view that any person who does not live in the society is either a god or a beast. The implication of this assertion is that since humans are not beasts, spirit or god, they live in the society and as such realize their existence within this social setting. Politics and religion are both social workings in the society which are product of man. Thus, man is not born with religion or politics but originated and systematized through a gradual evolving of the human society. There is therefore no politics and religion outside the state as the two are social institutions with different perspectives which often time influences each other.

The concept of the state features more in Political Philosophy, however, its meaning has equally become problematic. The concept state has it origin from Roman-Law concept of *status rei Romanae* (the public Law of Roman Republic) which replaced the Greek and Latin equivalents: *polis, res publica,*

civitas and *reqnum corpus politicum*. In *Basic World Political Theories*, Nwoko (2006) sees a state as "an association of persons, permitting an orderly government, under a system of law, settled in a particular territory and commanding some sovereignty as a juristic personality (2006: 5)." According to Uyoh and Nwadinihu "the concept of the state has changed over time. In the ancient Greeks, the state is understood as an association of people around the *polis* (city). However, in the modern time, this conception has shifted to mean an entity 'organized for the government of a nation (or more closely related nations), whose territory is determined, at least in part, by national customs and expectations' (2018: 17)."

Self-Assessment Exercise 1

> 1. .... is a human community that claims the *monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force* within a given territory.
>
> 2......... mean striving to share power or striving to influence the distribution of power, in the states.
>
> 3. For ---- any person who does not live in the society is either a god or a beast.

2.2.3   On the Origin of the State

On the origin of the state, many perspectives have emerged which include force theory, divine theory, economic theory, mechanistic theory, natural or evolutionary theory and social contract theory. While there is no general accepted theory on the origin of the state, each theory contributes some truth to the formation of the state.

According to the divine theory, the state was established by God and its rulers are divinely chosen and ordained. They are representatives of God and are only accountable to God and no one else. "The people have no right to question the authority of the king or to demand for accountability. The goodness of the king or his badness is all left for God to judge and not for the citizens. The king according to divine theory cannot be vicious, even if he is wicked, it implies that God is using him to punish the people for wrong doing and only amending their ways can relieve them of the burden (Uyoh & Nwadinihu, 2018: 23-24)." According to Appadorai in *Substance of Politics* note that: "the essence of the theory, whether held in the East or the West, is not only that God created the state in the sense that all human institutions may be believed to have had their origin in divine creation; the will of God is supposed to be made known by revelation immediately or immediately to certain persons who are his earthly vice-regents and by them communicated to the people. Obedience to the state becomes a religious as well as a civil duty; disobedience, sacrilege (1968: 31)." The Divine theory which championed during the medieval period justified the absolutism of Kings. However, the emergence of social contract theories of

Thomas Hobbes, John Locke and Jean Jacques Rousseau weakened the divine theory as it brought in secular view on the state.

The natural theory holds that the origin of the state cannot be traced to any particular time in history as what we have today an organized society is as a result of so many factors like kingship, religion, war and political consciousness. For the natural theory, the state is as a result of natural evolution in the history of humankind which has moved from the level of imperfect society to a higher one.   On another hand, the force theory is of the view that the state is an outcome of war, conquest and coercion. Uyoh and Nwadinihu (2018) write that "the proponents of this theory hold that powerful tribes are the principal factors behind the creation of the state. A stronger man establishes his authority over the weaker one and in turn, the stronger one is made the king who gives and sees to maintaining of laws and has the duty to defend the state from aggression" (25).

Despite theories that bounds, the view of Plato adds some gist to the origin of the state.   According to Plato (428-348 BC), the state came to be as a result of human needs and the need to practice individual skills. The insufficiency of man necessitated the formation of the state.   In the *Republic*, note: "come then…let us make an imaginary sketch of the origin of the polis. It originates from our needs." The State grows out of the nature of man. Man, therefore is an insufficient being that needs the other for its existence. Plato's students Aristotle is of the view that the state originated from the basic unit of the society which is the family. "Family is the association established by nature for the supply of man's everyday wants. But when several families are united and the association aims at something more than the supply of daily need, then come into existence the village. When several villages are united in a single community, perfect and large enough to be quite self-sufficing, the state comes into existence, originating in the bare needs of life and continuing in existence for the sake of good life." For Aristotle, the formation of the state is not a calculated venture but outcome of human needs and a result of gradual process. According to Omoregbe, "in Aristotle's theory, the origin of the state was by gradual process, and the purpose is to provide man's needs, to enable him actualize his potentialities, perfect himself, and live a happy life (2007: 15)." Augustine of Hippo (354-430), sees the state as a result of the fall of man by the original sin. Uyoh & Nwadinihu (2018) writes:

> According to him after man had rebelled against God, rebellion extended and members of his own being also rebelled against him. Man, henceforth became rebellious even within himself. He was now controlled by evil tendencies and was prone to evil. "If these evil tendencies in him are not checked the consequences would be disastrous both for himself and the society in which he lives. Hence there is need for the state, to check these evil tendencies (Omoregbe, 2007: 15)." In the thought of Augustine, the emergence of the state

was to control man's excesses and also to check resultant effects of his evil tendencies which might destroy him and the society in which he lives. The state therefore serves as the machinery for checking man's inadequacies. From the perspective of Augustine, "if there were no "original sin," that is, if man had not fallen and generated evil tendencies there would have been no state (Omoregbe, 2007.)."

Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) a scholastic theologian sees the state as a natural institution derived from human nature. "He explains that humans have material or natural needs, spiritual needs and other supernatural ends. For him, the state was not formed for the sake of the 'fallen man.' Thus, if there were no original sin, the state would have existed. Aquinas is of the view that one of the natural goods that man is naturally inclined to is to live in the society. He holds that even 'in the state of innocence (humans) would have led a social life' (ST 1.96.4). This is one of the basic foundations of his political thoughts. Following the line of Aristotle's thoughts, Aquinas holds that the state came into existence as a result of human needs and aspirations (Uyoh & Nwadinihu, 2018: 20-21). The state for Aquinas is not simply given to man by nature but what humans naturally aspired to for the sake of the perfection of their existence. Thus:

> To be sure, political society is not simply *given* by nature. It is rather something to which human beings naturally aspire and which is necessary for the full perfection of their existence. The capacity for political society is not natural to man, therefore, in the same way as the five senses are natural. The naturalness of politics is more appropriately compared to the naturalness of moral virtue (*Commentary on the Politics*, Book 1, Lesson 1 [40]). Even though human beings are inclined to moral virtue, acquiring the virtues nonetheless requires both education and habituation. In the same way, even though human beings are inclined to live in political societies, such societies must still be established, built, and maintained by human industry. To be fully human is to live in political society, and Aquinas makes a great deal of Aristotle's claim that one who is separated from society so as to be completely a-political must be either sub-human or super-human, either a "beast or a god." (Peter Koritansky, "Aquinas Political Philosophy." *Internet Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*.)

Aquinas traced the origin of the society to have begun from the family. The natural tendency between male and female to join together for the purpose of procreation brought about the family. For Aquinas, the family is natural and is prior to political society. As families grow in size and needs increases which cannot be ultimately be met in the family, thus, families grew to form villages. While the families provide daily needs of man, the villages provide non-daily needs (Uyoh & Nwadinihu, 2018: 22).

According to Peter Koritansky in "Aquinas Political Philosophy" in *Internet Encyclopaedia of Philosophy,* "What Aquinas and Aristotle seem to have in mind in describing the emergence of the village is the division of labour. Whereas humans can reproduce and survive quite easily in families, life becomes much more productive and affluent when families come together in villages, since one man can now specialize in a certain task while fulfilling his family's remaining material needs through barter and trade." Aside protection and economic benefits, there are other reasons why the state came into existence. Thus:

> In addition to yielding greater protection and economic benefits, it also enhances the moral and intellectual lives of human beings. By identifying with a political community, human beings begin to see the world in broader terms than the mere satisfaction of their bodily desires and physical needs. Whereas the residents of the village better serve their individual interests, the goal of the political community becomes the good of the whole, or the common good, which Aquinas claims (following Aristotle) is "better and more divine than the good of the individual" (*Commentary on the Politics*, Book 1, Lesson 1 [11]). The political community is thus understood as the first community (larger than the family) for which the individual makes great sacrifices, since it is not merely a larger cooperative venture for mutual economic benefit. It is, rather, the social setting in which man truly finds his highest natural fulfillment. In this sense, the political community, even though not directed to the individual good, better serves the individual by promoting a life of virtue in which human existence can be greatly ennobled. It is in this context that Aquinas argues (again following Aristotle) that although political society originally comes into being for the sake of living, it exists for the sake of "living well." (cited in Nwadinihu 2018: 23)

The social contract theory seems to have been favoured by many as it sees the state as human conscious formation. In our discussion we are going to pay attention to: Thomas Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau.

Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) an English philosopher is of the view that before the formation of the state, men lived in what he termed the state of nature. In his work the *Leviathan,* Hobbes analysed the nature of manand how the society came to be. He holds that man has two natures: the concupiscible aspect which desires to appropriate common things and the rational aspect which teaches him to avoid annihilation. On the equality of man in the state of nature he notes: "Nature has made men so equal in the faculties of the body and mind. This proves rather that men are in that point equal than unequal (Leviathan, 1958, 104-05)." The state of nature according to Hobbes is a state of war, a state of man against his fellow man. In this state, there was no right, no care, it

was survival of the fittest as there was no law, development or justice. In this state, no action was considered to be right or wrong and each was his own lawmaker and judge. In the state of nature, life was short, nasty, brutish, poor, misery and solitary. In the state of nature, each person was in pursuit of his own happiness and there was always constant clash of interest. Though there was no law and justice, Hobbes holds that in the human person there was the inclination towards peace. "They are the fear of death, the desire to live better and secure, and so on. In short, it is the struggle to survive that drives men to seek peace. Reason suggests peace as the necessary condition for the achievement of these peace-inclinations. Thus, people enter into bound or contract to establish peace and order (Nwoko, 2006: 73)."In the state of nature, men follow the natural law which is the preservation of one's life. In an attempt towards peace, every person is to renounce some of his rights. Men are to surrender their rights to everything; thereby entering into a covenant. Each member of the community enters into contract not with an already instituted body, but with the fellow members of the same community in which one lives (Uyoh & Nwadinihu, 2018: 30)." To survive peacefully as William Lawhead (2002: 223) puts it, "we must all give up our rights to one ruler or assembly. Hobbes says it is as though every individual signs this agreement." As Hobbes note, "It is a real unity of them all in one and the same person, made by covenant of everyman with everyman, in such manner, as if everyman says I authorize and give up my rights of governing myself to this man or to this assembly of men, on this condition, that thou give up the right to him, and authorize all his actions in like manner (L.2:17)."

According to Uyoh and Nwadinihu (2018), "this agreement brings into existence the civil society. Through this social contract, men moved away from the state of nature in which each was at war against the other. According to Hobbes, once there is agreement to bring into existence the sovereign which he called the Leviathan (which means a huge being) or an artificial man into power, we do not have any right over it. "To guarantee that we will all abide by this mutual agreement to restrict our power over one another," Hobbes holds that "there must be some coercive power, to compel men equally to the performance of their covenants." (L.1:15) Thomas Hobbes idea of social contract in the view of Matthew Nwoko (2006: 74-75) can be outlined as follows:

- The contract or covenant generates directly an absolute government;
- The contract is between subjects (citizens); the sovereign is not party to it (except perhaps by derivation);
- Sovereignty belongs to the government, which now represents absolutely the commonwealth. Therefore, it is inalienable and is the highest power in the state;
- This contract which establishes the sovereignty cannot be freely abrogated by the citizens, nor can the absolute power of the sovereign be easily reverted;

- The contract subsumes the individual rights of self-rule and will into the sovereign's will;
- Going against the sovereign power would imply defecting from the contract and ultimately a return to the state of nature, which is a lower state of life; civil disobedience is not justified, although Hobbes somewhere says that the natural law limits the absolute power of the sovereign.

For John Locke in his *Second Treatise of Government,* who followed the social contract perspective in tracing the origin of the state note that the state of nature was indeed to be preferred to subjection to the arbitrary power of an absolute sovereign. In his *Second Treatise on Civil Government,* John Locke holds that men in the state of nature were free and lived according to the law of nature. For him "men are free 'to order their actions, and dispose of their possessions and persons, as they think fit, within the bounds of the law of nature (2nd Tr., §4)."The state of Nature has a law of Nature to govern it', and that law is Reason. Locke is of the view that in the state of nature, reason is the guide. It teaches everyone that "no one ought to harm another in his life, liberty, and or property" (2nd Tr., §6); and that transgressions of this may be punished – thus we are all executioners of natural. In the state of nature, each person act on his own without infringing into another person's rights. For Locke, in the state of nature, natural law restricted man from doing some things and it was a state of freedom unlike Hobbes state of nature. However, in the state of nature, man "has no Liberty to destroy himself, or so much as any Creature in his Possession, but where some nobler use, than its bare Preservation calls for it."Writing on Locke's state of nature, Gauba note, it is "a group of men living together according to reason without a superior on earth with authority to judge them. If men become judges of their own cases, justice would not be secured. In this respect, the state of nature proves to be inconvenient. In order to rectify this defect, men abandon the state of nature and entered into a civil or political society by means of a contract (2007: 187)." Even though the state of nature was tolerable, it was not convenient. Though there were laws of nature and reason, there was still need for written laws and a body (government) to enforce them, and though men may punish wrong doing, an officially appointed judge would do it better without self-interest. For Locke, we need government to enforce laws on behalf of the powerless.

Locke introduced the social contract here as a pact entered into by individuals to avoid inconveniences. By entering into this contract, they form political society. This agreement is between free men and not between rulers and ruled. In this contract, men forgo their rights to correction and punishment. The main reason for the formation of state for Locke is for the protection of property. For Locke, property includes lives, liberties and estates. Political state rests on rational foundation and consent. For those who are not part of signing the contract, Locke says that "we have given tacit consent to it by virtue of the fact that we have lived in our society and received its benefits (Lawhead, 2002)."

According to Locke, the essence of the formation of the society is for the sake of preservation of property and the government is to see to the wellbeing of all – for the common good. Hence, if they do not maintain the reason for entering into the contract, men are justified to resist the government. For Locke, sovereignty rests on the people and they have the right to change whoever that is in charge. The authority of any government is to guarantee the safety of the people's wellbeing and when such is not seen. As when the leader becomes tyrant, the people have the outright obligation to resist his authority.

Jean Jacques Rousseau in 1775 brought to limelight a contrary view to Hobbes idea of state of nature in his work: *Discourse on Inequality*. Rousseau holds that "natural man as a noble savage, living a life of idyllic blissfulness and primitive simplicity. He states that men in the state of nature are equal, self-sufficient and contented, but with the rise of civilization and learning inequalities raised their heads. With the development of arts and science, private property ownership comes into existence with the consequent division of labour (Gauba, 2007: 183)." According to Uyoh & Nwadinihu (2018), "Rousseau maintains that in the state of nature where there was neither state nor civilization people were essentially innocent, good, happy and healthy. In the state of nature, men had absolute freedom, equality, and enjoyed idyllic happiness, but they were enslaved. As he puts it, *Man is born free, and everywhere he is in chains (71)."* For Rousseau, man in the state of nature was good, he was not violent, he knew and did no evil. The state of nature was a state of innocence and remained so until society was formed. For Rousseau, it is society that spoiled man. If the state of nature was good, why form a civil society? Uyoh & Nwadinihu (2018) capturing Rousseau's thought writes that:

> It was one man's greed and insatiable attitude that brought about the formation of society. This caused man to leave the state of nature where all things were commonly owned, where people co-existed peacefully. According to Rousseau, man changed with the advent of civil society and private property. As he asserts, "The first man who, having enclosed a piece of ground, bethought himself of saying This is mine, and found people simple enough to believe him, was the real founder of civil society" which brought with it the destruction of natural liberty and which, 'for the advantage of a few ambitious individuals, subjected all mankind to perpetual labour, slavery, and wretchedness.' In the view of Rousseau, man in the state of nature was innocent and good. This view is contrary to Hobbes idea of state of nature where man is at war to each other.

> Emergence of society marked the beginning of unhappiness, conflict, hatred and ruthless struggle to acquire private properties to the detriment of others (especially the weak, poor). As the poor became conscious of the fact that they were being trampled upon by the rich, they rose up against them (rich) in order to take back their properties. To protect themselves and their properties the rich agreed

to form a state and make laws to check violence and other societal ills. Rousseau therefore contended that the state was not for the poor, it was for the benefit of the rich, it is for rich. In the view of Rousseau, "the social contract was defective because of certain inherent dangers. It put the once free humans into chains without their knowing it (Nneji, 2010: 69)."

In the view of Rousseau, the state of nature was a state of innocence, the formation of the state was to have a common law, for the protection of lives and properties and to check violence and social ills. For Rousseau, sovereignty rest not on the monarch (leaders) but on the people as a collective whole. The contract brought about the state and it was founded on agreement and by this contract, man follows justice, morality, duty and give rights their place. On the sign of good government, Rousseau writes:

> What is the purpose of a political association? (It is) the preservation and prosperity of its members. What is the surest sign that they are preserving themselves and prospering? Their number and the rate of its growth. We need to look no further for the much-debated criterion. All other things being equal, the best government is unquestionably the one whose citizens increase and multiply most, without extraneous means such as naturalization and colonies. The worst government is one under which the people diminish and waste away (Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract or Principles of Political Rights* in Essentials of Rousseau trans. Lowell Bair: New York, 1974, 8., cited in Nwoko, 128).

2.2.4   Politics and the State

Politics as a theory and practice on acquiring power and managing the state operates with a recognized geographical area known as a state. Like we noted earlier, a state implies a known geographical area, with its own sovereignty and laws to guide it. Politics is tied to the state. The organization of modern day is through politics which makes it possible to people to participate in acquiring power and influencing polices. Following the thoughts of Thomas Hobbes, John Locke and Jean Jacque Rousseau's idea of the social contract, the establishment of the society is by contract and those to manage or those that manages the affairs of the society do so, on the basis of the consent of the people. The social centralists, Niccolo Machiavelli and Max Weber disengaged politics from the medieval conception of politics being tied to religion to an extent that Church had enormous influence on the election of leaders.   Politics is tied to the state and it provides an ordered community for the participation of citizens in shaping their society. Politics involves concern for public affairs and in a secularized society of today; politics which has been disengaged from religion still sustain the influence of religion on it. Politics shapes the state and the state determines most times the focus of politics. From the social contract

perspective, politics which aims at to get the best leadership which would not see itself as an absolute but subject to the will of the people. Hence, politics as tied to the state aims at always making the essence of the contract which is according to John Locke the preservation of lies, liberties and estates and Rousseau holds that it is for the preservation and prosperity of its members. The state therefore provides a wider community for politics while politics in turn provides the avenue for the management of the society.

Self-Assessment Exercise 2

---

1. According to ------ theory, the state was established by God and its rulers are divinely chosen and ordained.

2. According to ------- the state came to be as a result of human needs and the need to practice individual skills.

3. The social contract theory states that the state came as a result of agreement among men which laid the foundation to understand politics and leadership as a contract. True or False?

4. For Hobbes ------- is a state of war, a state of man against his fellow man.

5. Politics is tied to the state and it provides an ordered community for the participation of citizens in shaping their society. True or False?

2.3 Summary

- Politics exist in a public space and it involves the participation of citizens in order to shape and organize the state for the common good.
- There are many perspectives on the origin of the state, which include force theory, divine theory, economic theory, mechanistic theory, natural or evolutionary theory and social contract theory. While there is no general accepted theory on the origin of the state, each theory contributes some truth to the formation of the state.

- The social contract theory states that the state came as a result of agreement among men which laid the foundation to understand politics and leadership as a contract.

- The primary focus of politics is to get to leadership position and fulfil the aims of the contract.

2.4 References/Further Reading

Amaku, E. E. (2010). *Philosophy and Social Life in Nigeria.* Uwani: Victojo Production sevices.

Appadoria, A. (1968). *Substance of politics* . Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Ekwuru, E. G. (2011). *The Dynamics of Afri-Raciogenesis and the Dialectics of Afrizealotism* . Owerri: Totan Publishers.

Lawhead, W.E. (2002). The Voyage of Discovery, A Historical Introduction to Philosophy. Second Edition. CA USA: Wadsworth.

Njoku, F. (2002). *Philosophy in Politics, Law and Democracy.* Owerri: Clacom.

Nkrumah, K. (1970). *Consciencism: Philosophy and Ideology for Decolonization.* New York: Monthly Review Press.

Nwadinihu, C (2018). *Walk with God.* Owerri: Rosarian Publications.

Nwoko, M. I. (2006). *World Basic Political Theories.* 2nd edition. Edited by Francis O.C. Njoku. Enugu: Snaap Press.

Ofoegbu, F. C. (2014). *Live and let Live Nigeria.* Owerri: ApplauseBMulti-Sects.

Omoregbe, J. (2007). *Social and Political Philosophy And International Relations.* Lagos: Joja Educational Research & Publishers Ltd.

Onyeocha, I. (2007). *Africa: the Country, the Concept and the Horizon.* Owerri: Imo State University Press.

………(1994). *Idealism, Politics and Nation-Building: The Nigerian Experience.* Owerri: Imo State University Press.

.. .. .. (2007). *Africa: the Country, the Concept and the Horizon.* Owerri: Imo State University Press.

Raiser, Konrad. (2013). *Religion, Power, Politics,* Translated from the German, by Stephen Brown. Geneva: WCC Publications.

Senghor, L. S. (1994). *On African Socialism.* Translated by M. Cook. New York: F.A. Praeger.

Simon, B. (2008). *The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy* . USA: Oxford University Press.

Uyoh, B. and Nwadinihu, C. (2018). *Social and Political Philosophy: Thematic Introductions.* Owerri: Rosarian Publications.

2.5 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercise

Self-Assessment Exercise 1

1. State

2. Politics

3. Aristotle

Self-Assessment Exercise 2

1. Divine theory

2. Plato

3. True

4. State of Nature

5. True

Unit 3: RELIGION AND STATE

3.0 Introduction

This unit attempts to examine the relationship between the religion and the state (politics) and examine three models in history regarding the relationship between religion and politics. It further discusses the relationship between religion and African state and recognizing religion as an important dimension of African man.

3.1 Intended Learning Outcomes

This unit will help the students:

1. To understand the relationship between religion and state.

2. To briefly examine three models in history regarding the relationship between religion and politics.

3. To examine religion as serious dimension of African man in his everyday life.

3.2 Main Contents

3.2.1 Religion and State Relationship

The issue concerning the relationship between Church (Religion) and state can be traced to St Augustine's work *The City of God (*Book xlx, Chapter 17)*, where he examined the relationship that is ideal between the "earthly city" and the "city of God". Here, Augustine explicitly stated the need for the people to live together on earth. For him it is "temporal city"work to help establish a "heavenly city" on earth. In the same light, monarchs ruled the state through the idea of a "divine right", then they became in charge of both their kingdom and the church within their boundaries. Equally, through the doctrine of the Catholic Church the Pope as Christ Vicar on earth exercise authority over the

church and the state indirectly, such situations occurred in the case of Henry VIII and Henry III of England and Navarre respectively (Elliott, 1877:165).

On the other hand, the idea of Church and State separation may have traced to John Locke who argued that the government should have no authority and control over individual conscience and emphasize on religious tolerance. His idea influenced American colonies and also the drafting of the United State Constitution (Feldman, 2005:29). Also, Thomas Jefferson (1802) in his letter to Danbury Baptist Church built a wall of separation between the church and the state, especially by preventing the establishment of a national church.

From the above relationship between religion and politics Mubarak (2009) observes;

> Both religion and politics have one common goal: that is
>
> to acquire political power and use it to fulfill their aims.
>
> However, to achieve this object, their methods are different.
>
> Religion mobilizes religious sensibilities of people in order
>
> to get their support to capture power; while politics uses
>
> intrigue, diplomacy, and makes attempt to win public
>
> Opinion either democratically, if the system allows it, or
>
> Usurps power with the help of army, if the society is
>
> under-developed and backward.

Here, Mubarak makes clear the relationship between religion and politics. He further buttresses that religion and politics in their struggle for power undermine each other. And if religion has political authority it will fulfil her divine mission and reform the society under the spiritual guidance. On the contrary, if politics holds power it changes system of government and laws. So, he outlined three models in history in relation to religion and politics;

- Integration and sharing model; it occurs when religion and politics unite to monopolize political power.

- Subservient model; it occurs when politics subdue and overpower religion, and uses it for political interest, whereby religion plays a servant role to politics.

- Rival model; it occurs when the two come in conflict and struggle for domination with the other and later leads to separation.

From the foregoing, one may decipher what happens when religion and politics come together and the consequences of religion dominating politics or vice

versa. This makes one to ask if religion is separated from politics whether it will make it weak or vulnerable or the complementary of religion and politics make for common good.

3.2.2 Africa and Religion

Religion is one dimension of the African man that is evident in almost daily living. Thus, the African sees religion not just as a code to observe but as an aspect of life to be lived. There is always that desire to constantly unite with the Supreme Being which is understood not in abstract terms but existential real relational dimension. Though three religions dominate Africa: African Traditional Religion, Islam and Christianity, the practitioners of any of these religions are convinced on the supernatural power of God and as such are convinced that there is a Being who looks after them hence, in any struggle or calamity, there is a strong believe in the powers of God being able to save them. Izu Onyeocha in *Africa: The Country, The Concept and The Horizon* write that:

> In African experience religion is not on paper but in people's hearts and minds. It arose and took shape in the process of human's trying to find answers to questions affecting their existence and happiness in the world in which they live. In the system of Africanity belief and action are inseparable. No line is drawn between the physical and the spiritual. The human being is very central of African religious impulse and expression. When the African turn to God, it is strictly for pragmatic reasons of what he or she can get, be it material in terms of wealth or offspring, or spiritual in terms of expiation for his or her offences (2019: 117).

The African idea of binding self to the divine stems from the etymological understanding of the term religion which is *religare*. For the African man, there is a being that created the world. This idea is as old as man's ability to record events and it is as a result of critical reflection on the universe. Thus, the idea of God and believe in Him which encapsulates in religion has made the African man to identify him/herself as a religious being. Thus, he cannot live without religion as it is part of him which manifest both in the interpretation of his morality, daily living and equally at work place. In "God, Humans and the Universe in African Worldview" Onyeocha writes that "God is real to Africans. His activities are palpable, and it is impossible to think of any human experience of reality in which he does not have a superintending power. Some of the African names of God indicate a personalized relationship with him. There can be no mistake about this fact (2013: 70)."

For anyone conversant with G.W.F Hegel's *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*, he insists that the African has not yet succeeded in making distinction between himself as an individual and his universal essentiality. He

has not reached the awareness of any substantial objectivity like God and Law. "In Hegel estimation, there is an ontological distinction which the Negro is as yet bereft of: he cannot yet go beyond himself- beyond his instinctual behaviour and posit the existence of a being outside of himself (Njoku: 2002)." The African builds a link between himself and God and therefore personalizes God. He holds God as the absolute controller of the world and sustainer of which every power and authority is under him. This is evident in the name Africans (Igbo) bears: Chimdi (my God is), Chinweike (God has power), Chinenye (God gives), Chizoba (God saves), Chinyeaka (If God helps), Chioma (Good God), etc.

Self-Assessment Exercise

---

1. Who examined the relationship that is ideal between the "earthly city" and the "city of God"?

2. The idea of Church and State separation is traced to ....

3. African sees religion not just as a code to observe but as an aspect of life to be lived. True or False?

3.3 Summary

- In history religion and the state have complimented each other and have also had cause to separate.

- The main relationship between religion and politics is to acquire political power and use it to fulfil their aims.

- Religion is one dimension of an African man that reflects in his daily life.

3.4   References/Further Reading

Amaku, E. E. *Philosophy and Social Life in Nigeria.* Uwani: Victojo Production sevices, 2010.

Afolabi, O. O. "The role of religion in Nigerian politics and its   sustainability for political development." *Net Journal of Social Science*s,   Vol.   3(2), pp. 42-49, May 2015, ISSN: 2315-9774

Elliott, C. (1877). *Delineation of Roman Catholicism: Drawn from the authentic and acknowledged Standards of the Church of Rome*. Lane & Scott.

Feldman, N. (2005). *Divided by God*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Jefferson, T. (1802). "Jefferson's Letter to the Danbury Baptist. *US. Library of Congress.*

Mubarak, A. (2009). "Religion and Politics: Integration, Separation and Conflict" *Violence and Peace Challenges of Religion*. Lahore. www.ireness.net.

Onyeocha, I. (2007). *Africa: the Country, the Concept and the Horizon.* Owerri: Imo State University Press.

Oshewolo, R. M. and Borok, A. M. (2015). "Religion and Politics in Nigeria" *International Journal of Politics and Good Governance* Volume VI, No. 6.3 Quarter III.

Raiser, K. (2013). *Religion, Power, Politics,* Translated from the German, by Stephen Brown. Geneva: WCC Publications.

Uyoh, B. and Nwadinihu, C. (2018). *Social and Political Philosophy: Thematic Introductions.* Owerri: Rosarian Publications.

3.5 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercise

Self-Assessment Exercise

1. St Augustine

2. John Locke

3. True

Unit 4: Some Issues on Religion and Politics

4.0 Introduction

This unit attempt to examine some issues on religion and politics. It states the positive impact of religion on the state. It further presents some issues concerning politics and religion like; the relationship between religion and democracy, religious freedom and political obligation. In addition, it discusses some problems of religion in the state.

4.1 Intended Learning Outcomes

1. to examine some issues as pertains to religion and politics in the society.

2. to understand the impact of religion on the state.

3. to discuss some problems of religion in the state.

4.2 Main Contents

4.2.1 Positive Impact of Religion on the state

Religion as a belief and practice will always make an impact on politics by enhancing peaceful coexistence in the society thereby guaranteeing a sustainable development of the state. Religion being normative and prescriptive in nature will ensure that religious ethical values are taught and practiced in the society. Hence, when we have authentic adherents of religion in our society it will provide good leaders and followers in the society. Thus, Adeleye (1988) buttresses:

> Religion breeds an ideal heart in man to be able to
> be conscious of the need to have a clean heart. By
> this, he will grow to have a philanthropic or patriotic

> thought before venturing to lead or represent his
> people in government of the state. In another words,
> religion will prepare the mind of man to be a good
> politician who will constantly fall back upon his
> religion to guide him. The teachings or threats of
> religion are expected to guide him to be able to lead
> his people aright as a politician with fear of God in
> him. He will never consider himself first, rather he
> knows that he is the servant of the electorates (sic)-
> his people. Religion in an idealistic set up, therefore,
> serves as oil to lubricate politics.

Here, religion will serve as the conscience of the people and direct them to the right path of decision making and service to the people. Once there is morality in the society which religion propagates, and citizens imbibe and embrace it - there will be unity, peace, progress and sustainable development in the society. Thus, religion guarantees common good in the society which is the aim of politics, ensuing democracy, religious freedom, political obligation among other positive impacts.

4.2.2 Religion and Democracy

In the issue of religion and democracy some people may ask questions if they can interact or if there is tension among them. In reaction to this one may opine that there is a relation between religion and democracy when democratic rules and laws are influenced by religion. Hence, it becomes religious democracy, which is a government where values of a particular religion inform the law and rules of the society. If these values are respected in the society it will guarantee common good. On the other hand, the tension between religion and democracy Can be seen when religious leaders fight against political leaders vice versa, and this bring about religious crisis and anarchy in the society. Hence, the possible thing to do for the benefits of the two is for them to complement each other in order to guaranteeing common good in the society.

4.2.3 Religious Freedom

This has to do with a fundamental human right which protect all people's conscience. It makes it possible for the people to express what they believe and act according to it. Religious freedom avails people the opportunity to believe, worship and follow their faith doctrine with coercing from government. Once, there is religious freedom there will not be religious crisis because there will be respect among all the religions of the in society. Hence, when religion and politics are complimentary in the society, there is peace, justice and harmony.

4.2.4 Political Obligation

The term "political obligation" was coined by T.H. Green "to discover the true ground or justification for obedience to law" (Green 1986 :13). It deals with the obligation to obey the national laws by every citizen of the state. Political obligation is supported by an argument of divine command stating that political society and its rules are ordained by God and should be respected and obeyed by the people.This argument draws its strength from two biblical injunctions; (Matthew 22:15–22) that the people should give to Caesar what belongs to him and to God what belongs to Him, and (Romans 13:1–2): "For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore, he who resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment." So, this justify the complimentary relationship between religion and politics in order to bring about peace and progress in the society.

4.2.5 Problems of Religion in the States
So much has changed in today's world in the realm of religion. There is commercialization and politicization of religion. There is nothing wrong with religion as history proves that it has aided man in being a better person and to understand his ontological essentiality. It has favoured many who adhere to it. However, it has caused woes to humanity also. Ejiogu Amaku opines that:

> Religion as old as humans, appears to be the baking-pot of most human tragedies. The religious pathologies might not be the result of the anger of the gods against the infidelity of human beings. They are rather owed to some human beings who turn religious beliefs either into means of exploiting those who believe, or weapons of war, hatred and hostile segregation against those who do not belong to the religious set (2017: 107)."

There is form of religious pressure on adherent believing that the doctrine of one's religion is better than that of the other and as such there is a line drawn which does not creating a welcoming ground for religious tolerance.

There is high sense of business orientation in religion. God being at the centre of religion is seen by some persons as a commodity that has to be sold and those in politics tap into human desire for the divine to woo people into believing in them. Nwadinihu in *Walk with God* not that:

> From East to West, North to South, different areas/communities in Nigeria have been dominated with churches. Many people wants to be in God's ministry both the called and the self-called; why? An indubitable reality in Nigeria is that the more the proliferation of churches, the more the commercialization making most new born churches a divine deceit. For more than two decades now, outside the mainstream churches (Catholic, Lutheran, Anglican, Methodists, Baptist, etc.), most churches in Nigeria headed by their founders

have been turned into a business centers and "God" has become a commodity. An irony of the reality is that the more churches, prophesies and self-acclaimed pastors, the more deplorable situations of the worshippers, the more segregations we have, more miracle competition we see and more faithless Christians who only hope for miracles. (2018: 43).

Religious wars have become a contemporary issue which is often caused by competing religions. Rex Morgan in "Does Religion Cause War" is of the view that a number of war currently plaguing the world are religious in nature, notably those instigated by Muslim extremists. These wars are often seen as sacred duties that must be fulfilled. There is therefore the desire to fulfil it because it is linked to the divine. Those who hold onto the fundamentalist position are often exclusivist in mentality and see others as infidels who must be converted at all cost. This intolerant position has caused discrimination and hatred for non-adherence.

In quest for leadership, it has been proven that aspirants run to religion as a way to seek supporters. Hence, those aspiring for a leadership are shared among the lines of religion. Writing on the commercialization and politicization of religion, Onyeocha (2019) writes that:

Not only has religion been institutionalized, it has also been commercialized to become at the same time a source of wealth, a rally point for political activity, a forum for tongue-lashing bigotry and a powerful instrument for social engineering. Many daily shout exhortations from the rooftops, but few practice what they preach. Some confuse others with religion, some use religion to exploit the vulnerability of their followers. So claim to heal, to create wealth, to confer power, to redress injustices. Some shout, others keep quit, yet each seems to find fault with other's approach. All this amounts to a manipulation of religion for self-serving individual ends. From the rising of the sun to its setting, those invoking the name of God or Jesus seem to be at each other' throat. Some really do not know what they believe, while others are given to superstition, which passes for faith (119-120).

As a result of man's religious quest, there is an interwoven between religion and politics. Many in political positions often run to religion to as an avenue to get support. In the Nigeria parlance where politics is done on the lines of ethnicity and religion, a Christian feels comfortable to vote a Christian than to vote a Muslim. It is not amazing to see an Imam indoctrinating Muslim followers on the need to vote only Muslims in order to continue the message of Allah.

Self-Assessment Exercise

1. When we have authentic adherents of religion in our society it will provide good leaders and followers in the society. True or False?

2. ------ is a government where values of a particular religion inform the law and rules of the society.

3. ----- deals with the obligation to obey the national laws by every citizen of the state.

4.3 Summary

- Religion as a belief and practice makes a positive impact on politics by enhancing peaceful coexistence and guaranteeing a sustainable development of the state.

- Religion has created a lot of problems in the state through commercialization, pathologies and politicization of religion among others.

4.4 References/Further Reading

Adeleye, M.O. (1988). Religion, Politics and Society. In: Adewale S.A. (ed). *Religion and Society: The Nigerian Experience*, Ibadan: Orita Publications. 60-75.

Amaku, E. E. *Philosophy and Social Life in Nigeria.* Uwani: Victojo Production sevices, 2010.

Afolabi, O. O. "The role of religion in Nigerian politics and its sustainability for political development." *Net Journal of Social Science*s, Vol. 3(2), pp. 42-49, May 2015, ISSN: 2315-9774

Elliott, C. (1877). *Delineation of Roman Catholicism: Drawn from the authentic and acknowledged Standards of the Church of Rome*. Lane & Scott.

Feldman, N. (2005). *Divided by God*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Green, T. H. (1986). Lectures on the Principles of Political Obligation and Other Writings, P. Harris and J. Morrow (eds.), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Jefferson, T. (1802). "Jefferson's Letter to the Danbury Baptist. *US. Library of Congress.*

Mubarak, A. (2009). "Religion and Politics: Integration, Separation and Conflict" *Violence and Peace Challenges of Religion*. Lahore. www.ireness.net.

Nwadinihu, C (2018). *Walk with God.* Owerri: Rosarian Publications.

Onyeocha, I. (2007). *Africa: the Country, the Concept and the Horizon.* Owerri: Imo State University Press.

Oshewolo, R. M. and Borok, A. M. (2015). "Religion and Politics in Nigeria" *International Journal of Politics and Good Governance*Volume VI, No. 6.3 Quarter III.

Raiser, K. (2013). *Religion, Power, Politics,* Translated from the German, by Stephen Brown. Geneva: WCC Publications.

Uyoh, B. and Nwadinihu, C. (2018). *Social and Political Philosophy: Thematic Introductions.* Owerri: Rosarian Publications.

4.5 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercise

Self-Assessment Exercise

1. True

2. Religious democracy,

3. Political Obligation